

Research in Higher Education Development Modes for Ethnic Group in Minority Areas

— Set Yunnan Province as An example

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Abstract—Higher education for ethnic group in minority areas has its own particularities. For the area lies in China's border, economy development level is behind the developed coast cities relatively, and its culture and society are special. The following passage is based on Yunnan's higher education, analyses the plight of higher education in minority areas. The paper analyzes the internal cause and external dynamic to influence the higher education development in minority areas from the perspective of minority consciousness, cultural diversity, border, modernization and internationalism. Consequently, two development modes are put forward in the paper: the higher education development mode in minority areas should has distinguishing feature based on border and minority's cultures, and the other one should be "small and delicate" for universities in minority areas based on the local economic, cultural and social development. Two measures are also put forward in the passage.

Keywords—higher education, development mode, ethnic group areas, trait, culture

I. INTRODUCTION

Whether it is the main nationality or minorities, each ethnic group has its own traditional culture in a country with nationality diversity, and also has the cultures and dynamics for mutual reference and absorption. Education plays an important role in transmitting the national excellent traditional cultures and minority's wonderful cultures. China is a united country with minority diversity. Because of the historic reason, many ethnic groups live in western areas where the population is small, the natural condition is serious and the economy is undeveloped. It is special in economy, political affairs, culture and society. Different ethnic group has its own cultural tradition and characteristic education. The research in higher education in minority areas has much significance in knowing about ethnic group areas, cultivating high-quality minority members to adapt modern society and enriching the treasure house of minority cultures

II. THE PRESENT SITUATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN MINORITY AREAS—SET YUNNAN PROVINCE AS AN EXAMPLE

Yunnan is the province has the most ethnic groups in China this has 56 nationalities. Besides Han People, 25 ethnic groups

whose population is above 5000 live in Yunnan. Among them, 15 minorities are unique for Yunnan. The minority population is amount to 30% of Yunnan's total population. The distribution for Yunnan's ethnic groups is complicated with 2 traits. For one thing, minorities are mixed in small settlement, for another, minorities are various distributions due to Yunnan's various landscapes and weather kinds. Yunnan's ethnic groups have the cultural diversity in buildings, clothes, festivals, customs, religions and languages.

After the enforcement of Western Development Policy, the economy, politics, science, education and culture in western minority areas have been improved greatly. However, due to the natural, historical and policy reasons, the relative undeveloped condition in minority areas has not been improved in deed. According to the traditional census data in 1990, 2000, and 2010, the population is 90,567 million (1990), 106.43 million (2000) and 133.97 million (2010). In the data of 2010 census, the minority population is occupied 8.49% in the national total population. In 1990, 2000 and 2010, the number of minority university student is occupied 0.08% (1990), 0.15% (2000) and 0.23% (2010) in the nation total population. According to the census data in 2010, 389 people have university degree among 10,000 people, but only 42 in 389 are ethnic students. Before 1995, the portion for minority students in each 10,000 people, Xinjiang is 6.7; Ningxia is 20.8; Xizang is 16.2; Nei menggu is 16.1; Qinghai is 26.7; Guangxi is 13.2; Yunnan is 12.9 and Guizhou is 9.9. [1]Only one special university for minority students exists in Yunnan.

III. THE PLIGHTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN MINORITY AREAS

A. Conservative Education Concept

Conservative concept without innovation is the main block for higher education development in Yunnan minority areas. For one thing, the direction of running a school for higher school is short of distinguishing features. Some universities compare themselves with other coastal developed universities without full thinking. For another, many majors in higher school in minority areas are too old. The talents are mostly cultivated in basic majors as education, medicine and agriculture. Conservative education concept restricts people

who are in charge of higher education management visions not bright and short. So they make decisions and policies not kept the same pace with the time. Students are cultivated in this concept and education atmosphere are always blinded and out of date. So, for some students who are diligent in studying, even they work so hard, but after graduation, it is so difficult for them to find a good job. After that, many of them will lose heart in study and education. Even some are hateful to society. Society is also influenced by this concept. Many students would be in this bad recycle. They maybe regard university education useless, and they do not let their children in Minority University to receive education again. For this reason, education concept is so important to policy makers in university. They are key persons for the level and development of the whole university. If their vision for university development is so broaden, the policy can keep the pace with the time, students in this education must be beneficial a lot. So, university leaders should be responsible for the university development.

