

Reflections on the Research Path of Guizhou Special Education Assisting Rural Revitalization

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Keywords: Special education, rural revitalization, education poverty alleviation

Abstract: The research on the topic of Special Education Facilitating Rural Revitalization actively responds to the aspirations of people with disabilities and their families for equal opportunities to share a better life. It is not only conducive to improving the cultural quality of people with disabilities, accelerating the development of rural areas, but also beneficial for addressing the underlying challenges of education poverty alleviation. Furthermore, it enhances poverty alleviation efficiency, contributing to the comprehensive establishment of a moderately prosperous society. This study builds upon a review of scholars' research findings related to special education, educational poverty alleviation, and rural revitalization. It combines the current perspective of rural revitalization with a focus on the development status of special education in Guizhou and how to integrate education for disabled youth with rural revitalization. The research aims to deeply and systematically explore the theoretical framework for special education supporting rural revitalization, clarifying the research ideas for how Guizhou's special education for young people with disabilities can contribute to rural revitalization.

1. Introduction

The national focus on poverty alleviation includes significant attention to the reform and development of education. Guided by policies such as the "National Medium and Long-term Educational Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)" [1], "Opinions on Implementing the Education Poverty Alleviation Project" [2], and "Implementation Plan for Educational Poverty Alleviation in Deeply Impoverished Areas (2018-2020)" [3], China has achieved historic results in education poverty alleviation. It has played a crucial role in enhancing the social security capabilities of vulnerable groups, promoting educational equity, and improving people's livelihoods, particularly in assisting people with disabilities in the poverty alleviation process. However, it is essential to recognize that the task of poverty alleviation for people with disabilities remains challenging. The foundation of special education for people with disabilities is not yet stable, significantly affecting the effectiveness of poverty alleviation through education.

Under the guidance of the strategic decisions for rural revitalization implemented at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the landscape of education for disabled youth is undergoing significant changes in the new era. There is an increased emphasis on the precision and effectiveness of education for disabled youth, with a focus on integrating poverty alleviation

with supporting aspirations and enhancing intelligence. Disability is one of the main causes of poverty, with over 85 million people with disabilities in China facing the dual challenges of disability and poverty. Education for disabled youth primarily relies on special education, an essential component of China's education system. It serves as a fundamental pathway to promote the comprehensive development of people with disabilities and facilitate their better integration into society.

Education for disabled youth can be considered a crucial and distinctive aspect of precision poverty alleviation in practical education, aligning with the intrinsic requirements of rural revitalization. The concept of rural revitalization was introduced in the later stages of the poverty alleviation campaign, emphasizing its dual role in "serving rural areas" and "contributing back to rural areas." Education for disabled youth plays a vital role in the educational battleground of poverty alleviation, effectively serving rural communities. It can contribute to empowering rural areas and, fundamentally, break the intergenerational transmission of poverty within the context of ongoing rural revitalization. In the post-poverty alleviation era, education for disabled youth, as a significant carrier of China's education-driven poverty alleviation efforts, is increasingly gaining attention from both the national and local levels. Addressing how to fully leverage the role of education for disabled youth in precision poverty alleviation and effectively promoting rural revitalization has become a topic of common concern across various sectors of society.

2. Literature review

In foreign countries, the study of special education has a long history, a rapid development pace, and a wide range of coverage, which holds positive implications for the development of special education in China. From a global perspective, there is a consensus among various countries to focus on researching and analyzing the learning needs of special students and emphasize the individualized teaching approach. Additionally, the practice of regularly releasing educational statistical analyses has become a common approach in developed countries, with the United States and the United Kingdom as representatives. This practice provides education administrative authorities with a basis for understanding the current problems and deficiencies in special education teaching and formulating timely strategies to address them.

In China, the research on special education started relatively late, evolving from the initial replication of the Soviet model of establishing special education schools to the current practice of referencing international experiences in special education reform and development. In the context of research on education-driven poverty alleviation in China, there has been relatively limited exploration from the perspective of special education, and the quantity of research outcomes does not match that of general education. Special education is a crucial component of national education in China and holds significant importance in enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

As international perspectives on special education have been widely introduced, Chinese scholars have begun to conduct in-depth research on special education in various aspects and from different viewpoints. Over the past 30 years, the focus and outcomes of scholarly research in China's special education have exhibited two main characteristics: firstly, the research primarily centers on special education schools and children with special needs, exploring issues related to support systems, teacher training, and other aspects of special education reform; secondly, the research methods predominantly employ case analysis. Starting from the current situation and issues of special education in certain provinces or cities and drawing on foreign experiences, scholars have put forward recommendations for appropriate reforms.

