

# Thoughts on Government Purchase Preschool Education Services in China\*

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**Abstract**—The transformation of government functions, demand contradiction of preschool education and the development of relevant preschool education institutions and educational intermediary organizations make the government purchase preschool education services become possible. Public school private, purchase educational position and provide management, curriculum and other individual or several education services are the main ways of government purchase preschool education services in China.

**Keywords**—government purchase of services; government purchase preschool education services; development of preschool education

## I. DEFINITION OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASE OF SERVICES

Government purchase of services is derived from the reform of social welfare system in the West. But government purchase of services must have the following characteristics: the purchaser is the government; the Contractors are all types of social organizations (including for-profit and non-profit organizations); the services that government purchased by must belong within the scope of public services; the funds from the government; the purpose of purchase is to maximize the effectiveness of government finances.

The government purchase of educational services is a kind of government purchase of services, the government purchase of educational services can be defined as in order to implement or strengthen the government educational service functions, the government sign contracts with various social organizations, and pay the cost of government funds to the social organizations based on the number and quality of educational services they provided, in order to provide public education services to achieve maximum effectiveness of behavior.

## II. THE FEASIBILITY AND NECESSITY OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASE OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION SERVICES

### A. The Transformation of Government Functions

The economic globalization requires to establish the position of marketization of government functions. World Bank emphasized the importance of government capacity building in world development report in 1997:Government in

changing world says that the effective government, rather than the small government, is the key to development of economy and society. This is becoming more and more common. The role of the government is to supplement the market, not to replace the market(World Bank,1997). According to requirements of the World Trade Organization, to reposition the government functions, it is how to give full play to the basic role of resource allocation in market. Our government functions were also actively changed, with the China's accession to WTO, as well as the development of economy market. This is mainly reflected in the government put the right of economic decision-making return to the market, meanwhile providing the free competition, even bargain market environment to the market main body, and let the them decentralized decision-making and bear the economic consequences and social impact.

With the transformation of government functions, state power of education should also occur differentiation and metastasis. The state power of education will be converted to the right to education of international organizations, local government and Social education right, the State retaining only about to formulate macro national education policy, education regulations and the quality of education, the powers of supervision and education of judicial. Most of the education administrative power transfer the differentiation to the local governments and the international NGO and social groups, Keeping the dynamic balance of mutual restrict between the state power of education and Social education right (Xinmei, Zhu,2001). The differentiation and metastasis of state power of education promoted socialization of the part of the state power of education, namely social organizations (for-profit and nonprofit) can share some rights, it provides a realistic possibility for the government purchase preschool education services.

### B. The Demand Contradiction of Preschool Education

In recent years, with the rapid development of China's economy, by strengthening national education awareness, people pay more attention to national preschool education, but the contradiction between the people's growing demand of preschool education and Insufficient of preschool education resources are difficult to solve at the moment. In 2015, the national number of children in the kindergarten is 3424.45 million, three-year preschool gross enrollment rate was 62.3%. According to the National Medium-and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development

\*This study was funded by Scientific and Technological Research of Chongqing Municipal Education Commission Program: Study on Models of Universal Preschool Education in Poor Counties in Chongqing (KJ1401417).

requirements the number will reach 40 million in 2020. With the expanding preschool education, a serious shortage of preschool education resources will be more prominent.

In order to better solve the problem, the State Council issued the "Some opinions of the State Council on the current development of preschool education ", it clearly stated: "To expand preschool education resources through a variety of forms and encourage social forces to organize various forms of kindergarten, by ensuring reasonable use of land, tax relief, etc., to support social forces to organize kindergarten. Actively support the private kindergartens, especially the generally beneficial private kindergarten that for the public and lower fees." The government sign contracts with various social organizations, and pay the cost of government funds to purchase of preschool education services, it can effective integration of preschool education resources, and maximize the effectiveness of preschool education, resolving the demand contradiction of preschool education.

