

# Fundamental Research of Migrant Children's Education

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**Abstract:** *With the continuous advancement of urbanization in China, the phenomenon of "family migration" of rural population to the city is becoming more and more common, and the education of floating children has become a focus issue. In order to further study the problem of migrant children's education, the basic research on migrant children's education has been carried out, including three aspects: First, the research status, by means of literature research, the research status of migrant children's education is analyzed from both foreign and domestic aspects, so as to determine the starting point of the research of this topic. The second is related theories, which reveal the correlation between research topics and existing theoretical frameworks, including social exclusion theory, public goods theory, educational equity theory and service-oriented government theory. The third is the policy combing, which provides guidance for the formulation of education policies for migrant children, respectively from the embryonic stage, the initial stage, the running-in stage and the promotion stage.*

**Keywords:** *Migrant Children's Education; Fundamental Research; Research Status; Related Theories; Policy Sorting*

## 1. Introduction

In the process of rapid industrialization and urbanization in China, a large number of surplus rural labor force rushes to the city, and the scale of the young floating population that flows into the city from the countryside is growing day by day. In addition, under the policy background of deepening the reform of the national household registration system, the large-scale floating population structure began to develop in the direction of family, and the phenomenon of floating population becoming family appeared in the society. More and more children are moving into cities with their parents, known as "floating children", also known as "migrant children" or "children of migrant workers". A large number of migrant children appear, and various problems of migrant children's unfair education become increasingly prominent [1]. In many cities, migrant workers cannot get registered permanent residence because of the high threshold, and it is difficult for their children to get equal qualifications for school. This not only produces a large group of left-behind children in rural areas, bringing negative impacts on their academic performance, physical and mental health and other aspects, but also leads to very limited opportunities and quality of education for migrant children in cities, which directly changes the migration and employment decisions of parents as labor forces, and is not beneficial to the optimal allocation of labor resources. Therefore, the education of migrant children is not only a problem that the government pays close attention to and urgently needs to solve, but also an unavoidable and important issue in the academic research. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to carry out this research.

## 2. Research Status

By means of literature research, the current research situation of migrant children's education is analyzed from both foreign and domestic aspects, so as to determine the starting point of this research.

### 2.1 Foreign Research Status Analysis

Due to the early completion of urbanization in developed countries and regions such as Europe and the United States, and different national conditions and systems from China, there are relatively few

research results on the education of migrant children, and the literatures that can be consulted are mainly educational policies or social integration. According to the research of Angela E. Arzubia and Silvia C. Noguera et al., migrant children (migrant children) are mainly from developing countries. Not all migrant children are treated the same, and middle-class immigrant families are more welcome in immigrant countries. In addition, factors such as the class level, educational level and income of parents will affect the flow path of migrant children. Some discriminatory policies against migrant population will also deepen the gap between migrant children and local residents. Fowler-Finn pointed out that in areas with a high proportion of migrant children, schools have to spend a lot of time and energy to solve the transfer of migrant students, which has a bad impact on the teaching quality of schools. Moreover, the dropout rate of students in schools with a high proportion of migrant children is also higher than that of local children. This situation is similar to that in Japan. Due to language barrier, inconsistent living habits and different races, some immigrant children often choose to drop out of school because they cannot keep up with the progress of school courses, resulting in a high dropout rate of immigrant children.

## **2.2 Domestic Research Status Analysis**

Scholars have studied the education of migrant children in China from the perspectives of pedagogy, public policy, demography and sociology, among which pedagogy and public policy are the most important. The research dimension mainly includes three aspects: Liu Xuedong and Chen Guoqing et al. explained the unfair performance of migrant children's education. Although some migrant children can successfully study in public schools in migrant areas, they are often discriminated against and treated unfairly by local classmates, and they are marginalized in life and study. Over time, migrant children have more psychological feelings of inadaptation. Pang Xiaoxiao believes that the family education of migrant children has a weak awareness of family education, simple family education methods, and educational ideas and methods are mostly derived from the experience of the previous generation, which leads to a lack of patience in education, a one-sided view that education is a unilateral matter of the school, and neglect the cultivation of physical and mental health and moral quality. Thirdly, Tang Kaifu analyzed and summarized the problems of migrant children's lack of self-awareness in social integration from the surface, middle and deep levels, and the discrimination of individual teachers and students in communication, which had adverse effects on migrant children's social integration.

## **3. Correlation Theory**

Theory is the summary and induction of practice, and the theoretical basis reveals the relevance of the research topic with the existing theoretical framework. This topic belongs to the applied research, need some basic theoretical basis to ensure the scientific research.

