

Research on the Investment Guarantee Mechanism for Preschool Education in Ethnic Minority Regions under the Background of Rural Revitalization

Weihua Dong

Wenshan University, Wenshan 663099, Yunnan, China

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Abstract

In the context of rural revitalization, investment guarantees for preschool education in ethnic minority regions have become a crucial aspect of promoting educational equity and regional coordination. This article analyzes the demand for investment in preschool education driven by rural revitalization and highlights the supportive role of preschool education in the development of ethnic minority regions. Based on this, it explores the deficiencies in the current mechanisms, including insufficient financial investment, imbalanced funding structures, limited social participation, and weak financial supervision. To address these issues, the article proposes pathways such as improving tiered fiscal systems and transfer payments, optimizing funding structures, constructing diversified investment models, and enhancing performance supervision. These measures aim to enhance the stability and effectiveness of funding guarantees, providing institutional support for the development of preschool education in ethnic minority regions and rural revitalization.

Keywords

rural revitalization; ethnic minority regions; preschool education; investment guarantees; mechanism optimization

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1. Introduction

As the starting point of the educational system, preschool education represents a critical stage for children's holistic development and serves as a foundational element for promoting social equity and sustainable development. In ethnic minority regions, preschool education is not only crucial for children's growth and families' futures but also closely linked to human resource development, the improvement of public services, and social integration within the context of rural revitalization. However,

investment in preschool education in ethnic minority regions remains inadequate, constrained by factors such as regional economic development, fiscal capacity, and social support. This situation hampers the improvement of educational quality and the level of educational accessibility. Against the backdrop of rural revitalization, exploring how to establish a robust investment guarantee mechanism not only addresses the practical needs of educational development but also provides support for achieving educational equity and rural revitalization.

2. Correlation Analysis between Rural Revitalization and Investment in Preschool Education in Ethnic Minority Regions

2.1. Demand for Investment in Preschool Education from Rural Revitalization

The advancement of the rural revitalization strategy relies not only on the development of agricultural industries and the improvement of infrastructure but also on the enhancement of population quality and the balance of public services. Preschool education, as the starting point of the educational system, shoulders the mission of cultivating children's cognitive abilities, sociality, and basic learning qualities. It serves as the foundation for the quality of subsequent education. In ethnic minority regions, where educational resources are scarce and the population is sparsely distributed, investment in early childhood education is particularly crucial^[1]. Without stable financial support, preschool education struggles to ensure both accessibility and quality, which in turn affects rural talent reserves and sustainable social development. In the process of rural revitalization, education is an indispensable pillar, with investment in preschool education being a fundamental and critical component. This demand is particularly pronounced in ethnic minority regions and is directly linked to the fundamental driving force behind long-term rural development.

2.2. Supportive Role of Preschool Education in the Development of Ethnic Minority Regions

In the development process of ethnic minority regions, preschool education not only serves as the starting point for children's growth but also acts as a significant driving force for social progress. High-quality preschool education provides children with a better cognitive and socialization environment, enhancing their ability to adapt to subsequent learning and social life, thereby improving the overall population quality. For rural societies, an improvement in educational quality signifies better public services and increased family trust, as well as a more solid foundation for achieving the goal of "livable and business-friendly" environments in rural revitalization. Effective investment in preschool education can narrow the urban-rural gap, promote cultural heritage and social integration in ethnic minority regions, and provide

sustained momentum and stable human resources for rural development^[2]. Therefore, preschool education is not only a component of educational policy but also a crucial foundation for implementing the rural revitalization strategy in ethnic minority regions.

3. Issues in the Investment Guarantee Mechanism for Preschool Education in Ethnic Minority Regions

3.1. Insufficient Financial Investment and Unstable Growth

Against the backdrop of the continuous advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, the level of educational investment in ethnic minority regions still falls short of the targeted requirements. Local governments face limited fiscal revenues, with agriculture and infrastructure construction often taking precedence in budget allocations, resulting in a low proportion of funds allocated to preschool education. Some regions rely heavily on special funds and temporary transfer payments, leading to sudden and volatile funding arrangements that lack institutional guarantees for sustained growth. Insufficient investment directly impacts the expansion of kindergarten facilities, the improvement of preschool education enrollment rates, and the enhancement of educational and care conditions, thereby constraining the consolidation of the human resource foundation in rural revitalization efforts.

In some economically underdeveloped counties, even though rural revitalization plans propose improving educational conditions, the implementation of funds often lags behind. The instability of the investment growth mechanism has become a key bottleneck restricting educational development in ethnic minority regions, making it difficult to achieve long-term goals and further weakening the supporting role of the rural education system in the overall social development^[3].

