

# The Investigation of Executive Condition of Minority Regions' Special Education Policies: The Case of Du'an Autonomous County

TU Wen-jing<sup>1</sup>, MEI Jin-ping<sup>2</sup>

(1. College of Management, Guangxi University for Nationalities, Nanning 530006, China;

2. School of Economics, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Wuhan 430073, China)

**Abstract:** The unbalance development of education is a widespread problem around the world, and the most outstanding of it is the lag of the education development of minority regions. For the sake of developing the education of minority regions, the government adopted a lot of policies and measures, enacting special education policies is the important matter among them. The paper tries to take Du'an autonomous county, Guangxi autonomous region as a case to explore the problems in the executive condition of minority regions' special education policies, and gives the suggestion for the government to accelerate the education development of minority regions.

**Key words:** minority regions; special education policies; Du'an County

The unbalance development of education is a widespread problem around the world, and the most outstanding of it is the lag of the education development of minority regions. On account of the poor environment, behindhand economic development and laggard education, in the market competition, minority regions are in a disadvantaged position, they always stick in the poor abyss, and the gap between the minority regions and other regions in the country is bigger and bigger. Developing the education of minority regions, and promoting their "soft resources" to make up the lack of their "hard resources", is the essential way to supply the gap.

After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, for the sake of developing the education of minority regions, the government adopted a lot of policies and measures to give the right to minority regions to develop minority education independently including enacting special education policies. However, how is the executive condition of minority regions' special education policies? The paper tries to take Du'an autonomous county, Guangxi autonomous region as a case to analyze the problems in the executive process of minority regions' special education policies, and gives the suggestion for the government to accelerate the education development of minority regions.

## 1. The General Education Situation of Du'an County

Du'an is a Yao clan autonomous county, and it lies in the Midwest of Guangxi. The total area of the county is 4 095 square kilometers. Thereinto, the tor area occupies 3 634 square kilometers, accounting for 89% of total area. Because of poor, it is one of the central antipoverty counties of China in new epoch. There are 9 nationalities

---

TU Wen-jing(1982- ), female, graduate student of College of Management, Guangxi University for Nationalities; research fields: public management, district governance.

MEI Jin-ping(1963- ), male, Ph.D., professor and Master supervisor of School of Economics, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law; research fields: economics of development, employment and economic growth.

in this area, including the Zhuang, Yao, Miao, Han, Mulao, Maonan, Shui, etc. Up to 2005, the total population of the county is 631 696, the population of national minority constitutes 97.35% of it, about 614 975, and the population of Yao clan accounts for 137 334, which constitutes 21.74% of the whole population in this county.

There are 251 primary schools and 610 rural schools in the whole county; and there are already 28 types of high school, including 4 complete high schools, 23 junior high schools and 1 senior high school; moreover, there is 1 vocational secondary school as well. Up to the end of 2005, the county has 102 359 students in schools. Among them, 3 623 are kindergarten kids, 66 779 are primary school students, 22 120 are junior high school students, 13 460 are senior high school students.

Because of the large minority population and miscellaneous nationalities, the special education policies which are carrying out in the county are as follows:

(1) Establish ethical school. According to the provision of *minority regions' autonomous law*, Du'an County established Yao clan high school in 1957. Now it has already become a complete high school, and one of the director schools of national education association of ethical school.

(2) Set up ethical class. Since 1985, Du'an County has set up ethical classes. In 2006, beside the ethical classes in the rural schools locate in the country where minorities gather in, the county set up 4 junior ethical classes per grade in Yao clan high school and 2 senior ethical classes per grade in Du'an high school. The students in the ethical classes can get 60 Yuan subsidy per month.

(3) Launch girl-senior-high-school-class. With the help of Guangxi Ethnic affairs committee, Du'an County launched a girl-senior-high-school-class in Du'an high school in 2003. Fifty minority senior high school girls were imbursed, and every one of them can get 1 000 Yuan subsidy per year.

(4) Descend the passing score. The passing score for all of the students in the county on national examination is generally adjusted downward by 20 points.

(5) Education aid. Du'an County and Zhangmutou town of Guangdong province were tied in one-to-one aid partner in 1997. In the past few years, Zhangtoutu town had supported 1.9 million Yuan to help poor schools and students in Du'an County. With the help of Zhangtoutu town, the education infrastructure of Du'an was improved comparatively.

## **2. Problems in the Special Education Policies' Executive Process**

Owe to the carrying out of special education policy, Du'an County has obtained great harvest on education. According to statistics, in 2003, there were 2 130 Du'an County students passed the national examination and matriculated by all kinds of universities, the rate of matriculated was 85.4%, moreover, among them, 326 students matriculated by key university. Now, education harvest is the glory of Du'an County, there is a saying in the folk, studying in Du'an high school is the passport of university. Although special education policy obtained huge success in Du'an County, there are still some problems in its executive process as follow:

### **2.1 Ethical school is in dilemma**

As the unique ethical school in Du'an County, Yao clan high school should be the main battlefield that develops minority education, but in fact, except the name of the school, Yao clan high school is no more than an ethical school. The management of fund, teaching staff, student source and course setting of it is the same as other school, and Yao clan high school doesn't have its own characteristic. What the name give it is more restriction than help, Yao clan high school has to compete with other schools from a lower scratch line, and the lag becomes

more and more great in the run, then, forms as a vicious circle, which all makes the ethical school in dilemma.

