

# Reflections on Women's Education in Southwest China from the Perspective of Poverty Alleviation

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**Abstract:** From ancient times to the present, China's "women's education" has continuously developed and changed, but its connotation is in the same continuous line. As half of human beings, women play an irreplaceable role in social life with their peculiar piety and passion. In our country, especially in the southwest region, women's education still faces more prominent problems. How to increase support for women's education in the southwest region, how to change traditional concepts, and a series of issues need to be considered and studied.

## 1. Introduction

2020 is the final year for my country to build a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way, and a year of decisive victory for poverty alleviation. A well-off society in an all-round way is not just a success in a certain field, but a balanced development in all aspects of economy, politics, ecology, education, etc. Since the founding of New China, my country's literacy education achievements have attracted worldwide attention, but there is still a big gap in the level of education development in the eastern and western regions. Sichuan, Chongqing, Shaanxi and other provinces and cities are leaders in education in the western region, and the level of education in other western regions needs to be improved, especially women's education. Some ethnic minorities in the western region are affected by topography, concepts, religions, etc., and pay little attention to the education of girls and women. Yueyue Shen emphasized at the second executive committee meeting of the 12th All-China Women's Federation: "Unite and mobilize women to play a half-sky role in building a well-off society in an all-round way." Therefore, to win the battle against poverty, we must attach great importance to women's education. Based on the historical evolution of the thought and practice of "women's education" in our country, this article demonstrates the importance of women's education, and analyzes the reasons for the lack of women's education in the southwest region, and then comes up with effective and feasible solutions.

## 2. The Germination and Development of the Thought of "Women's Education" in Ancient My Country.

From the matrilineal clan to the patrilineal clan, the thought of "women's education" in ancient my country has evolved with the development of the times, but the connotation is the same. "Women's education" in ancient times did not pursue equal education power with men like modern women's education, but was relative to the "ritual" education under the dominant position of men. These include virtue, wisdom, beauty, labor, motherhood, etc. Such a "women's education" thought can be traced back to the pre-Qin period. Since the pre-Qin period, the education of women has been significantly different from that of men. The main goal of women's education is to train women to be "good wives and mothers". [1] "The Book of Songs•Daya•Mian" says, "Ancient father and father, come to go on horseback. To rate the Western Water Margin, as for Qixia. Yan and Jiang Nv come to Xuyu." "Jiang Nu" is the concubine of the ancient public and the father and the eldest daughter of the Jiang family of the plains. Since the Jiang surnamed woman can be included in the "Book of Songs", she must be different and may have participated in the planning of the ethnic group Meritorious. We can infer from the side that in the era of "The Book of Songs", the woman surnamed Jiang was definitely not a person without virtue and talent, but a good education.

“Women who are obedient to women follow their uncles and aunts and those who live in the room; and then become husbands.” [2] reveals the requirements for women from the perspective of feudal ethical marriage. During the Han and Tang Dynasties, women had a higher status and a more developed economy, and women received a relatively high level of education. Due to the influence of Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming Dynasties, the society as a whole had particularly harsh requirements for women. In terms of women’s chastity, Cheng Yi’s proposal of “saving nature and destroying human desires”, Cheng Yi believes: “Whoever takes one to match one's body, if one is taken to match one's body, it is one's own failure.” Can a lone widow who is poor and untrustworthy be able to remarry?’ Said: ‘It's just that later generations are afraid of the cold and starve to death, so it is said. However, starvation is very small, but it is very bad!’ [3] In the Ming Dynasty, textbooks for women's family education were popular, such as “Precepts for Women”, “Internal Training”, and “Book of Goodness”. Among them, Liu's “Female Fan Jie Lu” has a greater impact, which emphasizes that women should pay attention to the education of their children [4]. It is not difficult to see that in the early days of society, men and women had the concept of inequality. With the development of history, even if women were restrained by the ethics and education that maintained the social ruling order and general rules, people's education for women was highly valued.

