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Adjustment Strategy of Compulsory Education School Layout in Tibet: Taking Changdu Area as an Example

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Abstract

It is found through survey that students, parents and teachers in Changdu area of Tibet are ambivalent about school layout adjustment, as follows. Most of students prefer to attend a day school, while they don't object boarding. More than half of parents support to integrate teaching sites, but more than one third of parents object. More than half of teachers are for boarding, but a lot of teachers' attitude are noncommittal even explicitly opposed to the student boarding. Moreover, the factors such as the local terrain characteristics, traffic characteristics, the characteristics of production and life style, water and electricity in poor supply and teacher shortage restrict the compulsory education school layout adjustment. Therefore, the local government about school layout adjustment should adhere to the following strategies, such as scientific planning and sustainable development, collect most parents' advices and suggestions, keep and restore the necessary teaching sites, set standards for school construction, strengthen teachers team construction and improve the quality of school education, more government spending and encourage various forms of running a school.

Key words: Tibet; Compulsory education; School layout; Attitude; Restriction factors; strategy

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INTRODUCTION

The problems of school layout adjustment in compulsory education of Changdu area faced with, generally exist in Tibet and western minority areas. The adjustment strategy should be taken by compulsory education school layout in Changdu region of Tibet, has a reference value for the whole Tibetan region even for the western minority areas. Therefore we take Changdu area as an example to research related issues about the Tibetan area's compulsory education school layout adjustment.

According to people's attitude towards related issues about school layout adjustment and the local actual situation, this research will discuss the adjustment strategy of compulsory education school layout in Tibet region, in order to offer reference for people.

1. PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE TO SCHOOL LAYOUT ADJUSTMENT

1.1 Most of Students Prefer to Attend a Day School, While They Don't Object Boarding

School layout adjustment of compulsory education in Changdu area of Tibet has a most direct influence on the local students. Through the preparation of effective survey data, students' basic situation is found as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 obviously reflects that students of compulsory education phase living in the county are more frequently to

Table 1
Cross Table of Home Address * How Often to Home

	Once a day	How often to home				Aggregate	
		Once a week	Once half a month	Once a month	Once a semester		
Home address	county	117	34	4	1	165	
	village and town	61	52	17	24	213	
	Agricultural and pastoral area	82	133	30	33	363	
aggregate		260	119	51	58	153	741

go home than that of students from the villages and towns and pastoral areas. And the frequency of going home to the students from the villages and towns is distributed in “U” type, and the pastoral areas of the students’ home frequency are once a week at most, the second is once a semester. You can see that the students’ home address more directly affect the frequency of back home.

And Table 2 intuitively reflects the stage of compulsory

education students regardless of whether they prefer to boarding school or attending a day school mostly has a favorable view of boarding in Changdu area of Tibet. In preference for day school students, only 21.1% of the students to be vague or disapprove of boarding, 78.9% of the students are for boarding.

Through analyzing the data from the questionnaire, the ideal school layout most students prefer is possible to

Table 2
Choice of Boarding or Attending a Day School*Attitude on Boarding

Boarding	Choice for boarding or attending a day school		Percent	
	Attending a day school			
Attitude on boarding	Totally object	2	12	2.0
	Object	3	19	3.2
	Noncommittal	25	84	15.9
	Support	85	310	57.7
	Totally support	41	104	21.2
aggregate		156	529	100

attend a day school. The actual situation, however, is most students need boarding at school after centralized school sponsoring. But most of them are not extremely against boarding, in another word, they hold an understandable attitude on boarding.

1.2 More Than Half of Parents Support to Integrate Teaching Sites, but More Than One Third of Parents Object

Investigators randomly interview 176 parents whose children drop out of compulsory education school in Changdu area of Tibet. They reflect the biggest change is farther distance from home to school after the adjustment of the school layout, which is the reason some students drop out of school. Through the interview data, we conclude dropouts’ home-school distance and parents’ attitude to streamline to teach (statistical results as shown in Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, among 176 students in the compulsory education stage, approximately 60 students with home-school distance between 0 and 10 kilometers, accounting for about 34%, the rest of the students surveyed with 10 km or more from home to school, and even a few students whose home-school distance is more than 80 kilometers. Farther distance from home to school after school layout adjustment makes part of the students in compulsory education need boarding in school, therefore their families will lack auxiliary labor and increase the additional household spending. And

farther home-school distance increases the traffic risk when students are on the road to school, some parents have to make younger children drop out of school for this purpose.

