

Sude
Mei Yuan
Fred Dervin

An Introduction to Ethnic Minority Education in China


Policies and Practices

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Sude · Mei Yuan · Fred Dervin

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 教育科学出版社
Educational Science Publishing House

 Springer

Sude
School of Education
Minzu University of China
Beijing, China

Mei Yuan
School of Education
Minzu University of China
Beijing, China

Fred Dervin
University of Helsinki
Helsinki, Finland

ISBN 978-3-662-61066-4 ISBN 978-3-662-61068-8 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-61068-8>

Jointly published with Educational Science Publishing House
The print edition is not for sale in China Mainland. Customers from China Mainland please order the
print book from: Educational Science Publishing House

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer-Verlag GmbH, DE part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: Heidelberger Platz 3, 14197 Berlin, Germany

Foreword

Our thanks to Prof. Sude, Mei Yuan, and Fred Dervin for a book that offers a portrait of both the challenges and the empowering successes of multicultural education in China.

The book represents an account of multiethnic education in China through the eyes and discernments of scholars with the history and knowledge that ensures the accounts are trustworthy, informed, multiperspectival, and contextualized. Sude, Dean of Education at Minzu University, is highly respected and is perhaps the leading multicultural educator in China. Sude and his associate editors, Mei Yuan and Fred Dervin, have developed the book with the support of their colleagues and the communities with whom they worked.

The book offers a careful and instructive study of educational sites throughout China vying to meet the needs of diverse learners. The observations are focused at communities and schools that represent a subset of the recognized 56 multiethnic groups that live throughout China. They represent schools and communities that dream about a better future for their young and attempt to do so in a fashion that tries to align with and build from their culture, heritage, language, and life experiences.

The book reveals the roadmaps provided by policymakers and depicts how their guidelines are fitted to local conditions for better or worse. In essence, the book provides details of the Chinese and local governments' efforts to meet the needs of Chinese minorities with varying success. Across its various chapters, the book provides snapshots of communities, educators, administrators, and families, but mostly it celebrates the students attending schools who often must live away from home to attend schools.

The portrayals have much to offer as they represent a range of settings including observations by teams of researchers who have spent time in these sites interviewing school administrators, community members, government officials, the teachers, and the students themselves. The portrayals are also connected to detailed analyses of the national, provincial, and local policies that govern these developments and the frustrations that arise when the policies are ignored or not adapted/adopted in the spirit intended.

For the foreign reader, the book offers spaces to observe the experiences of the students, teachers, communities, and the family members from whom the students are drawn. At times throughout the book, snapshots help locate the instantiations in policies hoping to advance the education of ethnic minorities. But the snapshots are not akin to political posters, they afford images of struggles that arise as teachers and students seek a form of the transformative cultural accord that stirs dreams of a better future in harmony. They raise our consciousness to issues that will resonate with educators globally. They illuminate the struggles—the circumstances and systems that can be abortive rather than supportive. They introduce the well-intended and committed, but also the misguided advocates with values that could contribute to estrangement.

The various sections of the book are powerful in different ways. The second section is a brief introduction providing an overview of multiethnic developments in China by Sude. This section is an important introduction that affords the reader an orientation to China's ethnic populations, a brief history of ethnic education in China and the study itself. The third section is an introduction to the pertinent policies that have been developed over the past 50 years. What is striking is how Sude and his collaborators delve into the discourse of the policies themselves so as to afford the reader a more critical understanding of the policies including the license afforded provincial, and local governments in hopes of adaptations and adjustments befitting the communities that they are intended to serve. How these policies play out in the real world of implementation is a concern, however, and such concerns are highlighted in the third and closing sections detailing the overall findings and recommendations from the study. The next section, which accounts for most of the book, includes the 11 case studies of schools and communities that the team of researchers studied. These case studies do not provide a uniform image of multicultural education in China, rather they portray the different needs and struggles of each community. While there may be some common considerations, the book details the difference in schooling across these sites—especially in response to the diverse backgrounds—cultural, social, economic, and geographical—of the students. They explore the struggles of the administrators and teachers in conjunction with detailing the everyday lives of teachers (with varying cultural backgrounds and expertise) and the students in and out of school as well as within the setting of dormitories for boarding that entails long periods away from home and often beginning at a young age. The cases offer a rather raw portrayal of the ongoing struggle to improve multicultural education in China.

The final section is a powerful bookend as it affords the reader an opportunity to engage with Sude and his colleagues in a conversation about the cases, as presented, what they see as key issues that need to be addressed, including a discussion of cultural positioning along with their recommendations for policy development at the national, provincial and local level. Sude and his colleagues also point to changes needed to the curriculum, the preparation of teachers and school–community–family relationships including how best to respond to the nature and function of after-school needs including adjustments to the approach needed to support students who board.

The discernments for China offered by Sude, Mei Yuan, and Fred Dervin concur with those developments globally that are rooted in the notion that effective education occurs when you connect with the learners and their communities in a manner that builds from rather than over their prior learning and cultural moorings. It requires us to reckon with the need to respect and therefore validate cultures and understanding that is transformative for all rather than attending to the interest of some over others. Globally, indigenous and various multiethnic educators in various countries have seriously challenged the supreme orthodoxy of both the structure and purpose of a Eurocentric, the colonizer's or a dominant groups sole interpretation of education. Diverse peoples are declaring and asserting their rights and freedoms for more culturally affirming and responsive curriculum content, assessment procedures, and teaching methods. Growing numbers of indigenous schools or multiethnic schools have been created to fulfill the educational aspirations that indigenous and multiethnic parents have for their children, and higher education institutions have emerged affording indigenous and multiethnic students and scholars the opportunity to pursue knowledge in a culturally safe and intellectually enriching learning environment.

The book offers those of us, who are interested in China or global education matters, an opportunity to explore China's recent efforts to meet the needs and educational aspirations of their multiethnic populations and to do so with the raw footage provided by Sude and his colleagues. The footage is not unfamiliar to those of us perplexed by these matters with our own peoples. Yet, in other ways, it is unfamiliar and requires a reading consistent with reading across cultures—avoiding presumptuousness and prejudgments. It may be reassuring to learn with Chinese colleagues that they are committed to multiculturalism and are intently wrestling with these issues. What remains to torment some of us is that educators worldwide seem to be struggling against similar gravitational forces tied to the interest of some to assimilate rather than accommodate, to standardize rather than diversify, to impose rather than support situated learning and self-determination. We would do well to interrogate and reform our own country's policies and practices through such lens.

Robert Tierney
University of British Columbia |
Unceded Musqueam Territory and Honorary Professor
The University of Sydney
Sydney, Australia

Bob Morgan
Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
and Research (BATSIER)
Callaghan, Australia

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Chapter 1

Studying Chinese Minority Education



1.1 Contextualising Minority Education (Sude)

China is a unified socialist country, with a multiethnic¹ and multicultural society. There are 56 ethnic groups coexisting in this “family,” forming a unified but diversified society. Education for ethnic minorities (EFEM) is a significant part of the whole education system in our country, which is also important considering the ethnic work. Its development is a critical signal of a harmonious society. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of EFEM, issuing a large number of policies for EFEM according to the different characteristics of ethnic minorities and minority areas, in order to guarantee their rights of equal access to education. Especially since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), a major decision of Reform and Opening-up was made, which has led China to rapid development. Making a general survey of the policy development for EFEM through more than 30 years since the reform and opening up, the policies for EFEM are divided into the following three stages.

The first stage is from 1978 to 1991, which is the period of the recovery and development of the EFEM policies. In 1980, “the suggestion on strengthening the work for EFEM” was issued by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, which articulated the policies and guidelines and major principles for the recovery and development of EFEM. In 1984, the Second Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress passed the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy of the People’s Republic of China, which not only systematically formulated the principles of socialist ethnic relations in our country, but also summarized our experience of the development of EFEM, stipulating the fundamental principles of improving EFEM. In 1985, “Decision on the Reform of Education System,” which was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, proposed explicitly that the

¹In this book, we use the words *ethnic minority* and the Chinese term *Minzu* as synonyms. *Minzu* can refer to ethnic group, ethnicity, or nation. Other terms have been used in English to refer to the diversity of the Chinese population: *minority groups*, *non-Han peoples*, *Local peoples*, *nationalities*, *nationality groups*.

state would help the minority areas speed up the development of education. In 1986, the Compulsory Education Law was issued and implemented, which determined the supportive policies for compulsory education in minority areas by law.

The second stage is from 1992 to 2001, which is the period of rapid development of the EFEM policies. In late 1980s and early 1990s, the instability, unrest, and even secession began in some countries and regions due to ethnic issues, to which great attention was paid by Chinese government. In 1992, “Suggestion on Strengthening the Work of EFEM” was issued, which clearly stated the principles and tasks as well as guidelines of EFEM, and became the key document to guide the work of EFEM in that period.

The third stage is from 2002 up till now, which is the new period of all-round development of the policies for EFEM. In 2002, the State Council issued “Decision on Deepening Reform to Speed up the Development of EFEM,” which comprehensively summed up the working experience of EFEM since the reform and opening up, and expounded the important role of EFEM in improving the living standard and cultural development for ethnic minorities, and promoting the economic and social comprehensive progress in minority areas and strengthening ethnic solidarity as well as safeguarding national unity and social stability. Besides, it analyzed the obstacles and problems existing in the work of EFEM under the new situation, and stipulated explicitly the fundamental policies, aims, tasks as well as policies and measures for EFEM, and put forward the idea of great development of EFEM in the new century.

In 2010, the State Council passed the National Outline for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010–2020), which specially made a comprehensive planning for EFEM. It was a good opportunity for the development of EFEM, which speeded up the process of the reform of EFEM as well as the quick development of EFEM.

All in all, the policies for EFEM in China do get enormous achievement, promoting and ensuring the reform and development of EFEM. For example, the investment of EFEM has enlarged a lot, and the recruit minority student number at school has multiplied, and the quality of EFEM has been improved, which make the whole career of EFEM, from Zhuang Village in the South to Inner Mongolia Grassland in the North, from the Tianshan Mountain Ranges in Xinjiang to the snow-covered Qingzang Plateau, from Hexi Corridor to the Changbai Mountain Ranges in the Southeast, the education of ethnic minorities has a prosperous development.

However, due to the special situation and unique development of China, the EFEM has encountered some problems. For example, there is a big gap between different ethnic areas in the development of education, and in the implementation of related policies, the result is not the targeted goal. The exploration of the deep-rooted reasons for these discrepancies is of great importance to the effective implementation of these policies.

Based upon the direction of “improving the education of ethnic minorities and developing high-quality education with cultural sensitivities,” this book tries to examine the policies of basic education for ethnic minorities. By fully describing the whole process of policy implementation and the results, we can find some valuable and successful examples, the limiting factors, the weak points, and the challenges. On this

basis, we can propose an analysis on how to make and improve the policy systems. Also, on this basis, we can develop and implement related trainings to meet the need of minority ethnic groups. Some major problems and special difficulties will be given special concern, and we should try to develop a basic education model for ethnic minority children with sensitivity.

1.2 Background

In 2006, the UNESCO Spanish Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Achievement Funds was established based upon the agreement of the United Nations and Spanish authorities. Eight United Nations organizations collaborated through the United Nations Development Program-Spanish MDG Achievement Funds “Culture and Development” project. The ultimate goal was to strengthen ethnic minorities’ participation in culture, economy, and politics through improving public policies and services, and impart ethnic minorities’ authorities in managing cultural resources and gaining benefits from economic development. The unique character of this project was that “culture” was considered essential in regional and interregional development. This project not only put forward that “diversified culture is essential to human beings as common property,” but also proposed that “a cultural sensitivity approach is significant to the development of ethnic minorities” (UNESCO World Cultural Diversity Declaration, 2002, p. 3). This project integrated multiculturalism with the development framework and sought for practical patterns in “promoting ethnic minority development as well as maintaining their plentiful multiculturalism and characters.”

This book regards “all involvement” as the main educational guidance. “All involvement” education emphasizes education equality and attaches importance to education opportunity equality for vulnerable groups. “All involvement” education is the premise of constructing an open society, and it provides effective research guarantee for the disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, and women. In the process of policy implementation and regulation constructions, the “all involvement” education idea can affect the trend of one nation’s long-term education policies, and it embodies the enhancement of ethnic minorities’ participation in education policy implementation and the improvement of education quality and putting minority children’s formative education into practice.

This book argues that there is a need to ensure ethnic minority education rights, especially in basic education. The right for minorities’ education is not only shown in equality of enrollment opportunity, but also in equality of education processes and sequence. Another important aspect of this book is to support cultural sensitivity in ethnic minority education.

The policies should be presented so that decision- and policymakers would give consideration to education, particularity in minority areas. The particularity of ethnic minority areas such as particular nature, history, and environment should be considered, and there should be knowledge of local ethnic minority cultures and proper treatment of ethnic minority educational modes. The effect of customs on children’s

schooling should be fully understood. The need of ethnic minority children based on cultural difference in school and the emotional experience because of language difference and culture identity should also be considered.

The content of our study (project goals and theoretical framework) is as follows:

- (1) *Analyzing policy content.* After systematically collecting current policy materials which are related to ethnic minority education, especially in basic education, we can analyze and evaluate these materials comprehensively in order to provide the policy basis of ensuring ethnic minority educational rights and cultural sensitivity.
- (2) *Picturing policy implementation.* By picturing the implementation process and consequences of ethnic minority education policy through case study research and fieldwork in the communities, we can identify successful examples, constrain factors, gaps, and challenges.
- (3) *Proposing suggestions.* By further analysis of the aforementioned research data, we can propose effective measures and recommendations for implementing ethnic minority education policy.
- (4) *Improving policy capacity construction.* By developing the relevant training program, we can improve the practice of decision-makers and implementers.

1.3 Method

The book is based on the project strategy framework presented in Fig. 1.1.

The method of this research combines qualitative with quantitative methods. Besides, we adopt anthropological ethnography in order to picture the process of policy implementation.

Concrete data collection methods include

- (1) Coding and content analysis of ethnic minority education policies.
- (2) Questionnaires: self-made questionnaires to education administrators, teachers, students, and education officers in terms of implementation of ethnic minority education rights policy (T.: 1791 samples).
- (3) Interviews: semi-structured individual or group interviews. Open-ended interviews, with special attention paid to key parties such as local education administrators, minority teachers and students, people involved in religious matters. (T.: 350 interviews).
- (4) Observation: We carefully observed school cultures, communities, interaction between teachers and students, classroom instructions, facilities in boarding schools and their living conditions (among others).

The chosen schools relate to the project goals and help us understand the situation in the provinces of Guizhou, Qinghai, and Yunnan.

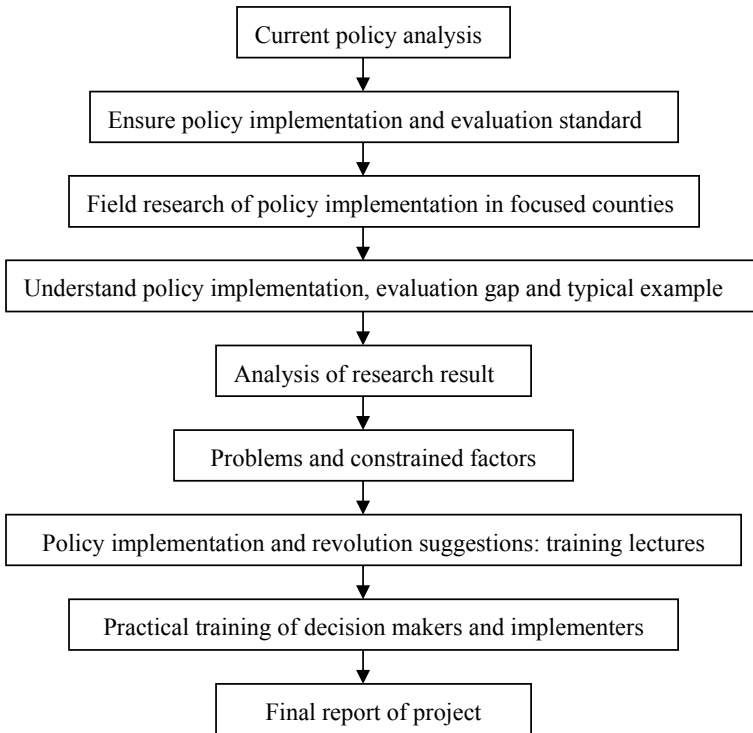


Fig. 1.1 Project strategy framework

- (1) Local people were consulted in the choice of the schools. At least, one village was selected in each county. The research was conducted in the communities (generally including junior middle schools and elementary schools) of each selected village and stockade village (including lower primary schools).
- (2) The conditions below were to be fulfilled. The schools were located in minority rural areas, and the main focus was on minority students in schools. Minority distinguishing features, “bilingual” classes and boarding conditions, were considered while selecting the schools. Certain general local characters, for instance, economic development and minority culture maintenance were also taken into account.

Based upon the aforementioned criteria, the following case study schools were selected: The Central Primary School of Xishan Township in Luxi City, Middle School of Xishang Township, Fengpingzhen Middle School, Namu Primary School, Achang Mingshe Primary School of Longchuan City, Mengyan Nine-year System School, Fangxiang National Primary School of Leishan County, No. 2 Middle School of Leishan County, Xiaohuang Primary School of Congjiang County, National Middle School of Luoxiang Township, Hualong National Middle School, and Central Primary Boarding School of Ashinu Township.

1.4 Research Phases

Phase 1 (Nov. 2008–Nov. 2009)

It is the phase of the collection and analysis of existing policies for basic education of ethnic minorities. Research of this phase mainly focused on understanding and analyzing current policies for ethnic minority education in China and delving into the details of the policies to lay a solid foundation for field research in the next phase. Table 1.1 presents the research plan for this phase.

In this phase, an Analysis Report on Educational Policies for Basic Education of Ethnic Minorities was written, which helped the research group to obtain conclusions that our field research in the next phase would be predicated on the policies closely related to the economic and cultural characteristics of the ethnic minorities, so that we could put forward solutions to improve educational development of the ethnic minorities by lessons from the foundation and practice of previous policies.

Phase 2 (Nov. 2009–Nov. 2010)

This is the phase of field research in local areas on the implementation of policies for the basic education of ethnic minorities.

The major task of this phase was to identify the eight policies targeted at the economic and cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities in light of the Analysis Report.

Table 1.1 Plan for policy research

Scope of research	1. Policies, laws, and regulations targeted at the distinctiveness of ethnic minority education; 2. Universal policies for basic education		
Dimensions of analysis	1. Protection of ethnic minorities' right to education; 2. Cultural sensitivity of government policies		
Time range	From the founding of the P.R. China in 1949 to 2008, especially the recent decade		
Classification of policies	Central level		
	Local level	Ethnic Minority Autonomous Region	Non-Ethnic Minority Autonomous Region
		Region-level Prefecture-level County-level Township-level	Province-level Region-level Prefecture-level
Source of data	Policies issued by the official Web sites of the state and local governments, administrative departments and Ethnic Affairs Committee; Published document collections and reports of ethnic policies and ethnic education-related policies; Texts of policies collected by field research in local areas; Expert consultation conferences.		

The policies were: Structural Adjustment, Boarding School System, Bilingual Education, New Curriculum Reform, Building of Teachers' Team, "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy," "Controlling Dropout Rate and Ensuring Enrollment Rate" and Popularization of Ethnic Culture on School. Specialists and core members made up six research groups, which were assigned to 11 research stations to examine the implementation of the eight policies and explore the experiences, challenges, and disadvantages in the execution of the policies (Zhang, 2010). Therefore, the research in this phase served as a basis for the improvement of policies and the cultivation of cultural sensitivity.

The main purposes of the field research were as follows.

Collecting information about the research place:

Current educational development of the targeted province or prefecture; natural-economic environment and social-economic development of the community where the targeted schools were located; local ethnic culture, especially the use of ethnic minority language and its writing system.

Collecting information about the effectiveness of the implementation of the policies:

Realization of the goals of the policies; influence the policies had on protecting ethnic minority students' rights to education and their cultural awareness; influence the policies had on the lives and cultures of ethnic minorities; unexpected results generated by the policies.

Collecting information about the execution of the policies:

Problems and difficulties during execution; key factors that influenced the implementation of the policies or led to unfavorable consequences; supplementary measures adopted by the local governments and experience gained; strategies applied to implement the policies; whether realities and needs of ethnic minorities were taken into account; how schools implemented the policies by initiating relevant activities; participation of relevant interest groups and their ways of expressing opinions.

Collecting information about the people who executed the policies:

Executive capability and cultural sensitivity of working staff who executed local policies; to what extent those who did the execution knew and understood the policies.

With these clear goals in mind, we conducted personal and group interviews with governmental officials, school principals, teaching staff, students, and community leaders to learn more about the problems in the execution of the policies for basic education of ethnic minorities and people's understanding and expectations of the policies. Meanwhile, through observations in classrooms, in schoolyards, and interviews with relevant people in schools and communities of the 11 research stations, the six research groups tried to identify how people viewed school education of children and traditional culture, how they understood the educational policies and what expectations they had toward the policies. By observing classroom instructions and teacher-student interactions, we could find out to what extent teachers understood

the policies and to what extent they were aware of the special needs ethnic minority children had.

A Research Report on the Field Research at Local Level, as well as other research reports of the 11 case studies, was written during this phase.

Phase 3 Training and Discussion (May 2011–Jul 2011)

In phase 3, state-level and province-level discussions were initiated with the aim to stimulate the cultural awareness of policymakers and policy executives in provincial and national institutions and enhance their ability to serve ethnic minorities.

The major task of this phase fell into three sub-tasks: compiling training materials on the basis of the field research and relevant studies; starting training programs for education policymakers and administrative working staff of educational departments in targeted provinces with the theme of “stimulating cultural awareness and enhancing executive ability”; holding seminars for education policymakers and relevant experts to discuss how to improve the research (Fig. 3).

The compilation of training materials was finished in 2011. This was followed by provincial trainings in Mang City, Yunnan Province, Kaili City, Guizhou Province and Xining City, Qinghai Province from May to July. In August, a state-level symposium was held in Beijing. Various summary reports were written during the trainings and the symposium.

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Chapter 2

Chinese Education for Ethnic Minorities: Achievements and Experiences Since the Founding of New China



Since the founding of new China, the country changed from a poor country to a powerful country with well-developed politics, economics and culture. In the past 60 years, with the leadership and great support from the Chinese Communist Party and Government, Chinese ethnic educational work has witnessed significant achievements, such as gradual improvement and development of education policies, school conditions, teacher quality, school national unity education, bilingual education, teaching quality, training of high-level talents of ethnic minorities, among others. “Learn from the past, think now, and look to the future” (Ma, 2010) is the essential content and link for the study of ethnic education. It provides reference and guarantee for maintaining the promotion of national unity, as well as strengthening the sustainable development of the education of ethnic groups and national regions.

As part of the superstructure, as well as general education, ethnic education must keep up with the development of the times. Ethnic education is an important component of Chinese education, and so is the important content of national work in China. Its development degree is not only related to the development of children, ethnic minority areas, and Minzu, but also the important indicators for building a harmonious society in China’s regions. Ethnic education is thus a major education issue and is also a crucial political question (Chen & Li, 2010). As a unified multiethnic country, besides Han Minzu, there are other 55 ethnic groups in China; customarily, these other groups are referred to as “ethnic minority groups” (Liu, 1986). In 2011, the sixth national population census showed that China’s ethnic minority population of 113,792,211 people accounted for 8.49% of the national total population. The Han Minzu population increased by 66,537,177, an increase of 5.74%, while the ethnic population increased by 7,362,627, an increase of 6.92%, compared with the fifth national census of 2000. Ethnic groups in China are mainly distributed in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Guangxi, Tibet, Yunnan, Guizhou, Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, Liaoning, Jilin, Hunan, Hainan, Taiwan, and other provinces. There are five national autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, and 120 autonomous counties in China. Ethnic areas have many outstanding characteristics in China, such as numerous Minzus, diverse ecological cultures, complex terrain of mountains and rivers mainly in rural and pastoral areas, sparse populations, disperse

distribution of inhabitation and aging economic development (Ma & Guo, 2009, pp. 10–12). During their long history of development, ethnic groups have gradually been characterized by “big mixed, small settlements, mutual crisscross lives” (Sude, 2003) in mutual exchanges and flows.

Since the founding of new China, under the leadership of the Party and the government and the work of all Minzu people, China has established strong ethnic education systems including preschool education, basic education, higher education, and vocational education. Education policy and education quality of ethnic educational work have all witnessed remarkable achievements. “At present, the main content of the national education research in our country includes ethnic education policy, the relationship between the traditional ethnic group culture inheritance and school education, the reform of basic education curriculum in ethnic minority areas, bilingual teaching in ethnic minority areas, ethnic unity education and other central issues” (Chen & Li, 2010). Making an objective summary of the achievements and experience of Chinese ethnic education development in the last 60 years not only can deepen our understanding of national education, but also can provide reference and methods for promoting the development, reforms, and research of ethnic education; meanwhile, in view of the current main difficulties and problems of ethnic education research, more accurate development strategies and countermeasures can be provided.

2.1 Chinese Ethnic Education Policy Development and Achievements

In the past 60 years, since the founding of new China, in order to safeguard the equal rights and interests of ethnic education, to keep the development of the education level, to adapt to the new situation of Reform and Opening-up as well as the demand of the information age, considering from the reality of the characteristics of ethnic minorities and national regions, the Chinese government made a series of new ethnic education policy constantly, providing a strong guarantee for stable and rapid development of China’s ethnic education work.

2.1.1 The Development Situation of Chinese Ethnic Education Policy

Before the founding of new China, China’s ethnic education level was very backward. Modern education was almost non-existent, and the education level of ethnic minority people was low. During the Cultural Revolution, the ethnic education and ethnic education policy of the country experienced a political “baptism,” which not only did not lead to any development but got backward. Until the end of the 1980s, “the

views on strengthening the ethnic education work” which was issued by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs (2003) positioned the recovery and the development of ethnic education policies and major principles, as the most important national education policy document to guide and promote the ethnic education work. In more than 60 years, ethnic education policy developed and changed with the attention and guidance from the party and state, with the concerted effort from all people of Chinese ethnic groups. Most laws point out the related provisions to support and help ethnic education, such as “The constitution of the People’s Republic of China,” “the regional national autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China,” “The education law of the People’s Republic of China,” “The decision on deepening reform to speed up the development of national education,” “The decision of the state council on accelerating the development of the national education” and “The ethnic minority preparatory class of common colleges and universities, ethnic minority class management approach (trial),” “The national system of ethnic minority primary and middle school Chinese course standard (experiment draft),” and “The ethnic education ordinance” for provinces and autonomous regions (such as “The ethnic education regulations in Heilongjiang province” and “The new regulations on the education of Inner Mongolia autonomous region”). The central and local education administrative departments at all levels set up special ethnic education management institutions in carrying out the national education policy, specialized processing of the special problems of ethnic education; the central and local governments set up special funds for the education development in ethnic minorities regions. Under the guarantee and guidance of all kinds of ethnic education policy, the ethnic education work has proved to be successful: The illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults is strongly and massively eliminated, and the knowledge acquired by ethnic group people has significantly increased.

2.1.2 Achievements of Chinese Ethnic Education Policy

2.1.2.1 Improvement of Ethnic Education Policy System

Before the founding of new China to Reform and Opening-up, the main contents of the ethnic education policies in China were to strengthen the training of ethnic minority cadres, especially political cadres; to set up ethnic education subsidy funds; to set up special ethnic education management organization; to make ethnic minorities preferential policy in student recruitment; to attach great importance to the study and application of ethnic minority languages; and to encourage multiple forms to develop minority education (among others). After the Reform and Opening-up policy, the government developed the effective content of the original works in the ethnic education policy. At the same time, a lot of new national education policies were proposed in all aspects of ethnic education, such as the implementation of high-level backbone talents of ethnic minorities, the cultivation of high-level talents for ethnic minorities and national regions. The Tibetan middle school, Tibetan class, Xinjiang

senior high school classes started to be held in the Mainland, increasing support for Tibet and Xinjiang education. The following support was also to be provided: organize and utilize the education and quality education resources in economic developed areas to help and promote the development of education in minority region; give special support to ethnic education in areas with relatively lower populations, education in special areas, girls' education in poverty-stricken areas; promote modern distance education in ethnic minorities and national regions; increase funding for ethnic education through various channels; strengthen both the construction of ethnic Chinese teaching and teaching materials and the education of ethnic teachers and education administrative management cadres training (among others). The national education policy system, which includes preschool education, basic education, vocational and technical education, adult education and higher education, and it is the national education system with Chinese characteristics and provides a strong guarantee for the sustained, healthy, and coordinated development of China's ethnic education (Chen & Chen, 2010).

2.1.2.2 Improvement of Aims and Measures on Ethnic Education Policy

A very important goal of ethnic education policy is to narrow the gap between ethnic education and the national average education, in order to safeguard the equal rights and interests of ethnic education and improve their ability to adapt to the mainstream of social life. To achieve this goal, the state adopted special policies and measures, such as setting special ethnic education funds, targeted students recruitment and other measures, strengthening the cultivation of teachers in various schools in the alpine areas, mountain and pastoral areas, and border areas, establishing national colleges and universities, mainly for the students of ethnic minorities, recruiting minority students in common colleges and universities in lowered scores policy and preferential admission policy, implementing bilingual teaching. "The decision of the state council on deepening reform to speed up the development of ethnic education" and related policy documents explicitly put forward: adhering to the basic nine-year compulsory education and basically eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults. These documents promote the development and improvement of ethnic education system including preschool education, basic education, vocational and technical education, adult education and higher education, maintain and protect the equal education rights and interests of ethnic minorities educators, and stick to adjust measures to local conditions (Dong, 2009). The national education reform and development should be promoted realistically, in the development planning, reform steps, goals and objectives, language teaching, curriculum and educational system arrangement, and so on. They further strengthen the support to education of ethnic minorities and national regions, raise national education funds through various channels, increase investment to the national education, strengthen education counterpart support work and policies and measures of teachers construction, further define bilingual education policy, promote Chinese language learning of minority students, actively promote the development of modern distance education in ethnic minorities and national areas,

and energetically strengthen the national unity education policy measures (Gao, 2010, pp. 26–28).

2.1.2.3 Legalization of Ethnic Education Policy

China has developed a large number of ethnic education laws, regulations, and normative documents according to the actual situation and characteristics of different national regions and ethnic groups, especially “The decision of deepening reform to speed up the development of the ethnic education” issued by the state council and “The minority education ordinance” by the provinces, “The 13th Five-Year Plan” issued by national education career is put forward. At the same time, the drafting of the minority education basic law was also made, “The national minority education law” and related series of policies, to strongly promote the process of the construction of Chinese ethnic education and ethnic education policy, to promote education justice, to provide an important basis for China’s ethnic education policy and regulations construction, also to mark the ethnic education policies in China gradually to develop in the direction of legalization, and to mark that our country has initially formed the prototype of the ethnic education law system (Zhang, 2009).

In short, during the past 60 years, China’s national education policy construction has obtained the obvious result as a whole, but in terms of scientific decision-making, there is still a long way to go. Since “The national medium and long-term education reform and development plan outline (2010–2020)” and “The state council decision about accelerating the development of ethnic education,” national education policies have made good progress in both policy practice and academic research. In order to further play the role of guarantee and lead of national education policy, to deepen and improve the ethnic education reform, development, and quality, the following aspects should be clarified and promoted: the goals of ethnic education policies; solutions for ethnic education; moving from ethnic education policy to ethnic education laws and regulations; the implementation of ethnic education policy and research on ethnic education policy theory.

2.2 Chinese Ethnic Education Disciplines Development and Achievements

The Chinese ethnic minority education discipline was founded in the early 1990s. The creation benefited from the Reform and Opening-up eras, also from the academic contribution of many scholars who contributed groundbreaking theories for the formation and development of the discipline.

2.2.1 Definition of the Discipline

The definition of the discipline must be the first step to set up any subject, which is a gradual process. Professor Ha Jingxiong (2009), who expounded the ethnic higher education discipline in the book “Chinese Ethnic Higher Education,” argues that China’s national higher education is the study of higher education phenomena in various periods and aims to explore the general rule of their occurrence and development of discipline. In 1996, in “The Constitution and Present Situation of National Education Discipline System,” Ha and Teng pointed out that “national pedagogy is a discipline studying the education rules of every ethnic group with different cultural backgrounds of a multiethnic nation.” At the same time, the paper mainly discusses the particularities of ethnic education. Education science and national science are the dual nature of ethnic education. This definition laid an important foundation for China’s national education theory. Today, the conceptual definition and theoretical development of ethnic education are gradually improving.

2.2.2 The Establishment of Ethnic Education Basic Knowledge System and Discipline

In 1990, Sun edited a volume entitled “An overview of ethnic minority pedagogy in China,” which focuses on macro research on Chinese minority education, involving both ethnic education subject ontology research, such as the research object, task, characteristics, the scope and methods of national education, and relationship problems between ethnic education and external aspects such as the relationship between ethnic education and the geographical environment, society, population, culture, politics, economy, science and technology, law, religion, language, customs, art, philosophy, psychology. It includes both the internal status quo of ethnic education of different types and different levels, the overall reform and development, such as ethnic education system, ethnic basic education, ethnic higher education, vocational and technical education, ethnic adult education, and also includes school education and teaching in ethnic education micro areas, such as ethnic school education and teaching problem of moral education, intellectual education, physical education, aesthetic education and “bilingual teaching.” The advent of this book is for two aspects of significance for the development of national education; the first one is a systematic summary of the ethnic education research and practice, and the other is the preliminary basis for further research on ethnic education. This was the first time that a book systematically expounded the basic knowledge and framework of the discipline. Based on the founding of national higher education disciplines, Professor Ha Jingxiong, Huo Wenda, Meng Lijun, and others plunged into the exploration of relevant theory on national higher education. In 1991, Ha, Chief Editor of “The Higher Education of Ethnic Minorities in China,” systematically expounded the related concepts, the discipline nature, research object and research methods of

national higher education, and systematically developed knowledge about China's national institutions of higher learning education from the system structure, the training goal of the national colleges and universities, teachers and students, teaching and scientific research as well as ideological and political education, and constructed the basic framework of national higher education system. Since then, Ha and Teng (1996), Co-Editors of "The General Theory of National Education," wrote about the basic knowledge and basic framework of the discipline from the concept of national education, development history, discipline nature, research objects, and research methods.

2.2.3 Related Research Achievements of Minzu Education

2.2.3.1 Major Research Projects

Ethnic education theory is an important part of the disciplinary development of ethnic education. There are both theoretical and practical significance for the development and guidance of new China's ethnic education. The basic theory of ethnic education is an important theoretical basis for the subject, and it is also an important area of ethnic education research, which achieved fruitful research results.

The main projects of ethnic education research were led by the following researchers: *Professor Ha Jingxiong*, Project Leader of "The development of the western region and China's reform and development of minority education research" (2001 national key subject of the national education science "fifteen" plan) as well as Project Leader of "The national education science 'fifteen' national planning" and "The national education subject guide," etc; *Sude*, Project Leader of "a major problem research on Inner Mongolia national basic education" (The key subject of the national education science "Fifteen" plan), "The national education quality assurance and characteristic development research" (The key subject of national social science fund in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan in 2008), "The present situation investigation and countermeasures research on ethnic basic education of village and herding area border" (National key subject), "The Chinese minority basic education policy research" ("The development of Chinese culture and the partnership" program for United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization and Spanish development fund) and "The Sino-Japanese comparative study on the problem of ethnic minorities education in the process of urbanization in east Asia" (joint declaration with Japanese Metropolitan University) and "The study on implementation and model of bilingual education policy in ethnic minority areas" (The major project of national social science fund), "Research on problems of bilingual education and ethnic relations in Xinjiang Province" (The united front department entrusted task), etc; *Professor Wan Minggang*, Project Leader of "The curriculum development research for poverty-stricken ethnic minority areas in northwest China" (The humanities and social science research project of ministry of education), and "The compulsory education and 'Two Basic' crucial track research of ethnic

minority areas” (The humanities and social sciences key research projects of education ministry) and “The problem and countermeasures of education development in western China after the implementation of free policy” (The national social science fund and education science project), etc; *J. Wang*, Project Leader of “The research on priority development policy of minority education under the background of the western development”; *Teng*, Project Leader of “The national education theory and policy research in the new period” and “China’s new ethnic minorities script in the education teaching application research,” etc; *Professor Chen Lipeng*, Project Leader of “The research on theoretical issues of minority education in China” (The national education science “Eighth Five-Year” Planning subject), “The research of ethnic minority education legislation of China” (The Ninth Five-Year Plan project) and “The legislative study of leap-forward development for basic education in ethnic regions” (The key subject of education ministry), etc. This series of major issues is just the tip of the iceberg in the study of China’s ethnic education today. In addition, many experts, scholars, and national education workers are giving priority to the “field” research methods, and to explore solid practices (Ma, 2007; Sun, 2009; Teng & Li, 2010).

2.2.3.2 Major Publications

In the late 1990s, two books brought together research results about national education. The first one is entitled “Tibetan education research” co-edited by Geng and Wang (1998), while the other is “The national education reform and exploration” co-edited by Geng and Wang (2001). “The pedagogics overview of ethnic minorities in China” as the national key project research achievements for Seventh Five-Year Plan marks the formation of national pedagogy as an independent discipline. Wang (2004), editor of “Chinese border ethnic education” and “The studies of Chinese minority education theory,” the former book is the first systematic monograph on frontier ethnic minority education since the founding of new China, and the latter aimed to explore the basic theoretical issues of national education. Ha and Teng (1996), chief editors of “The general theory of ethnic education,” summarize the main research field of national education, namely the basic theories of national education, national education development and academic achievement attribution theory, and introduce the theory of intercultural education, the relationship of natural, social, ecological environment and national education, national education law and policy, the national education system and management, the foundation of national early childhood education, national basic school education, national higher education, the national vocational education, ethnic normal education, ethnic adult education, national education research methods, multicultural society and multicultural integration education. Many studies also rely on extensive data collected during fieldwork as is seen in the following volumes: Teng, chief editor of “The anthropology of education series” (a total number of more than 40 volumes today); Zha, chief editor, Sude, deputy editor of “The encyclopedia of Mongolian study, education section”; Sude,

chief editor of “the Chinese border ethnic education theory” and “China’s minority education policy research series,” “The national education policy: qualitative research and case analysis” (seven volumes), “The China education encyclopedia (four volumes), national education volume,” “a new vision of national education series” (six volumes), and “the study of multicultural education: globalization and localization”; Meng, chief editor of “The historic leap—supernormal development of national education and development of national regions,” “New China’s national education policy research,” “An introduction to the new China’s national education theory”; Zhong, chief editor of “the cross-border ethnic education research”; Wan, chief editor of “The research on children’s psychological development and education of ethnic minorities in the northwest,” “Northwest ethnic minority education research series”; J. Wang, chief editor of “The national education,” “The multicultural comparative study,” “The study of ethnic minority education policy system in China,” J. Y. Wang, chief editor of “The present situation and countermeasure research of basic education development in China northwest minority areas.”

During this period, national education research has made a large number of important scientific research achievements in areas such as basic theory research, applied technology research and has made a number of landmark achievements in aspects of ethnology, anthropology, national theory of policy, national history and culture, minority language and information processing. They largely impacted academia at home and abroad. During the period of “China 15 years planning,” colleges and universities won 108 state-level scientific research projects, including 36 projects from the national natural science fund and 68 projects from the national social science fund; 144.05 million yuan of scientific research funds; 1769 textbooks and 19,080 papers were published (Chen, 2016). At the same time, a large number of outstanding and influential experts made a major contribution to China’s national education.

2.3 Chinese Ethnic Education Research Achievements

There is no education quality without scientific research, let alone national education science development. Since the founding of new China 60 years, especially since the fifth national educational work conference in 2002, national education and scientific research have made remarkable achievements, which have played an important role for the scientific development of national education.

2.3.1 The National Education Research Field Is Expanding with an Increasing Number of Scientific Research Achievements

The content of national education research includes from a vertical level, preschool education, basic education, higher education, vocational education and continuing education, etc.; from a horizontal level, the basic theories, policies and regulations, national education and teaching management, teacher development, Minzu unity education, bilingual education and cultural heritage, national psychology and cross-cultural studies. There are a lot of fruitful research achievements, such as the “Education Dictionary” (national education booklet); Han, chief editor of “The history of ethnic minority education in China” (four volumes). There are also a lot of research results related to practice, such as “The bilingual teaching guidance of preschool education” published by the Beijing Education Science Research Institute. This last book played an important role in teachers’ training work and the quality promotion of preschool bilingual education in Xinjiang Province.

2.3.2 Growing Scientific Research Teams and Institutions

National education scientific research personnel are mainly distributed in national colleges and universities, the national education institute of the central and local governments, education management institutions of autonomous regions and minority areas. These include theory researchers and department workers. In recent years, in order to strengthen national education and scientific research, the state established a national education development center of the education ministry, and at the local level, such as the Xinjiang ethnic minority’s bilingual education research center, the Guangxi national education development center (Ye, 2010). At present, China has a good national education research network, with education research institutions in the central government, provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government), and counties, with ethnic colleges and universities, colleges and universities in regions, and research institutes of ethnic education at comprehensive universities.

2.3.3 The Service Capacity for Guidance and Coordination of Scientific Research on Ethnic Education Is Improving

In 2012, the ministry of education established the ethnic education development center and established a national ethnic education scientific research plan (2014–2020). It is pointed out that “in accordance with the unified plan of the ministry

of education, to strengthen national research guidance function of the education development center of the ministry of education, overall planning, coordination, and guidance; to carry out ethnic education major theoretical, policy, and real problem research.” In addition, it also formed the national minorities education expert committee, and set up ethnic education research projects, relying on relevant universities and research institutions to establish 16 major research bases for projects of ethnic education policy, laws and regulations, ethnic psychology and education, ethnic education development and high-level talents cultivation, ethnic minority maths and science education, ethnic minority bilingual education quality inspection, school ethnic culture inheritance and innovation, etc.

In short, the development of China Minzu education and scientific research plays an important role in guiding the efficient development of this type of education, which made an overall integration with the existing scientific resources as well as effectively improved the service and country’s decision-making ability about Minzu education and scientific research. For further development of Minzu education, education and scientific research should strengthen the guidance and improvement effect of significant theoretical innovations to practice, lead primary and secondary school teachers to be actively involved in experimental research and action research; facilitate the trans-regional, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary integration of Minzu education scientific research resources and strength, strengthen Minzu education scientific research information communication, actively promote and share research results (Zhang, 2011, pp. 168–172).

2.4 The Different Stages of Development and Achievements of Chinese Ethnic Education

2.4.1 The Achievements of Minzu Elementary Education Development

The aspects of quality of basic education in Minzu regions, teaching contents, methods and means, students’ academic achievement have improved greatly. Furthermore, great achievements have been made in aspects such as infrastructures, the school layout adjustment, and the construction of campus cultures. The rapid development of Minzu education has made a significant contribution to economic development and all-round social progress, strengthening national unity and maintaining social stability and national unity in ethnic minority areas.

2.4.1.1 Considerable Increase in Educated Population and Basic Formation of a System of Minzu Education

Minzu education has made outstanding achievements at various stages in the last 60 years, for example a large number of Minzu schools have been established. According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs (2003) and Sude, Yuan, and Luo (2016), in 2001, the Minzu students in all schools have reached 19.4888 million, a growth of 39% compared to 1991 (average college student growth of 189%, secondary specialized school students 131%, secondary normal school students 20%, the average high school student 83%, vocational school students 52%, primary school students 20%), the illiteracy rate of youth is significantly lower. Statistics show that, in 2007, all kinds of schools in Minzu regions (including colleges and universities, secondary schools, primary schools) amount to 70,457, basically achieved the goal of universal nine-year compulsory education and of eliminating illiteracy among young and adults. The number of ethnic minority college students increased from 36,000 in 1978 to 1.07 million in 2006. There are more than 10,000 schools using a minority language or bilingual teaching in 13 provinces and autonomous regions. According to statistics, by 2014, Minzu students in schools of all types and all levels reached 25.01 million, and accounted for 9.9% of the number of students in the country (3.47 million ethnic minority children, accounting for 8.6%; primary school students 10.59 million, accounting for 11.2%; junior middle school students, 4.77 million (10.9%); high school students 3.45 million, accounting for 8.9%).

2.4.1.2 Increased Spending on National Education

Since 1990, the government has set up Minzu education subsidies dedicated to the development of Minzu education. During the period of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1996), the central government set up a “National compulsory education program for poor region” with a budget of 3.9 billion Yuan. 2.2 billion was invested in the 12 western provinces and districts where minorities concentrate and where the “nine-year compulsory education program” is more difficult to implement; “Minzu poor region compulsory education grants” were invested 130 million yuan in ethnic minority areas, funding for the poor family children’s schooling issues. The Government arranged four periods of loan projects for the development of basic education in poverty-stricken areas, and \$200 million key support to 200 counties of the western Minzu regions in China. From 1996 to 2001, Treasury bonds and other special expenses were all used for the implementation of the Minzu education project for poverty alleviation, such as the “211 Project,” the key campus network construction in western China, the development of secondary vocational education and ordinary high school education development in western China, the mainland Tibet and Xinjiang high school class projects, the investment funds for national and western region with a total of 5.368 billion Yuan (Zhou, 2004). In two years, the central government allocated 3 billion for the reform of primary and secondary school buildings, and 5

billion as compulsory education special fund for Western minority areas during the period of the “15-Year Plan,” and thus, conditions of ethnic minority education were improved considerably (Weng, 2003).

2.4.1.3 New Achievements for the “Two Basics” Program

Under the support of the state, through the implementation of the national poor region compulsory education program, the dangerous house renovation project of rural middle and primary schools has established boarding schools, promoted bilingual teaching, establishing mainland Tibetan classes, Xinjiang high school classes, and used advanced resources of developed areas, such as teachers and teaching resources, to support the development of education in ethnic minority areas (Chang, 2007, pp. 49–51). Based on local conditions, ethnic areas adopted flexible and varied forms of teaching, speeded up the popularization of compulsory education, greatly improved the operating conditions of primary and secondary schools in ethnic minority areas, and improved the teaching quality in ethnic minority areas. By the end of 2001, there were 699 county-level administrative units of national autonomous areas in China, 358 counties of them had achieved the “Two Basics” target, accounting for 51% of the county-level administrative units in national autonomous areas (Sude, 2003).

China’s “Two Basics” program has made great achievements and helped to achieve the goal of universal nine-year compulsory education and basically eliminating illiteracy among young and adults. Before 1949, the national school-age children enrollment rate was only 20%, and population illiteracy rate reached 80%. The education duration of people older than 15 years was only 1.6 years on average; in general, people’s education level was very low (Liu, 1986). Since the Reform and Opening-up in China, in 1985, “Decision on Reform of the Education System” was issued by the government, which first proposed the implementation of nine-year compulsory education. Then “The compulsory education law” and “The literacy work ordinance” were promulgated, which made clear that the implementation of the nine-year compulsory education and eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults was officialized as laws. On the basis of the preliminary realization of “Two Basics,” three key events helped promote education development and education justice:

The first thing was the implementation of the “Two Basics” plan in western China. More than 400 county-level administrative regions which had not implemented the plan were mainly concentrated in the western minority areas in China (Yan, 1999). Since the region’s economic development lagged behind and the natural conditions were poor, the status of the education foundation was weak, the government spent tens billions yuan to ensure the renovation of rural primary and secondary school buildings, the construction of boarding schools in rural areas, of rural primary and middle schools modern distance education and other important education projects. In 2007, the “Two Basics” crucial program was completed, and in rural areas, especially rural schools, conditions in the western region as well as the weak condition of the

compulsory education foundation have been improved significantly. Nowadays, in China, the best construction in remote mountain area is to be found in schools.

The second thing is the full implementation of free compulsory education across the country. In 2003, the government published a special policy for Midwest rural students who were in compulsory education and with heavy economic problems. The policy is mainly for exempting all kinds of fees, providing free textbooks and subsidies for accommodation cost, and it would gradually put into the whole country. In 2008, all cities began to implement the free compulsory education plan, with more than 100 million school-age children or adolescents who need not pay for school (Xu, 2009).

The third achievement is the establishment of the system of student aids. Through the perfection and the implementation of the national system of grants, scholarships and student loans, help is provided for students with family economic problems, ensuring that they will not interrupt their studies for economic reasons. At the same time, they encourage social participation, providing greater support for students with family economic problems. From 2006 to 2011, the national financial investment increased from 5.36 billion yuan to 6.74 billion yuan, and total investment reached 242.95 billion yuan; the central government investment increased from 2.01 billion yuan to 3.17 billion yuan. The whole society investment that amounts for student aids is 363.88 billion yuan. In 2011, for the whole country, the provincial administrative region, and all administrative units are at the county level. This changed China's basic education and realized a historical leap in the development of education (Sude, 2013).

By implementing the national mechanism reform for ensuring adequate funding for rural compulsory education, all the tuition and fees of student at the compulsory education stage are free in ethnic minority areas, since public funds of rural elementary and middle schools are all guaranteed. Under the strong support of the party and the state, with the efforts from the government and education workers, the "Two Basics" plan have made significant achievements in ethnic minority areas and trained a large number of talents from ethnic groups.

2.4.1.4 Education of Ethnic Full-Time Teachers

Since the founding of new China, the state has adopted a series of measures to help educate and train teachers in ethnic minority areas, such as universities, primary, and secondary schools in developed regions to support teacher training, and encourage teachers from the mainland to teach in ethnic minority areas. At the same time, Minzu teachers can take short training courses, exchange education management and teaching experience, and take short-term positions in the mainland universities, in-service training and through other measures. According to "Decisions on Further Strengthening Ethnic Education" (2015), since 2000, the state has implemented comprehensive quality training for primary and secondary school teachers in minority regions; nearly, 400,000 teachers from 17 provinces and areas have participated in the training, and teachers' comprehensive quality improved significantly. By 2001,

the total number of full-time teachers in different types of Minzu schools has been 950,000, which basically met the need of the full-time teachers of Minzus in quantity and quality. By 2014, the total number of full-time teachers in different types of Minzu schools was 1.29 million, accounting for 8.6% of full-time teachers of all level schools.

2.4.1.5 Further Attention to Be Paid to and Strengthening of “Bilingual Teaching”

According to the laws, “bilingual teaching” can be used in national primary and secondary schools and kindergartens of Minzu autonomous areas. At present, the total number of Minzu preschool and primary and secondary schools is more than 13,000. Bilingual teaching is available to 21 Minzus and in 29 languages. In 2015, the implementation of bilingual education in basic education took place in 100,000 classes, for more than 4,500,000 students, by 235,000 bilingual teachers (Decision on Accelerating the Development of Ethnic Education by the State Council). In some areas, people are carrying out the “three words” teaching experiment for ethnic, Han and foreign languages. For example, more than 100 professionals teach bilingually in colleges and universities of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. In parts of ethnic colleges and universities, Minzu professional master’s and doctor’s degrees authorization centers also have been set up. In order to ensure that the Minzu language teaching goes smoothly, state and local governments have set up special subsidies for Minzu written materials. At present, the total number of annual published Minzu written materials is more than 3500 types, the total amount being than 100 million copies (Decisions on Further Strengthening Ethnic Education by the State Council 2015).

2.4.1.6 Effective Education Support and Partnerships

Since 1992, the former state education commission and the State Ethnic Affairs Organization in Shanghai, Guangdong, Beijing, and other 13 eastern provinces and cities have organized support with 9 provinces (such as Inner Mongolia, Yunnan Province, and so on), 143 Minzu poverty counties, and given assistance and support, by means of teaching instruments and equipment, training education management personnel and backbone teachers, guidance and education teaching reforms (Sang, 2001). Under the personal concern of the state council leaders, since 2000, the “two engineering” (school-to-school support and urban-to-rural support) has been implemented in the eastern and western regions, and increased support for Minzu education. Recently, according to the requirements of the fourth central Tibet meeting, 15 provinces, cities of the mainland will directly support the seven cities of Tibet on education work (Ma, 2010). From 1992 to 2001, the totaled education support funds, teaching equipment, and training for Minzu regions were 160 million yuan;

over 38,000 children aid in ethnic minority areas, training more than 15,000 primary and secondary school teachers, training 4898 education management cadres. Tibetan schools in 20 provinces and cities have totally enrolled more than 20,000 junior middle school students, more than 10,000 technical secondary school students, junior college students, high school students, and more than 3000 college students in 16 years, existing school students have reached more than 13,000 people, and nearly 10,000 college graduates have been to Tibet (Wang, 2002, pp. 80–83). Since 2000, Xinjiang high school classes have been set up in the key high schools of 12 cities, recruiting 2000 students (Sang, 2001). During the “Twelfth Five-Year” period, the national 528 projects have been implemented to support Xinjiang education, backing 148 Tibet education projects and 86 Qinghai education projects, whose total investment is 120 million. The ethnic minority classes have been set up in junior middle schools, high schools, vocational schools, prep classes, colleges, and graduate student education (Sude, 2013).

2.4.1.7 The Minzu Unity Education of Primary and Secondary Schools Is Particularly Effective

The party and government have always attached great importance to strengthen a Marxist view, religion, and education of party’s Minzu policy, and religious policy for all ethnic group people. According to the relevant requirements of the party and state, from our country population distribution characteristics and the actual conditions of ethnic relations, in 1994, the former state education commission and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission began to carry out the national unity education activities in Minzu primary and secondary schools, to make primary and secondary school students have further understanding of Chinese history, Chinese traditional culture, to strengthen the ethnic students’ self-consciousness to maintain national unity and oppose separatists. Education activities have played a very important role to enhance the cohesion of the Chinese nation.

2.4.2 Development and Achievements of Higher Education for Ethnic Minorities

2.4.2.1 Expanding the Capacity of Universities

According to the government (2009), there were only 9 universities for ethnic minorities in China in 1979 with only a total number of 7300 students. By 2007, the number of students in 13 universities for ethnic minorities nationwide reached more than 190,000. In 1999, the number of full-time students in the six universities for ethnic minorities supervised by State Ethnic Affairs Commission was 22,096, and the total number in 2007 reached 10 million, an increase of 3.5 times. The enrollment

range of universities for ethnic minorities expanded to 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, where the proportion of minority students accounted for about 65% of all the students. As of 2015, there were 1.99 million ethnic minority college students, accounting for 7.8% of all the students national wide. There were 18 universities and colleges for ethnic minorities, and other 220 colleges in Minzu autonomous areas.

2.4.2.2 Educational Levels Have Been Gradually Raised

After years of construction, universities and colleges for ethnic minorities made progress from a single level to a multieducational level, including not only undergraduate, junior colleges, Minzu prior education and cadre training, but also doctorate or master's degrees, vocational education, overseas, and adult education. Before the Reform and Opening-up, no school for ethnic minorities had been named "University." However, today, 12 of all the 18 colleges for ethnic minorities have been renamed "Universities," of which 12 universities have the authority of granting master's degrees, 8 universities doctoral degrees. The universities and colleges supervised by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission have 189 master's degree programs, 27 doctoral degree programs, and 7 postdoctoral research centers (Chen, 2016). Minzu University of China has been selected into the national "211 Project," "985 Project" and "Double First-rate" research universities, which means the overall strength of Minzu institutions has been enhanced gradually.

2.4.2.3 The Structure of Academic Disciplines Is Increasingly Optimized

In order to meet the needs of the modernization of ethnic areas, the structure for majors of the universities and colleges for ethnic minorities gradually changed its direction of development from the humanities before the Reform and Opening-up to liberalization and integration. While maintaining the advantages of traditional disciplines, universities and colleges for ethnic minorities increased the range of various applicability majors. In 2000, universities and colleges for ethnic minorities supervised by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission set up 147 undergraduate majors (Jin, 2002, pp. 118–120). Until the end of 2007, they opened 11 disciplines covering 301 undergraduate majors. In addition, they set up 2 Minzu key disciplines, 3 Minzu scientific bases, 41 key disciplines at provincial level, and 37 key laboratories of provincial and ministerial level (Jiang, 2009). All of these have basically formed a distinctive and rational layout of the major system.

2.4.2.4 Teacher Quality Has Been Enhanced

The total number of full-time teachers in China's universities and colleges for ethnic minorities was only 2100 from the founding of P.R. China to the Reform and Opening-up (Peng & Jin, 2010). By the end of 2007, there were 9000 full-time teachers in these universities, and 5154 full-time teachers in universities and colleges for ethnic minorities supervised by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. Teachers with a senior professional position accounted for 44.06%, and with postgraduate degrees 40% (Wang, 2009).

2.4.2.5 Education Quality Has Improved Significantly

Universities and colleges for ethnic minorities set the task of improving the quality of education and teaching as the center of school work, and constantly deepen the curriculum, teaching content, teaching methods, personnel training methods and the school internal management system and other aspects, in order to strengthen the basic construction of teaching, as well as comprehensively promote quality education. By 2008, all the universities and colleges for ethnic minorities supervised by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission have passed the assessment work of undergraduate education by the Ministry of Education. 6 of them were assessed as excellent. Hundreds of thousands of graduates educated at universities and colleges for ethnic minorities work in different parts of the country, most of them go back to ethnic areas and play an important role for meritorious deeds, to promote Minzu economic construction, scientific and technological progress, cultural prosperity, and social stability. According to the statistics of 2007, the employment rate of graduates from universities and colleges for ethnic minorities was over 80%, and the employment rate of graduates is over 95% (Wang, 2007).

2.4.2.6 Fruitful Scientific Research and Results

Since the founding of the P.R. China, universities and colleges for ethnic minorities have gradually changed from teaching only to paying equal attention to teaching and scientific research work, which not only improved the interaction between teaching and scientific research, but also has contributed a large number of important scientific research results in basic theoretical research, applied technology research and other areas. Research has been focused especially on major theoretical and practical issues in the ethnic minorities' areas. A number of landmark results have been achieved in ethnology, anthropology, national theory and policy, national history and culture, minority language, information processing (among others). These results and achievements have had a great impact on the academic community in China and abroad. In the "Tenth Five-Year" period, universities and colleges for ethnic minorities supervised by State Ethnic Affairs Commission completed 108 state-level scientific research projects. The National Natural Science Foundation of China and the

National Social Science Fund reached 36 and 68 respectively among all the projects. The research funds were 14.405 million yuan, 11,769 textbooks and monographs, and 19,080 academic articles were published (Ministry of Education, 2012).

2.4.2.7 Significant Improvement of School Conditions

The conditions for running ethnic colleges have changed from below standards to substantial improvements. The state has increased its investments in infrastructure, teaching and research in colleges and universities for ethnic minorities every year. Funding for universities and colleges for ethnic minorities supervised by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission has increased from more than 200 million in 1999 to 1.22 billion yuan in 2007. The total area of all campuses reached 3.21 million square meters, and the total assets of teaching and research equipment reached 796 million yuan. The general collection of books reached 8.26 million, the number of teaching computers to 24,131, and students' capacity in multimedia classrooms reached 102,675. The teaching space, student living facilities, sports venues, and campus ecological environment have also been greatly improved. More than half of the universities and colleges for ethnic minorities have been built or are building new campuses.

2.4.2.8 Further Improvement of Special Policies and Measures for Universities and Colleges for Ethnic Minorities

According to the needs of the development in the western region and the modernization of the ethnic areas, in order to speed up the training of ethnic minority professionals, the Chinese government has adopted the measures of "Extra entrance scores enrollment for the minority candidates," "Preparatory course," "Targeted enrollment" and "Targeted distribution," to increase the training quality for ethnic minority talents. By 2001, more than 100 colleges and universities in 17 provinces have run preparatory classes and ethnic classes, with the enrollment amount of more than 11,000 (Zhou, 2004). As to the policy for undergraduate and graduate students' enrollment, the government has taken the measure of "Priority admission with same conditions," "Extra entrance scores in admission" and other measures for ethnic candidates to create more opportunities for their further studies. At the same time, the state has offered college enrollment indicators to ethnic minorities and the western region, raising the enrollment rate of ethnic minority students. In order to further strengthen the construction of disciplines and the cultivation of high-level talents in minority areas, the state has taken full account of the characteristics of ethnic areas and adopted a policy increasing the disciplinary scope and indicators in universities and colleges for ethnic minorities, authorizing some provinces in the western regions to approve the authority of awarding master's degrees by themselves. At present, the relevant provinces and districts of the western region have more than 70 doctoral degrees,

about 700 master's degrees; more than 20 colleges and universities with a doctoral degree-granting authority, 53 colleges and universities and scientific research institutions with a master's degree-granting authority (Zhang, 2011, pp. 187–189). Inner Mongolia University, Yunnan University, Guangxi University, Xinjiang University and Yanbian University and five other universities have been selected into the “211 Project.” In addition, in order to support the development of Minzu traditional medicine, Tibetan medicine and Mongolian medicine have been added to the subject directory. Meanwhile, the state gives a strong support for the construction of colleges and universities in the ethnic minorities and the western regions. These measures have strongly supported the development of higher education for ethnic minorities.

2.4.2.9 Status, Function and Distinctive Features of Universities and Colleges for Ethnic Minorities

The characteristics of colleges and universities are continuously and gradually distinct. In order to meet the needs of ethnic areas, universities in China have actively implemented Minzu policies and cultivated a small number of ethnic minority talents in colleges and universities, which are of great significance and obvious advantages in the whole higher education system. These universities have achieved the overall improvement of the education of all ethnic groups. Facing the impact and challenges of modernization on Minzu culture, the state has made a lot of achievements mainly in the mission of Minzu education, the educational function of Minzu culture, the significance and path of school education inheriting Minzu culture, and reflection of Minzu culture by local and school-based curricula.

2.4.3 Ethnic Vocational Education

2.4.3.1 China Attaches Great Importance to the Development of Relevant Policies and Structures

“The Twelfth Five-Year Plan for Chinese National Education Development” (2012) pointed out: “A number of vocational colleges and majors, with features of protecting the heritage of Minzu culture and art, folk art, especially intangible cultural heritage, should be supported.” China has always attached great importance to the comprehensive development of the economy in ethnic minority areas, with particular emphasis on education which played a significant role in economic and social development in ethnic areas. Moreover, with the development of social modernization in ethnic areas and the deepening of reforms, the topic of vocational education in ethnic minority areas has become the focus of social discussions.

Since the foundation of P.R. China, vocational education has always accompanied development and reform. China is fully aware of the important strategic function of

vocational education for the development of the entire economy and society, especially in ethnic minority areas. Therefore, the state promulgated a series of laws and regulations. “Vocational Education Law of People’s Republic of China” implemented from September 1 in 1996 clearly pointed out: “The law is formulated according to the education law and labor law in order to implement the strategy of rejuvenating the country through science and education, developing vocational education, improving the quality of workers, promoting socialist modernization. This law is an important part of China’s educational progress, and an important way for economic and social development as well as employment. The law clearly mentioned support to the development of vocational education in ethnic minority areas.” The “Policy of speeding up the reform and development of vocational education in ethnic areas,” issued on July 28, 2000, by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Ministry of Education pointed out: “The development of vocational education is the necessary and effective means for achieving two fundamental changes and improvement of the quality of workers for ethnic minorities and in ethnic areas.” Since the Reform and Opening-up, ethnic minority education has developed by leaps and bounds. There have been a number of effective and model vocational schools, which have promoted the development of the local economy and society and eliminated poverty for ethnic minorities.

2.4.3.2 Gradually Expand the Capacity of Schools While Increasing the Quality of Education

In 1997, the number of students enrolled in secondary vocational schools in most of the ethnic minority areas in the west regions was 50% lower than the total number of students enrolled in all middle schools (Yan, 1999). The overall quantity and the scale were relatively small. The level of vocational education structure, school layout, and mode of school running cannot meet the needs of economic construction and social development in ethnic areas. In recent years, with further and deepened reform of the vocational education system, management system and operational mechanism, the phenomenon of neglecting vocational education gradually disappears. School capacity, conditions, educational quality, and school efficiency have been further improved (State Ethnic Affairs Commission & the Ministry of Education, 2000).

In 2002, “The decision on the promotion of vocational education reform and development by State Council” pointed out: “Since the Reform and Opening-up, China’s vocational education has been greatly developed. All vocational schools at all levels of education and vocational training have made remarkable achievements, with training and cultivating a large number of high-quality workers and practical personnel for the socialist modernization construction.”

2.4.3.3 The Formation of a Comprehensive School System

China's national vocational and technical education has developed rapidly, to achieve the construction plan for county-level vocational education center. There has been flexible innovation, such as "6 plus 1," "9 plus 1," and comprehensive high school (among others), which has led to the social development of ethnic areas.

2.4.4 *Development of National Unity Education*

The state has promoted Minzu theory and policy, Minzu laws and regulations and Minzu basic knowledge in the whole country. The experience of both history and reality has proved that the unity of all Minzus is an important guarantee of the unification of the state, political stability, economic development and social progress.

The CPC and the State Council have always attached great importance to Minzu unity education in schools. Since 1994, the Ministry of Education and the State Minority Committee have issued a number of documents to guide this work, and put forward specific programs and perspectives for it. In November 2008, the General Office of the Ministry of Education and the General Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission issued the "Guidelines for the Education of National Unity in Schools (Trial)" to further clarify the guiding ideology, objectives and tasks, and the main contents of carrying out and strengthening the work of national unity education. "The decision on accelerating development of Minzu education by the State Council" (2015) has clearly put forward the "establishment normalization mechanism for national unity education" for the first time in the form of the State Council documents. The document has also constructed the school national unity education system completely. It also offers comprehensive guidance for the content of national unity education, curriculum system, teaching modes and methods, teaching materials and teaching resources development, teaching supervision and other aspects. It has made arrangements in particular for the national unity education curriculum in a variety of schools at all levels. It is a necessity and complement of the national unity education curriculum system to offer the party's national theory and policy courses in colleges and universities, vocational colleges (including higher vocational schools and secondary vocational schools). Based on national unity education, each ethnic minority student can deepen their common sense of the history of the motherland, and constantly enhance their identity as Chinese, so as to maintain and safeguard national unity, as well as promote the common progress of all Minzus and prosperity of the motherland. National unity education in schools has been discussed and formulated in 2017.

In short, the maintenance of national unity is the prerequisite for national solidarity, prosperity, social harmony and scientific development. Considering today's new social conditions, it is an important foundation and common responsibility of each citizen in the country to preserve the social stability of the country to strengthen national unity, to safeguard the reunification of the motherland and to oppose national

division. Educational administrative departments at all levels and all kinds of schools at all levels should regard the work of national unity education as an important task.