2.1 Current Status of Special Education Research

Several studies have addressed the challenges and development of special education in various regions of China. For instance: Xiaomei Zhang (2018) conducted an analysis of the basic situation of special education in Changchun City. Based on identified issues in the special education support mechanism, recommendations were proposed to establish and improve the special education support mechanism in Changchun City [4]. Xiaojie Yang, Hongxin Chang et al. (2018) conducted a study on the development status of eight special education schools in Qiandongnan Prefecture from 2015 to 2017. They suggested measures such as increasing educational opportunities for children with special needs, enhancing the professional development of the teaching staff, balancing distribution, and increasing financial investment to promote the development of special education schools in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture [5]. Xiaomeng Chen (2016) explored the major issues in the development of special education in Guangdong Province. Recommendations were made in four areas: strengthening basic capacity building, reforming school curriculum and teaching methods, enhancing teacher training, and promoting regional exchange and cooperation [6]. Meng Deng, Xingpeng Peng (2021) proposed that special education schools and inclusive education together constitute the practice path of inclusive education in China. They emphasized the need to improve policy and regulatory construction, strengthen teacher education, build a support system, and share regional practical experiences to promote the future development of inclusive education in China [7]. Zhiyun Guo, Meng Deng (2021) systematically reviewed the 40-year historical evolution process of the development of special education as a profession in China. They pointed out that the core task for the future is to focus on improving the quality of development. Challenges from related fields such as educational rehabilitation and general teacher education were highlighted, and the importance of enhancing the quality of talent training for the future development of special education was emphasized [8]. Renhong Shen, Tao Li (2022) interpreted the basic connotation of high-quality special education development from four aspects: the public welfare universality of the positioning of special education, the balanced development of high quality in the development of special education, the dynamic adaptability of placement in special education, and the comprehensive development of individuals in special education. They emphasized the need to improve the accessibility of special education, promote the continuous development of inclusive education, strengthen the construction of the special education teaching staff, and improve the special education support mechanism as the path for promoting the high-quality development of special education [9]. Meng Deng, Ling Zhang et al. (2023) clarified how the logic route of "strengthening universal development" in China's special education can progress from gradual to accelerated in terms of goals, scope, practice direction, promotion method, and guarantee mechanism [10].

2.2 Current Status of Research on Special Education Assisting Rural Revitalization

With the introduction of the rural revitalization development strategy, domestic scholars in China have intensified their focus on research related to rural revitalization. Simultaneously, the volume of research in this field is continuously expanding.

Heguang Liu (2018) emphasized the importance of "leading rural revitalization through talent cultivation," stating that talent is the fundamental element for development [11]. He stressed that achieving development relies on the construction of a skilled workforce, which is crucial for promoting cultural inheritance. Furthermore, Heguang Liu mentioned the need to effectively implement the rural revitalization strategy by focusing on the three essential elements of "people, land, and money." He conducted in-depth analyses on how implementing the rural revitalization strategy could effectively address the main contradictions that have emerged in China's new stage

of social development. This approach aims to enhance the well-being and satisfaction of the vast rural population, promoting the improvement of the rural policy system. The gradual implementation of the rural revitalization strategy is seen as a crucial step in addressing and resolving issues. Based on this foundation, Huguang Liu provided recommendations on how to better implement the rural revitalization strategy. This included emphasizing the vital role of talent support in rural revitalization, recognizing the importance of various stakeholders in promoting the strategy's implementation, and addressing practical development issues in rural areas. Qizhen Zhu (2018) believes that it is essential to fully "recognize the importance of rural schools and improve the rural education system"[12]. In theoretical terms, the decline of rural areas is equivalent to the decline of rural education. If rural education lags behind, it will directly hinder the true revitalization of rural areas. Yinchuan Yua (2022) pointed out that the government should increase investment in talent and actively cultivate professionals in rural industries, as well as managerial talents [13]. The goal is to strengthen talent revitalization by enhancing the construction of a skilled workforce, thereby aiding rural revitalization and promoting rapid and positive economic and social development.

