

Characteristics of Chinese Farmer Education From 1949 to 1956

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Abstract

The farmer education exhibits different characteristics in different historical stages. It is a special period from 1949 to 1956 connecting between the preceding and the following in the history of new China. Under the new historical conditions, farmer education destroys the old and establishes the new, showing a new era characterized by the specific performance of “five”: Education system beginning to move toward standardization, more extensive educated object, education content tending to be more practical, more flexible learning system, education process tending to be unbalanced.

Key words: From 1949 to 1956; China; Farmer education; Characteristics

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INTRODUCTION

Why to educate farmers and how to educate the farmer is a major problem that the proletariat political party generally needs to solve after seizing power. It is not only a historical extension of the mobilization of the peasant revolution in the revolutionary period, but also the inevitable requirement of the ruling party to consolidate political power under the new historical conditions. At the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, new China is in the critical period from New

Democracy to socialism and getting into all-round socialist construction, each career undone. New national conditions and new history make the farmers's education lie at the crossroads how to develop. Therefore, from 1949 to 1956, it has become a new Chinese history, which is not only inherited the tradition of the farmer education in the period of revolution, but also a special historical period of the first stage of the education of the farmers in the ruling period. In the “iconoclastic” characteristics of the times, farmer education in the education system, education object, educational content, learning system and education process has undergone tremendous changes.

1. EDUCATION SYSTEM BEGAN TO MOVE TOWARD STANDARDIZATION

Before the founding of the PRC, whether it is in the war of resistance against Japan, or during the war of liberation, Chinese Communist Party and its leadership of the government's policy of the farmer education is still flexible and practical, but due to the impact of the war, and did not make the standardized provisions of farmer education. After the founding of the country, on the basis of the experience of farmer education from the revolutionary base, the party and the government put the farmer education into a standardized schedule. On December 21, 1950, the Ministry of Education issued “the instruction on developing farmer amateur education”. The instruction “required to strive for conditions that gradually transform the farmers seasonal part-time learning (winter school) to perennial amateur learning.” It

provided that the farmer amateur education should be mainly based on the literacy culture, and cooperate with the current policy education and production, health education. The amateur school was divided into elementary class (group) and senior class (group). The junior class was the literacy, and the senior class required basically to reach the equivalent of high school graduation degree. The students completed the prescribed courses after passing the examination, and issued graduation

certificate. This diploma is equivalent to the primary school and senior school diploma. In general, teachers should implement the policy of farmer education that uses the people to educate the people, and call for the mobilization of all literate people to make the masses of teachers, to teach people to read as their glorious task. The leader of farmer amateur education is the Education Department of the people's governments at all levels, and the relevant departments assist. (Central Institute of Education Science, 1978, p.31)

This "instruction" firstly proposes to establish the farmer amateur school, and make a clear provision for the farmer education from learning requirements, education content, textbooks, teachers, students, funds and so on after the founding of the PRC to carry out a more comprehensive plan, opening the farmer education system of the formal construction for the first time.

In order to ensure the orderly conduct of the farmer education, the party and the government also set up the mechanism of farmer education. On November 1, 1949, the Ministry of education of the Central People's Government was established under the department of social education and the committee on the literacy movement. On November 15, 1952, the committee on the elimination of illiteracy was established. This is firstly specially to deal with the united institutions of the rural education since the founding of the new China. On November 18, 1954, the Central Commission for literacy was merged with the Ministry of education to make it more focused. On March 15, 1956, the National Association for the eradication of illiteracy was established, required to have the association's branch or branch of the organization all over the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities, counties, townships and villages, and more than the county established the office of literacy association. The establishment of these organizations strengthens the party and government leadership and the organization of farmer education.

In addition, under the guidance of the "instructions", the farmer education sets up a relatively complete system of education and makes more detailed provisions from the curriculum, teaching funds, teachers, teaching evaluation and so on. For example, in the standard of education, in 1953, the committee on the elimination of illiteracy proposed farmers should know 1,000 commonly used Chinese characters, read popular books, and can write commonly used notes, receipts and so on (Ibid., p.93). By 1956, "the decision on eliminating illiteracy" will improve the literacy standards of farmers to 1,500 words (Ibid., p.160) and proposed the appropriate incentives for outstanding teachers and the masses.