2.5 Overview and Achievements of Bilingual Education in China

Bilingual teaching is the basic content and main characteristic of Chinese education for ethnic minorities. The CPC and the state have always regarded the protection of minority languages as one of the main contents of the establishment of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmonious ethnic relations. Since the founding of the P.R. China, the issue of the use of minority languages has been clearly stated in the Constitution and the relevant laws and regulations. The implementation of bilingual teaching in minority schools is a fundamental right granted by law.

2.5.1 Construction and Improvement of Bilingual Education Policy System

Language is not only an important aspect of Minzu culture, but also the basis of Minzu identity. It affords the mission of preserving the value of traditional culture. Most of the world's multiethnic and multilingual countries have clear and specific policies and regulations on minority languages (Banks, 1994; Lee, 2002; Talbot, 2003).

Since 1980, the Chinese central government has issued a series of documents on bilingual teaching, all of which have helped with the establishment of the legal status of bilingual teaching. Bilingual teaching has now spread to the whole nation. On October 1, 1984, the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Autonomy in Ethnic Areas" was enacted, which clearly stipulated that the schools that enroll students of ethnic minorities should be entitled to use textbooks of minority languages and provide lessons in minority languages, while higher levels of primary schools or middle schools should offer Chinese courses to promote Mandarin. The "Law of the People's Republic of China on Compulsory Education" promulgated in 1986 also stipulated that schools should promote the use of Mandarin. Schools mainly recruiting students of ethnic minorities can teach in minority languages. In July 2002, the "Decision on deepening reform to accelerate the development of national education," issued by the State Council, pointed out: "vigorously promote 'bilingual teaching' in primary and secondary schools for ethnic minorities, deal with the relationship between minority language teaching and Chinese teaching, and deploy 'bilingual teaching' work in the primary and secondary schools for ethnic minorities. The aim of this work is to form a minority language and Chinese teaching curriculum system in the primary and secondary schools for ethnic minorities gradually. Some

regions with better educational conditions should offer foreign language teaching. The local education development plan should include ‘bilingual teaching’ teaching materials.” At this point, bilingual teaching is no longer just teaching experiments and exploration, but it is already regarded as a kind of state activity.

In July 2010, the “National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020)” stressed the importance to strengthen support for education in ethnic minority areas, and vigorously promote bilingual teaching. “Decision of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of National Education” (2015) noted: Each educational institute should promote bilingual education scientifically and steadily. The national common language education should be unswervingly implemented combined with practice, to ensure that minority students know how to use Mandarin and minority college graduates can master it. At the same time, respect and protection of the rights of ethnic minorities to use minority languages during the education process, and the continuous improvement of the teaching of minority languages are pushed forward. In areas where common language education is weak, the local education authorities should set the understanding of both Mandarin and minority languages as a basic teaching goal, and therefore an effective connection from preschool to primary and secondary schools at all stages can be established. The teaching system should be compatible with the students’ learning abilities. Teachers and the teaching resources meet the needs of the bilingual teaching system.

2.5.2 Achievements in Bilingual Education in Various Ethnic Areas

In 1984, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region issued a document, which added Chinese classes first in urban minority schools from the Grade 3 primary school classes, requiring minority students to both master the minority language and a certain level of Chinese until their graduation from high school, in order to initially realize the training objectives of students’ “mastering Chinese and minority language.” The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Regions in 1980 resumed the implementation of the use of Zhuang characters, and began Zhuang culture teaching experiment in some primary and secondary schools in the Zhuang area in 1981. In 1990, the Autonomous Region decided that the management of teaching experiments for Zhuang characters should be transferred by the minority language council to the education administrative department, which meant that the Zhuang characters teaching was included in basic education. In 1987, the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Jilin Province made three decisions: First, the department of Minority Education Reform was established. Second, the department focused on bilingual teaching and launched the overall reform experiment for minority basic education. Third, the costs required by these reform experiments should be included in the state budget. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region encouraged minority students to learn the use of the minority language and national common language. This area issued a series of policies to

promote Mongolian bilingual education. The policy of 12 years of free education was implemented for bilingual students learning Mongolian and Chinese. The local government also further improved the subjects for college entrance examination and scores counting method for the students learning Mongolian and Chinese together. They have also made preferential policies to promote the employment of university graduates mastering Mongolian and Chinese.

In 2017, the state issued “The guidance on strengthening the bilingual education of ethnic minorities.” The Chinese government has clearly formulated the four basic principles of bilingual teaching of ethnic minorities, six major tasks and overall goals. The four basic principles are: promoting bilingual teaching, overall planning the teaching task, highlighting the key points of teaching, guiding the teaching work according to local conditions, improving teaching quality. The policy calls for the establishment of a relatively perfect connection of preschool education, compulsory education, high school education, higher education, while linking up general education, vocational education, practical training of farmers and herdsmen before 2020. The local educational system should form a complete set of teaching mode, teaching resources, teachers, and examinations. It is conducive to the implementation of bilingual education system with ensuring quality education and innovative personnel training according to coordination of the common language education and the teaching of minority language. The overall goals have been set already, such as modern distance education in each class should be popularized, and bilingual education should develop rapidly. The stages of bilingual education should include: preschool bilingual education acts as enlightenment; compulsory education as a basis for bilingualism; while high school students can communicate bilingually, and qualified bilingual personnel training can be achieved in the higher education stage.

2.5.3 Bilingual Education Is Based on a Good Teaching System

Since the founding of P.R. China, bilingual teaching has been established as an educational model and has been continuously improved. Bilingual teaching experiments explore new methods for the education of ethnic minorities throughout the whole ethnic areas in China. According to the Middle and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020), China has more than 10,000 bilingual schools, which account for about 10% of all primary and secondary schools in ethnic areas. The number of students taught in bilingual schools is more than 600 million, accounting for about 40% of all the students learning in ethnic minority primary and secondary schools. Nowadays, complete bilingual teaching systems from kindergarten level to higher educational level have been established and developed in ethnic areas to some extent. China has edited and published teaching materials for children, primary and middle schools, junior high schools, high schools, secondary professional education, adult education, vocational and technical education and national higher

education with 29 kinds of ethnic characters of 21 ethnic minority languages (Zhu, 2009). Various subjects of folk textbooks are compiled and published each year with more than 3500 kinds and more than 100 million copies (Xu, 2009). At the same time, colleges, universities and scientific research institutions have also trained a large number of bilingual teachers with different levels of proficiency, who edited and published a large number of applicable bilingual teaching materials and teaching reference books. The establishment of the “Chinese Bilingual Teaching and Research Association of ethnic minorities” is a sign that bilingual teaching research has come to a new stage of development and its formation as a discipline.

The ethnic educational experts from 14 provinces and autonomous regions gathered in Guangxi Province in May 1979 for the conference of “Chinese language teaching experience exchange in colleges of ethnic minorities.” The conference declared the establishment of the “Chinese Teaching Research Association for All College of Ethnic Minorities.” In 1983, the association was renamed as “The Chinese Teaching Research Association for Ethnic Minorities.” The name was changed in 1985. The Bilingual Education Committee was under the management of the Ministry of Chinese Minority Education in 2012. The committee and association have become the links for the discipline construction and development of bilingual education. Their research formed the theoretical framework for the bilingual education discipline, and promoted the development of bilingual teaching. Until now, the Bilingual Education Committee of the Ethnic Minorities and the Bilingual Teaching and Research Association for Ethnic Minorities have also held Minzu bilingual education conferences from time to time.

2.5.4 Ethnic Bilingual Education Has an Important Status and Role

The implementation of bilingual education was to safeguard the national security and to achieve long-term stability. To protect and develop minority languages and apply them to the practice of bilingual education is conducive to enhancing minority people’s sense of belonging to the Chinese culture. It is helpful to improve the centripetal force and cohesion of ethnic minorities and enhance the consolidation and stability of the country.

2.5.4.1 The Implementation of Bilingual Education Provides an Effective Way to Inherit and Protect Minority Languages and Cultures

Each language does not only preserve the social memory of a Minzu, but also embodies the spiritual will and cultural centripetal force of a given Minzu. Therefore, the protection of a language is actually equivalent to protecting a culture.

2.5.4.2 The Implementation of Bilingual Education Is to Serve Local Socio-Economic Development Requirements

Bilingual education cultivates a number of talents not only “for the world, for the country, for the future,” but also “familiar with the local conditions and serve the local people with wideness insight” in ethnic areas for a long term (Yin, 2005, pp. 65–66).

2.5.4.3 The Implementation of Bilingual Education and the Need for the Development of Individuals

It is more conducive to the employment of students and improvement of post-employment training in the future through enhancing the overall quality of ethnic students through bilingual teaching. It has been proved that it is more powerful and of great benefit for the growth of the individual when each ethnic student can learn Chinese well on the basis of learning their own ethnic minority language. Therefore, it is of great significance to strengthen research of ethnic bilingual education, which is an important part of Minzu education and the social development of ethnic minority areas. Bilingual education has gradually become the focus of the reform and development of minority education. Bilingual education has made great achievements in Mongolian in Northern China, in Korean Minzu in Northeast China, in Uygur Minzu in Northwest and Southwest China, Tibetan Minzu, and each ethnic minority in Southwest China. However, the development of bilingual education in various provinces, autonomous regions and ethnic minorities is extremely uneven and the difference is significant (Sude, 2013).

2.5.5 Achievements in Bilingual Education Research

Since the founding of P.R. China for more than 60 years, China’s ethnic bilingual education has made remarkable achievements. Not only a large number of topics have been focused on, but also a lot of works have been published. Monographs and articles published on the topic include “Minority Education in China in the twentieth Century—Theory, Policy and Practice” (2002), “Cultural Changes and Bilingual Education—Fieldwork and Text Compilation of Educational Anthropology in Liangshan Yi Community” (2001) and “Objects, characteristics, contents and method of Chinese Ethnic Bilingual Education Research” (1996) written by Teng; “Chinese national conditions and bilingual education” (1996) written by Dai and Dong; “Status and development trend of Chinese Minority Bilingual Education” (1998) written by Dai and Guan; “A Study on the Development of Running a School in Ethnic Universities” (2015) written by Lv; “Mongolian and Chinese Bilingual Education Research: from theory to practice” (2016), “Bilingual Education for Ethnic Minorities: Experience, Problems and Strategies” (2017), “Development Report of Chinese Ethnic Education—Reality and Prospects: Bilingual Education in Ethnic Areas” (2017),

“Ethnic Education Policy: qualitative research and case studies” (2013), “Research on Bilingual Education for Ethnic Minority” (2004), “National Identity Education: strategic choice for the development of education in the border of Yunnan Province,” “Construction of Small Micro-schools in Ethnic Regions With the Background of Balanced Development of Education” (2016) written by Sude; “Development and Situation of Ethnic Bilingual Education Research in China For the Past 30 Years” written by Li; “Several Issues in Bilingual Studies in China’s Ethnic Areas” (1984) finished by Ma and Dai; “History and Development of Minority Bilingual Education” (2003) written by H. Y. Wang; “Research Status and Trends of Chinese Ethnic Minorities Bilingual Education” (1997) written by Chen; “A Review of the Historical Process of Bilingual Education of Ethnic Minorities in China (2009) written by Li. “Chinese Ethnic Minorities and Education—theory, policy and practice in the twentieth Century” written by Teng. There is a comprehensive introduction to solve the country’s bilingual education in the “Chinese National Conditions and Bilingual Education,” which follows the principles of bilingual education, calling for the establishment of bilingualism and bilingual education policies with Minzu characteristics from the perspective of Minzu reality and the bilingual laws that conform to their own Minzu conditions.

All ethnic groups in Chinese history have made their own important contribution to the scientific protection of ethnic minority languages. It has important theoretical and practical significance for us to study the bilingual education of ethnic minorities carefully, when we inherit and carry forward Chinese cultural traditions, promote the development of national educational science, and enhance cultural prosperity and development as well as social harmony. The state provides strong support for the development of bilingual teachers, training, teaching and research, teaching materials development and publishing. It provides policy support for students who are enrolled in bilingual education and encourages ethnic teachers and students of Han Minzu to learn minority languages, and teachers and students from ethnic areas to learn minority languages from each other. Therefore, the establishment of bilingual education supervision, evaluation and quality monitoring mechanism can be completed. In short, through bilingual education, we can maintain the diversity of the world’s languages and cultures, promote understanding and cooperation between different ethnic groups, enable children to have equal survival skills, cultivate students to obtain a positive attitude toward different cultures and the maintenance of national unity (Xu & Wu, 2006).

2.6 Basic Values in Ethnic Education

2.6.1 Ethnic Socialist Education

As an important part of Chinese education system, ethnic education must always adhere to the direction of socialist education. According to the basic tasks of the CPC

during the period of socialist construction, as well as the reality in ethnic regions, teachers and students of various ethnic groups should increase their theoretical level of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the thinking of the “Three Represents” and the education of the CPC’s basic line, strengthen the CPC’s national policy and national unity, maintain national unity with patriotism education, cultivate builders and successors for socialism with moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development. Great importance should be paid to ethnic education work which can play the important role of consolidating and developing the socialist ethnic relations of “equality, unity and mutual assistance” (Ha, 2009).

2.6.2 Increase Investment in Education and Deepen Education Reforms

Most of our ethnic minorities are located in the cold and poor land with poor natural conditions, weak economic basis, difficult life of farmers and herdsmen, and therefore are relatively weak in thoughts and understanding of education. To accelerate the development of education in these areas, it is necessary to increase the intensity of educational funding by government at all levels and take a policy of focusing on the needy areas. At the same time, we must speed up the pace of education reform, optimize the educational structure, adjust the school layout, improve the quality of education and school efficiency, accelerate the development of education, and promote national unity and progress with common prosperity.

2.6.3 Seeking Truth from Facts and Local Conditions

China’s ethnic minorities are not only widely distributed, but also very different in their natural environments, languages, customs, and religious beliefs. The social, economic, cultural, educational development in each region is uneven because of historical reasons. In addition to follow the general rules of education, ethnic education should also keep to its own particularities (Xiong & Yan, 2007). The development of minority education should proceed from the actualities and characteristics of ethnic minorities and ethnic areas, adopt flexible and diverse forms of running schools, and put forward different requirements according to local conditions.

2.6.4 “Bilingual” and “Multilingual” Teaching

To maintain the prosperity of a nation, we must learn excellent culture, advanced science and technology from and with each other. For ethnic minorities in China,

besides studying and using the minority language, they should also strengthen the teaching of Chinese language and actively promote Putonghua, in accordance with the requirements which are conducive to the long-term development of the nation, the improvement of ethnic quality, and promotion of scientific and cultural exchanges among all ethnic groups. Ethnic primary and secondary schools with better conditions can also offer foreign language classes to meet the needs of modernization (Yue, 2006).

2.6.5 Seek Support from the Whole Nation and Developed Regions

Due to their historical and cultural backgrounds, the economic and cultural situation in ethnic regions is relatively backward with poor bases of education. Therefore, the work of educational promotion faces difficulties (Yu, 2004). To improve this situation, ethnic areas should attach great importance to education, and vigorously implement the strategy of rejuvenating the country through science and education, overcome difficulties and accelerate the development of ethnic education. At the same time, strong support and help from the whole country as well as from developed areas are also required.

2.6.6 Uphold the Principle of Separation of Religion and National Education

Article 11 of the “Law on Ethnic Regional Autonomy of the People’s Republic of China” stipulates that: “No one shall use religion to destroy social order, impair the health of the citizens or impede the State educational system.” Therefore, no one shall engage in religious activities at school. It is the responsibility of the school to educate teachers and students on atheism and materialism so that teachers and students can establish a scientific view of the world.

We must continue to sum up the ethnic national experience in all aspects of educational theories. Ethnic education should be guided by the spirit of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the “Three Represents,” the scientific concept of development, the spirit of the 18th National Congress of the CPC, the spirit of the Second, the Third and the Fourth Plenary Sessions of the 18th National Congress, and the important speech of General Secretary Xi Jinping. Ethnic education should aim to protect the rights of ethnic minorities in minority areas, to improve the scientific and cultural quality of all ethnic groups, to inherit the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and to vigorously cultivate and carry forward the core values of the socialist nation. Scientific guiding ideology and educational goal should always maintain national unity and social stability (Zhang, 2011, pp. 109–111). Governmental policies

for ethnic education should be based on the reality of ethnic regions so that people of all ethnic groups can enhance their identity of the Chinese nation and Chinese culture. Ethnic education work should adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party of China, to the combination of national and regional influencing factors, to optimize educational structure and improve the quality of education, the rule of law, the actual situation and conditions in various ethnic areas. Education should also correctly understand and deal with the relationship between the intercommunity and specificity of general education and ethnic education (Wen, 2009).

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Chapter 3

Policy Analyses of Minority Education in China



3.1 Background and Methods

3.1.1 Background

There are about 106 million Chinese ethnic minority individuals, who account for 8.5% of the total population (Zhang, 2011, pp. 8–10). How can we ensure that children of ethnic minorities receive high-quality education while at the same time promoting their cultural identity? This is a question of “culture and development” in the field of education for ethnic minorities, as well as one of the dilemmas of Chinese current Minzu education policies. This chapter focuses on the UNDP–Spain MDG subproject named “*Strengthening Policies and Institutional Capacity While Developing Cultural Sensitivity and Implementing High-quality Education for Minority Children.*” The gist of this program is to solve the issue of “culture and development” by improving the validity of existing education policies that serve for the specific needs of ethnic minorities. Eight United Nations agencies work together on this issue through the UNDP–Spain MDG Achievement Fund “Framework for Chinese Culture and Partnership Development.” The overall goals are improving the participation of ethnic minorities in cultural, socioeconomic, and political life through the improvement of public policies and services, while empowering ethnic minorities to manage cultural resources and benefit from cultural-based economic development. It is unique in recognizing the importance of “culture” as a cross-regional theme in the field of development: not only recognizing cultural diversity as “the common heritage of mankind is necessary for all humans,” but also discovering the significance of an appropriate cultural sensitivity to ethnic minorities’ demands on development. The project seeks to “promote both the development of ethnic minorities and the preservation of their rich multiculturalism and identity” by creating a method of integrating the multiculturalism of ethnic minorities into the framework of development, in order to make it a policy foundation for policymakers to adopt and implement directly.

“*Strengthening Policies and Institutional Capacity while Developing Cultural Sensitivity and Implementing High-quality Education for Minority Children*” serves

as a subproject of the “culture and development” project. It aims at strengthening the decision-making and technical capacity, improving the educational system, solving major problems in ethnic minorities’ education, developing and implementing culturally sensitive basic education models for ethnic minority children. The project focuses on the introduction of multiculturalism and the improvement of educational quality in the process of constructing policies and institutions and regards them as an “inclusive” strategy to solve and respond to diverse educational needs based on culture, ethnicity, and language. “Inclusion” does not only mean a goal, but also a tool, including changes in the implementation of educational policies, methods, and strategies. Therefore, this project aims to solve the following problems:

1. Two challenges of minority education are the foci. The first is to increase enrollment rates and school performance of students of ethnic minorities, while the other is to strengthen the organic link between Minzu education, Minzu cultures, and Minzu languages in order to improve the quality of education for ethnic minorities.
2. Education policies are designed with flexibility in order to meet the needs of different places and different situations and to protect their cultural diversity. It is problematic if students’ features and diversity are ignored. There would be a trend of assimilation if all schools would adopt the same curriculum design and test system without any flexibility.
3. The government shall protect and reinforce minority cultures, values, and identity while improving their education level, in order to ensure that children of ethnic minorities have a sound basic education in the areas of acceptance, development of culture and language. In order to retain cultural diversity while promoting social unity, decision-makers shall improve their capacity of stipulating and implementing education policy taking into account cultural sensitivity and ensuring the quality of language and culture education for students of ethnic minorities.

Therefore, firstly, we shall check whether the existing education policies and decisions could serve for the specific needs of education for ethnic minorities. Secondly, we shall put forward consultations for implementing education policy and strategy development concerning cultural sensitivity and relativity. The UNESCO proposes to adopt the following actions:

1. To accumulate, evaluate, and analyze, the existing policies and documents from the perspective of education for ethnic minorities with a focus on Guizhou, Yunnan, and Qinghai provinces.
2. To examine the implementation of education for ethnic minorities policy based on individual research and community research and specify the potential challenges, discrepancies, and advantages.
3. To analyze field-level information on national and provincial policies and to make policy recommendations to identify effective actions to implement educational policies for ethnic minorities.

4. To implement the capacity development for decision-makers and administrators in terms of carrying out policies of cultural sensitivity education and elementary education for ethnic minorities.

Based on the aim and plan of the project “*Study on China’s Minorities’ Elementary Education Policies*,” project members have finished the first phase of the research, which is to arrange and analyze policy texts, and then edit a *report on the analysis of China’s ethnic minorities’ elementary education policies*. By analyzing the problems discovered, based on policy analysis, the report confirms the topic for discussion of the next step and thereby confirms the next research focus.

3.1.2 Research Strategies

Policies for the elementary education of ethnic minorities include laws and stipulations made by central and local governments, and from state leaders’ speeches. China is a centralized state, with policies stipulated and implemented from the top. Therefore, the policy for the elementary education for ethnic minorities is either made by the central or local government. Considering the differences between different ethnic minority areas, policies will differ from each other as a result.

Based on the aforementioned framework, this chapter examines the basic education policies of ethnic minorities from two dimensions: (1) the provisions on the protection of minority education rights; (2) cultural sensitivity of policies.

Policy texts from the past 10 years stem mainly from the official Web sites of the central government, the Ministry of Education, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, education administration departments, as well as a compilation of policy documents published by the central and local governments, and policy texts collected by the project teams in provinces and counties (Table 3.1).

3.1.3 Theoretical Foundations

Educational policies that are geared toward specific groups and communities and their living places are based on a set of concepts and mechanisms. As a kind of political action, the formulation and implementation of policy cannot be separated from ideology. “Ideology... or the party’s policy objective, regardless of being a symbolic sign, plays a vital role in policy implementation, and is viewed as the orientation of action” (Hill, 2004). “The party organization is a systemized political structure that plays a kernel and guiding role in the process of reign” (Wei, 1998). The political ideology of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has guided a clear direction for Minzu education policy formulation and implementation. Under the guidance of Marxist theory and the guidance of the CPC, the principle of handling ethnic affairs and ethnic relations has been formed, namely “achieving equality, unity,

Table 3.1 Research summary

Contents	1. Laws and regulations targeting elementary education for ethnic minorities 2. Universal elementary education policy		
Dimensions	1. Guarantee the education rights for ethnic minorities 2. Culture sensitivity of policies		
Timespan	From the founding of PRC in 1949–2008		
Classification	National level	laws and regulations made by the central government	
	Local level	Autonomous regions of Ethnic minorities	Non-autonomous regions of Ethnic minorities
		Policy texts issued at autonomous region level (provincial level) At autonomous prefectures level At autonomous counties level At villages level	Policy texts issued at provincial level At regional level At counties level
Collection methods	Policy texts from official Web sites of the central government, the provincial government, administration departments, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the compilation of policy documents compiled and published by the central and local governments		

harmony, and common prosperity of all ethnic groups,” which serves as cornerstone for law and policy formulation for education.

“The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China” is the fundamental legal basis for the formulation of education for ethnic minorities’ policy. It defines education for ethnic minorities and its principles for implementation as well as the basic aims. Four amendments were added since it was issued with the same implementation objectives: adherence to principles for educational autonomy, guarantee of minority’s freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written language, and help with speeding up economic and cultural development in ethnic minorities’ areas (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Policy Text (1)

The People’s Republic of China is a unified multiethnic country created by the people of all nationalities jointly. The socialist ethnic relations of equality, solidarity, and mutual assistance have been established and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard national unity, we should oppose dominant chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, but also against local chauvinism. The state makes every effort to promote the common prosperity of the various nationalities throughout the country.

Chapter I General Principles Article 4: The state shall, in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the ethnic minorities, help the various ethnic

minority areas to accelerate their economic and cultural development. All ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own languages, and they have the freedom to maintain or reform their own customs and habits.

Article 119 in Section 6: The organs of autonomous government in national autonomous areas shall independently manage the local educational, scientific, and cultural, health and sports undertakings, and protect and organize the cultural heritage, development, and prosperity of the ethnic minority areas.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China (2004)

3.1.4 Legal Bases for Educational Autonomy in Autonomous Areas for Ethnic Minorities

“*The Constitution of the People's Republic of China*,” “*Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy and Regulations for Autonomous Villages*” define educational autonomy in autonomous areas. This is what the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy* says, for example:

1. Ethnic minorities' local governments in autonomous areas can make decisions on their own education programs, including the establishment of schools, the way of school running, course contents, and procedures of enrollment within the state education policies and relevant laws (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2: Policy Text (2)

Article 36: Ethnic minorities' local governments of the autonomous areas can decide their own local education programs, including the establishment of schools, the length of study, the way of school running, course contents, language of instruction and procedures of enrollment, and develop independently their own type of education based on their ethnic minority characteristics and within the state education policies and relevant laws.

—*Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy (2001)*

2. The policies clarify the educational tasks and concrete developing measures, such as the forms of running schools, funds, teaching languages, and textbooks of ethnic minorities, by the ethnic minorities' local governments of the autonomous areas for harsh, remote, and poverty-stricken farming and pastoral areas (see Box 3.3).

Box 3.3: Policy Text (3)

Article 37: Ethnic minorities' local governments of the autonomous areas can decide their own local education programs, eliminate illiteracy, establish schools, and universalize the system of nine-year compulsory education ...

Minorities' local governments of the autonomous areas shall establish national public primary and secondary schools based on boarding and scholarships system for students coming from rural, mountainous and poverty-stricken ethnic minority areas, guarantee them to finish the academic work of nine-year compulsory education. School funding and grants shall be subsidized by local finance. In case of Local financial difficulties, finance from higher-level government should give subsidies.

Schools and other educational institutions admitting mainly ethnic minorities shall adopt minority language textbooks and give lessons in minority language. They shall circumstantially initiate Chinese course from lower to higher grades in primary schools and promote the nationwide use of Putonghua and standard Chinese character. Governments at all levels shall provide financial support for translation and publication of minority language teaching materials.

Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy (2001)

3. The policy defines the obligations and responsibilities which the state shall fulfill in the development of education in minority autonomous regions (see Box 3.4).

Box 3.4: Policy Text (4)

Article 71 The state shall increase education investment in autonomous regions and take concrete measures to help with speeding up the implementation of nine-year compulsory education and other education to enhance scientific and cultural level of all peoples. Government of all levels shall adopt various measures to help minority children students with financial difficulties to finish school studies.

State shall hold minority middle schools in economically developed regions or set up class for minority children in general secondary schools to offer secondary education.

The state shall help the autonomous regions to cultivate and train teachers of all nationalities, organize, and encourage teachers of all nationalities and qualified college graduates to participate in teaching course in autonomous regions and give them appropriate preferential treatment.

Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy (2001)

Although the basic stipulations on educational autonomy of “*Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy*” remain basically unchanged since its amendment in 2001, some provisions became more specific.

1. Financial support shall be made to help students of ethnic minorities from pastoral, mountainous, and poverty-stricken areas to finish compulsory education.
2. The government shall support financially the translation and publication of teaching materials in minority languages.
3. The state shall fulfill the obligation and responsibility to develop education for ethnic minorities in autonomous areas (Box 3.5).

Box 3.5: Policy Text (5)	
<p>Article 37: Organs of self-government in autonomous areas shall establish national public primary and secondary schools based on boarding and scholarships system for minority students coming from pastoral, mountainous, and poverty-stricken areas, guarantee them to finish the academic work of nine-year compulsory education</p>	<p>Article 37: Departments of self-government in autonomous areas shall establish national public primary and secondary schools based on boarding and scholarships system for minority students coming from rural, mountainous, and poverty-stricken areas, guarantee them to finish the academic work of nine-year compulsory education. School funding and grant shall be subsidized by local finance. If met financial difficulty, higher leading bodies shall provide subsidy Schools and other educational institutions admitting mainly ethnic minorities shall adopt minority language textbooks and give lessons in minority language. They shall circumstantially initiate Chinese course from lower to higher grades in primary schools and promote the nationwide use of Putonghua and standard Chinese character. Governments at all levels shall provide financial support for translation and publication of minority language teaching materials <i>Law of The People’s Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy (2001)</i></p>

If one compares the 1984 and the 2001 versions of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy*, for example, one notices some differences. Firstly, both of them adhere to principles for educational autonomy. Secondly, the

2001 version emphasizes and reinforces the conditions and subsidiary measures for implementing education for ethnic minorities' rights, especially the stipulations in funding. Thirdly, the 2001 version specifies the state's responsibility in enhancing education development in minority autonomous regions.

3.1.5 *Educational Law Concerning Minority Elementary Education*

The educational laws concerning Minority Elementary Education include the “*Education Law of The People’s Republic of China*,” “*Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*,” “*Teachers’ Law of the People’s Republic of China*.” As for the “*Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*,” it stipulates the rights to education, school establishment, and language teaching. It also defines the elementary education rights of ethnic minorities, which means that ethnic minorities enjoy an equal right to education and to use their own minority languages. It also defines the responsibility of the state and governments of all levels to provide financial support and teacher training (Box 3.6).

Box 3.6: Policy Text (6)

Chapter One General Principles.

Article 9 Citizens of the People’s Republic of China shall have the right and obligation to receive education. All citizens, regardless of ethnic group, race, sex, occupation, property status or religious belief, shall enjoy equal opportunities for education according to law.

Article 10 The state, according to the characteristics and requirements of the different minority ethnic groups, provides assistance to the development of educational undertakings in regions inhabited by the minority ethnic groups. The state supports and assists the development of educational undertakings in the remote and poverty-stricken areas. The state supports and develops educational undertakings for the disabled.

Article 12 The spoken and written Chinese language shall be the basic spoken and written language in schools’ teaching and other institutions of education. In schools and other institutions of education in which students of a minority ethnic group constitute the majority amount, the spoken and written language used by the specific ethnic group or commonly used by the local ethnic groups may be used for instruction. Putonghua (common speech based on Beijing pronunciation) and the standardized characters designed for use throughout the country shall be widely used in instruction in schools and other institutions of education.

Chapter 7 Education Funding and Support.

Article 56 State Council and local people’s governments above the county level shall set up special funds for education to support remote and poor areas, as well as minority areas to help with implementing compulsory education.

—*Education Law of the People’s Republic of China (1995)*

With the development of Chinese society, these laws were amended. For example, the “*Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*” is the basic law to the implementation of nine-year compulsory education, and it requires that all children and adolescents of school age receive education.

1. Always adhere to the stipulation of individual rights to receive compulsory education.
2. Add the provision of ensuring completion of compulsory education in minority autonomous areas.

The 1986 version of “*The Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*” mainly includes the equal rights to education, instruction language in school, and state aid for minority groups to implement compulsory education. In 2006, the revised “*Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*” was expanded to be more specific. The main contents are as follows: First, it requires compulsory education for children and adolescents through educational resource allocation and financial support. Second, it enhances counterpart support and cooperation of different regions as a priority. Third, the same goes for setting up classes for minority children in economically developing areas. Fourth, it encourages qualified college graduates to participate in teaching courses in autonomous regions by appropriate preferential treatment.

3. On the changes in the language of instruction used in compulsory education

Article 6 of the 1986 version of the “*Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China*” stipulates that schools admitting minority children might apply their language as the language of instruction, while the 2006 version did not mention this provision (Box 3.7).

Box 3.7: Policy Text (7)

<i>Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China (1986)</i>	<i>Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China (2006)</i>
<p>Article 6 Schools shall promote the use of Mandarin common speech based on Beijing pronunciation, which is in common use throughout the nation</p> <p>Schools in which the majority of students are of minority nationalities may use the spoken and written languages of those nationalities in instruction</p> <p>Article 12 The state should assist areas inhabited by minority nationalities to implement compulsory education by providing them with teachers and funds</p>	<p>Article 6 The State Council and the local people's governments at the county level and above should reasonably allocate the educational resources, promote balanced development of compulsory education, improve the conditions of weak schools, take measures to ensure implementation of the compulsory education policy in rural areas and areas inhabited by ethnic minority groups, and guarantee that school-age children and adolescents from families with financial difficulties and disabled school-age children and adolescents receive compulsory education</p> <p>The state shall organize and encourage the economically developed areas to provide aid to the economically underdeveloped areas in the implementation of the compulsory education policy</p> <p>Article 18 The administrative department of education of the State Council and the people's governments of the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central government should, if necessary, set up schools (classes) in economically developed areas so as to enroll school-age children and adolescents of ethnic minorities</p> <p>Article 31 The teachers engaging in special education should be entitled to the subsidies of special posts. The teachers who work in ethnic minority areas and in remote and poverty-stricken areas should be entitled to subsidies of hard and poverty-stricken areas</p>

The above analysis shows that elementary education laws for ethnic minorities emphasize more education resources allocation, financial aid and staff development, as well as specific and effective measures aiming to enhance compulsory education in

minority regions, but with no stipulation on the instructional language in compulsory education.

These changes enable nicely the implementation of laws and regulations. The reasons are as follows: When laws or regulations are too general, it is hard to implement them since general provisions can be understood differently. When more and more importance is attached to the development of ethnic education and culture, there is a need for more specific and detailed laws and regulations (Zhang, 2010). With the development of society and economy, more money has been put into the improvement of the education of ethnic minorities. The government has realized that without the development of education of ethnic minorities, there will be no real development. What is more, social stability and unity of the country are also needed.

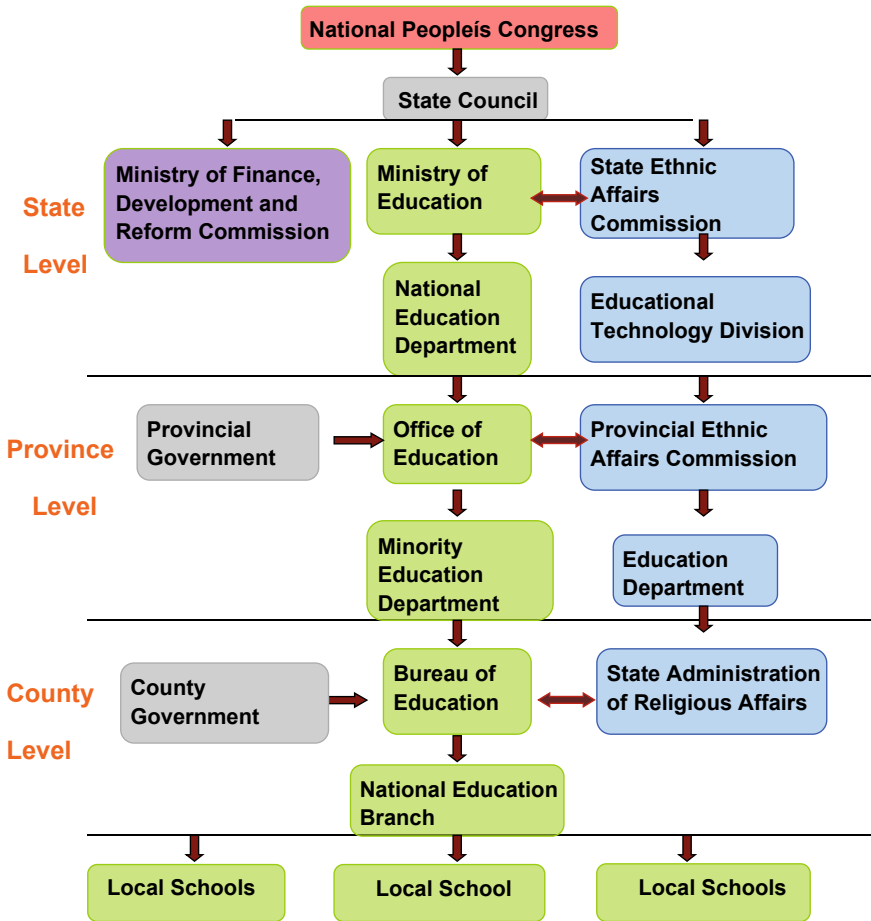
3.1.6 Operation Mechanism of Policies for Elementary Education for Ethnic Minorities

Policy operation relies on a specific administrative management system. Minority elementary education differs from the general one. Therefore, the operation mechanism of elementary education for ethnic minorities has its own features.

Elementary education for ethnic minorities is embodied in the general elementary education system and thus forms a linear operation mechanism of state–province (region)–city (district)–county–village, which demonstrates differences from the general administrative management of elementary education. Due to its specificities and importance, the department for ethnic minority education was established in the education administration department.

At the same time, as the official agency to administrate education for ethnic minorities' affairs, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission researches major problems existing in education for ethnic minority reforms and development under the overall planning scheme, it also participates in formulating laws and regulations and makes special comments and proposals in cooperation with administrative departments to offer aid. The local Ethnic Affairs Commission basically functions the same way. Therefore, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and local Ethnic Affairs Commission are both important official departments which perform the function of education policy stipulation and operation mechanism.

This diagram presents the operating mechanism of education policies for ethnic minorities.



This mechanism ensures that elementary education policies for ethnic minorities can be implemented smoothly. However, it also has disadvantages in the later stages of operation. Due to different goals, departmental interests and responsibilities, different departments carry out the related policies differently. As a result, inconsistency can occur between different departments which to some extent leads to the ignorance on specialty of education for ethnic minorities in the implementation of corresponding policies.

3.2 Analysis of Policy Documents

3.2.1 *Policies for Ethnic Minority Elementary Education at the National Level*

National elementary education policies for ethnic minorities refer to the educational policies issued by the CPC Central Committee, the National People's Congress, the State Council, and various ministries concerning the ethnic minority. These policies can be classified into the following categories:

First, the CPC Central Committee, National People's Congress, the State Council, ministries, and other institutions of education issue documents¹ of provisions for ethnic minorities' areas, such as "*Regional National Autonomy Provisions of The People's Republic of China by the State Council*," "*Ethnic Minority Project of Eleventh Five-year Plan*," "*Plan of Supporting the Development of Ethnic Minorities With Small Population (2005–2010)*," "*Chinese Educational Reforms and Development Program*," and "*The Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Education Reform*,".

Second, the CPC Central Committee, the National People's Congress, the State Council, ministries, and other agencies issued documents on education for ethnic minorities, such as "*Decisions On Deepening the Reforms to Accelerate the Development of National Education by the State Council*," and "*The Notification of Deepening the Reforms in the Financial Mechanism of Rural Compulsory Education*,".

Third, the Ministry of Education implement the laws and policies promulgated by the CPC Central Committee, State Council and other ministries, such as the implementation of "*Regional National Autonomy Provisions of The People's Republic of China by the State Council*," the implementation of the CPC Central Committee's, and State Council's "*Decision on Further Strengthening the Work of National Minorities and Ethnic Minority Areas to Speed up Economic and Social Development*,".

Fourth, the Ministry of Education issues education development plans, outlines, decisions, and notices or some provisions in cooperation with other departments relating to minority elementary education policies, such as "*Counterpart Assistance Among Schools in the Eastern and Western Regions*," "*Two Elementary Education Programs For Ethnic Groups With Population Less Than 100,000 by the Office of the Ministry of Education and Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission*," "*Two Basic Plans in the Western*" (2004–2007), "*Plan for Teachers in the Implementation of Rural Compulsory Education by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Personnel, and Central Office*," "*2003–2007 Action Plan for Invigorating Education*,".

These documents mainly focus on how to ensure the implementation of the "Two Basics" (see Box 3.8). One is to ensure the implementation of the "Two Basics"

¹Including all kinds of regulations, articles, policies, government files, important projects, etc.

in minority regions, in particular among ethnic minorities with a small population, thereby ensuring equal access to education by minority groups. The other is that the government should take various measures, such as the “Two Basics Crucial Program,” “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” “Boarding,” “Counterpart Support,” “Distance Education Projects in Rural Primary and Secondary Schools,” to help ethnic minority areas to achieve the “Two Basics” targets. The government will help with increasing financial investment, improving teaching staff quality, and giving priorities to ethnic minority areas and border areas.

Box 3.8: Policy Text (8)

2... support will go to the key counties for national poverty alleviation and development work with small ethnic populations in particular areas and border areas. Students from poor families that meet the family planning policies will give priority in funding. Special funds for free textbooks should be unified into the provincial treasury management.

Views on Speeding up the Ethnic Poverty Alleviation and Development Work on Key Counties Through Two Exemptions and One Subsidy, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, transmitted by the State Council General Office (2005), priority should be given to ethnic minorities in main poverty alleviation and developing areas, especially in ethnic minority areas where the population is relatively small. Priority is given to poor families who meet the family planning policy. Central special funds for free textbook should be unified into the provincial treasury management, with the implementation of sub-account accounting and centralized payment.

The General Office of the State Council forwarded the opinions of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education on accelerating the work on the implementation of the “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” in main counties for national poverty.

1. Implementing the “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”

Free distribution of textbooks for all students in the poverty-stricken counties is supported by the central government. Local governments should gradually subsidize students boarding in schools. These textbooks are funded entirely by the central government.

2. Construction of the “Boarding System”

In the early 1950s, boarding ethnic schools were set up due to the economic difficulties of ethnic minorities in remote and inaccessible mountain areas. In order to implement the “*State Council’s Decision to Accelerate the Development of National Education and the State Council’s Decision to Strengthen Rural Education*” to implement the Work of the Fifth National Conference of National Education, ethnic areas were invigorated by more investments and constructions since 2005, and the boarding

system management was improved and reevaluated. With the recent readjustments of boarding schools, these kinds of schools are developing much faster, but there are different views on the layout adjustments.

3. Strengthening support and establishing more schools in different areas (see Box 3.9)

Counterpart support is professional support and cooperation between regions and between departments. This requires economically developed areas of education institutions and the western region educational organizations to form relationships as pairs, in order to guarantee the latter can be helped by the former in terms of capital, equipment, teachers, teaching experience, and other aspects.

Box 3.9: Specific Details of the Policy Contents (9)

We should earnestly implement the eastern–western counterpart’s assistance to support the schools in poor areas. Provincial counterparts’ support among schools in large cities (autonomous regions and municipalities), and schools in western poor areas should also be established, so that ethnic minority and poor areas will acquire more finance, equipment, teachers, and teaching experience. Counterpart’s assistance in education will be carried out accordingly.

On Deepening the Reforms to Accelerate the Development of National Education by the State Council (2002)

Schools located in developed areas enrolled students from ethnic minority areas, and education resources in developed areas can be used to promote the quality and development of education for ethnic minorities and completion of the “Two Basics.” In 1984, the first Tibet inland class was set up, and the first Xinjiang inland class began in 2000 (Yu, 2004). These schools greatly helped ethnic minorities to improve their educational level.

4. Strengthening the quality and level of teaching staff (see Box 3.10)

Training for teaching staff is the key to ensure the quality of education, and it is also an important factor in ensuring equality of education for students. The improvement of teachers’ quality in ethnic minority areas mainly includes training qualified bilingual teachers; strengthening teachers’ training; adopting various measures to encourage college graduates to teach in ethnic minority farming and pastoral areas, alpine regions, mountainous areas, and border areas.

Box 3.10: Policy Text (10)

(6) Teachers’ quality should be improved vigorously. Teaching staff quality should be treated as the focus of ethnic education, and education investment

should satisfy the needs of teachers. Teachers in the west and the ethnic minority areas should be trained as “bilingual” teachers, and a qualified “bilingual” teachers’ team is the key to the development of education. The reforms of teachers’ training should be done to improve the county-level teacher’s training. Meanwhile, by using modern means such as distance education, adult education can be employed to improve the quality and efficiency of education. The training of headmasters should also be strengthened in order to improve the management of the schools. We should increase the numbers of teachers and encourage the non-normal-university graduates and graduates from eastern and central regions to teach in ethnic minority areas. Enrollment of students should be ensured with special measures. Teachers’ training should be strengthened in agricultural areas, cold areas, mountainous and border areas, and therefore to guarantee the demands for qualified teachers. We should encourage teachers to participate in various further studies and improve their education. Respect for teachers should be greatly encouraged in society, and the payment of teachers should be ensured and improved continuously.

On Deepening the Reforms to Accelerate the Development of National Education by the State Council (2002)

5. Bilingual teaching and bilingual textbooks (see Box 3.11)

Bilingual education is beneficial to minority children in terms of equal education and helps children to learn their own culture. Bilingual textbooks are the key to the implementation of bilingual education. Currently, there are some provisions for bilingual teaching and learning materials.

On June 17, 2004, *An Interim Measures for Minority Language School Textbooks Compilation* was promulgated based on the policy *On Deepening the Reforms to Accelerate the Development of National Education by the State Council (2002)* and the *Interim Measures on Management of School Textbooks*, whose aim is to further strengthen the primary and secondary national language teaching materials, to improve primary and secondary schools’ management of the language teaching of ethnic minorities, and improve the quality of ethnic language textbooks. The Ministry of Education established cross-province and cross-autonomous regions committees to examine the use of ethnic language materials in primary and secondary schools.

Box 3.11: Policy Text (11)

3. Special funds

(1) The central government will grant special funds to minority education, which are supposed to be used to support education authorities to implement “bilingual” teachers training and equipment purchases for primary and secondary compulsory education in central and western regions.

Management Approaches of central government's Subsidy on Minority Education and Special Education (2006)

3.2.2 Local Policies

Local-level development policies refer to the provisions on elementary education passed by provincial and county-level people's congresses, governments, and education departments. Local-level development policies of elementary education mean mainly the following three types: Firstly, it is to implement elementary education in minority areas according to policies from the higher authorities; secondly, they mean the local governments can make readjustments to the regulations, policies, and governmental documents from the higher authorities according to their own situations; thirdly, the local government can make new policies to improve ethnic minorities' education according to the local needs.

The last two elements are subordinate to the higher laws, regulations, policies, government documents, while the scope of the former is often innovative.

1. The implementation of the *Law of Regional Autonomy of the People's Republic of China* and *Compulsory Education Law of People's Republic of China* and other education laws (see Box 3.12).

Box 3.12: Policy Text (12)

Article 43 Schools should promote the use of Mandarin and use the standard Chinese characters.

The educational administrative departments of government in autonomous region and autonomous counties should promote the ethnic schools to set up various teaching systems based on an interrelated system of bilingual education. Ethnic schools should implement bilingual education by adopting the local ethnic language and Mandarin.

Measures of implementation of <The People's Republic of China Compulsory Education Law in Qinghai Province> (passed on September 24, 2009, People's Congress Standing Committee of the eleventh session of Qinghai Province).

Article 18 Schools should promote the use of Mandarin.

Schools mainly recruit minority students in the places where Chinese is not used, so local languages and Chinese can be used for teaching. If there is no written form for the local language, Chinese should be used in the teaching process with oral language in local places as an accessory.

Article 24 Government at all levels should support the implementation of compulsory education in ethnic minority areas. In compulsory education, infrastructure investment and teaching equipment should be given priority.

Flexible funds supporting the development of underdeveloped ethnic areas should be distributed proportionally to ethnic minority and poor areas for the implementation of compulsory education.

Article 26 Colleges training ethnic teacher can enroll minority students on the basis of the special aim system, which means the enrolled students are from certain areas and go back to work in the same areas after graduation. The enrollment of minority candidates for college training teachers can be more flexible.

Article 28 ... to promote and encourage teachers to teach in remote, poor and ethnic minority areas, and the local government should provide them with better working conditions, and offer better treatments.

Measures of Guizhou Province in the Implementation of “The People’s Republic of China Compulsory Education Law” (2004)

Take Qinghai and Guizhou provinces, for example. Qinghai and Guizhou, according to their actual situation, formulated and promulgated implementation measures, which reflect the policies made by the provincial government. Qinghai and Guizhou are mostly interested in the school teaching languages, and they have different measures to improve their use.

2. Measures to implement the “Two Basics” (see Box 3.13)

In order to successfully complete the crucial program of “Two Basics,” local governments also introduced a number of supporting policies. We take the cases of Guizhou and Yunnan provinces in what follows.

In Guizhou Province, “*The provisions on the implementation of Regional Autonomy Law of the People’s Republic of China, Advice to Speed up Work on Further Strengthening the Minorities and Ethnic Economic and Social Development*” by Guizhou CPC and Provincial Government of Guizhou Province, “*The Eleventh Five-Year Educational Development Plan of Guizhou Province*” and other supporting policies were promulgated. The policies focus on the following aspects:

- To guarantee financial support, to enhance the *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* policy in ethnic autonomous areas, and to implement free and compulsory education in rural areas.
- To make efforts to set up boarding schools in rural areas and to emphasize the protection of minority children’s education, especially the educational rights for young females.
- To help these areas to launch the “Two Basics” programs, especially among ethnic groups with small populations.

Box 3.13: Policy Text (13)

Authorities at higher levels should help ethnic autonomous areas implement nine-year compulsory education and eliminate illiteracy; governments at all levels should bring compulsory education into the line of public finance in ethnic autonomous areas; compulsory education investment in ethnic autonomous areas should be higher than other common areas. Greater efforts should be taken to support compulsory education in autonomous regions and less populated poor areas. Free compulsory education should be meanwhile conducted in the rural autonomous areas gradually.

The Provisions of Guizhou Province on the Implementation of China Regional Ethnic Autonomy (2005)

Help ethnic minority areas to construct the “Two Basics” crucial projects in the minority areas to realize the goal of nine-year compulsory education. Department of Education in Guizhou Province and Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission decided to select the ethnic minority of Maonan as the subject of the joint project supported by the Ministry of Education and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission to try out the “Two Basics” crucial program with a population under 10,000. Pingtang County Education Bureau is supposed to make a perfect overall planning.

Yunnan Province has made the following provisions for the “Two Basics” program: *Decisions on Poor Families Receiving Living Subsidy in Boarding Schools of Compulsory Education in Rural Areas of Yunnan Province, Reform Program of Fund Insurance Mechanism for Compulsory Education in Yunnan Province, The Implementation Plan of the Construction of Rural Boarding Schools in Yunnan Province, Land Management of Yunnan Rural Boarding School Construction Project*, and other supporting policies. In Longchuan County and Luxi City, for example, the “Two Basics” emphasize the following points (see Box 3.14):

- Establishment of a responsibility system within the counties or towns, and a reward system for “Controlling Dropouts and Guarantee Enrollment.” Take the reward system as one criterion in the yearly evaluation of leaders at different levels. Promotion of the publicity of compulsory education.
 - Taking measures to ensure funds are invested in ethnic education.
 - Establish child labor inspection systems and other measures to prevent school-age children and adolescents from dropping out of schools.
3. Implementing the policy of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* (see Box 3.15).

To realize the goal of the “Two Basics,” some provinces take measures to strengthen the *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* policy. Yunnan and Guizhou take the following steps:

- Allocate special funds to ensure the realization of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*. On the border area of Yunnan Province, the government has also implemented the policy of “Three Frees.”
- Identify priority funding targets and set up assessment and monitoring systems.

Box 3.14: Specific Details of the Policy Content (14)

Authorities at higher levels should help ethnic autonomous areas to implement nine-year compulsory education and eliminate illiteracy; governments at all levels should bring compulsory education into the regulations of public finance in ethnic autonomous areas; compulsory education investment in ethnic autonomous areas should be higher than the common areas. Greater efforts should be taken to support compulsory education in autonomous regions and less populated poor areas meanwhile to offer free compulsory education in the rural autonomous areas gradually.

The Provisions of Guizhou Province in the Implementation of China Regional Ethnic Autonomy (2005)

Luxi City strengthens the governing bodies for controlling dropouts and improves the work of students' enrollment. It strictly implements the “Two-line” responsibility system and the “Six Leaderships” responsibility system. Luxi City not only establishes personal responsibility system for preventing school-age children and adolescents from dropping out of school, but also actively takes the “No Dropouts Town/Village” activities. The city plans long-term mechanism to implement assistance to needy students and establishes a report–supervision–inspection system to control the dropping-out of students. The “Two-line” are county–township (town)–village and educational bureau–Central School–schools, which form a supervising system to prevent the dropping-out of students. Child labor inspection system is established. The reward system for “Controlling Dropouts and Guaranteeing Enrollment” is also established.

Longchuan County in Yunnan Province clarifies the responsibilities of related departments and strengthens the “Two Basics” responsibility structure. The work of “Controlling Dropouts and Guaranteeing Enrollment” becomes the main factor for the annual assessment of leaders at all levels. Longchuan County has established a two-line responsibility system with “county–township–village” and “Bureau of Education–Center School–School.” The work of “Controlling Dropouts and Guaranteeing Enrollment” becomes one of the main factors for the annual evaluation of the town leaders, school principals, and teachers. The requirement of sending their children to school becomes one part of the village rules management to further consolidate and improve the “Two Basics” results.

Longchuan County of Yunnan Province developed “*An Interim Regulation on Exemption of Tuition Fee for Rural Compulsory Education Students,*”

Longchuan County developed Interim Measures on Management of Rural Primary and Secondary Public Funds, Longchuan county Special Funds for Rural Compulsory Education Interim Measures, and other management mechanisms, in order to ensure enough funding for compulsory education, and the supporting documents such as Schools Financial Management Provisions of Longchuan County are issued to regulate rural compulsory education funds management effectively and to ensure the fund to be used for compulsory education. “Accounting center” was established to supervise funds, management, and ensured wages, payments on time. Schools and financial authority control systems were established to inspect the use of rural primary and secondary education funding. The financial management system and county reimbursement system are strictly implemented.

Box 3.15: Specific Details of the Policy Content (15)

Department of Finance of Guizhou Province and Guizhou Provincial Department of Education issued a notification jointly on making budget of the 2005 Spring Term to exempt tuition of rural students from poor families and boarders students' subsidy. The special funds will give priority to the minority students in small population areas.

Since 2000, Yunnan provincial government has allocated special funds to implement the “Three Frees” on border regions: free textbooks, free tuitions, and free stationery. There are 4.08 million students who have benefited from it. In 2004, Yunnan carried out the “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy for all rural students in the compulsory education phase. Yunnan integrated the “Three Frees” into the national “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” measures, while the subsidy for stationery turns into living subsidy. Yunnan also arranged 80 million RMB as special funds each year as living subsidies to those who have been offered the original “Three Frees” in boarding schools. Free textbooks and other miscellaneous expenses are sponsored by the state and county governments. Yunnan is also the first province to make use of the free textbook tender, and more than 10% of the saved funds will be used to offer more students with free textbooks. Financial aid will be given to students by the following order: the students who are under the “three kinds of free education,” children with disabilities, children from low-income families or absolute poverty, orphans, students with financial difficulties due to unexpected events, and ethnic students. To ensure fairness and equality, the students aided will be evaluated each year.

In Yunnan Province, Luxi City conscientiously implements the mechanism to ensure funding for rural compulsory education. Luxi City strengthens their

help for the students of junior, senior high schools, and secondary occupational schools by allocating a subsidy as 150 RMB per student annually.

Considering the measures taken and the funds invested in the two provinces, it can be inferred that the cost of education in ethnic minority areas is very high and needs more funds to support it. It can be deduced that the comparison based only on the total amount of funds in different regions of the proportion of investment in education does not have much value and significance, when calculating the amount of funds and the educational operation costs in different regions.

4. Construction of a “Boarding System” (see Box 3.16)

Boarding schools are established to provide more opportunities for ethnic minority children, who live in scattered, underdeveloped, and remote inaccessible mountainous areas, to go to school. Guizhou and Yunnan, for example, take the following measures to set up a “Boarding System”:

It is required to establish boarding, half-boarding schools in ethnic minority autonomous areas, and to set up more ethnic classes to ensure the students can complete compulsory education. Guizhou Province puts more emphasis on helping poor ethnic minority girls.

Strengthening the management of boarding schools and boarding system should be ready for the real needs of children.

- Increase subsidies for boarding students.
- Expand the coverage of boarding school and improve the educational quality in Guizhou Province.

Based on the comparison of measures taken by the above two provinces, it is clear that:

- There are some differences in terms of financial input for boarding schools between the two provinces.
- Boarding schools in different provinces differ.

Boarding schools in different provinces give priorities for different groups. Guizhou emphasizes more on minority girls, while Yunnan more on ethnic minorities and the poor on the border and sparsely populated areas.

Box 3.16: Policy Text (16)

On July 6, 2005, Guizhou Provincial Department of Education issued *A Notice on the Start-up of Boarding Schools for Juniors* (Qian [2005] 16). By offering boarding system for juniors and by implementing the national “Two Basics” policy, the educational difficulties in the remote ethnic areas would be partly solved. Meanwhile, a great effort is made to train qualified personnel at all levels, especially minority women teachers at all levels. There is the plan of

building 26 boarding schools for ethnic juniors in nine prefectures and cities. Financial assistance for ethnic classes shall be allocated from the special funds of the ethnic education. Each class is made up of 50 students. Every class will be granted 30,000 RMB. 10,000 will be used for the purchase of daily necessities; 20,000 supports each student in each class, which means that 400 RMB will be given to the boarding students in the class per year directly to solve their problems of living expense. The notice also lists the principles and requirements of establishing an ethnic class.

Yunnan implements “Schools’ Construction Project on Borders,” which gives educational substantial improvements to minorities and poor people in border areas. By the implementation of the border schools’ construction project, Yunnan Province will greatly improve the economic and social undertakings in the areas, which not only benefit the 25 border counties and 400 million people of all ethnic groups in the border areas, but also offer more education opportunities for more than 20,000 children of 20 minorities. Meanwhile, China can demonstrate its current situation of elementary education in minority areas to the neighboring countries. The conditions of 61 schools will be improved in the project and the students’ number will increase to 50,000, which means an increase by 60%. All of the above will greatly promote the plan of revitalization in Yunnan and the steady development of education.

In Luxi City, Yunnan Province, according to *A Notice on the Development of Primary and Secondary School Teaching and Administrative Staff by the General Office of Yunnan Provincial Government* ([2002] 52), there will be a cook for 50 students and a full-time students’ residential teacher for 100 students living in school to take care of their boarding on average.

5. Counterparts’ Support and Branch schools in remote areas

In the western–eastern counterpart support program, regions and ethnic minority areas are given priority in the implementation of the program. Take Guizhou Province, for example, *Guizhou Province Eleventh Five-year Plan of the Development of Education* (Qian [2006] No. 362) issued by the Guizhou Provincial Department of Education requires to give priority to ethnic schools in the implementation of the “*Education Development of the West*,” “*Counterpart Support of the Schools in the Eastern Region to Poor Areas in the West*,” “*Counterpart Support of Big Provincial Cities to Schools in Poor Areas*.” Meanwhile, support from Shenzhen, Qingdao, Ningbo, and Dalian focuses on the development of ethnic minority regions.

6. Strengthening the Quality of Teaching (see Box 3.17)

Teacher training is an important issue in the education development of minorities. Therefore, provinces and autonomous regions should strengthen the quality of teaching in accordance with national laws and policies of education and plan for teachers’ training and recruitment independently. Qinghai, Guizhou, and Yunnan, for example,

have done the followings: Firstly, they encourage university graduates to go to the remote ethnic minority areas to teach by increasing teacher's salaries, subsidies, etc.; secondly, they strengthen the implementation of the rotational system of principals and teachers in the local regions; thirdly, they strengthen teachers training in ethnic minority areas.

According to the policy, the provinces mentioned above take active measures to improve the quality of teaching, especially in encouraging more college graduates to teach in minority areas. For teacher training, for example, Luxi City emphasized the training of "bilingual" teachers.

Box 3.17 Policy Text (17)

To improve the overall quality of teaching work and to attract qualified teachers to teach in Qinghai Province, the establishment of subsidies for teachers in remote areas is quite necessary. Policies, such as the University Graduates Volunteer Program, the regional rotation system of principals and teachers of primary and secondary schools are implemented to enrich teaching resources in the remote ethnic areas.

In *Opinions on Speeding up the Work on National Minorities, and Economic and Social Development in Minority Areas by CPC Guizhou Provincial People's Government*, it requires that government to endeavor to solve the problems like shortage of primary and secondary school teachers in rural areas. The measures can encourage young college graduates volunteers to teach in minority areas.

In September 2009, Dehong Education Bureau issued *Faculty Performance Appraisal of Dehong Compulsory Schools*. All the teachers (including three-year duration of employment) in compulsory schools (including the high schools), which are listed in the financial budget of the compulsory schools or the special education schools, should be involved in the performance appraisal. The evaluation results of faculty performance will be served as the basis for payment, recruitment, promotion, and rewards. The performance evaluation starts on September 1, 2009.

Luxi City Board of Education in Yunnan Province strengthens ethnic primary and secondary school faculty quality in the following way: Firstly, they strengthen the training of elementary and middle school principals in ethnic areas, and organize them to receive off-site training in Shanghai, Kunming and other places; secondly, they carry out the bilingual training in accordance with teaching and the implementation of quality education and improve the education management in the meantime; thirdly, they assign more jobs to university graduates to work in minority areas to guarantee the quantity of teachers in minority areas.

Longchuan County Bureau of Education of Yunnan Province has the following "Twelfth Five-year Plan Five-year Plan." In the five years' period, all teachers will receive at least two times of trainings which are free of charge.

Primary schools' principals will participate in provincial training at least once. They encourage teachers to obtain a higher level of education, and by the end of the Twelfth Five-year Plan Five-year Plan, more than 80% the primary school teachers should have a college education, more than 85% middle school teachers should have an undergraduate education, and more than 95% high school teachers should have experienced undergraduate education. By the year 2020, for primary school teachers, more than 95% should have a college education, while more than 50% of them should have an undergraduate education. For high school teachers, by 2020 more than 95% should have an undergraduate education, while 100% should have a college education. In the Twelfth Five-year Plan Five-year Plan period, public election system for principals will be implemented strictly, together with faculty competition for employment system, and payroll distribution system will base on performances. The performance appraisal system will also be carried out much more strictly. They will implement "Holiday per Month" system in some remote mountainous areas and encourage new teachers to work in the mountainous and remote areas as "service limits" in order to improve the living conditions and increase the subsidies for each teacher, ranging from 80 to 150 yuan per month in cold mountainous areas.

7. Bilingual teaching and teaching materials (see Box 3.18)

Great importance has been attached to bilingual teaching in ethnic minority areas, and different provinces and autonomous regions have their own measures. For example, Qinghai and Guizhou have taken the following measures: promoting bilingual initiatives; reinforcing the training of bilingual teachers; thirdly, compiling bilingual teaching materials.

There are two problems to the above bilingual education policies and measures. One is how to balance the learning of Chinese and minority languages; the other is how to understand the status of minority languages in education—whether to treat them as a teaching tool or as a kind of learning channel of ethnic minorities' culture.

Box 3.18: Policy Text (18)

In November 2004, according to *The Notice on Chinese Proficiency Test on a Trial Basis in the Autonomous Regions by the Ministry of Education*, Qinghai formulated *An Advice on the Chinese Proficiency Test on a Trial Basis* (Qing [2004] 18).

On March 14, 2005, the General Office of the Ministry of Education issued *A Notice on Authorizing Qinghai Province to publish Tibetan Language Curriculum Standards (trial version) in Primary and Secondary Schools* [2005]

4), which authorizes Qinghai Province to issue Tibetan Language Curriculum Standards which has been approved by the National Tibetan Textbooks Board of the Tibetan primary and secondary school education among the five provinces. In September 2006, in order to promote elementary education curriculum reform in Tibetan areas, a new curriculum for elementary education has been established. According to the investigation and actual regional reality, based on the collaboration with five provincial leading groups on Tibetan educations, “*Coordination of the Five Provinces to Implement Compulsory Education Curriculum Reform Program*” has been promulgated, which was in accordance with the fundamentals of reforms in elementary education.

In December 2003, the Department of Education issued *Advice on Enhancing and Improving Bilingual Teaching in Primary and Secondary Schools* (Qing [2003] 12), which actively developed Chinese language teaching. It requires that minority areas with good Chinese language environment start Chinese language lessons in Grade 1. For those areas where Chinese is rarely used, primary schools start Chinese lessons in Grade 1 or preschool, and it is advisable to vigorously strengthen the bilingual teacher training, and Mandarin Chinese Proficiency Test certificate would be one of the requirements for teachers’ employment. The document has also regulations on the selection of bilingual teaching materials. The documents also promote the establishment of bilingual education with corresponding examination and evaluation system. This would enhance the supervision and evaluation of Chinese language teaching. What is more, curriculum standards of teaching plans should be implemented. This will improve teaching in terms of clear requirements and standards with regular inspection and assessment. The teaching evaluation system, teacher evaluation system, and the student evaluation system consistent with quality education will be established gradually.

8. Formulation of Priority Enrollment Policies (see Box 3.19)

Policies of the national level clarify that the schools in ethnic autonomous areas can enroll students according to the self-identification rule. For instance, Guizhou and Yunnan have the following measures: increasing the enrollment number of students of ethnic minorities in high school and high-quality schools, increasing scores and giving priority to the quota system for students of ethnic minorities.

The admission measures have clearly divided students into different groups, with a focus on specific groups.

Although priorities should be given to the children of teachers, and workers in the mountainous areas, peasants and herdsmen families need more. Cadres, teachers, and medical workers working in ethnic minority areas and mountainous areas have been taken care of and encouraged. The demarcation of such groups has been hierarchical.

Box 19: Specific Details of the Policy

According to the principle of *Lowering Scores to Enroll Ethnic Minority High School Students in some townships (districts, municipalities)*, Guizhou Provincial Department of Education and the Religious Affairs Commission has formulated this regulation in 253 townships, counties (districts, cities). It means that enrollment of high school students should give priority to minority candidates by the method of reducing scores (Qian [2004] No. 153) with 10–20 points for enrollment, and the specific reduction of points is decided by the city (county and municipalities).

—Issued on May 10, 2004, according to the Standing Committee of the CPC Guizhou Provincial Committee at its ninth session [2003] No. 63 *Minutes of the Conference*

CPC Guizhou Province and Guizhou Provincial People’s Government’s Views on Further Strengthening the Work on Ethnic Minorities to Speed up the Economic and Social Development points out that ethnic minority candidates in the rural county (cities, districts, municipalities) registered for high school admission policies continue to implement the policy of reducing scores.

In Longchuan County of Yunnan Province, the Education Bureau suggested that all primary schools should actively improve the learning and living conditions in classes for ethnic minority students in the fall of 2008, and to run ethnic language preschools, so that the admission rate of kindergarten children would reach 65% or more. Therefore, county ethnic primary school enrolled 130 fourth-graders during that time, and the ratio of local ethnic minority students (i.e., Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Achang, De’ang, Hui in Laoma County) should not be less than 60%.

