Problems Existing in Balanced Development of Preschool Education in YN Province and Countermeasures

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Abstract. Preschool education is a fundamental security for improving the quality and efficiency of compulsory education. In particular, preschool education has attracted extensive social concern and achieved significant development since the Outline of Direction for Preschool Education was issued and implemented. However, the difference in economic development level fundamentally limits the development of preschool education. Based on analysis on general situation of preschool education in YN Province, it is found by author of the paper that such problems exist in preschool education of YN Province as low enrolment rate and unreasonable teacher structure. Suggestions are proposed for countermeasures for such problems to provide theoretical support and direction for the development of preschool education.

Introduction

Education is the foundation of the people’s wellbeing, while preschool education is an important part of basic education. Preschool education is an important part of realizing educational equity concerning hope of the country and the future of the nation. Vigorous development of preschool education is of great significance for subsequent study and lifetime development of children as well as high-quality and high-level popularization of nine-year compulsory education.

General Trend of Preschool Educational Development in YN Province

YN provincial government upholds the preschool running mode “directed by government school running and led by school running of social powers”. With a multivariate preschool running mechanism, it has developed the multivariate preschool layout with coexistence of public, social-funded and private (joint-stock) preschools.

In particular, YN has issued a series of policies including Three-Year Action Plan for Preschool Education of YN Province (2010–2013), specifying the development scale, objectives and teacher staffing. In 2012, Regulations on Preschool Education of YN Province was issued which offered special regulations on such hot issues as the duties of different levels of governmental departments for preschool educational development, fund input in preschool education, difficulty in admission to kindergartens and primary school-orientation. The development of school education has won policy support.

Basic Situation of Preschool Education in YN Province

In recent years, preschool education in YN Province has achieved great development, which plays a considerable role in improving the enrollment rate of preschool children and the people’s quality.

In 2009 before the Three-Year Action Plan for Preschool Education of YN Province (2010 – 2013) was implemented, YN Province had 3,381 kindergartens. During the period covered by the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, the number of kindergartens was increased from 4,257 in 2011 to 6,540 in 2015, the number of teaching staff for preschool education was increased from 54,400 in 2011 to 81,500 in 2015, and the number of children in preschool was increased from 1,085,900 in 2011 to 1,294,000 in 2015.
Teaching Staff Structure of Preschool Education

From 2013 to 2015 the number of teachers of kindergartens throughout YN Province fluctuated, while the number of fulltime teachers increased stably for three years consecutively, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of teaching staff for preschool education of YN Province.

(10,000 persons, %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Teaching Staff</th>
<th>Fulltime Teachers</th>
<th>Increase %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of teaching staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Including: teachers of private kindergartens</td>
<td>Increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>9.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be concluded from the statistics of the above table that in terms of teacher team structure, YN Province is increasingly emphasizing the quality and ability of teacher team and more tends to employ specialized teachers, while the increase of fulltime teachers indicates the increase in the number of specialized preschool teachers. Since 2011, a series of policies have been issued including Implementation Comments on Outline of Medium and Long-Term Planning for Educational Reform and Development of YN Province (2010 – 2020). With continuous strengthening of the team of preschool teachers, the increase in number will definitely lead to improvement of quality as there are a sufficient number of candidates for selection of preschool teachers and the space for kindergarten choice is improved, from the limited number of candidates in the beginning to selection from a large number now. It significantly improves the general quality of teacher team to some extent.

Teacher-Student Ratio of Preschool Education

The Ministry of Education issued Standard for Teacher Staffing of Kindergartens (Tentative). It is specified in the Standard that in order to standardize the employment behaviors of various kindergartens, the ratio of teaching staff and children shall be 1:5 ~ 1:7 for newly established fulltime kindergartens and the existing fulltime kindergartens shall meet the requirement of the Standard step by step in three years. The teacher-student ratio for preschool education of YN Province from 2013 to 2015 is respectively 1:29.66, 1:27.9 and 1:26.4. The teacher-student ratio has been improve year by year, but there is still a large gap from the requirement of the Ministry of Education and the construction of teacher team needs to be further strengthened.

Present Situation of Technical Position Structure of Fulltime Teachers for Preschool Education

According to the data statistics in 2013, 2014 and 2015 Statistical Abstract of Educational Undertaking of YN issued by the Department of Education of YN, the total number of teachers in school for preschool education was 40,100, 44,700 and 49,000 (including the number of teachers in private kindergartens) respectively in 2013, 2014 and 2015, respectively including 25,900, 28,600 and 31,600 fulltime teachers. According to the data, the level of technical title of fulltime teachers is low, with the number of teachers not rated accounting for 62.8%, 63.49% and 64.4% of the total number of fulltime teachers respectively from 2013 to 2015, almost more than a half of fulltime teachers are not rated.
**Problems Existing in Preschool Educational Development in YN Province**

Presently preschool education is still a weak part for the development of educational undertaking of YN Province, with insufficient total quantity of educational resources in general. In particular, preschool education in different prefectures, cities and regions of YN Province is still “the weakest of weaknesses”, with balanced development to be improved.

