



The Influence of Migrant Workers' Return Policy on Rural Children's Education Opportunities Under the Change of Social Structure

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Abstract. With the sustained rapid economic development and profound transformation of urban-rural structures in our country, a large number of migrant workers have left rural areas to flood into cities, hoping to secure better job opportunities and more comfortable living conditions. They carry their aspirations for a better life, leaving their hometowns to work hard in cities and making indelible contributions to urban construction and development. However, in recent years, the state has introduced a series of policies to encourage migrant workers to return to their hometowns for entrepreneurship and employment, gradually increasing their implementation of these policies. Under the guidance and support of these policies, an increasing number of migrant workers are choosing to abandon city life, returning in large numbers to rural areas, re-rooting themselves in their hometowns, and dedicating themselves to the construction and development of their hometowns. This phenomenon not only reflects a shift in the employment choices of migrant worker groups, but also reveals new changes in the urban-rural development pattern. In light of this, this article aims to explore the far-reaching impact of policies encouraging migrant workers to return to their hometowns on educational opportunities for rural children against the backdrop of social structural changes.

Keywords: migrant workers returning to their hometowns; rural children; educational opportunities; social structural change

1 Introduction

In the historical process of China's rapid industrialization and urbanization, hundreds of millions of rural laborers flocked to cities in search of better job opportunities and living conditions, gradually forming a large group of migrant workers. This group has not only made significant contributions to urban economic development and social progress but has also brought about numerous social issues. In recent years, with the deepening implementation and continuous advancement of the national rural revitalization strategy, a series of policies aimed at encouraging and supporting migrant workers to return home for entrepreneurship and employment have been introduced. These policies have become important measures for promoting the comprehensive development

of the rural socio-economy. This article will delve into and analyzes how these policies specifically impact educational opportunities for rural children, including changes in their access to educational resources, improvement of educational quality, and realization of educational equity. Additionally, the article further explores the profound significance of these impacts on the personal growth and development of rural children, as well as on the overall structural changes and long-term development of society. Through this analysis, we intend to provide useful references and insights for improving relevant policies, and promoting fair education and harmonious social development among rural children.

2 Social Structure Change and the Background of Migrant Workers Return Policy

In recent years, with the changing global economic situation and adjustments in domestic industrial structures, rural areas of our country have faced unprecedented opportunities and challenges. To promote the comprehensive revitalization of rural regions, the state has introduced a series of policies to encourage migrant workers to return home, aiming to guide and support this group in bringing back their accumulated experience, skills, and capital to their hometowns, thus injecting new vitality into the socio-economic development of rural areas. These policies not only cover multiple aspects such as financial subsidies, tax incentives, and financial support, but also focus on providing entrepreneurial guidance and skill training to comprehensively enhance the employment and entrepreneurship capabilities of migrant workers after they return home. Against this backdrop, the wave of migrant workers returning home has gradually emerged, becoming an important force driving the socio-economic development of rural areas. As the future hope of rural regions, improving and enhancing educational opportunities for rural children has undoubtedly become a focal point in this process¹.

Educational opportunities serve as cornerstones of personal growth and societal progress. In rural areas where resources are relatively scarce, enhancing educational opportunities for children is crucial. With migrant workers returning home, there is now a unique opportunity to leverage their experience and resources to improve the educational landscape. Many of these workers have gained valuable knowledge and skills while working in urban areas, and they can now contribute to their hometowns. Policies encouraging migrant workers to return home often include educational development provisions. Financial subsidies and tax incentives can be used to build and upgrade schools, purchase educational material, and train teachers. The focus on entrepreneurial guidance and skill training also extends to the realm of education, ensuring that rural children receive comprehensive and practical education that prepares them for the future; in this context, it is important to create a supportive environment for rural education. This includes fostering partnerships among local governments, migrant workers, and educational institutions to share resources and expertise. By working together, we can ensure that rural children have access to high-quality education, laying the foundation for their personal success and socio-economic development in rural areas.

As many migrant workers return to their hometowns, the educational environment in rural areas has undergone significant changes. On the one hand, many returning workers possess high levels of cultural literacy and vocational skills, enabling them to provide more diverse and rich educational resources for rural children. These resources not only include textbook knowledge and academic tutoring but also encompass urban life experiences, vocational skill enlightenment, and broader guidance on worldviews and values. However, the entrepreneurial and employment activities of returning migrant workers have brought more economic benefits to rural areas, thereby improving the economic standards of rural households and providing material support for better education for rural children. However, the impact of policies that encourage migrant workers to return to educational opportunities for rural children is not entirely positive. With an increase in the number of returnees, rural areas face new challenges in the allocation of educational resources. In some regions, owing to limited educational resources, issues such as teacher shortages and outdated teaching facilities may arise, making it difficult to ensure educational quality. Moreover, there are differences in educational needs between children returning migrant workers and those who return to cities. Meeting these differentiated needs and achieving educational equity remain urgent issues that need to be addressed².

In response to these issues, the government and all sectors of society need to work together and take effective measures. On the one hand, there should be increased investment in rural education, improved teaching facilities, and enhanced teacher quality to ensure that all rural children can access high-quality educational resources. However, a flexible and diverse educational system should be established to meet the varied educational needs of different children and promote educational equity. At the same time, efforts should be made to strengthen the training and employment guidance for migrant workers returning to their hometowns, helping them better integrate into rural society and contribute more to the educational development of rural children.

In summary, the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns has multifaceted impacts on educational opportunities for rural children, with both a positive impetus and potential issues and challenges. Only through the joint efforts of the government, society, and individuals can we achieve comprehensive improvement in educational opportunities for rural children, laying a solid foundation for the long-term development of rural areas.