According to the No. 7 conference’s decisions issued by People’s Government Discipline of Longchuan County in 2008, there were two classes enrolling ethnic minority students, totally 100 students. In the process of recommendation, priority should be given to local minorities, and children of the cadres, teachers, medical workers who work in the mountains, with reducing scores by 5 points. All of the ethnic primary school graduates, except for their own willingness to return to the original township (town), should go to No. 1 Middle School. If No. 1 Middle School cannot provide qualified junior and senior high school education, the primary school graduates, except for their own willingness to return to the original township (town) or go to secondary schools, should go to Guangdong Middle schools.

9. Neglect of the language and cultural factors of students of ethnic minorities and the development of their own culture (see Box 3.20)

Education is an important part to improve the quality of students of ethnic minorities. The national implementation of the “Elementary Education Curriculum Reform” and of teacher training aims to improve the quality of education among ethnic minorities.

Educational administrative departments at all levels have also attached great importance to teaching and taken measures to improve the teaching level based on local conditions.

Box 20: Specific Details of the Policy Content (20)

In May 2009, Longchuan County Bureau of Education issued *Measures to Promote Steady Progress of the Reform in Primary and Secondary Education and Teaching* (Long Education [2009] No. 28): (1) The education administrative authorities should change the single administrative management into the combination of administrative and teaching management and focus more on actual departments to school education and teaching, with combining the government's macro-policies with the specific school management affairs. (2) Teaching and researching departments should be established as the center of education management. (3) School reform.

Measures and steps are taken as the following: ① In September 2008, according to state-wide deployment and arrangements, Longchuan No. 1 High School had carried out some reforms, actively exploring the experiences of reforms and promoting the reforms for the next round, in order to form a firm foundation for future reforms. Other schools should try to get ready for future reforms. Other schools should actively do a good job in learning, advocacy, and mobilization of work for the next reform. ② In September 2009, Longchuan No. 1 Middle School carefully summed up the typical successful experience, as well as comprehensively promoted the “catering system” as the key points of classroom teaching reform on the basis of deepening reform work in high school education. Other junior middle schools should also actively explore the appropriate reform model based on the schools' characteristics. The concrete method also includes the steady implementation of classroom teaching reform, such as the “first learning then teaching, and training directly in class.” Longchuan No. 1 Middle School (the junior middle school department), Longchuan No. 2 Middle School, Longchuan No. 3 Middle School and Qingping Middle School have all carried out the reform. At the stage of primary school, ethnic minorities live together in the primary school. The school should actively carry out “bilingual languages and bilingual cultures” teaching, comprehensively improve the compulsory education section of school education and teaching quality. ③ In September 2010, the county fully implements the secondary education reform, as well as reform practices in some primary school. ④ In September 2011, the county primary and secondary schools are in the full implementation of education and teaching reform.

“The implementation of primary and secondary education reform program in Luxi City” was passed on October 11, 2008, by the Fourth Session of the Luxi Municipal People's Government in the ninth executive meeting. Primary schools are based on student expertise, and students are good at the field of multi-intelligence implementation of the “catering,” in order to form a solid

foundation for students to learn, The development of interests, good learning habits, thinking ability, accumulation of cultural heritage, and enhancing students' cognitive ability have been all focused. In September 2009, the city has fully implemented the education and teaching reform.

As aforementioned, provinces and autonomous regions can take their own measures to carry out elementary education for ethnic minorities according to their actual needs. Although the major task is to implement requirements and measures according to the state's policies, provinces and regions can add amendments according to their local conditions.

Guizhou and Yunnan provinces, for example, have developed innovative policies of "ethnic culture into school," trying to combine minority cultures with education at school. Guizhou introduces ethnic culture into the classroom, while Yunnan has ethnic language lessons for the students; secondly, financial support has been provided for these activities (Box 3.21).

Box 3.21: Specific Details of the Policy Content (21)

Secondary Education in Luxi City was passed on October 11, 2008, by Luxi City People's Ninth-fourth executive session. The reforms are carried out in some schools on a trial basis. High schools and middle schools are supposed to divide the students into three levels in the "catering" system" according to their own capability. Primary school students are divided according to the students' characteristics and strengths in multiple intelligences, focusing on a solid foundation to foster interest, development of good study habits and thinking skills, accumulation of cultural heritage, and enhancing cognitive abilities of students. In September 2009, the full implementation of education and teaching reform will be on the move in the whole city.

In the ethnic areas of Luxi City in Yunnan Province, students will study ethnic language for one year in preschools, implementing bilingual, or bicultural teaching. Meanwhile, student in every grades are required to learn ethnic language courses, enabling them to learn their ethnic languages, grasping, and understanding their own ethnic culture, society, history, so to carry forward the fine traditional culture of ethnic minorities.

Mang City in the minority areas of Yunnan Province has enabled students to learn ethnic language one year before school to carry out bilingual or bicultural teaching. At the same time, all grades set up ethnic language courses, so that the ethnic students can master and understand their ethnic humanities, society, history, inheritance and carry forward the fine traditional culture of ethnic minorities. The documents issued by the Department of Education in Guizhou Province and the Provincial People's Committee on the various types of schools in the province to carry out national folk cultural education (Qian [2002] 16)

required: ① general primary and secondary schools, elementary and middle schools in ethnic areas should regard excellent national folk culture as the content of quality education. The folk music, painting, dance, sports, literature, and traditional handicraft production which loved by local people of all ethnic groups should be introduced into teaching activities. ② Ethnic folk cultural education should be flexible in various forms. Special courses can be offered through local and school curricula or can be arranged in a planned way in the relevant curricula. They can also be carried out in combination with extracurricular activities, interest groups, labor education, and comprehensive practical activities. ③ Conducting extensive and in-depth investigation and research, in order to sorting out the local representative and suitable folk cultural projects for primary and secondary school teaching to guide schools to carry out educational activities. Offering the necessary financial support, and setting up the teacher training program for national folk cultural and educational activities.

—*The Education Development in The Eleventh Five-year Plan Five-year Plan Guizhou Province* requires containing of folk culture into the classroom activities in the ethnic minority areas.

To summarize: The above policies and regulations for elementary education in minority areas mainly ensure equal access of students of ethnic minorities to education and equality in the educational process, but there is a lack of supervision during the policy implementation. Furthermore, the attention to the special needs of minority children, especially those living in boarding schools, is not quite enough. Thirdly, although bilingual education has been emphasized in ethnic minority areas, the implementation of bilingual education varies. This situation has been created by different understandings of the concept. Fourthly, insufficient attention has been paid to the connections of minority cultures and school education, and there is no sufficient financial input.

3.2.3 Reflections on National Policies

National elementary educational policies refer to those policies made and implemented by the state and local governments for all the areas and communities. They are regarded to be commonly applicable to all educational activities in elementary education. Though no regulations were targeted at the education for ethnic minorities, the policies are national education norms guiding local governments' design of supporting policies and the relevant practices.

Let us take Longchuan County and Luxi City of Yunnan Province as examples. To ensure the actualization of compulsory education and to solve the problems caused by scattered settlements and poverty in ethnic areas, the state has made a series of policies and thought out resolutions to encourage large-scale school education. *The*

Decisions on the Reform and Development of Elementary education put forward by the State Council published on May 29, 2001, explain: “We must effectively push forward the adjustments of the layouts of primary and secondary schools in rural areas, further improve the quality and efficiency of education, and promote the beneficial development of elementary education in rural areas.”

According to the instructions of Yunnan Province for the “five difficulties,” the difficulty in enrollment must be solved during the planning stage. The concrete educational policies should be designed based on the following criteria: Each township should run a junior high school, while each small village should open a primary school. The construction of primary schools should be strengthened, and teaching places should continue to be consolidated. The focus should be put on the expansion of enrollment in high school and vocational high school, together with the needs of preprimary education development. Longchuan County is a sparsely populated mountainous county with a few dams and people live in scattered settlements. Boarding schools should be developed and constructed there for more rational allocation of education resources, maximum benefits of investment and the construction of large-scale schools. However, since Longchuan County is a mountainous area with inconvenient transportation and scattered settlements, attending boarding schools from the Grade 1 of primary school would be quite inconvenient for the students with less capability of self-care, as well as for their schools and the parents. In addition, Longchuan County has a large population. The customs and habits of local people will surely play an important role. Therefore, some primary schools, junior high schools, and teaching places will have to be kept for a certain period and need to be taken into consideration in the whole educational design. Since 2000, some reasonable adjustments have been made to the schools’ layout planning according to the principle of “Merging and constructing schools when necessary.”

As can be seen from these examples, some of the education policies are short of concerns about the special needs of education for ethnic minorities. Meanwhile, layout adjustments, closing and merging schools, have in fact ignored the role of schools in remote areas and communities. This ignores the fact that schools are, to some extent, the most important entity in the process of education policy implementation. Schools have a direct impact on minority groups by integrating and adapting education policies designed by higher authorities into their daily management and teaching activities.

3.3 Problems Linked to Current Policies

The Communist Party of China and the Chinese central government insist on the development of education for ethnic minorities. But many problems still exist during the planning and practice phases, especially many social problems appear during social transformation. Based on the previous analysis and summaries of policy texts,

problems and obstacles in the implementation of ethnic minority elementary education policies are summarized for laying the foundation and showing directions to our research work in the next stage.

3.3.1 Inconsistencies in the Objectives of the Basic Education Policies of Ethnic Minorities

The fundamental inconsistencies in the basic goals of ethnic minority elementary education policies concern the inconsistency of ethnic minority elementary education, specifically in relation to ethnic minority culture and school education. The concrete reflection of this conflict lies in the inaccurate bilingual educational orientation in practice. The second inconsistency lies between the universal values of education policy and the special needs of ethnic minorities. Individual attainments and achievements of cultural capability and quality have been ignored in elementary education for ethnic minorities.

3.3.2 Conflicts Between Different Policy Texts

The formulation and implementation of ethnic minority elementary education policies involve multiple levels and different departments. Different understandings of education and of the same policy text from different levels and departments, in particular the lack of knowledge of the special characteristics of ethnic minority elementary education, will lead to inconsistencies in the focus of the implementation or the provisions of complementary measures formulated and finally result in “different policies from different departments.” For example, the fact that “bilingual” teachers and those who have their teaching certificates must pass a certain level of Mandarin is a direct consequence of this situation.

3.3.3 Contradictions Between National Education Policy and the Particularities of Education for Ethnic Minorities

National education policy emphasizes general applicability. Not every policy requires taking into account the specialty of local situations, but some policies should consider the specificities of some special groups or regions. Education for ethnic minorities has its own particularity in addition to other common features. However, national education policies, such as school layout adjustments, the Elementary Education Curriculum Reform and so on, might neglect the special requirements of education

for ethnic minorities, which will not help but hinder the development of education in ethnic areas.

3.3.4 Lack of Supervision, Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism in the Policy Management System of Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities

Firstly, such words as “may,” “in principle,” “under certain circumstances,” etc., often appear in the provisions of ethnic minority elementary education policies. Although it is for the sake of taking flexible measures in different regions, it has led to a lack of intensity and authority in the implementation of ethnic minority elementary education policies. Secondly, ethnic minority elementary education policies are often regarded as considerations for minorities, but the specialty of ethnic minority elementary education has been ignored. As a consequence necessary and strict supervision, evaluation and feedback mechanisms are missing, which finally affect the implementation of ethnic minority elementary education policies.

3.3.5 Lack of Clear Division of Responsibilities in Fund Allocation

In many ethnic minority elementary education policy texts, local authorities are required to solve the problem of funding by themselves, but some provinces, in particular those in the western regions, have limited financial capacity and are unable to provide enough support, thus making self-funding a facade that does not solve problems. Another disadvantage is that the documents are always quite vague about the amount of funds and with no available data. Finally, there is a lack of accounting for the costs of ethnic minority elementary education development.

3.3.6 Lack of Continuity, Stability, and Innovation in Policy Implementation

Some ethnic minority elementary education policies are symbolic, and some are unpractical. On the one hand, some provisions for ethnic minority elementary education policies fail to be timely and modern. Their implementation tends to be rigid and lacks innovation. On the other hand, these policies are often put into practice through educational projects. Although some effects can be achieved and social resources can be mobilized in the near future, it can only function in the present period and lacks continuity and stability of policy implementation.

3.3.7 Lack of Cultural Indicators in Policy Evaluation

In the assessment of ethnic minority elementary education, much attention has been paid to the figures which are quantifiable points or indicators such as enrollment rates and admission rates to higher education institutions. Cultural perspectives concerning students have been neglected, which leads to a lack of cultural considerations in teaching and learning evaluation.

3.3.8 Staff's Lack of Cultural Awareness in Policy Implementation

Policy implementation affects not only daily life, work, and the learning of ethnic people, but also their emotions and identity. The lack of cultural awareness of staff in policy implementation departments can result in ignoring ethnic and cultural factors and the oversimplification of policy implementation. Often, implementation of educational policy is problematically rigid.

3.3.9 Difference in Motivation and Level of Autonomy

Authorities of provincial and county levels have the rights of administrative discretion and interpretation within the right of legal provisions. However, the autonomy of provinces and counties to develop ethnic minority elementary education is far from enough. It is often confined to or even determined by the level of the local economy, administrative examination system and other factors, or pushed by the unified implementation of national elementary education policy and the implementation by strong administrative power. At the same time, unlike the state-led implementation of the national elementary education policy, elementary education policies for ethnic minorities are lacking effective management mechanisms. They are rarely used as indicators of local officials' performance or evaluation. Some local administrations also appear to lack the motivation to implement them. However, some provinces and counties do actively implement education policies for ethnic minorities and push forward the development of elementary education for ethnic minorities. Local authorities are left with some flexibility based on their own policy focus. Hence, there are different policies and regulations in different places and regions.

3.4 Refocusing the Policies

The problems, discovered through summarizing the educational policy documents of basic education for ethnic minorities and the whole country, revolve around the following issues.

1. Factors Affecting the Educational Rights and Interests of Ethnic Minorities in the Process of Implementing Basic Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities.

The reasons are the followings. Firstly, executive departments possess great freedom of implementation. They may have different policy concerns due to various interests and requirements. The executive departments of different provinces and counties will put their needs into the implementation of the policy. Secondly, many policies lack cultural sensitivity focusing only on the universality, regardless of particularities. Thirdly, the implementation of these policies may amplify the problems in the policy texts and cannot properly improve and effectively consider the special needs of ethnic minorities.

2. Investigating the influences on ethnic minority students brought by educational policies into the daily educational life by school principals, administrators, and teachers.

The reasons include many policies neglect the cultural considerations of ethnic minorities, and the specificities of minority education; teaching policies are not suitable for the particular requirements of students for ethnic minorities; the implementation of educational policies in the nine-year compulsory education of ethnic minorities often adopts a single index instead of scientific evaluation, and thus, we cannot evaluate the social effects of the evaluation policies.

3. Identifying new foci for policies

Some provinces have established new policies which try to combine the cultures of ethnic minorities and school education. We can look for new foci for policies through the observation and study of backgrounds, processes, and effects of their implementation: layout adjustments, Boarding System, bilingual education, teacher training, counterpart support, Two Exemptions and One Subsidy, Ethnic Cultures into School, and Controlling Dropout Rate and Ensuring Enrollment.

3.4.1 Layout Adjustments

In 2001, The State Council made the *“Decisions on the Reform and Development of The 9-year Compulsory Education.”* One of the decisions is “to adjust the layout of compulsory education schools according to the local situation,” which goes hand in hand with the principle of enrolling students in the nearest primary school, the relative concentration of junior high schools, and the optimization of educational resources.

Rural primary schools and teaching places should merge so that it is convenient for students to attend the closest schools. In inaccessible areas, some teaching places should be made available. No students should drop out due to the layout adjustments.

To investigate the policy, we should pay attention to how the policy can be carried out while considering the local situations in minority areas. These elements should be considered:

- The basis on which the local departments implement the “layout adjustment.”
- The complementary measures are taken to compensate for the difficulties faced by the students in terms of layout adjustment.
- The influences on the quality of teaching in minority areas after layout adjustment.
- Comments about “layout adjustment” in minority communities.

3.4.2 *Boarding System*

By 2007, the total number of boarders in compulsory education reached 29,924,000 in China, accounting for 18.4% of the total amount of Chinese students. The ratio of boarding students in primary and secondary schools in western areas is much higher than those in other regions (The National Education Development Research Center, 2009). According to Wang and Yu (2008), primary school boarders are over 20% in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Yunnan, and Qinghai (autonomous regions); junior boarders represent over 70% in Tibet, Guangxi, and Yunnan (autonomous regions). From the data, we can see that boarders in compulsory education are mainly located in large ethnic minority provinces (autonomous regions).

The Boarding Policy is one of the most important measures which the Chinese government has taken to popularize nine-year compulsory education and to promote equity in education. This policy is mainly for primary and secondary schools in Chinese rural areas, especially in the western regions. To investigate this policy, we need to focus on the following questions:

- Does the boarding system increase or reduce school expenditure for students? Is the dropout rate of students of ethnic minorities affected by the policy? Is this kind of change positive or negative?
- Does the boarding system affect the school life of students of ethnic minorities? How has teaching quality been affected?
- Is it possible for local governments to make adjustment to the boarding policy?
- What impact does boarding have on the layout of schools? Should boarding policies and systems be different in ethnic minority areas due to their specific geographical, economic and cultural factors?
- “Boarding” has been mentioned in a number of central government policy documents, which of the policies have been concretely taken by the local government?

According to research on the regional and cultural appropriateness of the boarding policy, we can understand its effect on guaranteeing students' education rights and cultural sensitivity.

3.4.3 Bilingual Education

Bilingual education is one of the important measures taken by the Chinese government to conserve languages of ethnic minorities, to promote cultural heritage, as well as to maintain national unity and assist students of ethnic minorities in adapting to modern life. To investigate this policy, we need to focus on:

- The relationship between teaching in ethnic minority languages and the Chinese language.
- Supporting bilingual teaching, including teachers, teaching materials, and assessment systems.
- The influence of ethnic languages and Chinese on the mobility of students and their future lives.
- Is there still any possibility for different regions to make adjustments to the bilingual teaching policy?

3.4.4 Teacher Training

Teacher training is a key influence on the quality of school education in ethnic minority areas. Central and local governments have mentioned the importance of teacher training in a number of policy texts and have implemented many supporting facilities. To investigate these policies, we need to focus on:

- The relationship between teacher training and teaching quality in minority areas.
- The effects of various supporting programs strengthening teacher training (such as “the plan of setting up special teaching posts in rural schools”).

3.4.5 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

- The “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy refers to the financial assistance policy adopted by the Chinese government in 2005 to help the students from poor rural families to complete their compulsory education. Students of ethnic minorities account for a high proportion of the funding from this policy. To investigate the policy, we need to focus on:

- The effects of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” on students of ethnic minorities attending schools.
- The appropriateness of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” in minority areas.
- The adjustment to the policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy.”

3.4.6 New Curriculum Reforms

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the government of China implemented a nationwide basic educational curriculum reform, called “Curriculum Reform.” The policy behind the “Curriculum Reform” is a systematic program, including teaching methods, teaching materials, evaluation, and administration. This policy was applied in ethnic minority areas. Some specialists’ consultation shows that there might be some problems regarding the speed and timing in the policy implementation process. We focus on the followings:

1. The sociocultural adaptability of Curriculum Reform in ethnic regions
2. The implementation strategies of the Curriculum Reform in ethnic regions
3. The availability and effectiveness of Curriculum Reform in ethnic regions.

3.4.7 Ethnic Culture in Schools

In 2002, the educational department of Guizhou Province formally requested that ethnic cultural education should be promoted in schools at all levels. In 2009, ethnic cultural education was comprehensively developed. This was a successful policy, which was formulated and implemented by the local government, and it deserves to be investigated. We should focus our attention on the following points:

- The actual effect and experience of the policy of ethnic cultures in schools
- The difficulties of ethnic cultures in school and countermeasures.

3.4.8 Controlling Dropout Rates and Ensuring Enrollment

Dropping out is a long-term problem waiting to be solved in Chinese basic education. Before the layout adjustment of schools, dropping out was mainly caused by poverty. After the layout adjustment, tuition fees were removed as well as the cost of textbooks. There are also subsidies for the boarding students. The financial burden for students’ families is lower than before. However, some students live far from schools and some are too young to adapt to the boarding school lifestyle. Therefore, this situation becomes the main reason for dropping out. We should thus focus on the followings:

- The control of dropout rates after-school layout adjustment.
- How to make sure that allowances are given to students with real needs.
- Measures to be taken to create a healthy and enjoyable school boarding life.

3.5 Conclusion

The aforementioned policies are worth paying close attention to in our investigation. In short, the government of China has formulated many policies to ensure that minorities can enjoy equal education rights and culture development rights: laws, regulations, rules, programs (among others). In the process of policy implementation, there might be some aspects of policy implementation that departs from the goals of the policy. There are several reasons behind this phenomenon: flaws of the policy itself, no sufficient resource or condition for policy implementation, a lack of capability of the policy executive operator, etc. It is very important for the improvement of the ethnic education policy to be aware of these problems. In what follows, we investigate the availability and culture sensibility of education for ethnic minorities and assess the achievement of education policies for ethnic minorities in protecting education rights for ethnic children and enhancing educational quality.

At the same time, we should also pay attention to issues such as executors' implementation capacity at all levels, the necessary financial support, supervision, feedback mechanisms, and participation in social competitions by students of ethnic minority, etc.

The next chapter's part represents a detailed account of fieldwork in eleven schools. Through careful observation and interviews with teachers, students and staff, and officials, the fieldwork mainly concentrated on the implementation of policies. The following eight perspectives were taken into account: layout adjustment, boarding system, bilingual education, teacher training, Two Exemptions and One Subsidy, New Curriculum Reform, Ethnic Cultures entering Schools, and Controlling Dropout Rates and Ensuring Enrollment. The next step was to examine how to deal with the problems in each of these eight aspects. In the last part of each case, suggestions and countermeasures for the improvement of ethnic education are proposed. The eleven case schools are:

Case 1 Fengping Ethnic Middle School, Yunnan Province

Case 2 Mengyue Nine-year Schools, Yunnan Province

Case 3 Namu Primary School, Yunnan Province

Case 4 Xishan Primary School, Yunnan Province

Case 5 Xishan Middle School, Yunnan Province

Case 6 Mingshe Primary School, Yunnan Province

Case 7 Fangxiang Ethnic Primary School, Guizhou Province

Case 8 Leishan No. 2 Middle School, Guizhou Province

Case 9 Luoxiang Middle School, Guizhou Province

Case 10 Ashinu Central Complete Primary School, Qinghai Province

Case 11 Hualong Ethnic Middle School, Qinghai Province.

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Chapter 4

Case 1—Fengping Ethnic Middle School, Yunnan Province



4.1 Background

4.1.1 Ecological–Cultural Background

Fengping is located in the southeast of Luxi City, Dehong Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. According to statistics (Sude, 2013), Dai people live in concentrated communities in the hilly areas, of a total of 381 km². Fengping has low-latitude subtropical climate: the average temperature is 15.5 °C and the average rainfall is 2.15 mm.

There are 12,075 households in total, in which agricultural households account for 94%. The total population is 62,325, including Dai, Han, and De'ang people) among others) of which Dai people account for 83.4%. The total cultivated land area is 99,863 Mu, and the per-person cultivated land area is 1.7 Mu.

Dai are people who emphasize etiquette and tend to have “herd mentality.” What impressed us most was how much Dai people spoil their children. They are hospitable and enjoy dining together.

Nearly all the Dai people believe in Theravada Buddhism and every village has a Zangfang (Buddhist temple). People who are over 40 usually go to Zangfang to cultivate themselves.

4.1.2 General Situation of the School

Fengping School is a junior boarding school in Luxi City, whose students are mainly from five Dai villages and Padixinqiao village in the Fengping area. The school has a standard comprehensive building and two old teaching buildings, one girls' dormitory and one boys' dormitory. The school occupies 32,479, 2578 m² of which is classrooms, 374 m² of which is laboratories, 1770 m² of which is teachers' living quarters, 1907 m² of which is students' dormitory, 352 m² of which is canteen, and

6990 m² of which is the playground. The school has 68 computers, 8068 books, and 380 GB of electronic books.

There are 1135 registered students, 589 boys and 546 girls. One thousand twenty-eight of them are ethnic minority students including 996 Dai students, 23 Achang students, and nine students of other ethnic minorities. Minority students account for 91% of the school population. The dropout rate in 2009 was 2.56%.

The school has 89 staff members, including 82 full-time teachers (seven middle school senior teachers, 47 middle school first-class teachers, 26 middle school junior teachers, and two teachers unrated) and seven workers.

There are 47 female teachers and 42 male teachers. Seventeen of the teachers are ethnic minorities: ten of them are Dai, three of them Jingpo, and four of them belong to other ethnic minorities.

Three teachers are younger than 25 years old, 11 teachers are between the age of 25 and 30, 14 teachers between the age of 31 and 35, 25 teachers between the age of 36 and 40, 17 teachers between the age of 41 and 45, ten teachers between the age of 46 and 50, and two teachers between the age of 51 and 55.

There are 82 full-time teachers: 47 of them have a bachelor's degree, 21 of them a junior college diploma, and two of them a technical secondary school diploma.

The staff–student ratio is 89/1135; full-time teacher–student ratio is 82/1135. Dai teacher–student ratio is 10/996, and full-time Dai teacher–Dai student ratio is 7/996.

The current principal is Han Chinese. Before joining the school, he worked in the secondary school of Jiangdong (Han area) for 14 years so he has extensive experience in teaching and management. He told us: *“Our school is in a suburban mountain area. and students mostly come from the five nearby villages. Dai students account for more than 90% of the entire student population, so the school is almost purely Dai. According to the ethnic situation, the school has set up classes on ethnic minority culture. Dai students have weak academic background, but with favorable policies towards ethnic education, the scale of our school is expanding, and the number of students has increased to 1135 from the previous 825. In 2008, student enrollment reached over one thousand for the first time. The Dai secondary school is different from the Secondary School of Jiangdong. There are more Han Chinese children in the Secondary School of Jiangdong and the school can get more support from parents. Dai parents do not care too much about the children’s learning. When I first came here, there were conflicts between the teachers. They were not enthusiastic about teaching and the quality of teaching was bad. There were only two or three students who could enter senior highs at that time, but we had more than twenty last years. I have developed a layered incentive-based teaching scheme, which is officially approved by the bureau. But we simply cannot put a student who gets 90 and a student who gets 9 in the same classroom, can we? This is what we had to do.”*

We understand that the so-called classified teaching is to allocate students into advanced classes and regular classes by their entrance exam scores. The whole school has eight advanced classes and 15 regular classes. The exam-passing rate is very low. The average scores for Chinese and Maths are mostly between 15 and 20 points. The students from advanced classes have much better grades than students from regular classes, especially in terms of senior high admission rate. In the survey,

we discovered that expectations for and investment in advanced classes are much greater than regular classes. Advanced classes have better teachers. Additionally, students seem to enjoy learning and they work hard in the advanced classes. During the interviews, many teachers said they believe that students from advanced classes demonstrate high learning enthusiasm and self-discipline; therefore, the teachers are enthusiastic about teaching these students. Upon investigation, we learned that the school does not have a better strategy for students who have poor scores and for those who dislike learning. Currently, these students stay in school just to complete compulsory education. The principal is also confused about what to do with these students, how to guide them, and how to improve their learning. The current plan is to continue the classified teaching scheme.

Fengping School divides students into eight advanced classes and 15 regular classes based on their entrance examination scores. Students all talk in Dai after classes. In class, the teachers make them speak Chinese and the class is taught in Chinese. Most teachers are Han. Even a Dai teacher seldom teaches bilingually. According to the questionnaires, students who do not understand their teachers in class account for 33.5%. On the question of “which language do you prefer your teacher to speak in class?”, of all the 79 students from ordinary class, 23 chose “both Chinese and ethnic language” for the reason “I wish teachers to explain in Dai when we don’t understand.” However, the teachers think that bilingual teaching surely is mandatory in primary school, and language problems should have been solved in primary school. It is no longer necessary to teach bilingually in middle schools.

4.2 Research Methods and Process

The data collection methods include interviews, observations, questionnaires, and fieldwork diaries. The research goal is to analyze and study the process and the implementation of basic education policies for ethnic minorities in Luxi. The fieldwork in Fengping School lasted from May 25 to May 31, seven days in total. The research participants included officials from the local Education Bureau, Education Research Center and the Municipal Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs, principals, teachers, students, community members, and parents.

During our fieldwork, we observed six classes and collected 140 questionnaires by students in Grade 8, 42 teacher questionnaires, two headmaster questionnaires. We also interviewed seven staff members, including two principals, four teachers, one dormitory supervisor, and one folk artist. We interviewed 16 students, including three Han students. We also visited two communities and interviewed five parents.

During the investigation, we also encountered some problems. Fengping School uses streaming teaching methods in which students are divided into advanced classes and regular classes. When we expressed interests in seeing the classes, we were first given the opportunity to observe four advanced classes. After some negotiation, we were finally able to visit a regular class. We also found a lot of problems with our questionnaires for the students. There is no problem for the students of advanced class

to answer them. However, in regular classes, several boys did not have pens to write with and showed some resistance in answering the questionnaire. Some students did not understand the questions and some Dai students even wrote the character for Dai as Tai. Finally, with the teacher's supervision and our encouragement, most students finished the survey. Overall, we can feel that the students respect their teachers and they look forward to their attention and encouragement.

We went into two Dai communities to interview parents, and it was quite difficult for Dai parents to express themselves in Chinese when we communicated with them, so we invited some guides and students to interpret for us.

4.3 Focus on Basic Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities

4.3.1 Boarding System

The boarding system in Fengping School has a long history and the school has rich experience in dormitory management. According to the statistics on May 20, 2010, there were 656 boarding students, 254 boys and 402 girls. The school established a series of regulations on dormitory management and reinforced the management of sanitation and epidemic prevention.

We observed that there were 12 bunk beds in every dorm. The dorms are well ventilated and safe. There was fire-control equipment in the dormitory building and a place for drying clothes on the ground floor. It is neat and tidy inside the dorm building and in the yard. The boys' dormitory and girls' dormitory are within the same bounding wall and the public bathroom is 500 m away from the dormitories out of the bounding wall. The school has no hot water and there are no closets in the dormitories. Students' dishware and toothbrushes are placed here and there, on the windowsills or in the washroom.

The school is located in the center of the town, so transportation is convenient, and most students live nearby, about 15 min to one-and-a-half-hour walk from the school. Students can ask for day-offs if necessary, and generally, boarding students do not seem to experience strong homesick feelings.

The canteen kitchen is small, consisting of several flat-house rooms. The students' dining place is also small. The open big cote is their dining place, with a cement table and four small wooden tables. The students have dinner here only when it rains. They usually have dinner under the trees or in the dorms.

The school canteen is run by a private contractor. The meal prices are 1 *yuan* for a meat dish and 0.5 *yuan* for a vegetable dish. The dishes are usually bought in cash. Rice is 90 cents and it is usually bought with a rice ticket. Students usually spend 2–2.5 *yuan* per meal. The school has a special manager for the canteen. It is clean inside the canteen and there is a special wash sink for the cutlery. It is crowded when students are buying meals. They do not wait in line, but no one wastes food.

The clinic next door brings convenience for the school. *“Next door there is a clinic. We have a special hallway to the clinic. If students are sick at midnight, we can send them there directly,”* the director of teaching affairs said in an interview.

School security was being strengthened when we visited. In order to build a safe schoolyard and to ensure the safety of teachers and students, Fengping School employs two full-time security guards.¹

The dorm management is very difficult. During the interview, a school chief said *“Dai students have bad habits and are not good at self-control. In addition, there are many juvenile delinquency cases outside the school, which brings more difficulties to the school management.”*

The dormitory manager Mr. Han has been in charge of dormitory management for 22 years and he speaks fluent Dai language. He knows Dai students well and does his job with skill and ease. He told us about his management style: *“children are mischievous. I discipline them with soft and hard means at the same time. My management style is very strict, but students like me. For example, I often pretend to beat the students who don’t obey rules with a stick. I lift up their clothes, make noises deliberately, and let other students know that they were beaten but in fact they are not hurt, I just want to give them a lesson, and let other students see. Dai children care about face very much. When they see a friend criticized by the teacher, they will behave well. In fact, I don’t think small things should be reported to the school. I like to give kids a second chance. If we really have no choice, we can report them to the school.”* When asked “what is the most troublesome thing in your management,” he answered: *“Security. I worry that students will sneak out at night and make them register for going to washroom at night. Some girls manage to get out anyways. There are some unemployed young people in the neighborhood. Mobile phones are common these days and once they contact via mobile phones, we don’t know what could happen. There is no washroom in the dormitory building (they may sneak out, saying they are going to the washroom).”*

Through questionnaires and interviews, we learn that most students prefer boarding. According to the questionnaires, 32.1% of the students like boarding very much, 30.0% of them like it fine, 16.4% of the students somewhat like boarding, and 10.0% do not like boarding at all. The reason why students prefer boarding is that they get “more friends in school, [it is] jolly and convenient.” Parents would like to let their children live in school because they feel reassured when their children are there. They do not have to worry about their safety on the way to school. Some boys often go to school by motorcycle, which can be troublesome. During the interview, some boys said “although the school does not allow us to ride motorcycles, we often park them in the vicinity of our school where teachers cannot see.” Also, parents favor the strict management style in school. Parents said that they feel reassured when their children are in school, because children often run out to play at night when attending day schools and they are afraid that their children would fall under bad influence. What is more, when asked “Is the school food tasty and do you have enough to eat?” students answered differently. *“It’s OK, I have enough food.”* some said, *“I*

¹Statistics on the Fulfillment of School Security of Luxi City.

don't often eat at school. I eat snacks.” We also found out that children bring pocket money from home. A child spends 8–10 *yuan* every day on average, and the subsidy is only enough to cover two weeks, so parents have to provide the rest.

The school organizes evening self-study, which ensures study results and increases communication between the teachers and the students. It improves students' comprehensive quality, such as interpersonal skills and self-care ability (Chen, 2008).

During the interview, a school chief mentioned that the student dormitories can only accommodate 700 students. With the expansion of the school, there is not enough dormitory space for every student. Thus, some students can only attend day school. *“We cannot ensure the security of the students who attend day school, so we allow students to skip night classes, but their study time may be less than the boarders.”* In addition, boys' and girls' dormitories are in the same yard, which also brings challenges to management. Based on our survey, the canteen lacks infrastructure facilities and the hardware is not good enough.

To build a better environment for top students, the dorm arrangements of advanced classes and regular classes are different. First, nearly all the students in advanced classes are required to live on campus for the convenience of having evening self-study. Second, the school has preferential treatment for ten top students in the advanced class, arranging them in several smaller dorms with better conditions and relatively free schedule. Top students include boys and girls, Dai and Han.

The school takes special measures for its conditions. A parent said that the school does not allow students in regular classes to live on campus and gives priority to top students. Such phenomenon has been found in Grades 7 and 8, but a parent of a Grade 9 student said it is true that the school forbids some students to live in school because they are afraid that they will cause trouble.

There are conflicts and discrimination among boarders. We learned from a Han student that Dai students sometimes bully Han students, such as asking for rice tickets with threatening words or behaviors and peeing in Han students' dishware. The school took some measures to arrange dorms for Han students separately.

4.3.2 Ethnic Cultures Entering School

Many Dai children are good at singing and dancing, and they like drawing (Yin, 2005, pp. 71–79). The school has a special class for Dai dancing. Many graduates from this class become members of the “Yunnan Impression” art troupe or dancers with other troupes.

“Provincial departments have been advocating ethnic cultures entering schools, but no specific policies or regulations have been formulated yet,” a former section chief of provincial education departments said. In Luxi, considering the features of the local ethnic minorities, some specialty classes were opened in primary and secondary schools, integrating aspects of ethnic cultures, such as ethnic dancing and

music instruments, into teaching and activities.² The purpose was to carry forward intangible local cultures and to arouse students' interests.

In his interview, a headmaster thought that ethnic schools have their own unique resources, which deserve to be developed. This school opened a class of Dai dancing and keeps developing new classes, such as classes of Hulusi (cucurbit flute), bamboo wares, and paper-cutting. Teachers all acknowledge and appreciate Dai students' art gifts and wish for them to develop further in this field (Sude, 2008).

Students' opinions on classes of specialty vary. In the interviews, we find that most students love singing and dancing and would like to learn dancing. A student (a boy from a regular class) was discontented about the enrollment of specialty class: "*The enrollment was over when we entered the school and we were not allowed to transfer to that class.*" "*The worst class in the school is that class of specialty, those who learn dancing,*" another student, a girl from an advanced class, said. We can sense her prejudice about the class of specialty.

The policy implementation is helpful to secure good student resources, increase the efficiency of school management, and gain a good reputation. The higher authorities and the leaders of the school all highly appreciate the effect of special classes. Because of the poor local cultural atmosphere, the enrollment rate and promotion rate are hard to be increased. Students' knowledge is not solid and appears hard to build up. To solve the problems, the school has to establish its own brand of ethnic characteristics. They send students specializing in arts to higher-level schools every year. Now, the school has been appointed as the base school for the Affiliated High School of Yunnan Art College and has earned a good reputation.³ It is beneficial to the transmission and inheritance of ethnic traditional cultures.

A school leader also told us that an old folk artist initiatively came to the school and taught peacock dancing. Fang Guiying, 70, transmitter and inheritor of peacock dancing, love Dai culture: "*Now fewer and fewer people can do the peacock dance. I am afraid that good culture would be lost, so I come here initiatively to teach for free,*" she said in her interview. She spoke highly of the students. When asked about students' interests and skills, she said, "*These students have strong receptivity, and they all love dancing. The only shortcoming is the lack of vivid facial expression.*"

4.3.2.1 Difficulties

School leaders mentioned the difficulties they face during the interviews. Hardware conditions are limited. On the one hand, the present dance room is of double-duty, as it is both used as students' dancing room and staff meeting room. So, students have to move over 80 desks and chairs every time they have a dancing class. On the other

²Summarized from the interviews with leaders of the Education Bureau and Education Research Center.

³Management and Development Ways of Rural Dai Junior Middle School in Border Areas—Exploration of Fengping Junior Middle School for Ethnic Minorities of Luxi City on Management Characteristics, December 20, 2008.

hand, equipments and funds are in need. The leader said, “*The problem is mainly about the examination expenditure of art students. Whenever they go to take exams, accommodation, meal expenses, entry fee and costume expenses are quite expensive for both the school and the students.*”

4.3.3 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

According to the plan of the new three-year “Prospering Frontier and Enriching People Project” of Luxi, the government will put more efforts on the “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” of compulsory education in rural areas. The subsidy to the registered students of compulsory education will be extended and the amount of subsidy will be increased (Gui & Zhong, 2010). The local government will solicit 75,500,000 yuan from the central and provincial governments. The municipal Education Bureau is responsible for the implementation.⁴

During fieldwork, the school principal, teachers, and students have different understanding of the standard of the policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” the amount of the subsidy and the sources of the subsidy.

Students’ answers:

- Student A (boy, Grade 1, used to be a boarder): “*The subsidy is about 80 yuan per month. Boarders have the subsidy and non-boarders don’t; students get the subsidy in person. It’s spent on games and drinking.*”
- Student B (boy, Grade 2, boarder): “*Every student gets 75 yuan per month, and boarders get an extra 15 yuan per month. It is given to us directly. I spend the money on games.*”
- Student C (girl, Grade 2, boarder): “*75 yuan per month.*” The teacher said, “*Some institution will come to count the number (of boarders). Don’t skip classes. When they come and count, whoever comes gets the money. If you are not present, you will not be given the money. Maybe once a month. It seems that they give out the money whenever they want to.*”

Teachers’ answers:

- Teacher A (leader): “*the accommodation subsidy is 750 yuan per year, no extra poverty subsidy.*”
- Teacher B (class supervisor in Grade 2): “*a stipend of 15 yuan per student, poverty subsidy 50 yuan per student last year. The stipend for this year hasn’t been worked out nor granted.*”

⁴Circular of the People’s Government of Luxi on Printing and Issuing the New Three-year Prospering Frontier and Enriching People Project.

Parents' answers:

Parent A *"I don't know how much the subsidy is exactly, as it is deposited directly into the meal card. My child has never brought cash back. Students of advanced classes don't have to pay cash for dinner, just punching the card."*

Parent B *"I know they have subsidies, but I don't know when and how much. My child does not tell me, so I don't know. I don't care."*

Parent C *"Yes, there is a little. But I don't know how much. My child brought back 80 yuan once. It seems that the amount depends on exam results."*

In further research, a teacher mentioned that there are two kinds of subsidies: *one is a living subsidy for primary and secondary school students, 15 yuan per student per month, but students get 12 yuan each, which is universal in any school. The other is a poverty subsidy, 75 yuan per student per month. It's for each student theoretically, but the number of students allowed by the higher authorities is often smaller, so the school only gives this subsidy to diligent students.*

On the one hand, this shows that people who implement the local policy and people who benefit from the local policy do not understand the policy clearly. They do not know the specific standards and the contents of the policy. On the other hand, the policy beneficiary groups do not care about their rights. They do not understand the policies concerning their interest (Chen, 2008). To some extent, this also results in ambiguity when the policy is implemented and poor results.

"Since the implementation of 'Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,' the central government has carried out the free textbook initiative, with limitations. School-based materials are not included. Previously, the central government granted some funds for the school-based curriculum. But now, the central government stipulates that schools are not allowed to charge any fees. The provincial government no longer funds schools for school-based curricula. Funding becomes a big problem," a leader of Education Research Center shared with us. We can see that because of the restraints of local financial resources or other factors, the implementation of a certain policy may affect another one.

The headmaster thinks that the distribution standard of financial subsidies is too even, without taking into consideration the actual economic income of different regions and families. In the interview, the headmaster says that *"the country covers 70% of expenses, while the province covers 30%. The county can get a little money. Although this policy is very good, I feel that the implementation is not good for the minority regions, especially in mountainous poverty-stricken areas (like my hometown) where the annual income is just more than 700 yuan. This small amount of money is just the average income of some families. The poor families who can't afford the tuition still can't go to school."* In addition, *"Living subsidy is allocated annually, but the school begins in September. Some students can't enjoy the subsidy for half a year and the money goes to other students."*

Teachers think that the problem of dropout rates due to poverty has been solved since the implementation of the policy, and dropout rates have got controlled to some extent. A teacher said during the interview, *"The dropout rate was higher before our*

government adopted the policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” because the parents could not afford the tuition fees.”

During the parents’ interviews, when asked “if there have been changes since the government’s implementation of the policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” several families explained that the policy has reduced their financial burden.

From the above interviews, we learn that since the central government implemented the policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” students’ life has improved greatly and dropout due to poverty has been held back.

Problems exist in the implementation of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” (Cui, 2010). First, the school allocates the subsidy flexibly, taking into consideration students’ marks. Whether such a distribution system can achieve the original goal of the policy remains to be discussed. Second, with the present income level, some families cannot afford children’s senior high school tuition fees. Some parents reflected in the interviews that they worry about education expenditure in senior high school because there is no subsidy for this education level.

4.3.4 Teacher Training

In recent years, teacher training has been organized. The only pattern of centralized training has been changed to multitraining patterns, such as intern training, on-the-job training, training through distance education, sending trainees to the countryside, and school-based training. (Gui & Zhong, 2010). Trainings are both short term and long term, and they are organized through participative learning, lectures, observing classes, joint teaching, and research.⁵

A leader of the Education Research Center explained that the number of trainees from Luxi in 2009 reached over 2400, including 550 promotion trainees, 200 distance training for headmasters, 30 long-term training for village-school headmasters. A few headmasters were sent to the provincial capital or Shanghai for training. Besides, the Education Research Center invited some experts to conduct full-time training on cadre management, organizational discipline, project leading, etc. He said that there are still many difficulties. *“First, there are difficulties in process management and effectiveness. How to promote pertinence and effectiveness still remains to be researched. Second, many teachers want to be sent out for training, but the school doesn’t have enough substitute teachers. Third, according to the No. 35 Order of Yunnan Province, two percent of education expenditure shall be used for education research and training. But it is hard to say how much 2% of education expenditure is. There is no special funding for teacher training.”*

According to the Circular of Yunnan Province on Guideline on Merit Pay Implementation in Schools of Compulsory Education, Luxi merit pay system for staff of compulsory education started on September 1, 2009. Merit pay includes basic salary

⁵Summarized from the interviews with several leaders of the Education Research Center of Luxi.

and bonus, among which the basic wages account for 70% of the total, and bonus account for 30% (Luo, 2009).

The school established a system of teacher training, including a teacher training plan and a plan for teacher professional development. The school gradually organized the selection, recommendation, training, and assessment systems of key teachers and subject leaders. Now, the school has completed the assessment and selection of key teachers for Chinese, English, music, P.E., and fine arts. It constantly organizes teacher training sessions (including intern training, computer training, teaching contests, model lessons, high-quality lessons, etc.).⁶

In addition, a comprehensive proposal for faculty and staff assessment of Fengping School has been formulated in line with the regulations of the Luxi Education Bureau on year-end assessment and the requirement of quantitative evaluation for primary and secondary school faculty and workers in Luxi.

In the interview, a leader said that education in Luxi is the education of frontier, poverty, and minority. In light of the actual education conditions in Luxi, he stressed the essential role of three key actors. The first is *teachers*: to cultivate key teachers and exert key teachers' leading role. The second is *researchers*: to make more efforts in educational research and to combine teacher training and teacher professional development. The third is *managers*: to actively exercise their guiding role.⁷

"Our bonus pay has been delayed. but teachers in the Kunming area have received their bonus. We don't know why. And the two-month salary for school breaks has also been delayed. It shouldn't have been delayed. Teachers are discontented with these aspects," teachers of the Education Research Center remarked.

Some policies issued by the central government are not in line with local conditions: *"The central government has been advocating school autonomy, but it is still very poor. When I need a teacher, I have no right of employing one. If a teacher is employed but not in accordance with the need of the school, what should I do? This year, the admission examination system was introduced in this area. But I am still confused. All the items in the exam are objective ones. As a test for teacher admission, it can't test teachers' teaching ability,"* a headmaster said, when asked about difficulties in implementing the policies.

The higher authorities did not offer support during implementation. The headmaster said that he had reported the issue of teacher training many times, but it has not been solved yet.

"There are 1135 registered students and 84 teachers. According to the policy, the staff quota now should be 84. But the actual approved quota is still 57 of 2007. The higher level said that we had been over-staffed. Actually, teachers are not enough. They didn't consider the number of students and the number of classes. Now the additional teachers only get paid minimum wages; for example, no matter how excellent a "rank 2" teacher is, if there are no vacancies in "rank 1" teachers, they can't be promoted."

⁶Report of Fengping Junior Middle School of Luxi on Self-evaluation of Work Goals.

⁷Summarized from interviews of the Education Bureau leaders.

At present, teacher training and assessment are tied together. Besides, open recruitment and last-one-out system motivate teachers to study. But problems remain such as over-formalization, lack of effectiveness. (Chen & Sude, 2005).

The conflicts between the teacher assessment system and teacher training are frustrating. *“Going out for training, a teacher has to ask for private leave, and the time gets deducted from the work attendance bonus and assessment marks. The school requires teachers to be trained and deducts teachers’ allowances. It’s conflicting. There are a series of rules and regulations and they are not helpful at all,”* a teacher said.

Fengping School centers on appropriate allocation of education resources, optimizing personnel structure and enhancing education quality. It is good for motivating teachers and improving teacher quality.

Fengping School now has 82 full-time teachers. Forty-seven have bachelor’s degrees, 21 graduated from junior colleges, and two graduated from special secondary schools. The pass rate is 98%.

Dropout control increases teachers’ burden. When asked about difficulties encountered in work, most teachers think it is dropout control. Some students do not come to school, and the school arranges for teachers to visit dropout students and persuade them to come back to school. One teacher said, *“Some students really don’t want to learn in school, but the state requires them to attend school. So junior high school teachers have to go to the countryside to advise students to go back to school every semester, 5 times per semester. They have to ride motorcycles to go to distant places. This is especially true for the head teacher of a class. Fengping School puts students into advanced classes and regular classes. My class is a regular class, and there are more than 50 students, and I’ve been to almost every student’s home.”*

Students’ knowledge is poor and it is hard for them to get a high score. Students from countryside schools in ethnic minority areas are those who cannot go to better schools in urban areas (Wang & Wan, 2006, pp. 96–103). They tend to be rebellious and weary of study. Most teachers think that students’ knowledge is poor and it is hard to arouse their interest in class.

A teacher argued that the entrance examination to junior middle school had been canceled since the implementation of nine-year compulsory education. Some students are sent to junior high schools before finishing primary school. Just as two primary school students of Grade 6 said: *“If students apply for the local ethnic minority middle school instead of the ethnic minority middle school in the prefecture or in the city, they can get in with any score. Students realize this early in primary school.”*

Competing for positions puts teachers under pressure. We learned during the interviews that teachers think competing for positions can urge teachers to improve, but they also feel pressured and have no sense of security.

The local cultural environment has an influence on teaching: *“Dai people have good incomes. They believe in Buddhism and follow fate and fortune, so they don’t force children to do things they don’t like. At the beginning of every term, teachers have to visit the students and persuade parents to let them go back to school,”* an

administrator said. Teachers express discontent to the parents in such situations. Teachers generally think that Dai parents are very different from Han parents.

4.3.5 *New Curriculum Reforms*

The leaders of the Education Bureau stated: “*After new curriculum training, most teachers attach importance to students’ independent study, and abandon the previous ‘cramming education’ method. Now teachers leave more time for student-based learning.*” The training for the New Curriculum Reforms lasted for four years, from 2002 to 2005. County and city-level departments were in charge of the trainings for primary school teachers. Prefecture-level departments took care of junior middle schools and provincial-level departments high schools. All the teachers attended the training. Intern training is popular among local headmasters and teachers.

As for class teaching, the advanced classes and regular classes are quite different in terms of study atmosphere and teachers’ devotion. The teachers from advanced classes are of higher ranks, and they apply the concepts and teaching methods of the new curriculum better.

Students listen to the teacher carefully and have great discussions in class. It is obvious that students take the initiative in learning.

Teachers make students preview new lessons, which proves to be effective. While teaching, teachers guide students throughout the whole lesson, pay attention to the difficult points and learning of the entire class, and motivate students with encouraging words.

Ordinary classes appear to be undisciplined. Except 6–7 students who listen carefully in the first two rows, the other students are not paying attention at all, even without books and pens. Some are sleeping, others are talking, and some are walking around, which affects teachers’ enthusiasm and teaching results.

When asked which policies affect his school negatively, the headmaster mentioned the New Curriculum Reforms: “*I am personally against the New Curriculum Reform. It’s not realistic.*”

A teacher said, “*I wrote an essay titled Reflections on the New Curriculum Reform. The school should pay attention to education-quality. The reform is just lip service. I don’t think it has been fulfilled. The main reason is that the education concept hasn’t been improved.*”

The coverage rate of the New Curriculum Reform training in this school reached 100%. All the full-time teachers have attended the following trainings: curriculum reflection and establishment, teaching techniques, new teaching material, and the curriculum evaluation.⁸

Most teachers have understood the ideas behind the New Curriculum Reform. According to the questionnaires we collected, for the question “I think I know the teaching concept of the New Curriculum Reform,” 7.3% teachers chose “Partially

⁸Information Table of Fengping Junior Middle School for Ethnic Minorities, Spring Semester 2009.

disagree,” 17.1% chose “Neither agree nor disagree,” 31.7% chose “Partially agree,” and 43.9% chose “Totally agree.”

Through the investigation in Fengping School, we learnt that the biggest obstacle in the implementation of the new curriculum is poor knowledge and low learning enthusiasm. A teacher claimed: *“If you are too strict with the students, they will loath you and run away. As a result, you have to invite them back to learn. There was a pupil in our class who hated learning. In elementary school, there are only two exams, Chinese and Maths, and he got 5 points all together. He may have guessed some right answers in multiple choice questions. The blank-filling questions were blank. Students like this are not willing to stay at school. It is useless to ask them to learn.”*

Students are seriously school-weary, which affects teaching negatively. A teacher said in an interview: *“Students’ sense of discipline is too poor. Some students are lazy and are hard to be disciplined. They are not interested in studying. Quite a few boys don’t want to learn at all. They have to sit in the classroom just because of compulsory education.”*

Students have poor knowledge and their receptivity is limited, but they have to meet the same standards, which brings great difficulty to teaching (Yin, 2005, pp. 38–46).

The New Curriculum Reforms and the related training do not appear to be realistic and effective. The goal has not been fulfilled. There is a gap between teachers’ understanding of the concept of the new curriculum and their actual teaching (Zhu & Yang, 2006, pp. 83–91). The local environment and culture had a great impact on teaching. In an interview with the teachers, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the local parents. Teachers generally felt that Dai parents differ from Han parents. They are not interested in children’s learning and their sense of education is weak. One teacher said, *“Most parents are reasonable, but we often meet some uncooperative parents. Some parents pretend they do not understand, and some parents say, ‘Do not come to persuade our children. He does not want to go to school and our family has nobody to do the farming.’ Some parents yelled at us, ‘let him be, we can’t discipline him. If you have means to persuade him, go ahead.”* As such, many parents said they did not understand their children’s learning very much. In addition, because of the influence of Theravada Buddhism, Dai parents never beat up their children. They just let them grow naturally, and even leave them to themselves, or spoil them (Yin, 2005, pp. 71–76). In the investigation process, many parents do not know what is going on with their children’s learning and they just let them be. The gap between family education and school education is one of the most difficult problems in ethnic education, which can prevent the implementation of the national basic education policy in local schools (Chang, 2007, pp. 54–61). In the survey, we also learned that Dai parents hold natural attitudes toward the children’s further education and their future. When asked about the future of their children, several parents said, *“Just let them be.”* In the survey, most teachers claimed that Dai parents spoil their children and do not have high expectations for their children.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 *Boarding System*

The school can provide only 700 beds to 1135 students, so some students have to live outside the school. The school is located in the town center, so transportation is convenient. The majority of students live near the school. They spend 15–60 min to go to school on foot. Because of safety issues, students who live far from school do not take part in the evening activities. Compared with boarders, they have less time to study. On this note, we think that the housing condition brings negative influences on students. First, for safety reasons, those who live far away do not attend evening self-study. As a result, they have less study hours than boarding students. Secondly, to improve study efficiency, the school gives priority of boarding and dormitory arrangement to top students to make sure they have adequate time for studying. The other students become “day-students.” Third, the washroom is too far. It is not only inconvenient but also brings difficulty to management. Some students often sneak out with the excuse of going to washroom at night. Therefore, to a great extent, the difficulties behind the implementation of policies are related to the school’s physical condition.

Fengping School is located in a suburban area. There are many unemployed young people there, often harassing students. To ensure school security, teachers are on duty 24 h. We find that dormitory management must meet ethnic minority students’ needs and grassroot experience plays an irreplaceable role. Dai culture and language are important for management. Many parents can not understand related policies due to language ability, which limits security education in school. Policy implementers should thus publicize and explain the policies in local ethnic minority languages to parents to ensure good results.

Boarding students and their families are the most direct beneficiaries. They are greatly influenced by the policies. We find that parents are very satisfied with dormitory management. They feel reassured when their children live in school, because management is strict. They do not have to worry about their children sneaking out of school or following bad examples.

We see that students’ hobbies are too simple and that they have few activities, and it is likely that they will shift their attention and interest to unhealthy habits, such as drinking, gambling, etc. Therefore, the school should organize activities after school, enriching their lives and studies (Cao & Wang, 2010).

4.4.2 *Ethnic Cultures Entering Schools*

The school has established its own ethnic characteristics and earned a good reputation. To develop ethnic minority culture, the school establishes and improves its management system and gives priority to ethnic cultural activities. Fengping School

sends a certain number of art students to higher-level schools every year. Now, it is a base for Yunnan Art College and has achieved good social benefits.

As for the policy of “Ethnic Cultures Entering Schools,” Yunnan provincial government has not made explicit provisions. The schools just opened after-class activities and specialty classes, according to local cultures and conditions. Teachers tutor students who fall behind in class and let advanced students develop their talents. In this way, students would want to stay in school. This approach also plays a role in the protection and inheritance of ethnic minority culture (Zhu & Yang, 2006, pp. 7–15).

4.4.3 “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” Policy

Since the central government carried out “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy, students’ lives have improved a lot and the dropout rate has been greatly reduced. There are some problems. Firstly, since the implementation of this policy, most students do not face financial hardships anymore, but it is not equal for everyone. Secondly, because of the quota of subsidies, the school distributes them flexibly according to academic achievements and performance. Thirdly, the information campaigns for schooling are not fully conducted. Students and parents do not know the amount and criteria of the exemption or newly issued policies and measures. Fourthly, some families are not able to afford senior high school. Fifthly, headmasters think that the distribution of subsidies is too even and it is difficult to improve impoverished students’ living conditions. As a result, the policy goal is not fulfilled (Chen & Li, 2010).

4.4.4 Teacher Training

There are many systems and plans of teacher training, but they are scattered and imperfect. Teacher training lacks systematic support, definite plans, and funds. There are no special institutions and measures to fulfill the policy. Different people had different reactions during our investigation. Firstly, what the local teachers lack is education techniques. Secondly, good training is needed. Some training has no appropriate trainers. The training only focuses on theory but it cannot solve teachers’ actual problems. As a result, teachers are frustrated. Thirdly, there is a shortage of funds. Fourthly, teacher training is widespread and frequent, but not effective. The effectiveness and pertinence remain to be improved. Fifthly, even if teachers desire to be trained, they are too busy to take a leave from their teaching responsibility (Chen & Sude, 2005).

We find through interviews that the rigid implementation of policy has become seriously restrictive. Dai students in Fengping School account for 90% of all the students. In this area, ethnic minority education lagged behind for a long time (Meng, 2007, pp. 121–127). However, the school has to be evaluated by the same standards

with other general schools. It is difficult to embody the particularity of schools for ethnic minorities. There are confusions and conflicts between the particularity of ethnic minority and the universality of education evaluation (Wang & Guan, 2010).

4.4.5 New Curriculum Reforms

Research has shown that the problem of rigid implementation is very serious in the New Curriculum Reforms. The existing curriculum provision and training patterns are designed based on the conditions and teachers' quality of urban and developed areas, which is not suitable for teachers in impoverished and ethnic areas. There are conflicts between the universal education policies and ethnic minorities' particularities (Chen & Li, 2010). There is also a gap between teachers' understanding of the new curriculum concept and their teaching practices. Actually, many teachers cannot adjust to the new teaching materials and new teaching methods. It is very difficult to make them adapt. The New Curriculum Reform and related trainings are not geared toward local circumstances. It is just lip service, unfulfilled and not effective enough. The policy of the New Curriculum Reform has not achieved its expected goals (Bao, 2009, pp. 121–126). In addition, the trainers are not qualified; their training methods are simple and/or impractical, so the effect of the trainings is not satisfying.

4.5 Countermeasures and Recommendations

4.5.1 Implementing Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities with Full Consideration of Their Particularities

In implementing the related education policies, the particularities of certain ethnic groups should be fully considered. Local needs should be an important factor for decision-making. Through thorough research, governments at all levels should divide these areas into certain levels and types by taking into consideration the differences in geography, ethnic composition, languages, cultures, etc. (Cui, 2010).

4.5.2 Clarifying Relationships to Avoid Conflicts Between Departments

The designing and implementation of education policies for ethnic minorities involve various departments on different levels. Different Education Bureaus, the ethnic affairs commission, departments of finance and local governments are all involved. Different departments establish and implement policies based on their own views,

which is common in the administrative system. Therefore, we must clearly define the responsibilities and authority of every department in the implementation of education policies for ethnic minorities to avoid conflicts and burdensome administration (Ding, 2005).

4.5.3 Improving Training for Decision-Makers to Develop Cultural Sensitiveness

In education policies for ethnic minorities, the policy goals of the central government tend to be flexible and leave space for local governments. Under these circumstances, the interpretation of policies in local governments plays a decisive role in the implementation. The implementers do not take part in the research process of policy-making and their understanding of the policies is not systematic and integral. Sometimes, they even misunderstand the policies (Jin, 2009a, pp. 71–88). Therefore, to improve the education of ethnic minorities and their cultural sensitivity, improving decision-makers' ability to make culturally sensitive education policies, but also improving implementers' ability to carry out these education policies should be the priorities (Gui & Zhong, 2010).

4.5.4 Delegating Administrative Autonomy to Lower Levels

Governments at all levels and related functional departments should grant education administrative departments and schools necessary autonomy in school management. Only through this can administrators and/or headmasters make appropriate decisions to meet the actual needs (Li, 2005, pp. 132–137).

4.5.5 Establishing a Concrete Strategy to Help Teachers with Professional Development

Due to the lack of training funding, teachers' knowledge and ability are yet to be improved. Administrative departments should make specific and scientific plans for teachers' professional development and allocate more funds for teacher training. The government should take measures to develop teacher education, encourage teachers to engage in teaching permanently, and offer opportunities for their professional development (Gui & Zhong, 2010).

4.5.6 Arranging Classes Based on Local Ethnic Characteristics in Line with Students' Actual Needs

Based on students' needs, curriculum reforms should be implemented. Some classes with unique ethnic characteristics should constitute an important part of the curriculum. It will not only arouse students' interests in their own ethnic culture, but also improve their cultural sensitivity (Jin, 2009b).

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Chapter 5

Case 2—Mengyue Nine-Year School, Yunnan Province



5.1 Background and Introduction

5.1.1 *An Overview of the Ecological Environment and Culture*

Mengyue Township lies in Longchuan County, Dehong Autonomous Prefecture of Dai-Jingpo Ethnic Minorities, Yunnan Province. Surrounded by mountains, Mengyue Township is mainly made up of Jingpo, Han, Yi, Lisu people, and other ethnic groups. The farming population in Mengyue Township is 7407 (1799 families), including 5748 Jingpo people, accounting for 77.8% of the total population (Meng, 2007, pp. 96–104).

Mengyue is an underdeveloped region, economically and educationally. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Han people here were mainly from three counties, Tengchong, Lianghe, and Longling. After 1949, encouraged by the central government, a large number of Han people gradually moved in from Tengchong, Lianghe, and Baoshan counties for the need of developing the frontier and developing state-owned farms (Meng, 2007, pp. 104–109).

Mengyue Township is in the middle of the Longjiang River Valley. Recently, owing to dam construction, some villages were affected by the reservoirs. Inhabitants and local government offices in reservoir areas were moved to higher terrains, including the present Yingpan village and county government. Compensation was given to the affected villagers by the local government. In general, the economy lags behind, so does education. Many internal migrants in this township have contributed to the local economic development, cultural integration, local customs, and ideas (Sun, 2009).

5.1.2 General Development of the School

The School of Mengyue Township is located next to the Mengyue Township Government, surrounded by several government departments. The school is built along the mountain, surrounded by two roads. Many cars and people pass the front gate every day. A central market where people buy daily necessities every five days is on the opposite side of the school. Teachers and students also hang around and shop at the market.

The school was moved to the current place from the reservoir area on September 1, 2009. The first batch of students started classes on September 11, 2009. The school motto and school culture have not been established yet. The school has teaching buildings, office buildings, playgrounds, washrooms, dormitories (for both students and staff), and a dining hall. The school consists of a preschool, a primary school, and a secondary school (17 classes in total). Among the 627 students, 47 are in the preschool, 367 in the primary school, and 213 in the secondary school. As for the ethnic groups of these students, they are Han, Jingpo, Lisu, Achang, Dai (among others). The number of boarding students is 577 (including 27 preschool students). The classes in primary and secondary schools are arranged at the same time. The class timetable is written on the blackboard in the teachers' office. Students know the classes they have from the timetable in their own classrooms.

The school is near the township government office building. The principal said: "Our school is led both by the education bureau and the township government." The school reports to the local government every year. A police officer of Mengyue Township is also the vice-principal of the Nine-year School, in charge of the safety of the school. Police officers patrol around the school several times a day. The school is far from the villages and towns in mountain areas. Parents from these places come to pick up their children every two weeks.

5.2 Investigation Methods and Procedures

Beginning from May 22, 2010, 14 days of fieldwork were done in the School of Mengyue Township.

5.2.1 Research Goals

The research team was composed of researchers and students of Minzu University of China. The research methods included interviews, observations, and questionnaire surveys. The investigation focused on the students' daily life and school education. The key points in the investigation were discussed as follows.

1. Understanding ethnic minority education policies from different groups of people.
2. Teachers' and students' daily life and school education, particularly in the boarding school.
3. Implementation of ethnic minority education policies in ethnic regions.

5.2.2 Research Methods

The research group interviewed 50 people, including the secretary and the deputy secretary of the Education Bureau of Longchuan County, staff in the basic education department and personnel department, the director and researchers in the Education Research Center, the deputy secretary of the Ethnic and Religious Bureau of Longchuan County, teachers, students, and parents from the school. The group observed the school, dormitories, classes, community, and the dining hall. Besides, ninety questionnaires were sent to students and 96.8% of them were collected. Six questionnaires were sent to the teachers and 83.33% of them were collected.

5.3 Focus on Fundamental Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities

5.3.1 Layout Adjustment

In 2001, *the State Council Decision on Basic Education Reforms and Developments* explicitly pointed out: "... to adjust the rural compulsory education school distribution according to local conditions. Students go to primary schools nearby, concentrating on the junior middle schools, and optimizing the allocation of resources. The school layout should be reasonably planned and adjusted." The Education Bureau of Longchuan County plans to close and merge 72 primary and secondary schools in six years (2009–2014), keeping 33 primary schools and secondary schools (including new ethnic boarding high schools).

Since December 2009, Mengyue Township has had four schools: one nine-year school and three primary schools, namely Kongnanba Primary School, Longjiangba Primary School, and Wamu Primary School. So far, part of Kongnanba Primary School has merged into the Nine-year School of Mengyue Township, only the preschool, Grade 2 and part of Grade 3 have not moved out yet. It was estimated that all schools will be merged into the Nine-year School by September 2010. After that the secondary part of the Nine-year School was supposed to be merged with the No. 4 High School of Longchuan County (located at Jinghan Town).

The new teaching building of Kongnanba Primary School was put into use in 2004. Because of the merging of schools, it was abandoned before 2011. When asked about

the arrangement of the abandoned school, the principal said the schools would be sold to local individuals, which is a waste of resources.

