

The Development Trend of the Non-governmental Higher Education in China

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Abstract: In more than 30 years after China's reform and opening to the outside world the non-governmental higher education has developed dramatically and enjoyed more and more favorable conditions, making great contributions to the popularization of higher education in China. According to the definition that "The non-governmental higher education is a major growth point for development of educational career and an important driving force in promoting educational reform", quoting from The planning outline on the national medium and long-term educational reform and development (The Planning Outline for short) issued in 2010 by China's State Council, China has launched policies of greatly supporting the non-governmental higher education and designed the reform goals of the government as the main body of education, with the active participation of the whole society, and the mutual development of the governmental and non-governmental higher education. Soon afterwards, the nation has started the move of the non-governmental educational system, and positively explored the management of classification of profit and non-profit non-governmental educational institutions. Thus, the development of the Chinese non-governmental institutions of higher learning has been greatly influenced because of the policies and relevant practices. With the opening of the 18th national congress and the political direction mentioned in the report as "encouraging and guiding social organizations to initiate education", the pace of development of the non-governmental institutions of higher learning will be accelerated and some new development trends will become clearer.

Keywords: China's reform; higher education; non-governmental higher education

1. Standard Development being the Mainstream

Chinese non-governmental higher education develops with the market economy, under the background of the popularization of the higher education and the lack of enough public educational resources, so, at the premier stage of its development, the nation doesn't make many interventions and limitations and the development is in chaos and a free condition. With the prosperity of higher education in China, the chance development is inappropriate and the standard development will become the mainstream for building the first-class non-governmental institutions. And the reform of educational mechanism will be the turning point.

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In the national educational conference 2013, Yuan Guiren, minister of China's education, noted that this year China would put forward to enact suggestions of supporting the development of the non-governmental institutions, manage the profitable and non-profitable private schools separately, get rid of all discriminate policies towards private education and encourage social organizations to develop education. In order to realize the goal, the first thing is to provide favorable policies and institutional environment, eliminate all the discriminations and worries in terms of non-governmental education, include all problems and solutions into policies, and use the policy to lead a healthy development of the non-governmental education. In fact, the standard development of the classified management of profitable and non-profitable private education is not only an affirmation of the profitable private education, it can also create conditions for the development of non-profitable private education and pave the way for promoting the favorable development of the whole non-governmental education.

2. Connotative Development Becoming Inevitable

Although it is only about 30 years since the renaissance of China's non-governmental higher education, it has made great progress in both of its quantity and infrastructure, and satisfied the demand of education and educational popularization. It's said that non-governmental higher education, on the aspect of merely meeting the demand of quantity in higher learning, has become a specific task in a certain historical period, and this specific task has been basically achieved.

With the implementation of the basic construction in the early development of the non-governmental higher education, the core of its further development has changed as well. The Planning Outline has explicitly stipulated on this subject in the statement which is "to support the innovative system and mechanism and education mode of private schools, improve private schools' quality, and build a group of high-standard private schools with striking characteristics." This stipulation has clearly pointed out that the important target of developing private institutions is to improve its quantity. Such a policy functions as the role of guidance, and it's easy to reach a consensus and form a mainstream trend.

It is well known that quantity is the lifeline of higher education, and education without quantity is just like a soulless body. As an important part of the cause of the higher education, the private institutions also need to be based on the long-term strategy, and for survival and further development its emphasis should be turned to the improvement of the quality and changed from the extensive development to the high-quality education. From now on, the connotative development with high quality as the core will become the main trend of developing private institutions. Sort management is a major measure to promote the quality of the private

institutions, and it will also help to quickly realize the target of promoting and improving the quality.