### **3. The Historical Evolution of Women's Education in Modern China.**

As half of human beings, women play an irreplaceable role in social life with their peculiar piety and passion. [5] At any time, the education level of women is always related to their social status. In China, women’s education was put into practice in the true sense after the Opium War. Western missionaries came to China with the establishment of the treaty system and established schools and preached. As one of the first five trading cities, Ningbo took the lead in establishing a girls' school in 1844, which was called “Ningbo Girls' School” in history. [6] With the implementation of the Reform Movement of 1898, the society has changed drastically, and the exchange of ideas between China and the West has become more in-depth. The ideas of gender equality and women's liberation have entered China. Women's education has gradually been put on the agenda of social reform, the new Chinese women's education came into being. In 1903, Zhang Zhidong and others included women's education in family education when they drafted the “Articles of the Zouding School”. This was the first time that the government explicitly mentioned women's education. In 1913 (the second year of the Republic of China) the American Church and the Christ Church jointly established the first women's university in China-Jinling Women's University. Later, Peking Union Women's University and Fujian South China Women's University were established. Since then, some people of insight in China have realized the importance of education to the revitalization of China, and women's education has received further attention. In March 1907, the Qing government promulgated the “Regulations of Women's Primary School” and “Regulations of Women's Normal School”, which was the beginning of the inclusion of Chinese women's education in the education system. [7] In the May Fourth New Culture Movement, at the end of 1916, Cai Yuanpei became the president of Peking University. The following year, Peking University first imposed a female ban and recruited 9 female auditors.

In 1926, the KMT and the Communist Party jointly organized the Women's Movement Training Institute, with He Xiangning as the director. In the same year, the Women's Movement Training Institute was founded and Deng Yingchao was the director. In 1927, Mao Zedong opened the first evening school for women and workers in Xinquan Township, Liancheng, Fujian. In 1932, the Central Soviet District, the revolutionary base area, founded the provincial “March 8th” Women's Vocational School, and organized women's half-day schools, cram schools, literacy classes, and training classes for women cadres. In 1939, the Communist Party of China founded Yan'an Women's University in Yan'an.

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the “Common Program” with the nature of the provisional constitution and the 1954 Constitution clearly stipulated that women enjoy equal rights with men in cultural education. According to the actual situation, the government has specially set up nursing schools, nursery teachers, secondary vocational schools, and various

professional training classes to recruit girls in accordance with women's own characteristics and work needs. After the reform and opening up, with the continuous advancement of the socialist rule of law, the constitutional principle of equality between men and women has been effectively implemented, and women's right to education has been more effectively protected by laws and policies. Education legislation such as the 1986 “Compulsory Education Law” and the 1995 “Education Law” stipulates that men and women have equal rights to education. In 1992, the state formulated and implemented the “Women's Rights Protection Law” and set up a special chapter to clarify the cultural and educational rights enjoyed by women. Since 1995, the three issues of the “Program for the Development of Chinese Women” promulgated and implemented by the State Council have all put education as one of the priority areas to promote gender equality, and put forward specific goals, strategies and measures on how to thoroughly implement the basic national policy of gender equality in the education field. [8] At the same time, the government is also vigorously developing adult education for women and improving the quality of working women. Girls in various adult schools and amateur schools account for about 50% of the total number of students. (See Table I)

Table I Girls in Various Adult Schools and Amateur Schools

The proportion of female students, female faculty and staff in various school education in China from 1951 to 1989 Unit:%												
category year s	Institutions of higher learning		Secondary technical school		Secondary normal colleges		General middle school		Agricultural Middle School Vocational Middle School		primary school	
	School girl	Female faculty	School girl	Female faculty	School girl	Female faculty	School girl	Female faculty	School girl	Female faculty	School girl	Female faculty
1951	22.5	12.6	31.9	11.0	26.0	8.1	25.6	10.6	-	-	28.0	18.4
1956	25.9	18.1	27.7	16.8	27.7	13.2	26.9	15.6	-	-	33.4	18.8
1960	24.5	20.8	31.8	21.7	31.3	21.7	31.2	18.2	-	-	39.1	27.7
1965	26.9	20.6	37.8	-	48.6	-	32.2	22.7	23.6	-	35.0	32.3
1975	32.6	24.4	34.4	-	34.4	-	38.3	24.1	-	-	45.2	36.3
1980	23.4	25.3	37.4	28.5	26.0	21.9	39.6	24.8	32.7	13.7	44.6	37.1
1986	31.6	35.3	42.9	35.6	45.5	35.3	40.7	27.7	43.4	26.5	45.1	38.5
1989	33.7	28.7	45.4	36.7	-	-	41.4	30.7	44.5	30.4	45.9	42.6