In an interview, parents, principals, and executives held different views about the closing and merging schools. They are influenced by this policy differently. An educational executive explained: “Closing and merging schools are necessary, otherwise there will be a hopeless mess.” By 2014, only 33 schools remained (134 schools formerly). He also told us that it was useful to expand the scale of schools. The Secondary School of the Nine-year School was merged into the No. 4 High School of Longchuan County, while other primary schools were merged into the Nine-year School.

Parents shared different opinions about these. About the merger of the secondary part of the Nine-year School, some parents said, “We have not heard of that at the moment.” When asked whether they agree or object to that, some parents argued that “It will be farther to pick up the children, especially for the two-child family with one child in Jinghan and the other in Mengyue Township. It is troublesome.” This could be a new reason for students to drop out.

About the merger of other primary schools, some parents agreed with this arrangement because the conditions of the new primary school would be better. The principal was confident with the closing and merging of schools. Due to the lack of teachers and supporting services, teachers have to be responsible for managing students’ daily life, which affects teachers’ energy and time to deal with teaching activities.

5.3.2 *Boarding System*

According to the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Regional National Autonomy* passed on May 31, 1984, the departments of self-government of national autonomous areas may set up public primary and secondary schools, boarding schools, and schools providing subsidies to students in pastoral areas and economically underdeveloped areas, and sparsely populated mountain areas of ethnic minorities.

About 92% of the students and 96% of the teachers live on campus since they live far from the school. Most students are boarding students, except a few who are half-boarding. The school gives them day-offs every two weeks.

There are two dormitory buildings in the school. The front one is for boys, while the back one for girls. Usually, all dormitory doors are unlocked. The number of students in each dormitory is uneven, which is arranged by classes. There is an old desk in each dormitory where students put cups, lunch boxes, and other daily necessities. In addition, students use a string to hang clothes. We noted that here is no mattress on the bed, so students have to bring bamboo boards from home to set the bed. Other necessities such as beddings and toiletries need to be brought from home. Because of the old and broken bunk bed rails, there have been accidents such as students falling off from the upper bed.

A male manager is in charge of students' boarding life. He is a permanent member of staff who used to be a teacher, before he was diagnosed with mental health issues. All the teachers know about this. Teachers do weekly duties in turn, including 17 male teachers and 22 female teachers. Teachers on duty take responsibility for maintaining order, turning on/off the lights and the morning broadcast.

(1) Boarding Students' Time Management

Children follow the timetable made by the school—there are separate summer and winter timetables. Students get up, have meals, have classes, and have breaks according to the timetables.

(2) Relationships Between Students

At school, the relationships between students are based on age and gender. During the interviews, students explained that fights happen between classmates sometimes. Students of lower grades think that fighting is a normal thing because they like joking. Nevertheless, they do not realize the harm of fighting. Girls get on well with each other, with the exception of some minor disagreements. Most students get along well. Both classmates and roommates help each other and study together. When a student gets sick, classmates and roommates take the responsibility of taking care of them.

(3) Feelings About the Boarding School

The results of our questionnaires show that nearly a quarter of the students do not like living at school. The reasons include: Some are disturbed by others when they sleep. Some are not able to afford boarding. Some belongings are stolen, and some students are bullied. The dorms are not clean.

Half-boarding students choose to eat at home since they are not satisfied with the quality and price of the meals at school. Boarding students pay 295 yuan for meals every semester. Some students have to pay the fees in installments. The central government allocates 500 yuan to every boarding student in primary school and 750 yuan for secondary school per year. Every student pays 1 yuan for breakfast at the stand outside school. Some students always go hungry because they do not have enough money for breakfast.

Rice during lunch is self-served and the dishes are served by staff. In most cases, there is one dish for each meal, occasionally two. Students have meat dishes twice a week.

(4) Dining Environment

Students always eat their meals outside because there is no table or bench in the dining room. They stand on the playground or against a wall. Students are not allowed to eat inside the classroom or in the dormitory.

Parents hold different opinions about boarding. First, parents worry that their children cannot take care of themselves at such a young age, especially when they get sick or homesick. Second, some parents do not worry about their children because they believe boarding life can improve the children's ability to take care of themselves and teachers can take care of them. Third, parents of older students, especially girls'

parents, worry that their children may pick up bad habits outside school. Nevertheless, all the parents prefer boarding school because it saves time. All the parents seem to miss their children very much.

5.3.3 *Bilingual Education*

“Bilingual education” means bilingual teaching among ethnic minorities at ethnic minority schools. The basic principle is to respect minority students’ will and to meet the local needs.

The dominant ethnic group here is the Xiaoshan group of Jingpo in Mengyue Township. The Zaiwa language is taught in minority language classes. In the Nine-year School of Mengyue Township, only Grades 4 and 5 in primary school have minority language classes. Though there is no minority language material, the teacher copies the content on the blackboard for students to read and write. The school requires Jingpo students to have minority language lessons, but neither Han nor other ethnic groups. In the observation of classes, we found that students were quite active in bilingual classes.

Before the end of the semester, teachers test the students’ learning. Exams were organized by the Education Bureau of the County in the past. However, the students do not have bilingual materials at all. This is unimaginable for the bilingual class teachers. In the Nine-year School, students in preschool and lower grades do not need to have bilingual classes. Continuous bilingual education does not appear to be effective.

Staff who are in charge of bilingual education in the Education Research Center of Longchuan County introduce the current development. From 2009 to 2010, bilingual education was carried out in 67 classes of 62 schools, involving 2080 students around the whole county, including ten Dai language classes, six Jingpo language classes, eight Zaiwa language classes, four Achang language classes, two Lisu language classes, and 37 Chinese language classes.

Bilingual classes are set up in senior grades instead of junior grades. Exams are organized by the schools at the end of every semester.

Staff in the Education Research Center of Longchuan County are under great pressure and told us about three key problems that they are facing. First schools lack permanent bilingual teachers. Second, leaders do not provide full support. Third, schools face a shortage of bilingual teaching material.

Referring to the lack of permanent bilingual teachers, some administrators suggest that the local Education Bureau cooperates with universities and normal universities to train more bilingual teachers in order to solve these problems (Sun, 2009).

5.3.4 Ethnic Culture in School

Introducing ethnic culture in school can not only protect ethnic culture but also can help inherit and foster excellent traditions. This practice will also enhance students' awareness of their own ethnic culture (Cao & Wang, 2010).

In the process of developing ethnic culture, some schools have some experiences, some just began to implement this policy, and others did not start yet (Chen & Chen, 2010).

In the school, students have Jingpo dancing lessons. The buildings are also built in Jingpo and Dai styles. Paintings on the walls show Jingpo culture. Students do Jingpo physical exercises between the second and third periods every day.

Students' questionnaires show that most students like to know their own ethnic culture. They like local teaching material, but the quality should be improved.

Almost every student uses the local textbook entitled "Love My Longchuan." We witnessed some local and ethnic activities organized at the school, which were not seen in other places like the Sahu Autonomous Township of Achang. In the Sahu Autonomous Township, the dominant people are Achang. But it seems that few ethnic activities are organized at the Mingshe Complete Primary School in the Sahu Autonomous Township of Achang.

5.3.5 Teacher Training

The training of minority teachers is very important for the improvement of education in ethnic minority area. The government proclaimed a series of policies in order to develop excellent minority teaching staff in various ways, such as strengthening teacher training, raising salaries, and increasing regular staff at ethnic schools. Nevertheless, teachers are faced with many problems in their lives and work (Chen & Sude, 2005).

The School of Mengyue Township is administrated by the Central School which has its office in the Nine-year School, having four teaching and administrative staff. The number of staff in the Nine-year School is 49, including 43 full-time teachers, one contract worker, and five temporary workers (cooks). Regarding their ethnic groups, there are five Jingpo teachers, four Dai teachers, and one Bai teacher, while the others are Han Chinese.

46 of 47 full-time teachers and Central School staff graduated from college while one teacher graduated from high school.

Usually, the students in lower grades respect teachers very much. However, students in higher grades start to get into a rebellious phase and judge teachers by their own standards.

The relationships among teachers are not very harmonious. Once in an interview, a teacher complained that her teaching material was stolen by another teacher several times, so she had to prepare them time and again.

Since September 2009, five teachers had transferred elsewhere. Some of them went to other schools, while some changed their occupation. We were told that the reasons for teachers changing occupations are as follows: less respect, low salary, great pressure and responsibility, their own capability and social background.

Performance-related pay for the first year was not yet transferred to the teachers. The school this kind of pay but the proposal could only come into force after being approved by the Education Bureau of the County.

Assessment of performance-related pay is related to teachers' ability of managing class, work attendance, head teacher bonus, and workload. The total is 25 points. A teacher who got the first place in assessment asserted that the performance-related pay was unfair because teachers could not get what they deserved.

Longchuan County has 2148 teachers and staff and faces a shortage of teachers while, at the same time, firing staff.

Every year, 70–80 teachers are transferred around the county. There are three ways to get transferred. 1. Six years' working experience in mountain areas and pass qualifying exams. 2. Teachers transfer from one mountain area to another to stay close to their spouse. 3. Teachers are transferred to different jobs.

As the training base of the county, the Education Research Center of Longchuan attaches great importance to teacher training activities. Most teacher training is held at the local Education Research Center. Few trainings take place in other provinces.

Many teachers who have received training think that it is an important part of their job, but they argue that some training is impractical and ineffective. In the county, no money is set aside for teacher training. The Finance Bureau of the County reserves 5% of the compulsory education funds for training. 30% of money for training is deducted by the Finance Bureau (Wang & Lu, 2006, pp. 77–83).

2010 was the first year to practice merit pay. At present, the Education Bureau has required schools to do a plan for merit pay. Both the Finance Bureau and the Education Bureau are in charge of the implementation of merit pay (Wang, 2010).

The government holds a cautious attitude toward merit pay, whereas some teachers do not think that it makes any difference. Teachers and graduates from developed areas are not willing to come to the impoverished frontier areas, thus counterpart assistance has little effect.

At the Central School of Sahu Autonomous Township of Achang Minority, the investigation team came across a volunteer teacher from a university in Beijing. Volunteer teachers are welcomed by the local teachers because they can share teaching tasks and bring new ideas. Volunteer teachers only stay for a semester or 1–2 years at most.

5.3.6 New Curriculum Reforms

The main idea behind the New Curriculum Reforms is to encourage students to join the class activities actively.

The State Council Decision on Basic Education Reforms and Developments was issued by the State Council in 2001. The decision emphasizes that basic education is of strategic priority in socialist modernization. The educational departments should thus establish a comprehensive curriculum system and put efforts to improve curriculum structure and content in compulsory education (Wang, 2010).

Great attention has been paid to the quality of education as promoted by the New Curriculum Reforms. Whether the New Curriculum Reforms can enter class can be reflected on how students learn, how teachers teach, how students respond, and how teachers and students communicate in class.

We chose four representative situations in class and identified some problems:

Sample 1: The teacher can neither organize class very well nor make full use of time efficiently. We found out, during the interviews, that students' learning is not satisfying.

Sample 2: Little communication occurs between teachers and students. Furthermore, the teacher asks simple questions, which are not stimulating enough.

Sample 3: Class time of some subjects is taken up by other key subjects, with no respect for the timetable. Teachers show little concern to students. All the time the teacher dominates, not giving opportunities to students to express their opinions.

Sample 4: Teachers bring new ideas into the class. For instance, questions are asked in diversified and new forms. It is still unclear whether this method has some positive impacts.

Many problems emerge in the process of using new teaching material based on the curriculum reforms. The teaching material used all over the country is unsuitable for frontier areas. An educational executive asserted: "The teaching material is problematic because it is inappropriate for students in frontier areas. Students need plenty of knowledge in one lesson although the textbook looks simple at the first glance. What is worse, teachers know nothing about related technology so that no one can teach that part. Although we are having New Curriculum Reforms, there is great pressure on us. This is why we need teaching material suitable for local needs."

Teachers hold different views on the New Curriculum Reforms. "New Curriculum Reforms are meant to improve old teaching approaches and methods." "They urge teachers to act as instructors and guide students to study on their own initiative." "Although New Curriculum Reforms are in conformity with current times, teachers have heavier burdens." "The current evaluation standard of schools still relates to scores so that the exam-oriented education occupies a dominant place. Modern teaching approaches have really entered classrooms. Students are weak in expressing and exchanging their ideas, and we should take measures suitable to local conditions. The 'Two Exemptions and One Subsidy Policy' is one of the benefits from the New Curriculum Reforms."

Although teachers have their own opinion and understanding about the reforms, it seems that they have not digested the deep meaning of this policy and some teachers confuse the New Curriculum Reforms with other current policies. They are not able to keep a balance between scores requirement and students' burden alleviation.

5.4 Discussions

5.4.1 *Layout Adjustment and Boarding System*

The policies of the school layout adjustment and boarding system drastically improved education quality in rural areas. The implementation of these policies can not only concentrate on education resources, but also save students' time on commuting, making good use of their time, and enhancing their ability of self-management and adaptability to collective life (Cui, 2010).

However, some government administrators place too much attention on the number of schools that were merged and the number of boarding schools built. School layout adjustment and boarding school building become the only standards to judge the performance of the local officials. The implementation of this policy becomes rigid, which has caused waste of resources and dissatisfaction of parents (Teng & Zhang, 2009, pp. 66–71).

Let us take the Nine-Year School as an example. The project school was put into use in 2009. The Education Bureau of the County still owed the contractor six million yuan. The secretary of the Education Bureau and the principal tried to collect money and begged the labor contractor to complete the building of school. It is very difficult for education administrators to make these decisions and there are potential problems with this practice. As long as the shortage of teachers and bad management remain unsolved, closing and merging schools cannot bring significant changes. Closing and merging schools are only one aspect of education quality. Teachers have to take care of students' daily life because of the lack of supporting staff and funding. This adds extra workload to teachers and distracts them from teaching. Students, especially the preschool students, are not able to take care of their boarding life at such a young age. They feel lonely and helpless at times (Li, 2009).

5.4.2 *Bilingual Education*

Before they go to school, ethnic minority students seldom had opportunities to learn Chinese and some can hardly understand Chinese when they first come to school. It thus feels unfair that students of various ethnic groups use the same textbooks and the same teaching method. This will put ethnic minority students in a disadvantageous position. In the long run, this gap will grow (Zhang, 2009a).

Therefore, it is necessary to have bilingual teachers who know both Chinese and minority languages to teach minority students bilingually. However, there is a shortage of bilingual teachers, bilingual textbooks, and funding (Zhang, 2009b).

5.4.3 *Ethnic Culture into Schools*

School education should be conducted in line with the development of ethnic culture. That is policy innovation. It is beneficial to students' consciousness of their ethnic culture. The development of ethnic culture varies in different schools and different regions, depending on the local economic development and support from leaders. Local researchers have realized the importance of developing ethnic culture in school education. The development of ethnic culture should be deeper and various kinds of ethnic cultural activities should be organized (Sude, 2008).

5.4.4 *Teacher Training*

Some teachers face great pressure and heavy burdens with unsatisfactory salaries and welfare. Teacher training plays an important role in improving education quality in ethnic minority regions. Recruiting high-quality teachers is essential for the improvement of education in ethnic regions. The transfer of teaching staff is frequent, so measures should be taken to make teaching staff more stable. Meanwhile, there are not enough permanent positions for bilingual teachers. Teachers need training both ideologically and technically. Teacher training can meet teachers' needs. When new ideas and teaching skills are put into practice, they can help students in their learning. Counterpart assistance is good, but students with masters' degrees come and go, thus having little effect on improvement of education. The government should take measures and make preferential policies to attract good teachers in border areas (Sude, 2004b).

Teachers are concerned about performance-related pay, which closely relates to the stability of teaching staffs. Performance-related pay should be carried out fairly and timely. There are problems in the local personnel system. To solve the problem, we need to adjust the number of permanent positions for teachers and bilingual teachers by faculty–student ratio.

5.4.5 *New Curriculum Reforms*

The implementation of New Curriculum Reforms is confronted with difficulties, for instance, students' bad performance in their learning (Chen, 2008). According to the situation at the school under review, the six-year curriculum reform finds itself in an awkward position. The New Curriculum Reforms lack cultural appropriateness in ethnic regions due to urbanization and the influence of dominant Han mainstream culture.

In conclusion, teaching staff are not qualified to meet the needs of the New Curriculum Reforms. Besides, relationships between teachers and students as well as

among teachers are not harmonious, which limits teaching cooperation and interaction between teachers and students. Necessary equipment is also needed. In addition, teaching methods and content are not well situated for ethnic cultures.

5.5 Countermeasures and Suggestions

5.5.1 Layout Adjustment and Boarding System

As far as the implementation of basic education policies in ethnic minority areas is concerned, there are still some problems. Policymakers should consider various elements and take measures to ensure the development of basic education in frontier areas (Chen & Li, 2010).

Regarding the suggestions and views from different people, the feasibility and plan of closing and merging schools should be carefully and rationally made. During the process, waste and loss of educational resources should be strictly prevented.

Government should expand investment to improve the boarding conditions, increase subsidies for boarding students, and alleviate economic burden for families. To ease the overload of teachers, schools should solve the problem of lack of support services and facilities. It is necessary to enhance students' boarding conditions, teacher training and to pay attention to students' mental health (Ding, 2005).

5.5.2 Bilingual Education

The importance of bilingual education should be strengthened by allocating more funding. The assessment system of bilingual education should be improved. A standard should be set up to evaluate teaching results of every school. Moreover, bilingual textbooks and supporting material should be compiled and published in larger numbers with higher quality. Bilingual teaching material should be free. The quality of teaching staff should be improved and more capable bilingual teachers should be recruited and trained (Sude, 2004b).

5.5.3 Ethnic Culture in Schools

Classes and activities related to ethnic culture should be organized to raise cultural awareness of ethnic minority students. The government should make national laws and rules to support ethnic culture. Both schools and governments should have deep understanding of the cultural connotation of ethnic minorities. More local teaching

material in ethnic minority languages should be compiled and published (Wan, 2006, pp. 123–127).

5.5.4 *Teacher Training*

The Education Bureau should develop ethnic teacher education and train minority teachers. The established system should be suitable for local needs. To improve education quality, teacher training should be strengthened in line with teachers' needs and teaching practices. Departments at all levels should take performance-related pay policy seriously. We need to offer teachers better salary and welfare and make policies to attract high-quality teachers in ethnic regions (Wang & An, 2009).

5.5.5 *New Curriculum Reforms*

The New Curriculum Reforms have positive effects on teachers and students. Teacher training ought to be enhanced both in theory and practice. More investment should be put into improving teaching conditions for the New Curriculum Reforms. In assessing the New Curriculum Reforms, student development should be emphasized, regardless of their scores. Both the school and the government should develop teaching material suitable for ethnic minority areas. During this process, the special situation of ethnic minority regions and the special needs of the minority students should be carefully considered (Wen, 2009).

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Chapter 6

Case 3—Namu Primary School, Yunnan Province



6.1 General Background

6.1.1 Ecological–Cultural Background

Namu is a village in Fengping Town, Luxi City, Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province. Located on a low-latitude plateau with a monsoon climate, the city has mild with long cool summer and short warm foggy winter, distinct wet and dry seasons, long sunshine time, and abundant rainfall. Namu village is at the south of Fengping Town, 3 km away from Fengping Town government, and 11 km from the municipal government. Transportation here is convenient with paved roads.

People in Namu village are mainly Dai, a southern ethnic minority of China. The total population here is 5634, including 5217 Dai people, accounting for 95.5% of the total (Yin, 2005, pp. 76–81). It is the most densely populated village by Dai people in Dehong Prefecture. Other ethnic groups like Jingpo, Achang, and Han also live here. Dai is one of the native peoples in Luxi. Dai people have lived there for a long time and their ancestors were a branch of ancient Baiyue. Dai people call themselves “Dai,” which means “people who love liberty and peace.” Dai are optimistic people with a herd mentality. The villagers are divided into different groups according to their age and gender. People in the same group wear the same costume, work, and take part in activities together (Meng, 2007, pp. 17–21).

Villagers here mainly speak Dai language and write “Daina characters,” which is of the Zhuang–Dai branch, the Zhuang–Dong language group, the Chinese–Tibetan language family. Dai people believe in Pali Buddhism (Theravada Buddhism), and still have residual primitive religion, worshiping trees, and the White Horse Temple. Every village has its own “Zangfang,” i.e., a Buddhist temple where people offer sacrifices to the village god regularly. According to the customs, villagers at the age of 40–50 are supposed to enter “Zangfang” every September to chant Sutra in Dai and worship Buddha. Once one enters “Zangfang,” he may not kill anymore. They have various traditional holidays like the “Ganduo Festival” and “Water-splashing Festival” (Meng, 2007, pp. 27–31).

With abundant rainfall and sunshine, crops like rice, melon, and sugar cane grow well in Namu village. What is more, the arable land is efficient, so most villagers can have an average life by farming. They have formed a self-sufficient, low-consumption lifestyle. In recent years, some young villagers choose to become migrant workers and some villagers live by doing business. Tobacco planting has become a part of their life in recent years, and according to a report in 2007, Namu was the largest planting base of dried tobacco (Sun, 2010).

6.1.2 Background Information of the Project School

6.1.2.1 A Brief Introduction to Dongguan “Two Places, One Heart” Namu Qiaoxin Primary School

There are two primary schools in Namu village: Dongguan “Two Places One Heart” Namu Qiaoxin Primary School (Namu Primary School for short) and its branch Nongkan Primary School (five classes and 144 registered students in total). The two primary schools are all affiliated with Fengping Central Primary School. Namu Primary School is the central primary school of Namu village, which was founded in 1953. With a total area of 5700 m², the school has 19 teachers, four male and 15 female, including 11 ethnic minority teachers. There are nine classes, one class in each grade, two classes for Grades 2 and 6. There are 375 registered students, including 353 ethnic minority students, among which Dai account for 94%. As for language, Dai students and teachers are accustomed to speaking Dai language after class but they usually use Mandarin as the teaching language in class. Learning and using Chinese is promoted in the school.

6.1.2.2 Conditions

Namu Primary School has two teaching buildings, two teacher’s dormitory buildings, and a one-story lavatory building. The total area of the bigger teaching building is 881 m², which was built in 2010. The old teaching building has twelve classrooms on three floors, including a library room, a laboratory, and a multimedia room. Because it has been used for many years, part of the wall has fallen off. The lavatory building is newly built. The school is equipped with one multimedia room, one laboratory, and one library. The multimedia room has six computers with only one connected to the Internet. The size of the library is about 40 m² and there are 1312 books in total. The school has no playground or teachers’ office. In recent years, more and more students come to this school, so the teaching and boarding conditions need to be improved.

6.1.2.3 School Culture

First, since the new teaching building of Namu Primary School was completed, some of the facilities have been under construction.

Second, the school puts an emphasis on green schoolyard and decorations. Some teachers said that teachers and students planted trees together a couple of days ago.

Third, the national flag is flying high on the flagpole in the middle of the schoolyard. The school holds a flag-raising ceremony weekly, but the ceremony and exercises during breaks had to stop due to the construction of the teaching building.

In addition, there have been no posts or blackboard-newspapers in the classrooms in the newly built teaching building yet. In the classrooms of the old teaching building, blackboard-newspapers, timetables, and regulations for students are put up all over the walls. There is a column named “Who’s the Best” in junior classes to show the “little red flowers” (which means honor in various aspects) the pupils have won. The illumination of the classrooms is good and desks and chairs are comfortable.

Finally, the teaching staff has a meeting every Monday afternoon after school. The meeting is a summary of the work from the previous week, among other things.

6.1.2.4 Teachers’ Living Conditions

Namu Primary School is a non-boarding school. Except for two female teachers living in the school, all the other teachers and students commute between home and school. The teachers have no extra income besides their salary. According to the number of students, class supervisors receive a special allowance, two yuan per student for each semester.

6.1.2.5 Students’ Living Conditions

During breaks, junior students like playing games together, such as hide-and-seek, cards, and rope skipping. Boys and girls usually play together in junior classes. However, boys and girls seldom play together once they get into Grade 4 or higher. It is worth mentioning that Dai people attach importance to appearance, especially students of higher grades.

6.1.2.6 Timetable

See Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Timetable

Periods		Time			
Morning	Morning study		7:30–7:50		
	1		8:00–8:40		
	2		8:50–9:30		
	3		9:50–10:30		
	4		10:45–11:25		
Lunch break					
Afternoon	5		2:30–3:10		
	6		3:20–4:00		
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Morning study	Morning study				
1	Chinese	Maths	Chinese	Maths	Chinese
2	Maths	Ideological education	Maths	Fine arts	Science
3	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Maths
4	Music	P.E.	Entertainment and P.E.	Labor	Music
Lunch break					
5	Science	Fine arts	Maths tutorship	Entertainment and P.E.	Ideological education
6	P.E.	Local course	P.E.	Young pioneer activity	Class meeting

Note a health education lesson is taught at the time of class meeting each month

6.2 Research Methods and Process

6.2.1 Getting into the Field

On May 14, 2010, a research group consisting of 12 teachers and students from Minzu University of China left Beijing for Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province and began the fieldwork until June 4, 2010. The research group was divided into three subgroups and conducted fieldwork at three different townships.

6.2.2 Research Schedule and Duration

The fieldwork in Fengping Town lasted 22 days, from May 14–June 4, 2010. Our research was done in a middle school and a primary school in Fengping Town. We discuss the case of Namu Primary School in this section.

6.2.3 Research Tools

The study aimed to investigate and analyze the implementation and the effect of basic education policies for ethnic minorities in Luxi City. The research was done mainly through interviews, observations, and questionnaires.

6.2.4 Sampling Standards and Numbers

Our observations include schoolyard, classroom, and community observations. During the fieldwork, we attended eight classes (Chinese, maths, fine arts, and music) from Grades 2 to 6. We selected the classes randomly to ensure that we observe the real state of the class (Table 6.2).

We distributed 121 student questionnaires to the students in two classes of Grades 5 and 6, among which 101 were valid. We distributed 30 teacher questionnaires (30 were returned as valid). We also distributed two headmaster questionnaires and collected two valid ones.

6.2.5 Main Research Goals

The research purpose was to obtain a thorough description of the implementation, effect, and problems of six focused policies, namely the bilingual education policy, layout adjustment, New Curriculum Reform, “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” ethnic culture into schools, and teacher training. Through fieldwork in Namu Primary School, we analyze in depth in four dimensions—education administrators, school, parents, and policies. Therefore, we can put forward policy recommendations for basic education for ethnic minorities.

Table 6.2 Research methods and related details

Research methods	Participants	Number	Memo
Interviews	Headmasters	2	1 chief, 1 deputy
	Teachers	5	Including the director of teaching affairs and bilingual teachers. 4 Dai teachers, 1 Han teacher. 3 male and 2 female
	Students	10	Grades 4 and 6 including Han and Dai students; boys and girls; achievers and underachievers
	Parents	4	
	Representatives of the community	3	Associate dean of Namu Village Committee An old villager who masters old Dai characters and former leader of the village (Nongkan) next to Namu
Questionnaire	Headmasters	2	
	Teachers	30	
	Students	102	Class of Grade 5 (34 students), class 1 (29 students) and class 2 (39 students) of Grade 6
Observation	Observations of the school environment, classrooms and teachers and students' daily life, including 8 periods of class observation		

6.2.6 Research Process

The fieldwork was conducted with the support of the Luxi Municipal Education Bureau and the Luxi Municipal Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs, and with the cooperation of the staff and students in Namu Primary School. During the fieldwork, the research group members lived in the teacher's dormitory of Namu Primary School and had an easy access to teachers, students, and villagers. Dai people's hospitality made our work much more convenient and we got along well with the people.

However, we faced some problems and challenges. During the interviews, some parents could not speak Mandarin, so we had to ask teachers or students who speak Dai to be interpreters to make sure that the interviews were done smoothly.

6.3 Basic Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities

Based on data from fieldwork and interviews with the local people, this section depicts and analyzes the implementation process and effect of the six policies—bilingual education policy, layout adjustment, New Curriculum Reforms, “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” ethnic culture into schools, and teacher training.

Namu Primary School is a non-boarding school, and it takes the students around 5–10 min to walk from home to school. Therefore, there is no analysis of the boarding situation here.

6.3.1 Bilingual Education Policies

Bilingual education is a major measure to protect ethnic languages and scriptures. It also promotes the transmission and inheritance of ethnic culture and improves ethnic minority students’ capacity of adjusting themselves to modern life and to ensure national unity (Bao, 2009, pp. 37–42). There are three patterns of bilingual teaching in Dehong: “bilingual,” “bilingual and bi-script,” and “transmitting and inheriting.” The three patterns emphasize different things. “Bilingual” requires teachers to speak Mandarin mainly when teaching and take ethnic languages as an auxiliary language. For example, teachers interpret difficult sentences in ethnic languages to help students understand, but do not write them in ethnic characters. “Bilingual and bi-script” consists in making students learn Mandarin and characters as well as ethnic languages and characters in class. “Transmitting and inheriting” is an ethnic language teaching pattern aiming at transmitting ethnic cultures, through which teachers teach mainly in ethnic languages with little, even no Chinese.

The majority of Namu villagers are Dai, whose daily language is Dai. Many parents can not speak Mandarin, so pupils’ knowledge and ability of the Chinese language are limited. Taking into consideration this specific situation, Namu Primary School now carries out a “bilingual teaching” method. *“We teach Dai in pre-school classes, but not in Grades 1 and 2. Both Chinese and Dai are taught in Grade 3 as a pilot project, with Dai in less proportion, no Dai if not necessary. There are Dai lessons in the curriculum schedule of Grades 4 and 5, but we don’t have the course due to lack of teaching material.”* Students can have classes completely in Chinese without the assistance of the ethnic language when they get into Grades 5 or 6.

There are conflicts between different groups about bilingual teaching. Through our fieldwork, we learned that different groups have different attitudes toward the implementation of a bilingual teaching policy.

Headmaster Y: *“About bilingual and bi-script teaching, higher-ups have different explanations, and it’s quite difficult for us to follow. The Education Research Center requires us to begin bilingual education from pre-school, but teaching Dai in pre-school class affects the students’ ability to learn Chinese; when the CPPCC members came, they said students should learn Chinese... since they speak Dai at home, it’s not necessary to teach Dai at school.”*

There are conflicts between ethnic cultural transmission and entrance examinations. Ethnic language and cultural transmission require the teaching of ethnic languages, but only Chinese characters and knowledge are tested in students' graduation exams. What is more, studying two languages at the same time tends to cause negative effects. It is difficult to master two languages simultaneously, so there is a conflict between ethnic cultural transmission and the current performance evaluation system (Sun, 2010).

There are also conflicts between the different orientations in doing "bilingual education." The central government pushes the bilingual teaching policy for the protection of ethnic languages and characters, for the transmission of ethnic culture, and for the nation unification and ethnic minority students' adjustment to modern life. However, through interaction with local administrators and teachers, we find that many teachers think that when the students' Chinese is good enough, bilingual teaching ideas such as "*ethnic minority language can help students learn Chinese*," "*ethnic minority language can help students understand Chinese knowledge in the textbooks*" are baseless.

According to the Record of Bilingual Teaching Seminar in Namu Primary School, "*Bilingual teaching in Fengping town was initiated relatively early, and it was widely practiced in the 1980s. In January 2006, the Ethnic Language Teaching Research Office of Dehong Prefecture applied for and established a new research project. In April 2006, the Office appointed Namu Primary School as the project school of bilingual teaching research. The office also appointed the pre-school class enrolled in September 2006 as the project class. There were 54 students in this class, all Dai. Bilingual and bi-script teaching would be easier for students if they just start schooling. The bilingual textbook was reedited. Chinese and Dai were edited together, which is good for Dai children to get over the language barrier, to improve their study interest and confidence and to raise education quality.*"

Students' attitudes toward bilingual teaching show that they hope to learn more Chinese and use their ethnic language as support for learning it.

The analysis of the questionnaires shows that, to the question "which language(s) do you prefer teachers to speak in class?", students' choices (shown in the Chart 6.1) are 40.8% for Chinese, 17.5% for ethnic languages, 35.9% for both Chinese and ethnic languages.

As far as Parents' attitudes toward bilingual teaching are concerned: "*we prefer our children to study Chinese more, and it would be better if the children can speak both Chinese and the ethnic language.*"

Headmasters' and teachers' attitudes toward bilingual teaching: bilingual teaching is good and necessary and ethnic languages should be taught as a support language to learn Chinese. "*The higher-ups have different opinions, so we don't know which one to follow. It is difficult to carry out bilingual teaching.*" Now there is the impact of foreign cultures, some ethnic languages and cultures are fading out.

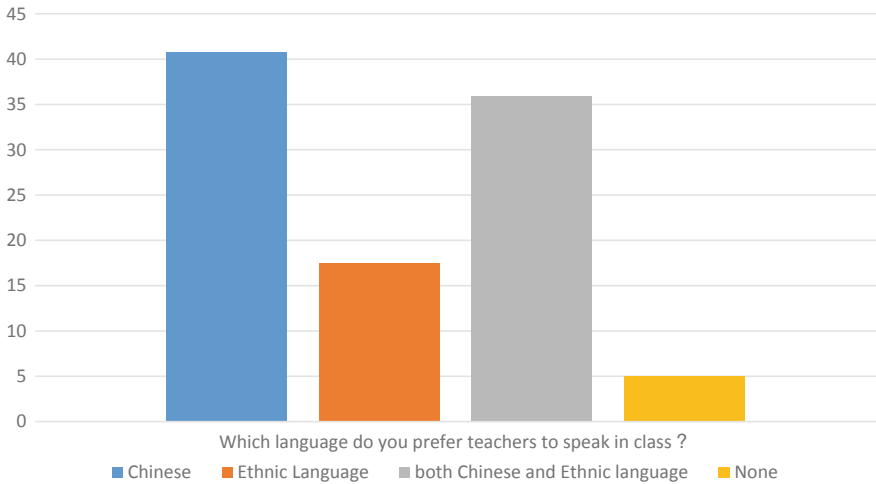


Chart 6.1 Languages students wish teachers to speak in class

6.3.2 Layout Adjustments

In 2001, the State Council issued the *Decision on the Basic Education Reform and Development*, which contained the following provision: “to adjust the school layout of rural compulsory education according to local conditions.” The layout should be planned rationally and adjusted according to the principle that primary school students can go to nearby schools; the distribution of junior high schools should be relatively concentrated and the allocation of educational resources optimized. Rural primary schools and teaching sites should be closed and merged on the prerequisite that students can go to schools close to their homes. Essential teaching sites shall be kept in the areas with inconvenient transportation to prevent dropout caused by layout adjustment (Wang, 2009a, b, c). One of the provisions of the Namu Primary School Development Plan is to enhance concentrating schools, merge Nongkan Primary School with Namu Primary School in three years and run the school as a semi-boarding school. Nongkan Primary School is a branch of Namu Primary School, and the two schools are under Fengping Town Central Primary School.

We have conducted an exhaustive opinion survey on school closing and merging. A chief education administrator told us, “I can say that I’ve been to every single school in Luxi... and I have visited a lot of villages. Actually, it is hard to be an official in a border area... closing and merging of any school can only happen after consulting the people. If over one third of the people disagree on closing or merging, we keep the school.”

Education authorities work actively to carry out the policy of closing and merging schools. It can be said that education sectors from the Yunnan provincial government to the Luxi municipal government responded positively to the layout adjustment policy issued by the central government and have taken a number of resolutions (Wang &

Guan, 2010). An administrator with the Luxi Education Research Center explained: *“Our municipal Education Bureau attaches great importance to this matter. The chief leader and I looked into it in person, on the spot, several times. Taking Fengping Town as an example, we communicated with school leaders and local government officials about the merging plans. In addition, we interviewed parents and government officials about students’ safety.”*

The education authorities follow the policy and confirm the advantages of closing and merging. Administrators of the Luxi Education Bureau and the Education Research Center are aware of the purpose and the advantages of closing and merging schools. The state issues the layout adjustment policy for the optimization of resources allocation, centralized management, better teachers, conditions, and resources for students. Education administrators follow and support the current policies. They believe that *“the benefit of closing and merging schools is centralized management, so it is easier to do the administrative work. We can share the resources. The more people, the more ideas.”*

Dai people, both villagers and students, tend to have “herd mentality.” Relations between the villagers of neighboring villages are subtle, sometimes conflicting (Wang, 2009a, b, c). It influences the children, who form small groups and members of different groups seldom play together. During the interview, an administrator at the Luxi Education Research Center mentioned the problem: *“it’s characteristic in Dai areas that if our village has a school and your village members are unwilling to go to the school in our village, they got to have a school in their village. They don’t agree on closing and merging, so we have been trying to persuade them...”*

However, the headmasters and teachers have their own countermeasures and they are confident that the merger with Nongkan Primary School will take place in due time: *“First, we bring the pre-school class of Nongkan to Namu. In this way, Nongkan will lose student sources gradually. Second, we bring the senior grades to Namu. If the seniors can get accustomed to Namu, so will the juniors.”*

According to our study, many parents in Nongkan are against the closing and merging plans. They said, *“If the new school is far, we are afraid that children will be caught in rain when commuting. And there is too much traffic on this road, so we worry about their safety. It is impossible for us to pick them up every day.”* About the problem of unsatisfying conditions at Nongkan Primary School, some villagers even claimed: *“then we can build one, our villagers can raise money. We just don’t want to be merged.”* All the above reflects the parents’ concerns and opposition.

6.3.3 *New Curriculum Reforms*

The New Curriculum Reforms are the most influential basic education policy directly pushed and carried out by the State Council (Wu, 2006, pp. 21–27). We learn through fieldwork that Luxi government has made great efforts on implementing the standard of the New Curriculum Reforms. In addition to making the documents known to all

the schools, they have organized many activities. For instance, to thoroughly implement the new curriculum standards and fulfill the essence of the new curriculum, the Luxi Education Bureau and Education Research Center carried out teaching research activities and large-scale cross-district teacher training on the new curriculum, as well as demonstration classes to village members.

Administrators' understanding and attitudes are positive about the New Curriculum Reforms. They actively carry out the implementation of the new curriculum through various teaching research activities. The Luxi Education Bureau and the Education Research Center have carried out teaching research activities and large-scale cross-district teacher training for the new curriculum and presented classes to villages.

The New Curriculum Reforms encourage independent study, requiring teaching with new and more stimulating methods. However, the change of textbooks, introduction of new teaching media, and new requirements has affected the teachers negatively. They feel confused and lost when teaching. A headmaster explained: *"Teachers all feel that it is difficult to teach now, including me. When I enter the classroom, what should I teach, how and why? I think due to the higher and higher requirements of teachers, especially in recent years, many teachers feel confused after the reforms."*

Teachers said that there is too much work and not enough colleagues. Teachers also do the work of gardeners and security guards, so they cannot concentrate on teaching. A headmaster shared his concerns: *"I have a lot of miscellaneous work here, mainly security, various inspections, and so on. Teaching is not my priority. We cannot concentrate on teaching. Currently the issue of security is extremely important, but we have no special security person. All the teachers who are not in class will take turns to do the security job. There must be a male teacher on every shift. We have only 4 male teachers, which is not enough at all."*

The New Curriculum Reforms represent a new challenge to teachers. Therefore, teachers have to keep up with the new ideas, learning new methods, and techniques (Zhang, 2009b). In this way, many older teachers feel very stressed. An outspoken teacher said, *"My teaching methods are out of date, so I say no matter how much I try, it will not work."*

As for supplementary teaching materials, each pupil at Namu has less than one supplementary book on average. Commenting on that, a headmaster said helplessly: *"If students buy supplementary material by themselves, they don't know where to go and their parents have no idea, so they can't get good ones. If we collect money to buy for the students, the parents like it. And the superiors don't allow us to charge for this. It's conflicting."*

Teachers of music, P.E., and fine arts are in severe shortage, so such courses can not be scheduled regularly. A headmaster told us: *"we are badly in need of teachers of music, P.E. and fine arts. Not only here, these teachers are also in shortage all over Luxi. Even if we have one here, the teacher will be transferred to urban schools sooner or later. Places like this cannot attract good teachers at all. Without enough suitable teachers, we cannot open interesting classes or implement some new ideas."*

It is already difficult for students to learn basic knowledge, let alone to discover or explore anything. So the reform brings more difficulties in teaching and learning.

Parents do not think much of their children's education. Just as a local said, "*Parents pay attention to money and beauty. They have no concept of supporting their children to go to school.*" Teachers complained that parents do not pay attention to the students' education. "*Parents here don't support education. Dai people believe in following fate and fortune, and seldom discipline their children or make children study hard.*"

A headmaster claimed: "*Actually we don't follow some policies, for example, students' burden reduction. It is also required in Yunnan. Originally, supplementary and exercises books were lacking in this area and we only had textbooks. Now we are required to reduce their burden, so school hours are reduced, which in fact has caused many problems in teaching.*"

6.3.4 "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy"

The policy of "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" refers to a financial aid policy implemented by the central government since 2005 for the students from rural poverty-stricken families during the compulsory stage of education (Zhang, 2009b). Through fieldwork, we have learned that the policy of "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" has been fully implemented all over Luxi area. Most pupils in Namu do not need to pay for tuition and can get a 50 yuan subsidy every month, 500 yuan for a year. For students who are too young, the school grants the money to parents directly at a parents' meeting once a semester.

The implementation of "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" definitely ensures Namu children's rights to education. Both administrators and teachers believe that this measure is good for alleviating the economic burden of ethnic minority families, helpful for the enrollment rate, and further education. The implementation of this policy will improve education there. Since the implementation of the "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" policy, in addition to tuition fee exemption, children can obtain certain subsidies. There is no doubt that parents have benefited a lot and are willing to send their children to school (Teng & Wang, 2009, pp. 67–73). About this policy, many parents believed: "*It's much better than before. We don't have to pay tuition fees and get a 500-yuan subsidy per year.*" When asked which policy is the best, they said without any hesitation, "*allowance and subsidy is the best,*" "*the policy which doesn't require us to pay is a good policy.*"

6.3.5 Ethnic Culture in School

The policy is beneficial to the protection of ethnic cultures and helpful to promote the tradition of ethnic cultures. Article 54 of the Autonomy Ordinance of Dehong Dai

and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture Yunnan Province was amended in 2005: “*Related departments of self-government of autonomous prefectures inherit and advance fine cultural traditions of ethnic minorities, and develop socialist cultural undertakings with ethnic cultural characteristics...*” and also in Article 66: “*Every July 23 is the memorial day of the founding of prefectures, residents here have a three-day holiday. Traditional holidays of any minority ethnic groups in the autonomous prefecture shall be respected...*” These articles fully show that governments at provincial and prefecture levels have put great efforts in protecting ethnic cultures.

Ethnic minority students in Namu Primary School account for 94% of the total. However, there are no differences in students’ appearances, school decorations and architecture between ethnic schools and ordinary rural schools.

- (1) Namu Primary School is a pilot school of bilingual teaching in Luxi City, but we cannot feel any importance attached to ethnic cultures and languages. When asked “what do you think of your school as a pilot school of bilingual teaching?” the headmaster asked us smilingly, “Do you find the bilingual atmosphere strong in our school?” We answered, “Not really,” and he replied “You got it.”

Administrators, headmasters, and teachers *do what the higher-levels tell them to do* and only a few Dai teachers make efforts on the transmission and inheritance of their ethnic culture. The students are too young to realize the importance of the transmission and inheritance of ethnic culture. Parents said: “*Let it be.*”

Through contacts with parents, we feel that parents’ attitudes and their consciousness of the transmission and inheritance of ethnic culture are quite vague. Most of them did not think much about it at all. They feel that ethnic customs are getting weak and feel sorry about it. But no one has ever thought to do anything, “*let it be.*” Parents in Namu are not well educated, and they usually pay attention to the short-term benefits of children’s development. When asked “*which culture do you prefer your child to learn, your own ethnic culture or cultures from outside?*” a parent answered: “*of course other cultures.*”

- (2) In terms of curriculum arrangements, there are no obvious ethnic characteristics, and local people have been used as teaching staff. The questionnaires show that the three subjects students like the best are Chinese, P.E., and music. It is obvious what students’ preferences and needs are and teachers of music, P.E., and fine arts are in shortage (Chart 6.2).

6.3.6 Teacher Training

Teacher training is the emphasis of education development for ethnic minorities (Wang, 2010). Article 51 of the Autonomy Ordinance of Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province amended in 2005, states: “*Departments of the autonomous government should strengthen teacher training, promote teacher quality and make the teachers in line with local needs in quality, quantity and teachers’ majors...*” There are no ad hoc post teachers in Namu Primary School (ad

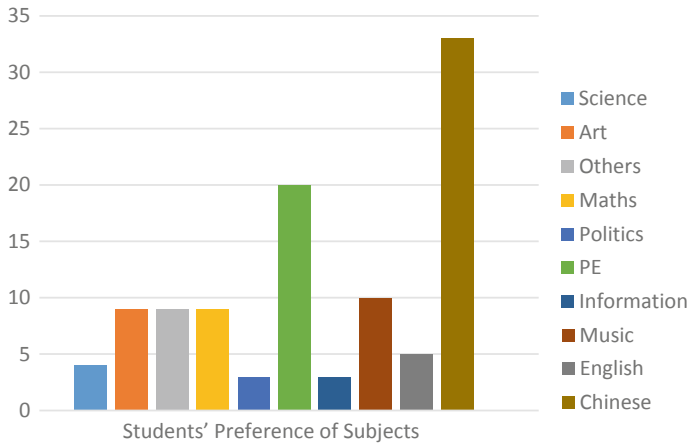


Chart 6.2 Students' preference of subjects

hoc post teachers are usually assigned to mountainous schools) and Namu Primary School is not in the list of the “counterpart support.” This section mainly describes and analyzes teacher training, remuneration, and assessment.

Administrators of the Education Bureau and Education Research Center claimed, “*No training, no post; training first, then comes the post. Anyone has to go through training—curriculum standard training, teaching material training, before teaching begins.*”

The Luxi Education Bureau emphasizes the importance of teacher training and teacher training is mainly the responsibility of the Education Research Center. Interviews show that administrators at the Education Bureau and the Education Research Center have done a lot for teacher training and achieved great results.

There are several ways of training: “inviting in (trainers) and sending out (teacher trainees);” “contiguous teaching research activities;” “sending speakers to rural countries” to improve teachers’ knowledge and teaching abilities.

The contents of training include New Curriculum Reforms, bilingual teaching, comprehensive training, teaching techniques and abilities, multimedia techniques, distant teaching, and trainings for every subject.

There are trainings designated for different kinds of trainees, headmaster training, mainstream teacher training, training for teachers of certain subjects (such as training for primary school teachers of Chinese), long-term and short-term training.

When asked how to assess the training effects and how teachers trained are doing after they go back to their schools, an administrator in the Education Research Center said: “*(the teacher who has been trained) has to be in charge of training of the whole school, then he must demonstrate what he has learned during the training in his teaching. For example, if you have learned a new teaching method, you should make a demonstration, such as a demonstration lesson, offering a chance for others to learn.*”

However, the headmasters' and teachers' attitudes toward training are not as positive and affirmative as the administrators'. Some teachers explained: *"the purpose of training is mainly for academic titles. It takes enough credits to pass the title assessment."* Mentioning the effect of training, a teacher asserted: *"The trainer lectured, and then came the exam. (We) just underlined something in books. I don't think such training is of any help, and I feel there is not much difference after training."*

About the criteria for selecting trainees, we got various answers. Administrators were of the opinion that trainees are selected according to specific conditions and teachers' own quality, such as academic title, age, and subject. According to an administrator: *"The provincial bureau allocates quotas every year to the prefecture, and the prefecture provides them to the city... Usually, the quota is allocated based on age and title. If one school gets the quota of title promotion, other schools will get it the next time. The authorities have to consider the educational conditions of the whole city and the specific state of each school."* But some teachers said, *"No particular criteria."* Some teachers believed that access to good training opportunities involves *"interpersonal relations."*

According to the fieldwork, the salary of teachers in Namu Primary School ranges from 1000 to 2000 yuan/month, which is the medium salary in Namu village. But the teachers' living costs are usually higher than that of average villagers, because most teachers do not live in school and have to commute between school and Fengping town or Luxi city. When we mentioned the issue of salaries, administrators and teachers were a little agitated, *"We live such a hard life, but cannot get a salary rise."*

For merit pay, according to the Implementation Advice on Merit Assessment of Basic Education Staff of Luxi City, the rules of merit pay of Luxi City have been quite systematic, but administrators at the Education Research Center and the teachers at Namu Primary School were discontented: *"Our money has been deducted and the merit pay hasn't been issued yet."*

Teachers' dormitory is not in good conditions. Except for two teachers who live in dorms, the other teachers have bought apartments and live in Fengping town or Luxi town center. During our research, we learned that special commercial housing is being built in Luxi center for teachers at a relatively low price. Several teachers in Namu have bought such apartments.

6.4 Comprehensive Discussion

6.4.1 Bilingual Education Policies

The CPPCC of Luxi emphasizes the learning of Chinese and the improvement of exam results. The Center of Education for Ethnic Minorities of Luxi City lays the emphasis on learning and inheritance of ethnic languages. Different higher-level departments have different priorities, which confuse the headmasters and teachers.

The central government pushes bilingual teaching to protect ethnic minorities' spoken and written languages and to promote inheritance and transmission of ethnic cultures, but many teachers think that ethnic languages are just a side product of Chinese learning.

In terms of teaching materials, bilingual teaching requires school-based textbooks. However, the compilation and cost of textbooks are the major problems. Years ago, the provincial government provided school-based textbooks. In 2008, the provincial government stopped the initiative because of a lack of funding. Since then, local teaching materials have been compiled by the Education Research Center of Luxi City and there have been many difficulties in editing them.

The bilingual teaching of Namu Primary School has undergone changes following the directions from higher levels. For example, they followed the “transmitting and inheriting” pattern at first and taught Dai written language from pre-school. Later they changed to the “bilingual and bi-script” pattern and taught ethnic languages in senior grades. Now it has been changed to the “bilingual” pattern in pre-school classes to Grade 2 and “bilingual and bi-script” classes to Grade 3. Without doubt, such changes and instability of teaching patterns affect teaching and learning negatively (Wen, 2009).

Those who can speak both Chinese and ethnic languages are selected to give bilingual lessons or give lessons after training. In terms of learning attitudes, although the course of Dai is opened, primary school graduate exams are not in Dai language but in Chinese. So students, parents, and teachers all prefer to learn to speak and write Chinese, but they do not pay attention to the Dai language. They all think learning Chinese is more important and helpful for students' future (Xu, 2009).

In terms of teaching quality, the class hours are limited and teachers' and students' devotion are low, so it is hard to ensure teaching quality. Although students learned the Dai language, they usually forget it when they are in senior grades (Yin, 2005, pp. 71–77).

6.4.2 *Layout Adjustment*

Dai people tend to have “herd mentality,” both villagers and students. They are accustomed to working together and united with village members. The relationship between neighboring villages is subtle (Zhu & Yang, 2006, pp. 17–21). This can be seen in the children's behaviors sometimes. They form small groups and are reluctant to play together with children from other villages. As a result, villagers are reluctant to accept layout adjustment and reject closing and merging of schools.

6.4.3 *New Curriculum Reforms*

Teachers in Namu are not dedicated enough in teaching and are often sidetracked. Music, P.E., and fine arts courses are not offered regularly because of staff shortage.

Most students find it difficult to adjust to the independent and inquiry-based learning patterns advocated in the New Curriculum Reforms. Many teachers are not able to adjust and master the changes of textbooks and the new requirements in teaching. In addition to neglecting their children's study, parents are not well educated, so they cannot tutor their children, which is not good for the improvement of students' learning and the implementation of the New Curriculum Reforms (Yue, 2006). To sum up, the New Curriculum Reforms are not in line with local conditions.

6.4.4 *“Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”*

The exemption of tuition fees and book costs greatly lighten parents' burden, but the education department loses a major income. The school-based teaching materials published by local publishing houses in Yunnan are not subsidized, so Yunnan provincial government stopped supplying school-based textbooks. The funding for school-based textbooks represents a major issue.

“Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” recycles used textbooks, which economizes resources and protects the environment, but it has caused some practical problems. Teachers of the Education Research Center claimed that, sometimes, there are missing pages from the recycled textbooks. Another problem is the disinfection of recycled textbooks. Textbooks get dirty and worn out. For the health of Children, the schools have to disinfect the books before distributing to students again.

Since it is policy-based funding, there should be a systematic management and supervision system concerning how the “subsidy” is allocated. But no relevant procedure was identified.

6.4.5 *Ethnic Culture in School*

Local teachers and villages do not put much emphasis on ethnic cultures. It is hard for them to realize the preciousness and importance of ethnic cultures due to lower education levels. Knowledge on ethnic cultures and customs are not embodied in the curriculum or class activities (Wang, 2010). Without support, the condition is not ideal.

6.4.6 *Teacher Training*

The criteria for selecting trainees need to be transparent. The motivation of teachers taking part in the training is mainly external rather than internal. The content of the training is not practical and the effect of training is not satisfactory. Teachers only receive a salary, no bonus or benefits. The uncertainty of the merit pay system makes them discontented (Wang & An, 2009).

6.5 Countermeasures and Suggestions

6.5.1 *Bilingual Education Policies*

First, strengthen bilingual teachers' training quality and optimize the allocation of teachers, related assessment criteria should be setup (Weng, 2003).

Second, it is significant to have a proper understanding of bilingual education, and to reach a consensus on the importance of bilingual education between the Education Bureau and the Ethnic Minority Affairs Commission.

Third, increase investment in ethnic minority education, reinforce the team compiling bilingual textbooks so as to solve the lack of teaching materials needed (Xu, 2009).

Lastly, more attention should be paid to the quality of bilingual education. It is thus important to enhance teachers' sense of responsibility for their students, and form harmonious relationships, so that teachers, students, and parents can communicate closely and frequently (Zhang, 2009a).

6.5.2 *Layout Adjustment*

First of all, policies must be made and implemented in light of the specific local cultural backgrounds and actual conditions. In Namu, relationships between the villages and children's security should be taken into consideration. It is good to carry out some activities involving both the school and the community, during which teachers, students, and parents from different villages could communicate with one another more effectively. Besides, school buses can be sent to pick up students to relieve potential safety concerns (Zhang, 2009c).

Second, increasing investment in the infrastructures is one important way to help Namu Primary School to accommodate Nongkan Primary School (Zhu, 2009).

6.5.3 *New Curriculum Reforms*

First, New Curriculum Reforms have led to a change of textbooks, but also of educational theory. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to receive training on the New Curriculum Reforms.

Second, it is still a long way for many teachers to meet the requirements of the New Curriculum Reforms, so they should be given a certain period of time to get familiar with them. They should be encouraged to adapt to the new textbooks and the new teaching techniques (Zhou, 2004).

Third, measures should be taken to solve the shortage of music, P.E., and fine arts teachers by recruiting new teachers or training those who have potentials.

In addition, investment in the ethnic minority areas should be strengthened, especially in basic facilities and teaching aids.

At last, policies should be made in line with local actual conditions and cultural appropriateness. Policies like “reducing students’ burden” were intended for students in the developed areas, which might not be suitable for students in economically underdeveloped ethnic minority areas (Zhu, 2009).

6.5.4 “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”

First, to solve the problem of shortage of school-based textbooks after the introduction of the policy of providing “textbooks for free,” the local government and education department can manage to provide school-based textbooks for free.

Second, the establishment and improvement of the supervision system could play a very important role in the implementation of the policy (Yang, 2006, pp. 64–72).

6.5.5 *Ethnic Cultures in School*

First, knowledge of ethnic cultures should be shared with teachers, parents, and students, in order to raise their cultural awareness and enhance their interests in their own ethnic culture, which has a vital role in ethnic cultural transmission (Wen, 2009).

Second, ethnic cultures should be integrated into the curriculum and class activities.

Finally, solving the problem of the shortage of teachers of music, P.E., and fine arts is by inviting local artists as teachers. They can teach the Dai language, local customs, stories, folk songs, and the Hinayana scriptures (Wang & Wang, 2006, pp. 37–42).

6.5.6 Teacher Training

First, a system of teacher training should be established and improved, which includes training contents, training models, training targets, targeted trainees, and assessment of the training results.

Second, all teachers should have an equal opportunity for training, which means the criteria for selecting teachers for training should be transparent and standardized. An equal opportunity for training can enhance teachers' enthusiasm (Sude, 2004).

Third, local teachers' voices should be heard and taken seriously into account when determining training content and their actual needs.

In addition, a training assessment system should be improved through sharing and evaluating trainees' classroom performances.

Teachers' salary and related living conditions should be enhanced. In addition, some activities should be organized on special days such as Teachers' Day (Chen, 2007, pp. 76–87).

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Chapter 7

Case 4—Xishan Primary School, Yunnan Province



7.1 General Background

7.1.1 *Background of Xishan Township, Luxi City, Yunnan Province*

The Xishan Township is composed of six village communities, 40 natural villages, and 48 villager teams. According to the census at the end of 2005, there were 2635 households and a population of 11,292 in the Xishan Township in total, including an agricultural population of 10,849 (96.07%). The ethnic groups of Jingpo, Han, and De Ang have been living there for a long time, among which 87% are Jingpo (9482 in total).

The soil of the Xishan Township is fertile. The sunshine is sufficient (rainfall ranging from 1300 to 1653 mm). Thus, the climate of the land is suitable for tropical plants. However, we have seen a number of abandoned lands in the township. In addition, there is only one road heading to the Xishan Township, which is long and hilly and has been called the “Rolling Stone Road.” Since the hilly pathway to Xishan is limited and dangerous, there is a farmers’ market at the center of Xishan Township (Nongbing village) every five days. The native people called this kind of market “Gaizi.” Most of the goods are daily supplies sold by the people from Zhefang Township. People from Xishan Township only sell mostly homemade vegetables or rice wine. They seldom sell commodities.

The biggest festival is the traditional Jingpo festival called “Mu Nao Zong Ge.” The festival takes place in the central square of Nongbing village. When the day comes, thousands of Jingpo people gather. They wear traditional clothes. The men carry the Jingpo sword, and the women carry a small basket. They perform a professional folk dance around the totem-pole. They twist into couples and dance to the sound of Jingpo music.

7.1.2 Basic Information About Xishan Primary School

There are four village-based complete primary schools at Xishan Township. The Central School is located at the center of the Township, where the Township's government is located. Maojiangmingde Primary School is located in the south of Xishan Mountain. Bengqiang Primary School is in the southwest of Xishan Mountain. Yingpan Primary School is located in the southwest of Xishan Plain.

In 1952, the Frontier Executive Plan Commission of Yunnan Province established an educational program called Brother Ethnic Minorities Educational Plan based on the decisions from the Department of Culture and Education in Yunnan. They decided to launch a public elementary school at the Xishan Township, where most of the Jingpo people live. This program aimed to assist ethnic minority people to achieve political and economic development. This was seen as a starting point for the rapid development of the public education of Xishan Township (Gao, 2010, pp. 72–81).

In 1984, the Yunnan's Department of Culture and Education advocated a policy about launching "semi-boarding schools" (He, 2009). The Xishan Township added semi-boarding schools in its location. The village schools only had classes from Grades 1 to 3. After Grade 3, students were sent to elementary schools in Xishan Township. This action promoted the graduation rate and the enrollment rate of Xishan Township. The admission scores were set comparatively lower for minority students. Reflecting on the policy for promoting minority education of the state in the 1980s, the educational development in Xishan Township became more rapid because of the developments of free education and bilingual education (He, 2009, pp. 66–72).

After 1983, Xishan Primary School conducted an education system reform. The elementary schools shifted their five-year primary system to a six-year system. In 1989, 8 of 80 classes changed into the six-year system and started using new textbooks. In the spring of 1995, Xishan Township launched its experimental courses for bilingual education and started teaching the Wa language (He, 2007). In March 2003, Xishan Township processed its institutional reforms. The township closed its Central Primary School. Based on the policy of centralizing the resources for schooling, Xishan started to close small schools. Five more schools were closed, while six complete schools were kept opening. In 2006, two more complete schools were closed. Four complete primary schools remained, among which there was a Central School managing the other three village schools.

There is no fence or gate at Xishan Primary School. The school covers an area of 20,000 m² and a building area of 4472 m². There are two teaching buildings, one administration building, one canteen, and nineteen dorms for teachers and one restroom. There are several facilities donated by the Chen Yixin Family Foundation, including a computer room, a distant education room, a young pioneer activity room, and a library. The dorms and classrooms are very crowded because of the layout adjustment policy. There is no playground except a basketball court and a couple of nearly abandoned pingpong tables. The canteen does not have enough tables or seats to hold all the students to have meals at the same time. There is a clinic room for a doctor. Some commonly used medicines and simple medical equipments are

available. More than 400 students and teachers share the restroom. There's no room for students to take a shower.

At the time of the study, the Xishan Primary School had eleven classes which held 398 students (291 of them were minorities, 73.1% of the student population). 337 of them were boarding students at school (85% of the total number of students). There were two preschool/kindergarten classes, which held 89 students. The rate of enrollment in the schools at Xishan Township was 100%.

As to the staff in Xishan Primary School, there were 28 teachers in total in 2010. Among them, 12 of them were from the Jingpo ethnic group. Fourteen of them were Han, and two of them Dai. They were ten males and 18 females. Among them, one had obtained a BA degree. Eighteen of them were junior college graduates. Four of them were high school graduates. Three of them were from a junior teachers' college. One was a technical school graduate, and another one was a junior high school graduate. There were dorms for teachers. Two or three teachers shared a dorm about of 40 m² (1/3 are roofless) with a kitchen and without any restroom or bathroom.

The Xishan Primary School covered all the school-aged children for the two villages of Nongbing and Gongwai. Most people in the villages of the township were Jingpo residents. The students living further away from school needed about one and a half hour to walk to school. The Xishan Township Government was located at the center of Nongbing village which is about five minutes' walk from the school. The only bank, cultural center, market, restaurant, and supermarket are located in an area of less than 2000 m². The relationships between the school and the government/community were very good. For example, the school teachers had participated in planning some governmental projects in the villages, such as daily administrative tasks, pension projects, and the plans for one-child policy and social welfare for low-income families.

7.2 Research Methods and Process

The survey lasted from May 17–June 3, 2010, and adopted an up-down module. Interviews were conducted in the Education Bureau and teaching and research centers at Xishan Primary School and Xishan Middle school. The research methods included questionnaires (for school leaders/teachers/students), interviews, and observation forms (in class/school/dorms/canteen). The targeted students for the questionnaires were Grades 4 and 5 in the primary school and all grades in the middle school. The valid questionnaires of the primary school were 120 copies and that of the middle school 174 copies. The valid questionnaires of the primary school teachers were 22 copies and that of the middle school teachers 13 copies.

7.3 Policy Description

7.3.1 *Layout Adjustment*

There was one secondary school, one primary school, six semi-boarding schools and some teaching sites in the villages (including one-teacher school). The teaching sites had all been closed and were merged into primary schools in 2006. The six semi-boarding schools were reduced to four at the end of 2006.

The administrator reported that the decision of school closing and merging was based on a community survey. The total number of the schools had declined from over 300 in 2003 to just over 100 at the time of the study. But what actually happened? We conducted a detailed survey about the closing of Bangjiao Primary School.

The director of the Luxi Education Bureau told us that he had visited lots of schools and conducted sufficient community survey to decide which schools to keep. In 2001, the city had received a decision about the State Council's "Basic Education Reform and Development" from the Educational Board of the Autonomous Prefecture. The policy emphasized that "we should not impose uniformity on the implementation of the policies." According to the director, based on the decision from the central government, many other provinces had started to process the procedure of closing teaching sites and establishing boarding schools, such as the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. He explained, "We decided to implement the policy before the official release date in Yunnan, since other provinces such as Inner Mongolia had already started it. No matter if there was such a policy, we had upgraded some schools, since many schools had only one teacher." As a result, the Luxi Education Bureau started to close some schools with just one teacher in 2002. Most of them were merged into primary schools in 2005.

The director of the Dehong State Education Department addressed the outcomes of the layout adjustment policy in Chuxiong State at the State Education Summing-up Conference in December 2005. He confirmed that the reduction of schools had demonstrated the achievement of the policy implementation. The director also confirmed that the policy was adequate and would be continued.

The principal of Bangjiao Primary School Mr. Yang asked the vice director of the Luxi Education Bureau if the principal could decide about the closure of certain schools. He believes that he was the one who knew the school best. But the vice director gave him a vague answer: "You know the director's idea perfectly. Now you need to do research back in the schools with your colleagues and the village government to find out an answer and tell us."

Within one week, the Luxi Education Bureau received a report about "the Layout Adjustment of the primary schools in Xishan Township" from the Xishan Township Government and the Central Primary School. Xishan is a less developed township in Luxi City in terms of economic, cultural, or educational conditions. The current director revisited the former director's decision and said, "Xishan has already been the worst one, so there's no harm to try new things since it can't be worse." Mr. Yang, the principal of Xishan Central Primary School, and Mr. Mu, the Party Secretary

of Xishan Township, received the following order in March 2006: “the Bangjiao Primary School and Mindong Primary School can be closed but communication with the community and post-closing affairs office is necessary.”

While talking about the choice to close Bangjiao Primary School, Mr. Yang gave three reasons behind the closure of the school. First, the condition of the Bangjiao Primary School was very poor. The teachers were aged and less qualified. The age structure of teachers was imbalanced. Second, there were dangerous buildings, which would have needed a big amount of money to repair. The cost could be saved if the school was merged with another. Third, the distance between Bangjiao Primary School and the Central School was only five kilometers. Although commuting took longer for some students, the teaching and learning environment were obviously better.

The villagers’ committee was dissatisfied with the decision and claimed that the closure was against the central government’s policy (“Decision on reform and development of primary education”). In order to calm down the villagers and teachers of Bangjiao primary school, the Mindong Primary School provided a suggestion for closing to the villagers’ committee. Mr. Yang brought the files and plans of “The Closing and Merging of Bangjiao and Mindong Primary Schools” to meet the Party Secretary of Xishan Township in November 2002.

The amendment project of the dangerous buildings of Bangjiao primary school had always been a problem for the township government. The township government was still taking charge of monitoring the project, although it did not control the finances anymore. The government had submitted the budget for the project, but it had always been turned down. The township government was blamed by the leaders from the Prefecture Education Department.

Mr. Mu thought this represented a chance to solve this problem in order to meet the requirements of the Education Bureau. Bangjiao Primary School was closed down through an arrangement between the Party Committee, the People’s Congress of Xishan Township, and the principal of the Central Primary School.