3.2. Imbalanced Funding Structure and Regional Disparities

The current investment pattern still primarily focuses on hardware construction, with significant attention given to kindergarten renovation and equipment procurement. However, "software investments" such as teacher training,

curriculum resource development, and improvements in care services are inadequate. This imbalance has resulted in some kindergartens experiencing significant improvements in physical conditions, yet their educational quality and teacher competence remain lagging. Meanwhile, urban-rural and regional disparities are also pronounced, with preschool education conditions in central townships being superior to those in remote villages, creating a polarized distribution of investment and resources ^[4]. In the context of rural revitalization, these disparities undermine the effectiveness of balanced educational development, making it difficult to safeguard the preschool education rights of children in remote ethnic villages, achieve educational equity goals, directly impact the overall improvement of rural population quality, and further solidify the trend of urban-rural differentiation. If this situation continues, it will not only exacerbate the imbalance in regional development but also undermine the talent pool and social cohesion necessary for rural revitalization.

3.3. Insufficient Participation from Social Forces

Rural revitalization emphasizes the involvement of multiple stakeholders. However, in ethnic minority regions, there is a lack of motivation for social capital and non-profit organizations to invest in preschool education. On the one hand, local areas lack stable cooperation mechanisms and incentive policies, making it difficult for businesses and social organizations to find sustainable avenues for participation. On the other hand, the short-term economic benefits of preschool education are not significant, leading social capital to prefer investing in industries with relatively higher returns ^[5]. Under such circumstances, the contributions of social forces to education mostly remain at the level of temporary donations and public welfare projects, lacking institutionalized and regular participation. This results in a lack of social support in ethnic minority regions, causing an over-reliance on government finance for preschool education investment. The lack of diverse synergy does not align with the “co-construction and sharing” goal of rural revitalization and also affects the overall improvement of educational quality. From a long-term perspective, this limitation not only restricts the expansion

of funding sources but also weakens the enthusiasm of various sectors of society to jointly promote rural education development.

3.4. Low Fund Efficiency and Weak Supervision

As rural revitalization places higher demands on public service levels, the effectiveness of preschool education funding in ethnic minority regions has failed to match. Some localities prioritize investment scale over management performance, resulting in a disconnect between investment and demand. Issues such as redundant kindergarten construction, idle equipment, and insufficient teacher subsidies coexist, affecting the efficiency of resource allocation. The funding supervision system is inadequate, with a lack of scientific standards for performance evaluation and limited information disclosure, making it difficult for society to exercise oversight. The low efficiency of fund utilization and weak supervision not only undermine the credibility of educational investment but also make it difficult for limited financial support to truly translate into the human resources and educational quality improvements needed for rural revitalization, weakening the supporting role of education in regional development ^[6]. If this issue is not addressed, it will not only result in financial waste but may also affect the overall sustainable development capacity of rural education.

4. Optimization Paths for the Investment Guarantee Mechanism of Preschool Education in Ethnic Minority Areas

4.1. Improving Tiered Financing and Transfer Payments to Ensure Stable Funding

In ethnic minority areas, local fiscal revenues are generally insufficient, making it difficult to independently shoulder the responsibility for popularizing and enhancing the quality of preschool education. To overcome this limitation, stable and sustained financial support needs to be achieved through a tiered financing mechanism. The central government should play a leading role by establishing a long-term and stable mechanism for increasing investment. By combining general transfer payments with special transfer payments,

the central government should increase its support for ethnic minority areas, ensuring that preschool education funding does not significantly decrease due to economic fluctuations. Local governments, in turn, should clarify their share of responsibilities, prioritize preschool education as a key livelihood issue, and incorporate it into annual budgets and medium- to long-term development plans to prevent arbitrary adjustments or diversion of funds. Through this approach, fiscal investments can not only be more controllable in quantity but also institutionally guaranteed^[7].

In the implementation phase, a dual-track model of “base funding + performance incentives” can be established. This model ensures long-term stability of basic expenditures and links incentive subsidies to educational outcomes, thereby motivating local governments to improve educational quality. Additionally, it is essential to improve the direct fund allocation mechanism, shorten the transmission chain of funds from higher levels to grassroots units, and prevent issues such as fund retention and diversion. For economically disadvantaged regions, minimum guarantee standards and safety net provisions should be established to ensure that every preschool child has access to basic public education services. This mechanism can enhance the continuity and fairness of preschool education investment, preventing rural families from losing educational opportunities due to regional disparities and laying a foundation of human resources for rural revitalization.

4.2. Optimizing Fund Allocation to Promote Balanced Development Between Urban and Rural Areas

For a long time, investment in preschool education in ethnic minority areas has been skewed towards the construction of kindergarten facilities and infrastructure improvements, while investments in teacher training, curriculum development, and childcare services have been relatively weak. This imbalance has led to noticeable improvements in the physical appearance of some rural kindergartens, but educational quality and teaching standards have not improved correspondingly, failing to meet the public’s demand for high-quality education. To address this issue, it is essential to increase the proportion of “software development” in financial arrangements,

prioritizing teacher training, the development of kindergarten-based curricula, and the improvement of childcare and education quality. By raising teacher subsidy standards, increasing opportunities for in-service training, and establishing a teacher mobility support mechanism, the overall quality of teachers can be gradually enhanced, creating a better learning environment for rural children.

