

China Women's University

The Shadow Report of Chinese Women's NGOs
on the Combined Seventh and Eighth Periodic Report
Submitted by China under Article 18 of the *Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against
Women*

**Equal Right in Education
(Article 10)**

(For public information)

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I. Efforts and Progress

The Chinese government has formulated regulations and policies for the institutional and financial security of girls in access to compulsory education. The *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China* revised in 2006 and the *Outline of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Education Development* promulgated in 2007 also provided an important legal and policy basis to ensure the enrollment of girls. The educational environment for girls has been optimized constantly: First, the national fiscal budget for compulsory education is on the rise, reaching 973.9 billion yuan in 2011 from the 330.5 billion yuan in 2006, an average annual increase of 24.1%; the special fund allocated by the central government for transfer payments for compulsory education also grows at an annual rate of 43.5%. Second, subsidies for poor families in rural areas have been increased. From 2006 to 2011, approximately 600 billion yuan was invested in rural compulsory education restructuring, providing a stable and reliable source of funding for exemption of the tuitions and fees, free textbooks, grants for boarding students from economically disadvantaged families, renovation of dilapidated buildings, etc. In October 2011, the State Council launched a nutrition enhancement program for rural students receiving compulsory education, benefiting about 26 million students in 680 cities and counties. Third, children of migrant workers have their right to education safeguarded. Building schools for children of migrant workers has been included in urban infrastructure planning, with education funding allocated in support. In some areas, scholarships and other means have been adopted to help kids from migrant families with financial difficulties go to school. In 2009, 9.971 million children of migrant workers were learning in primary and secondary schools in the recipient cities, of which 77% and 80% were enrolled in public primary and secondary schools respectively. In 2011, the central government allocated a special fund of 4.568 billion yuan, and conferred awards to local authorities doing a good job in helping migrant workers' children with access to the national compulsory education.

The proportion of women is increasing in all kinds of education at all levels. Girls became outnumbering boys in enrollment since 2006, and the net primary school enrollment rate of school-age boys and girls reached 99.8% in 2011, a guarantee on basic education for girls. Girls accounted for 48.6% and 49.0% of high school students in 2010 and 2011 respectively, indicating a growing number of females engaged in higher education. By 2010, there were 11.351 million girls in colleges and universities, accounting for 50.9% of the total, nearly five times of the number in 2000. In 2010, female graduate and doctoral students accounted for 50.4% and 35.5% respectively.

Channels have been expanded to provide poor women and girls with education and vocational training. The China Children and Teenagers' Fund launched the Spring Bud Program. As of the end of 2013, over 1,200 schools were built up through

funded by the Program, helping more than 2.4 million impoverished girls with their tuition and living expenses while providing technical training for over 400,000 girls. Shaanxi Women's Federation launched the Red Phoenix Project 15 years ago, which so far has funded more than 2,000 poor female undergraduates. The Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women set up a training school for rural women. By organizing scholarship sessions for rural women, by the end of April 2009, a total of 2,679 adolescent girls from poor areas mastered skills to improve their family economy; and by launching the vocational skill training project for young women in poor rural areas, the School engaged 1,774 trainees from 18 ethnic minorities in poor rural areas.

Advocacy campaigns have been rolled out to promote women/gender studies. The ACWF and the Chinese Women's Research Society collaborated with the Party Schools, the research institutes of social sciences and numerous universities to speed up the building of the research and training base on women / gender related issues. By 2013, 32 bases had been established in 16 provincial-level jurisdictions, with regular annual meetings and academic exchange activities held to propel research on women's issues. Emphasis has been put on women / gender related theoretical studies, followed by the relevant courses open to college students. As of the end of 2007, nearly 100 universities developed such courses. The inception of the gender and law website (www.genderandlaw.org.cn) by the Center for Gender and Law Studies, Institute of Law under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences also made a substantial contribution, with 9 universities as its network members providing mandatory courses, elective courses or seminars on the topic "gender and law". As of 2008, 44 M.A. and 11 Ph.D. programs in 30 universities/institutes across China were open to candidates for women / gender related studies, covering eight disciplines, respectively philosophy, economics, literature, history, law, management, education and medical science.