### **2.2 Ethical classes' aid extent is insufficient**

As we know, national minority constitutes 97.35% of the total population in Du'an County, so the concept of "minority" can nearly be ignored here, as a result, in the recruiting process of ethical class, the condition of students' domestic economy will be taken into account firstly. In some sense, in Du'an County, ethical class is "antipoverty class" more than "ethical class". But, the aid extent of ethical classes that have already been set up is insufficient. Take Yao clan high school as example, there are 12 ethical classes here, and 600 students are helped every year, however, according to the presentation of some director, as of 2006, the school has 3 900 students in school, the poor extension is near half, therefore the ethical classes help less than 1/3 of the students who need help. Du'an high school carried on detailed count once, there were 1 624 students whose living expenses are less than 100 Yuan per month, but there are 6 ethical classes in all that it can help only 300 students, which is less than 1/5 students who need help.

### **2.3 Boarding schools refuse junior-class students**

On account of 89% area in Du'an County is tor, the population distributes dispersedly. Establish rural school in each village will waste education resource and overburden public finance. Du'an County combines the rural schools nearby, and the upperclassman whose home is far from school can apply boarding. The original intention of running boarding school is to avoid possible dangerous on the students' way home, but they only accept the boarding applications of upperclassmen, and refuse those of junior-class students who are more devoid of the consciousness of evade danger. So, we can't help to regard that the schools try to elude being incompetent in taking care of kids and breach their original intention.

### **2.4 Abortive girl-senior-high-school-class**

Due to heavy poverty of Du'an County, the girls face discontinuing their studying after they finished compulsory education. In order to give the national minority girls the equal right to accept advanced education, from 2003 to 2006, Guangxi Ethnic affairs committee appropriate 50 thousand Yuan every year to help 50 minority girls to continue their senior high school study. In national examination in 2006, these girls matriculated by universities all. It is believed that the girl-senior-high-school-class is successful, but we are sorry to say that it is the first and the last girl-senior-high-school-class.

### **2.5 Descending the passing score exist in name only**

Descending the passing score is a policy whose yield extension is maximal, hereby, its incidence is widest. In our investigation, the framework of contention of this policy are: (1) no one, even educrat doesn't understand the cause and the standard of the policy; (2) the 20 point's incline is not enough and it is not help for the students on the national examination; (3) the policy only exist in name only, a majority of universities take factual passing score as the only criterion.

## **3. Suggestion for the Government to Accelerate the Education Development of Minority Regions**

According to the problems found in the special education policies' executive process, if we want to accelerate the education development of minority regions, we should commence from the following aspects:

Firstly, set up special fund for the education of minority regions. The main characteristic of minority regions is poverty, as a result the imminently demand for the development of minority education is fund. In China,

education is in charge of county, depressed minority regions, they are incompetent in developing education, and education expenditure is a weighty burden for local finance. As a public service, government has obligatory duty in providing education. In minority regions, we should achieve fair via unfair, which means to set up special fund for the development of their education, and give top priority to them when distributing education resources.

Secondly, endue the right of developing education independently to local agency. National minority students have their own culture background, and it represents strongly in minority regions especially. In view of the special of the education in minority regions, we should develop education discrepantly, instead of in a homogenizing way. Otherwise, there are two purpose of education: one is exploiting the potential, another is culture preservation. Endue the right of developing education independently to local agency, so they can adjust measures to the condition of minority regions, it is beneficial not only to accelerate the development of education in minority regions, but also to preserve national culture.

Thirdly, take soft passing score as the only criterion. Soft passing score is the passing score that has been adjusted downward, and hard passing score is the factual passing score. The purpose of setting soft passing score is to balance the inequality that caused by the difference of education resource in different areas. But the concurrence of soft and hard scores makes the criterion confused. In order to get excellent students, the universities are apt to take hard score as the only criterion, and thus the policy of descending the passing score exist in name only. Cancel so-called soft score and hard score, and make the soft score as the unique standard score, so that the policy can be put into effect.

Fourthly, make good use of social power to make up the government's failure. The power of the government is limited. Its policies are from a macro-view also, and they can't meet all kinds of needs. Attracting social power to take part in is beneficial to accelerate the education development of minority regions. For example, alter the unused houses of villager working outside to dormitory, and hire elders to take care of boarders, it can not only save the cost, but also ensure the security of junior-class students. Besides, set up endowment funds to help needy students, run private vocational schools and so on are the good cooperation forms for the government and the social power.

#### **References:**

- [1] Martha J. Coutinho, Donald P. Oswald. Disproportionate Representation in Special Education: A Synthesis and Recommendations. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 2000, 9(2).
- [2] DING Yue-ya. Educational Inequality in the Minority Regions of Present Day China and Suggestions for the Government Regarding the Education Policy. *Front. Educ. China*, 2006(1).
- [3] Edward J. Kormondy. Minority Education in Inner Mongolia and Tibet. *International Review of Education—Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft—Revue Internationale de l'Education*, 2002, 48(5): 377-401.
- [4] YANG Jun. Reflection on Balanced Allocation of Fundamental Education Teachers in Poverty-Stricken Areas of Ethnic Minorities: Example of a Survey in the Tibetan Autonomous County of Tianzhu in Gansu Province. *Front. Educ. China*, 2006(1).

(Edited by Jimmy Wang, Gavin Dai and Shirley Hu)