Meanwhile, the issues of urban-rural and regional disparities also need to be alleviated through coordinated financial planning. A cross-regional coordination mechanism can be established to prioritize support for remote villages and sparsely populated educational sites, providing a higher proportion of funding based on actual needs and geographical conditions. In practice, regional education resource-sharing centers can be established to offer itinerant teachers, mobile childcare and education vehicles, and online education platforms, enabling children in remote areas to access high-quality educational resources and growth support^[8]. Optimizing the funding structure can not only avoid redundant construction and resource waste but also promote balanced development across different regions, genuinely responding to the demands of rural revitalization for educational equity and laying a more solid foundation for overall social progress.

4.3. Establishing a Multi-Source Investment Model to Enhance Social Participation

While financial support serves as the foundation, the sustainable development of preschool education in ethnic minority regions also requires attracting social participation. Through policy guidance and institutional innovation, enterprises, non-profit organizations, social groups, and families can work together to gradually establish a diversified investment landscape. Enterprises can actively participate through tax incentives and government procurement of services, particularly in areas such as kindergarten renovation, equipment upgrades, and nutritional improvements. Non-profit organizations and foundations can support the training of rural teachers and the expansion of educational resources through long-term funding, collaborative kindergarten operations, or the establishment of scholarships and grants, thereby enhancing the resilience and inclusiveness of educational development and making educational services more closely aligned with the actual needs of rural areas^[9].

To ensure the stability and standardization of social investment, cooperation agreements and evaluation mechanisms need to be established to clarify the use of funds, project responsibilities, and assessment criteria, avoiding the short-term effects of “one-time donations.” Meanwhile, it is essential to establish an information disclosure system and a third-party supervision mechanism to ensure that social funds truly flow to grassroots kindergartens and rural children. By constructing a diversified investment model characterized by “finance-led, socially-coordinated, and family-supported” efforts, we can effectively alleviate the financial pressure on the government, enhance the openness and sustainability of rural education, and better align educational investment with the requirements of “co-construction and sharing” in rural revitalization. This approach will also promote the formation of replicable and scalable long-term mechanisms, injecting sustained vitality into educational endeavors in ethnic minority regions.

4.4. Improve performance evaluation and supervision to enhance the effectiveness of funds

To maximize the value of investment in preschool education, it is imperative to rely on scientific evaluation and stringent supervision mechanisms. Ethnic minority regions should establish a comprehensive performance system that covers the entire chain of fund input, execution, and output, incorporating indicators such as enrollment rates, teacher staffing, teaching quality, parental satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness into the assessment framework. Through regular evaluations and dynamic adjustments, it can be ensured that every penny of funding is precisely utilized to enhance educational quality and service levels. Independent audits and quality evaluations can be conducted by third-party assessment agencies to avoid biases introduced by local government self-assessments and enhance transparency and social trust through the publication of reports.

In terms of supervision, it is essential to promote the construction of an information platform for

educational funds to enable real-time monitoring and disclosure of fund flows, allowing all sectors of society to stay informed about the utilization of educational funds promptly. Financial and educational departments should strengthen responsibility tracking and strictly hold accountable those responsible for violations and inefficient practices. Areas that demonstrate remarkable effectiveness in fund utilization can be encouraged through rewards and policy preferences, creating positive incentives. Conversely, projects that exhibit prolonged inefficiency and prominent issues should have their funding allocations adjusted or face restrictions on new fund inflows^[10]. By improving the performance evaluation and supervision system, the efficiency of fund utilization can be significantly enhanced, reducing waste and losses. This will ensure that limited educational resources are genuinely transformed into improvements in the quality of preschool education in ethnic minority regions and provide long-term guarantees for the smooth realization of the strategic goals of rural revitalization.

5. Conclusion

Securing investment in preschool education is the cornerstone of rural revitalization in ethnic minority regions. Looking ahead, it is essential to further promote the coordinated development of financial support and social forces, fostering a more stable and diversified investment landscape. Simultaneously, attention should be paid to optimizing the funding structure and enhancing the efficiency of resource utilization, ensuring a more balanced distribution of educational resources between urban and rural areas as well as across different regions. With the gradual improvement of digital management and performance supervision mechanisms, the development of preschool education will become more sustainable and transparent. Only by continuously strengthening the education security system can ethnic minority regions provide solid human resource support for rural revitalization and achieve a positive interaction and mutual progress between education and the economic and social sectors under the new circumstances.

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