Liping Yuan, Junxiao Li [14] argue that in the "post-poverty alleviation era," after the absolute poverty has been eliminated, relative poverty will come into focus. New issues, such as the risk of returning to poverty for the poverty-alleviation targets and the impact on the sustainability and stability of poverty governance, pose new challenges to poverty governance. They propose new requirements for poverty governance. The authors provide a clear direction for China's higher education poverty alleviation from the perspectives of policy laws and regulations, the educational poverty alleviation environment, the capacity of education social services, and the responsibility of education poverty alleviation, as well as the dedication spirit of teachers and students. As mentioned by Xiaoqing Zou, Xiang Li [15] current research on education development and rural revitalization mainly focuses on two aspects: "research on the development issues of rural education based on the background of rural revitalization" and "research on how education can help rural revitalization and serve rural revitalization from the perspective of education development." There is relatively rich research on rural education, rural teachers, vocational education, and other aspects under the background of rural revitalization. However, research on the macro-level education serving rural revitalization is limited, and studies on how education can contribute to rural revitalization are still in the early stages. The majority of research is concentrated on the mid-level vocational education and its role in serving rural revitalization. There is limited research on how education services rural revitalization at the macro level. Insights into the high-quality development of education and rural revitalization are beginning to emerge. The authors suggest exploring the practice path of empowering rural revitalization with high-quality education development at the core of "endogenous development" from the dimensions of policy agenda, policy elements, and policy tools.

Overall, foreign research in this field is relatively mature, proposing important theories that highlight the role of education in alleviating poverty and its significance in poverty alleviation. This lays a solid foundation for consolidating efforts in educational poverty alleviation. On the domestic front, scholars tend to focus more on the practical aspects and progress of educational poverty alleviation. Exploring future trends in education development and other related areas remains a frontier issue that urgently needs attention in academia. Research on promoting effective alignment of education policies is relatively scarce, especially considering the strategic transformation of education work after the complete eradication of absolute poverty. There is limited research on how education can strategically transform to contribute to the revitalization of rural talents. While studies related to the impact of special education on poverty alleviation have touched on the effects of policies exploring bottlenecks in rural revitalization in the new era, these studies lack a systematic discussion on special education for disabled youth. Moreover, there is a dearth of

targeted research on adapting to the current development strategies of rural revitalization, particularly with a limited focus on a specific region in the western part of the country. Hence, this study, based on the significant decisions made at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to implement the rural revitalization strategy and the requirements outlined in the 20th Party Congress report to "strengthen the inclusive development of special education," aims to explore the strategies for integrating special education for disabled youth with rural revitalization, particularly from the perspective of special education in Guizhou Province. The goal is to take education's vital role in high-quality development to new heights.

3. Reflection triggered by research

Guizhou Province is located in the remote southwestern mountainous region of China, with 66 key counties for poverty alleviation and 9.23 million registered poor people (as of October 2018). Since 2018, the Guizhou Provincial Party Committee and the Provincial Government have closely followed the decisions and arrangements of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council. They have effectively promoted the targeted assistance for students in poverty through the "1+N" approach of the Provincial Department of Education. They proactively incorporated education for people with disabilities into the "precision poverty alleviation strategic action," ensuring comprehensive implementation of the policy of leaving no one behind, assisting every eligible student, and strictly adhering to the policies of targeted assistance for education in poverty alleviation. They rigorously followed the assistance standards for students at different educational stages, ensuring the smooth enrollment of impoverished students.

Currently, all 77 special education schools in the province provide free compulsory education with waived boarding fees. The advancement of the nutrition meal plan and targeted education assistance from relevant education departments have significantly reduced the living expenses of students. Guizhou has initially formed a special education system with special education schools as the main component, gradually expanding from primary to high school education stages. Their approach to education for poverty alleviation places a stronger emphasis on exploring a comprehensive and systematic system for vocational skills training within the curriculum.

Due to the later development of special education in China, it lags behind the overall education system. The foundation for special education in Guizhou is particularly weak, facing issues such as an incomplete system, insufficient guarantees, and the urgent need to improve quality. Challenges remain in achieving precise, comprehensive, and long-term universal education integration. Therefore, during the critical period of consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation and transitioning to the strategic reform of rural revitalization, it is crucial for Guizhou's special education to navigate opportunities and fully leverage its role as a driving force. This requires in-depth exploration of the precise promotion of rural revitalization through the focal points and long-term mechanisms of special education schools in the context of education for poverty alleviation, contributing to a smooth and effective connection between the two.

The author suggests that for an in-depth and systematic study on how Guizhou's special education contributes to rural revitalization, the primary focus should be on Guizhou's special education schools. The research should analyze and study the current development status of the 77 special education schools in Guizhou. Building on relevant professional theories, the study can center around disabled youth, analyzing the existing issues in promoting rural revitalization through special education for disabled youth and proposing reform suggestions. In practical terms, the research can draw on existing research findings, attempting to integrate theories of "special education," "education for poverty alleviation for disabled youth," and "rural revitalization." After conducting empirical research on the current status of special education in Guizhou, the study can

generalize the unique challenges faced by education for poverty alleviation for special vulnerable groups, conduct a causal analysis, and finally, use social support for rural revitalization as a starting point to integrate various social resources and formulate relevant strategies for promoting rural revitalization through special education for disabled youth in Guizhou.