Almost all the teaching sites of Xishan Township were closed in 2005. The former one-teacher schools were merged into boarding schools. The number of students in Bangjiao Primary School increased from over 60 to over 110. It received students from seven closed village schools. The classrooms and dorms were shabby and dangerous. The canteen building was a D-level dangerous building, which was supposed to be torn down. But the project was delayed because of a lack of funding. With an increasing number of students, the school’s conditions of living, studying, and dining became more inconvenient. Accommodation was also affected, with one bed shared by two students. The teaching of so many students made teachers exhausted.

Mr. Li said, “I really didn’t know (that the school would be closed down) until Mr. Yang asked me about that.” But Mr. Li believed that the leadership team of Bangjiao Primary School needed to govern a giant school district and was a boarding school itself. It should not be merged into another school with a similar scale. Although he was shocked to hear that the school would be closed, he was told by Mr. Yang that the government already provided benefits for him. Mr. Yang said, “It was the leaders’

idea. Getting you a job at Bengqiang Primary School close to your home is already a privilege.” The teachers were silent. Angry parents blamed Mr. Li for the situation.

Yang Deguang was informed with the other teachers that Bangjiao Primary School would be closed on September 3, 2006. He was astonished but had nowhere to turn to. The students were excited hearing that they would not have to go to school but they did not know how hard the future would be for them. The parents did not understand the reasons for closing the schools and gathered for a protest.

The students and their parents of Bangjiao Primary School had not realized that the school would close down until September 2006. Mr. Li took some parents to meet Mr. Yang. Mr. Yang took them to Mr. Mu. Mr. Li kept asking the reasons why Bangjiao Primary School was closed with the kind persuasion of Mr. Mu. The parents calmed down after Mr. Yang hosted them for a dinner. Only some parents who did not go to the dinner kept resisting in their own ways.

The Xishan Central Primary school did the closing affairs of Bangjiao Primary School. Three out of eight teachers of Bangjiao Primary School went to the Central Primary School. Two of them went to Maojiang Primary School and three others to Bengqiang Primary School. All the students were moved to the Central Primary School. During the arrangement, one of the teachers suggested to have an opinion poll. But Mr. Yang refused this suggestion, and presented a report clearly mentioning that “we have already done enough surveys and the affirmative rate is 85%. We still need to communicate with those who haven’t come to an agreement yet.”

The current principal of the Central Primary School told us that the former principal of the primary school asked all the male teachers to bring rice wine in order to communicate with the influential people in the villages. The parents had no choice but to sign “agree” on the survey forms, because there were no teachers left. Only the parents of preschool students kept resisting. They believed that the children were too young to travel so far to school. The principal had to leave a female teacher to guide the preschoolers. After the female teachers’ retirement, the preschool was merged into the Central Primary School in 2008.

Yunnan Province released an official notice in December 2009: *The Announcement of Primary and Secondary Schools’ Layout Adjustment in Yunnan Province* (Yunnan, No. [2009]241). It aimed to “concentrate schools and close all the one-teacher schools; to close down all the primary schools of less than 300 students; each township focuses on one complete boarding central primary school and a certain number of village primary schools, and gradually ensure that there are more than 300 students in each school... and this work would be done within three years. 10% of school-merge work would be done by the end of 2009, while 50% by the end of 2010, 80% by the end of 2011 and the entire process would be finalized before the end of 2012.”

The aim of the layout adjustment policy is to “concentrate the limited resources to enhance the quality of education.” The administrators and teachers of the Luxi Education Bureau all agreed that this policy showed that “its greatest advantage is centralizing the resources,” “gather everybody’s ideas to produce giant power.”

Only two more teachers were hired in Xishan Primary School after the layout adjustment, and one of them was a dorm teacher. The student–teacher ratio increased,

so did the work burden of the teachers. The policy seemed to “concentrate on the limited number of teaching staff to tackle the shortage of teachers,” but the truth was otherwise. The number of teachers was almost the same while the student number increased by one-third. Opening new classes and thus hiring new teachers were not options, which meant more work for the current teachers.

The teachers agreed that the layout adjustment brings flexibility for the teachers, but also worse living conditions, malnutrition, and longer distances from home to school.

The living conditions were unsatisfactory after the layout adjustment. The increase of students and insufficiency of infrastructures caused difficulties for the teachers and leaders to manage the school.

7.3.2 Boarding School Policy

Xishan Primary School administrates four semi-boarding schools. Two of them hold 1011 students of which 885 are minority students (88.7%). Children’s enrollment rate is 100%. There are six prep classes in total including 232 students.

The school merged two classes due to the lack of classrooms in September 2009. It brought a lot of pressure to the administrators, while the number of students reached 60 in one class. Now, there were still 75 students living in very poor rooms. Sixty out of them had to share beds with other students.

Since the layout adjustment policy was implemented, the head teacher of one class had to do extra work and take care of the students’ daily life, but also of safety and accommodation due to the increasing number of students and the lack of teachers.

For many students coming to school at a very young age, the teachers had to do parenting work for them. The students often got sick.

Through our observations in the community, we found that the distance between each village was long. Lots of families did not have enough young and healthy workers, so women had to work in the farms. The parents “had to take their children to schools,” based on the requirements of compulsory education. But they also needed to do labor work in the farms. In fact, the students were too young to go to school by themselves.

This contradiction led to parents’ neglecting their children’s studies. Only the parents who had received a certain level of education would go to see their children and encourage them to learn well.

After the layout adjustment, the school hired two dorm teachers and temporary staff for canteen, who were mainly paid by the school budget. The dorm teachers had not received any training, so they improvised and learnt from the experiences of former dorm teachers. They were required to “stay in the dorm building for 24 h.” The annual salary for the dorm teachers was 80,000 RMB in total. The salary was paid by the Education Bureau.

85% of the students of Xishan Primary School lived in dorms since their homes were far away from the school. Some parents went out of their hometown to work so no one looked after the children. Most of them had to live at school.

The layout adjustment could not be implemented if there was no boarding policy.

7.3.3 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

The financial administrator of the Luxi Education Bureau told us that “We are all ‘exempted’ for Luxi is in a border area.”

According to the financial administrator, “the subsidy comprises 80% of national fund and 20% of local fund. The subsidy for low-income people covered all the boarding students and for non-residential students it was called extended subsidy. 50 yuan for each student per month available for ten months per year.”

According to the rule, the subsidy “has to be allocated to the students or the parents.” But the principal of the Central Primary School told us that “normally the head teacher disseminates the subsidy to the students and recollect them right after that” because “the primary school students don’t have a sense of financial management and they may spend all of it within one week.”

Mr. Sun, the general principal of Xishan Primary School, believed that “the students would leave school if they got the money. There’s no drop-out student due to the financial subsidy. The national government has done a lot with the Two Exemptions and One Subsidy. Every meal costs eighty cents and if the student brings rice from home, then it costs nothing. Fifty yuan for each student per month is for the vegetables and meat. Nine meals per week cost 7.2 yuan. Students would have some pocket money if the family could afford it. We advocate the students spend 10 yuan per week and don’t compare themselves with each other. But if the students already spend all the money in their hands and still want to have snack food, some of them may steal, which increases the difficulties for the school to manage.”

The financial allocation was not always on time so that the students’ living costs had to come from the school budget. The textbooks for school-based curriculum were not free of charge. The food was not completely free. Students needed to bring rice to school or pay for it. The school advocated the reuse of textbooks but the necessary disinfection equipments were not available. Besides, some pages were missing in some textbooks so it was not convenient.

7.3.4 Teacher Training

According to the interview with the Education Bureau, there were low requirements for teachers’ educational background during the recruitment. The lack of teachers was still an issue, especially in Xishan Primary School. The imbalance and lack of staff directly caused heavy burdens to teachers.

The Luxi Education Bureau arranged teacher training during the holidays, including school tours or lectures. But only part of the teachers was able to take part.

Teachers' payment comprised of a basic salary and merit pay. The merit pay was deducted from the total monthly payment and would be allocated according to the pay rules by the school. It was meant to encourage the teachers to work with enthusiasm and to promote teaching and learning.

Ms. Zhang Li, a teacher at Xishan Primary School, was assigned directly to the school without any test, which was a privilege policy three years earlier. But the test is now a prerequisite for joining the school. The enrollment of the teachers became more professional progressively. The test required not only knowledge of educational theory, but also other relevant knowledge.

The year of 2010 is the "Dehong Education Quality Enhancement Year." The Luxi Education Bureau organized a "Cross-district teaching and researching activity" in forms of attending, discussing, assessing, and analyzing the open classes to implement "reducing the burden and enhance the quality" and to promote the balanced development of both rural and urban areas. This was meant to activate the education and teaching reforms. This was also meant to strengthen exchanges between schools and teachers, provide a stage for talented teachers who could show good examples and finally enhance the teachers' ability and education quality.

Forming a sufficient and qualified team was the basic requirement for promoting quality and quality-oriented education. In order to avoid the imbalance of the teachers' body in rural areas, only the teachers with a working period longer than 3 years could apply for a job in urban areas. The selection test was flexible (written tests and interviews). The teachers could go to the urban areas only when they met the requirements.

The allocation of teachers' merit pay varies in different schools. Mr. Dong revealed that the salary depended on the students' scores. Secondly, the time a teacher spent in classrooms also mattered. There was an extra subsidy for the head teacher of one class, 1.5 yuan for each student/month. The more the students the more the subsidy.

7.3.5 Bilingual Education

Yunnan is a province where various ethnic minorities live together. According to 2005 statistics, only 5.7% of the students received bilingual education in the whole province. Xishan is a township of the Jingpo ethnic group and it started conducting bilingual education since the Liberation (1953). The history of local bilingual education is eventful.

According to our interviews with the Luxi Education Bureau, the Teaching and Research Center and the leaders and teachers of Xishan Primary School, we found that there are three offices that mainly deal with bilingual education issues, the Dehong Prefecture Minority Education Department, the Luxi Education Bureau, and the Luxi Teaching and Research Center. The bilingual education policy was

passed down from the Provincial Education Department, the Prefectural Education Department, the City Education Bureau, the Central Primary School and subordinated primary schools in forms of documents and conferences memos. The governments and schools from different areas and of different ethnic groups have the right to adopt flexible measures according to the actual situation.

The prefecture education department released a [Prefecture] File No. 186 to encourage bilingual education and require the prep-school to Grade 3 to have compulsory bilingual education. The higher grades can adopt different ways depending on the actual situation. We did not identify any provincial-, municipal-, nor county-level policy texts regarding this.

Mr. Yin Xueliang, the bilingual education representative of the Teaching and Research Center introduced three types of bilingual education in Luxi City: culture-transmitting type, bilingual type, and bilingual–biscript type. The Culture-transmitting type focuses on transmitting ethnic languages and this type of bilingual education starts from the prep class. The teaching and research group suggested having a one-year course for students in higher grades to learn the script of ethnic languages but the suggestion was not adopted. The bilingual type aims at assisting teaching by learning ethnic languages. For this type, at the lower grades, the culture-transmitting type is still used. The bilingual type was mainly adopted in rural and ethnic areas. The bilingual–biscript type is meant to teach ethnic scripts on the basis of the bilingual type. Only one class of Fengping Primary School was using the biscript type. The other courses were mainly taught in Chinese.

Through communication with a couple of teachers from this center, we found that the local administrators share one idea: bilingual education helps to learn Chinese and other courses. Ms. Yang, the director of the center emphasized again and again that “all our efforts aim at enhancing education quality.” Mr. Yin supplemented that “take Dai ethnicity as an example, the transmutation of culture, language and script mainly existed in the community and family but not in schools. We couldn’t afford to lose ethnic languages, but if we don’t focus on bilingual education, the knowledgeable ethnic elites would diminish.”

Since Xishan Primary School is located in the area of the Jingpo people, the students of this school are nearly 100% from this ethnic group. We also found a common concept about the understanding of bilingual education among the administrators and teachers of Xishan Primary School, which emphasized that bilingual education was very important for learning Chinese.

Bilingual education was mainly arranged in preschool classes and lower grades. There was only one preschool class in this school and all the courses were taught by Ms. Mu who had worked here for more than 30 years. The main content of the lessons was learning Chinese and the Jingpo alphabet. If the lower grade students were still not good enough in the Chinese language, the teachers who knew the Jingpo language would use it as support, but for the teachers who did not know the Jingpo language, they would only use other ways to teach.

Ms. Zhang Li, a Han Chinese who did not know the Jingpo language, taught Chinese lessons for the lower grades. She gave us an example “there would be some difficulties in language and that was a problem that the preschool class didn’t solve.

They could only understand simple things. It was magical to explain the words to them... They couldn't distinguish /h/ and /f/... They did not understand the word 'extremely'. I would pick a flower and compare it in and out of the classroom to show the contrast, helping them to understand the word 'extremely'. It is much easier for them to understand in a concrete way."

There were no specialized bilingual courses in nine-year compulsory education but the "folk course" would provide 3–5 h per semester for ethnic character learning. The prefecture government used to provide free bilingual education textbooks for Xishan Primary School. The allocation of the textbooks was stopped in 2008. Mr. Xu, the director of teaching, picked up a book from his desk and showed us. He said, "This was the old textbook we used to use. Since the prefecture government has stopped giving free bilingual textbooks, there were only dozens of them left. We have to use them year after year and the teachers would arrange lessons [of Jingpo language and script] on ethnic culture."

Mr. Xu is a half Han and half Jingpo. He told us that "My Jingpo speaking was not so good, not to mention reading and writing. I started speaking the Jingpo language in class from junior high and just started to learn the characters last year at a bilingual training. I also used this textbook to learn the Jingpo script and, lucky for me, it's not hard because this language uses the alphabetic writing system. You can read it after learning these scripts as long as you can speak the language."

Most of the teachers in Xishan Primary School were similar to Mr. Xu. They knew little or no Jingpo language, especially the young teachers from urban areas. It was almost impossible for them to teach in both languages. Ms. Mu from the preschool class would retire in less than a year. She had no idea who would teach these children after her retirement, and whether there were qualified bilingual teachers. Some teachers also said that the bilingual teachers were supposed to be Jingpo people, but very few of them could go to college.

The meaning of bilingual education for Xishan Primary School was perceived as support for students to learn Chinese and other courses. Mr. Mu, who had been a teacher in the school since the 1980s, told us: "go back to the time when we used to have the interpretation manual, the students learned so fast! I taught them with the manual and thought: our Jingpo children are not dull, they could master Chinese! Once they have solved the language problem they could understand the teachers of other courses. They could be confident and had an interest in learning. But now this (bilingual education) has been stopped, lots of students can't follow the teachers and the courses after entering higher grades."

There is a huge difference between the bilingual education in northern and southern parts of China. In the South, various minorities live together and the total population of each minority is not big. Bilingual education was thus not to transmit the ethnic language but to improve their Chinese (He, 2009).

We found that, in fact, the students spoke fluent Jingpo. They could communicate with the teachers in mandarin, but when they were playing around or having meals, they would naturally talk in the Jingpo language and use a little Chinese occasionally. Almost all the students here know how to speak Jingpo; lots of Han students could

“understand some and speak a little.” The teachers and parents explained that “the minorities are ‘Hanized’ while the Han are ‘Jingponized.’”

7.3.6 *Ethnic Culture in Schools*

There were two class hours called “folk course” at Xishan Primary School each week. It mainly consisted of ethnic culture, regional introduction and Anti-Drug/HIV/AIDS education.

Physical exercises between classes were adopted by Ms. Tang, the Jingpo teacher of Xishan Primary School and they replaced national exercises from the first half year. There were ten sections, which combined Jingpo dance and provided physical training for the students.

The school usually took a three-or-four-day break when the Munaozongge Festival came. The students would go back home to spend this grand festival with their family and villagers. The school also holds a Jingpo aerobics campaign for Children’s Day. The students all wear their festival costumes to attend this event. Mr. Xu told us that Xishan is an experimental area for Jingpo aerobics and that it would spread to other Jingpo areas.

The textbooks for the folk courses were provided by the Education Bureau of Luxi City for free. They mainly introduced the natural resources and ethnic culture of Luxi City. The textbooks for visual art were published by Yunnan Art Press. They mainly focused on tourism resources of Yunnan Province but there was no introduction to Jingpo Culture.

Teachers for ethnic culture were usually the class head teachers who did more than one jobs. The head teacher would have advantages teaching ethnic culture if she or he was of Jingpo ethnicity but the teachers of other ethnic groups mainly relied on the textbooks. The teachers did not attend any professional training about ethnic culture and no community crafters were hired as ethnic culture instructors.

Mr. Mu was a special teacher at the school. He was a Jingpo and had been living here since he was born. He combined the traditional and contemporary factors perfectly. On the one hand, he took loans to buy a house and a car in such a low per-capita area. On the other hand, he kept transmitting and spreading Jingpo Culture. He taught lessons about Jingpo music, dancing and folk tales, and played a vital role in spreading ethnic culture in the school.

The ethnic culture into school policy intended to transmit ethnic culture and to enrich students’ folk knowledge and their ethnic identity. Since the ethnic culture courses were not tested in the secondary school entrance exam, they were irrelevant to the teachers’ merit pay. Teachers’ motivation was thus affected, and the ethnic culture lessons were often replaced by other classes (Li, 2009).

The shortage of teachers had been a long-lasting problem for Xishan Primary School, especially teachers for music, PE and visual art, not to mention the ethnic culture teachers. The lack of teachers caused an exhausting situation for the staff.

The class head teacher often teaches ethnic culture lessons as well. Teachers' low level of specialty had a negative effect.

Ethnic culture learning needs supplementary materials such as instruments, costumes, craft materials, etc., which all require financial support. The Education Bureau did not set a special fund for this since the school's budget is limited, which limits the implementation of this work (Li, 2009).

7.3.7 New Curriculum Reform

During our investigation, we conducted in-class observations in Xishan Primary School. Ms. Kang was the Chinese teacher of Grade 1. She carried a recorder into the classroom. This class was about teaching the characters from a new text. Before teaching about the new ones, Ms. Kang led the students to review the last lesson. Ms. Kang was reading loudly with rich facial expressions. Although the observers were sitting at the last row of the classroom, they could clearly hear her voice. She pointed at the new characters with the teaching rod and led the students to read again and again. The students were concentrating, although some of them were fiddling with things, or looking out of the windows every now and then or talking to their desk mates. Ms. Kang kept asking the students to stand up for answering the questions.

Mr. Mu (Jingpo) was an ethnic culture teacher. The observer also attended his Jingpo music lesson. The students walked into the classroom slowly when the bell rang and Mr. Mu had already transcribed the lyrics on the blackboard. There were neither instruments nor contemporary appliances. Mr. Mu sang a line, the students followed. The students were shy and giggling at first, but gradually they sang well. The primary school teachers were so enthusiastic in class and the students were learning slowly, following the teachers' instructions.

Although the New Curriculum Reform had been implemented for a while, the teachers of Xishan Primary School told us that "this school is still waiting in line." The newly graduated teachers only had an idea of the basic requirements of the New Curriculum Reform, such as "asking the students to talk more and think more instead of telling them the answers directly." No teacher training focused on the New Curriculum Reform. No requirement and no enthusiasm. Thus, we can draw the conclusion that the teachers' understanding of the New Curriculum Reform was neither deep nor professional.

Although the New Curriculum Reform was not fruitful, there was still some good news. Mr. Sun, the principal of the Central School, praised Mr. Xu... "he is good... he has an understanding that teaching and learning are about the cooperation between teachers and students." During the seven years that followed the implementation of the New Curriculum Reform, the students changed. Mr. Sun told us that the students used to be frightened and anxious in the classroom but that they were much more active at the time of the study. The objective of active behavior was to benefit teaching and learning but it also brought problems to discipline. The teachers changed their teaching approaches from reading the textbooks to interactive instruction. As the

observation in the classrooms showed, students in the Grade 2 followed the Chinese teacher, reading new characters and texts carefully and loudly. The teacher would ask the students to read and spell words one by one, which created an open and active atmosphere in the classroom.

The New Curriculum Reform required multiple criteria to assess the progress of students. But the teachers told us that if any students wanted to go to schools outside Xishan, the score of the entrance exam was still the only criterion and requirement.

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Chapter 8

Case 5—Xishan Middle School, Yunnan Province



8.1 General Background

8.1.1 Background of Xishan Township, Luxi, Yunnan

The Xishan Township is located at 780–1750 m high in Xishan (west mountain), where the ethnic group Jingpo lived in China. Jingpo people have a history full of legends. They used to be hunters in the mountainous areas. They suffered from countless disasters and built up their own culture during their migration to the foot of the mountains. Jingpo people's traditions include specific diet, costumes, wedding, and funeral. Usually, the distance between houses was long, and communication was limited. Thus, Xishan was a closed and independent society for a long time (Luo, 2000, pp. 32–37).

The hilly and twisted road leading to Xishan is called *the twisting rocky road* by local people. The fertile land in Xishan with abundant sunshine and rainfall is suitable for many plants. But what we saw was lots of abandoned land which was a contrast to what it supposed to be. Every five day, there was a bazaar where people could buy daily products and agricultural tools. Most of the businessmen are from Zhefang Township. People from Xishan only sell things like wild vegetables and homemade rice wine. Local people seldom do serious business.

The Xishan Township Government is located at Nongbing village, which governs six villager committees, 40 natural villages, and 48 villager teams. According to the census at the end of 2005, there are 2635 households in Xishan Township in total and a population of 11,292, which consists of an agricultural population of 10,849 (96.07%). The ethnic groups of Jingpo, Han, and De'ang have lived there for a long time, among which 87% are Jingpo (9482 in total) (Luo, 2000, pp. 11–16).

Xishan Township mainly relies on traditional agriculture. Growing traditional plants is aimed at promoting its economic development. In recent years, some villagers started to grow crops, and some companies from other places have signed contracts with the villagers. The township has 40,546 μm farmland (including 10,799 μm contracted with people from other places). The average farmland of each villager

is 2.6 mu (1 μm = 666.66 m^2). According to statistics from 2005, the total grain output is 3198 thousand kilograms. The average output of each villager is 292 kg. The total income of the township is 21.46 million yuan and 918 yuan per person per year, lower than the poverty line (924 yuan).

People's living standards can be reflected by their households called "Chacha house," which refer to a kind of building supported by two pieces of Y-shaped wood and covered by some grass as the roof.

Xishan Township is where Jingpo people gather and live. This is why Jingpo living customs, costumes, and diets have been preserved. There is a typical sign of preserved culture: Mu Nao Zong Ge Square in Nongbing village is used for the Jingpo greatest festival. When the day comes, thousands of Jingpo people gather, wearing traditional clothes; men carrying the Jingpo sword, women carrying a small basket to following a professional folk dancer, twisting into spirals, and dancing to the beat of Jingpo music around a totem pole at the center of the square (Sun, 2010).

Like most of the southern mountainous areas, Xishan Township has a tradition of early marriage and early pregnancy, and an idea of male's superiority over female still exists. Some girls are arranged to get married by her family even before the end of junior high school (Wang, 2010). That is why the idea of "girls do not need to go to school" used to prevail, although this kind of situation has changed. Normally, parents support their children to go to school. Also, they encourage their children to speak Mandarin. The Jingpo language still dominates the local villages. Some Jingpo children who could not speak their own language would be called "bastards" by their clansmen.

Drugs and AIDS cause social problems here. The government and school have opened courses of "Forbid Drug and Prevent AIDS" to deal with them. We visited a student's home. The neighbors told us that her father was in rehabilitation for drug taking in Mangshi, which caused her mother to leave home and the passing away of her grandfather.

We also found out that a large quantity of cultivatable lands was drowned for the construction of the Longjiang reservoir. The government had paid a large compensation to those who lost their land. However, many of them did not take good advantage of the money and used it to gamble or to take drugs. One hardworking female Jingpo farmer told us: "they don't work at all, but eat and wear better than us."

8.1.2 Basic Information About Xishan Middle School

Xishan Middle School is located at the center of Xishan Township. But due to the high latitude and difficulty of access, the center of this township is not as developed as, e.g., a village in eastern China. The market day every five days is the busiest time. There is a row of houses outside the school, which is the most commercialized place, selling daily products and food.

In terms of topography, Xishan Middle School was built on a sloping terrain. The school has an area of 26,700 m^2 , and the buildings cover 3748 m^2 . Not long

before our fieldwork, there were a series of attacks targeting young students. Xishan Middle School sets up a gate and alarm lights/boards under the Luxi Education Bureau's command. The so-called gate is made of three pieces of bamboo sticks and the school hired a Jingpo young man as the guard. "All the payments for construction work and the guard's salary come from our management fund. There's no allocated money from the education bureau," The principal explained.

The school is composed of a teaching building, a students' dormitory building, a canteen, a school kitchen, and a teachers' dormitory building. Besides, there was a building under construction and planned to be finished at the end of the year which would be used as offices for teachers, laboratories, musical rooms, and classrooms for specially talented students.

There was a simple playground and a basketball court. The grass could not cover the land, and the goal posts made of bare metal sticks are of no use. One student told us that he had neither seen a football nor ever played it. The playground had no rubber tracks. All we saw was red mud. Some students told us when the rainy days come, the mud would even stick their shoes off the feet.

There was a canteen for the boarding students to have two meals per day. Two staff members from nearby villages worked in the canteen. The students would have breakfast by themselves. There were several desks outside the canteen for putting rice and dishes. Normally, students would choose one vegetable dish (0.5 yuan) and one meat dish (1 yuan) but if the students came to the canteen too late, they might not have the vegetable dishes. The canteen also offered homemade pickles. There was no special canteen for teachers thus they would have the same meals as the students. One male teacher told us that sometimes he would only have one meal per day because the food was tasteless. There were neither tables nor chairs for having meals in the canteen. Finally, the students were allowed to bring their own food to the playground, dorms, or any corner of the school.

The restrooms of Xishan Middle School had no flushing system, and the students had to clean it in turns with mud every week. The winter would be easier than summers. There was no shower room in the school.

The students of Xishan Middle School mainly came from five villages of Xishan Township. The population of Xishan Township was not big so was that of Xishan Middle School. Teachers said students with higher scores would go to the schools in the plain area where "the school has better resources and students with higher scores."

Xishan Middle School had six classes, two classes for each grade. Since primary schools were transformed from five-year to six-year, there were no new students in September 2006. There were only two grades before 2009. There are 225 students in total, of which 89.33% were minorities and 198 Jingpo.¹

It was hard for us to find an exact word to describe the students of Xishan Middle School. The students would not communicate with us like those of Xishan Primary School. If we said "hello" to them walking in the school, they would be shy, say nothing and go away or just ignore us.

¹Annual report of Xishan Middle School, 2009.

For this is the only secondary school in Xishan Township, the students came from all parts of the township. Some students only needed a few minutes' walk to go to school, while others might need 4–5 h. Many students rode motorcycles to school. We assumed that these were students from richer families, but the teacher denied our assumptions. Since the government provided free compulsory education, the teachers and parents begged students to go to school. We found that the children were spoiled. They wanted things like motorcycles. They would not go to school if their parents refused to buy them one. So many parents had no choice but buying things for their kids.

Another issue was the use of cell phones. According to our observation, over 80% of the students had a cell phone while the principal told us that about 50% of them owned one.

According to the Annual Report of Xishan Middle School (2009), there were 22 staff members in Xishan Middle School. There were 20 full-time teachers and two workers. Sixteen teachers (80%) had bachelor's degrees. Four teachers (20%) had junior college degrees. All the teachers had qualified educational backgrounds. One teacher had been awarded the title of senior teacher, and six were A-class teachers. Ten were B-class teachers, and three C-class teachers. 80% of the teachers were mid-aged. The excellent teaching team included one teacher who won an award in the city and four teachers who won awards in the school.

The teachers' office was an ordinary classroom, and the teachers sat in a round table to prepare for their classes. The principal told us that the teachers who did not have classes were not required to come to the office. However, the teachers said that they have to come to the office every day since they had classes every day. The first impression of the office was that it was messy. There were some textbooks, reference books, students' assignments, and score sheets scattered on the desks. A phone and three Thermos bottles in the office were available for the teachers. But necessities such as computers or printers were not to be seen anywhere.

The teachers' dormitory building was made of mud. There was no restroom or bathroom in the dorm. The teachers had to go to the public lavatory outside the dorm. If they wanted to take a shower, they would use warm water to wipe their bodies to clean themselves. The teachers told us that "it's ok in the day time, but going outside to the restroom at night is so inconvenient." Several female teachers cooked together because they "cannot bear the canteen food."

According to Mr. Ming, the principal of Xishan Middle School, the cooperation between Xishan Middle School and the township government was very close. The relationship between the school and the school community was also on good terms.

During our investigation, we found out that the textbooks were compiled by the People's Education Press and that the content was related to life in the city. There was no school-based curriculum about community development and villagers' lives.

Most of the teachers were not from this community. They neither knew this community well, nor really cared about it. They did not understand the community's urgent need for development.

Although some teachers attended a training about the New Curriculum Reform, the training did not fit the local situation very well.

8.2 Research Methods and Process

The survey lasted from May 17 to June 3, 2010, and adopted a top-down module. Interviews were conducted in the Education Bureau, the Teaching and Learning Center, Xishan Primary School, and Xishan Middle School. The methods were questionnaires (for the school leaders/teachers/students), interviews, and observations (in class/school/dorms/canteen). The targeted students for the questionnaires were Grades 4 and 5 in the primary school and all students in the middle school. Valid questionnaires: 120 (Primary School) and 174 (Middle School). Valid questionnaires from the primary school teachers were 22 and middle school teachers 13.

8.2.1 *Brief Introduction to Interviewees*

Mr. Mo comes from Fengping (formally called Fapa). His ethnicity is Dai. He graduated from Qujing Normal College in 2002, majoring in history. He worked at Xishan Middle School since his graduation.

Mr. Lei comes from Xishan. His ethnicity is Jingpo. He graduated in 1988 and worked at Xishan Middle School since 1994, teaching politics and history.

Mr. Li belongs to the Jingpo ethnic group. He worked as a dorm keeper since 1998. His major tasks consisted in opening and closing the dorm doors.

Mr. Fan is Han Chinese. He is the director of teaching affairs. He first worked in the primary school and then was transferred to the secondary school.

Mr. Shi is also Han Chinese. He worked at Xishan Primary School since 1999.

Mr. Ming graduated from the prefecture normal college. He was transferred to Xishan Middle School in 2009 as principal.

Mr. Yang is Han Chinese. He graduated from Kunming Normal College, and he taught maths at the school.

Mr. Zhang comes from Longchuan. He is Han Chinese. He graduated from Qujing normal college in 2009 and taught P.E.

Ms. Zhou graduated in 2009. She taught biology.

Ms. He graduated from Yunnan Normal University in 2004, majoring in Chinese. She taught Chinese.

8.2.1.1 Students

Mu Geyong, F, Jingpo, 16-year old, Grade 9, Bengqiang village.

Zhang Lezhuai, M, Jingpo, 16-year old, Grade 9, Maojiang village.

Mu Yongming, M, Jingpo, Grade 8, Yingpan village.

Dong Decheng, M, jingpo, Grade 8, Nanpu village.

Ye Shenghong, F, Jingpo, Grade 8, Huikong village.

Bao Mucheng, F, Jingpo, 14-year old, Shangyingpan village.

Mu munen, F, Jingpo, 15-year old, Mu nai village.

Feng xiangying, M, Han, Grade 7, Zhongxin village.

Dongmudong, M, Grade 7, Bengqiang village.
Tangleyin, F, Grade 7, Nongbing village.
Jinli, F, Grade 7, Jingpo, Gongkan village.
He meimu, F, Jingpo, 15-year old, Maojiang village.
Zhuo Xiaoming, F, Jingpo, 17-year old.
Mu Ruizhi, F, Jingpo, Grade 9, Maojiang village.
Lai Matuan, M, Jingpo, Muai village.

8.2.2 *How to Enter the Field?*

The officer of the Education Bureau and Ethnic Affairs Department (EAD) showed negative attitudes toward our visit. Although we were welcomed by the Education Bureau, it was that they were concerned about us. The Ethnic Affairs Department had the same attitudes.

Since we were not acquainted with the school, observations and interviews were so not relaxed. After a period living with the teachers, they started to treat us as insiders, so we could get the information that we wanted.

The community surveys were arranged at the weekends so we could take a glimpse at the boarding students' family life. We visited four families; one was Han Chinese and the others were from the Jingpo ethnic group. We were guided by a Jingpo student to find some students' house. We could only communicate with the parents who had been to school. When there was a language barrier, the Jingpo students would be our interpreter, but that did not appear to have had a negative effect on our interviews.

The people for community interviews included as follows:

Mr. Luo, Han Chinese, speaks the Jingpo language fluently, a village officer.
Mr. Li, the uncle of Li Meigan, a student of Xishan Middle School, just got married. He takes care of his drug taking brother's son.
Mr. X, a Jingpo, mother of Zhuoying, a student of Xishan primary school.
Mr. Li, a Jingpo, Christian, has a business of tree planting with his two sons, one in Mangshi Primary School and one in Xishan Middle School.

8.3 Policy Description of Ethnic Minority Education

8.3.1 *Boarding School Policy*

There was no bathroom in the school. Students had to go clean themselves near the wells or wipe themselves with towels.

There were 12 beds in each dorm, both on two floors. The students were responsible for the cleaning. The dorm keeper would conduct a simple check when locking

the doors. He would give a warning to the students whose rooms were extremely dirty.

It took 3–4 h for most of the students to go home. Half of the students were picked up by their parents, and the other half would walk home with classmates. The traffic was a big problem for the boarding students in Xishan. Some students dropped out because of the long distance between the school and home.

There was no front gate or fence in Xishan Middle School. There was only a “gate” with some bamboo sticks. The distance between the restrooms and dorms/classrooms was long, and the restroom building was in poor conditions. The students’ dorm had many cracks on the wall.

8.3.1.1 Infrastructure

The locks of the dorms were easy to break. The lighting system was not good enough. The teachers had to use flashlights after the evening class. Some classrooms had broken windows.

The first responsibility of the local government and school was to ensure students’ security.

8.3.1.2 Situation

The instruments of the Biology/Chemistry/Physics laboratories were covered with or without a sheet. There was no storage room for laboratory equipment. The laboratory materials had not been renewed for a long time, and some had expired. There were no security instructions in school.

There were three dorm managers in Xishan Middle School, whose major jobs were to turn on/off the lights, to prevent outsiders from entering the dorm and making trouble, and to notify the school leaders if there was an emergency. Each week, one teacher would be on duty to assist the school leader with daily issues.

Every student’s life followed a routine from Monday to Thursday.

They got up at 6:30 am. After cleaning and having breakfast, they go to the classroom.

11:20: They go back to the dorm and pick up their bowl and chopsticks to have lunch. There is a break after lunch.

14:10: They start afternoon classes.

17:00: They pick up the bowl and chopsticks to have dinner.

19:40: Evening classes.

21:15: The dorm is open again.

22:00: Bedtime.

A student told us that his life would be about having classes and playing basketball. Some others played poker. The students found school to be boring. Each student received a subsidy at school and allowances from their parents. Some students borrowed money from the teachers if they did not have enough for living.

Most of the students had graduated from Xishan Primary School. The ones with higher scores would go to secondary schools in Mangshi. The ones who stayed in town were either “with a low academic ability” or “hated studying.” The students lived far away from their parents so they took care of themselves and studied by themselves. The questionnaires show the students’ feelings toward school (Table 8.1).

The weekend was the only time that a student could spend with their parents. Most parents had not been well educated. In addition, they were busy at their farms. They had few concerns about their children’s learning and school life.

It provided students with some convenience but there were still some existing challenges. Even though the students’ dorm building was the newest in the school, the conditions inside the rooms were very poor. There were mosquitoes in the summer and no heating in the winter. Students had to wait in line to go to the restroom, to clean themselves, and to go to bed.

Normally, it was the head teacher’s job to take care of the boarding students’ daily life. So, the students had to take care of themselves. But some students with bad self-management skills would play poker instead of studying, arranging “night meetings” or even going out of the dorm, which had a bad influence on other students.

Because of the lack of management fees, the students had to be taken care of 24 h/day instead of 8 h/day. However, the school could not afford to hire extra workers. Therefore, the teachers had to work over 16 h per day and sometimes did not have any rest during the weekends.

The students would gather in groups to go out of school. The only things they could do in the dorm were to play and chat. Some students did not go to the evening classes. The teachers told us the school was indeed unattractive to the students. Some teacher said: “If the boarding policy just means buildings with an area of hundreds of square meters, it’s like a car without wheels.”

Table 8.1 Students’ feelings about going to school

Like to go to school	Member	Percentage (%)
Very much	86	53.10
A little	38	23.50
Kind of	29	17.90
Not really	7	4.30
Not at all	2	1.20
Total	162	100.00

8.3.2 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

The subsidy covers each student's living expenses in Xishan Middle School no matter if he/she is boarding or not. The subsidy (75 yuan per month) is directly registered into a school card which can only be used for meals. The students would spend 20–30 yuan per week on average.

The “Two Exemption and One Subsidy” policy alleviates the parents' economic burden and ensures the enrollment rate. But the subsidy was often delayed and may cause students' dependency.

Since the subsidy usually did not arrive on time, it was common for students to pay for their meals. When the allocations arrived, they would receive a large amount of money. This enabled students to purchase cigarettes and alcohol. The school thus made a card for every student and only permitted them to purchase food with the subsidy. But due to the late arrival of the subsidy, this measure did not show any obvious effect. The subsidy also encouraged the students to believe that they can gain without working and take this subsidy for granted. Some teachers said this subsidy should only be provided to those hardworking students instead of everyone.

According to what the teachers of Xishan Middle School told us, the school firmly implemented the national policy, and no one was permitted to do anything else with the money. About the subsidy, the teachers viewed it as “basically enough for meals,” and all the parents thought the subsidy “released their financial burden.”

8.3.3 Teacher Training

The teaching staff was insufficient in Xishan Middle School. Mr. Ming, the principal, said “our teacher team changes a lot. The reason is because of the poor traffic and underdeveloped environment. Teachers would like to teach at the schools in the cities since there were better students.” A lack of teachers would increase the current teachers' workload, which had a negative effect on their enthusiasm.

There were trainings during the vacation, which were mainly school tours or seminars coupled with assessment.

2010 was the “Dehong Education Quality Enhancement Year.” The Luxi Education Bureau organized a “cross-district teaching and researching activity” in forms of attending, discussing, assessing, and analyzing the open classes to implement the policy of “reducing the burden and enhancing quality” and to promote the balanced development of both rural and urban areas. This would activate the education and teaching reform and apply the concept of “focus in the classes and implement various teaching methods.” Moreover, this would strengthen communication among schools and provide a stage for talented teachers, who could establish good examples and finally enhance the teachers' ability and education quality. Some teachers would come back to remote rural areas after the training (Wang, 2010).

The schools in Mangshi and the plain areas all hired teachers from other cities/counties and would select candidates for city schools with the best performance. Students' scores and other indicators were used to decide on the salary paid for each teacher.

A teacher said that “the social environment of Xishan Township was awful! There were more than 280 HIV patients, and thousands of people were taking drugs and there were numerous orphans.”

Because of a lack of money, Xishan Middle School had neither fences nor gates. The teachers' dorm building was made of mud.

Students tended to chat or sleep in class and played around when the class was over. They were not passionate about learning, which was one of the factors that made teachers reluctant to stay. A teacher claimed that “The trainings are limited so is communication.” The activities improved the teachers' teaching but the effect was limited.

8.3.4 *New Curriculum Reform*

The bell rang. Students came to the classroom in groups of 2 or 3. The students sat at the back of the classroom and kept talking. They did not even have a textbook. Some students kept turning over to peek at us. We asked them what that class was about. They told us that it was an English class. We asked them where the English books were. They smiled and did not reply. Here are some excerpts from our observations:

- The English teacher walked into the classroom and wiped his glasses for a while.
- The teacher walked from the front to the end of classroom, still wiping his glasses. Suddenly he saw us... “Everyone, we'll revise this text from last time. Now take out your paper” (A couple of students were sleeping on the desk) (Starting from No. 1, the teacher read the answers or asked some questions which didn't need any answer. It started to rain outside, and the wind entered the classroom through the windows).
- The teacher asked, “What does ‘office’ mean?” After a long while, a student said, “coffee.” Teacher said, “Coffee is coffee, what does ‘office’ mean?” No one answers. The teacher said, “office means office (in Mandarin)!”
- The teacher asks what is “to have a cold”? (he keeps asking the four students sitting in the front row).
- The teacher asks what is “wife”? No one answers, the teacher laughs: you should remember this, this is *wife* (in Mandarin). Some male students repeated: “wife, wife (in Mandarin).”
- The students sitting in the last rows keep chatting with each other. The four students on our left side are sleeping. Are they tired?
- The teacher walks down from the podium and asks us “what is *thieves*?”
- After the class, the teacher told us this was the worst class. Had we not been in the classroom, the teacher would have had to deal with discipline more than 10 times.

He told us that the students of this class were the most undisciplined students with the lowest scores in the school.

The newly graduated teachers knew a little bit about the New Curriculum Reforms. There was no special training about the New Curriculum Reforms in the school so the teachers did not take the initiative to implement the policy.

“It started in 2004, there are both advantages and disadvantages. The previous one was to provoke the students’ free mind, whereas the latter one makes management more complicated. Assessment is still all about the scores of the entrance exam. All the reforms are just formalism,” one teacher said so.

A Chinese teacher said that the New Curriculum Reforms mainly aimed to encourage students’ enthusiasm but did not suit Xishan school, because scores were still the only criterion.

8.3.5 Bilingual Education

Students were either shy or just ignored our “hello.” We rarely talked with a student more than two sentences. In the class, teachers said, “Their Mandarin is fine, they can communicate in the language. The students’ low academic achievement was because they were not the best students from the primary school. The best students had gone to other schools. These hopeless kids ended up here. If they had any language obstacles, it was an issue that should be solved in primary school. It is too late for solving the problem in a secondary school.”

When we interacted with students, there was an obvious communication barrier. Most of the answers were only *yes* or *no*. They told us that they often got confused in class. They felt very scared to answer any questions. Even the student with the highest score could only get 80 points for the Chinese test and around 60 points for the maths test. The students used the Jingpo language rather than Mandarin to communicate in their daily lives.

From the principal to teachers, they all think there was no bilingual education in Xishan Middle School, since there were neither teaching staff nor textbooks.

The only teacher who was able to speak two languages was often considered as “insane” by people. We asked to attend his political classes but he refused. One day in an English class, we were disturbed by the noise from another classroom. It was this Jingpo teacher who got angry at his students. Eventually, he agreed that we could sit in his class. We found that he was just reading the books and never paid any attention to his students, no matter how noisy they were.

Why not hire some other Jingpo teachers? Mr. Ming told us “there was a limit for the teachers’ educational background: the Jingpos were not able to enter high school. How could they go to college? If they can not enter college, how could they become teachers here?”

8.3.6 *Ethnic Culture in the School*

Mr. Ming thought that the school should play a role in preserving minority culture. But the school did not even have Music/P.E./Art teachers in 2009. Mr. Ming said “we have neither financial support nor staff.” He added that “when the new building is completed, I’ll set up rooms for music, visual art and dancing... and hire teachers for these subjects.”

The teachers were all enthusiastic to start courses about minority culture and considered that it was a way to promote students’ passion for school. But when asked about how to run it, teachers’ responses were similar: This kind of activity was valuable but time-consuming. If they used too much time and energy on this, the routine work would be delayed. And the fees for these courses were beyond the school’s financial ability. That is why the school leaders were cautious about this issue.

When they talked about dancing and singing, students would get so excited and become talkative. They said that “it would be great if we can learn about them at school.”

8.4 Discussion

8.4.1 *Conflicts Between Policies*

8.4.1.1 Boarding School Policy

The school became a “prison” with the leading idea of “better management.” The students were not allowed to go out of the school while the school buildings were in such poor conditions. The school did not have any library, experimental room, multimedia room, art room, or bathroom. Students felt bored at school.

A subsidy of 75 yuan per month was obviously not enough for a student in junior high school.

8.4.1.2 Bilingual Education

It was necessary to hire more Jingpo teachers and expand bilingual education to solve the language difficulties. Bilingual education should also play its role in provoking students’ enthusiasm for learning.

8.4.1.3 Teacher Training

The shortage of staff was a severe problem in Xishan Middle School. The teachers were mostly from a different place and not willing to stay in Xishan. They wished to go to big cities or back to their hometown.

Jingpo people had a strong group identity. Thus, they did not respect the new teachers, who are not from the Jingpo group. An English teacher, who was a Dai, narrated her personal experience. She said, “When I first came here, all the students bullied me. Once there was an 8th grade boy who asked another student in my class to go out and play during class. I didn’t permit this and this made him yell at me. I was so angry and took him to his master teacher, he then stopped bullying me.”

8.4.1.4 New Curriculum Reforms

The teachers at Xishan Middle School spent much of their time and energy to chase students who escaped from school. Their understanding of the New Curriculum Reforms was vague and limited. Training was also inadequate.

New training was needed to assist teachers to understand and implement the New Curriculum Reforms.

8.4.1.5 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

It was a highly appraised policy, which still led to disagreement. The vice principal said that the policy made the students lazy since “no one cherishes the free lunches... now they even tear the books into pieces and throw them away.”

It was hard to testify whether the subsidy was the reason that students did not cherish their opportunities. The graduation ratio declined, and it was thought to be important to find out a way to encourage their passion for school.

8.4.2 Cultural Sensitivity

In China, policies for minority education were compiled by departments at different levels. This resulted in conflicts between the policies. Most education policies concerned the entire nation and did not always cover the specific case of minority education (Sun, 2009).

8.4.2.1 Bilingual Education

The teachers believed that there was a correlation between the negative attitudes toward bilingual education and assessment. They thought it was best to leave the minority language behind, to learn Mandarin.

8.4.2.2 New Curriculum Reforms

Due to poor results, Xishan Middle School had 0% enrollment rate for higher education. As a result, the Education Bureau focused on other key schools to improve the New Curriculum Reforms.

8.4.2.3 Teacher Training

No one could conduct minority education in Xishan Middle School. The trainings were limited and somewhat inadequate. If the trainings were insufficient, there could be a subsidy for the teachers working in poor areas to compensate them. More importantly, it was essential to add a cultural indicator when assessing a teacher's performance.

The “special post plan” intended to enroll more qualified teachers for the less developed areas. But most of these teachers spent their energy on the tests for civil servants rather than being teachers. Very few of them were willing to stay.

8.4.2.4 Boarding Policy

The school had become both a school and family since this policy had been conducted. It was important to educate the students combining ethnic psychological factors with their minority cultures (Sun, 2009).

8.4.3 Implementation

We could see from the interviews of several related persons that the implementation sometimes was confusing. There were so many conflicts among these decisions made by the Bureau and the school principal, among others.

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Chapter 9

Case 6—Mingshe Primary School, Yunnan Province



9.1 General Background

9.1.1 *Ecological–Cultural Background*

9.1.1.1 General Introduction to Longchuan County

Longchuan is an agricultural county in a mountain border area with various ethnic minorities. It is located in the southwest of Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture. The county consists of mountainous areas, semi-mountainous areas and basins with mountainous areas accounting for 77.53%, flat land 22.47%, and forests 45.5% (Teng & Li, 2010).

There are seven townships in the Longchuan County. Husa was selected as our target township for the study. Longchuan is a county with many ethnic minorities living in concentrated communities. According to statistics from 2005, 29 ethnic Minzus including Han, Jingpo, Achang, Lisu lived there. The Han population represented 44.5%, the Achang 7.5%, and Lisu 2.6%.

Longchuan is a farming county where the main crops are sugarcane, rice, tobacco (among others). Most companies in the county produce refined sugar. The living standards are relatively poor (Luo, 2000, pp. 56–65).

Longchuan County shares borders with Burma. Drug-taking and human trafficking are serious problems, which bring many social and educational problems. In the project school, there are a few (AIDS) orphans, who usually live with their grandparents in hard conditions. Some students dropped out of school because of the lack of labor force in their family. Education in Longchuan is facing great challenges.

In 2009, there were 114 schools of all types and all levels, including nine cultural and technical schools for adults (three independently organized), seven regular middle schools (six junior middle schools), nine nine-year schools, one vocational junior middle school, 73 primary schools and one Education Research Center. The rate of girl enrollment is 99.76%.

9.1.1.2 Introduction to Husa Achang Autonomous Township

Husa Achang Autonomous Township is located in the Northwest of Longchuan County, bordering with Burma. Its altitude is 1380–1500 m. Rice is the main crop as well as corn. Wheat and beans are also widely grown. This township is where Achang people are mostly concentrated. According to statistics from 2005, the population of Achang in the township is 11,955, accounting for 52.8% of the total (Luo, 2000, pp. 67–73).

Achang was a diasporic ethnic group of people without any concentrated living communities. In Yunan Province, the Achang people were called the “*jews from Longchuan*” by the locals. They were “*good at trading and very smart.*” Achang people have a speaking language system without any written system. “Achang language-Chinese” bilingual people represent the majority in the township. All of the Achang people believe in Theravada Buddhism; some of them also believe in Mahayana and Taoism. The main ethnic holidays are the “Aluwoluo” Festival, “Huijie,” and Torch Festival. They have their own ethnic handicrafts, such as cucurbit musical instruments, elephant-foot drum, and the Husa knife (Wang & Lu, 2006).

9.1.2 General Information About the Project School

Mingshe Primary School (Mingshe School for short) was founded in 1956 with only one teacher and over 20 students in a combined class. There were not any school buildings or classrooms at the time. The new teaching building was completed and put in use in 2005. The area of Mingshe was 7625 m². There were six classrooms for six classes—one class for each grade. There were two bungalow rooms for accommodating students. A row of bungalows was utilized for the teachers’ dormitory, teachers’ office, a teaching instrument room, a video-computer room, and a young-pioneer activity room. There was a student canteen without any tables or chairs. Beside the canteen, there were a planting field and a hogpen as the work-and-study base.

The school now has 196 registered students, including 164 ethnic minority students, accounting for 84% of the total. Among the ethnic minority students, there are 150 Achangs, 11 Lisus, and three Jingpos.

The students here are from 11 villages. The school and villages are connected by rugged and rough paths. It is difficult for many students to go to school. Many students live far from the school, and some are often late when it rains.

The school sits in a village inhabited by both Han and Achang people, and the living standards are rising. Through observation, generally speaking, the further the village is from the school, the lower the living standards.

In December 2008, Mingshe School was chosen through public appraisal as a “Green School at Prefecture-level.” The school is green, clean, and tidy. Most entries in the blackboard new bulletin are usually about “earthquake precautions.” The walls

in the classrooms are usually covered with sayings from great historical figures (see picture 5), students' work (excellent drawings and writings) and schedules.

The school motto is "Diligence, Endeavor, Excellence," and the school spirit is "Civilized, Healthy, Harmonious, and Innovative." The teaching spirit is "Teaching by Personal Examples as well as Verbal Instruction, Striving for the Best." The study spirit is "Self-conscious, Earnest, Precise, and Practical." The goal of the school is "To build a beautiful education environment and a green atmosphere for the soul, to foster teachers' noble image and first-class education quality."

The teachers from the school almost know every student's information. The relationships between the teachers and students are harmonious. Most teachers are younger than 30 and easy-going. The teachers get along well with each other; "*Most students are relatives.*" The students are guileless, industrious, well-bred, and respectful of teachers. "*Habit-forming education is developing fast and has achieved a lot in recent years,*" the teachers said.

Students have four periods of classes in the morning and two periods in the afternoon from Monday to Friday. They usually play poker or wander around during the breaks and their spare time. Two students are on duty every week to clean the schoolyard.

9.1.2.1 Students

A headmaster said that many parents of the students are migrant workers away from their home. Some parents died from drug-taking, leaving their children as orphans—there were two AIDS orphans in the school. Many children live with their grandparents and cannot be taken good care of, which is one of the reasons why they prefer staying at school.

Without parents' care, the students might have problems at school. A teacher who was a class supervisor mentioned that a student in Grade 2, whose parents work for others in Burma, learned well at first. But some day, he started to play truant for a couple of days in order to attract his parents' attention. Then, his parents bought him a mobile phone and called him frequently. Generally speaking, the students' family finance was not very good. Some students wore worn clothes (Table 9.1).

Students' Languages

During our observations, we found that most of the Achang students speak the Achang language with classmates and speak Mandarin with teachers.

The school has a Mandarin Assessment Standard, which stipulates that students should speak Mandarin at school. The school emphasizes that Mandarin should be used between teachers and students and students and students in class and for assembly and greetings.

Table 9.1 Languages students used before enrollment and in school (Meng, 2007, pp. 76–87)

Languages before enrollment	Languages in school			Total
	Ethnic languages	Mandarin	Mandarin and ethnic languages	
<i>Ethnic languages</i>				
Achang students	2 (5.4%)	25 (67.6%)	8 (21.6%)	3 (94.6%)
Jingpo students	1 (2.7%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (2.7%)
Lisu students	1 (2.7%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (2.7%)
Total	4 (5.6%)	25 (67.6%)	8 (21.6%)	37 (100.0%)
<i>Chinese</i>				
Achang students		8 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (33.3%)
Chinese		15 (62.5%)	1 (4.2%)	16 (66.7%)
Total		23 (95.8%)	1 (4.2%)	24 (100.0%)
<i>Chinese and ethnic languages</i>				
Achang students		7 (63.6%)	3 (27.3%)	10 (90.9%)
Han students		1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (9.1%)
Total		8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	11 (100.0%)
Total	4 (5.6%)	56 (77.8%)	12 (16.6%)	72 (100.0%)

9.1.2.2 Teachers

The school has nine teachers in total, among whom two have a bachelor's degree, and seven have junior college credentials. One teacher is a senior primary school teacher. Three are primary school first-class teachers, and five are primary school second-class teachers. Teachers of ethnic minorities include one Dai (she said she can speak 60% the Dai language) and two Jingpos, but no Achang teachers. Some teachers graduated from correspondence schools. They do not think correspondence study was helpful to improve their abilities and that it was just to meet related requirements of teachers' academic degrees.

Teaching is not only brainwork, but it also means hard physical work to them. Teachers' workload is heavy. In Longchuan, the transmission and notification of policy documents are mainly done through an app called QQ. Every teacher has the responsibility to receive and download the documents through two QQ groups—Husa Education Group and Longchuan Education Group.

As required by the higher-level authorities, the teachers have to go to the villages in the school's service area to check and make records, getting the facts of school-age population, dropouts, and household changes door to door.

9.1.2.3 Community (Village) Education

Through the interviews with parents, we found that they “wish children would find a good job” (“good job” here means becoming a civil servant, employed by the prefecture). Because, according to a teacher, “in here, once one becomes an official, his or her family would also get benefits.” During the interviews, the students told us, “my parents don’t care about my studies much and they only care whether I pass the exams at the end of term.”

When asked “what do you talk about with the villagers?,” most students answered, “where and what I do during my free time.” They seldom talked about their studies at home.

9.2 Research Methods and Process

9.2.1 Research Goals

Our main research goals are to learn about how departments of Longchuan county implement the policies and how the economic and cultural conditions shape the communities in Husa Achang Autonomous Township.

9.2.2 Research Methods

The interviewees are mainly administrators from the Education Bureau, teachers, students, parents, community members, and related staff in the school.

During our observations, we were interested in the school infrastructure facilities, school culture, dormitories, canteen, interpersonal relationship, languages students speak, and classes.

We distributed nine questionnaires to the headmaster and teachers, one for the headmaster and eight for teachers. For the students in Grades 4, 5, 6, we distributed 74 student questionnaires and collected 72 effective ones. The valid collection rate was 97.30% (Table 9.2).

9.2.3 Problems and Resolutions During the Study

During the interviews, we suffered some language barriers in communicating with the students. Some low-grade children’s Mandarin was not sufficient to converse with us. As a result, in our interviews, we needed Achang ethnic students with good

Table 9.2 Distribution of students' grades, ethnicity and gender

Grade			Ethnicity				Total
			Achang	Jingpo	Han	Lisu	
Grade 4	Sex	Male	4		1	1	6
		Female	11		2	0	13
	Total		15		3	1	19 (26.4%)
Grade 5	Sex	Male	1		5		6
		Female	8		4		12
	Total		9		9		18 (25%)
Grade 6	Sex	Male	15	0	3		18
		Female	14	1	2		17
	Total		29	1	5		35 (48.6%)
Total			53 (73.6%)	1 (1.4%)	17 (23.6%)	1 (1.4%)	100%

Chinese to help with interpreting. Although the results were good, it was a little time-consuming.

9.3 Focus on Basic Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities

9.3.1 “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” Policy and Other Supporting Funds

9.3.1.1 Policy Support from the Provincial Government

All the students in compulsory education at Mingshe School (Grade 1–Grade 6) are exempted for book fees and other expenses. But different students have different subsidies (Table 9.3).

9.3.1.2 Role Played by the “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” in Dropout Control

All the stakeholders we interviewed discussed the policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” positively. They insisted that it was helpful to relieve farmers’ burden and to consolidate the achievements of education popularization. For example, one of the phenomena was that many students in the boarder land areas left school and went to Burma. This phenomenon drew the attention of the authorities in 2000. It became one of the reasons before carrying out the policy of “three exemptions.” In

Table 9.3 Subsidies of students from Grades 1 to 6 with different conditions

Ethnicity	Boarding or not			
	Boarders (per student per term)		Non-boarders (per student per term)	
Achang	250 yuan + 250 yuan	Subsidy for boarders + subsidy for students of less-populated people	250 yuan	Subsidy for students of small ethnic groups
Non-Achang	250 yuan + 250 yuan	Subsidy for boarders + subsidy of prospering frontier and enriching people	250 yuan	Subsidy for prospering frontier and enriching people

Note 1 Each boarder receives a subsidy of 50 yuan per month on the basis of ten months in an academic year, so each of them receives 250 yuan every semester

Note 2 Local people also call the “subsidy for prospering frontier and enriching people” as an “extended subsidy.”

2005, the policy had come into force in the entire region. Since then, the number of transferred students increased year by year and reached 64.

The administrators said that the implementation of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” had effectively ensured the enrollment rate and the consolidation rate. Both rates in compulsory education can reach 100% in Husa.

The teachers thought that it was much easier to control dropouts thanks to the policy, and they did not have to persuade parents to send their children to school by going to their home anymore.

In the interviews, we found that the senior grade dropouts were more than those of junior grades for the following reasons: financial difficulties, age (for example, “She is married,” “She is older and shy,” “He is too old and should not go to primary school”); assisting parents with farm work (“My parents are too old to work”; “Parents are too busy. I want to help”); study weariness, etc. Domestic calamity and change are some of the main reasons behind dropping out: “Some dropouts are not native,” and “Some accident happened in his family.” Migrant children and orphans are also mentioned in as reasons for dropping out.

9.3.1.3 Problems with Funds

Students in preschool classes had to pay 150 yuan every year. The education administrators said that the range of exemption and subsidy should be extended. The teachers argued that “from preschool to senior high school, parents of preschool students often cannot afford tuition fees. Preschoolers should be brought into compulsory education. Many parents did not send their children to preschool because they cannot afford it.”

Teachers thought that it was very hard for the distribution of subsidies to be fair and just. The rich families do not care about the money, while it was not enough for the families facing financial difficulties.

Non-Achang parents also wish for the subsidy to be made available for students of small ethnic groups. A villager said that it was good that Achang people had more preferential policies because their Chinese was not as good as ours. But they had also been granted the same subsidy for a long time. This is why some men in the village wanted to marry Achang women, then their children became Achang. A Lisu parent said that the Achang people got the subsidy earlier and more than them. People in their village were all very discontent about this. The Lisu people were a “small ethnic group,” but their subsidy was not much. Their financial conditions were thus very tight.

9.3.2 *Layout Adjustment*

Policy of the “layout adjustment” in the school had not been formally implemented. However, this school was in the list of schools to be closed down. Therefore, the following analysis was based on the planned layout adjustment and the uncertain information from students and parents. We cannot assess the desired results of the policy yet.

The local governments considered closing and merging schools as one of the assessment criteria on administrators’ and headmasters’ performance. Education administrators said they must vigorously implement the policy of layout adjustment issued by the central government. All the leaders of the Education Bureau believed that it was an alright policy and that it should be carried out and fulfilled vigorously. The Longchuan Education Bureau would merge the existing 144 schools into 33 by 2014. The closing and merging plan of Husa Township had been made, according to which the 13 schools in the township would be closed and merged into three schools serving upper communities, middle communities, and lower communities, respectively.

When we asked the question “What is influence on the administration of the education bureau if some of the schools are closed and merged into 33 schools?,” they answered: “We can manage these schools by uniformed standard. We can visit the remote schools once or twice now. After closing and merging, we can visit them more frequently, and it helps strengthen the management of schools.”

A teacher said after closing and merging, some students would be reluctant to go all the way to school. In addition to their lack of interest in studying, it might cause more dropouts.

The students did not know about the issues of closing and merging. Many parents heard about it from the villagers. They did not know about where the students would be sent to if the school was closed and merged. There were two kinds of rumors about the destination of Mingshe School—one was that it was going to be merged into Mangdong Primary School, several kilometers away. The other was that it was

going to be merged into the Central School of Husa Township. Most parents hoped that their children could receive a better education. However, emotionally, they would not hope that their small children left them. They worried that their children would develop some bad habits, but they could not foresee what was going to happen (Peng & Jin, 2010).

At the same time, parents were also very concerned about safety. After merging, boarders would be farther away from home. Some parents picked them up by motorbikes, and some students walked home. It was tiring and unsafe.

9.3.3 Boarding System

Before we conducted this fieldwork, we thought that the students were dissatisfied with their situations. But through our observations, we found that the boarding life was not so hard for most impoverished students. Most people preferred the boarding schools, especially the orphans. They said that they could get more love from their friends and the teachers. Some students seldom had meat at home and were satisfied with the food provided at school. All the boarding schools in Longchuan developed part-work and part-study systems—to build hogpens in school and to reclaim vegetable plots. The school hired them to raise pigs, and they provided the students with opportunities to plant vegetables on their own.

But in the dormitory observations, there were also some problems.

First of all, there were only two dorms in Mingshe School. One was for boys and the other for girls. Senior and junior students had to be mixed in one room. It had influences in two aspects. Senior students were the elder sisters or brothers in the dormitories. They took care of preschool students. For example, a Grade-6 girl said that when the pre-school students came to board, they often cried at night. She had to get up to comfort them. Sometimes they might have a fever. Then, she asked the teachers for help. If the illness was serious, teachers would ask parents to take their children to see a doctor the next day. The teachers treated them very well.

There were also bad things happening between seniors and juniors. Some senior students bullied some juniors. A boy mentioned that some of the juniors were afraid of one senior student. If they did not obey him, he would abuse them. Sometimes teachers could not control these issues.

The students' self-management and caring about each other also reduced teachers' burden of boarding management.

The beds were in poor conditions. There was a long board on the upper-berth of the beds. Students said that "we are afraid of falling off, so we put a board. But it is not convenient to get on and off the bed. We have no other choice." Overall, the floors in the dormitories were clean, but the quilts were dirty. Some students put little stones on their beds to play, and the quilts were covered with dirt and dust. The walls of the boys' dormitory were dirty.

Teachers were under extreme stress. A teacher said that “teachers have to take care of every aspect of students’ lives. When they start boarding life, they often cry and attempt to run back home. Teachers have to look for them.”

Also, sports facilities in Mingshe School were few and simple. Whether to hold self-study or not had become a difficult problem for teachers and researchers. For easy management and security concern, there was a way to organize students to have self-study together after school. Although too long self-study was not in accordance with children’s laws, the boys and girls could not have games or relax time in the school. The school had no money to buy entertainment facilities.

During the interviews, most parents showed ambivalence about boarding. On the one hand, they preferred boarding for their children, so they do not have to go so far to school, and it would be safer. On the other hand, they wished their children would stay home.

9.3.4 New Curriculum Reforms and Education Quality

The education administrative departments claimed that the reforms were required and that they received complaints about them. But they had to carry out the reforms carefully. Mentioning the New Curriculum Reforms, a leader commented on the context of high school more—“The teaching materials are worse, not practical. We have no projectors. A lesson based on the new curriculum is very informative, but the teaching materials are hard to use.”

The headmaster said that she could not say that they had conducted the New Curriculum Reform in the school. They were still exploring. She was still trying to know more about it. “The concept of the New Curriculum Reforms is too complicated, and I don’t know how to comment on it. I don’t understand it well ...the textbooks have been changed. They think the new textbooks are OK... They can adjust to the reforms.”

But teachers had a lot of questions.

Some teachers understood the New Curriculum Reforms as “to watch teaching CD in distance education classes and then ask students to preview. The teacher should guide and answer students’ questions. It was convenient and easy to teach. We did consolidation exercises and put little red flags or little red flowers on students’ exercise books to encourage students... and advance students’ enthusiasm by encouraging and praising them.” After saying so, the teacher asked the researcher “Is this the goal behind the New Curriculum Reform?”

A class supervisor thought that the New Curriculum Reform was not applicable in lower grades because “students are too young to control themselves. It is difficult to keep class in order while invigorating it. It is difficult to make students discuss.” “Since the students have had communication issues because of their Chinese level and study demands hard work, it is not enough to study only in class,” one teacher said.

Table 9.4 is a record of class observations. It reflects the interaction between teachers and students.

Throughout this class observation, we found that the teacher asked neither open nor inspiring questions. Students were not active and not interested in the questions. For example, when the teacher asked “is the grass boat made of grass?,” most students had no reaction. Some students said yes, some shook their heads. The questions did not inspire students to think and reflect.

Table 9.4 Class observation record

Time: May 19, 2010 8:00–8:45 a.m., recorder: W Subject: Chinese: Borrowing arrows by grass boats Grade: Grade 5 Teacher: L gender: female professional title: senior primary school, age: 34			
Time	Teaching processes	Observation	Reflection
8:00–8:05	Students read new characters	The teacher makes the students read new characters, holding a stick pointing at the characters on the blackboard	Whether it is a good beginning remains to be discussed
8:05–8:10	The teacher introduces the students to a text by a question	The teacher asks, “Is the grass boat made of grass?” Students are silent for seconds and answer: “yes,” “no.” The teacher: “yes, it is. You try to make one”	The question is not open and irrelevant to the text
8:10–8:15	The students read the text aloud together	Some students open their mouths but do not read	Students do not really learn the characters
8:15–8:21	The teacher asks questions	Teacher: “We must give a name to Zhuge Liang.” Teacher: “What is a grass boat? What’s on the double sides of the boat?” Students: “there are grass targets”	The questions are based on the text but do not relate to the real meaning of “borrowing arrows by grass boats”
8:22–8:45	Mark subsections of the text	The teacher writes down the main ideas of the subsections of the text from a reference book on the blackboard. She also asks questions about writing	Students do not really participate in the “analysis.” The teacher should lead students into the context of “borrowing arrows by grass boats”

9.3.5 Teacher Training

9.3.5.1 Teacher Supplement Mechanism

In April 2000, related documents stipulated that “Shanghai counterpart supports Yunnan Province.”