**Preschool Enrollment Rate Is to Be Improved**

Regulations on Preschool Education of YN Province was issued in 2012 and the first three-year action plan for preschool education was successfully fulfilled. YN Province totally got specialized central fund of 2.543 billion yuan for preschool education, the provincial input was 336 million yuan, 2,093 kindergartens were built from idle schoolhouses in rural areas, affiliated kindergartens were built for 3,120 primary schools in rural areas, 2,509 urban kindergartens and inclusive kindergartens were built and children in poverty of 272,600 persons (times) were aided for enrollment in kindergartens, with the problem of “difficulty and expensiveness of kindergarten admission” solved effectively. Educational scale was rapidly expanded, but there is still a significant gap among different regions in terms of preschool educational development and gross preschool enrollment rate is still low.

**Awareness and Management of Local Government Is Insufficient for Development of Preschool Education**

Some local governments of YN Province have insufficient awareness of preschool educational development and unsound management, leading to the phenomena of no development plan, no special fund and no teaching staff establishment for preschool education in some areas. Local governments didn’t sufficiently recognize the importance of preschool education, and didn’t place preschool education at an equally important position with compulsory education, senior middle school education and vocational education, with insufficient input, management and care for preschool education. Some local governments even didn’t take preschool education into urban-rural development plan, establish special fund for preschool educational development or take teaching staff establishment, cultivation and training for preschool education into plan. They still implemented natural elimination and depletion and enriched the teaching staff by transferring teachers from primary school.

**Teacher Structure and Level Is Unreasonable, Insufficient in Number and Quality to Be Improved**

Unstable teacher team has long been an important factor making it difficult for preschool running and improvement of teaching quality in border regions. It is found from analysis of statistical data that the greatest problem in unbalanced development of teacher team is that the structure of educational level and technical position of fulltime teachers is severely unreasonable and the teacher team structure is extremely unreasonable, educational level is low, more than a half of fulltime teachers are not appraised for professional titles and the number of teachers is severely insufficient, leading to excessively large class and teacher-student ratio beyond standard in both public and private kindergartens. The Standard for Teaching Staff Establishment of Public Kindergartens is not issued yet, there is still a large gap in the number of preschool teachers and public kindergartens is significantly characterized with teacher ageing, female teacher dominance and teacher non-professionalization. Private kindergartens have such problems as difficulty in recruitment, great mobility and low professionalization of teachers, non-standardized school running behaviors of some kindergartens, “primary school orientation” and “baby-sitting orientation”.

**Great Gap Exists between Public and Private Kindergartens**

Presently, the establishment of a large number of private kindergartens in YN Province has complemented the insufficiency of public kindergartens, especially in poor regions, which to some
extent satisfied the demand of local children for preschool education. However, there is still a significant gap between public and private kindergartens, especially the gap in terms of teacher and educational quality.

**Suggestions for Countermeasures for Future Balanced Development of Preschool Education in YN Province**

**Insist the Preschool Running Mode Led by Government with Multivariate Participation of Social Powers**

Preschool education is a public welfare undertaking and people’s wellbeing project. Consideration of balanced development of preschool education shall be led by government running, financial input and public teachers with the emphasis put on performance of the demonstration and direction role of urban kindergartens and given priority to accelerating the balanced development and popularization of preschool education in rural areas, thus to provide convenient, nearby, flexible and diverse preschool education service for children and parents. In particular, the balanced development of preschool education must emphasize the leadership of government with the practical situation taken into consideration that YN Province is located on border with underdeveloped economy, inconvenient traffic and dominance of ethnic regions.

**Preschool Education Shall Develop toward Popularization and High Quality**

Enhance comprehensive evaluation work of demonstration kindergartens and actively support inclusive kindergartens. It is to perfect the establishment of special fund for preschool education with the focus placed on support of public preschool education in rural areas in poor rural areas and reward and direction of high-quality private preschool education in downtown areas based on the principles of “rewarding the advanced and supporting the poor”. For children in financial difficulty, multiple forms shall be taken to help them receive preschool education to reflect the public welfare nature and inclusive characteristic of preschool education in terms of fund input.

**Secure Teachers’ Rights and Interests, Improve Teachers’ Treatment**

There is a large gap in the number of preschool teachers and public kindergartens is significantly characterized with teacher ageing, female teacher dominance and teacher non-professionalization. Private kindergartens have such problems as difficulty in recruitment, great mobility and low professionalization of teachers, non-standardized school running behaviors of some kindergartens, “primary school orientation” and “baby-sitting orientation”.

Government shall offer the same treatment to teachers of private and public kindergartens, which will significantly improve the working enthusiasm of teachers of private kindergartens. It shall try to narrow the gap in treatment between public and private kindergartens, secure the position and treatment for teachers of preschool education pursuant to law and practically maintain the rights and interests of preschool teachers. By so doing it is to enable preschool teachers to have equal rights with primary school teachers in terms of advanced appraisal, professional title appraisal and employment and social security. In addition, the government shall perfect social security systems for preschool teaching staff including endowment insurance, medical insurance and unemployment insurance, and practically secure the rights and interests of preschool teachers in rural areas.

To sum up, as a pilot province for the national “reform on measures and systems of exploring government preschool running and encouraging social powers for preschool running”, YN Province must insist public welfare and inclusiveness, trying to establish a public service system of preschool education covering both urban and rural areas with reasonable layout to secure basic high-quality preschool education for school-age children; it must insist the leadership of government, participation of social powers and simultaneous development of public and private preschool education. By so doing it is to provide powerful policy support for rapid, healthy and scientific development of preschool education, thus to gradually realize balanced development of preschool education.
References