B. Equality for Higher Education

1) The Chance for University Entrance Is Unequal

The chance for minority student to accept university education is determined by finance support and invests, except student themselves. Because of the differentiation in family background, family income, family members' education level between minority areas and developed cities, the portion to enter university education in minority areas is lower than developed areas. Economic level is the most important reason for a whole society's development; for it decides the fund invest in education. It is known that in a richer country, people draw attention to education more, and they are willing to cost more money in education. So the education can be developed better, and it is helpful to the whole society's development. Otherwise, if a county is poor enough, and it has no money in education, fewer students can receive education. So the students can't be excellent and capable person in different working fields. It is difficult for them to do devotion much to society development. Thus, if the education chance and level is equal and developed, economy of the nation must be developed. Another reason for the unequal chance to receive university education is some parents' conservative and traditional concept. In some areas where people play much emphasis on boys rather than girls, they have different chance to go to school. In minority areas, because of no one-child policy restriction in China, each family can have more than two or there or even more children, so parents have a so heavy economic burden, in order to survive, children have to work for family early, they have no chance to go to school and also they have no the concept that education is so important for their whole life.

2) Employment for Graduates Is Unequal

Most minority students work in ethnic areas after their graduation from university. Because of the heavy competition, more and more eastern university graduates move to western minority areas to get a job. They bring technology and information to the west, but also make the minority student be in more job-hunting pressure. In modern society, if a university graduate student wants to get a good job, it needs a lot of necessities. The first, job chance form society is various. Even

in the same city, in different time to graduate, students chance to have a job is different. For example, maybe it is easy for English major students to be a middle school English teacher in Kunming in 1990. But it is hard for the students to get the same job in 2000. Maybe it is more difficult for the students to be an English teacher in their rural villages in 2015. The second, family resources are another important reason to get a job. In China, relation is a so important social fact to influence everybody in society. If some students are born in rich family or their parents are in high social ladder, be officers in government, it is really for them to get a job easier than students in rural areas. Their third, cities and villages are two different developed-level areas. Government pays so much money, talents, technology, information, resources and profit policies in city rather than rural villages. Even cities have to face more serious competition, but also it has more job-getting chances. Students in minority live in rural areas all the time, it is difficult for them to study in city, and meanwhile it is difficult for them to work in city. The last but not the least, the students themselves is short of excellent education in school and family. So many of them are not confident in techniques, and they have no competitive skills in job-hunting.

C. Problems from Cultural Differentiation

1) Difficulty in Adapting Cross-cultures

Students are from different ethnic groups and regions in higher school, which brings the diversity of customs, psychology and consciousness. When a student steps into a new environment, he has to adapt the new living style and culture. Some of them have difficulty in adapting the new culture environment and consciousness of belonging. For most minority students, their hometown is in rural areas or mountains. Their parents are peasants. Their living environment is very hard, rough, and poor. But the customs of there are very brief and full of happiness. Maybe they have no chance to go to towns and cities; they connect with villagers and members from family and relatives. So they are friendly to each other. Their social relation is narrow, brief, easy and kind. But, when students step into cities and receive higher education. For one thing, their vision can be broadened and they can learn more and more knowledge, making more friends from different provinces. For another they have to face and adapt more complicated city life. Some of them maybe are in difficulty in adaption new city life comparing with their rural village living style. For some students, they speak ethnic group language, and they receive bilingual class in middle school. But in university, they have to attend bilingual class in Han language and English, rather than minority languages. And also about the religion, so maybe some students feel lonely without too many people from the same religion. Some time it is difficult for them to celebrate their own festivals.