3. Survival of the Fittest Becoming a Trend

In 2011, private institutions inherited the development trend in “the 11th Five-Year Plan” and kept growing. There were altogether 698 private institutions (including 309 independent colleges), increased by 22 than last year, and they enrolled about 1,537,300 new students, increased by 6990. The number of the students at school reached 5,050,700, increased by 283,800.¹ However, in the fierce market competition, due to factors such as educational goals, theories and orientations, some superior private institutions have prospered and some inferior ones perished. In 2011, five private institutions including Jilin Huaqiao Foreign Languages Institute competed with some public institutions, and awarded the right to grant master’s degree because of their excellent educational quality and services. This is the first time for China’s private institutions to obtain the qualifications to educate masters. The systematical innovation and breakthrough will greatly expand the strategic place for the development of private education. It is not only recognition of the high quality of the private education, but also an implication that China’s private education will have a greater improvement in educational level. Meanwhile, some other private institutions are gradually shrinking and even coming to an end. A few of the private institutions are charged to stop running.

This trend of survival of the fittest will be strengthened with the sort management among the private institutions. The public schools and the non-profitable private institutions are different in the subject, but they enjoy the same legal status and treatment, so once the public fiscal fund is distributed to private institutions, their public credibility will be greatly enhanced, and those with good foundations will get more development space. By contrast, the private institutions with weak foundations and no ability to enroll new students will shrink step by step. And even before or in the process of the sort management some private institutions will choose to close.

4. The Mutual Development of Public and Private Institutions Taking Shape

Article 3 of the People’s Republic of China on Promotion of Private Schools issued in 2012 prescribes that private institutions belong to public welfare undertakings and a component part of the cause of socialist education. Hence, private institutions are upgraded from a complementary education to an indispensable component part,

¹ Statistical Bulletin of National Educational Career Development in 2011.

having an equal position with its state-run counterparts from a legal perspective and realizing the status transition in the cause of China's education. Soon after, the private institutions enjoy a rapid growth, and by 2011 the number of private institutions had increased to 698, occupying 29% of total higher schools. The students studying in private institutions amounted to 5,050,700, occupying 22% of the overall university students. Private institutions, in quantitative terms, have accounted for about one third of the entire higher education in China.

Moreover, both of the Planning Outline and the report to the 18th National Congress of the CPC have given the private institutions, from the planning of educational development, different strategic positions, and further indicated its important status in the entire national educational system. It is obvious that China will try her best to promote education hereafter through policy bias in private schools, explore and reform the existing issues in managerial system and operational mechanism of higher education through the management of private schools, realize educational diversification through developing private schools, and eventually complete the upgrading and promotion in quality and system of higher education.

The situation and experience of foreign higher educational development have also testified that the improvement of higher education can not depend on government support only. It's an absolute principle of the development of higher education to form a proper system in which the government takes the lead with the active participation of all the social sectors and the mutual development of both the public and private schools.

5. High Standard Private Institutions Coming Forth

With the policy that China will support some of the higher institutions in the establishment of world-class and high-standard universities, the goal of the reform and development of China's higher education has been focused on the founding of the world-class and high-standard universities, which also provides a good opportunity for the private institutions to develop themselves and become high-standard. "To support the innovative system and mechanism and education mode of private schools, improve private schools' quality, and build a group of high-standard private schools with striking characteristics" as stated in The Planning Outline shows that the establishment of high-standard private institutions has been brought into the blue print of national education, and the founding of high-standard private institutions has become the inevitable trend for the private education to develop.

Sort management among private institutions is a very important move in the establishment of high-standard private institutions. It will clear the hindrance and

provide as many chances as possible for the private institutions to develop. It will also improve the development environment of the private institutions, deepen the system reform, optimize the policy-making system, explore the supporting policies and measures, and finally clear away all the barriers and push on the development of the private institution. At last, we can take a bold perspective for the future that since the non-profitable private institutions use all the money in educational end, focus on internal improvement, emphasize the standardization of management and high-quality of development; they will earn more favorable policies and supporting measures in the sort management. And with the help of government and their own internal improvement, they will lead the way in the establishment of the high-standard private institution and become models in the Chinese private institutions.