3 The Impact of Migrant Workers Return Policy on Rural Education Resources

3.1 Redistribution of Educational Resources

As the wave of migrant workers returning to their hometowns surges, the distribution of educational resources in rural areas has undergone significant changes. On one hand, the return of these workers brings more human resources to the countryside. This includes not only their labor and experience, but also, more importantly, many of them are willing to contribute to the knowledge and skills they have acquired in cities to the

education sector in rural areas. This contribution manifests in various ways, such as participating in school volunteer activities, providing extracurricular tutoring for children, and leveraging their networks to raise more teaching materials and funds for rural schools³.

On the other hand, the return of migrant workers to their hometowns has led to a more rational allocation of educational resources in rural areas. In the past, due to the relatively lagging economic development in rural regions, educational resources were often scarce, with high-quality resources concentrated in a few schools or areas. After returning to their hometowns, migrant workers may choose to start businesses or find employment in their communities or nearby regions. Thus, their children have more opportunities to attend school locally and enjoy better educational resources. This trend of local schooling helps alleviate the issue of the uneven distribution of educational resources in rural areas, allowing more rural children to access quality education.

However, it is worth noting that while the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns has brought opportunities for the reallocation of rural educational resources, it also faces some challenges. For instance, as the number of people returning increases, the demand for education in rural areas also rises, placing higher demands on the supply of educational resources. If the government and all sectors of society do not promptly increase investment in rural education, improve teaching facilities, and enhance teacher quality, the contradiction between the supply and demand of educational resources may further intensify, and addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from multiple stakeholders. First, the government needs to allocate more funds to rural education, ensuring that schools have adequate resources to meet growing demand. This includes not only constructing new schools and classrooms, but also upgrading existing facilities to provide a better learning environment.

Second, improving teachers' quality is crucial. Government and educational institutions should invest in teacher training programs, focusing on enhancing teaching skills and providing professional development opportunities. Additionally, attracting and retaining teachers in rural areas through better salaries and incentives can help alleviate teacher shortages, and promoting community involvement in rural education is another effective strategy. By fostering partnerships between schools and local communities, more resources and support can be mobilized to improve educational outcomes. Community members can volunteer as tutors, organize extracurricular activities, and contribute financially or in kind to school projects.

Therefore, under the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns, achieving rational allocation and effective utilization of rural educational resources requires the joint efforts of the government, schools, society, and individuals. The government should increase investment in rural education, improving teaching facilities and conditions in rural schools; schools should actively explore and innovate educational models and methods to enhance educational quality; all sectors of society should actively participate in rural education, providing more support and assistance to rural schools; and individuals should establish correct educational concepts, paying attention to their childrens education and creating a good environment for their growth and development. In conclusion, while the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns presents opportunities for rural educational resource reallocation, it is

imperative to address the associated challenges. By increasing investment in rural education, improving teaching facilities, enhancing teacher quality, and fostering community involvement, we can ensure that all children in rural areas have access to quality education regardless of their background or circumstances.

3.2 Fluctuations and Challenges in Education Quality

Migrant workers returning to their hometowns inject a fresh wave of vitality and a plethora of new opportunities into the often underresourced rural educational landscape. However, this influx presents significant challenges to the consistency and stability of the educational quality in these areas. On one hand, the high-caliber talents among these returning migrant workers possess the potential to introduce innovative teaching concepts and methodologies to rural schools⁴. This can lead to substantial improvements in the overall quality of education. Their active involvement not only diversifies and enriches the content presented in classrooms but also effectively ignites and sustains students' interest and enthusiasm for learning. Consequently, dynamic engagement plays a crucial role in nurturing a new generation of innovative and practically skilled individuals, thereby contributing to the long-term development and prosperity of rural communities.

However, on the other hand, due to the varying educational backgrounds and professional experiences of migrant workers returning to their hometowns, there are differences in their educational capabilities and levels. Some workers may lack systematic knowledge and teaching skills, making it difficult for them to handle school teaching roles. If schools fail to effectively train and guide these individuals, their involvement could negatively impact educational quality. Moreover, with an increase in the number of returning residents, the number of students in rural schools may also increase, placing higher demands on school management and resource allocation. If schools cannot promptly adapt to these changes, educational quality may fluctuate or decline⁵.

Therefore, under the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns, to achieve continuous improvement in rural education quality, joint efforts from the government, schools, and all sectors of society⁶. The government should strengthen support and guidance for rural schools, providing more educational resources and policy support; schools should enhance training and management for returning migrant workers, ensuring the quality and level of education; and all sectors of society should actively participate in improving rural education quality, offering more assistance and support to schools. Only then can we achieve comprehensive improvement in rural education quality, providing solid talent support for the long-term development of rural areas.

4 Conclusion

The policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns has a profound and positive impact on the educational opportunities for rural children. By improving preschool education and enhancing basic education, this policy provides a fairer, higher-quality educational environment for rural children. This not only helps improve the educational

level and overall quality of rural children, but also lays a solid foundation for their future growth and development. However, it is important to recognize that the implementation of this policy still faces challenges and issues. Examples include how to ensure the quality and standards of education for returning migrant workers, how to effectively integrate and utilize various educational resources, and how to further improve the rural education system and mechanisms. These issues require joint efforts from the government, schools, and all sectors of society, strengthening cooperation and communication, and continuous exploration and innovation to ensure that the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns can sustainably and steadily promote the development of rural education.

In short, the policy of migrant workers returning to their hometowns has brought new opportunities and challenges to rural children's education. We should make full use of the favorable conditions of this policy, strengthen the reform and innovation of rural education, and provide more powerful support and guarantees for the comprehensive development of rural children.

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