2) Contradiction between Minority Language and Uniform Education System

The uniform education system creates the single education structure. School education is enforced almost in Chinese language only, including Chinese materials and contents. But it is difficult for minority students. The students' Chinese language level is poor, which does bad effect in their learning, especial in motivation. Uniform education system aims to

develop students skill in high level. So education system makes often learn from eastern coastal high developed universities. But due to the different level of students' origin and education base, maybe the education system is good in eastern university, but not proper in minority areas. English exam is a key example to explain these. For most students from minority areas, they are good in ethnic group language. But they do not attend any English class till middle school. Even in middle school, some school are short of English teachers and textbooks, so students receive little English knowledge, which is a disadvantage in entrance exam of university. So they have to attend less developed university or go back home. And in university, they have to pass CET 4 or CET 6, which is a burden for them resulting in not paying so much attention to major knowledge study.

D. Be Short of Teachers and Education Resources

Yunnan lies in the border, and the education resources are rare. So it is difficult to cultivate excellent native teachers. However, due to the difference of environment and culture, it is also for non-local teachers to provide long-term services. Many excellent teachers move to coastal developed university to get more development chance. It is the fact that excellent teachers and education resources are distributed into cities and eastern coastal universities. In minority areas, people are not concentrated as city, so government does not invest too many money and capable talents in education. In Yunnan mountain areas, some villages even have no electricity and road. The first element for villagers is survival. The areas can't attract teachers, so the students are poor in the concept to study. But it is a piece of good news, many university volunteers are to be teachers in Yunnan rural areas in their summer or winter vacation. Even though they can't stay for a long time, they also contribute a lot to the mountain areas, and the most important is that they are good examples for mountain village children to change their life due to receive education.

IV. DYNAMICS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN MINORITY AREAS

A. Internal Dynamics

1) Minority Consciousness

Ethnic groups have their own minority consciousness in belief concepts, religion, customs, which builds their cultural identity and cultural diversity. The development for nation and ethnic group should be reflected in its distinguishing features and advantages.[2] Minority consciousness holds people to solve their own ethnic group and devote themselves voluntarily. They can be willing to display and defend their own excellent traditional cultures. Minority consciousness is the essential internal dynamics for the minority development. Social recognition is so important to minority consciousness. For example, if one ethnic group can be regarded high developed in economy, education, culture and reputation, the people in this group feel more confident than other poor developed ethnic group. In China, government regards each ethnic group the same social status not according to the big population, long history or large areas distribution, each minority has the same rights. So, for the minority members they should be confident

and proud for their ethnic group. If this minority consciousness can be involved in each member's mind, they would contribute a lot to the minority development. Everybody should be responsible for their minority development. So minority consciousness is a strong power to move the society go ahead.

2) Cultural Diversity

Due to the influence of diversity, various minority cultures are mutually touched, collided, adapted, absorbed and melted. How to make people be tolerant for various cultures is the direction to form cultural diversity. Culture is the most difficult word to definite in the world.[3] The range of culture is so large that too many things can be belonged to culture, engaging from materials, goods, languages, customs, religion, living styles and concepts in people's mind. People live in different background and for different cultures. The whole humans civilization is based on cultural diversity. Each culture has its features, advantages and disadvantages. Cultural diversity has made our world so wonderful. Students should be proud of their minority culture. If they can keep and evolve the excellent culture aspects well, the culture can be developed faster toward bright direction. In the integration of culture, people should distinguish good and bad, and try to keep excellent tradition. Culture plays more and more important role in society development.

B. External Dynamics

1) Border advantages

Yunnan province lies to Burma, Vietnam and Laos. Mekong River connects China, Thailand and Kampuchea. Also Yunnan is near to Malaysia, Singapore, India and Bangladesh. Yunnan has long borders and foreign neighbors, which make Yunnan, be the window and door for opening trade toward other Southeast Asia countries, the chance and convenience to communicate with other countries and cultures develop the movement for the regional whole society and ethnic group. In border regions, even though many people are transnational which means they are belonged to different country, but because it has a long history and tradition these different people marry and do trade business, so they have very strong connection. In the close connection, they have formed similar culture. For example pupils in Vietnam can attend Chinese elementary school from Monday to Friday; they serve as a bridge to connect with two countries. Many people are minority groups in the border region. So the border advantage is helpful for transnational communication and culture.