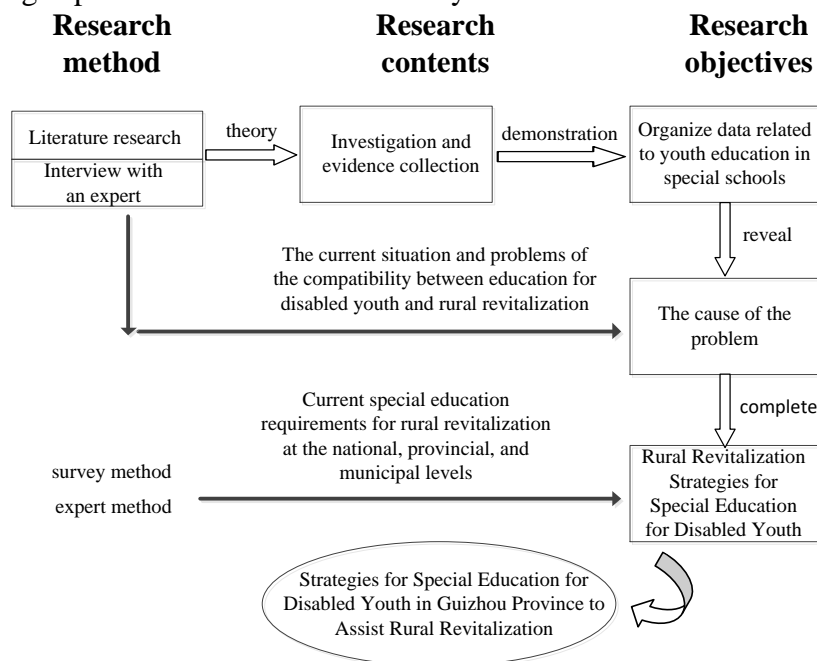


Figure 1: Research Plan for Guizhou Youth Special Education to Assist Rural Revitalization

As illustrated in the research technical roadmap depicted in Figure.1 above, in order to better conduct research on the support of rural revitalization by special education for youth in Guizhou, the author believes that it is essential to primarily employ literature review and expert interviews for in-depth investigation. This involves understanding the current status of youth education in special schools and exploring the alignment and issues between current education for disabled youth and rural revitalization based on the latest firsthand data. Subsequently, it is appropriate to use survey methods and expert consultations to promptly understand the latest policy requirements at the national, provincial, and municipal levels in the field of special education for rural revitalization. This will lead to the formulation of a set of strategies suitable for special education for disabled youth in the context of rural revitalization.

It goes without saying that Guizhou, as a western province highly prioritized in consolidating poverty alleviation efforts, faces crucial issues such as the development of special education and the construction of a special education poverty alleviation system. These issues are expected to be encountered and urgently addressed during the process of consolidating poverty alleviation efforts. Therefore, in the face of the key period of rural revitalization reform and transformative development, continuously strengthening the role of special education for disabled youth, exploring strategies to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty through education, and igniting the intrinsic development motivation of the impoverished special population are of significant practical significance to efficiently promote rural revitalization work. To effectively address the topic of supporting rural revitalization through special education in Guizhou, it is crucial to thoroughly investigate the role of special education in advancing rural revitalization, explore the organic integration of special education and rural revitalization, deeply understand the importance of the educational environment for rural revitalization work, and thereby identify the path and methods to resolve the issue of special education contributing to rural revitalization.

4. Conclusion

Research on the role of special education in rural revitalization must actively respond to the directives of the central party leadership, diligently implement the precise poverty alleviation in education, and solidify the important strategic thoughts of poverty alleviation and rural revitalization. Following the requirements of the "Special Difficulties Group Care Plan," efforts should be directed towards advancing the construction and development of special education schools. The focus should persistently be on strategic assistance, with a supplementary emphasis on spiritual support. Collaboration with local governments, social organizations, research institutions, and businesses is essential to form a collective force that propels the high-quality development of special education. This collaborative effort aims to continuously explore and strive for progress in promoting rural revitalization, vigorously paving the way for the high-quality development of special education in Guizhou. We firmly believe that through the high-quality development of special education, supporting intellectual growth and poverty alleviation, cutting off the intergenerational transmission chain of poverty caused by disabilities, and empowering with high quality will fortify the defenses in the ongoing battle against poverty. This, in turn, is certain to pave the way for a new approach to promoting the development of every individual with disabilities in the context of rural revitalization.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the financial support by Guizhou Province Youth Development Research Project (No: QNYB2357).

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