An official in the personnel department said, “Shanghai counterpart supports Yunnan. But no teachers from Shanghai have ever been here, not to mention experienced teachers. Last year, I heard a young graduate student came, but left a week later.” “Maybe, he’s not accustomed to the environment,” “it seems that no one is in charge of these affairs,” “the reason is probably that it is not attractive for the young teachers due to the poor conditions and low wages.”

“The counterpart supporter usually provides donations but few teachers, let alone administrators from there, want to hold a position here,” a leader mentioned.

The special posts of teacher are allocated to Longchuan No. 1 Middle School (including junior middle school and senior middle school).

An official in the personnel department introduced the situation of special post teachers in this county—“We started the qualification examination of special post teachers in 2007, and the posts were arranged in Longchuan No. 1 Middle School. The recruitment quota of 2009 was 12. Most of those who passed the exam were female and Han, there were only two ethnic minority teachers.”

9.3.5.2 Teacher Training

“I majored in liberal arts, but I was assigned to take charge of the lab. I don’t know the bottles and pots well. But I have no choice. Hands are not enough here,” a teacher mentioned.

“The Central School of the Township decides which subjects a teacher can teach. Due to the shortage of teachers, it is very possible to assign a teacher to the subjects that he or she isn’t good at,” a leader of teaching affairs mentioned. However, a teacher said that the main reason was that the leaders of the Central School of the Township did not know the teachers well.

Teachers attach importance to training and expect to be trained—“I would like to receive some extra training, especially on the subjects I teach or the ones closely relevant to my work.”

Views from the Education Research Center were as follows. The training methods vary. We learned from the Education Research Center that they had many training methods including participative teaching, class example learning, observation of key teachers’ classes, intern training, participative discussions and sending training to the countryside, etc. A leader of the Education Bureau stressed that “the participative training in Longchuan is the best in the whole prefecture.”

But teachers were not optimistic. They thought that the trainings were not practical. In the model class presentation, the trainer used multimedia, but they did not

have in their own classrooms. A teacher said only book learning and trainers’ own experiences were taught during the trainings, and the experience was not up to date. Another teacher said that all the trainings were held at the county level, they wanted to go to bigger places to learn more. A teacher mentioned that she majored in liberal arts at college, but she was in charge of the lab. She wished to have trainings related to her work, but there were no trainings on lab management.

Ordinary teachers could not get better training easily. A leader of the Education Research Center mentioned that “trainings for headmasters should be strengthened,” because “Success or failure depends on the headmasters.” Without headmasters’ support, trainings cannot have the desired effect.

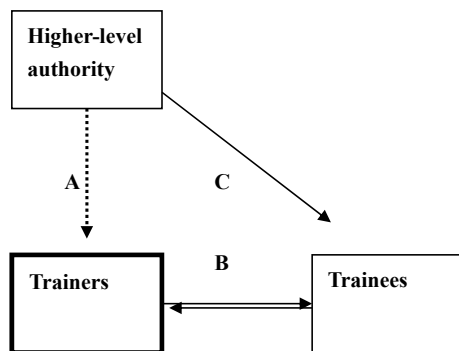
“It doesn’t work to train our ordinary teachers. The most important thing is to train our headmaster. We don’t have the final word,” a teacher said. He also mentioned that, once in training, “a headmaster was among us. When the trainer gave the lecture about teacher assessment, the headmaster was sitting there upset and tired. Later after the lecture, someone told the trainer that he wished he were able to put a sticker on the headmaster’s back.”

A leader of the Education Research Center told us that Dehong Normal College had a special class for ethnic languages before, such as Dai language and Zaiwa language. But they were canceled later. The classes were running well. People did not know why they were terminated.

“Teacher training expenditure should represent 5% of the annual public expenditure budget of the school,” an official document¹ stipulates. “Since 2009, the finance bureau of the county offers 5% of compulsory education public expenditure for teacher training. But the finance bureau charges 30% of the training expenses for the overall planning, in this way, the funds for training are much less and tight,” a leader of the Education Research Center said.

There are three kinds of evaluation (Chart 9.1).

Chart 9.1 Training evaluation patterns



¹No. [2006]7 of Yunnan Finance and Education Bureau.

- A is the evaluation of trainers by higher-level authorities.

This pattern was weak. When asked “how do you understand the New Curriculum Reform?” “it should be asked to the Education Research Section,” the person in charge of training answered.

- B is the evaluation of the effects of training on trainees by trainers and the evaluation of certain training processes by trainees.

The former was the evaluation of training effects. In Longchuan, it was conducted through summaries, class observations, and class supervisor symposia.

- C is the evaluation of trainees by higher-level authorities. It is weak, too.

Last year, a teacher of Longchuan No. 1 Primary School participated in the teaching contest of the prefecture. The applauses for her “participative teaching” were especially warm. People thought she would win the first place. But the answer turned out to be no because the judges were “veteran revolutionaries,” who could not accept new methods. This demotivated the teacher.

9.3.5.3 Merit Pay

The Implementation of the Policy in Longchuan

“Each school has its own policy. The merit pay has three levels. The first level is for headmasters of the central school of township and the education bureau. The second is for the first-class leaders of schools (associate headmasters). The third is for the second-class leaders of schools. The merit pay is meant to reward teachers and to maintain stability. There should n’t be a big gap, because every teacher has heavy workload. The detailed rules of implementation are implemented from the prefecture level to the county then to the school, and it’s based on the guidance of the provincial government. Each step of the implementation should be properly regulated (in the part of merit wages, the ratio between headmasters’ and ordinary teachers’ should not be over 2.5, namely no more than 2.5:1. The county government stipulates that this ratio should be no more than 1.6. The second-class leaders’ ratio should be no more than 1.4 and the final specific ratio should be decided by the first-class leaders). Specific implementing details and numbers are effective after being passed by 80% of the representatives of the Conference of Teachers’ Representatives,” a person in charge of the Education Bureau mentioned. As for the resources for the merit wages—“The provincial government appropriates some, the prefecture government appropriates some, and the county government raises the rest.”

Teachers' Views Varied on Merit Pay in Mingshe School

Teachers' views on assessment standards were almost the same but different about the advantages and disadvantages of merit pay.

Some teachers' attitudes about the implementation of merit pay were that "Merit pay is advantageous. It is an encouragement." Some others said that "I support this. Our living standards will be raised accordingly." While, some teachers felt "a little out of balance. I've never met such a situation that leaders can earn more"; "Merit pay occupies a part of the original wages. If anything goes wrong at work, it would be terrible. I may lose even the basic wage."

9.3.6 Bilingual Education

Longchuan County has opened a preschool in every rural school and ethnic language classes for Grades-4 and -5 students. It is stipulated in the provisions that bilingual teachers in the ethnic schools of Longchuan must be able to speak and write the ethnic language. Following the direction of the higher-level, Mingshe School has opened ethnic language classes.

9.3.6.1 Reasons for the Opening of Ethnic Language Classes

Education administrators explained that, in 2003, the average scores of final examinations in mountainous and rural primary schools were only about 30–40 marks. After investigation, administrators thought that the matter urgent to be solved was students' Chinese communication abilities. That is why they opened preschool classes of ethnic languages in every school to improve students' listening and speaking of Chinese to support their studies.

But students had various study motivations. "Then I can find a good job," "Learning Chinese, I can find the way back home." It is obvious that students' purposes of studying are realistic.

9.3.6.2 The Bilingual Teaching Situation in the Preschool

Because there are no Achang teachers, the preschool class teachers use an "interpreting" method: Let Achang students with good Chinese interpret what teachers mean for those who are not so good at Chinese.

But in the observations, we find that not all the students could participate in the class. The translators also did not have a higher cognitive and intellectual level. So many misinterpretations took place.

At one time, when studying the word “pomelo,” no one knew how to read it. And there was no pomelo at hand. Several days later, students brought a pomelo, and the teacher said it was a pomelo. Students laughed, “It’s cunzi” (Achang language)!

The following is a mouse song.

Children’s Song About the “Mouse”

The mouse clicks like a dance. The mouse nods, the computer shows a big tree; the mouse nods again, the computer shows a rabbit; the mouse nods again, the black cat becomes a pig, scaring the little mouse to roll downstairs.

During our interview, the students did not know what a “mouse” was or which part of computer is called a “mouse.” The children’s song was innovative and interesting for the children, but could not introduce the characteristics of a mouse completely. The teacher did not show a real mouse. The students could not match the word with the picture.

If one wanted to avoid cases like the above, a multimedia document or a picture or an Achang teacher could easily solve the problem.

In the interview with the Education Department, we asked why there was a lack of bilingual teachers. The Education Department leaders thought that they did not consider the differences in ethnicity, which meant there was no discriminatory attitude. But there was a policy that if a teacher of ethnic languages wanted to teach in the ethnic primary school in the county, they should be able to speak and write the ethnic language. Our team thought that it was unfair for ethnic minority students.”

- Making students write characters according to the textbook

In the preschool, the following words were found in the textbook: *gate, close gate, spoon, table, chair, stool, close window, open window*. The teacher stood by the window explaining the words and then led the students to read aloud twice. But the students did not recognize the characters. One student kept pointing at the picture in the textbook (*a gate*) while reading.

In the second period, the teacher made students write new characters: “table, chair, and spoon.” The teacher wrote the words on the blackboard, then sat on a student’s chair and did her own things. After writing twice, the students handed in their exercise books for marking. Some of them made mistakes with the writing order or missed strokes of the characters.

Students said that these characters were so difficult to write. Students generally claimed that the homework was difficult, and sometimes they could not finish it.

The education administrators said that the recruitment of teachers did not take ethnicity into consideration. We learned from interviews that personnel departments did not care whether the applicants were ethnic minorities. But ethnic language teachers in the County Primary School for Ethnic Minorities were required to be able to speak and write in the ethnic language.

Table 9.5 Students' answers to the question "what teaching language do you prefer?"

Ethnicity	Language			Total
	The teaching language you prefer			
	Chinese	Ethnic languages	Both Chinese and ethnic languages	
Achang	41	6	6	53
	56.9%	8.3%	8.3%	73.6%
Jingpo		1		1
		1.4%		1.4%
Han	17			17
	23.6%			23.6%
Lisu		1		1
		1.4%		1.4%
Total	58	8	6	72
	80.6%	11.1%	8.3%	100.0%

9.3.6.3 Questionnaire Analysis on the Languages Students Prefer Their Teachers to Use in Class

Table 9.5 demonstrates the students' preference of teaching languages.

Among the 72 students surveyed, 80.6% of them preferred their teachers to teach in Chinese, including 41 Achang students and all the Han students. The only one Lisu and one Jingpo students surveyed had a preference for ethnic languages. The main reason they preferred Chinese was that students thought Chinese was more definite and exact. Some Achang students preferred Chinese because "the whole class can understand Chinese" or "teaching in Chinese can improve students' Chinese abilities." A student wrote in his questionnaire that "the reason is that Chinese has written forms while ethnic languages do not."

Some students wished teachers to teach in both Chinese and ethnic languages, for "it can not only carry forward our ethnic language but also enable us ethnic minorities to learn Chinese well."

9.3.7 Ethnic Cultures Entering Schools

9.3.7.1 Provincial Level Documents

The Autonomy Ordinance of Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province stipulated that "Achang people and all the cadres and masses in Achang compact communities take a two-day holiday on Aluwoluo Festival of Achang people."

Table 9.6 How students know about their own ethnic culture

Channels	Results	
	Person times	Percentage (%)
From teachers	17	23
From relatives and friends	14	18.9
From community members	29	39.2
From TV	1	1.4
From books	13	17.6

As Table 9.6 shows, students learned more about ethnic cultures from community members. In our interviews, many students mentioned “Ganbai” and the “Aluwoluo Festival” of the Achang people. Han students generally “picked them up in the village” and “got to know about Achang festivals gradually” because “my neighbors often do so.”

9.4 Comprehensive Analysis

9.4.1 Policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”

Throughout the research, this policy got the most public praise and least controversy. Whether the preschool students could get the subsidy was an issue. But the local education department and the teachers considered that the economy was not good enough to support the children. The quotas of subsidy were limited, and the process of subsidy granting was rigid (Wang, 2010).

9.4.2 Policy of Layout Adjustment

The policy was implemented without having been assessed. Mingshe School was in the list of school mergers, but some teachers and the parents did not know this plan. Emotionally, the parents did not want their children to leave them, but they all wanted their children to get better education. Whether a large range of layout adjustment could get good results was still a problem to be solved.

9.4.3 Boarding System

With layout adjustment going further, school size was getting bigger and boarders more than before. But the supporting facilities were limited. The school also needed

more teachers to manage the boarding students, who needed more interesting sports and a more meaningful life (Wang & Wan, 2006, pp. 71–75).

9.4.4 The New Curriculum Reforms and Education Quality

During the implementation of New Curriculum Reforms, local education resources were not developed, but teaching methods were mechanically improved to be more scientific, which was not completely in accordance with the actual conditions of ethnic minority education (Ye, 2010).

It was not easy to take the New Curriculum Reforms into effect, especially in terms of teaching methods and of the development of local courses. Developing local courses demanded a large number of manpower, material, and financial resources. The financial capacity of the local government was limited (Wang & Guan, 2010).

9.4.5 Teacher Resources Development

The local government did not put great efforts into local teacher resources development, while outside support was not in line with the local culture and development (Wang, 2010).

9.4.6 Bilingual Education

The preschool bilingual teaching in Longchuan County belonged to neither Model 1 bilingual education (giving priority to ethnic language teaching plus a course of Chinese) nor Model 2 (giving priority to Chinese plus a course of ethnic language teaching).

There were some problems. First, ethnic minority teachers were in shortage. Second, teachers did not understand the teaching materials well. Third, the preschool classes were taught in different ways in each primary school, which was not suitable for children's physical and mental development.

Language is an expression of thought. Ethnic languages are not only a tool enabling students to learn Chinese but also for cultures and ways of thinking. Students learned knowledge in class through their own ethnic languages as well as their basic ethnic cultural context, especially the way of thinking of their own people and area (Wang, 2004).

9.4.7 Ethnic Culture in School

Ethnic culture entering the school embodied not only singing and dancing but also a good way of inheriting local culture. Based on this study, having community activities was a better way to spread the local culture.

Only by “excavating” teachers and teaching models from local resources can we develop education in accordance with the actual local conditions (Wang, 2009a).

9.5 Countermeasures and Suggestions

9.5.1 Strengthening and Perfecting Local Teacher Training

With supplement teacher policies, a reasonable teacher disposition had been partly realized. Reasonable teacher disposition combined with teacher training in light of teaching practice is the effective way to improve teachers’ skills.

Based on the interviews and our observations, we think that teacher disposition was the key to teacher training. Teacher training could give more support to the teachers. Our advice is that the government should employ more local teachers to protect their unique culture.

9.5.2 Financial Support for the Policies

There is a need to increase financial support for teacher training. Without enough support, the teachers cannot gain better training. To ensure financial support for the preschool classes with ethnic languages is urgent for local education (Sude, 2003).

9.5.3 Criteria of Layout Adjustment Should Be All-Around and Practical

It has emerged that students had been differentiated into distinct levels just because some of them were not accustomed to the courses after the merger with the township next to Husa. It would cause different results to merge two schools of different levels and have different courses together. The criteria could include the curricula, management, among others. This policy must be suitable for the students and teachers (Bai, Teng & Ma, 2011, pp. 64–73).

9.5.4 Use of the Internet

Mingshe School was in a remote mountainous area with inconvenient transportation. By using the Internet, Mingshe School might be able to get more useful resources. Based on our research, the government would need to promote the application of the Internet to transmit documents and conduct teachers' distance training.

9.5.5 Connection Between School Education and Community Education

During fieldwork, we found that the community was a better place to transmit cultures. We thus think that making communities play a more active role in the transmission and inheritance of ethnic cultures is quite necessary. And teachers need to take students' languages into consideration while teaching. If the teachers cannot understand the student's culture, they may face more problems (Sude, 2004a).

9.5.6 Construction of Work-Study Base

Setting up a work-study base is quite significant. On the one hand, it can partly solve the issue of students' living expenses. On the other hand, it can help students learn basic working skills.

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Chapter 10

Case 7—Fangxiang Ethnic Primary School, Guizhou Province



10.1 Background Information

The analysis of policy issues should not only focus on the policy itself and the way of implementing it, but also on a number of factors related to the policy implementation. This is of particular necessity for the present case—the analysis of primary education policy for ethnic minorities. Recently, in the studies of multicultural education, the relationship between cultural analysis and education has been interpreted thoroughly. A multicultural perspective is required in ethnic minority education as well as in the analysis of ethnic minority policies. In this chapter, we provide a brief description of the case study school, Fangxiang National Primary School in Leishan County, Guizhou Province, and its natural, social, and cultural environment, with a view to present the background and cultural information on which the policy study and analysis are based.

10.1.1 *Eco-culture Overview*

10.1.1.1 A Brief Sketch of Guizhou Province

Located in the southwestern part of China, and situated in the Yungui Plateau, Guizhou Province lies to the west of Hunan Province and to the east of Yunnan Province, with Guanxi Province to its south and Sichuan Province and Chongqing to its north (Chen, 1990, pp. 21–22).

The total land area of Guizhou is 176,167 km², accounting for 1.8% of the total area of China.

Guizhou is mainly a mountainous and hilly province, with few flat terrains. As a result, the farmland acreage is of small size and poor quality.

Guizhou is a multiethnic province. There are 49 ethnic groups in Guizhou, ranking third in terms of the number of ethnic minorities after Yunnan and Xinjiang. The

ethnic minority population accounts for 37.9% of the total population of the province (Wang, 2010).

10.1.2 Brief Sketch of Leishan County

Leishan, a county in the southeast of Guizhou, lies to the southwest of Hmong and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, to the west of Taijiang, Jianhe, Rongjiang County, and to the north of Sandu Shui Autonomous County of Buyi Hmong Autonomous Prefecture. Its west and north are adjacent to Danzhai County, Kaili City. Leishan County is so named because of the peak named Leigong of the Hmong Mountains.

Leishan County is home to Hmong, Shui, Yao, Dong, Yi, Han, and other ethnic groups. Ethnic minorities account for 91% of the total population, among which Hmong people account for 86.3%. Leishan is a mountainous agricultural county with “90 percent mountain, half water and half fields” and with more than 90% agricultural population. Leishan is recognized as one of the state-level poverty-stricken counties (Wang, 2010).

Owing to its remoteness and economic backwardness, coupled with the unique natural environment and historical folklore, Leishan County has been very little influenced by outside culture. The ethnic culture of the villages formed the wonderful Hmong cultural system of Leishan County, mainly embodied in housing, clothing, food, festivals, wine, dance, and marriage. Therefore, Leishan is called the “Chinese Hmong Cultural Center” and the “Holy Land of Hmong Culture” (Wang, 2004).

For a long time, Leishan is one of the main settlements of Hmong people. Hmong’s unique historical and cultural traditions gave birth to strong customs and social psychology which bring an influence on the local society, economy, culture, and education. Hmong is an ethnic group plagued by frequent misfortunes. For thousands of years, they lived in poverty and backwardness. For various reasons, they were forced to migrate constantly, resulting in its diverse branches, the hostile living situation, and their poor and backward living conditions. As a result, Hmong do not have their own language, and different branches of Hmong differ greatly in their language, customs, clothing, and other cultural aspects (Wang, 2009b).

On the one hand, variation hinders the development of Hmong people. On the other hand, Hmong culture is endowed with diverse and inclusive features.

10.1.3 A Brief Sketch of Fangxiang Township

Fangxiang is located east of Leishan County. It lies in the Leigongshan National Nature Reserve, east to Taijiang, Jianhe, Rongjiang counties, south to the town of Yongle, and west to Danjiang Town and the Datang Township, north to Xijiang Town, and 47 km from the county.

Fangxiang Township occupies a total area of 144.4 km², with 6000 mu arable land.

The People's Government of the township serves the residents of seven administrative villages, including Xiapingxiang, Tixiang, Shuizhai, Douzhai, Queniao, Getou, and Maoping. Among the 57,360,000 people, Hmong people account for 99.9% of the total population.

10.1.4 The Development of the Case School

Fangxiang National Primary School is located in Leishan National Nature Reserve, and in the hinterland of the National Forest Park, to the east of the main peak of Leigongshan. The school was originally founded as Fangxiang Elementary School in 1939 and changed its name as Fangxiang People's Central School when Fangxiang became a township in 1945. With the passage of time, the school experienced various challenges and changes of location before finally being renamed as Fangxiang National Primary School.

In 2008, another two schools, Fangxiang Douzhai School and Fangxing Shuizhai School, were closed and merged into Fangxiang National Primary School. Afterwards, Queniao Complete Primary School and Getou Complete Primary School were also closed and merged into Fangxiang National Primary School in September 2009.

School Environment and Facilities

The current school covers an area of 7600 m², with 2800 m² being used for the building area. There are 12 classrooms, one laboratory, one storeroom for instruments, one multimedia room, one computer room, one library, one reading room, one activity room for young pioneers and one for CCP members, one headmaster office, one office for the director of teaching, one room for the chief of general affairs, one accountant's room, one storeroom of PE appliances, one teachers' office, and one school canteen, respectively, three basketball courts, two dormitory buildings, and two teachers' dormitories. There are 380 students (174 of whom are girls) and 11 classes, each class equipped with a television.

Teachers and Students

There are 29 faculty members, 24 qualified teachers, two pursuing their continuing education, and one security personnel. The 24 professional teachers are all qualified with the required academic diplomas, one with a bachelor's degree, 17 with college degrees, and five with an intermediate college degree. At present, the 29 teachers have acquired professional titles, including 17 with senior title, nine first-level title, and two second-level title, and one with Senior Engineer title.

In terms of age structure, the majority of teachers are between 41 and 45 years old.

In terms of gender structure, there are more male teachers than female ones.

The teachers feel that they are stuck in their current living situations. On the one hand, they are used to the living environment here and are not willing to go out and find another job. On the other hand, most teachers are happy with what they are doing at school. As local people, they think they are responsible to contribute to the local area.

Their living conditions are far from satisfactory. The teachers' buildings are old and dilapidated. One is a wooden building, and the other is a two-story brick building, with severely cracking walls. They think their "home" is far less beautiful and safe than the students' dormitory building.

There are 381 students in Fangxiang Primary School, all of whom are from the Hmong ethnic group. So are the teachers. Bilingual communication and education are used both in and out of the classroom. The higher the grade, the more Mandarin is used by students. Students are physically short but vigorous. They do plentiful of break-time activities.

10.2 Research Methods and Process

10.2.1 Schedule of the Research

The research at Fangxiang Primary School lasted for ten days. Field research was carried out in the school from May 24–June 4, 2010.

The investigators were three post-graduates and one teacher from the Education Department of Minzu University of China. The main research methods included interviews, questionnaires, and observations. During the study, 137 questionnaires were distributed to the students, nine to the teachers, and one to the leader of Fangxiang National Primary School. Moreover, eight class observation tables, two school-yard observation tables, two community observation tables, two canteen observation tables, and two dorm observation tables were completed.

10.2.2 Targets, Job Allocation, and Difficulties

The survey mainly focuses on students' daily life and school education, aiming to answer the following questions:

1. For the educational administrators, the research aims were to find out about their understanding of the basic education policy of ethnic minorities based on the local minority features together with their work experiences, and their roles in policy implementation and the difficulties they faced.
2. For school leaders, the research hoped to know their understanding of the basic education policy of ethnic minorities based on the real situation and their work

experiences and the problems they had in the implementation of the policy in their school.

3. For teachers, the study focused on their understanding of the basic education policy of ethnic minorities based on their living conditions and working experience, their daily life and current situation in schools and other issues.
4. For students, the study investigated their understanding of the basic education policy of ethnic minorities based on their family background and their living conditions, their daily life and school education situation, especially the boarding condition, their family situation and childhood, particularly their living and studying issues.

10.3 Focusing on the Basic Education Policy of Ethnic Minorities

In this chapter, we will analyze several policies of ethnic minority education, so that we can know their implementation in this region, and the impact on the basic education of ethnic minorities. The analysis was mainly carried out among local educational administrators, school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and even community members. Based on our investigation and their teaching practices, we will analyze and discuss several focal policies, hoping to reveal the relationship between the current situation of ethnic primary education and the policy of ethnic primary education, so as to generalize policy experiences and to improve policy efficiency.

10.3.1 Layout Adjustment Policy

The layout adjustment of schools aims at combining the limited resources of schools for better use.

Teachers: Decline in the Quality of Life and the Change of Work

Layout adjustment policy has brought great changes to the life and work of teachers:

- (1) The teachers' living conditions declined as a result of the layout adjustment policy. In particular, the change of their housing conditions directly led to the decline of their living conditions. All of the teachers were working at local village schools before the layout adjustment policy was conducted. They used to have enough dormitories to live in because the number of staff was small. But now, they don't have spacious rooms anymore. They live in small rooms and far from their homes. Their living conditions are worse than before.
- (2) Layout adjustment also caused the increase of teachers' workload—besides teaching, the task of taking care of students became their extra work. Before

the layout adjustment, students lived at home and went to schools nearby. Now most of the students live in dorms instead of their own houses. It's obviously an extra burden for the school's management system.

After the merger of schools, there were more teachers to rely on when difficulties arise. However, because the students are too young, they are more likely to get sick in the cold winter. Then the teachers have to take the sick students to the nearest hospital in the county because their parents usually live in a village far away from the school. Meanwhile, the parents have to be called to the hospital to look after their kid. This was not at all a problem before the adjustment policy because students go home after school.

Parents: Helpless and Confused

Parents were the ones mostly affected by the layout adjustment policy. Not only did it bring them real financial burden, but it also confused them for they didn't have any other choices.

Firstly, they had no other choice but to obey the policy for it was a compulsory policy released by the government.

The government simply told us to retreat from our former school and to the school in the township. Despite our reluctance and resistance, we had to keep quiet because the relief or subsidies would be cut off if we refused to go there. I dared to speak out my true feelings now because my child is 17 years old now. In the past, I was afraid to be fined because the kid was born outside the one-child policy. The kids living at dorms are so young that they wet the bed at night. But what worries me most is when he gets sick. I dare not think about other problems. We just have to obey the policy. (interview with a parent)

Secondly, as a result of the adjustment policy, more students had to live in dormitories, increasing their living costs and other fees, which definitely resulted in the increase of parents' financial burden and pressure. Lots of families found it harder to bear.

Question Do you think your former school can still be used now?

Answer Not possible. I think there are advantages and disadvantages in this policy. The good point is that teaching quality will be increased when the teachers and schools are combined; the bad point is that we have to walk to school because of the poor traffic conditions in the whole county. Even if the traffic conditions are improved, we'll have to pay at least 6 yuan on commuting, which is beyond the family's means.

10.3.2 Boarding School Policy

The distance between the students' home and the schools may increase after the merging of schools. The boarding school policy was designed to solve this problem.

It appeared to be a good policy for it could solve the problem caused by the layout adjustment policy. But in fact, there are also negative impacts on students.

Students: A New Living and Study Environment

The minority students (Hmongs) received benefits from the basic education policies for ethnic minorities. Aspects of their daily life reflect the tendency, effect, and impact of educational policy. Meanwhile, the starting point and ultimate objective of certain policies are to provide better educational resources for students.

(1) Reasons Behind the Boarding System

Documents released by the central government explain that “the areas which have a demand for, and enough resources may set up boarding schools.” The file explicitly commands that the decision of whether to set up a boarding school and put students in dormitories should be made according to the local conditions.

The reality is that the current school site of Fangxiang National Primary School was originally for the former Fangxiang National Secondary School, which is bigger and better equipped. However, the school cannot provide the 381 boarding students with good living conditions. In fact, students suffer from nostalgia. When asked whether they prefer their present school or the former one, most of the students of Queniao Primary School said they preferred the former one. But the reality of the situation is that the school is 10 km away from home. It takes at least several hours for the students to go to school on foot. So, the distance makes it impossible for them to go back home every day, and they have to live at school and go home on weekends.

There are several reasons why students board at school. Firstly, it is required by the higher education supervisors. Secondly, it is the result of the layout adjustment policy. They are forced to go to school far away from their home, which, in turn, compels them to board at school so as to keep the negative influence of commuting on their study to the minimum.

However, it should also be noted that many problems and conflicts arise after they begin their boarding life. For example, the increase of the costs of living brings new financial burdens to the families. At the same time, students have to adapt to the boarding life and learn to get on well with their roommates and classmates. What matters most is still the problem of security, which is also the common concern of school leaders, teachers as well as parents.

(2) Boarding Conditions and Life

On the surface, the living environment seemed to be safe, tidy, and clean. The truth is that there are many invisible issues. The students are supposed to enjoy a happy and carefree childhood, with study being their priority. However, the boarding life causes them many difficulties and worries.

Who Knows the Child's Difficulties?

Q Have students got used to the boarding life? Do they cry?

Parents We do not know, and we didn't go to visit either. They said the food is very bad. The rice is so hard, and they're full when just eating a little. The only vegetable is just a small potato and a cucumber every day. They're tired

of having meals at school. We had to pack some pepper and pickles for them. At the beginning, they're not used to living in school, and nobody keeps an eye on their studies either. First, we pay attention to their study and they're good at learning, but then not so well without our control. My son caught a bad cough after living at school for a period of time. I took him to the hospital. The doctor said he caught pneumonia and needed to stay in hospital for a week. But I have no money. After his stay in hospital for only two days, I took him back to school. I don't know whether he is fine or not. A few days ago, the doctor called me to take my child to the hospital to check again, but I did not do that.

Q How did the students get pneumonia?

Parents Catch a cold. My son is honest. He didn't tell me about the cold. After two days in the hospital and two days at home, he said they would have an exam, and had to go to school. His study is very good. He got over 90 points (total 100 points) for each subject. Eh... the children are too young. They're afraid to go out and not dare to say when they wet their beds, just lying on the wet sheet. We have no time to see him. We can't help them to do some washing. The teacher did not help them to wash either. They don't tuck in sleep, and it is easy to catch a cold.

In a word, the implementation of the boarding policy provides convenience to the students who live far away from school. Meanwhile, it assists the ethnic culture to enter the schools and adds up students' time for studying. But it also brings many problems.

- (1) Students have more difficulties in going to school. Although the students needn't take hours to go to school, they also have to bring rice from home in exchange for their meal tickets for the meal at school. In addition, they have to endure nostalgia away from their parents. Some students even cry at night and become very homesick.
- (2) There are few opportunities for communication between the students and their parents.
- (3) For the students who are not fully independent in handling their lives, the implementation of boarding school policy results in many constraints to their lives.

The implementation of the boarding school policy increases teachers' burden and they have to undertake the dual task of teaching and taking care of students. Despite the daily teaching activities, the teachers have to assist the boarding students to deal with their dorm lives since some of the students are too young to take care of themselves.

Our school was merged starting July 2009. As you can see, when a kid of 6 or 7 is studying here, their parents will be worried. That's why they are still reserved about the layout adjustment policy. We have to go to their village and try to communicate with them. We're told that their prime concern is safety and food. They don't say a word about the quality of education. They believe that once their kids are at school, it is the school that should be

responsible for their education, life, moral code and everything. No wonder teachers have to work so hard. For example, the dorm supervisors have to check every night.

Students cannot celebrate their own ethnic holidays because the school gives vacations only on national holidays to avoid potential safety problems and the corresponding responsibility related to the holidays.

Our research shows that all the individuals involved showed deep concerns about students' security.

They are too young, and we can't feel relieved. The worst thing is that when they are sick, especially in winter. We don't have money. It costs a lot of money when they are ill. One teacher's whole year income can't afford the treatment cost for one time. If my child is ill, we have to borrow money from the neighbors. In hot days he is rarely sick, but in winter he suffers most. Sometimes he also falls out of bed. The child said there is also a teacher looking after them to see if they were tucked. Then I asked my child what to do if he pees in bed? He said the teachers don't help to wash or give a hand. So he got sick. I worry about this most.

—An interview with student Yang's parents in Queniao Village

10.3.3 Construction of Faculty, New Curriculum Reforms, and Bilingual Policy

10.3.3.1 Local Education Administrators: Difficulties in the Policy Implementation Because the Policies Are Not Suitable for the Local Needs

- (1) Teacher Training: Lack of money is the biggest obstacle for teaching training programs.

Investigations show that the funds needed for teacher training cannot be solved in a short time period because the place has long suffered from a backward economy and a shortage of education funds (Bao, 2009, pp. 15–18). The educational administration officials also admitted that the current teacher training cannot be successfully carried out due to the limited funds. Besides, the teacher training programs add extra burden to the schools (Gui & Zhong, 2010).

The school leaders and the teachers have to pay by themselves for their teaching training programs organized by the education department. But other training programs are usually paid for by the organizers. For primary and middle school teachers, the training program is no other than an additional burden to the already scarce school funds. The schools are put into an embarrassing situation if they have to pay for the training program on their own. It is an extra financial burden to these schools.

(2) New Curriculum Reforms: Difficulties in policy implementation as a result of financial shortage and evaluation methods.

Carrying out the new curriculum policy in ethnic minority region relies on two aspects. One is the design and use of a multicultural curriculum of education in the ethnic minority region, while the other is the training and skills learning for the New Curriculum Reforms (Jin, 2009). According to our research, these two ethnic minority education policies have not been successful during the policy implementation. Financial shortage and the poor situation of ethnic education deprive the implementation of curriculum policy of its effectiveness.

Except from Guangxi and Qinghai, G is the worst in terms of curriculum reforms. We just follow the trend. The financial situation limits the school in its implementation of policy. Teachers' training is carried out only on the surface level and there's no guarantee of financial support. There is no clear idea on how to carry out New Curriculum Reform. Besides, the expensive fee for teachers' training program, charging 600 yuan for a two-day training, are actually transferred to students. Without extra income, teachers cannot afford this kind of expensive training program. In addition, teachers have to spare part of their salaries to sponsor some students. When the students are sent to school, their parents expect the school to take care of the kids for everything, which is a heavy burden for every school.

In addition, the evaluation method seldom takes into consideration the special needs of ethnic education. As a result, the ethnic policy has to be implemented in the same way as other national policies are carried out.

In bilingual curriculum, ethnic contents are added only in some extra curriculum activities to guarantee the dominant position of main courses. The bilingual courses are of great help in cultivating students' potentials. . . . They were taught first by school teachers voluntarily, and got the attraction of some leaders in the county, and was valued by some experts, who in turn promote the rapid and extensive boost of this type of education. But it should not be all in the same pattern. The prerequisite should be the guarantee of college entrance examination and of the admission rate of students.

Therefore, the central government has developed many preferential policies toward the development of ethnic minority education (Ma, 2009). However, these policies should be improved to be more qualitative rather than quantitative, paying more attention to the connotative development and internal quality of ethnic minority education.

10.3.3.2 Teachers: Multiple Difficulties in Policy Implementation

In general, teacher training and curriculum policy have some effects. Diverse forms of training have updated the teachers' knowledge and ideas, as well as broaden their vision. However, teachers also differ in their understanding of the policy.

- (1) The Conflict between the uniformed pattern of policy implementation and traditional culture of the region.

The purpose of teachers' training program should help teachers adapt to the New Curriculum Reform, thus improving the quality of classes. However, the current training based on the uniformed standard fails to help teachers to apply the teaching methods learnt from the training in teaching practice, resulting in inconsistency between the training and the local needs.

When I tried to teach in the way I learnt from the training program, I found it not suitable for our rural areas. Students in cities are able to get afterschool tutoring from their parents or personal teachers. But our students cannot. So, we need to teach in a way that is based on our unique local situation. (interview with a Y teacher)

- (2) Difficulties Brought by the Shortage of Policy implementation Resources.

The lack of funds to support teachers for the teaching training program leads directly to the less training opportunities and times for teachers (Ma, 2010). Besides, most training is targeted at young teachers, leaving the elder teachers rare opportunities to attend training program.

The New Curriculum Reform is itself good. But after the reform, both teachers and students suffer from more difficulties. Take mathematics for example, we used to state the questions with words, asking students if this group has certain people, and that group has certain people, how many people are all together. But now we are supposed to teach the same question with many charts, which confuse students a lot.

- (3) Students' Learning Abilities Play a Vital Role in the Implementation of Curriculum Reform Policy.

The implementation of curriculum reform policy confronts both distress from teachers and misunderstanding and problems from students (Jin, 2009). For students, the place they have been living does not provide them with adequate knowledge to understand some knowledge in the new curriculum. Besides, they are not psychologically or linguistically confident to interact with teachers in class (Sude, 2008). Consequently, in classroom teaching, teachers will encounter obstacles from students. In fact, students' ability has become another prominent obstacle in the implementation of curriculum reform policy.

This New Curriculum Reform is mainly about the interaction between teachers and students. They discuss and then solve questions. In our Hmong region, these students grow up with their parents who mainly speak with their kids in Hmong language. As a result, the students cannot fully express their ideas in Chinese. That's why it's difficult for them to interact with teachers in classes. They cannot speak much Chinese, let alone Mandarin. So they tend to feel inferior and self-conscious. It will be more difficult for them to interact with teachers. What is worse, there are only two or three students like this. Most of the students cannot speak a Chinese word at all. That's why there is no warm discussion on how to solve the questions. ...I don't mean that the students are shy. Instead, they cannot speak Chinese, or cannot translate from Hmong to Chinese. So, they may have ideas on the questions but don't know how to express the idea in Chinese because they are afraid to be laughed at by classmates if they make mistakes in their expression. Under this pressure, they will only participate in the discussion when they are 100 percent confident about the right answer. If they are still not sure, they will just keep silent.

10.3.3.3 School Leaders: The Policy Is Not Suitable for the Local Situation

In the survey, the leaders of the school told us that the assessment and monitoring system to the school are the same as the non-ethnic schools. If the improvement of teaching quality is assessed with the same criteria of non-ethnic schools, it does not reflect the special characteristics of the ethnic schools (Xu & Wu, 2006). Actually, the long-term underdeveloped situation is not consistent with the general assessment mechanics. There are confusion and conflicts between the particularity of ethnic minority education and the universality of education evaluation.

Courses of ethnic culture are declined after the New Curriculum Reform. Especially for the first-grade students, there are 8 periods for Chinese. Both teachers and students share the feeling that courses are more difficult and contain more knowledge, making it hard to finish teaching. Of course, we want to add some ethnic elements in music and PE classes, but we are not allowed to do so. Especially when we are being inspected for the ‘Two Basic’ policies. If we do not strictly follow the requirement of the policies, we will be in trouble. We dare not do that. ...The teaching of ethnic culture is not included in the inspection.

10.3.4 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy Policy

(1) Educational Administrators: Ethnic minority education needs financial support.

The current ethnic minority education is comparatively in lower level and starts rather late (Wang, 2007). What’s more, there are various factors influencing the development of ethnic minority education, among which the impact of ideas and cultural factors are two important factors that cannot be ignored (Ma, 2004).

The “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy is of profound significance and effect to the development of ethnic minority education (Yue, 2006). This policy partly solved the conflicts between the minority education’s need for development and the long-lasting poverty. It largely promotes the enrollment ratio and graduation ratio and ensures the students’ rights to receive education and promotes the development of the minority education (Zhang, 2009).

(2) Schoolmasters: the underdeveloped local economy and the financial shortage of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy.

Although the school is still an ethnic minority school at present, in fact, the administration and evaluation mechanism are not different from the non-ethnic schools (Wang & Qi, 2009). As far as the issues of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy, the main challenge is that the insufficient financial fund is insufficient to resolve all the difficulties of the students.

The state living allowance to each student is 50 yuan each month. Students get the money and give it to the canteen, and then the canteen spends it all on food. ...Besides living allowance, there’s no other allowance now. We struggled to live this semester with the 50,000 worth

'benevolence lunch' obtained from Zhejiang. Maybe next semester we need other allowance because this 50 yuan is not enough, and food is not good enough for their growth.

10.3.5 Ethnic Culture in School

10.3.5.1 Educational Administrators: Bewilderment Faced by “Ethnic Culture in School”

It has been an old tradition to inherit ethnic culture in local places. In fact, the school has started the inheritance and education of ethnic culture before the release of “ethnic culture into school” policy. The implementation of the policy is farsighted and self-innovated ethnic education policy (Sun, 2009).

However, problems still exist in the process of policy implementation.

(1) Lack of Professional Teachers in Ethnic Schools.

At present, the “ethnic culture into school” courses are mainly taught by teachers from non-government organizations or by teachers of other subjects (Cao & Wang, 2010). The number of qualified teachers is very limited and teaching quality is not satisfying.

Many schools have bilingual courses of both Hmong and Chinese. For example, students from rural schools can speak Hmong but don't speak Chinese, and then the teachers teach classes with Hmong as the subsidiary language. The teachers are discovered by the Hmong Association and society. There is no specific teaching training.

(2) Misleading Understanding of the Policy and Incomplete Assessment Mechanism.

Teaching subjects related to ethnic minority culture is doubted because people worry that this will affect students' daily studies, especially in the entrance examination for higher education.

At present, the major problem is people's cognition towards the policy. In the past, it was generally admitted that teaching ethnic culture in schools would have bad effect on the college entrance examination. Anyway, the ethnic minority students don't enjoy any other privileged policy except for 20 extra scores. ... Besides, parents have their own perspective to ethnic culture. In our county, ethnic culture courses are only a course for quality education, not for test-oriented purpose. If a student can sing popular songs as well as Hmong folk songs, and can dance modern dances as well as Hmong dances, they can demonstrate their talents in colleges or in enterprises. This is how the local people understand the policy. If an ethnic group loses its language, its culture dies with it. But under the pressure of College Entrance Examination, we cannot care too much about these folk things.

10.3.5.2 Teachers: It Is Important to Reserve the Ethnic Culture But We Cannot Do More

From the interview of the teachers, we found that the biggest problem and bewilderment of the “ethnic culture into schools” Policy faces are the lack of a monitor and assessment mechanism and of financial funds.

In the places where our research was carried out, there used to be “ethnic culture into school” activities. However, with the gradual implementation of “Two Basics” Policy, the former activities were gradually ignored. The ethnic culture curriculum is not systematically mature’ courses are forced to give way to other normal courses in order to improve teaching quality (Wang, 2010). Consequently, the current “ethnic culture into schools” courses didnot have the necessary monitoring and supporting mechanism. Therefore, the present ethnic culture curriculum is just a form without necessary monitoring—although the ethnic culture class is in the curriculum, it is very casual and sometime just replaced by other classes.

W What do you think of the “ethnic culture into school”?

L It is necessary. Because our Hmong ancestors have created many dances, stories, songs, and so on. They are the quintessence of our ethnic minority group. They are very good, only few are not that good. They are useful to help foster students’ strong will and other good character. So they should be protected and inherited. It is very necessary. As to the “ethnic culture into school” policy, I think our teachers don’t have any specialties and skills of our own. As a teacher, we can only teach according to the textbooks. We try to teach them what we know. Not qualified in the special knowledge and skill of Hmong culture, we can only teach students as much as we can. The central and local government hasn’t published any relevant textbooks. Though we were required several times to teach ethnic culture in classes, we still couldn’t do it. We don’t have enough knowledge and skills to teach these courses. Take the period of class for example, I am supposed to teach ethnic culture, but I just replace it with maths. But if I continue to do the same next week, the students will be unhappy and bored. What else can we do now? The only thing we can do is taking students to the multimedia classroom. We’ll just download some relevant information or pictures and ask students to write down their review after reading and watching them. Or we just play some DVD to the students. Besides, we use the story of Ayouduo to tell our students to learn from her. Ayouduo is a Hmong star singer and set a good example for our ethnic minority group. She is just like us. But she went to work after graduated from middle school and succeeded as a famous singer. We ask students to listen to her songs and learn the songs. We encourage the students to take active part in the classroom activities and promise to recommend them to a better school to fulfill their potential. At the same time, we need to inherit our traditional Hmong music. The heritage passed down by our ancestors cannot be forgotten. We told the students once we lost our traditional culture, it would never be recovered. Besides, we have the advantage to carry on our excellent ethnic culture. We

shouldn't be shy. Instead we should actively study our culture. That's what I can do as a teacher.

10.3.5.3 School Leaders: Difficulties of Culture Preservation and Ethnic Culture in School

Not only can the “ethnic culture into school” preserve and inherit ethnic culture, but it can also promote teaching and help students better understand their own ethnic culture (Wang, 2009a). However, in our investigation, we found that there were many difficulties, namely the lack of suitable textbooks, qualified teachers, and appropriate assessment mechanism, that hindered the “ethnic culture into school” activities,

The current implementation of the policy “ethnic culture into school” is a little difficult. There are no qualified teachers, no suitable textbooks and no enough time. School textbooks are compiled on a national basis without local characteristics. We thought of write our own textbooks, but the publication of the textbooks will be complicated. We don't know how to apply for a patent for the book.

10.4 General Discussion

In the last year's Policy Analysis Report, we studied, within the framework of “Culture and Development” (Xiong & Yan, 2007), the government overall policy making and implementation of ethnic minority education. Besides, based on the requirement of “Culture and Development” framework, we aim to study how to “improve the education level of ethnic minority students and their culture sensitivity” (Bai, Teng, & Ma, 2011, pp. 21–23). According to the analysis and description of focal policies in Chap. 3, we have a detailed understanding of how the basic education policies of ethnic minorities are implemented and applied in the target ethnic minority regions. Furthermore, we summarized the main problems and errors in the implementation of these focal policies. In this chapter, we will further discuss and analyze the issues existing in the implementation of the policies based on the requirement of “culture sensitivity” the basic education policies of ethnic minorities, together with the real situation of local region.

The discussion will mainly focus on the following aspects of current Chinese primary education of ethnic minorities:

- the value and targets of the policy
- the relationship between policy making and policy implementation
- the study of culture sensitivity in policy implementation
- the mechanism of policy assessment, supervision, and feedback
- the fund of policy and guarantee mechanism.

In the following discussion, we will review and analyze the above five aspects of the policy. Combined with the discussion of chapter three, along with the basic idea of the present study, the analysis will focus on the issues of policy making, implementation, and assessment of Chinese primary education of ethnic minorities, especially on the problems reflected in the whole procedure of this study.

10.4.1 The Value and Targets of the Policy

For the research on the basic education policies of ethnic minorities, we not only need to study the cultural sensitivity and the implementation of these policies, but also do research on the value and goal of them. The ultimate goal of the basic education policy of ethnic minorities with culture sensitivity is to promote development through culture and preserve and inherit culture in the development (Peng & Jin, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary for the implementation of localized policy of ethnic minorities to understand the relationship between culture and ethnic minority education as well as to cultivate personal cultural quality.

10.4.1.1 Bilingual Education Policy

The research shows that the effect of bilingual education is not obvious in our target school. The main reason has to do with the local educational government's incomplete understanding of the role of bilingual education. Another deeper reason is that there is no consistency as to the role of the bilingual education in the whole ethnic education (Sude, 2004). According to our investigation and interview, we found that bilingual teaching exists simply as an auxiliary method, aiming to help students learn Chinese better while the language, culture, and ethnic sentiment conveyed in bilingual education are simply not the point.

10.4.1.2 New Curriculum Reforms

The New Curriculum Reform has proved to be effective. But there are still some gaps between the national educational policies and local conditions of ethnic minority education (Mao & Bai, 2008). In the process of policy implementation, there are no supplementary methods suitable for the local needs. The textbook, teaching methods, and assessment are all in accordance with the national standards. The local cultural and social conditions should be well considered. The long-lasting poverty and the existing education tradition and culture make the new curriculum policy unable to suit the local teaching and learning (Jin, 2009).

10.4.2 The Relationship Between Policy Making and Implementing

10.4.2.1 Assumption: Evaluation of Basic Education Policy in Ethnic Minority Regions

The study shows that the initial purpose of the layout adjustment policies is to optimize and integrate the limited teaching staffs and promoting equality in education (Xu & Wu, 2006). However, the actual implementation met with some problems that we did not anticipate when making the policies. In the process of implementation, we found that the layout adjustment was successful in developed areas and areas with good transportation, where they did integrate the teaching staff and school resources, saving quite a lot of school running cost. However, in the ethnic minority areas with poor transportation and underdeveloped economy, layout adjustment brought many problems. Parents concerned about the safety of their young children living in the school. Besides, students' boarding life added extra financial burden to the rural families, let alone various kinds of inconvenience brought to both young students and teachers (Chen & Li, 2010).

10.4.2.2 Communication in Policy Implementation: An Important Part in the Basic Education Policies of Ethnic Minorities

In the process of formulating and implementing of the education policies in ethnic minorities, adequate communication and share of information between related parties are very important. For example, the head of Education Bureau is the executor of both the education policies from higher level and the local education policies. Thus, the formulation and implementation of education policies in ethnic regions should be done after fully discussion with them. In particular, it should be thoroughly consistent with the aim of the policy, and the content that should be closely related to the ethnic culture, society, and economy in ethnic regions (Ma, 2004). We must take the actual situation of cultural and social development in the ethnic regions into account and carefully consider the impact of making and implementing the education policies.

10.4.3 Study on Cultural Sensitivity in the Implementation of the Policy

10.4.3.1 The Relationship and Conflicts Between the National and Regional Ethnic Education Policies

The general ethnic minority education policy stresses the universal applicability, rather than the particularity of each policy. Many policies do not satisfy and completely comply with the status quo and actual demand of ethnic minority regions (Teng & Li, 2010). Thus, incompatibilities are inevitable in the implementation of the ethnic minority education policies. Layout adjustment policy is a case in point. In rural areas, particularly in the vast ethnic minority regions, if layout adjustment policy did not take the local transportation, culture, social, and economic development into consideration, problems will appear accordingly (Ma, 2009). In the layout adjustment, students of lower grades who live in the boarding school have many difficulties in their lives they have never experienced before. Furthermore, the parents feel helpless with the layout adjustment policy. They concern greatly with the safety and living problems of their young children.

10.4.3.2 The Influence of Language and Culture on the Policy

Ethnic language and culture affect the implementation of basic education policies. In the process of the policy implementation, ethnic language and culture should be respected and protected. Most importantly, it should also enhance the ability of the ethnic minority people and other related people to participate in the multicultural ethnic education (Sude, 2008). The bilingual policy is a clear testimony of this requirement. The ambiguity and different methods in bilingual teaching materials directly reflected the incompetence in acknowledging the bilingual policy. The important cultural knowledge contained in the ethnic languages was not effectively conveyed. Bilingual education has become a “tool” or a “walking stick” to some extent and the bilingual policy has been distorted and alienated in the implementation (Zhou, 2004).

10.4.3.3 The Lack of Cultural Sensitivity in the Assessment Criteria

The current evaluation mechanism has not put due emphasis on and respect of ethnic culture. Among the focal policies investigated, the problem exists most clearly in the New Curriculum Reform policy and ethnic culture into school policy (Chen, 2008). In the implementation of the new curriculum policy, the local ethnic minority schools carried out the new curriculum according to the national standards and evaluated by the scores of the students. One of the reasons is due to the lack of understanding of the essence and aim of the New Curriculum Reform policy. Another reason might be

the indifference and neglect of the education evaluation system to the unique local cultural knowledge. These facts result in the single mode of the implementation and evaluation of the New Curriculum Policy by the unified national standard, which lacks the applicability to the local cultural traditions and customs (Ma, 2009). However, in the evaluation of the ethnic culture into school policy, there is still no unified evaluation standards and mechanism. The lack of funds and proper evaluation system in the ethnic culture into school policy is the direct cause for the lack of motivation in the implementation of the policy.

10.4.4 Policy Evaluation, Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms

A rigorous assessment, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms are needed to test whether the result of policy implementation is consistent with the intended objectives and whether the policy can minimize the disadvantages and problems arise (Xiong & Yan, 2007). Good supervision is the guarantee of correct assessment, and positive feedback can help further amend the policy. At the same time, efficient monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms can provide better and more comprehensive suggestion to the above three factors to work together much better.

Take the implementation of the New Curriculum Reform case study as an example, the evaluation methods, the particular needs of ethnic minority education is neglected. As a result, the policy has to be implemented according to the unified national standards. Under a unified evaluation standard, however, it is impossible to maintain the ethnic characteristics (Xu & Wu, 2006).

10.4.5 The Financial Fund and Guarantee Mechanism

Ethnic minority residents mostly live in the remote and underdeveloped areas. The shortage of resources, inconvenient traffic, and lack of financial support are always the most urgent problems of the policy implementation. To ensure enough financial support to implement the policy is always a big challenge for ethnic minority education.

10.4.5.1 Teacher Training

Teachers play the vital role in educating outstanding talents for the ethnic regions. With the development of society, the concept of teacher development and the teaching method are required to be updated (Yue, 2006). Therefore, the teachers in rural areas have to go out of the mountains to re-understand the outside world and their own responsibilities. The shortage of financial support directly reduced the opportunities

and times for teachers' training. Improving the quality of teachers can give students better education, but even so, there is still lack of financial support for teachers' training.

10.4.5.2 New Curriculum Reform and Two Exemptions and One Subsidy Policy

The concept of the new curriculum is respected and accepted by the majority of teachers, but will it be treated the same in ethnic minority regions? The New Curriculum Reform policy mainly focuses on two aspects: (1) constructing and utilizing multicultural curriculum in ethnic minority areas; (2) training and skill learning of New Curriculum Reform (Ye, 2010). But the financial deficiency in ethnic education made it hard for the policy implementation. The financial burden of school is becoming increasingly heavier. The "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" policy reflects the same problem. Each policy needs huge financial support from governments to guarantee its implementation. As a preferential policy with financial support from the central government, the local government and school still need to afford a part (Zhang, 2009). In this case study, the fund is far from enough to cover all the living fees of each boarding student. The headmaster has to call for subsidy and social donation to make up for the fund.

10.4.5.3 Ethnic Culture in School Policies

This is the most beneficial policy to develop the ethnic minority culture in schools in Guizhou Province, and it has got a lot of support. However, the inadequate financial support is also the biggest problem during the policy implementation. Both the explicit courses (the ethnic culture courses) and the explicit courses (various ethnic culture activities) need great financial and human cost. The heritage of ethnic minority culture is not just the slogan of a policy (Wen, 2009). To realize the objective of the policy, there must be some real cases in schools. However, with the limited fund, Fangxiang Primary School can only satisfy its basic needs, leaving no extra money for other relevant activities. The effect of the policy totally relies on the teacher's enthusiasm and what they teach in class. Compiling suitable textbooks, hiring qualified teachers or opening relevant classes, etc., do need financial support. The whole situation worries the school leaders a lot.

Implementation of the policy should not only be shown in the documents superficially. The most practical solution to the problem is to ensure the sufficient fund. Specific funding should be included in regulations so that the policy can be well carried out.

10.5 Countermeasures and Recommendations

The ethnic minority education policy needs to be well implemented and improved.

1. Related interest groups of this policy should be involved, and the policy implementation should be based on real local needs.

Only through the understanding and support of the people will the policies be well accepted by the people, and then well implemented. In some regions where the education level has long been lagging behind, people have difficulties in fully understand the government policies. The commonly existing misconception of the policies leads to difficulties arose in the implementation of the policies (Jiang, 2009). Even though the policies are carried out compulsively, the result is far from satisfactory. In particular, the local people still do not understand the policy and there is no big change in their behavior. It is not difficult to figure out the effect of the policy. Therefore, we should try to arouse the interest of parents and other related villagers to ensure that the policy can be well implemented.

2. Sufficient Communication between Related Parties.

What benefits can people gain from the policy affect their understanding and confidence in the policies. Besides, the effect of the previous policy can influence the implementation of the following one (Ding, 2005). The development of education and human being should be a step by step procedure. If the previous policy hasn't achieved its desired effect, the following policy will meet difficulties in its implantation because it lacks the necessary preceding support. As to the relationship between policy and education, the latter should be the foundation of the former one.

Before planning a certain policy, substantial work should be done to investigate the feasibility and applicability. Based on the above analysis, the making of ethnic minority policy should be taken two aspects into consideration: the effect of the previous policy and the unique situation of the students and families (Wang & Qi, 2009).

3. Understanding and Making Good Use of Local Culture and Tradition to Conduct Policy Implementation with Local Characteristics.

In terms of policies, there are both national and local policies. Though the central government also releases policies concerning ethnic minority education, they basically act as only general guidance to the local governments. In particular, the local government should formulate its own unique policies that correspond to the local need and that can fully exert the social, economic and cultural advantages of the local schools (Wang, 2009a). Specifically, ethnic minority areas should take good use of ethnic culture. In the meantime, the characteristics and merits of ethnic culture should be involved in formulating the "characterized policy," which helps preserve the local culture and promote the development of ethnic education (Xu & Wu, 2006). Meanwhile, the possible difficulties and problems should be considered.

Local conditions and needs are the starting point for the development of ethnic minority education.

4. Teaching resources should be improved while the role of teachers in policy implementation should be given due consideration.

The key to education development lies in teachers. In the past, there has been a period when the role of teachers in education system was denied. However, history has proven that the chief impetus to the education reform still rely on the increase of teachers' quality (Chen, 1999). To emphasize the importance of teachers is not only the general requirement of education development; it is also the result of the development of ethnic minority education. In ethnic minority areas, the living conditions of teachers are very poor. Many teachers have heavy workload and their life after work is really monotonous. Besides, there are special teaching tasks in the basic education of ethnic minorities, such as the cross-culture education, bilingual education, and so on, which makes the teachers' work more difficult and the task to teachers' training more urgent (Wei, 2009).

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Chapter 11

Case 8—Leishan No. 2 Middle School, Guizhou Province



11.1 Background Introduction

11.1.1 *Brief Introduction of Leishan County*

Leishan County is located in the southwest of the Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefectures, Southeast of Guizhou Province. Due to its remoteness, isolation, and backwardness of economic development, it has been rarely influenced by the outside world. With the unique natural environment and historical customs, it has retained a very abundant ethnic cultural heritage.

Leishan is the main region inhabited by a majority of Miao minority people in China. As the center of the Miao culture, it is called the Holy Land of Miao. The local ecological environment is very beneficial to the local ethnic language *Miao*. The county is located near Leigong Mountain. Most of the local people are *Miao*, over 95% of the whole population in the county. Miaos all speak the dialect of Miao language of eastern Guizhou Province (Based on our Field Survey). Therefore, Miao culture plays a vital important part in many aspects, such as architecture, dancing, education, festivals, costumes, and silverware in the local area.

However, it is very hard to attract investments in Leishan County, even the local enterprises, because of the poor infrastructure and the traffic jams in the mountainous areas. Most of the young and middle-aged Miaos usually go out of the mountain to find jobs to support themselves and their families, with their old parents and younger children staying at home. The money that they earn from work is the main income for their families and helps to cover the education expenses of their children.

11.1.2 *Introduction to the Study*

No. 2 Middle School of Leishan County was founded in September 1980 and is located near the scenic spot of Majiatun, which lies in the north suburb of the county

town. Situated at the foot of the mountain and surrounded by a river, it is quite convenient to access the school. The main gate of the school is very distinct from Miao ethnical features.

No. 2 Middle School insists on the following principles: “*All for Students*”, “*Aiming to build a better school by law, develop by virtue, improve through quality, manage in a scientific way, and with its own characteristics*”. The school takes “*Be Honest, Read The Good*” as its motto, “*Forging ahead in unity and seeking the truth*” as the school spirit, “*teaching strictly and helping mutually in innovation*” as its teaching spirit, and “*Diligence, Hard-work, Modesty and Honesty*” as its study spirit.

In recent years, the school has paid more attention to combine its educational curricula and Miao ethnic culture. Taking advantage of the special ethnic traditional culture, the school has added some art lessons in ethnic dancing, featuring Lusheng (a kind of wood musical instrument), and Miao traditional dresses. It is beneficial not only for students to develop themselves and to choose their own career in the future, but also for the school to play a major part in protecting and inheriting the local ethnic culture (Cui, 2010). There is an Ethnic and Folk Culture Exhibition Hall in the school, where many Miao musical instruments and achievements that the school has made are exhibited. On some important occasions, the students of the school wear their ethnic costumes. But in their daily life, they prefer to have some fashionable and regular clothes.

The introduction brochure of No. 2 Middle School has a Miao language version, which tells the history of the local county, such as the geographic conditions, politics, economy, culture, handicraft art, costumes, daily life customs, and lifestyle.

11.2 Methods and Procedures

Before the survey, we designed interview outlines for officials of the local educational administration, for the school principals, for the teaching staff, for the students, and their parents; questionnaires for teaching staff, students, and school administrators; observation forms related to the classrooms, student dorms, students’ families, and ethnic communities. And, we have studied the basic situations of Leishan County and some relevant policies.

The project team members visited Leishan Education Bureau and collected some information. We interviewed the director of the Bureau and visited some offices. We also interviewed the director of the Ethnic and Religious Bureaus and collected some information in the offices there.

The research team made an overall investigation of Leishan No. 2 Middle School. We collected 29 questionnaires for the teachers, covering one-third of the teaching staff, and 200 questionnaires for students. We interviewed three school leaders, ten teachers, and many students. We attended 12 classes and observed the student dorms,

teaching buildings, dining halls, schoolyard, library, cultural exhibition room, scientific labs, etc., and completed 18 observation forms. During the investigation period, we also visited and investigated the areas around Leishan County.

The team chose and observed Queniao village, Fangxiang Township, where many students of Leishan No. 2 Middle School live, and we also interviewed people there.

11.3 Relevant Policies of Research

In this part, we analyze and organize documents according to the focus policies chosen from *the Analysis of Primary Education of China's ethnic minorities*. In this section, we want to show how every policy has influenced people's lives, ideas, and feelings. The analysis is based on the records, documents, and discourses of the local people.

11.3.1 Reform of Educational Layout

11.3.1.1 A Massive Campaign of Education Reform

The Provincial Government Office of Guizhou issued a document on *Layout Adjustment of Primary and Middle Schools in Guizhou Province* on August 2, 2000, which marks the beginning of the merger and reorganization of schools in the whole province (Ding, 2005). Leishan County actively followed and implemented the policy under the supervision of the provincial government and provincial Educational Bureau. When introducing the county policy on school-merging, the director of Leishan County Educational Bureau said: "school-merging ensures key investments in better schools and balance education equality at the same time. When the resources are integrated well, more people would have more chance to enjoy good education."

More information was given as the first priority. When some students' parents disagreed with school-merging actions, one possible way to solve the problem was to let the teachers explain the reasons to the parents. The Educational Bureau and the government would also provide assistance, according to the director of the Educational Bureau.

11.3.1.2 Interests of All Parties in the Reforms

Educational layout reflects the interest layout of all parties, which reveals how the interests of different parties are rearranged, such as the interest relations between villages, township governments, county governments, the students, the parents, and teachers (Ye, 2010). The layout adjustment would affect the interests of the school staff, the students, and the teachers.

In 2008, Leishan Fangxiang Ethnic Middle School was officially revoked and merged with Leishan No. 2 Middle School. Before the merger, the Leishan County government also spread information. According to the former principal of the Leishan Ethnic Middle School, who is now teaching at the No. 2 Middle School, the teaching quality of the Ethnic Middle School was quite appalling. The student enrollment was low, so the proportion of teachers and students was improper. That is the key reason why his school was merged with No. 2 Middle School.

From the interviews, we learned that the county government also encountered many difficulties in the process of the school merging in Leishan County. Local people were not satisfied with the school-merging policy, but thanks to the help of teachers from Fangxiang Ethnic Middle School, the contradictions were not intensified. The government also took other measures to ensure the implementation of the policy. One teacher told us: “It’s useless for the parents to express their disagreement. For example, the parents were not happy with the school-rearrangement in Fangxiang area, and they said no to the revocation of the primary school in the village. But the government withdrew all the teachers away so that the parents had to send their children to schools in the neighborhood.”

11.3.1.3 How to Integrate Schools After Adjustment

Personnel transfer, cash flow, and material flow are involved in layout adjustment (Gui & Zhong, 2010). For example, the teachers and students would be reassigned to different schools, and the school assets would be transferred and reused. As for the revocation of Fangxiang Ethnic Middle School, all the students were transferred to Leishan No. 2 Middle School, and the teaching staffs were allocated to different schools. Most of the teaching staffs were government-assigned teachers. So the County Education Bureau decided how to reassign these teachers. The solution was to evaluate all the teachers at first, then to allocate them to different schools according to their evaluations. But the number of teachers depended on the proportion of students and teachers (Wei, 2009). If a school had more teachers, those teachers could teach there but with their personnel records and data kept in other schools. This situation is quite common in some good schools.

For the students, layout adjustment also brought some problems.

Student Situations after the Layout Adjustment

After the students were transferred to Leishan No.2 Middle School, they did get some benefits, and enjoyed better educational resources due to better teaching equipment and teaching quality. Besides, those students have to live in the school dorms because most of the students’ families live in the mountain areas. And the semi-boarding system makes it very convenient for them.

But there are some disadvantages for the students as well.

Transferring to other schools raised the family budget in education, including more expenses in traffic, food and accommodation. Peasants in Fangxiang County made most of their income from working outside in the cities, and some from the grains they planted in the mountains. When there were natural disasters that affected their harvest, the income would be affected

as well, which would directly affect the children's education. As a result, even a slight rise in education budget might kill the parents' willingness to send their children to school.

Together with the Leishan Ethnic Middle School, the ethnic preferential policy was also revoked. The former secretary of Fangxiang Ethnic Middle School graduated from this school and worked here for more than a decade, as a result, he knew clearly about the history of this middle school. Once the students in this school could get some stationery like pens or notebooks for free, and could get awarded marks for the senior high school entrance exams, all because of its special identity as an ethnic school. But things had changed from 1980s. The special ethnic subsidies and awarded mark policy had gone. The former Secretary said he felt very sorry for the changes at last: "Now the minority students could not get more preferential policies, they are the same with those non-minority students."

The layout adjustment brought some other problems, for example, a lack of proper discipline. The students left the mountain areas and lived in the school dorms in the town area, and went back home very rarely, usually once for two weeks or even a month. As a result, the children were quite free from their parents' discipline. Those students who could not control themselves might easily get addicted to the Internet. One teacher said angrily when talking about the problems: "Our school should be moved to the countryside." The former secretary also said that: "Students from the town worked harder because of their parents' discipline, and the parents also came to the teachers to know about their children's performance at school. But the situation of the countryside students was quite different. The parents paid much less attention to their children's study, and they seldom came to communicate with our teachers. All they thought was that the school should be fully responsible for their children's education, while the teachers complained to me that the parents did not pay enough attention to their children's study."