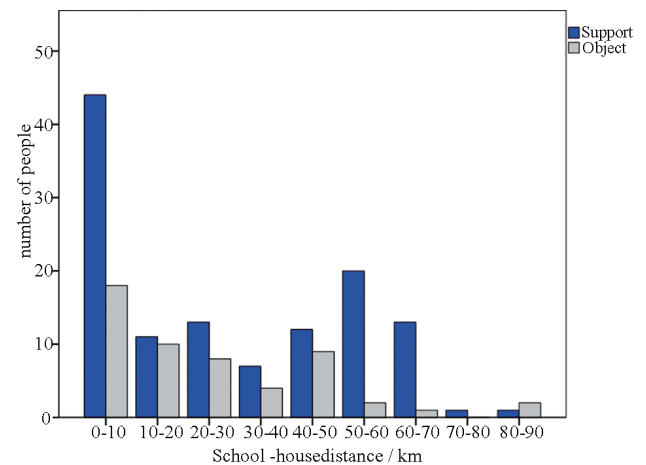


Figure 1
Statistical of Attitude to Integrate Trenching Spot for Distance of Home-School

Table 3 shows that even though after school layout adjustment home-school distance is farther, there are still 69.3% of parents surveyed support removal and close the teaching site near their home, because they think central primary school and middle school’s teaching quality is higher, and the higher quality of teaching can help their

children get much knowledge, are more beneficial to the development of children in the future. However, there are 30.7% of parents opposed to streamline to teach. This is a problem that cannot be ignored.

Table 3
Parents' Attitude to Integrate Trenching Spot

	Frequency	Valid percent
Support	122	69.3
Object	54	30.7
Sum	176	100.0

The ideal school layout parents think is closer to the student's home, and they don't need to worry about their children on the way to school, and the reality of concentrating teaching sites makes them have to worry about two problems, the way to school is remote and dangerous. But parents focus on the school teaching quality which is higher than before, to this effect, so the most of them are in favor of concentrating teaching sites.

1.3 More Than Half of Teachers Are for Boarding, but a Lot of Teachers' Attitude Are Noncommittal Even Explicitly Opposed to the Student Boarding

Questionnaire survey statistics show that among 523 teachers surveyed, 28.3% of them hold an ambiguous attitude to the student boarding, 15.3% of them are in opposition explicitly. This part of the teachers disapprove of students boarding in school in compulsory education stage, the main reason is that boarding is unable to meet the psychological needs of students in compulsory education stage. Compulsory education stage of students are mostly between the ages of 6 to 20 in Tibet Changdu region, these students, especially the younger students are still very attached to parent's love, and boarding can't satisfy their psychological need. Some teachers reflect that some boarding students in weekly diary write to them the depressed mood that they miss mom and dad, but can't usually go home. Some students even drop out of school because of homesickness.

Table 4
Teachers' Attitude to Students Boarding

	Frequency	Valid percent
Extremely unsuitable	10	1.9
Unsuitable	70	13.4
Ambiguous	148	28.3
Suitable	279	53.3
Extremely suitable	16	3.1
Aggregate	523	100.0

Although more than forty percent of the interviewed teachers' attitudes towards students boarding are ambiguous even opposed, but 56.4% of teachers are for it. They think centralized school sponsoring is much beneficial to students. Firstly, they think centralized school sponsoring can gather resources to provide better learning conditions for students. Secondly, they think centralized school sponsoring can gather the human

resources to provide an education with higher quality for students. Finally, centralized education ultimately benefits the students.

The ideal school layout in teachers' minds is students can often contact with their family and enjoy the warmth of the family's love. After centralized school sponsoring, many children who need boarding in school suffer homesickness, but it can give students better learning and living environment and guarantee the school quality of teaching, therefore most of the teachers are in favor of concentration of running a school.

2. THE RESTRICTION FACTORS EFFECTING SCHOOL LAYOUT OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN TIBET CHANGDU AREA

Seeing from the previous survey data analysis, the local students prefer attending a day school, parents don't want the distance from home to school is too far, and teachers hope students can enjoy the warmth of home rather than board at school for a long time, which proves these persons are more inclined to students going to nearby school in emotion. However, from the point of the actual situation in the Changdu area of Tibet, there is a huge difficulty in ensuring all students to nearby school and in removing and centralizing the teaching sites, which are because of the following five restriction factors.

2.1 Terrain Features

A place fit for building compulsory education schools where requires broad, flat and open terrain, is located in the center around the dense population, so as to ensure that students have enough room for learning and activities, and that the ability to serve the large number of the students in compulsory education stage. Changdu area of Tibet is located in the Hengduan Mountains Region with the complex topography, not only relatively open but rough pastoral areas, also a flat but narrow area of the river valley. In general, terrain of the region is characterized by high mountain and deep valley, thus it is difficult to choose a flat and open place where the population is relatively concentrated to build the school in this region.