Engels once said: “The degree of women's liberation is an important sign of social civilization; and women's liberation depends on the development of women's education.” The history of women's education in modern China shows that fighting for women's education to enjoy equal rights with men is an important condition for the development of women's education. Even though women's education in today's society is constantly moving forward with the improvement of human civilization, economic development and scientific progress, the development of women's education is still unbalanced on a global scale. Developing women's education and improving its quality is still a long-term and arduous task that requires unremitting efforts from all sides.

#### 4. The Significance of Women's Education Research on the Road to Poverty Alleviation.

Chairman Mao once said: “Women can hold up half the sky.” Women are the creators of material civilization and spiritual civilization, and they are an important force to promote social development and progress. Without women, there would be no human beings and no society. [9] 2020 is the year of decisive victory in the fight against poverty and the final year of building a well-off society in an all-round way. We will lift all rural poor people out of poverty under current standards and achieve the poverty reduction goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ahead of schedule. To get rid of poverty among the rural poor is the most arduous task for building a well-off society in an all-round way. We must give full play to the constructive power of women in

building a well-off society in an all-round way, liberate women from the concept of inequality and out of poverty. Indeed, women's poverty not only affects their own development, but may also affect the development of their children because of the intergenerational transmission of poverty, which in turn affects the sustainable development of the entire society. [10]

There is a Chinese saying: "When you look at your child, you should look at your mother first." It can be seen that mothers have a very profound and long-lasting influence on their children. Women hold the task of nurturing the next generation, and the quality of women will directly affect the next generation, and thus the future of the country. Since the founding of the People's Republic of my country, the Chinese government has attached great importance to improving women's political, economic and social status. The Constitution and the Compulsory Education Law provide for equality between men and women, and protect women's right to education in law. Many aspects and fields of social life have created good conditions for women's development and education. [11]

Of course, "women" can refer to both married women and can also be a general term for women. [12] In my country's women's education, girls' education is equally important. Since the 1980s, the issue of girls' education in my country has attracted attention. Girls' education research has been carried out in the western region in the form of projects and experiments, To a large extent, relying on the combination of the support of the outside world and project funds and the attention of leaders at all levels have made the rapid development of girls' education in individual areas and project experimental sites. However, the Achilles' heel of this "foreign aid-based" development model lies in its small scope of action, and a good state of development is difficult to sustain. Once the project is over and the researchers are withdrawn, no one will go to the experimental site again, and the experience gained from the research will be put on the shelf. The project leader also turned to other research. [13]

Poverty alleviation must first help the wisdom. To support the wisdom, the prerequisite is to develop a good education. On the road to poverty alleviation, especially in the southwest, an area with complex terrain, relatively backward economy, and relatively inconvenient transportation in some areas, if we neglect the education of girls and women and rely solely on state and government subsidies, then it can only be a short-term poverty alleviation, and it cannot achieve poverty alleviation in the true sense. It is better to teach people how to fish than to teach people how to fish. Only by paying enough attention to and vigorously developing education and letting people get rid of poverty can they get rid of real poverty.

## **5. Comparison of Women's Education in Different Regions of Our Country and Analysis of the Reasons.**

With the rapid economic and social development of our country, education is showing an imbalance. The education level in the eastern region is significantly higher than that in the western region. In the southwest region, the education level of Sichuan and Chongqing is significantly higher than other provinces and cities in the southwest region. my country has a vast territory and a large population. Under the influence of multiple factors such as nature and humanities, the problem of uneven regional economic development is prominent. This has led to great differences in the level of education development between the east and the west in my country. Under the influence of the feudal patriarchal ideology of our country for more than two thousand years, women's hearts were stamped with obedience and low self-esteem. These psychological characteristics are also obstacles to the development of women's education.