The former Secretary of Fangxiang Ethnic Middle School used to communicate with his students all the time. What he was concerned about most was that the layout adjustment might make some students drop out of the school. Far away from family discipline, under bad influence, some students were losing their motivation day by day.

11.3.2 Boarding School System

11.3.2.1 Proud of the Boarding School Management

The boarding school system is closely related to the interests of remote mountain area students (Sude, 2003). In the documents of Guizhou Province on educational layout adjustment, it is said that "*Boarding schools should be established in order to provide accommodations for those students who live in remote mountain areas. Never let any student drop out of school because of the layout adjustment.*"

Leishan No. 2 Middle School is proud of its management of its boarding system. The principal of the school is very satisfied with it. The school has very strict management of the students' dorms. When asked about it, one teacher said: "The school manages it in a very strict way. We have full-time staff here living with the students in the dorms. And we have teachers on duty around the clock. Boys and girls have their own teachers managing them. When they want to leave school on weekdays or at the weekend, they have to ask for leave." The school has strict rules on sanitation too. We visited some dorms and found that, although the conditions are tough, the

students had kept everything neat and clean, everything in order, which was good for the young students who left home for the first time to form healthy habits in their daily lives.

The school has special security measures for the students' safety. For example, boarding students have to take a special badge when getting in and out of the school. Besides, the school gives all the students routine safety education. During our visit, we noticed that the local police station held road safety education in the school, and the school usually campaigned for drug prevention education among the students.

The school has various care policies for the boarding students. Boarding students could get different kinds of subsidies. But some non-boarding students whose families were in absolute poverty could also get some subsidies. The parents could visit their children during the week.

11.3.2.2 Difficulties and Temptations for Boarding Students

Boarding students also face many problems. One teacher who is in charge of preventing dropout told us: "Boarding students are more inclined to drop out of school than non-boarding students. The main reasons are a lack of family discipline and heavy burden of living expenses. Although boarding students could get some subsidies, the money is just like a drop in a bucket."

Because of being far away from their parents and the influence of various kinds of entertainment in town, some boarding students do not care about their studies. As a result, the teachers were not satisfied with them. They believed that the school should pay more attention to those students because of their lack of self-control. Some teachers attribute their reluctant attitude of study to the parents and told us that only one-fifth of them would attend parents' meetings. But blaming parents might be too subjective, and some families might live too far away from school. As such traveling expenses for a round trip might exceed dozens of yuan. Some parents told us that they felt very shy to present themselves at school, which made their children embarrassed. The sense of inferiority of the mountain peasants has existed for decades (Luo, 2009). Their educational levels are relatively low, and they hardly know the purpose of the parents' meetings. Besides, some parents even think that since they send their children to school for education, it is the teachers' responsibility to take care of everything.

11.3.3 Ethnic Culture into School Education

Before we began our research, we were already aware of some activities this province had been holding, like introducing ethnic culture into school education. This activity once attracted much attention of government officials, researchers, and reporters. Some schools have done so well that they have become famous globally. When we

visited Leishan No. 2 Middle School, we got the chance to closely learn about the history, achievements, and problems of this activity.

11.3.3.1 A Policy Made from Bottom-up to Top-Down

On October 8, 2002, the Guizhou Provincial Bureau of Education and Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau jointly issued a document named *Opinions on Introducing Ethnic Culture into All Educational Institutes in Our Province*, in which an ethnic culture protective system was established in educational institutions. Before this document was issued, many primary and secondary schools in minority ethnic areas had already begun to introduce popular local ethnic culture into classes, which had led to good feedback. Therefore, this policy was generated from the practice of the grass roots, a bottom-up pattern. Later, as the government paid more attention to the ethnic culture, it began to organize those non-official activities in a top-down way (Ma, 2004).

11.3.3.2 Close Observations of Ethnic and Folk Cultures in School Education

Leishan No. 2 Middle School is one of the first schools chosen to join the Ethnic Culture Education Program, which was initiated by the Guizhou Provincial Educational Bureau and Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee. This activity is greatly encouraged in this school as a window to show itself to the outside world. On the first day of our visit, the principal invited us to watch their students' Miao gymnastic exercises which were choreographed by three art teachers who had studied Miao dance in their spare time and revised it to form a set of gymnastic exercises in two months' time. This set of exercises was completed in 2008 and has been used by all the students during the breaks.

In the days following our classroom observations, we learned that there were some other special education programs related to Miao culture. Besides, the school arranged its teaching programs according to the schedule of introducing ethnic culture into the school curriculum.

One exhibition classroom has been specially arranged for ethnic culture in Leishan No. 2 Middle School. In the corridors, we were deeply attracted by those delicate and beautiful paintings and calligraphies made by the students, which were based on Miao culture. Besides, there were many other things related to ethnic cultures in the school, like the fences in the garden, the Miao version of the school introduction, some traditional Miao folk activities such as bullfighting, birdfighting, and pigfighting, and mural paintings about traditional tools.

11.3.3.3 Passion and Embarrassment of Ethnic and Folk Culture Teachers

Although there is one classroom for exhibiting the ethnic culture, it is very narrow and small, and it was seldom open at ordinary times. The principal told us: “We’ve got more students now, and the classrooms are in short supply. As a result, all those ethnic Miao stuff have to be piled up together in one room. The real reason is the limited school yard and building space.”

For teachers promoting ethnic culture, the limitation is not only about the rooms, but also about the limited support from the outside world.

Mr. Jiang is a music teacher. He likes to introduce some Miao music in his teaching. He believes that most students are willing to learn some Miao folk music, and he expects to teach them something ethnic. When talking about the support from higher authorities, Mr. Jiang was unsatisfied: “We could not get any concrete support from higher authorities. They would not give us any funds but, at the same time, they would evaluate what you have done. What’s more, you should never ask about funds from them, because if you mention the money problem, they will think that you want to make deals with them, and then you’d better stop.” But at the same time, he said it did not make any difference whether he could get support or not: “we are doing everything on our own. I don’t care whether they support us or not. It is just our interest, and we do this for nothing else. Of course, things would be easier if they helped us, and I would keep on doing that stuff. But if they don’t, I can only try my best.”

The promotion of ethnic culture activities needs field research. Mr. Jiang told us: “You have to depend on funds for help to do field research. But now it is out of the question, because our salary is very low and we cannot afford to do so. Therefore, it is still difficult for us to do that stuff by ourselves.” When talking about compiling teaching materials, he said that he had tried to but failed because of the difficulties and the lack of energy. And fund shortage made things even more difficult. What is more, ethnic culture-promoting activities are greatly limited in teaching hours in this school, which have affected the learning effect. So, Mr. Jiang had been asking to increase the teaching hours but in vain. Without support from the outside world, it is very hard to continue with this work only out of personal interest.

What made Mr. Jiang dissatisfied most was that the school not only refused to give them financial support but also torn down the ethnic culture exhibition room they built up with great efforts. We could not see the exhibition room anymore, but from the audio-visual materials of this school, we could see some pictures rich with ethnic flavors.

Compared with regular courses, ethnic culture-promoting programs are not the core contents, thus they have been almost squeezed out by the main courses. At last, Mr. Jiang expressed his expectations: “We could do much more for this program. What I have done might just be only a drop in the ocean. We only hope that some better policies be issued as soon as possible so that we could do our job more easily. Otherwise, we have no faith in what we are doing right now, and doing it without vigor”.

Under the recommendation of the principal, we interviewed another teacher, Wu Chengjin. He chose to do the interview in his ethnic culture classroom. After showing us ethnic musical instruments and the awards he had received, he performed a piece of music with *Lusheng*, and then he changed into his Miao clothes for our interview.

The Frustration of a Miao Teacher

Wu Chengjin has been working on Miao culture for more than 30 years. Looking back on his working experience, he said he had great passion for his work. He had been studying, innovating, publicizing, and promoting Miao culture for all these years and made some achievements, trained many students to inherit ethnic cultures.

As the interview proceeding, he gradually told us about the difficulties he faced. He said that the classroom for ethnic culture activities used to be bigger, but the school separated this room for new classrooms and only left one fourth of the previous room, so it was small. His voice revealed his disappointment. Because the provincial government paid attention to this program, he often brings the students to take part in some performances and competitions. But the school refused to pay for the food and accommodation. He believed that promoting ethnic culture was not only promoting culture, it was also helping students with their employment in the future. If the students could not continue their studies in high school, they could work in some Miao tourist spots. Many of his students are in the Xijiang River Miao village, performing for tourists. He was grateful to the former director of the Education Bureau and the former principal, who paid much attention to this ethnic culture-promoting program. The current principal tore down the gate of the school for some unexplained reasons. And he thought his emotion had affected his work. "Last month, some students asked me to reopen the training classes, but I am a little upset this semester, so I refused. My ability is not well recognized and rewarded."

Although Mr. Wu had made some achievements in teaching Miao culture, he was still confused by the attitude of the school. He showed us a book he wrote about Miao culture and said: "The publishing house has printed only three copies of this book, and one of them was paid by myself. The school hasn't paid the publishing house yet. There is no special fund for us. If we have classes, we could get some subsidies. But if the school leaders are too busy to take care of us, we could not get any subsidies anymore. Right now, our problems are funds and time. It is really hard to do the work well." He was assigned a lot of other work, including taking care of one class, teaching two classes of a Chinese course, and some management work. Working for the ethnic culture-promoting program was just his spare time job.

Finally, he told us that, even without funds, he would also try his best to do this program. He kept all the collections very well that he had gathered for 10 years, hoping that one day these collections might be exhibited for everyone. However, he still mentioned the gate being torn down with a sad voice: "They had said they would support us, but with the gate being gone, how can we focus on work?"

11.3.3.4 Confusion and Way Out of Local Students

For the students, their perception of ethnic culture was no more than singing and dancing. Only two-fifths of all students would continue their study in high school; two-fifths would attend vocational schools; and the last one-fifth would stop school to find jobs. As the local tourist economy develops in Leishan County, these junior middle school graduates choose to work in some Miao villages, singing and dancing

for tourists. Some other graduates would go to some big cities working in some Miao restaurants. As was said by the vice director of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, “Difference is an advantage. Other young people of your age are the same with you as waiters. But you have an advantage because you can sing songs and dance of Miao.” Some teachers shared the same opinion, believing that it is practical to introduce ethnic culture into school. Sometimes, the teachers would ask the students to learn some knowledge and skills about ethnic culture.

If learning ethnic knowledge would only make the students more competitive in the service industry, then it would not be worth sacrificing their regular education (Wang, 2010). Some students and parents said they did not understand why those classes were necessary and believed that this could distract the students’ attention from preparing for the high school entrance exams.

The traditional ethnic festivals and celebrations were also a very important part of ethnic culture. The school would give the students holidays for the festivals. Miao people respect their ancestors very much, therefore many students would ask for leave during Pure Bright Festival to worship their family ancestors. But this protection of the traditional festivals and customs would affect school teaching in some teachers’ eyes.

One of the leaders of the Education Bureau mentioned something that aroused our curiosity: Generally speaking, the parents did not pay much attention to their children’s study, because they had not realized the importance of education; while at the same time, they attached great importance to the ethnic culture classes, and they would rather let their children stop school than taking part in ethnic culture activities.

How to reconcile the contradictions between the ethnic culture-promoting programs in school and the rate of admission into high schools was a problem for us to think about.

11.3.3.5 Understanding and Expectations from the Grassroots Leaders

The principal told us, the Provincial Education Bureau had said they were willing to support them, while the support from the County Education Bureau was very less. In the Bureau, the director told us that they were carrying out a program on introducing Miao culture into class study. Before the education reform, the county asked some schools to introduce ethnic cultures into classes. Each school should arrange one to three hours of culture classes and invite some old people from different minority ethnic villages and some folk custom experts to give lectures to students. The purpose was to pass down ethnic cultures to the next generation and train some talented students. While for the principal of the school, what is more important was not the management in details but the financial support.

For the school leaders and education official, the importance of the ethnic culture programs lied with economic and tourist industry development. The director of the Education Bureau believed that, “Education and tourism were closely related to each other. Especially those talented students would be popular among some high schools when they recruit new students and enterprises outside our county.” The principal of

the Second Middle School also said that when the economy developed, the ethnic culture would also develop. And the development of the ethnic culture would on the other hand boost the local economy. Compared with those passionate educators of ethnic culture, the school leaders and education officials considered the economic and social functions of ethnic culture in a broader and more practical way.

The director of the Education Bureau also expressed his worries and concerns about how to balance the relationship between promoting ethnic culture and maintaining the normal education curriculum. He said: "When there are some traditional ethnic activities in this county and need some actors, the parents would ask their children to come back from school to show their support. This is quite different from other minority ethnic regions." When the school management contradicts the ethnic customs, the director said they would first follow the policy and then try to respect the local customs. For example, it was normal for boys to wear earrings in this region, which was not allowed in modern schools, but at the same time it was a kind of local customs. Therefore, teachers should understand and respect it.

The director of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau considered this ethnic culture programs from a perspective of ethnic culture protection. He believed that his attention was not on education: "Now I am focusing on the protection of the ethnic culture. We seldom communicate with the Education Bureau only when it comes to promoting ethnic culture in classes and bilingual education." Since the school was subordinate to the Education Bureau, it was its job to take charge of promoting ethnic culture in classes and bilingual education. Even if the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau thought it was important, it could not say too much about it because this was beyond its administrative authority. The director of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau believed that the Education Bureau was quite supportive of the ethnic culture programs. But he thought the problem was the perception of the students and their parents. He said: "People are still quite worried. Our county introduces this program into school as a kind of quality education, so that our students can not only sing pop songs but also Miao songs, not only dance modern patterns but also Miao dances. In that case they have their specialties no matter at the university or in their work places. What we could consider right now could be no more than this. A nation will lose his culture if he loses his language. But under the pressure of the National College Entrance Exams, we could not pay too much attention to that ethnic culture stuff."

The director of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau believed that among many difficulties for this program, lack of financial support was the major one. Others aspects are as the followings. The ethnic knowledge of the teachers is not even. Some teachers are not very responsible with their work, and the school leaders do not pay enough attention to ethnic culture programs since he has the worry that it might affect the normal classes. The evaluation of ethnic culture classes is excluded from the evaluation of the students' academic performances that the teaching of this program was excluded from the evaluation of the teachers' performances. What is more, lack of necessary financial support for teaching and unified teaching materials was also some important reasons why this program was hard to be carried out in the school (Based on Field Survey).

Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau was enthusiastic in this ethnic culture-promoting program. It specially compiled a teaching book for this program in 2009 and wanted to popularize in the county schools (Based on Field Survey). But as we have observed, teachers refuse to choose this book, and their teaching was still based on what they mastered.

At last, the director of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau showed us one paper of his own, named Current Situation of the Protection of Leishan Ethnic Culture, which was not published yet. He said once again: “This program would not affect the high school entrance exams and national college entrance exams. It would on the other hand enhance our national confidence. It is an important way to improve the citizens’ quality. We should not put this program against the modern school education, but make them complement each other.”

11.3.4 *Bilingual Education*

11.3.4.1 *Miao Language in Crisis*

Since China’s reform and opening up 30 years ago, the economy and education have developed greatly in Leigong Mountain area. People’s life was also improved greatly, and problem of food and clothing lacking was basically solved. But under the influence of economic globalization and the Internet, Miao language has being neglected and even undermined. Fewer people would use it and Miao people could seldom get information and education in Miao language, which affects the improvement of local Miao people’s lives and their production leading to the relative low quality. At the same time, the unique traditional Miao culture in Miao language was vanishing gradually. For example, antiphonal singing, which is very common in the evenings and some Miao festivals in the past are disappearing now. Every Miao farmer used to know several Miao medicine herbs and medical prescriptions in the past, but now the young Miao know little of them. A large amount of the traditional culture resources and knowledge in Miao language are dying out. Miao language encounters the problem of being abandoned and is threatened by Mandarin, it is in the crisis of disappearance.

—From Director of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, Leishan County

Miao, Shui, and Dong ethnic minorities all have their own languages. Those languages are used for their daily communication, but not for school education. Only very few local adults who are engaged in the ethnic culture can write in their own ethnic language. Those languages are handed down from one generation to another just by oral without any normal standard. Even the same language has some differences in many aspects, such as pronunciation, tone, and meaning, in different villages. Besides Mandarin, very few people can use other minority ethnic languages in smooth way.¹

Although minority ethnic languages are just as the oral communication, the proficiency improvement of Mandarin is also a big problem for the local people (Sude,

¹Data sources: Educational Bureau of Leishan County: *Language Usage Report in Leishan County*. May 22, 2006.

2004b). Since the local economy lags behind others in Leishan County, it is an urgent thing for the local people to speak Mandarin smoothly and even foreign languages to develop the local tourism. For the young and middle-aged local people, the big difficulty is unable to speak, read, or write in Mandarin, which is a major obstacle blocking the economic development (Zhang, 2009b). The adults have realized the importance of learning Mandarin and thus all send their children to school to learn.

When communicating with the local educators and ethnic culture experts, we learned that their major concern was bilingual education. They thought it was the key thing for the students' academic performances, career development, culture heritage, and successful integration into society and community.

11.3.4.2 Marginalized Bilingual Education

Since September 2009, Leishan No. 2 Middle School began to introduce bilingual education in four classes in junior high school, including Class 1 Grade 1, Class 8 Grade 1, Class 4 Grade 2, and Class 6 Grade 2 (Based on Field Survey).

According to those bilingual teachers, they have to use some teaching materials compiled by themselves because they do not have any optional textbook. They think that they can combine Miao language with the education of Miao ethnic culture in this way. When teaching some Miao ballads, they use Miao language as assisting language tools, which helps to hand down the songs.

Through interviews, we learned that some teachers in this school were transferred from some primary schools, which will usually use Miao language to help students with their study. This also improves the minority ethnic students' language abilities and makes it easier for them to learn Mandarin. The director of Education Bureau also said that because the students only spoke Miao language before school, so it was difficult to learn Mandarin at the beginning of their school days. The teachers are local people as well, so it is common to teach in Miao language in primary schools. But from junior high schools, Miao language will not be used any more in school education, which makes it hard for some students to keep up to the class. As a result, students who lag behind might begin to be tired of studying and even drop out of school. If they want to continue to study in senior high school, they are always behind other students. Compared with the students in urban areas and in Mandarin-speaking areas, those students do not get the same opportunity in education (Xu, 2009). It is really a problem to solve.

11.3.4.3 How to Balance Miao and Mandarin Language Teaching

In Leishan No. 2 Middle School, bilingual education is not the core content of teaching and learning. For those students, the more serious problem is how to enter senior high schools and the society. Thus, it is a more realistic problem for them to improve their Mandarin proficiency. But from our interviews, we can see that

they still prefer to speak Miao language, which highlights the contradiction between modernization and traditional ethnic culture.

For the Education Bureau and the school, their missions are to ensure the students to get high marks and improve their Mandarin proficiency. As a result, the Education Bureau requires that junior and senior high school must use Mandarin as the only teaching language in class. For the school teaching, bilingual education is just an experience only carried out in a few classes (Zhang, 2009a). The school advocates that Mandarin should be spoken everywhere. The director of Education Bureau also said that the normal academic classes would not be affected, and bilingual education is only carried out in some extracurricular activities which would help improve the students' abilities in many aspects. As the matter of fact, bilingual education is not compulsory (Zhou, 2004). The director believes that bilingual education should be flexible, and the national college entrance exams should be guaranteed as priority.

Since Miao language is used in primary schools, the students would have to learn Mandarin first and would not learn English until the third year, and their English performances are usually not very good. Miao language also affects other subjects. For example, Miao students are not good at analysis, because Miao language grammar affects the development of their analytical ability, which affects the implementation of bilingual education (Zhu, 2009). This opinion is held by many teachers in Leishan No. 2 Middle School. In order to make students keep up with the teaching pace, teachers hope the students could master Mandarin as soon as possible.

The director of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau is enthusiastic about ethnic culture inheritance. He tries his best to promote bilingual education. But at the same time, he said that bilingual education is still tried out in model schools and is not yet mature enough to be implemented in schools with a large number of students. *The Program of Bilingual Model Area*, which was initiated by the director of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau set up from October 2009, spread out to other places gradually in 2010 (Based on Field Survey). This program raises some requirements for bilingual education in primary schools, such as improving bilingual teaching in school and training for Miao people outside the school, promoting to learn and use both of Miao and Mandarin languages, creating favorable environment for bilingual education, and so on. The budget of this program was 25,000 *yuan* RMB in 2009 (Based on Field Survey). In consideration of particularity of middle school education, it was excluded from this program.

Teachers, students, and their parents all have clear purpose for bilingual education. They all have clear aim to master Mandarin as a necessary tool mainly for communication in modern society and a carrier of advanced science and technology. But as for the purpose of learning ethnic language, they are not clear like that and could not fully understand the profound relationship between ethnic language and Mandarin. The great values of ethnic language in intellectuality, moral, aesthetics, instrumentalism, and hereditary have not fully reflected in school education (Sun, 2010).

11.3.4.4 Difficulties Encountered for Bilingual Education

Ethnic languages are just as the tool to learn Mandarin, and they have not been listed as subjects of school courses (Li, 2009). One teacher of Miao language told us that teaching hours for Miao language were limited and casually arranged and could be taken place by other classes and activities. Miao language teaching lacked continuity.

There are no proper teaching materials for bilingual education, either. Miao language teachers just teach whatever they know. Although some teachers try to write and edit some textbooks, they have to give up eventually because of fund issues and lacking of relevant assessment (Zhang, 2009b).

Lacking of Miao ethnic language teachers is very serious in bilingual education. According to the director of Education Bureau, many schools are carrying out the bilingual teaching. Because students from rural areas cannot speak Mandarin, teachers have to use Miao as assistance. The schools are recruiting publicly for Miao language teachers through the Miao Association. But there are no professional trainings for those teachers. We have learned from the document *Opinions on Further Improving Ethnic Languages Work in Our Province*, issued by Guizhou Provincial Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee and Guizhou Provincial Educational Ministry, that teaching staff training will be intensified for bilingual education. From 2002, there will be held training classes twice a year (Based on Field Survey). But how this policy has been implemented and its effectiveness is unsure so far.

11.3.5 Policy of Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

11.3.5.1 Implementation of Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

The “two exemptions and one subsidy” policy is one of the major measures for our country to promote the balanced development of compulsory education. From 2001, Leishan County began to implement the textbooks free of charge. Then in the Spring 2005, students in Leishan County all were exempted from tuition and fees in the phase of the compulsory education (Based on Field Survey). At the same time, the boarding students began to receive living subsidies, and more students are getting these subsidies gradually.

Public notification was well performed in this county. The subsidy-receivers’ name lists were posted in schools, town areas, and villages. From the documents of the County Education Bureau, the Bureau would report the implementation of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* to the county government regularly with fixed intervals. Because of the well-performed publicity work, everybody would get some idea of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* in the county.

Because of the natural conditions, the people scatter in the mountainous areas and suffer from poverty generations. Poor students take up more than 80% of all (Based on Field Survey). In order to ensure the students who are most in need to get the subsidies, surveys were conducted in the villages, families, and student groups.

The schools would make a list of the students most in need and submitted to the higher-level authority.

Some towns and villages can enjoy priority in *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* in the county. But most of places in Leishan County are impoverished. Among the poorer, Fangxiang, Dadi, and Taojiang Township situation are the most severe. Thus, in the implementation of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*, a principle of “overall balance, priority for the most needs” is followed. More quotas are given to the more impoverished places, so that the students who are in need most can keep on study in school.

Two Exemptions and One Subsidy concerns the financial sector, price control authority, supervision sector, bookstores, and educational departments (Ding, 2005). The county government is in charge of coordinating all departments mentioned above.

11.3.5.2 Different Responses to *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*

From all the feedback reports, we learned that *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* has played a positive role in the minority areas.

But the teachers and students from the grass roots of school hold different ideas. The principal of Leishan No. 2 Middle School told us that after the *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* was implemented, the parents believe that the country pays the school for teaching their children, so the school should take full responsibility for their children’s education. They themselves refuse to pay much attention to their children’s study and behaviors in school. It is not good for student. Only when the school and the parents’ coworker well together could make the students improve their academic performances.

We heard the similar opinions from the teachers we interviewed. Some said that the students do not realize the precious chances to study at school. Many of the students did not enjoy their school life. And when more subsidies are given to them, they regard them as something too easy to get and would not value it. And some other teachers said that those students just hate to study and refuse to study hard even if they get the subsidies. Although the Miao people are gentle and hospitable, few young children have learned their parents’ virtues. Only a small number of students knew to show their appreciation. Because of the underdeveloped economy, many young children went out to work, which made many school children want to do so. When we asked the teachers why they do not want to go to school since everything is free now, they answered, the outsider of the world made them excited, so many of them wanted to go out as soon as possible. Some other teachers believed *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* failed to promote the students’ study just because the rural parents’ attitudes were not positive and proper. But the parents in town are of higher quality, which attach greater importance to children’s study, and their children generally achieve greater achievements than those from remote rural areas.

According to our interviews, daily living expenses are about ten *yuan* for each student, but the subsidy for one boarding student is only 375 *yuan* every semester, which was far from enough.

We interviewed a typical Miao family with all of their three children studying at school. One of them studies in Leishan No.2 Middle School. The annual income of the family is only two to three thousand *yuan*. The parents told us that the money is not enough for the children's education at all. They were also worried about the children's life at school. Because of the long journey, the children could only go home once several weeks. In some other families we interviewed, even though the parents would want their children to study at school, the children actually quitted school and went to work outside in the cities.

11.3.5.3 Problems in Implementation of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*

Apart from the positive effects of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*, there are still some problems. One is that the average level of the subsidy per student is still quite low, which is barely enough to maintain the basic functioning of the school at present, and cannot meet the needs to repair the school buildings, buy new teaching equipment, and maintain the budget of teaching and research. Tight budget is still a big bottleneck for the development of education in impoverished areas (Ma, 2007). As introduced by the director of Education Bureau, the public fund deployed by the central government consists of three parts: 60% raised by the state, 20% by the province, and 20% by the county. But there are too many difficulties for the county to raise the money. The public fund is allocated on the number of students, with 380 *yuan* per head for one semester. All expenses including the utilities cost, purchase of office and teaching equipment, and *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* are covered by this fund. Minority ethnic students take a large proportion of all students, so they do not enjoy priority to get the subsidies (Wang & Qi, 2009).

11.3.6 New Curriculum Reform

11.3.6.1 Responses to New Curriculum Reform

In order to respond to New Curriculum Reform, Leishan County started the training programs for New Curriculum Reform in 2003. Now, it has generally introduced the ideas of NCR to the teachers and finished the first round of teacher training. From the autumn semester 2005, the Grade 1 in primary schools and junior high schools had begun to use the New Curriculum Reform textbooks, and now the first two grades in primary and secondary school all have begun to use the new textbooks, which have reached the aim of New Curriculum Reform (Jin, 2009a, pp. 31–34). The new textbooks are published by People's Education Press, including Chinese, Maths, Ethics and life, PE, Music, Art for primary school, and Ethics, English, Physics, Chemistry, History, Geography, PE, Music and Art for junior high school (Jin, 2009b). The textbooks, such as local special course book *Practical Technology*

for *Rural Areas*, have been published by Heping Publishing House, *Computer Science* by Guizhou Education Press. At the same time, ethnic culture, safety education, and social practice are also among the new courses launched for New Curriculum Reform.

11.3.6.2 Initiative and Passivity of New Curriculum Reform

The director of Education Bureau believes that only through training could the teachers fully understand the spirit of New Curriculum Reform, and then it is possible to implement New Curriculum Reform successfully. As a result, Education Bureau has launched many training programs. He also said that the training had achieved obvious effects in Leishan No. 2 Middle School, and it was necessary to invite some experts for the training to change the old opinions by the teachers.

The necessity and effects of New Curriculum Reform have been well recognized in the official documents and the interviews with the director of Education Bureau. The director of Education Bureau also admits that there is still a long way to go for New Curriculum Reform. When asked about the best school in implementation of New Curriculum Reform, he did not answer the question directly, but said that except Guangxi and Qinghai, Guizhou Province is the worst one in implementing this reform. This county could do nothing more but follow the requirements of the reform, because the schools are backward in financial conditions and in teaching qualities, and they have no clear ideas about New Curriculum Reform. Besides, the training was quite expensive, two days training would cost 600 *yuan* (Based on Field Survey). The allocated funds have to be used on the students' needs, and the teachers have no other income but their salary. They can hardly afford the expensive training. In addition, some teachers give some of their income to the poor student, which makes it even more difficult for the teachers and schools. From the interview, we learned that financial problems are the main obstacles of implementing New Curriculum Reform. The grassroots officials are just following the requirements and do not try some other ways to solve the problems.

In Leishan No. 2 Middle School, the principal and teachers also have many questions for New Curriculum Reform. The principal of Leishan No. 2 Middle School teaches chemistry in the past, and thus has his own questions for New Curriculum Reform. He thinks that the problem of New Curriculum Reform is that the courses in senior high and junior high schools are separated, and the students are weak in self-learning. And as for the local special courses, the vice principal said Miao language course is just one of them. But he is still confused about the definition of it.

The principal also believed that for the minority ethnic students, they were far behind compared with those urban students. So they needed to learn more and harder. As a result, it was necessary to give them remedial classes on Saturday.

Generally speaking, the principal did not think that New Curriculum Reform was appropriate in the underdeveloped areas. Because the real conditions should be considered in these areas, no reforms could be carried out when there were no basic conditions. For example, if the teachers were asked to use PPT in class, what could they do if there was no multimedia equipment at all in the school? Therefore,

New Curriculum Reform should not be compulsory everywhere. When we asked him about whether they could cultivate the students' practical abilities with some ethnic characteristics, he told us it was out of the question because he had to follow the requirements of the higher authority and use the textbooks required by them.

The teachers also had some perception and evaluation of New Curriculum Reform. One teacher we interviewed told us that many of his colleagues believe that there are problems about New Curriculum Reform. Some says the textbooks do not work, because the exercises do not match with the texts. Some says that the materials in the new textbooks are not closely related to the real life. Especially Chinese classes, something like the desert, the Bohai Sea, Qinghai Province are too far away from the students' world because their life is too limited, and they have learned so little about the outside world. Some teachers believe that the students should be separated according to their academic performances. For some good students, New Curriculum Reform might work for them and cultivated their abilities of independent thinking. But for some with poor performances, it just does not work. One teacher assesses New Curriculum Reform that "It sounds great, but not easy to implement. And it is hard for the interaction between the teachers and students."

As for the local special courses, Mr. Jiang told us that there are many mistakes in the teaching materials, which are compiled, by the local counties in the southeastern part of Guizhou Province, which he attributed to the lack of financial support and attention by the officials.

New Curriculum Reform needs policy support of local educational administrative departments, including financial support, assessment, and training. What is more important is the initiative of the teachers (Xiong & Yan, 2007).

11.3.7 Training of Teaching Staff

11.3.7.1 Reasons for Teachers Shortage

The backward economic development affects the teaching staff development. The annual fiscal revenue of the whole county is not enough to pay the salary of the teachers and school workers. Teachers' personnel files are not under control of Education Bureau, which has not the power to decide the memberships of the teachers. When the budget was tight, the county government was reluctant to recruit new teachers. And there is no big difference between the regular teachers and special post teachers because part of their salary is still paid by the county revenue.

The shortage of teachers in this county is not because that the teachers are not willing to come, but because of some other reasons. Although the economy is rather backward, the college graduates are still willing to come due to the harsh competition in the job market (Dong, 2009). As a result, the county would not have to attract graduates to come here with favorable conditions. The Leishan Ethnic High School even recruited some master graduates of Hunan University, and they were all highly qualified. Conditions vary greatly in different schools. The town schools can attract

many teachers because of its good location, good students' resource, and relatively higher payment. Remote schools in mountain areas can hardly attract new teachers. The young teachers are more unwilling to go to some remote schools in recent years (Gui & Zhong, 2010). When asked about this problem, the director of Education Bureau told us that the teachers get similar payment no matter where they worked. The rural teachers could not enjoy some preferential policies, but they are supposed to enjoy some preferential policies.

Although located in town area, Leishan No. 2 Middle School still has the problem of teaching staff shortages. The principal told us that the school was founded in 1980s, and the initial students were more than 600. Many students from other counties would also like to study in this school, so more teachers were needed. He complained to us that the authorized members were too limited. Although the school had asked for more teachers from the County Education Bureau, the total number was still far from being enough. The situation was worse after some students were transferred here from other schools after the layout adjustment. The principal told us that at least they needed 130 teachers, but now they got only 92. The reason for the Education Bureau's reluctance is the heavy burden of limited fiscal revenue. To solve the problems of teachers' shortage, the school has to hire some teachers from the society. And for those teachers, the county would only pay them 400–500 *yuan* per month, and the school had to bear the rest part of their salaries from the school budget. Now, all the teachers worked overtime and should be awarded some bonuses. But the public fund could not be used for this, which was a real problem for the school. Therefore, the principal regarded it as unreasonable that the public fund given by the central government cannot be used to pay the allowances of the teachers.

Although the central authorities established special teaching post for the compulsory education period in order to solve the problem of teacher shortage (Wang & Qi, 2009), this is not carried out in Leishan County. The principal of Leishan No. 2 Middle School said that there is only one assisting teacher similar to the special teaching post in their school. And this teacher got very little money, only some basic salary for the living expenses.

11.3.7.2 Teachers Training

On May 15, 2008, Leishan County started a project to improve the rural teachers' quality, with the focus on new teaching ideas, new courses, new skills, and professional ethics (Based on Field Survey).

Through interviews, we learned that many teachers had attended similar training programs. Some backbone teachers even got the chances to Beijing for some training. Many of the training projects were required to take, especially, in the summer and winter vacations. Some teachers were not content with this requirement, for they had their own plans to take some advanced courses during the holiday. For example, some teachers preferred to study for Master of Education, which could be attended in holidays. But if they were required to attend some other training programs, their plans would be impossible.

As for the effect of the training programs, the dean of studies of Leishan No.2 Middle School told us that there were many programs including subject training, computer training, Internet training, etc. These trainings are of some help, but other trainings just are also helpful. Computer training was the most effective; many teachers were able to use the computers now. Mr. Lu wanted to improve himself too, but he told us some of his problems: “Teachers in this school are all busy with many things every day. So we don’t have the time to study. For example, I wanted to take the entrance exams for postgraduate schools in 2005, but I was always busy with the school affairs, and gradually I had to give up. Many teachers lost their opportunities just like me. And what’s important about the training programs was not what we learned from it, but the chances for all the teachers to communicate with each other.”

11.4 Research Discussions

This part will focus on the results of this research, summarize the experience of implementing ethnic educational policies, analyze the problems, and preliminarily analyze the policymaking and implementation.

11.4.1 *Discussion on the Layout Adjustment*

Primary and middle school layout adjustment enables some students from mountain areas to study at the middle schools in town areas and improves the teaching qualities in the county (Xu, 2009). The students can get more subsidies after their schools were revoked. The county government made some promises to the teachers in order to carry out the layout adjustment, but did not keep the promises, which affected the teachers’ enthusiasm for their teaching, and hurts the credibility of the government.

In the process of the layout adjustment, publicity was not well performed. The publicity was just inside the government, and finally the responsibility fell on the teachers in the school, which not only increased the teachers’ burden, but also aroused resistance among the local people (Chen, 2008). And the implementation of the policy was affected eventually.

This layout adjustment is a policy for the whole country, which is emphasized again in the process of large-scale development of the western region and in the documents concerning ethnic education (Cui, 2010). And the governments’ action was all based on those documents. But the layout adjustment brought some difficulties for the students, and some students even dropped out of school, which was against the intention of the policy. Therefore, how to implement this policy with consideration of the local conditions should be considered.

11.4.2 On the Boarding School System

Boarding system guarantees the students' study far away from home. Leishan No. 2 Middle School has established a well-managed boarding system, which is helpful for the students to form good habits.

The modern culture and entertainment is a big problem encountered by the ethnic students and affects the inheritance of the ethnic culture (Zhang, 2010). Many parents go out to work in cities, so the schools have to take full responsibility for the students' education, which leads to some mental problems for the boarding students.

Boarding system needs some financial support. Minority ethnic areas are backward in economic development, so the central government has to assist them so as to implement the layout adjustment. Boarding system in Leishan County benefits from some key construction projects by the central government. The effect of central government's key projects is much greater than that of the regular policies in ethnic areas.

11.4.3 On the Ethnic Culture into School Education

The combination of ethnic culture and the school education is helpful for the inheritance of ethnic culture (Chen & Chen, 2010). Minority ethnic students can benefit from ethnic culture in employment.

Money shortage leads to the equipment and classroom shortage, which affects the development of the ethnic culture. Assessment of ethnic culture classes is not available, and the teachers are thus not enthusiastic about their work very much. Besides, no exams are required for the ethnic culture classes, so the students are not attracted to it. And no sustainable system has been established to guarantee the teaching materials, courses, and teaching training, so the ethnic culture education is mainly based on the teachers' interest and lacked standardization.

The ethnic culture program was not started by the educational authorities, but was initiated by the teachers with the enthusiasm for ethnic cultures. Then, the government got involved and its joining in was helpful for the spread of the program (Sude & Feng, 2004).

11.4.4 On the Bilingual Education

Teachers in Leishan No. 2 Middle School like to make innovations in teaching methods. They combine bilingual education with the teaching of culture, customs, and ballads and arouse the students' interest in the ethnic language.

There are also some problems. No bilingual reading materials and standardized textbooks are available, and even no assessment is ready to use. The students cannot

practice what they have learned, and language test is excluded from the regular exams. Bilingual education cannot get enough attention, and the budget is very tight (Cai & Halimulati, 2010). Some teachers have not realized the importance of it, and some lack relevant teaching experiences. And it is not very popular among students.

Bilingual education has something to do with the school education as well as the ethnic policy, thus it is under the joint control of educational department and ethnic affairs commission. For the educational department, it requires that the students should spend less time on it for the sake of exams, while for the ethnic affairs commission, it requires that the schools should pay more attention to it for the sake of cultural inheritance (He, 2009). It is the government's responsibility to set up systems for financial support, performance assessment, and exam scores in order to coordinate to the contradiction between the educational department and the ethnic affairs commission.

11.4.5 On the Policy of Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

Due to appropriate publicity, *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* has generated obvious effects and greatly helps to guarantee the enrollment of the school-age children in minority ethnic areas (Wang & Qi, 2009). Two Exemptions and One Subsidy helps to improve the education of the minority ethnic people.

But the number of students who get the subsidy is still small. Many poor students have no access to allowances. The requirements for recipients lack diversity and cannot distinguish between the poor students and the most impoverished ones. Although those most impoverished students get some subsidies, it is far from enough to guarantee their study at school. And some still have to dropout of school. On the other hand, *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* also has some problems. Some students do not value the chances to study at school because of the free education.

The number of possible recipients is big, and their conditions are quite different from each other, thus the most important part of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy* is supervision and assessment (Wang, 2009c). In the process of implementing *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*, Leishan County coordinates the work between different government departments and enables the success of *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*.

11.4.6 On the New Curriculum Reform

New Curriculum Reform is one of the key education policies of Chinese government. The response to New Curriculum Reform through the research showed that the grassroots people held quite low evaluation of it.

Many primary school and middle school teachers have a long way to go to meet the requirements of New Curriculum Reform on teaching requirements and teaching

methods (Zhang, 2009c). Some teachers said that they could not adapt to New Curriculum Reform. The local special courses need integration and are quite flexible, and assessment criteria are needed. The interaction between teachers and students in class is not enough due to the large number of students and the teachers' inability in organizing the teaching procedure.

Reducing students' burden is initiated for the students in developed areas. As for the students in ethnic areas, there are still much more for them to learn, and this can increase the gap between them and those urban students (Jiang, 2009).

As far as the effect of New Curriculum Reform in Leishan County is concerned, there are still many problems to solve. Some of the problems are due to lack of consideration of the special conditions of the ethnic areas; some are caused by the incompetence of some teachers and lack of trainings; and some are that the ethnic students are not used to the new mood of open teaching. Those problems require reconsideration of New Curriculum Reform.

11.4.7 On the Teachers Training

The central government has introduced some assisting policies like special teaching post programs and counterpart assistance, which have not been effectively made use of in our research project places. The reason is that some fund has to be provided by the local government in the process of implementation, and Leishan County is not enthusiastic about this just with its limited fiscal revenues. The teachers are not distributed evenly. Some schools have more teachers than they need, while some others need more as the enrollment of students was getting larger. But the local government failed to set up a dynamic regulation system. The distribution of teachers cannot be solved only with the temporary transferring of seconded teachers (Ma, 2010). Some training programs require the school leaders or teachers to cover the expenses by themselves and make the financial burdens of the schools much heavier.

The preferential policy for the training of teaching staff issued by the government is not actively welcomed by the local places, due to the problems of the personnel files and finance. The success of this policy lies in the proper division of responsibility and power between the central, provincial, and local governments and the active involvement of the local government into the implementation of the policy (Chen & Li, 2010).

11.5 Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the survey results of Leishan No. 2 Middle School and relevant policies of the central government and county ethnic areas, we propose the following suggestions for minority ethnic students and the implementation of the ethnic education policies.

1. The national education policies should be carried out gradually in minority ethnic areas.
2. The adjustment of the policies should be carried out on condition that the disadvantaged groups were well considered.
3. The minority ethnic areas should take advantage of the key construction projects to carry out the regular policies.
4. Innovation of the policies for minority ethnic areas should be emphasized.
5. Specific suggestions.

11.5.1 For Layout Adjustment

The local government is suggested to carry out the layout adjustment policy step by step and obtains the understanding of the local people with better publicity. It should raise the money needed by the policy on its own and try not to depend on the government to much. It should make sure the transfer of teachers and students and solve the problems like the teachers' personnel files and allowances for the transferred students. At last, it should make sure the boarding system would function well after the students were transferred into their new schools.

11.5.2 For Boarding School System

The boarding students should be supervised more closely with their study. A communicating channel should be established between the teachers and the boarding students' parents (Sude, 2003). The students' spare time should be well occupied with ethnic culture and custom activities according to their interest.

11.5.3 For Ethnic and Folk Cultures into School

Financial support should be guaranteed and the teachers' initiative should be aroused. The assessment of teaching of ethnic culture should be considered for the teaching assessment and performance appraisal. Ethnic culture courses should be established for the employment of the students. And the ethnic culture courses should also be evaluated as one subject of the entrance exams for higher educational institutes (Wang, 2010). The students who had taken the ethnic courses should be awarded related certificate.

11.5.4 Suggestions for Bilingual Education

The schools should guarantee the teaching hours of bilingual education. The county government should set up assessment criteria for the bilingual teachers. The provincial government should take charge in the teacher training and compiling of the teaching materials (Sude, 2004b).

11.5.5 For Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

The central government should raise the subsidy for the boarding students in underdeveloped areas and make more students get the chance to receive subsidies. Different levels of aid should be established in order to make sure the impoverished students could finish their study in the compulsory education stage (Wei, 2009).

11.5.6 For New Curriculum Reform

Training programs for New Curriculum Reform should be expanded in ethnic areas. The teaching materials should be flexibly adjusted according to the realities of the local places.

11.5.7 For Construction of Teachers Team

The county should set up a dynamic teachers control mechanism and make sure the distribution balance between all schools.

The central government and provincial government should publicize the preferential policies for the construction of teaching staff and adjust their policies on the teachers' personnel files and financial support.

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Chapter 12

Case 9—Luoxiang Middle School, Guizhou Province



12.1 Background Information

12.1.1 *A Brief Introduction to Congjiang County and Luoxiang Town*

Congjiang County is located in the Southeast of Qiandongnan Hmong and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province. The total area of Congjiang County is 3244 km². Congjiang County is 450 km away from Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou Province, and 252 km away from Kaili, the capital of the Qiandongnan Hmong and Dong Autonomous Prefecture.

Within the county, there are 14 towns, seven townships (including three ethnic minority townships) and 294 administrative villages. The population is 320,660, including 307,000 agricultural residents, accounting for 94.4% of the total amount. The ethnic minorities there are Hmong, Dong, Zhuang, Yao, Shui, accounting for 94.09% of the total population. People there mainly live on growing and selling rice.

Luoxiang Town is located in the northeast of Congjiang County, 45 km away from the county seat. It is the eastern doorway to Guanxi Province and Hunan Province. With the development of highway and railway, Luoxiang Town will be the first stop in Guizhou province to the Pearl River Delta.

After closing and merging villages in 2004, Luoxiang Town has 16 administrative villages with a population of 20,280. It is a beautiful town with Dong and Hmong people. Dong people account for 99.7% of the total population.¹

¹Above data sources from the Web site: <http://www.qdn.gov.cn/>.

12.1.2 General Information About Luoxiang Middle School

12.1.2.1 A Brief Introduction to Luoxiang Middle School

As the only junior middle school, Luoxiang Middle School is located in the north of Luoxiang village, the center of Luoxiang Town. It was once called Attached School of Luoxiang School, which was founded in September 1992. Luoxiang Middle School was initially built in 2003 and was expanded in 2004, then got its present name in September 2004. It moved to the east of Luoxiang Primary School. The total area of Luoxiang Middle School is 14400.72 m² (21.6 Mu), serving for the whole town (22 villages and one resident committee). There are one teaching building, 22 classrooms, six functional classrooms (three labs for physics, chemistry, and biology, respectively, one multimedia classroom, one 30-set computer room and one library with 7000 books.), one students' dining hall with 34 tables for 200 students' dining at the same time. There are also two students' dormitories with 54 rooms, 320 double-deckers for 648 students, one washroom (15 toilets for boy students and 15 toilets for girl students), two basketball courts, and one 250-m race track. There are also some table tennis tables, parallel bars, and other sports facilities. The plants-covered area is 1200 m², while all the ground has been cemented.

The number of teaching and working staff in the school is 63, including 54 full-time teachers (14 females). Of all the staffs, three are of undergraduate education while 57 of college education. There are four teaching and researching divisions, including science, English, Chinese, and combined subjects.

There are 1113 students now (487 females), 98% are of Dong ethnic minorities. There are 21 classes totally, and seven classes for each grade from Grade 1 to 3. There are 950 boarding students (421 females) at present.²

Congjiang County is one of the state-level poverty-stricken countries. According to official documents, all the newly built basic education schools can get the state financial assistance for compulsory education. According to the general case, there are two sources of financial support for schools: one is from the central government, while the other is from the local government (Yue, 2006). Take Luoxiang Middle School for example, all the funds for constructing teaching buildings and dining hall are from the central government, while the local government is only in charge of supplying water, electricity, and the paving the schoolyard. The local government is in charge of the three items above. Electricity is charged by the local power supply station. Water and roads exist there without any extra work required. However, paving the schoolyard was done with the cost of RMB 210,000.

²<http://www.congjiang.gov.cn/>.

Dudong Primary School in Luoxiang Town also enjoys the state counterpart funds for compulsory education in the poverty-stricken areas. That is to say, the central government and local government offer funds for schools' construction in the proportion of 1:1.

12.1.2.2 School Culture of Luoxiang Middle School

The whole campus is tidy and spacious, with slogans as "Knowledge is power" on all the buildings. There are one reception room and one security room. The school badge is located in front of the teaching building, while the whole school is surrounded with 2-m-high wall. The contents in bulletin board are mainly about school disciplines and students' artworks, but the contents about ethnic minorities are seldom seen (based on field survey).

12.2 Time and Progress of the Study

The researching period in Congjiang County was from May 14 to June 4, 2010, while the period in Luoxiang Middle School was from May 19 to May 23, 2010 (Table 12.1).

Table 12.1 Research schedule in Luoxiang Middle School

Time	Contents
19-5-2010 morning	Headmasters' interview (1-2 persons involved), campus visit; questionnaires distribution and collection (50 for teachers, 240 for students); observation of the campus
Afternoon	Sorting out files
Evening	Students' random interview (20 students)
20-5-2010 morning	Six classes teaching visit (researching staffs are divided into two groups, and each group had three classes to visits)
Afternoon	Sorting out files
Evening	Students' interview
21-5-2010 morning	Local communities visit in Lundong village and Dudong Primary School
Afternoon	Sorting out files
22-5-2010 the whole day	Sorting out files
23-5-2010 half day	Giving presents to Luoxiang Middle School; completing the whole research; going to Xiaohuang Village

12.3 Focuses on the Basic Education Policies for Ethnic Minorities

12.3.1 *Two Exemptions and One Subsidy*

“Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” is known among the local people in Congjiang County. “It has attracted great social attention and is readily accepted by people here” (from the interview in Congjiang County Education Bureau). Luoxiang Middle School enjoys several kinds of state and foreign subsidies, such as the living subsidies for the rural boarding students and the state subsidies for the free textbooks. The foreign financial support is mainly from the Sino-British Southwest Project Funds (Ou, 2011).

12.3.1.1 **The Verification of the Needy Students: Permission for Application and Averaged Subsidies**

The rural boarding students during compulsory education can obtain a certain amount of living subsidies. The related regulations made by the Education Bureau have clearly defined the living standards of poor boarding students and standards of funding as the following:

- Parents both farmers, poor;
- Parents both dead, poor;
- Rural single-parent family, poor;
- Rural disabled parents, poor;
- Rural poor family caused by illness or disaster;

Students of the above five conditions can get the living subsidies offered for the needy boarding students (Chart 12.1).

All the information above is taken from the local official documents issued by Congjiang Education Bureau. The process should be strictly implemented in identifying who are the real needy boarding students. However, according to our investigation and interviews, we found that the local villages did not carefully verify the applicants’ qualification on the basis of the five specific requirements but gave certificates to all the applicants and stamping on all the application forms.

As we know, remote ethnic minorities’ areas are usually underdeveloped regions. As for two equally poor families, it is hard to give one subsidy to one and ignore the other. Hence, the living subsidies which should be issued to the needy students are distributed evenly to each student and deposited to the boarding students’ dining cards to buy meals. In this way, the neediest students are not really identified. There exists therefore “the vacuum area” in needy students’ subsidies’ policy (Ma, 2009). This problem is hard to be found, but it really exists.

What is more, when Congjiang Education Bureau submits the needy students’ list for the ratification of upper government, the upper government may reduce the

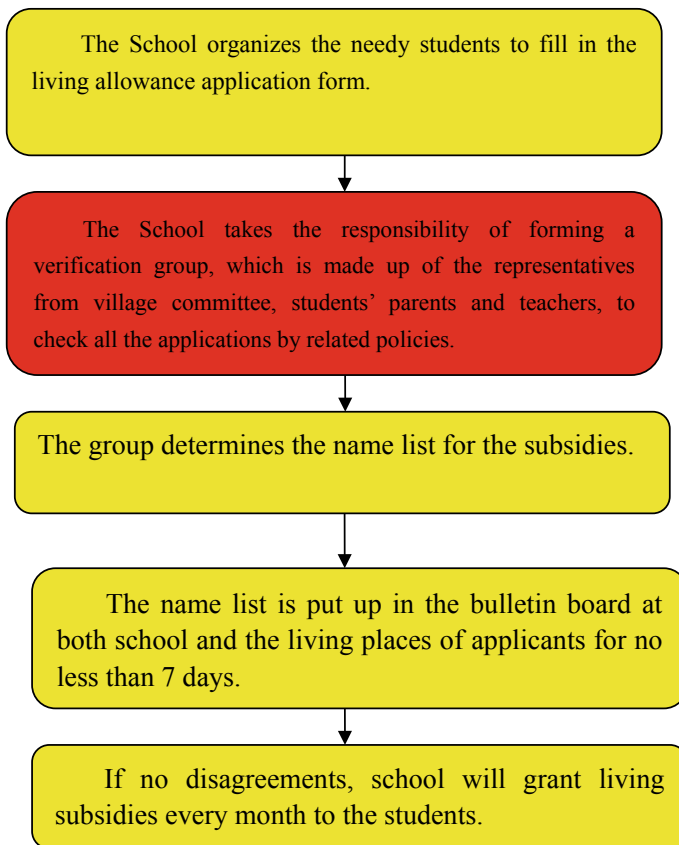


Chart 12.1 Process for the application of rural needy boarding students' living allowance

subsidies amount due to the possible dishonesty. This will result in, to a certain degree, that the total amount and coverage of needy students' living subsidies will be partly cut, and thus, it caused the even distribution of subsidies among all the boarding students, but not only to needy students.

We put forward some suggestions for them on living subsidies' covering the whole ethnic are for the needy students. Some parents disagree. Some schools said, "There is no good method, as all of them are needy, so let's just distribute the subsidies evenly. But it's not the principle of the policy. The subsidies, according to the policy, should be assigned to the neediest ones. In ethnic minority area, the financial situation of most children's family is nearly the same, but the extremely poor families exist indeed.

—Quoted from the Interview in Congjiang Education Bureau.

12.3.1.2 The Sino-British Southwest Project Funds: Strict Permission, Wide-Range Coverage

The Sino-British Southwest Project Funds made contribution to the development of basic education in Congjiang County. In 2009, the funds invested ¥16,758,000 in Congjiang County. In the way of donation, the funds donated double-deckers and other beddings for ten middle schools of ten towns and offered boarding students' living subsidies. Three thousand two hundred and six needy students got benefit from these funds. With the help of the funds, 805 teachers and 200 laboratory teachers from 65 schools in six towns got the opportunities to have teaching training. Thirty-one headmasters and 20 women teacher from 31 schools of five towns took part in the training for self-development (Ou, 2011). Mid-term evaluation questionnaire has also been finished. Six hundred and three teachers from 65 schools in six towns took part in the education fairness training.

Take Luoxiang Middle School for example, boarding students slept in wooden beds before. With the help of the Sino-British Southwest Project Funds, the wooden beds were replaced by iron double-deckers. Many boarding students' new cotton quilts are also offered from the funds. Nearly all of the teachers participated in the training project.

We are cautious about the introduction of foreign funds. We always accept funds in disciplines. Though we are poor, we are of integrity. We also take consideration of our country.

—Quoted from Interview on Congjiang Education Bureau

12.3.1.3 Free-Charge Textbooks: Recycled Using and Difficulties with Free of Charge

According to the regulation that all rural compulsory education students can obtain free-charge textbooks in the whole nation (including counties and towns), at the beginning of the spring semester in 2008, the textbook recycling system was established (Peng & Jin, 2010). The recycled textbooks include music, art, P.E., and health and information technology.

In fact, the free-charge textbooks' recycling is also "averaged." Although the old textbooks have been collected, they were not distributed to students' learning in the next year. Each session students are using new textbooks bought by their school with student's fund per person. According to the interview to the students in Luoxiang Middle School, we found that nearly all the students did not know the policy of textbooks' recycle.

By interviewing Congjiang Education Bureau, we learned that it is hard to carry out the policy of recycling textbooks, for many parents think it is unfair for their children to use second-hand textbooks.

According to the "Two Exemptions One Subsidy" policy, our country carries out the system of textbooks recycle, i.e. after textbooks' use by Grade 1, the textbooks are passed down

to the students of next grade to be used again, which can save much money. But many disagreements appear. The money that the state offers is insufficient, thus some children use new textbooks while others use old ones. Facing the question such as “Why does your child use the new book while mine use the old one?” by parents, we have no choice but have to explain the situation to students’ parents.

—Quoted from the Interview on Congjiang Education Bureau.

None of our students use recycled textbooks, but every semester students use new books.

—Quoted from the Headmaster’s Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

12.3.1.4 School Finance Bureau: Unified Management and Innovative Model

Congjiang Education Bureau has a special office to manage every school’s finance, including office expenses and finance budget. “Two Forwards and Two Downwards” management model is carried out in actual operation, i.e., each school forwards the finance budget. After the Education Bureau’s verification, funds will be distributed downward to school.

If schools find their funds insufficient, they will send their application to the Education Bureau, and then, Education Bureau submits it to Finance Bureau. Both of the bureaus jointly sign the file and award the funds to schools. This can ensure the reasonable use of every cent to some degree. This management model is popularizing.

From March 2010, all the funds are managed by Education Bureau. We just help them to manage the funds, but we don’t use any cent. If they manage the funds themselves, many problems might appear. We have budget to control the waste of funds by some headmasters.

—Quoted from the interview on Congjiang Education Bureau.

12.3.2 Boarding System

There are 1131 students in Luoxiang Middle School (950 boarding students) which is a half-boarding school. In the “Eleventh Five-Year Project” for Congjiang education, the total area of the dormitory is 3350 m² with the period of construction from 2008 to 2010. The total investment is ¥2,010,000 (Quoted from the Eleventh Five-Year Constructive Project Timetable of Congjiang County’s Education). Boarding students live in school on weekdays and go home on weekends once a week. By interview and investigation, we found some boarding problems existed.

12.3.2.1 The Dormitories: Narrow Space and Poor Conditions

The boy and girl students’ dorms are on both sides of the campus, respectively. Boy dorms are next to teachers’ dorms. In average, there are six wooden double-deckers

for 12 students in one girl dorm, while five iron double-deckers and one wooden double-decker for ten students in one boy dorm (Based on Field Survey).

Iron double-deckers are subsidized by Sino-British Funds. The double-deckers are close to each other, and therefore, it seems that the dorm is crowded.

According to the words by dorm's director, the iron double-deckers are better than the wooden ones which are not durable. The windowsills are low without barriers, which might easily cause safety accident. There is only one dorm's director for one dorm building but often absent. Firefighting equipment is scanty and seldom renovated. The students' dorms' locks are of poor quality. There is no curtain but only one lamp.

Because there are so many boarding students, the dorm space seems quite crowded for containing so many beds. It is hard to find room for other cabinets in the dorms. Students have to put their articles of daily use on beds or into the boxes under their beds. By comparison, girl dorms are much better. There are some toiletries, towel, and sundry boxes. However, there is nearly nothing in boy dorms.

There are only one public washroom which is 70 m away from boy dorm building and 160 m away from girl dorm building. It is inconvenient for girls to go to toilet at night for it is far and of bad sanitation.

There are two open-air water houses. One is just next to the school gate, while the other is next to the dining hall. Only cold water is offered here. All the students use cold water for washing and bathing. Therefore, they are very susceptible to colds in winter. There is no clinic in the campus. The students have to go to the town hospital if they are ill (Based on Field Survey).

When we were watching girl's dorm, several girls just washed their face with cold water a moment ago. They walked in on the cold cement floor barefooted. Sometimes, the school is short of water, so the students have no running water to use. They have to wash in the wells or ditches outside school. We found there were all kinds of rubbish even animals' dead bodies floating on the river, which is obviously easy to cause contagious diseases.

By interviewing teachers, we found that once when leaders checked up the work on "Two Basics" (the plan to make nine-year compulsory education basically universal and to basically eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults in the western region), two students lived on one bed. However, after the checkup, maybe ten-person-dorm was not fully occupied. Obviously, some students did not attend class at all, let alone live in the dorm. This was the reason why 648 beds could hold 950 boarding students. Thus, we can see that some compulsory students quitted their schooling for various kinds of reasons. As we know, controlling drop-out rates is a long-term task. The local government and schools should strengthen the tracking and feedback for "Two Basics" to ensure that every school-aged student can take part in schooling (Wei, 2009).

At most 17 or 18 students, while at least 12 students, sleep in our dorm.

—Quoted from Students Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

The biggest problem for boarding is the shortage of water. We often stand in line waiting for getting water. Sometimes we have no time, have to wash face and brush teeth with well water. Three villages share one well. A number of people stand in line to get water.

—Quoted from Students' Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

Another big problem for boarding is there is no washroom. Even if there are washrooms, it's still in vain because there is no water. Without indoor washroom it is quite inconvenient for the boarding students, especially for the ones going to the washroom at night. If they suffer from dysentery, they may defecate in the hallway by accident. The whole hallway will be terribly smelly. We shouldn't blame them. Why not build the indoor washrooms since the dorm building has been built? It's really of great inconvenience.

—Quoted from Teachers' Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

12.3.2.2 Students Management: With Full Workload and Complicated

There is only one director for both boys' and girls' dorm buildings. Therefore, besides teaching, teachers at this school must take certain responsibility for management of students' daily life. Every night around 10 p.m., the head teacher of each class must go to check students' presence in students' dorms.

Teachers usually complain that students are hard to supervise and they hate study. Many students disobey their teachers, even fight with their teachers. During an interview in the community, we learned that many students' parents show partiality to their kids. When the teacher makes family interview for their troublesome kids, some parents will even stand in the child's position to speak. This is quite disadvantageous for normal teaching and management.

When teachers gives an assignment, the students do it just according to their like or dislike. Sometimes they even dispute with their teacher. If the teacher criticized him, he just took it as an excuse and wouldn't go to school.

—Quoted from teachers' interview in Luoxiang Middle School

Teachers believe that 30% of all the students hate study. Even if some of them attend class, they always make troubles in classroom. This really makes teachers helpless.

—Quoted from teachers' interview in Luoxiang Middle School

12.3.2.3 The Boarding Students' Psychological Need: Left-Behind Children Miss Their Parents

The majorities of boarding students are in their puberty phase. They go home only once a week. As kids, they are naturally homesick when they leave home, especially the left-behind kids. When the left-behind kids go home on weekends, they can only live with their grandparents. The long-term lacks of parents' accompany not only influence the kids' normal psychological development but also cause some psychological problems which are bad for children's growth (Wang, 2007).

According to questionnaires to 192 students, 24.4% of the students are non-boarding one. 26.4% of the boarding students claim they dislike boarding at school, the amount of which is much higher than the ones like boarding at school (Table 12.2).

Among the 192 interviewees, 26.9% of the students claim they may suffer exclusion from others. 29.0% of them claim they seldom suffer exclusion from others. The survey shows that cold violence in campus exists in certain extent. Excluded students do not feel fine about the campus, which is just the reason they dislike boarding life (Table 12.3).

Left-behind kids account for 20%-30% of the total students. Families with only one parent account for 40%-50%. Many parents are just eager to earn more and more money, which is the most important thing in their opinion. Then, children's education has been viewed as the second issue. Obviously they pay less attention to their children. For the sake of long-term living without parents accompanying, children can always feel lonely. If the parents don't want to care about the education of their kids, they'd better not give birth to them.

—Quoted from Teachers Interviewing in Luoxiang Middle School

Table 12.2 Survey about boarding system in Luoxiang Middle School

Do you like boarding at school?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Like very much	31	16.1	16.1	16.1
	Like	37	19.2	19.3	35.4
	Like in someway	17	8.8	8.9	44.3
	Do not like	51	26.4	26.6	70.8
	Not matter	9	4.7	4.7	75.5
	Do not know	47	24.4	24.5	100.0
	Total	192	99.5	100.0	
Missing		1	0.5		
Total		193	100.0		

Table 12.3 Survey of whether the students suffered from exclusion

Have you ever been excluded in class?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Never	78	40.4	40.6	40.6
	Seldom	56	29.0	29.2	69.8
	Sometimes	52	26.9	27.1	96.9
	Often	5	2.6	2.6	99.5
	Always	1	0.5	0.5	100.0
	Total	192	99.5	100.0	
Missing		1	0.5		
Total		193	100.0		

I think boarding system is good for increasing the enrollment, but educating the left-behind kids makes teachers confused. Some parents hold the view of “Education is useless.” They believe it’s no use even if their kids have the opportunity of taking part in higher education. They would like to let their kids stay at home rather than go to college. If their parents would think so, their children would not like studying consequently.

—Quoted from Teachers’ Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

The Announcement On Taking Good Care Of Left-behind Kids issued by CPC Qiandongnan Committee Prefecture and Government definitely declares that great attention should be paid to establish family–school–society system to help the left-behind kids (Xiong & Yan, 2007). The governmental departments should establish the information files for left-behind kids and encouraging parents to bring their children to their working place to have education (Ding, 2005). Otherwise, they must undertake their responsibility as guardians who are in charge of their kids’ daily life and education if they could not take their children with them together.

12.3.2.4 Boarding School’s Dining Hall: Orderly Management, Monotonous Menu

The school deposits allowance for the needy students directly into students dining cards. If there is some money left at the end of semester, the school will inform children’s parents to draw the left money out, in order to ensure that students do not waste the rest allowance. Each student spends ¥2.6 for each meal (¥2 for dishes, ¥0.6 for staple food). The headmaster said some students take rice or flour from home instead of paying for staple food. For those who do not have rice at home, the school does not especially ask them to bring rice from home, but they are also allowed to dine at school.

Generally speaking, each student’s pocket money is ¥20 per week. That’s enough. ¥2 for dishes, ¥.6 for staple food. Students usually bring rice or flour from home. It’s not compulsory if they don’t have.

—Quoted from Headmaster’s Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

The school deposits ¥20 into their dining cards for 9 meals. There is no breakfast, so students pay for their breakfast with their own money.

—Quoted from Teachers’ Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

However, there comes a problem in this way. No matter whether students bring rice and flour or not, they enjoy the same allowance. Therefore, it is unfair that all the boarding students share the limited allowance evenly. Secondly, we found the menu is too monotonous, with only one dish—meat fried with cabbage, nearly for each meal. If students always have one same dish, it is bad for their health and boarding students’ management. Moreover, there are always homeless dogs running through the dining hall freely, which is not clean at the dining hall at all (Based on Field Survey).

12.3.3 New Curricula's Reform

In the *Summary of the Work of Education Bureau in CJ County in 2009*, situational teaching method and students' efficient participation in teaching and learning process should be encouraged among all primary schools and middle schools (Ye, 2010). They held the teaching research meeting in the whole county, in order to select the excellent demonstration class on the subjects of politics, physics, chemistry, and history for junior middle schools. Luoxiang Middle School is one of the schools for new curricular experiment. Since the New Curricular Reform, the school has made certain achievements but also has some problems.

12.3.3.1 Unsatisfying English Teaching Standard and the Quality of Textbook Waiting to Be Verified

After visiting one English class for Grade 1, we found the teacher had been fully prepared for it, but his pronunciation is not good enough. The textbook used is not the junior English textbook published by People's Education Press but by Ren Ai Press. The chemistry textbook is also of the same case.

During the investigation at Xiaohuang Primary School, we also found that the English textbooks used are also not the ones published by People's Education Press but by Hunan Youths and Children's Press. All the textbooks used by both Luoxiang Middle School and Xiaohuang Primary School are ordered by the local Education Bureau. However, the quality of these textbooks and qualification of them to be textbooks for compulsory education are waiting to be verified.