Although in some places, due to the degree of emphasis, some systems have not been implemented. But anyway, the party and government in the early days of the founding of China firstly make a relatively complete implementation of the policy and training system for the farmer education, and has taken the first step towards the transformation of the standardization.

2. THE OBJECT OF EDUCATION IS MORE WIDE

Farmer education is not only the need to consolidate the rule, but also the performance and requirements of the progress of the farmers. At the beginning of the founding of new China, the party and the government put the farmer political and cultural turn over in the first place, and winter school, after-hours school for adults and literacy group in all parts of the country were established to carry out extensive and large-scale farmer education activities. In 1950, to join the farmer education of students in 23.138 million people, the number of literacy in 1949 was 0.657million people, and increased to 1.372 million people. The literacy rate was 5.9%. In 1956, the number of farmer education increased to 51.426 million people, and the number of literacy was 7.434 million people. The literacy rate rose to 14.5% (Jiang, 1995, p.8). Among them, the object of education is the majority of rural people, especially in rural areas of young adults. Speaking nationally, the number of students to participate in the farmer education is relatively larger and wider. As follows:

(a) Wide regional distribution. In the early days of the founding of China, the farmer education movement in all parts of the country are carried out, such as Hebei, Beijing, Shandong, Shanxi and so on, the farmers have continuously enrolled, and the object of education is distributed widely throughout all corners of the country. According to incomplete statistics, in several regions of North, Northeast and East China, in 1949, the winter school that had 21,3481 were established, and reached an unprecedented scale (Jiang, 1999, p.37).

(b) Wide learning schedule. Regardless of windy and rainy, day and night, and hardships, the broad masses of farmers get up early, stay up late, and use slack time to go to the winter school and spare-time school for adults. Regardless of learning effect, from the time, the farmer learning schedule is relatively wide.

(c) Wide range of age. Students age levels are not neat, husband and wife, father and son, father and daughter, mother and son, mother and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law learn together, small to children under five years old, big to men over sixty years old, but most of them are given priority to with young adults.

(d) Wide work in the industry category. In the early days of the founding of China, although the object of farmer education is the majority of farmers, but they who are engaged in the industry category all over the first, second and third industry is very wide. Among them, it is the main body to engage in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, avocation and fishery.

3. EDUCATION CONTENT TENDS TO BE MORE PRACTICAL

After the founding of new China, the recovery and development of production have become the main task at that time. Therefore, the content of education should be adapted to it. To this end, the party and the government combine learning with production to arrange the content of farmer education, so that the two help each other forward.

(a) In the policy, it requires that the practical application of education content should be strongly promoted. On May 1, 1950, Qian Junrui, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of education in the first issue of the "people's education" published "the current construction of education policy", and pointed out that "serving the workers and farmers and serving the construction of production are currently implementing the center guidelines of new democratism education. Out of this policy, we will have a bias, and it will make mistakes" (Qian, 1950, p.8). In August 1954, the first national farmer amateur cultural education conference was held, and thought "in the future, the farmer amateur cultural education must be closely integrated with the rural cooperative movement and the development of agricultural production" (Central Institute of Education Science, 1978, p.110). These policies reflect the party and the government's determination to combine education with production to develop.

(b) In practice, the content of education should be combined with production. The party and the government according to the needs of the production of the farmer to arrange the farmer learning content, like the use of pesticides and fertilizers, breeding, cultivation techniques, rural finance and accounting, the management of rural undertakings and other production knowledge and technology, mobilize the masses to discuss the production, make use of the knowledge, and improve the enthusiasm of the farmer. In 1953, in West Zhang Geng village of Shanxi Province, the agricultural technology study group was established, which compiled the agricultural science and technology knowledge into the farmer easy to learn the notes, such as planting cotton technology, controlling pest, making granular fertilizer, learning to drive the tractor and so on. Among them, 90 students have mastered the cultivation of cotton and controlling pest technology, there are 42 students to learn with insecticide syrup, and 22 students as the tractor (Zhu, 2003, p.100). At the same time, due to the seasonal nature of agricultural production, the party and the government combined with the production rule in rural areas, making use of the farmer leisure time to study, doing it that both study and production will not be delayed, so that farmers continue to grasp the cultural knowledge and science and technology.