2.2 Traffic Features

Due to the complex terrain and poor traffic conditions in Changdu area of Tibet, lots of roads are built between the hills. Without traffic way in many rural villages, the villagers can only rely on horse riding or walking to anywhere. Even if a place where roads connecting, because of heavy snow in the winter then roads will become impassable, and hidden risk in safety will increase in the rainy season because of the natural disaster such as landslide and mud-rock flow. If the schools distribute in

each village, thus cost of building school is huge, and in the long-term vision by building teaching spot to ensure most of the students come to the nearby school, the cost is too high. However, if the retention and recovery of parts of necessary teaching spots can not only reduce the cost that students' family and government should take, can also reduce the number of traffic accidents students suffer from or quit school due to far home-school distance.

2.3 Characteristics of Production and Life Style

In Changdu area of Tibet, the main source of economic comes from farming and animal husbandry. With extensive mode of production, economic growth mainly depends on the increase of labor input, so many parents want their children to nearby school so that they can help the family do some farming or grazing after school. Pastoral area is broad, however, the low population density, and in pastoral areas people need to move according to the change of water and grass. These characteristics of production and life cause a large population mobility. Therefore the construction of a relatively concentrated site for teaching is much better to solve the problem of children to school in pastoral areas. Although the population of agriculture is relatively concentrated, but building schools need to occupy the local arable land that is not so much, which will cause certain influence on the local resident's income. Thus in Changdu area of Tibet, the characteristics of people's production and life style determined that there is no way to guarantee all students come to the nearby school in the local school layout adjustment.

2.4 Water and Electricity in Poor Supply

Compulsory education school is mostly located in the densely populated place, therefore it is easy to cause safety problems if the school is not under a great management. In Changdu area of Tibet, however, it is hard to supply sufficient water and electricity in a lot of villages and towns. After concentrated school sponsoring, students with far distance from home to school need board at school. If school isn't convenient to supply water for cooking and washing the dishes or food, it is very easy to cause health problems because the food without clean washing is not health to students. And boarding school students need to go to self-study in the evening, if there is no electricity, the children at school won't go on self-study in the evening. Then the management difficulty for teachers increases and there is a huge hidden trouble in safety without electricity. So, water and electricity in poor supply in Changdu area of Tibet make the certain difficulty in completely centralized education. If scattering the schools, there is no water supply difficulties and students also needn't go to self-study in the evening at school, therefore, power supply won't be a serious problem.

2.5 Teachers Shortage

Teachers shortage in Changdu area of Tibet always exists and in some villages and towns this shortage is even more serious. If establishing numerous teaching sites in order to make students go to nearby learning, thus government not only needs enormous fund input to build these schools but has to send some teachers to teach sites from central school. This measure will make few teachers in a central school and each teacher will take more teaching task. Teachers who are sent to teach sites shift frequently due to the unbearable hard working and living environment, which will have a negative influence on the quality of teaching sites. Thus, the shortage of teachers has it hard to realize the students going to nearby learning.

From the previous situations, in Changdu area of Tibet, there exists a certain difficulty in carrying on absolutely centralized school sponsoring mode or completely scattering the schools. The greatest way is to combine the two modes.

3. STRATEGIES OF SCHOOL LAYOUT IN TIBET

Through the analysis of the people's attitudes towards the adjustment of school layout in Changdu area of Tibet and the constraints of compulsory education school layout, as a writer, I think the following strategies could be taken in the adjustment of school layout in Tibet.

3.1 Scientific Planning and Sustainable Development

The United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization once specially emphasized on that,

when draw up the education plan, we have to consider the population dynamics. Because it contacts to age, gender, the number and distribution in geography of the target population in the education development so educational workers must have the relevant knowledge of statistical methods and principle, and enough understanding of the significance and limitations of it. In terms of quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis of education almost relate to the population, that is to say, relate to the number, the structure, distribution, dynamic and trend of population. (UNESCO, 1985)

Therefore, Tibetan areas should make a more realistic plan in the school layout adjustment according to the school layout of scientific standards to set the number, scale and site of compulsory education schools, in order to provide scientific guidance to the sustainable development of local primary and secondary schools and avoid that the school layout cannot adapt to the future development of the local.

3.2 Collect Most Parents' Advices and Suggestions

According to the origin knowledge, risk and bounded rationality theory from Austrian British economist Hayek, some persons such as Lei Wanpeng etc. put forward that,

knowledge is the basis of the reformation, but knowledge is discrete and scattered in different interest subjects. Reform is just an intellectual adventure. The effective ways to reduce the risk of reform are to establish a wide range of people to participate in and absorbing information mechanism, implementing participation-oriented reform. (Lei & Zhang, 2011)

In the school layout adjustment, government should solicit opinions and suggestion from parents, according to the reaction of the parents to decide the removal of the local teaching school or not, thus not only won the trust and support of parents, also avoid the students dropping out of school caused by far home-school distance after centralized schools.