The eastern region is mostly plain and coastal, with superior geographical location, convenient transportation, diverse transportation methods, and frequent exchanges with the outside world. People are more receptive to new ideas, and their concepts are more open. The southwestern region is mostly mountainous, large mountains and inland, which is relatively closed. Many people have difficulty getting the opportunity to communicate with the outside world. People's ability to take the initiative to accept new ideas and new information is weak, and their ideas and concepts are relatively conservative.

In the process of educational development, the improvement of educational conditions in the

western region has not kept up with the need for scale expansion, and the gap with the eastern and central regions is widening. The main problems in western education are insufficient funding, poor educational conditions, and low levels of education. The eastern region is backed by a large number of colleges and universities with strong talents, such as Tsinghua University, Peking University, Fudan University, Zhejiang University and Xiamen University. The enrollment rate of children is basically stable every year. Almost all children, regardless of gender, can enjoy nine years of compulsory education from birth. People's educational concept is generally more open. Accordingly, women have a higher level of education, basically achieving equality between men and women in education. There are relatively few colleges and universities in the western region with serious brain drain and scarce educational resources.

The eastern region has been influenced by Confucian culture for a long time, and the educational concepts are relatively consistent. In the southwest region, there are many ethnic minorities and are greatly influenced by religious concepts. It is difficult for deep-rooted ideological concepts to form a unified standard. People are deeply ingrained in traditional concepts such as "Women without talent is virtue". Especially in areas such as Yunnan and Tibet, where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, the notion that men are superior to women has been passed on for thousands of years and it is difficult to change. In addition, there is a large income gap between the east and the west. Many parents in the southwest have a conservative view. They believe that the investment in education is large and the return time is long. They simply believe that girls should be treated as labor rather than education. It is precisely because of the influence of many factors that the education level of women in the east and the west is quite different, and the situation of women's education is still severe. At present, women's education is still a weak link on the road to poverty alleviation. The focus and difficulty of poverty alleviation lies in the southwest region. Only by developing education and equal education can we solve poverty from the "root" and drive prosperity.

At the two sessions in 2019, poverty alleviation has once again become a hot spot for people across the country, especially for women's education in poor areas in the southwest. In such a situation, we must not only be based on the present, achieve the great goal of a comprehensive well-off with quality and quantity, but also have a long-term vision. Combining with the actual situation in the southwest region and constantly changing ideas based on changes in the main contradictions, we will overcome the "hard bones" that are difficult to overcome in the fight against poverty and establish a long-term mechanism for women's education.

## **6. Exploring the Long-Term Mechanism of Women's Education in the Fight Against Poverty.**

(1)The state continues to increase investment in compulsory education in the southwest region.

The quality of compulsory education is related to the healthy growth of hundreds of millions of children, the development of the country, and the future of the nation. In order to thoroughly implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the deployment of the National Education Conference, accelerate the modernization of education, build an education power, and run education that satisfies the people, it is necessary to implement the fundamental task of establishing morality, establish a scientific view of education quality, deepen reforms, and cultivate newcomers of the era who are responsible for the comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical education, and art. In view of the special education situation in Southwest China, the duration of compulsory education should be appropriately increased. For example, 12 years of compulsory education should be implemented to ensure that children in poor areas can enjoy the right to receive education.

(2)Actively play the role of women's federations

All-China Women's Federation is the bridge and tie between the Communist Party of China and the People's Government to connect with the masses of women, and is one of the important social pillars of the People's Republic of China. On the one hand, the Women's Federation should give full play to the advanced advantages of group organizations, vigorously promote the "Women's Rights Protection Law" and other laws and policies that protect women's rights, so that women in ethnic

minority areas who have a weak awareness of rights are aware of the rights granted by the state. On the other hand, various women's activities have been extensively carried out to give them a strong sense of participation and gain, and enhance self-confidence.