4. LEARNING SYSTEM IS MORE FLEXIBLE

As a part of adult education, the farmer education is different from general ordinary education. Its education object has a certain job and life experience, economic responsibility and working adult. On-the-job, amateur and adult are the essential characteristic of farmer education. This decides that the farmer education must be flexible and changeable in the form of organization and teaching methods, and can not engage in "one size fits all". "This is the reason we often take the training of flexibility, creativity, character, spontaneity and consciousness as a means of learning goals for our farmer living situation." (Zdarzil, 2001, p.101) In fact, the social background in the early days of the founding of the country, the social conditions at that time, and the object that it faces, decided that the study method and teaching content of the farmer education must be flexible. In the curriculum arrangement, it is not only to take into account the current production, but also to ensure the learning needs; not only the curriculum is rich, but also can not be too much, too heavy, and also need to maintain the appropriate scalability. In the curriculum objectives, it is not only necessary to maintain the national unity, but also to pay attention to different places to differential treatment. In the teaching content, it is not only to adhere to the principle of combining learning with production, but also to pay attention to use the farmer dialect to write the teaching material for education. In Xiyang county of Shanxi Province, 45 villages according to the actual situation of villages make up the farmer "textbook on recording work points and literacy". The content of the textbook related to the farmer production and life, such as his own name, name of the village, cloth, needle and thread, digital, bowls, chopsticks and so on, satisfies the needs of the farmer, and is easy to be understand. In the village of Zhong Si Le, Li Chunlan and other eight people in twenty days, study two hours a day, and have learned 143 new words (Anonymous, 1956, p.8). In the learning form, it ensure that the farmers are "not busy to learn more, more busy to learn less, too busy to learn one", and take some flexible and varied learning models, such as package including the education and learning, group cooperation and so on. In the teaching method, it requires the theory with the actual parties to cooperate with each other, makes use of science, library, visit, lectures and other methods to teach, expands the contents of the farmer learning, and then improves their learning interest.

5. EDUCATION PROCESS TENDS TO BE UNBALANCED

China is a large country with a large population and vast geopolitical, and economic, political, and cultural

development of the country is extremely uneven. Farmer education is complex, each region is different, and differences in farmer education also varies. As follows:

(a) Regional differences. After the founding of the new China, the differences in the country's new and old liberated areas are more obvious. Compared with the old liberated areas, the farmer education campaign has just begun in the new liberated areas, aspects of its educational development speed, level, scale, penetration, popularity and other aspects are still lagging behind in the old liberated areas. Later, although the party and the government make the different education policies to promote the development of farmer education in the new and old liberated areas, but overall, the new liberated areas is still lagging behind the old liberated areas.

(b) Age and gender differences. Due to different age and gender, the attitude of farmers to education is also not identical. Young adults learn relatively quickly, women learn to be slower, and the elderly and children are more difficult. If young people, women, the elderly and children together in teaching will lead to care for this and lose that. The loss outweighs the gain.

(c) Differences in policy implementation. After the founding of the new China, the farmer education was not at the same pace. Due to the flexibility of farmer education policy, because of the degree of attention of the party and government are different, different enforcement presents a different development model. Due to the flexibility of farmer education policy, the local farmer education will show a different development model because of the different degrees of the party and government's attention, and the different intensities of the implementation. For example, at the beginning of the founding of China, under the party and the government's attention, some places have introduced the corresponding policies, vigorously promote and development of a series of systems, thus promoting the development of the farmer education. The results are outstanding. On the contrary, some education departments pay little attention to the extent of the system, and almost does not develop a learning system, which has caused the poor performance of the implementation of farmer education and affects the farmer education developed. The results are not ideal. Visibly, the actual effect of the different implementation of the policies caused a big gap.

(d) Differences in education form. Because the development of rural areas is not balanced, the production

situation and the degree of organization in different regions are different, which determines the form of education and learning style of the farmer education at the beginning of the founding of the new China can not be forced to be consistent, stereotyped. At the same time, the party and the government according to the different level of development in rural areas, for the better conditions of rural areas, it can form a perennial spare-time school for adults, and develop the formal education. For conditions in general or relatively poor rural areas, it is based on local circumstances and conditions that take the form of concentrated study, or take the form of seasonal learn dispersed.

CONCLUSION

In short, it is due to the different farmer education in the new and old liberated areas, the differences in economic conditions gave rise to the differences of learning forms, gender, age, and the implementation, resulting in a different model of development in the process of rural education, which is implemented in the early days of the new China throughout the farmer's education process.

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