II. Gaps and Challenges

Girls' education still suffers imbalance in regional development, especially girls left behind in the rural areas by their migrant parents face more problems, calling for an urgent need to safeguard the girls' right to education. In the less developed central and western regions, in particular the remote and poor areas, the high secondary school dropout rate remain a notable problem, notably true for left-behind girls. According to the statistics, currently there are 58 million rural children left behind in China, of which girls account for 46.3%. The new *Compulsory Education Law* indeed mitigates the tuition concerns of left-behind girls, but it does not guarantee equal access to quality education throughout the educational process. Studies have shown the drop-out rate increases in and after junior high school period, only 88% of 14-year-old school kids' continue studying in schools, and the majority of school-leavers are girls. Left-behind girls bear a heavier housework and farm work, which will directly or indirectly affect their education, depriving them of their interest in learning and ultimately leading to their dropout from compulsory schooling.

Gender inequality still exists in higher education administration. The percentage of females in high-level university teachers and senior executives remain low. Women's involvement in in-house management is insufficient across colleges and universities. According to the Quality Research on University Chancellors in China conducted in 2006, the proportion of female presidents only accounted for 4.5% in Chinese colleges and universities. In 2007, The survey on the situation of women's leadership of universities directly under the Ministry of Education showed that

females holding principal or appropriate high-level positions only accounted for 7.9% of the total thereof, suggesting the need to enable women to play a bigger role in higher education administration.

Women do not have so much access to lifelong education and vocational training as men do, especially to quality resources. Although the number of women receiving adult and vocational education has increased significantly, it is still a small number compared to men (e.g. women accounted for only 36.6% of the on-job postgraduates in 2010), which to a certain extent curtails women's job promotion and competence enhancement, reducing them to domains at a relatively low professional level. For the time being, neither adult education nor vocational training is gender conscious, hardly taking into account different lifestyles and behavioral attributes between men and women when designing curriculum and training time and venue, especially in rural areas.

III. Suggestions in Response

For the problems of women's education encountered at this stage, specific policies and programs should be formulated to guarantee their right to education. For migrants girls, girls left behind in rural areas and in remote areas, dedicated assistance policies and increased education input are necessary, with a special fund established for girls to guarantee their equal right to education. For migrant women in cities, adolescent girls in rural areas and other vulnerable groups in society, their educational demand should be fully understood, with targeted teaching materials prepared to improve their living skills and social capabilities via compensatory education and vocational training.

Gender equity should be encouraged in school education to create a non-discrimination teaching and educational mode. Legislative or policy measures should be taken to refine the gender ratio in the existing educational management system, increasing the proportion of females in schools at all levels and the educational administrators. Institutionalization of gender training should be executed to enhance gender equality awareness among all educational policy makers, managers and teachers. Non-discriminatory education should be encouraged, with gender equality incorporated into pre-service and in-service training for teachers, textbooks and classroom instructions. Gender consultants should be engaged in the curriculum committee and the preparation and approval of textbooks, who shall be responsible for the development, preparation and review of gender indicators in the curriculum standards, the teaching outlines and textbooks for the timely removal of gender bias in educational content.

Disadvantaged circumstances in lifelong education and vocational education for women should be addressed. The Government should internalize the basic state policy of gender equality into vocational education, being well aware of the importance of women's access to vocational education and taking this as a priority concern to create a favorable policy, educational and social environment for women to receive vocational education. A culture featuring gender equality should be structured, with the perception of female staff training for vocational education updated to emphasize on their professional competence.

Efforts should be made to develop women's studies and disciplines. Policy and financial support should be redoubled to cultivate a highly specialized faculty, with new female research institutions established across universities and stronger support

given in terms of manpower and funding to ensure the functionality. Higher education bodies should be encouraged to offer majors or courses in women's studies so as to produce professionals in this field. Gender research projects should be added to the research projects under the National Social Science Fund of China, the Ministry of Education and the higher education bodies.

Appendix

Catalog of the Organizations

China Women's University

China Women's University (CWU) is the sole women's higher learning institution affiliated to the ACWF and academically administered by the Ministry of Education. It is a university specialized in the development of women's higher education, enhancement in women's caliber, promotion of the basic state policy of gender equality, leadership in advanced gender culture, and contribution to social and economic development, women's progress and women's international exchange.

Website: <http://www.cwu.edu.cn>