### *C. The Development of Relevant Preschool Education*

#### *Institutions and Educational Intermediary Organizations*

From the end of the twentieth century, with the continuous development of China's economy and society and people's increasing demand for preschool education, various types of early education institutions have sprung up in China's major cities. Although the level of teachers are mixed from various types of early education institutions, and there are also a variety of problems in education and teaching. But after more than a decade of socialist market economy and the elimination of choice, the inside management mechanism of early educational institution and service system continue to strengthen and improve, and has been appreciated and recognized by the society. Furthermore, the intermediary education organizations are also rapidly development in recent years, and its main types are: educational assessment agencies, educational consultancy agencies, education, information center, technological achievements information center, personnel exchange agencies, educational affairs agencies, educational management firms and education training institutions (Guorui, Fan, 2008). The development of relevant preschool education institutions and educational intermediary organizations make the government purchase preschool education services as possible.

## **III. THE WAYS OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION SERVICES**

### *A. Public School Private*

Public school private refers to the government departments signing contracted with the organizations or individuals , entrust it to management the area of public schools. The public schools that entrust the management are in the same ownership, the same sources of funding, and the school funding are still borne by the government. The government provide educational facilities, the social organizations or individuals provide complete sets of educational services to schools (Cuiping, Zhou, 2010).

This form of purchase educational services, the government intends to take advantage of the society organizations including for-profit and non-profit organizations that have professional qualifications of education to improve the public schools and weak schools' quality of education in the region, and guarantee the certain disadvantaged groups' equal rights on education in the area. The major problem in the development of preschool education is uneven distribution of resources, currently, most of the resources are concentrated in high-quality preschool education institutions that run by government agencies, and many lower-level public kindergarten have low quality of education due to lack of the government investment, it seriously affected the education fair. Through public private school, it can improve the quality of education in public kindergartens that have weak resources, and it can protect the equal access to education rights of certain vulnerable groups of children, reflecting the education fair.

### *B. Purchase Educational Position*

Purchase educational position refers to the government departments signed a contract with the non-public schools and other social organizations to purchase educational position as "public" student. The purpose of purchase educational position is in order to solve the problem of inadequate public education facilities and insufficient educational position. The government purchase educational position from the private schools or other educational institutions. The government also by means of the "contract", to ensure the quality of education, the payment of education funding and education assessment criteria made clear. As part of government purchase preschool educational services, the government purchase educational position is the most important solutions to solve the shortage of preschool education supply and demand situation in our country. Such as Zhengzhou municipal regulations, " Since 2011, the private kindergartens that legally established, quality assurance, implementation of the same level of public kindergarten fees and recruit the administrative domicile 3-6 years age children can get a certain percentage of public funds per student subsidy base on the previous year enrollment and the territorial public kindergartens public funds per student standards from the county (city, district) finance department in conjunction with education departments(Zhengzhou Municipal People's Government, 2011). The Zhengzhou city government though purchase educational position from private kindergarten that meet the standards to solve the situation of insufficient preschool positions, it is foreseeable that in the near future, there will be more provincial regional governments taking this way to purchase preschool services.

### *C. Provide Management, Curriculum and other Individual or Several Education Services*

The third types of government purchase preschool educational services is that government signed a contract with social organizations that have the professional qualification, and the social organizations provided such as the kindergarten curriculum, kindergarten management and other individual or several education services. The

Government intends to make up and raise the invalid and inefficient services that some public preschool education sectors offered, to improve the quality and efficiency of preschool education services through this type of government purchase preschool educational services. Georgia's pre-kindergarten program uses this type of service purchased. In 1995, Georgia has allowed the private sector to join in the pre-kindergarten program. So the government does not need to increase investment in new infrastructure or educational equipment, Georgia provisions that any legal educational institutions and child care entities that have official licenses such as the local school system, public or private non-profit organizations, or private profit institutions, as long as meet the relevant standards, they all have the right to provide services to children. This is the first time that this large-scale of cooperation between public and private institutions in Georgia and even throughout the United States.

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