Problems and Countermeasures in the Development of Preschool Education in Rural Areas in China

LI’E LI

ABSTRACT

Accompanied with the “National long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020)” announced, preschool education has attracted more and more attentions. However, the distribution of education resources in urban and rural areas in China has been extremely uneven. The preschool education in rural areas has a shortage of kindergarten numbers, imperfectly teaching facilities, nonstandard management, lower salary and professional teaching skills. Especially, there is no effective cooperative education between family and kindergarten. This article proposes five suggestions from the following aspects: increasing the appropriation to form the pattern of rural kindergartens; making the appropriate standard for rural kindergartens; establishing and implementing scientific management system; enhancing teachers’ qualifications; changing the adult education ideals and strengthening the cooperation between kindergarten and family.

KEYWORDS
Rural areas, Preschool education, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

It’s all known that preschool education is particularly important for the development of children's life. So, it’s important to improve the quality of preschool education and promoting the all-round development of children's physical and mental health. In recent years, as the development of the economic increasing, farmers' awareness of education has also been on the rise, and preschool education in rural areas has shown a flourishing development [1]. But, because of the unbalanced distribution of educational resources in urban and rural areas, the development of the rural preschool education facing many problems, and the quality is difficult to guarantee. Analyzing of the current situation and problems of preschool education in rural areas can helps us to clarify the development direction and achieve the balanced development of the national preschool education.

Li’e Li, lilie0716@126.com, School of educational science, Yan’an University, Yan’an, 716000, China.
PRESENT SITUATION OF RURAL PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The number of rural kindergartens and admission rate

At present, preschool education is at the edge of the education system. The government budget more inclined to primary and secondary schools. Preschool education in rural areas is neglected. Most kindergartens need to raise funds for themselves and run difficult. The lack of funds for preschool education results in a serious shortage of rural kindergartens. Although some areas have newly built or expanded township kindergartens, but there are more children in the country, the small-scale expansion can not meet the needs of children. And although township center kindergartens can meet the needs of children living nearby, but there are still more scattered rural population. How to meet the needs of young children living in these areas? Children’s schooling journey faraway in remote areas, there is great security risks for little child. Some of them have even been denied to kindergartens. In the case of insufficient public kindergartens, some private or illegal kindergartens were operated. Without government financial provision, these kindergartens maintained their operations on the basis of tuition fees, the higher fees keeping quite a number of children out of the kindergarten.

Kindergarten’ architecture and teaching facilities

In order to encourage more social people to run the kindergarten and alleviate the pressure of rural children entering school, the government has adopted more relax approval policies for the private kindergartens [2]. As a result, there are still a large number of rural kindergartens which are not up to standard in construction facilities, especially teaching equipment facilities are rudimentary. In terms of living facilities, the majority of kindergartens have not equipped with isolation room and health care rooms. They can’t observe the quarantine of children with signs of illness in time, and the sterilization equipment is not fully equipped, it maybe leading to the outbreak of mass infectious diseases. In terms of teaching facilities, there is a shortage of toys and teaching aids, such as projector, physical booth, computer, and audio and other facilities. Many rural kindergartens only display some desks, benches, chalk and blackboards, and there is no material for child to game. Thus, it is impossible for children in rural areas to receive high-quality preschool education.

Kindergarten’ management system

Rural kindergarten managers do not have systematic knowledge of preschool education, and lack of scientific management experience, leading to the lack of all kinds of management systems in kindergartens. For most kindergarten managers, they equate kindergartens with primary school management, ignoring the differences between preschool children and pupils, and implementing the primary school management model. Some managers have followed the example of kindergartens in urban areas to develop some management systems. However, these regulations are only for the purpose of being checked by superiors, which is difficulty to implement effectively. In addition to the lack of facilities, there some management systems that don’t have appropriate living soil, such as the absence of extra freezer leading to food...
retention system cannot be implemented, the lack of sanitation facilities leading to j
sanitation and disinfection system become a mere formality.

Low level of Kindergarten Teachers

Rural kindergartens are located in remote and poor areas with backward economic
development. Therefore, the salary of kindergarten teachers is lower than in city, about
two thousand Yuan a month, which makes it difficult to attract outstanding
professional teachers. It can only be done by idle workers who have graduated from
high school and senior high school. Those who do not have the appropriate knowledge
and experience engage in preschool education, which further aggravates the
substitutability and the mobility of the position. And influenced by the traditional
thought of examination in our country, many rural kindergarten teachers teach
preschool children with Pinyin, Chinese characters and Calculation. This kind of
teaching neglects the development of the body and mind of the preschool children, kill
the young children’s learning interest, and even make some of the children have a
strong sense of weariness. Looking into the cause is that kindergarten teachers have no
systematic education theory, teaching only by experience, and they have no ability to
teach in the form of game, and parents in remote and poor areas also believe that
children should learn knowledge as earlier as possible.