(3) Specific analysis of specific issues and appropriate adjustment of the syllabus

According to the different levels of education development in different areas of Southwest China, appropriately adjust the teaching content of ethnic minority areas. and respect the native culture of ethnic minorities, and develop diversified teaching methods based on the national culture.

(4) Protect women's rights and provide appropriate subsidies.

Poverty alleviation cannot be confined to the present, nor can it be simply aiding poverty alleviation. Real poverty alleviation should be long-term poverty alleviation, and fundamentally improve the level of women's education. Not only test "capital" but also rely on "wisdom." To guarantee women's equal right to education, students who want to continue their studies in poor families can be given corresponding subsidies according to the situation.

(5) Increase investment in faculty and infrastructure

With the rapid development of science and technology, teaching methods have shown diversified characteristics, and teaching tools and methods have become more and more abundant. This requires teachers to master cutting-edge teaching tool skills and proficiently master various teaching tools. Not only that, but you also need to be hard-working yourself. It is equally important to strengthen the training of teachers' professional quality, improve teachers' professional ability, and use diverse teaching methods to make students understandable.

(6) Change of concept

The southwest region is mostly inhabited by ethnic minorities, and there is still a large number of backward concepts of "women without talent is virtue". Even women in some areas do not go to school when they are born and enter society directly. This leads to a generally low quality of women, which in turn will affect the education level of the next generation. Research shows that the enrollment rate of women in the southwest is much lower than that of men, and the dropout rate of girls is higher than that of men. This requires us to actively guide and change our minds.

(7) Actively guide religion to adapt to the socialist society

In the southwest, especially in Tibet, most people believe in Tibetan Buddhism. They have been bound by the three major lords and traditional religions for a long time, so that more than 95% of women had not received any education before peaceful liberation. They repeat the traditional, simple and boring life year after year. This kind of numb life not only confines their thinking, but also restricts all their lives. Under the influence of such a long-term restraining thinking, it is difficult to change such a thinking in a short time. Therefore, it is necessary to actively guide the integration of religion and socialist society to make sinicization of religion.. [14]

(8) Establish counterpart assistance targets and learn from advanced experience at home and abroad

On January 15, 2018, the Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council of the Ministry of Education issued the "Implementation Plan for Educational Poverty Alleviation in Deep Poverty Areas (2018-2020)". Among them, it emphasizes that the implementation of popularization and poverty alleviation actions for the "three regions and three states", through concentrated learning, "one-on-one" mutual help and mutual learning, etc., strengthen the training and awareness of the national common language and writing of the grassroots cadres in the "three regions and three states" Application ability training. Such a "one-to-one" assistance model is worth learning from the education and teaching in poverty-stricken areas. Through the establishment of such a assistance model, precise policies can be implemented and the efficiency of poverty alleviation improved. At the same time, women's education first originated from abroad. The rise and development of modern women's education has gone through hundreds of years of history, and is closely related to the historical process of the women's liberation movement and the democratization and popularization of education. Judging from the distribution of major research institutions, the institutions that conduct research on rural women's education abroad are mostly universities. The top five high-yield academic institutions are the University of London (UK, 28 articles), the

University of California System (US, 20 articles), Johns Hopkins University (US, 15 articles), and Harvard University (US, 13 Chapter) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (United Kingdom, Chapter 13). . It can be seen that the academic institutions of the United States and the United Kingdom have an absolute right to speak in this research field. [15] We can fully develop domestic women's education based on the actual situation in the southwest region, learn from the advanced experience of foreign countries, and use me as the mainstay.

## 7. Conclusion

In short, women are not only beneficiaries of poverty eradication, but also participants and contributors. If women do not get rid of poverty, it will be impossible for humans to eradicate poverty. Women's education is particularly important at the critical moment of our decisive victory in a well-off society. The true development of women's education can never be accomplished overnight. We need our long-term persistence and continuous improvement of relevant mechanisms. All parties work together to build a long-term mechanism for women's education.

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