2) Modernization

Sociology of development holds that, modernization is a great leap forward of social and cultural system. It is formed from not traditional elements. Modernization holds people to solve social problem and pursuit social development with a rational mind. On the influence of modernization, higher education should be adapted to modernization by the means of reforming educational concept and thoughts. Modernization urges higher school to improve teaching level with the reform of teaching methods and contents. So modernization is an important external dynamic to improve higher education. In recent world, no country can be developed without communication with other countries, and also university can't develop well without communication with other universities

and nations. We call the whole world “earth village” it means with the modernization, the connection among different nations have been enforced. Education has to face modernization. So students and managers in university should have the concept to change their mind and keep the pace with the time. We should learn from other excellent and developed countries and universities.

3) Internationalization

Internationalization makes countries communicate and compare more. Information era holds ethnic groups to touch and adapt other cultural modes. Higher school can't survive without communications with other country and university. So internationalization is a necessary tendency in the future. For ethnic group, many of them are lying in Chinese borders, so they have international neighbors, even though many are poorer and less developed comparing with China, such as Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar. It does not mean we have learned nothing from them. Meanwhile, minority students should not restrict in neighbor countries. Indeed, because of poor education of minority education, so they should learn more from other developed countries such as the US, Canada, Australia, British and so on. Maybe exchange of students and teachers are the common and useful way to learn from developed regions.

V. MODE EXPLORATION FOR HIGHER SCHOOL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN MINORITY AREAS

A. *Higher School Education Should Has Its Distinguishing Feature Based on Border Advantage and Ethnic Culture*

Ethnic culture and border advantage are always connected with together. The feature and advantage for Yunnan higher education is border advantage and ethnic culture diversity. The development mode for distinguishing feature can be enforced from opening course, talents cultivation and graduates occupation direction. Distinguishing features is the competitive resources for university development. And also it is the power to attract government's invested and defense. For example, some majors such as ethnic language and history, ethnology, research of border regions and son on. Minority University should draw more and more government and social attention.

B. *Higher School Education Should Develop “Small and Delicate” Mode Rather Than “Full and Comprehensive”, avoid Learning from Other Regions and Universities without Thinking.*

The level of higher school education is relatively weak comparing with coastal developed universities. Higher school can invite excellent experts, principals and entrepreneurs to give a speech or course in minority areas. Communication with excellent experts and university is necessary, but not to copy their development mode. “Small and delicate” mode maybe can adapt the development of minority areas more and be the new direction of development. And meanwhile, minority university should not be influenced by Chinese government

policy of “spreading enrollment of university students” and enroll more students without blindness, for the high education and university have to responsible for minority students education level and chance of job-hunting after graduation.

C. *Higher School Education Should Establish Different Level Teaching System Based on Students' Knowledge and Background.*

Because most students are from ethnic group areas in minority universities, they have different knowledge, education level and family background. It is known that most minority areas lie in western and poor regions in China. The economy of these places and education development are poor relatively. Many educational resources are established unequally in these areas such as teachers' resources, courses, fund invest and educational policies and so on. So minority students have various education levels. Most of them are so poor that they are difficult in adaption of new university teaching and life. Many courses and knowledge are so new for them and before that they have no chance to receive. Consequently, higher school education should establish difficult level teaching system based on students' knowledge and background.

D. *Higher School Education in Minorities Should Not Only Be toward Ethnic Areas, but also Enhancing Cooperation with Other Eastern Universities and Foreign Countries.*

Protecting minority cultures do not mean education for ethnic group students just depend on minority cultures. Indeed, exchange and cooperation with eastern universities and foreign countries is another useful way to protect and keep traditional minority culture, because Han and foreign cultures can help minority students broaden their vision and realize the significance of each own ethnic group culture. The best way for keeping tradition is exploring, exchange, communication and cooperation among various cultures.

All in all, with the rapid development of globalization and modernization, minority education in higher school is not an issue just for ethnic group areas. In order to keep the balance of social development, the whole society should draw more attention to high school education in minority areas especial in border regions. Although there are some plights to stop the development of higher education in minority areas, making clear the nature of minority education is the core to develop itself usefully.

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