### **3.1 Social Exclusion Theory**

Social exclusion refers to the process or state in which certain social members or social groups are excluded from the mainstream social relationship network to a certain extent and cannot obtain proper social resources such as economic, political and public services [2]. These include labor markets, housing markets, schooling, health care, formal and informal social networks, urban infrastructure and social protection. As a vulnerable group in the society, the children of migrant workers have been subjected to various social exclusion. The enrollment problem is the result of the interweaving of institutional and economic social exclusion [3]. As a prominent manifestation of institutional social exclusion, the household registration system is the main obstacle for the children of migrant workers to enter urban public schools.

### **3.2 Public Goods Theory**

Public goods are those that are non-exclusive and non-competitive in consumption. The characteristic of public goods is that the consumption of public goods by one person does not reduce the consumption of the same product by others, nor can it exclude the consumption of the same product by others. Therefore, the supply of public goods is usually undertaken by the government to protect the public interests of the society. According to the theory of public goods, the government can determine which goods and services to provide to meet the needs of society. According to the theory of public goods, the compulsory education of the children of migrant workers should be paid by the local

government, not only because the local government has better economic conditions, but also because most of the migrant workers are economically underdeveloped areas. More importantly, migrant workers have played a role in promoting the local economic development [4].

### **3.3 Educational Equity Theory**

The theory of equity in education has two meanings [5]: One is to ensure that individuals receive education regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, and other factors. Second, establish minimum standards to ensure universal education coverage. In addition, educational equity runs through the whole process of education, including access to education, the process of receiving education and the final result of education. In any of these aspects the educated should be equal and should not be treated differently. All of these aspects of education should be equal, and should not be treated differently. The protection of migrant children's right to education involves the realization of the right to equal enrollment, the right to equal assistance during school and the right to equal education, and the relevant system construction should follow the theory of educational equity [6]. Resource sharing is a convenient and effective way to realize the fair distribution of resources, and it is a kind of conformal development mode, which can quickly solve the problem of the quality of education for the children of migrant workers.

### **3.4 Service-oriented Government Theory**

The service-oriented government theory is a modern governance concept, which emphasizes that the government should aim at providing high-quality public services and take the needs and interests of the public as its primary task. The theory holds that the government should change its functions from the traditional management to service, so as to realize the modernization, science and democratization of government services. The core of service-oriented government theory is "people-oriented", that is, the government should be guided by the needs and interests of the public and provide public services that meet the needs of the public. It is necessary to speed up the construction of a service-oriented government and improve the public service system. For the education of migrant children, especially the migrant children in the compulsory education stage, a service-oriented government can provide a perfect social security system, so that public services are not "absent".

## **4. Policy Sorting**

Education policy is a political party and a country in order to achieve the goals and tasks of education development in a certain historical period, according to the basic tasks and basic policies of the country in a certain historical period, formulated on education action standards. Education policies for migrant children refer to a series of policies and regulations promulgated by the state to ensure that migrant children enjoy compulsory education according to law, and ensure that migrant children enjoy the same educational opportunities as urban children of the same age.

### **4.1 Embryonic Stage: 1990-2000**

The main characteristics of China's floating population at this stage are as follows: First, the scale of population flow is relatively small. Due to the influence of the early household registration system, the population movement between regions was not significant. Second, the floating population is dominated by young male laborers in rural areas. In the traditional rural concept, men are the breadwinners of the family, while women mainly bear the responsibility of caring for the family. Third, family migration is rare. Therefore, the problem of migrant children's education is not prominent at this stage.

The Implementation Rules of the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, promulgated in 1992, is the first policy concerning the compulsory education of migrant children: "School-age children and adolescents who receive compulsory education in a non-domicile place may apply for loan study in accordance with the relevant provisions of the people's government of their place of residence upon the approval of the county education department or the township people's government in the place of domicile" [7].

The Measures for Schooling of school-age Children and Adolescents among the Urban Floating Population (Trial Implementation), issued in 1996, show that the state has recognized the problems

faced by migrant children in entering schools and has launched policy exploration. The original intention of the policy is to control the outflow of children, and some policy provisions require school-age children to receive compulsory education mainly in the place of residence, and collect loan fees for migrant children who need to study in the place of residence because there is no guardianship condition. The policy provides legal protection for migrant children to attend school in the destination.

The Interim Measures for Schooling of Migrant Children and Adolescents issued in 1998 pointed out that the governments of the places of migration should create conditions for migrant children and adolescents to receive compulsory education opportunities. The education department of the destination should bear the specific management responsibility of migrant children receiving compulsory education. The government of the place of permanent residence of migrant children and the government of the place of migration should cooperate with each other and jointly do a good job of migrant children receiving compulsory education. Parents or other guardians of migrant children shall apply to nearby primary and secondary schools in accordance with the relevant regulations of the local government and the administrative department of education, and go through the borrowing procedures after obtaining the consent of the school.