3.3 Remain and Restore the Necessary Teaching Sites

World bank senior executive expert Sergah Senik in charge of universal education subsidy project said, “the minimum population’s requirements should be satisfied, schools should be close to the settlements. In rural areas, the primary school with several grades in one class and only one classroom is necessary.” (Shi, 2004) American scholar Douglas Lehman, agreed that before the modern development and the rural transportation network being developed, the educational system of the developed countries in the world largely depended on small rural primary school. For instance, the United States had thousands of primary schools with only one teacher, to this day there are still 463 such schools (Shi, 2004). Therefore, despite of the low population density and poor traffic conditions in Tibetan areas, government should also adhere to the principle of fairness. In the remote and inaccessible places or the area where parents don’t agree with removal and combination of teaching sites, it should be permitted to remain and restore the necessary teaching sites.

3.4 Standards Setting for School Construction

In order to gain a good effect in school layout adjustment of Tibet, there should be the basic standards for construction of school buildings, school surroundings and the arrangement of support staff etc. to ensure the quality of school construction.

First of all, it should be clear that teaching sites, central primary school and junior high school students’ coverage standard ought to accord with the trend of local population development or educational demand change during a long period. Secondly, set building construction standards to ensure enough place for teachers and students’ life and learning. To ensure the school running smoothly, it is crucial to equip with such educational resources as necessary books, teaching equipment and support materials. Thirdly, set standards for school environment. Renovate the school surroundings. There should be a strict inspection for the business qualification of internet bars, billiards rooms around school and other inappropriate places for students in compulsory education stage to avoid

a bad effect on students. Finally, the boarding schools need to be equipped with the certain amount of support staff such as life management teachers, security guys, school doctors and cooks etc..

3.5 Strengthen Teachers Team Construction and Improve the Quality of School Education

The United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization says, “The principal goal of the educational system is to reduce the social harm to children who are from the fringes of society and with the disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty and rejection.” (UNESCO international educational development committee, 1996) I realize that to develop education in Tibet and break the vicious cycle of poverty and rejection of the local, the most fundamental steps are to strengthen teachers’ team construction and improve the quality of school education. However, at present our country is using the 2001 standard of teachers matching of primary and secondary school. The standard stipulates that at primary school student-teacher ratio is respectively 19 to 1 in city, 21 to 1 in county and town and 23 to 1 in countryside, at junior high school student-teacher ratio is respectively 13.5 to 1 in city, 16 to 1 in county and town and 18 to 1 in countryside. This standard has the defects of urban priority and inversion of city and countryside (Pang & Han, 2009). To develop the education of Changdu area of Tibet, the first is to increase manning quota of local teachers, especially in rural schools to relieve the work pressure of local teachers. Secondly, the native Tibetan teachers should be developed and trained. Reduce teachers outflow to other places. Ensure the quality and quantity of local teachers. Finally local teachers should be provided funding to enter college for training and further education, constantly improving the level of their teaching theory and teaching skills and broadening their horizons.

3.6 More Government Spending and Encourage Various Forms of Running a School

School layout adjustment is expensive, because many projects require capital investment such as teaching buildings’ construction, desks, teaching tools, multimedia, sports facilities etc. Improving the teachers’ payment also needs money. But the capital investment is required to guarantee the sustainable development of the school layout. Government financial input should take the proportion of above 90% in the money a compulsory public education school in minority areas such as Tibet requires. Government should totally bear the expense that a poor town or village school and teaching sites requires. The primary funds above the county levels should come from the central and provincial financial investment. Absolutely, it is necessary to encourage various modes of running a school as private education, enterprise support of running a school, and universities cooperation in running schools.

CONCLUSION

This research found that students, parents and teachers in Changdu area of Tibet are ambivalent about school layout adjustment, as follows. Most of students prefer to attend a day school, while they don't object boarding. More than half of parents support to integrate teaching sites, but more than one third of parents object. More than half of teachers are for boarding, but a lot of teachers' attitude are noncommittal even explicitly opposed to the student boarding. Moreover, the factors such as the local terrain characteristics, traffic characteristics, the characteristics of production and life style, water and electricity in poor supply and teacher shortage restrict the compulsory education school layout adjustment. Therefore, the local government about school layout adjustment should adhere to the following strategies, such as scientific planning and sustainable development, collect most parents' advices and suggestions, keep and restore the necessary teaching sites, set standards for school construction, strengthen

teachers team construction and improve the quality of school education, more government spending and encourage various forms of running a school.

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