Cooperation between kindergarten and family

The success of early childhood education cannot be separated from the support of
parents, so parents work is an important task in kindergarten. The rural children
parents could be divided into two categories, one is the mother of the child and the
other is the elderly who raise their children from generation to generation. These two
types of people generally share the same characteristics: low education level, outdated
ideas. Most of them are backward in their educational ideals. They believe that
teaching children is the teacher's responsibility. It has nothing to do with parents to
educate their children. Thus, family education and kindergarten education are
separated.

COUNTER MEASURES FOR DEVELOPING IN RURAL AREAS

Forming a rural kindergarten pattern dominated by public gardens

The government must clarify its responsibilities in the development of rural
preschool education and support the healthy development of rural kindergartens, and
increase investment in preschool education in rural areas. Preschool education in rural
areas should form a pattern of kindergartens in rural areas mainly based on public
kindergarten, and adhere to the public kindergartens to drive standardization
construction of rural preschool education to enhance the overall quality. The
government should rationally plan the distribution of kindergartens and establish at
least one standardized kindergarten in the townships to meet the needs of the children
of the surrounding villagers. The standardized kindergarten should deal with all kinds
of kindergartens in guiding and training to make up for the lack of teacher training in rural kindergartens [3].

**According to local conditions to design kindergarten standard**

The government should formulate relevant policies and regulations, formulate standards for running a rural kindergarten in accordance with local conditions, increase the flexibility of the system and establish a multi-development pattern of preschool education in rural areas. For example, kindergarten toys and teaching aids can be appropriately lowered in terms basic equipment standards, and the government should not require equipped with exactly the same educational toys. In addition to some large facilities, rural kindergartens are allowed to purchase local special educational toys or make educational toys on the principle of thrift.

**Kindergartens should establish and implement a scientific management system**

Kindergarten management system is an important guarantee for the development of a kindergarten. It directly affects the teaching quality. On the basis of improving the scientific management quality of rural kindergarten managers, kindergarten should really implement the principal responsibility system and improve various rules and regulations. First of all, it is necessary to establish a sound organizational structure, so that everything will be managed, and everything will be done. Second, kindergarten managers must establish and improve the kindergarten’s rules and regulations, such as children transport system, prepare lesson system, job responsibility system and so on. For preschool teachers, managers should establish the system of assessment, rewards and punishments system in accordance with the provisions on "Kindergarten teacher professional standards (Trial)" and "Opinions on Strengthening Kindergarten Teachers' Construction". According to the specific conditions of the kindergarten, we set up evaluation rules for teachers, assess the daily performance of teachers such as attendance, teaching ability and so on, and combine the results of performance evaluation with teachers' salaries and professional titles.

**Improving the level of preschool teachers**

Teacher is the key for the development of preschool education [4]. Building stable teachers group with professional quality is the fundamental guarantee for the healthy development of preschool education in rural areas. The government should improve the salary of kindergarten teachers in rural areas through financial appropriation or special grants, achieving all of the rural kindergarten teachers were equally paid for the same job, especially some non-government finance payroll teachers, reducing the mobility. At the same time, we should provide more opportunities for rural kindergarten teachers’ in-service training through variety methods. The competent department of education should integrate the business training of rural preschool teachers into the “national plan”, “provincial plan” and “help plan” to improve the professional level of rural teachers.

Rural kindergarten also can learn advanced experience from other kindergartens and improve the level of kindergarten teachers by dispatching teachers to go out for
further study [5], holding various forms of professional skills competitions in kindergartens, creating a common learning environment.

**Strengthen cooperation between family and kindergarten**

It’s kindergartens’ important work to propagating scientific conception, providing reasonable suggestions for family education. Kindergarten teachers should raise awareness of home-based co-education. Because of the main educators for preschool children in rural areas have low degree and outdated concepts, preschool teachers can though the parents’ meeting, parent-child activities and invite parents to watch audio-visual program and so on, improve the recognition of the rural parents’ educational opinions.

**CONCLUSION**

Enhancing the quality of rural preschool education is a long-term process. The support from the whole society plays an important role in improving the level of rural preschool education. By means of strengthening the government’s investment, supervision and management, the management level and kindergarten teachers’ professional ability can be increased. Accompanied with updating the parent education notion and guiding them to participation in the process of rural early childhood education, the quality of rural early childhood education could be improved.

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