#### ***4.2 Initial Stage: 2001-2010***

At this stage, China's population flow presents a new feature: first, the increase of female migrant workers in cities. As the economy diversified and traditional thinking changed, women began to leave the countryside to seek employment opportunities in the cities. Second, the trend of the floating population becoming a family is becoming increasingly significant. Family migration became a new form of population migration during this period, and the number of children accompanying them increased. However, due to the restrictions of the household registration system and the education system, migrant children cannot enjoy the normal right of compulsory education.

The Program for the Development of Chinese Children (2001-2010), promulgated in 2001, proposes to actively yet prudently advance the reform of the household registration system and the social security system, and gradually incorporate the floating population into local economic and social development plans. The problem of schooling for migrant children should be solved by focusing on local government management and full-time public primary and secondary schools. Measures shall be formulated for migrant children to take entrance examinations in their places of residence after compulsory education is implemented. We will accelerate the construction of rural boarding schools and give priority to meeting the housing needs of left-behind children.

The Opinions of The State Council on Solving the Problem of Migrant Workers issued in 2006 pointed out that the governments of the destination countries should assume the responsibility for the compulsory education of the children of migrant workers living with them, incorporate the compulsory education of migrant workers' children into the local education development plan, include it in the education budget, and enroll migrant workers' children mainly in full-time public primary and secondary schools. The governments of the destination areas shall provide support and guidance to the private schools entrusted with compulsory education for the children of migrant workers in terms of school funding and teacher training, so as to improve the quality of school running.

#### ***4.3 Run-in Stage: 2011-2018***

At this stage, the scale of China's population flow continues to expand, and the number of urban migrant children increases rapidly. Due to the concept of government policy change and the emergence of the new generation of farmers, the floating population has a stronger sense of rights protection and a clearer desire to integrate into the city. Not only that, the local governments have begun to realize the role of migrant workers in urban development and construction, and local residents have begun to accept and affirm them.

The Program for the Development of Chinese Children (2011-2020), promulgated in 2011, ensures equal access to compulsory education for migrant children, and focuses on the management of local governments and full-time public primary and secondary schools to solve the problem of schooling for migrant children. We will formulate and implement measures for migrant children to take entrance examinations in their places of residence. We will accelerate the construction of rural boarding schools and give priority to meeting the housing needs of left-behind children. A registration system for migrant children under the age of 16 has been established to provide a foundation for migrant children to enjoy public services such as education and medical care.

The 13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Education promulgated in 2017 promotes the integrated development of urban and rural compulsory education in counties, promotes the standardization of urban and rural compulsory education public schools, achieves full coverage of financial assistance for students from poor families, and guarantees equal rights to education for groups such as poor families, disabled children, children of migrant workers in cities, and left-behind children. We will further improve the policies and measures for the children of migrant workers to study and study in the places where they live, improve the service system, and implement more humane and refined service policies.

#### **4.4 Promotion Stage: 2019-2024**

At this stage, the floating population began to show new characteristics: First, the cultural and educational level of the floating population improved, rural graduates began to migrate for work in order to increase family income and pursue a better life, and even high intellectuals tended to migrate to big cities with their families in order to pursue better development space and quality of life, or to provide a better educational environment for their children. Second, the quality of the floating population has generally improved, and some migrants have settled in cities and received better moral and legal education.

China's Education Modernization 2035, issued in 2019, pointed out that the level of equality of compulsory education should be improved, a long-term mechanism for school standardization construction should be established, and balanced development of compulsory education in urban and rural areas should be promoted. On the basis of achieving the basic balance of compulsory education in counties, we will further promote high-quality balance. We will promote the integration of school benefits for children of migrant workers into cities, and expand the supply of urban degrees in an orderly manner. We will improve the examination system for children of floating population studying in different places. We will provide targeted assistance to disadvantaged groups, improve the financial aid system for students from poor families, and promote targeted poverty alleviation through education.

The Program for the Development of Chinese Children (2021-2030), promulgated in 2021, points out that the reform of the household registration system should be deepened, the mechanism for providing basic public services based on the residence permit as the carrier and the length of residence and other conditions should be improved, basic public services should be equalized among permanent urban residents, and children should be guaranteed equal access to basic public services such as education and health care. It is necessary to improve the community management service network of migrant children's families, enhance professional service capabilities, and promote the integration of migrant children and their families into the community.

## **5. Conclusions**

Along with the irreversible historical process of a large number of rural surplus labor force entering the city, the huge scale of migrant children contains a huge demand for education. How to meet the huge educational needs of migrant children has become a difficult problem in the process of urbanization in our country, which has aroused widespread concern and great attention from the whole society. This research provides theoretical support for the state and government to rethink the top-level design and formulate relevant policies, and provides relevant governance suggestions for the government and society to solve the problem of migrant children's education.

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