12.3.3.2 Separated Teaching and Examining: Inconvenient for Teachers' Teaching Preparation

Many teachers in Luoxiang Middle School claim it is hard for them to prepare for teaching since the New Curriculum Reform. Some knowledge and contents will be part of the examination, but they probably do not appear in textbook. That is to say, the difficulty of exam remains the same, but the textbook is getting easier (Chen & Li, 2010). Many teachers must make extra preparation to teach their students more knowledge for examination. One teacher of subject Chinese language in Luoxiang Middle School said that: "Take Chinese language class as an example, the former textbooks paid great attention to the explanation and memory of grammar, but now the present textbooks focus on plenty of reading and comprehension." There are also many contents for students to read by themselves. Instead, the grammar teaching has also been weakened. Teachers do not know how to teach and lead students.

After the implementation of New Curricular Reform, we find the textbook is kind of messy. Grammar was once focused on but now reading comprehension has been paid great attention to, especially the ability of self-teaching and self-reading. Examination and textbook are out

of joint. We pay attention to reading and explaining texts when examination comes. We focus on self-reading when we have class. This kind of reform isn't suitable to our students. It also brings great pressure to teachers. Since New Curricular Reform, it seems easier for teachers to have classes. But if you want to make students well prepared for the exam, you must fully prepare for it. All of the out-of-class knowledge is generally written in teaching plan while students have to make lots of notes. It's hard to say the students can fully understand. Meanwhile, the teaching standard is also hard to establish.

—Quoted from Teachers' Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

There seems something wrong with the New Curricular Reform. On the one hand, the students can't understand the knowledge fully in the textbook. On the other hand, the teachers feel that the teaching time in class is insufficient. Most of the students are unable to follow the normal teaching pace.

—Quoted from Headmaster's Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

12.3.3.3 The Applicability of Participative Teaching and Heuristic Teaching in Rural Area

According to the class investigation, we find some teachers can adopt the participative teaching and heuristic teaching theory. But there are still some teachers who cannot make full use of the teaching methods or use them flexibly. For instance, when the teacher taught the concept of "average" knowledge in a maths class for Grade 2 in Luoxiang Middle School, he only explained its formulation and calculating method without explaining the connotation and reason of the axiom. He asked several students learning well to answer his questions and explained "What it is" but did not encourage his students to take consideration of "Why it is?" It is hard for students to participate in the teaching activities.

We all know that the level of economic development in one area will influence the educational equality there. Usually, students in rural area do not have a good basis for their study, without a full understanding of the basic knowledge. If they are asked to understand and reflect on their own learning, this is a kind of destructive enthusiasm behavior. Therefore, in rural areas, the reform of teaching materials should focus on strengthening the rural children's learning base, with imparting basic knowledge to them first, and then guide the reflection, summary, and promotion for them (Sude, 2004a).

12.3.3.4 The Local Textbook: The Combination of New Curriculum Reform and Ethnic Folk Culture

It is a good attempt to coordinate the New Curricular Reform with local textbook. It can make textbooks more localized. The local textbook *My Hometown—Congjiang* edited by Congjiang Education Bureau is a good example which has combined class

teaching with local ethnic culture. In the rich atmosphere of ethnic culture, the students can realize the importance of learning basic knowledge well (Sun, 2009). It is also a good interaction between school teaching and students.

12.3.4 The Development of Teaching Staffs

In the background of “New Curriculum Reform” of basic education, CJ County has carried out a series of teachers’ training and teacher training activities, such as small and medium distance education, distance education training, Sino-British Southwest Basic Education Teachers’ Training and correspondence education, etc. (Based on Field Survey). All of these provide a good platform for the CJ County teachers’ professional development. Luoxiang Secondary School attaches great importance to the construction and development of teachers, with developing a series of teacher evaluation, training, rewards, and punishments system to improve the overall quality and level of secondary school teachers, but in the concrete operation, there are still some problems.

12.3.4.1 The Teachers’ Evaluation: Evaluating Teachers by Their Students’ Scores

Luoxiang Middle School operates the evaluation system of teacher’s performance by their students’ scores. If average score of one single subject of a class is among the top of the whole county, the teacher will be awarded a certain amount of money. But if one class’ score is at the bottom of the county, then there will be punishment on teachers with penalty ranging from 40 to 300 RMB in accordance with the different situation (See Below Quote from the Regulations on Rules for Teaching Quality in Luoxiang Middle School (Trial edition)). Furthermore, it is stipulated that regardless of the way in which Educational Bureau’s quality education system will be changed in the future, it will be implemented according to this system. Teaching’s quality award can only be calculated with this system, not according to regulations from the County Board of Education.

Bottom-ranked teachers’ salary will be penalized.

For the teachers who are in charge of experiment class, if his class single subject’s grade is among the bottom three in the whole county’s experiment classes, his/her salary will be penalized.

- If there are 5 or less than 5 experiment classes in the whole county, the teacher whose class score is the last one will be penalized 100 Yuan.
- If there are 6–10 experiment classes in the whole county, the teacher whose class score are ranked as the last one, two and three, they will be penalized respectively 300, 200 and 100 Yuan.

—Quoted from the Regulations on Rules for Teaching Quality in Luoxiang Middle School. (Trial edition)

We all know that many factors contribute to the students' performance at school. Maybe the teacher is unqualified, or maybe the students do not work hard. We cannot say students' low exam score is just due to teachers' teaching. This kind of evaluation will severely frustrate teachers' enthusiasm. It is unfair to penalize teachers. The initial purpose is to encourage teachers to improve teaching quality and make students keep on making progress in study. Penalty only causes the opposite emotion, making the teaching group unstable (Gui & Zhong, 2010).

Besides, teachers in L Middle School said their head teachers' allowance and their salary is low. Six teachers still have no dorms. The head teacher's allowance is not consecutive. Sometimes, they even do not have payment for supplementary payments for their extra teaching in classes.

We head teachers have low salary. So is our merit pay. We give students supplementary lessons every evening, but the allowance is only ¥ 5-6 for one time. Sometimes one semester had passed but the allowance hasn't been paid. Other working places are much richer than our school. Teachers' income is poor.

—Quoted from Teachers' Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

Since it is just the beginning to carry out merit pay in basic education, there will be less perfect in the concrete educational implementation and operation by the local authorities and educational institutions (Peng & Jin, 2010). Therefore, the local government and schools need to adjust their evaluation system to raise the teachers' income, finally to stabilize the motivations of teaching staffs and improve the teaching quality.

12.3.4.2 Teachers' Training

Congjiang County held a series of teachers training, including continuous education for primary and middle school teachers, distance education training, Sino-British Southwest Basic Education Training, correspondence course, etc. All the trainings are relevant to basic education. Most of the teachers in Luoxiang Middle School joined in Sino-British Southwest Project Training, but they think most of the trainings are just a kind of formalism. The training conditions and effects are unsatisfactory.

New Curricular Reform requires much on how teachers manage class and guide students to comprehend knowledge fully. In addition to the teachers' self-realization and self-improvement, teachers' training is a good way to learn to use New Curricular Reform teaching method (Chen, 2008). If the teachers' training quality was not improved, the teachers' enthusiasm for New Curricular Reform would be eliminated. Many teachers will just use new textbook but in the old teaching method, making New Curricular Reform useless. Neither teachers nor students can get benefit from the reform.

We think the present teachers' training is just a form and non-systematic. Sometimes the school just wants to cope with the upper authority's examination.

—Quoted from teachers interview in Luoxiang Middle School

We took part in the participative teaching training. We went to Guandong Middle School to take part in the Sino-British Project Training sponsored by the County Education Bureau. Actually, there are some problems in participative education: it's hard to keep order in classroom; Since there is no multimedia equipment, it's hard to have participative class actually. Moreover, the students are not readily to participate, as they don't respond to teachers voluntarily. Only good students participate in some interactive activities.

—Quoted from Teachers Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

For some state-sponsored or province-sponsored key training, Luoxiang Middle School will send some backbone teachers to take part in. These teachers will propagate those advanced concepts and teaching methods to other normal teachers in the form of seminars. This form has its own pros and cons. Only by improving the teachers' selecting system and giving a full play of backbone teachers' leading role can they spread the advanced teaching concept and make the training popularized among all the teachers (Chen & Sude, 2005).

12.3.4.3 The Level of Teaching Is to Be Promoted: Most of Teachers Changed Their Major with Unreasonable Subject Configuration

According to the interviews, we found that the subjects many teachers are teaching are not their major learnt at school. For example, a Chinese teacher once taught geography before, while a biology teacher once taught art before. As we know, there is a certain deviation of the teaching methods and ideas between different disciplines. Though teaching experience can be got along with time, however, there is no doubt that the shift from a certain major to another subject by teachers will affect the school's teaching quality (Chen & Li, 2010). This phenomenon has been resulted by the shortage of teachers in some subjects.

The difficulty we met is not the shortage of teachers, but the number of teachers who teach certain subjects. We need 2 more physics teachers but we have 3 more art teachers, more than enough. We have to ask the 3 art teachers to teach biology. In addition, loss of teachers also exists in our school. In 2007, 5 teachers left our school to teach in county town or turned to other occupations.

—Quoted from Headmaster's Interview in Luoxiang Middle School

We are short of teachers of certain subjects. It's common for us of lacking music, P.E., art and English teachers.

—Quoted from the Announcement for the whole County's General Information on Spring Semester's Starting

12.3.4.4 The Probation Teachers: Low Payment; One Came in While Another Left

In the latter half of the year 2007, there are 438 probation teachers in Congjiang County. Their salary is 180 yuan per month. The average income per day is 6 Yuan, which is rather low. Congjiang Education Bureau takes a series of measures to deal with it. For example, they dismissed 333 probation teachers. This method has helped to solve the funds appropriated by county Finance Bureau. According to this method, the remained 150 probation teachers' salary has been raised. At present, their salary is 600 yuan per month (See below Quote from the Interview in Congjiang Education Bureau).

Meanwhile, Congjiang Education Bureau adopts the method "one comes in while another leaves" to adjust the local teaches group's structure, i.e., the normal college's graduates will replace the same number of probation teachers. For the dismissed probation teachers, Congjiang County will compensate them, such as buying pension insurance for them to achieve the stability of the team of probation teachers.

At present, the issue of probation teachers is one of the major problems in teachers' training in rural area (Sude, 2003). We should deal with it cautiously. Some of these dismissed probation teachers have worked as teachers for nearly the whole life, so social attention and local government's support are needed to ensure their living condition and their dignity.

In the latter half of the year 2007, there are 483 probation teachers in the whole county. At that time, their salary is 180 Yuan per month, say, 6 Yuan per day. That is even not enough for them to buy a package of cigarette. We pay great sympathy to them.

—Quoted from the Interview in Congjiang Education Bureau

For probation teachers, we adopt the method "one comes in while another leaves." This year we have 40 new teachers who graduated from normal college, therefore about 50 probation teachers will be dismissed. This year we had 10 new teachers, so next year we'll dismiss 10 probation teachers.

—Quoted from the Interview in Congjiang Education Bureau

12.3.5 Bilingual Teaching

The bilingual teaching is a basic education policy for ethnic groups, which is thoroughly carried out and has obvious effect in Congjiang County. The majority of Grade-1 students can communicate in Mandarin. After interviewing students and having community investigation, we found that the local children grew up in a bilingual teaching environment. They speak Dong, the local ethnic language, at home, and Chinese at school. When playing with friends, they speak Dong language. When having class, they speak Chinese. Thus, the bilingual education policy in the local one has obvious characteristics: students can be bilingual along with enrollment, but the actual use of the bilingual policy is not obvious (Sude, 2004b).

Most Grade-1 students in Luoxiang Middle School can communicate fluently with each other in their own language and understand their teachers in class in mandarin. The difference between Dong and Chinese does not affect the normal teaching activities and communication. This probably owe to the bilingual teaching from primary school in Congjiang County. During the research in Xiaohuang Primary School, we learned that the students in Grade 4–5 can participate in teaching activities in fluent Dong and mandarin languages both. But the case differs in Luoxiang Middle School. Generally speaking, students use Chinese in class, but they tend to speak Dong when playing after class. The teachers in Luoxiang Middle School said that sometimes they explain the knowledge in Chinese at first, then they will explain the key points in Dong, and thus, the knowledge can be understood easily.

I teach bilingually. For instance, some students are quite shy. Even if he can understand Chinese, he also speaks Dong at times. So I'll repeat the key points in Dong.

—Quoted from the P.E. Teacher' Interview

12.3.6 *Ethnic Culture into School Policy*

Dong people not only pass on and carry forward their native ethnic culture but also bring it into campus and classroom, offering their kids to learn and enjoy the charming of their native ethnic culture. Just as the saying goes, “*Only the culture with strong ethnic characteristics can win international recognition*” (Sude, 2008). Premier WEN Jiabao once visited Japan with nine little lovely Dong girl singers, who make Dong folk songs well-known abroad. Congjiang Education Bureau makes special research on the topic of ethnic culture into school and also implements the policy in schoolyard.

Congjiang County Ethnic and Religious Bureau as well as Congjiang Education Bureau cooperate with each other to popularize ethnic and folk culture in schoolyard. Congjiang County Ethnic and Religious Bureau concentrates on making policy, verifying textbooks for ethnic culture and teachers training. During the policy's implementation, the officials from Education Bureau realized the problem of insufficient funds. No extra money can be given to the schools for these ethnic and cultural activities (Cao & Wang, 2010). The money is just from funds maintaining the daily work of schools. The money is usually spent on teachers' training and inviting folk singers as teachers.

Luoxiang Middle School holds ethnic and folk culture class for all the students. The specific teaching content is Dong folk songs and ethnic customs. However, some problems also exist.

12.3.6.1 Dong Folk Songs just Exist in Monotonous Forms

Tradition folk songs are taught in music class, and sometimes, folk players are invited to teach students how to sing Dong folk songs but mostly taught by school's music teachers. We found students are active in participating in singing Dong folk songs, and the class atmosphere is vivid. In P.E. class, the teacher will organize students to hold a traditional physical activity "walking on stilts." (Based on Field Survey) The school seldom organizes other activities related with ethnic culture.

Besides Dong folk songs, Lusheng (a musical instrument), embroidery, and other traditional ethnic arts are also introduced into classes, making children appreciate the charming of ethnic culture.

12.3.6.2 The Harmony of "Controlling School-Quitting and Keeping the Spirit of Ethnic Folk Cultures."

The interesting ethnic folk activities, such as Dong folk songs and Lusheng, singing and dancing, are popularized by local common residents as daily entertainment form. It also can attract children's attention. Such activities can attract them to enter and stay on schoolyard. It is a good approach to control drop-out rate. Meanwhile, great attention should be paid to the instructive function of these activities, not just a way to attract students. They can understand their culture and form a sense of pride for their ethnic groups (Sun, 2009).

Ethnic and folk culture into school yard is helpful to control drop-out rat. For many students who don't like study, they take interest in Dong songs and ethnic culture, so they can be attracted to remain in school for their study.

—Quoted from Luoxiang Town officials' interview

Ethnic and folk culture into schoolyard is another effective method to control drop-out rate in ethnic area.

—Quoted from Congjiang Education Bureau "Ethnic and Folk Culture into Schoolyard"

12.4 Comprehensive Discussion

12.4.1 Two Exemptions One Subsidy and Boarding System

There are two sources for the boarding students' allowance in Luoxiang Middle School. One is from the government policies, such as the rural needy boarding students' allowance and free textbook allowance. Besides, the Sino-British Southeast Project Funds also offers allowance for boarding students (Ou, 2011). The amount is large and covers various aspects. All the allowances make more or less influence on all aspects. Education development depends on certain amount of funds for school

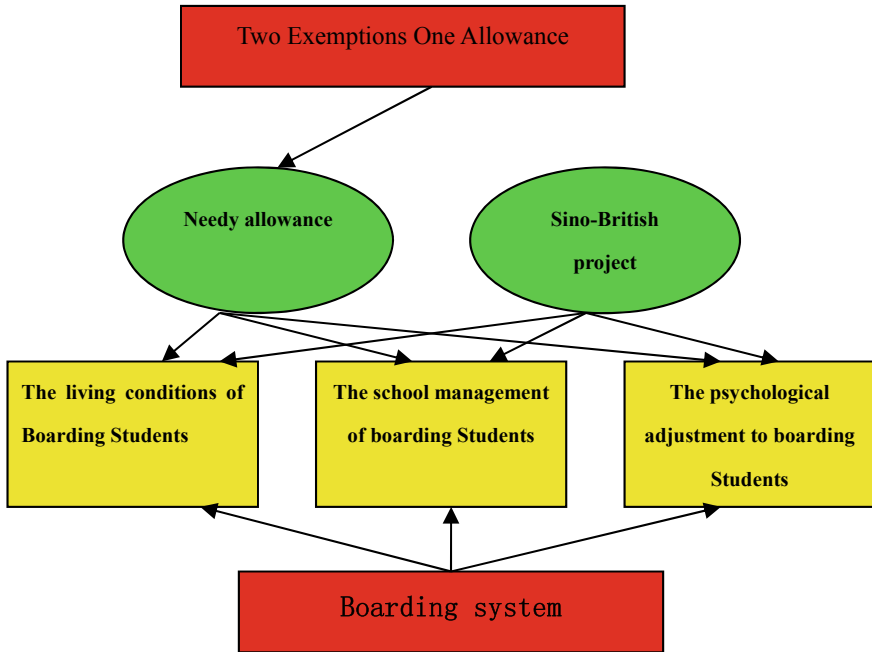


Chart 12.2 Chart of the “Two Exemptions One Subsidy” and boarding system

construction, teachers’ training, etc. However, the financial support is just one aspect to promote the education development. The more important aspects are education officials, schools, teachers, students, and parents (Wang, 2004). All these factors should work together to promote the education in ethnic minority area (Chart 12.2).

Congjiang County is a state-level poverty-stricken county. Many parents go out of the county to work in big cities for more money. Consequently, the problem of left-behind children in this area is very serious (Based on Field Survey). Some kids have to stay with their grandparents. For these children, although they have less love and care from their parents, materially their need can be met by their parents. Most of them do not need to worry about food, clothes, and daily necessities. During our investigation in the Dudong Primary School, we heard a story like this:

There is a little girl whose parents went to Guangdong for work. She does not have grandparents, but a younger brother needs her taking care of. She is only a little girl who is in Grade 5 in primary school. In order to take care of her younger brother, she has to drop out from school. They do not have any income to support their life, so the girl has to work in the farm to earn daily food. Every day, she gets up early and prepares breakfast for her younger brother. After her brother goes to school, she will go to work in the field. In the evening, she prepares meal, washes the clothes, etc. But, in the investigation, we should never forget that she is also a little child who needs care and love!

The teachers in Dudong School worried about this little girl and his younger brother very much. They have visited them for many times. But, the road condition is not very good, so teachers have to walk for a long time to get to their home. During our interview, we found that many teachers have tears in their eyes when they mentioned this little girl.

12.4.2 New Curriculum Reform and Teachers' Training

There are both advantages and disadvantages in the New Curricular Reform in Luoxiang Middle School. The advantages are as followings: this policy can improve students' innovation ability, while the participative teaching and heuristic teaching develop students' multiintelligence. The disadvantages are also obvious. Teachers' teaching preparation is getting harder, while teaching and examination are out of joint and even separated. The key point to this reform is to improve the teachers' quality. That is to say, the success of the New Curricular Reform depends on how the teachers in every school understand this reform and combine the new concept into their own teaching practice (Chen & Sude, 2005). One of the effective methods to promote teachers' quality is to strengthen teachers' training. For this aspect, the complex relationship between teachers' training and New Curricular Reform has gone beyond the case of Luoxiang Middle School, which can be discussed among all the schools which implement New Curricular Reform in our country (Chart 12.3).

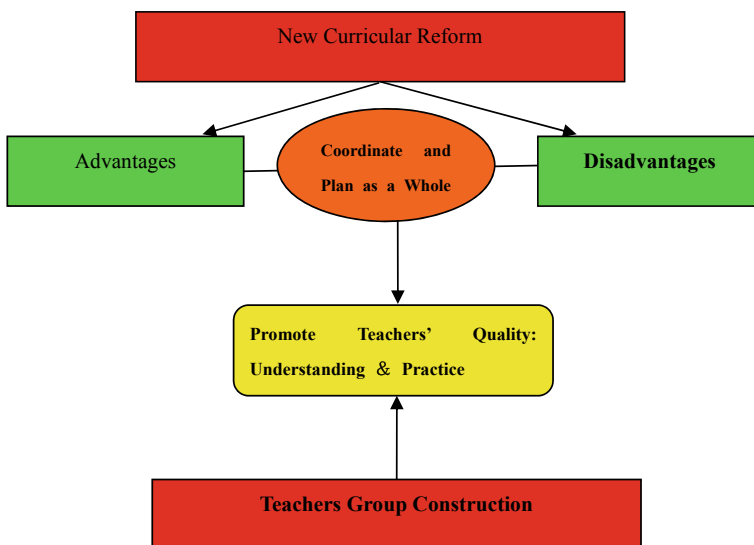


Chart 12.3 Chart of New Curriculum Reform and teachers' training

12.4.3 Ethnic and Folk Culture into Class and Bilingual Teaching

In Luoxiang Town and even in the whole Congjiang County, Dong is the dominant ethnic minority. Obviously, Dong culture is the local ethnic culture. Wherever we went, we could find the building, language, and customs with unique Dong characteristics. Dong people have integrated the culture into their daily behaviors and way of thinking. This has made Dong culture one part of their blood, which can be seen in all aspects of their life. For Luoxiang Middle School, bilingual teaching just means the Dong language taught in class, while activities like Lusheng and “walking on stilts” just stand for Dong’s folk traditions taught in class. From the view of education, bilingual teaching helps the maintenance of their language, while the passing down of ethnic culture can be finished in the process of education. From the view of culture, ethnic culture into school also helps the bilingual teaching (Zhu, 2009). Implementing new teaching method in the background of splendid culture is just the way. These two policies are complementary to each other (Chart 12.4).

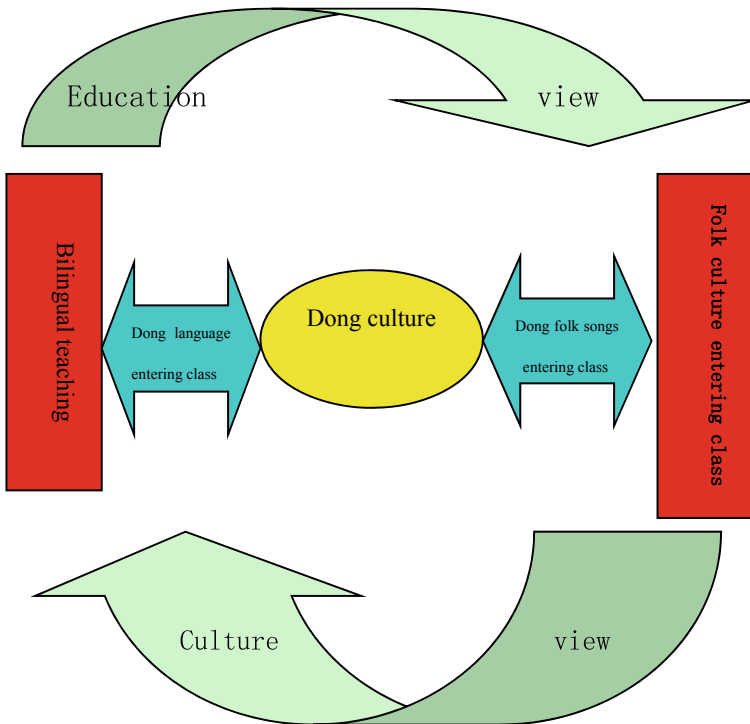


Chart 12.4 Chart of ethnic folk culture entering school and teachers’ training

12.5 Countermeasures and Suggestions

12.5.1 Improving the Verification of the Needy Boarding Students and Ensuring the Allowance More Effective

Dealing with the average distribution of needy boarding students' allowance, we should seek solutions based on fully understanding the local realities (Yue, 2006). After the boarding students applying for allowance, Congjiang County and Luoxiang Town government should establish a needy boarding students' allowance committee to take charge of the evaluation of the application, verification of the qualification, publicity of results. Meanwhile, a supervision committee made up of teachers, parents, and village leaders should also be established to supervise the fairness and the whole process of selection (He, 2007). On the basis of giving support to all the boarding students, priority should be given to the neediest students, ensuring them to stay at school and learn well.

12.5.2 Improve the Boarding Students' Living Condition and Pay Great Attention to Their Psychological Health

Based on our observation, the living condition of boarding students should be improved. For the difficulty of using water and inconvenient toilets, the local government should build water supplying facilities to provide students with drinking water and hot water. Meanwhile, the school should build 1–2 indoor washrooms in dorm buildings to solve the problem of long distance from the washrooms (especially for girl boarding students). In addition, the school should be equipped with clinic and doctors to take care of the boarding students' health. The system of "teachers' communication with students" should also be established to take care of left-behind children and children with possible psychological problems, making them live and study in a warmer and friendlier environment (Ma, 2010).

12.5.3 Improve Teachers Training Quality and Strengthen Teachers' Comprehension of New Curricular Reform

The model of teachers training in Congjiang County can be improved from "short-term class training" into "long-term teacher growth tracking." The New Curricular Reform concept can be accepted in rural ethnic area and be achieved in 1–2 classes within 1–2 days. Therefore, the core of improving teachers training quality can concentrate on the teachers' long-term development, not just a kind of form, which can make them not only realized the importance, but also ensure them to have the

ability to use the new teaching method (Dong, 2009). This will eventually integrate the New Curricular Reform concepts into their teaching, which can arouse the interest of students.

12.5.4 To Meet the Need of Basic Education for Ethnic Minorities, New Textbooks and Teaching Methods Should Be Developed

Considering the actual conditions of the basic education in Congjiang County and the learning of local students, it is suggested that new ideas and new methods should be adopted as a necessary part of reform when popularizing the New Curriculum Reform and new teaching method. For instance, usually the Chinese language level of ethnic minority students is not so good, so the language classes can specially set aside some time for students to study new words and grammar, then the comprehension of the text (Zhou, 2004). Meanwhile, teachers can integrate native ethnic culture knowledge into their teaching, which can arouse students' interest in studies.

12.5.5 Ethnic Culture Should Be an Indispensable Part of Basic Education

Whether the policy of ethnic culture into school is successful or not depends greatly on how each teacher carries out the work. Qualified and responsible teachers can not only teach students the knowledge of their ethnic and folk culture, but also combine the daily teaching with the ethnic and folk culture (Wang, 2004). We urgently need high-quality ethnic minority teachers who not only can teach students traditional culture but also can teach these cultural knowledge in a more profound and systematic way. Thus, students can really feel and learn the essence of their native culture. We also suggest that knowledge of ethnic and folk culture should be one part of the normal college's education system in ethnic minority area, which can help teachers acquire good native culture knowledge.

It's suggested that knowledge of ethnic and folk culture should be added to the teaching plan in ethnic minority normal education in ethnic minority area, which can help teachers acquire good native culture knowledge.

—Quoted from Congjiang County Ethnic and Religious Bureau Interview

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Chapter 13

Case 10—Ashnu Central Primary School, Qinghai Province



13.1 Background

This section describes the social and cultural background and provides a basic overview of the Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, Hualong County, Qinghai Province. It offers our analysis of the features of one of the cases in the project providing a portrayal of the basic education policy for minority ethnic groups within a particular context serving specific ethnicities.

13.1.1 Ecological and Cultural Background

Qinghai Province is located in the northwest of China, and the northeastern part of Qinghai–Tibet Plateau. There are six national autonomous prefectures, seven ethnic autonomous counties, and 28 autonomous townships. The area of national regional autonomy accounts for 98% of the total area of Qinghai Province. Current minority residents mainly include Tibetan, Hui, Tu, Salar, and Mongolian, among which Tu and Salar are the two Chinese minority groups only there. The population of all minorities is 2.5675 million, accounting for 46.32% of the total population across the Province, of which 1.217 million Tibetans, 881.9 thousand Hui, 229.5 thousand Tu, 121.9 thousand Salar, 97 thousand million Mongolians, and 20 thousand other ethnic minorities.

Main religions in Qinghai are Tibetan, Buddhism, and Islam. Tibetan, Mongolian, and Tu people believe in Tibetan Buddhism, while Hui and Salar believe in Islam.¹

Hualong Hui Autonomous County is located in the eastern of Qinghai Province, mainly inhabited by Hui people. It was chosen as a county with dire needs a key county of “national poverty alleviation and development” by the Peoples’ Republic of China’s State Council in 2001. Located in the transition zone of Loess Plateau

¹Above data sources from the website: <http://www.qh.gov.cn/>.

and Qinghai–Tibet Plateau, terrain of this county is complicated, which is cut by 16 valleys, forming the complex terrain with up-and-down mountains and ravines. The total population of Hualong is 245.8 thousand, about 210 thousand of which are farmers. Population of ethnic minorities accounts for 79% of the total, among which Hui accounts for 52.5, 21.3% Tibetans and 5% Salar.²

13.1.2 Overall Development of the Case School

Ashnu is a Tibetan word meaning “broad places.” It is located on the Kaligang Mountain in the south of Hualong County, 18 km away from the county seat. Its population is 6000 and Hui is the main minority group which accounts for 54.7% of the total population. It administrates Ashnu, RM, Yanglong, Azangwuju, Ruolan, Nahalong, GJ, Baijia, Qinghaiuanji, Liushidong, Saishiku, Songsai, Lieren, Ejia, Duojielaka, Heshijia, and other 16 village committees.³

Hui, Salar, and Tibetan residents in Ashnu have distinctive ethnic characteristics and geographical personality. Hui in Ashnu is called “Hui of Kaligang” due to its unique cultural phenomenon. Usually, people call them “Tibetan-speaking Hui people,” and Tibetan is their mother tongue spoken in family and community. Tibetans in Ashnu live in the Tibetan village of RM. Existing in the mixed area of multi-ethnic groups, the Tibetan language here is different from that of Tibetan hinterland, which can be seen from the large amount of borrowed words from Chinese and a lot of Chinese inflexions and homophone in their daily communication. For example, the Chinese “Mei,” is expressed as “Duo Suo” in Tibetan, while the Tibetan in RM pronounces it as “Mei,” which is borrowed from the Chinese pronunciation (Based on Field Survey).

Salar mainly resides along the Yellow River in Xunhua County of Qinghai Province. Historical data of Qinghai Province shows that the Salar in Hualong County migrated from Xunhua County gradually. At present, they mainly live in Gandu Town, and in its nearby villages of Chuma, Ashnu, Xiejiatan, Dehenglong, Shalianbao, and Bayan town.

Originally, with Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School as the center, Ashnu school district was composed of 14 teaching locations or spots, including RM Complete Elementary School and GJ Complete Elementary School. Schools in the teaching locations were small, and the number of students in mixed classes was large. The fact of “one school, one teacher” could be seen there. In the early 2009, through layout adjustment, Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School merged seven schools and the second- and third-year students of another school. The enrollment in all schools of Ashnu is 578, of which there are 236 boarders in GJ and Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, including Hui, Tibetan, and Salar. The number of current teachers in the whole township is 31, of which 13 in Ashnu Central Complete

²Above data sources from the website: <http://www.haidong.gov.cn/>.

³Above data sources from the website: <http://www.hdhl.gov.cn/>.

Elementary School, including four Hui and one Tibetan. There is one class in each grade of Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School.⁴

RM School is located in the Tibetan village of RM, one of the teaching locations of Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School. The schoolhouses were built by the support from Lizhong Foundation in the USA. There are three teachers, among whom one is a volunteer teacher and 1 is a Tibetan. All the students are Tibetan children from one of the RM villages (Based on Field Survey). According to the information gathered by our research group in the preliminary investigation especially the particular circumstances of the community, RM School was selected as one of the targets, in order to enrich the case study of Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School.

13.2 Research Process and Methods

Our case studies involve a mix of approaches—interviews and surveys along with available data from various authorities.

On 6–June 10, 2010, research group made a field survey to Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School and RM School. This was followed with the research group interviewing personnel in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, (six teachers and seven school leaders as well as four parents and seven students). In RM School, the team interviewed two teachers, three parents, and one village cadre. In view of respecting the privacy of the interviewee, their personal information was not revealed.

During the research in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, research group conducted two school-wide surveys, five surveys of different classes, two surveys of students' boarding school dormitories, one survey of a teachers' dormitory, one survey of canteen as well as two surveys of school activities.

Eighty students answered the questionnaire, among which 39 students from the third grade, 24 students from the fourth grade, and 17 students from the fifth grade. Among the 48 are boys, 27 are girls. They are 52 Hui students, 19 Tibetan students, eight Salar students, and one Tu student. The response rate was 100%. Nine teachers finished the questionnaire. In addition, research group conducted interviews of the three principals from the Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, RM school, and GJ Complete Elementary School.

13.3 Focus on Basic Education Policy for Minorities

Based upon the research teams' review of the surveys and interviews as well as the team's observations of the site, a number of areas of concern were discerned.

⁴See Footnote 3.

13.3.1 Adjustment/Policy Implementation

Based on the implementation of adjustment and implementation of the ethnic policies for Ashnu school district of Hualong County, the research team explored the following

- Policy Planning. How policies were understood, developed, and implemented locally by officials.
- Policy Implementation. The bases, process, and results of policy implementation, problems in the process of policy implementation.
- Key personnel in the process of policy implementation and its effect.
- Attitude of relevant people. The understandings, responses, and reaction of teachers and students to this policy.

13.3.2 Policy Planning

Under the “Report on Regulating Primary and Secondary Schools of Hualong County” issued by Education Bureau of Hualong County, from the beginning of 2010 to basically completion, the implementation or “layout adjustment” of the ethnic policies of Hualong County would last 5 years. As part of the adjustment, it was expected that the number of schools in the whole county would decrease from 276 in 2009 to 128 in the year 2015. Among them, there are two senior high schools, one vocational school, one minority complete middle school, four junior high schools, one nine-year compulsory education school, 115 complete primary schools, one youth activities center, and three kindergartens.⁵

“The Planning” regulates the closing and merging of schools for 31 villages and towns in the county. The adjustment plan for Ashnu village entails the retention of the following schools: Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School (boarding), RM Complete Elementary School, GJ Complete Elementary School (boarding), Lieren Junior Elementary School, and Nahalong Elementary School. Whereas a number of other schools would be merged and closed including: Songsai Junior Elementary School, Lagai Complete Elementary School, Yanglong Junior Elementary School, Baijia Complete Elementary School, Jiaorang Complete Elementary School, Liu Shidong, Duo Jielaka, and Ya Angkou Elementary Schools.⁶ We would note that “The Planning” does not provide reasons why certain schools are maintained and others merged. In addition, there is no specific written instruction of specific operation, guaranteed measures, and relevant strategies in the process of closing or merging schools. Nonetheless, in the winter of 2009, the Education Bureau made a plan,

⁵See Footnote 3.

⁶See Footnote 3.

demanding to close GJ School and merge it into Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School. From then on, the closing and merging of schools began.

In conjunction with the plans to merge, the approach appeared to involve a form of trial and error. For example, in order to arrange all the students in GJ to live and study in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, Principal M rented a bus to pick more than 100 students from GJ School to the Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School every Monday and sent them back on vacation. However, such attempt and practice did not last long, partly due to the student's safety of GJ School and partly due to the waste of teaching time in traffic. The third reason is that the Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School cannot provide enough dormitories for teachers while the fourth reason is the school cannot afford the cost of renting a bus (Based on Field Survey).

In some locations, the mergers were resisted by the locals. For example, in accordance with the plan of Education Bureau, Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School planned to merge all the students in RM School into the Central School this year. But the villagers and secretary of the village did not agree to do so. The reason they presented to Principal M was that there was no Tibetan class in the Central School. In our attempt to follow up, and learn the reasons for not accepting the merger, we went to RM village to interview parents and village secretary. One of our interviewees was a 63-year-old Tibetan who shared with us the opinions of the villagers. As he stated the concern of some parents is "what should the preschool kids do after merging the school"? Parents worried that if the school were closed, preschool children had to leave home to live in boarding school. "If they are old enough, they can go boarding, but we worry about the so young kids for boarding." In addition, the elder thought that village secretary had his own concern, i.e., the villagers would dissatisfy with him if the school were closed in his tenure. "Community Members gave him pressure. The villagers would blame him if he closed the school." Other reasons were proffered by the village secretary who suggested two reasons. As he stated, one reason was that "the children are too young." Another reason was "We want to perfect our own school from size and teaching quality." In villagers' eyes, RM School is their own school. Although they are dissatisfied with current situation, they have their own ideas and solutions. They aim at running well "our own school." Finally, in an effort to hear the voice of the students, we interviewed a Tibetan boy in the fifth grade from RM village. He told us that he was studying in RM School before he chose to study in the Central School. Now, he went home only once a week. Moreover, he had to walk for an hour to go home. He admitted that he would be homesick when he was in the school, but he felt confident about his choice.

Role and Function of the Principal

The difficulty moving forward with the mergers was confirmed by our survey. In the beginning, the decision of establishing these GJ and Ashnu two boarding schools were made by Ashnu Party Committee and village committees, but this was not welcomed and supported by parents and villagers. Instead, they were strongly dissatisfied and refused to accept it.

What was also highlighted was the key and difficult role the merger entailed for the principal (Teng & Li, 2010). In this regard, in the process of carrying out the adjustment policies, Principal M was the key figure of implementation including having to deal with the complications. Principal M said that the layout planning of the county had planned for three times and adjusted as they recognized the difficulties doing so as the Principal indicated: “When Education Bureau found it unrealistic, the former plan will be readjusted.” “If the leaders deny the plan, they would ask me to ‘readjust it,’ and then I have to do plenty of work.”

Principal M said that in the process of layout adjustment and managing school, although he encountered all kinds of difficulties, “I encouraged myself that I have to move forward since I start it...as a principal, I have the responsibility, but also have the obligation to devote myself wholeheartedly to it.” To call for students to attend school in the Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, Principal M went to village to “borrow” students and then tried to keep the students stay in the Central School. “I went to a secretary’s home at ten o’clock at night, it took me three hours on the zigzag road to his home, and the long journey exhausted me. But in the end, I convinced him to ‘lend’ me the 13 students.” To let students adapt to the life in boarding school, Principal M made the way out from living and study. First of all, he tried to improve students’ lives from the diet, followed by increasing students’ enthusiasm for study.

13.3.3 Bilingual Education

Based upon the field survey and our other observations, bilingual education and correspondent policies were key to the transitions envisioned and debate.

According to the bilingual education policy issued by the State Council and Qinghai Province, no matter which bilingual education model is adopted, Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School and RM School should hold Tibetan class for the Tibetan students. The problem arises that the teachers did not necessarily have the background or the commitment to do so (Wang, 2010).

Students in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School consist of Hui, Tibetan, and Salar ethnic groups. Part of the Hui belongs to “Hui of Kaligang,” who speak Tibetan in their daily life. However, there is no Tibetan class in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, and all courses are taught in Chinese. As for the Tibetan students, even for the “Hui of Kaligang,” Tibetan is their mother tongue. No matter in their families, communities, and schools, they speak Tibetan most of the time. Tibetan is their language for daily communication.

We found that teachers and principals did not have a comprehensive understanding of bilingual education. Principal M thought that there were three contradictions in bilingual education. Contradiction 1: “If the Tibetan students have Tibetan classes, students of Hui and Salar should have Arabic classes.” Contradictions 2: “The most important thing is learning Chinese.” Having Tibetan class is another burden to students. Contradiction 3: “The minority middle school has Tibetan course from the

beginning.” Principal M said: “They teach Tibetan from every simple letter.” So, it is “unnecessary” to study Tibetan in the elementary school. Vice Principal X said: “I don’t think it is a good idea to have Tibetan class, because the Tibetan language has some limitations. Compare with it, Chinese is better.” Another attitude is Neutrality. The only Tibetan teacher in the school said: “I didn’t learn Tibetan...I would feel glad if we have Tibetan class, if not, I feel glad, too.”

The students of RM School are all Tibetan from RM Tibetan village. The way of having Tibetan class is to add one Tibetan course from the third grade. In this regard, we found there are two opinions at least in school. One is that having Tibetan class is a kind of burden. Research group had a conversation with Principal M, Principal of RM School, assistant who teaching Chinese, Tibetan teacher T in the teachers’ dormitory, and this conversation mainly focused on the bilingual teaching in RM School. In the conversation, Principal M introduced the Tibetan courses in school: students of the third to fifth grade have Tibetan classes. Principal Yang and assistant Zhao believed that it could relief the burden for students of the first and second grade. However, they also said that the result of teaching in Chinese was not as good as expected.

Another opinion is from teacher T. “it is hard to be a Tibetan teacher.” We had face-to-face interview with Tibetan teacher T. She thought that the main problem was that the school did not attach importance to bilingual education instead of the problem of lacking teachers and teaching material which can be solved. In the Principal’s eyes, leaning Tibetan was a burden for students, and would affect the improvement of study. Therefore, he asked teachers not to teach Tibetan for the students of the first and second grades. But in teacher’s view, “I don’t think the principal is right.”

Tibetan teachers felt particularly embarrassed because bilingual education was not given enough attention. Teacher T said, “Tibetan teacher is only a form.” When the students asked her, “when do you teach us the Tibetan language”? She would feel upset. As for the attitude of parents, she said: “They are indifferent to Tibetan language, like or not.”

Unfortunately, these issues of attitude have been overlooked. In the “Report of Hualong on National Education Development (Bilingual Education),” Hualong Education Bureau believes that the county’s bilingual education has made “good performance and significant development.” (Based on Field Survey) Hualong Education Bureau also believes that the current problems in the county’s bilingual education include the problems of bilingual teaching system, the problems of bilingual teachers and the problems of lacking teaching software. “The Report” reflects that the educational department does not have a comprehensive understanding of bilingual teaching. Our analyses suggest that moving forward is complicated by the different language groups that need to be served especially when teachers and administrators have such mixed views and commitments to how to proceed.

13.3.4 Student Funding Matters: “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”

Student funding is a key element in moving forward. In accordance with relevant policies and regulations, with regard to the situation of Ashnu school district, students there are exempted from their textbooks expenses and incidental expenses, moreover, they also have the subsidy. Each needy boarding student will have 300 yuan per year, while 20 yuan per year for non-boarding needy students. What’s more, the stipend will be allocated to school (school district) every semester, and then distributed to the needy students by school in the form of cash (Based on Field Survey).

By analyzing the materials of 2006 “Report On the Implementation of ‘Two Exemptions and One Subsidy’ Policy By the Education Sector of Hualong” and 2009 “Report On the Guarantee Mechanism of Compulsory Education Fund of Hualong,” it can be learned that school is the final executor of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy, and has the authorization to decide how to use the fund.

However, according to our observations, Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School has its “own way” in the implementation of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy at the same time while the teachers in Ashnu School knew the “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” policy, many of them were not clear about its implementation. They only knew that textbooks are free, but had no idea of how much stipend students have. Students also said that they received no money from school, but their textbooks, notebooks, and after-school exercise books were all distributed by school, without charge.

So, where was the “one subsidy”? All the funds were managed by the school’s financial department. Accountant Ma of the school introduced the details of the funds management and use. As the school personnel stated students in the school are all free of charge, “as long as you enter the school, you have to pay nothing” which aimed at attracting more students. The way of realizing it includes: first, “adjust ‘one Subsidy.’” “Our school has adjust the ‘one Subsidy’ totally, sometimes even use our office outlay when the ‘Two Exemptions and One Subsidy’ is not enough.” About the supervision of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” Principal M said: “Every year, the Education Bureau will come to check, some regulations have to be carried out according to the policy, while some ... just need to meet the inspection.” Accountant Ma described the students’ living expense offered by Ashnu School: “electricity cost 15,000 yuan a month...more than 200,000 yuan per year. ...the financial assistance only covers 60% of students’ living expense, the rest 40% expense has to be saved from the our office outlay or saved by ourselves.” In order to solve the problem of food, the principal has to ask for help from the society and tries to use other ways, such as planting potatoes.

13.3.5 Boarding Schools

Boarding schools play an important role in the school and while some parents resist young students boarding, others recognize that the boarding schools solve some of the problems with lengthy and unsafe travel to and from the school as well as affording the opportunity for the students to be provided healthy meals, they also afford an opportunity for students to engage in extra-curriculum activities (Mao & Bai, 2008). Indeed, Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School has artistic activities in the multimedia classroom every Wednesday. The intention of Principal M was to keep students with various activities.

Apart from a small number of students living around school, most of the students in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School live in school. As the meals in school are delicious, some students living near the school choose to live in school. A student told us that: "I can choose not to live in school, but the meals in school are better." Among the students we interviewed, they could understand the purpose for boarding was to study. Their life in dormitory is also colorful. Questionnaire suggested that most of the students preferred to live in school. The results of questionnaire showed that 49 students thought that the wish of their parents wanting their children to live in boarding school was strong, seven thought the wish was comparatively strong, five thought it is OK, and 13 thought their parents did not want their children to go to boarding school.

Boarding students in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School have to go home every weekend. Previously, the school was responsible for sending students home, but later the school gave up the idea because of security risks. Now, students have to walk home most of the time. Through the questionnaire we learned that 29 students need to take over an hour back home, 13 students take about 2 h, and 12 students take more than 2 h.

13.3.6 Teachers

Teachers in the school have to teach as well as take care of students. Usually, they have to get up before 6 o'clock. Some teachers cannot have rest until 10 o'clock at night (Based on Field Survey). From the interviews with teachers, we knew that the management for teachers in the boarding schools was demanding. As the teachers suggested the most important thing in boarding schools was safety and as Principal M said: "security is the most headachy and worrying thing."

In terms of teacher preparation, from the description of Vice Principal X, there are two categories of the teachers training in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School. One is organized by the County's Education Bureau, and the other is school-based training. Among the nine teachers answering the questionnaire, two of them attended the training for five times, one for three times, one for two times, one for one time, and three of them did not attend any training.

We found that the “reference standard” for selecting teachers to attend training was subjective. “First, better mandarin, second, better moral quality, third, neatly dressed.” Most of all, it is important to “send young teachers and teachers of special posts to attend training.” About the will and needs for training, every teacher should consider the training content and time based on their own profession and specialty. The opportunity for teachers to attend training is much less, thus, independent study is an important way for teachers to be improved (Chen & Sude, 2005).

Principal M who had experienced the training for himself noted that “more efforts should be taken to the training of teachers’ and called for the teachers of several boarding schools to have school-based programs where teachers listen to the teachers’ lectures of the central school. However the experience of the teachers was varied. For example, Teacher J attended this year’s training in Lanzhou. She said she still had some feelings to this training. The training mainly focused on the new curriculum, and the way of training was that “participants watch while a teacher demonstrates.” About the will and need of attending training, she said that the teachers of special posts were lacking in teaching experience, and she hoped to have some training about teachers’ skills and teaching method. On the other hand, she believed it was necessary to enhance their knowledge of educational theory.

On the time of training, she recounted her personal experience. In her opinion, some intensive training can not achieve fine results. She said the school-based training was not the real training because it only needed to make some notes to cope with the inspection.

13.3.7 New Curriculum Reforms

Curriculum reform has been the focus of educators and schools throughout China. According to the materials provided by the Education Bureau, the New Curriculum Reform started from the year 2004 in Hualong. Ten school districts (schools) began the New Curriculum Reform first, including five middle schools, five elementary school districts. In the September, 2005, the first grades of elementary schools and middle schools in the non-reform school districts (schools) began to use new curriculum standard and new teaching materials (Li, 2005, pp. 25–28).

Related materials had comprehensive description on the measures of implementing new curriculum, the detailed rules, and management systems, showing that the whole county was “making great effort to promote New Curriculum Reform,” and “achieving good results.” However, Mr. Qiang, Deputy Director of Hualong Education Bureau, commented the New Curriculum Reform in an interview like this: “The New Curriculum Reform started from 2005, and we have made great efforts, but the effect is not obvious.” In accordance with the overall planning of county’s Education Bureau, Ashnu school district started the New Curriculum Reform following the first reform schools, that is the first grade of the elementary schools began to use new curriculum standard and new teaching materials since 2005. But they noted that there were many contradictions and conflicts in the process of implementing the

“New Curriculum Reform” for the teachers in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School (Based on Field Survey).

First, there is contradiction between the “New Curriculum Reform” and the students’ basic knowledge. The “New Curriculum Reform” advocates that all the teachers should start heuristic method of teaching, guiding students in active thinking and participation (Wang, 2009c). But a teacher said in an interview “sometimes it is a little bit difficult for students here. If we don’t explain some questions in the text carefully, the students will not understand them quite well.” “The purpose of doing homework is to train students’ ability of understanding, but it is not easy for most of students.”

Second, there is contradiction between the “New Curriculum Reform” and teaching schedule. The “New Curriculum Reform” encourages students to explore willingly, to practice a lot and to learn to cooperate with others (Jin, 2009). But a teacher said in an interview, “Sometimes I use the method of “New Curriculum Reform, but sometimes there is not enough time for me to do so because it would take a long time for group discussion.” “Some activities and discussions are hard to carry on.”

Third, there is contradiction between the “New Curriculum Reform” and teaching quality. The “New Curriculum Reform” stresses on turning “complex, difficult, partial, and old” teaching materials into “flexible” knowledge (Xiong & Yan, 2007). But a teacher said in an interview that “the textbooks of ‘New Curriculum Reform’ are easy, but the examination is difficult.” “Following the new curriculum, students will benefit from it and they will study and play easily, at the same time, teachers also feel relax, but it is hard to improve students’ score. So there are some conflicts.”

13.4 Discussion

13.4.1 Adjustment/Policy Implementation

From the survey, we found that the problems in the process of implementation-related policies are mainly as follows.

First, policy planning appeared to be incomplete and subsequently limited in implementation. Perhaps as the policy is not specific, in the process of grass roots implementation is weakened and quite mixed (Ye, 2010). Most significant, the implementation or the layout adjustment of Hualong does not provide reasons of why keeping or merging these schools, and there is no specific written instruction of specific operation, assured measures, and relevant strategies in the process of closing or merging schools.

Second, there is a lack of money and poor hardware equipment. The central government does not provide special funds for implementing the policy. Therefore, the most difficult thing for carrying out the plan is the money. Although there are project funds and social assistance, the financial shortage still remains in the implementation of plans.

Third, interests of various groups are not being addressed. According to the survey of the case study, views and interest conflicts between governments, schools, families and communities, who are all connected with the implementation of layout adjustment/implementation. Only when good communications between various groups are done, implementation of layout adjustment can be guaranteed (Luo, 2009).

Fourth, the principal bears great pressure in the implementation of layout adjustment. In the trial process of layout adjustment in Hualong County, there were neither technical personnel nor specific recommendation or guidance, thus, the principal became the last and key figure in the implementation. Much specific work had to be done by him and sometimes occurred in a trial and error fashion without a full understanding or shared understanding of or the resources needed to address all of the elements that needed to be addressed.

13.4.2 Bilingual Education

Our research suggested that bilingual education may be faltering due to conflicting views on how to address the needs of the diverse student body attending the school. The nature of the policy is incomplete and there is a lack of comprehensive understanding on bilingual education to meet the needs at the school (He, 2009). Specifically, the principal and teachers do not have a comprehensive understanding on bilingual education, the school does not have a reasonable schedule for bilingual classes and is lacking in resources and teachers with a repertoire of strategies or preparation to address the needs of the students. The supervision system of bilingual education is inadequate, and the principal and teachers have the right to change the hours and plans of ethnic language classes. The system of bilingual education is not complete, and the transition of ethnic language class between primary and secondary schools is not smooth.

13.4.3 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

According to the implementation in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, the problems in “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” are mainly as the followings. First, financial support to primary schools should be increased. This subsidy standard is absolutely low for poor ethnic minority areas and schools. Second, the way to use the funds needs to be reviewed. In term of the reality in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School, the principal adjusts the “one Subsidy” to meet the needs of all students, but this needs to be weighed against the principle of giving subsidy to the needy students.

13.4.4 Boarding Schools

From the survey, we found that there are the following problems in the process of developing boarding schools.

First, there are not enough managing staffs. In boarding schools, students live in schoolyard, and the management is closed-end. The management involves in a series of work such as students' living, meal, and security. Teachers in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School are responsible for teaching as well as students' daily life.

Second, payment for teachers is low. The purpose of merging schools and constructing boarding schools in rural areas is to integrate educational resources. Teachers in rural areas as an important factor in educational resources should receive special attention and care (Dong, 2009). However, the payment for teachers in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School is very low.

Third, the lack of basic facilities. In recent years, governments at all levels are increasing investment in boarding schools. By "Supportive Teaching Project," "Renovated Project" and "Construction of Rural Boarding Schools," Hualong is actively improving educational basic condition. However, the basic condition is still far behind the needs of development.

13.4.5 Teacher Training

From survey, we found that the environment of profession development for the teachers in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School should be improved. On the one hand, teachers have no time to study further because of the heavy managing and teaching tasks. On the other hand, there is no opportunity to learn because of the limited learning resources. We also found that young teachers in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School are all willing to study. Although the training opportunities for teachers have increased in recent years, the training mode has some flaws. With the deepening of training, particularly in the phase of renewal and expansion of profession knowledge, the training sometimes is not practical and just a form (Ma, 2010).

13.4.6 New Curriculum Reforms

The New Curriculum Reform just begins in Ashnu Central Complete Elementary School. When the school began to use new materials to test teachers teaching philosophy and to promote new teaching methods, teachers felt stressful, which was resulted from the contradiction between the New Curriculum Reform and education actuality and the contradiction between the New Curriculum Reform and education system.

However, at present, the main contradiction lies in the coordination of teachers' profession level and the requirement of new curriculum (Wang, 2007). For ethnic minority teachers, they feel unprepared to address the direction and requirements proposed by the New Curriculum Reform.

13.5 Solutions and Recommendations

13.5.1 Adjustment and Implementation

For Implementation to be successful, it will depend on the following aspects.

First, practical planning should take into the consideration of the school scale, educational effectiveness, and student population. The planning should not be implemented overnight but in a periodical manner in a manner that addresses the complexities and demands of the transitions, funding and resources, reform demands, and development needs (He, 2007).

Second, implementation or layout adjustment should be guided by the principle of appropriateness instead of being misled by the concept where size and immediate results are viewed as more favorable.

Third, social, governmental, educational, and community factors are essential to school layout adjustment and implementation. Therefore, accommodation and consultation should be considered of all parties should be viewed as key.

13.5.2 Bilingual Education

According to the field survey data, we believe that bilingual education needs to consider the following aspects. First, concrete and operable language policies suitable for ethnic language diversity should be formulated but implemented on a voluntary basis in regions inhabited by ethnic minorities though related laws and regulations. Second, bilingual teachers are needed. The shortage of bilingual teachers is an issue of priority in the course of bilingual education for ethnic groups in China, which so far mainly constraint to primary and secondary education in ethnic minority regions (Li, 2009). So, higher education's role of providing bilingual teachers for bilingual education should be reinforced. Third, bilingual textbooks are needed. Language textbooks and references at different levels should be developed based on local ethnic language, culture environment, and willingness of ethnic groups so as to enable students of ethnic groups to learn and use both Chinese and their own ethnic languages (Wang, 2009b).

13.5.3 Policy of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”

Out of the goal of common prosperity of all ethnics, the government should give more favorable financial policies to ethnic education, in particular to those poor ethnic regions and backward ethnic schools (Zhang, 2009). On the other hand, whether there are sound evaluation and supervision mechanisms of “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy,” and whether “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” is in accordance with school’s practical situation, have direct impact on the implementation of this policy.

13.5.4 Boarding Schools

The quality of students experience and safety within boarding schools need to be paramount. In turn, comprehensive management system and emphasis on management are keys to the quality of boarding schools (Sude, 2003). On the one hand, schools must establish sound and fitting management system and implement the management effectively. On the other hand, related departments should explore effective management for boarding schools. Managing and servicing staffs should be added, whose salary and work should be clearly defined.

13.5.5 Teacher Training

According to analyses including the views of the teachers interviewed, the following are the suggestions to improve training effectiveness. First, trainings of different modes suitable for local situations should be encouraged. Practical training plans and suitable textbooks for training should be made and selected according to local need (Wang, 2009a). Second, training content should be based on teachers’ needs in ethnic minority regions. Trainings related to education laws and regulations, class management, teacher’s professional level, and Mandarin proficiency should be reinforced.

13.5.6 New Curriculum

Based on this research, new means of implementing the new curriculum are suggested to solve conflicts between the new curriculum and the elementary education in ethnic minority regions. These means should take local conditions into consideration and

reinforce education regarding ethnic history and culture, ethnic language, and tradition (Sun, 2009). For example, curricula of various kinds including the ones of local ethnic culture can be integrated by inventing school curriculum and extra-curriculum activities, with which ethnic cultures and history interweave.

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Chapter 14

Case 11—Hualong Ethnic Middle School, Qinghai Province



14.1 Background

14.1.1 Ecology-Culture

Located in the east of Qinghai Province, Hualong Hui Autonomous County has been named as the key county in need of national poverty alleviation and development. Hualong Hui Autonomous County is 110 km away from Xining, the provincial capital. Hualong County has 17 towns and townships (including 5 Tibetan townships), 2 administrative committees, and 366 administrative villages. The total population is 24,350,000, of which 210,712 are farmers. There are 12 ethnic groups, such as Hui, Han, Tibetan, Salar. Hui people account for 52.82% of the total population, Tibetans 21.02%, Han 21.01%, Salar 4.93%, and the others 0.22%. The distance from the east to the west is 98.5 km, and the distance from the south to the west is 48.5 km. The total area is 2749 km², which means 86 people in each square km. The total agrarian area is 432 km² (650,000 Chinese mu). The altitude of the county is between 1884 and 4485 meters with continental plateau climate. The annual average temperature is 2.2 °C, and the annual average rainfall is 470 mm. There are just 89 frost-free days in a year.¹

Hualong County's economy is dominated by agriculture, and its main products are wheat, barley, peas, rapeseed, potatoes, and other crops. Fruits and vegetables are rich along the Yellow River which passes through the county. The main industrial products are aluminum, nickel, silicon carbide, and mineral water.

Livestock is the county's dominant industries. The total grassland in the county is 1716 km² (2,580,000 mu) while the number of cattle and sheep is 420,000. The county has formed its own industrial system, in which smelting, breweries; power generation, building materials, etc., are the backbone enterprises.²

¹Above data sources from the website: <http://www.qh.gov.cn/>.

²Above data sources from the website: <http://www.hdhl.gov.cn/>.

In the early periods after liberation in 1949, there were 75 primary schools in Hualong County, including 21 primary schools belonging to Islamic Education Promotion Association, 5 county central schools, 49 national schools (which included Mongolian and Tibetan primary schools). In 1965, Hualong County had 165 full-time primary schools, with 7666 students. The “Cultural Revolution” wreaked havoc with Hualong County’s education. Teaching disorder, reduction of teaching materials, and the persecution of many teachers had almost paralyzed the whole education. Beginning in 1978, school leadership and administration system were gradually improved as the education system was restored. In 1980, there were 19,743 primary and secondary schools students in the county, of which 15,941 were primary school students, 3145 junior high school students, and 657 high school students. In Hualong County, school-age children enrollment rate reached 65.8% and junior middle school enrollment rate reached 31.8% (Zhu, 1993, pp. 18–21).

In 1985, the county Party committees and the county government jointly held a working meeting on the county’s education management system and took the lead to implement teaching system reform in Qinghai Province. The rights of management, personnel and finance for rural primary and secondary schools were decentralized to townships as they assumed responsibility for the management of fixed number of teachers and the fixed sum of financial outlays. They did so within three managerial layers, (county or bureau, township or town, and village and community) (Zhu, 1993, pp. 26–28). In recent years, Hualong County has tried to combine the “Three Faces” with the three principles, that is. “Education is the foundation,” “Hualong County will be developed through science and education,” “give priority to the development of science and education and try to achieve satisfactory education.” (Based on Field Survey) As a result, compulsory education has gradually consolidated at the same time as senior middle school education has steadily increased. Hualong’s advancement has been viewed positively with the education of young children and adults, and the quality of teaching undergoing continuously upgrading by enhancing the quality of teaching staff, and the improvement of the educational environment.

14.1.2 Overall Development of Case Study Schools

Hualong Ethnic Middle School was founded in 1983 and senior middle school education in 1993. It is the only bilingual boarding schools in Hualong County and is responsible for the “bilingual” teaching tasks in 17 counties and towns. The school is located in Jiahe Industrial Area, 2 km away from the county. The schoolyard covers an area of 25.6 mu, with a building area of 7291 m².³

The county witnessed the first high school graduation in 1995 with 24 high school graduates, of which 14 participated in college entrance examination and with 9 passing the exam. 1996 witnessed the second high school graduation with 15 high school graduates.

³See Footnote 2.

In 1998, through the efforts by school leaders, the ethnic minority students could take the bilingual education, and enjoy preferential policies for ethnic minorities, such as participation in an examination to test their Chinese and the common college entrance examination. The school strengthened the teaching of the Tibetan language, and English teaching as well, which paved the way for the minority students to potentially obtain access to University.

The development of Hualong Ethnic Middle School is far from being smooth. Since 1999, the number of enrolled students underwent a sharp decline. From 2001 to 2005, Hualong Ethnic Middle School strived to explore the way which fit the development of national schools. It phased out regular classes and strengthened the “bilingual” teaching. With the support of senior government personnel and support from various segments of the communities, it has now developed into a school with 1502 students, 98 faculty members, and 23 classes. It is a boarding school with completely bilingual schooling. The curriculum was set by “Tibetan and Chinese Bilingual” system, which is “8 + 1” (8 basic courses taught in Chinese, plus a Tibetan language) (Li, 2005, pp. 31–36).

Hualong Ethnic Middle School covers an area of 25.6 mu. The gross area of the school construction is 5460 m². It currently has 21 classrooms, 1 computer room, 1 multimedia classroom, and 1 library, 75 computers, and 7672 books of all kinds, accounting for 8.6 books per capita.⁴ It spares no pains to create classroom teaching model and educational management model which can meet the requirements of national education. It has carried out a variety of teaching and research activities to promote the teachers’ professionalism.

Hualong Ethnic Middle School urges ethnic minority students to carry forward song and dance their own ethnic groups. It has recruited capable teachers, and strengthened education and training for promoting students’ strong points. It has carried out class meetings on a variety of issues, singing competitions, various branches of knowledge contests, which result in a strong cultural atmosphere. Since its foundation, “solidarity, diligence, dedication to study, enterprising” is Hualong Ethnic Middle School’s motto. It has established an operation philosophy, which as they state: “exists for the development of students, develop for the existence of students.” The aim of the school is to “Let every student have a chance for success; Let every teacher have the stage for creative teaching; Let every family enjoy the joy of return.” (Based on Field Survey) It purports to be invested in continuously deepening the educational reform, opening up educational channels, and expanding space for running the school.

Up to the time of our study, enrollment had reached 1502 in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. The majority of the students are Tibetans, and there are also some Tu, Han, and Salar. It is the only bilingual boarding school in Hualong County. It has Tibetan lessons and adopts Type II model of bilingual education (Based on Field Survey). The students mainly come from the east and west. Different students’ proficiency of Chinese and Tibetan are greatly uneven. Students use Mandarin in class, the Tibetan

⁴See Footnote 2.

language and dialect of Qinghai in everyday exchange, and Tibetan language in Tibetan lessons.

As of March 2010, the total number of faculty in Hualong Ethnic Middle School is 98, 38 of which are female. Eighty eight are full-time teachers, and 35 of them are female. The teachers are of Han, Tibetan, Hui, Salar, and Tu (Based on Field Survey). As a boarding school located in remote area, Hualong Ethnic Middle School lacks basic facilities. Teachers live in an extremely hard condition. There are no teachers' quarters, so most teachers live in the county or rent a house near the school. The school is about 3 km from the center of Hualong County, so teachers often take a taxi at their own expense when commuting from school to the county. Since there are no specialized teachers to take care of and manage students' everyday life, teachers in Ethnic Middle School must fulfill the task of student dormitories management, overseeing students' security, and assuming rather onerous teaching task as a result of teaching responsibility and expectations relative to supervision of students who are boarding. The school manages and evaluates the teachers through a series of regulations, which causes great pressures on the teachers (Based on Field Survey). A lack of sufficient infrastructure, resources, and high expectations and constant assessment of the teachers result in a lack of support for teaching which are coupled with poor living conditions for them.

14.2 Survey Method and Procedure

In 2010, the research team arrived at Hualong County in May of that year. We first familiarized ourselves with the Hualong County's basic situation. We contacted the county Bureau of Education through the help of Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission. Accompanied by the project director of the county Bureau of Education, we arrived at the case study school, Hualong Ethnic Middle School. Over an 11 days' period, we carried out field research of Hualong Ethnic Middle School. The field research involved the entire research team and included interviews, observation forms, and questionnaires. Through field survey, the team was able to examine in depth the process and results of the implementation of basic education policy for ethnic minorities, the financial support (i.e., "Two Exemption and one Subsidy)," boarding system, New Curriculum Reform, bilingual education, teacher training, and integration of ethnic culture into the school. Our goals were multifaceted and included to discover successful examples which could be popularized, but also constraints, gaps, and challenges.

Thanks to the cooperation of officers from Hualong County Education Bureau and all the teachers and students from Hualong Ethnic Middle School, we were able to obtain relatively comprehensive data. Certainly, there were some unexpected activities, such as commencement and of Senior High Class 3 meeting and people's schedules, to which we needed to adjust and accommodate.

14.3 Focus on Basic Education Policy for Minority

14.3.1 *Boarding School System*

As we have indicated Hualong County is one of the key counties of national poverty alleviation and development project. 79% of the total population is ethnic minorities, such as Hui, Han, Tibetan, and Salar. Poor natural condition, low level of economic and social development is the county's basic situation. Population density is 86 people per square kilometer. The average distance from one village to another is 5.7 km. The average distance from one township to another is 11.9 km. Hualong Ethnic Middle School is the only completely bilingual boarding school in Hualong County. The school covers an area of 25.6 mu and the gross area of the school construction is 5460 m². It currently has 1502 enrolled students. There is one female dormitory building, three male dormitory buildings, and three teaching buildings, among which the main teaching building was built in 1985.⁵

With the development of boarding schools in ethnic regions, it has played a positive role in ensuring the completion of compulsory education for students in ethnic regions. But in the process of implementation, it also has brought about a lot of unexpected difficulties and obstacles to local governments, schools, parents and students.

Challenges for the Principal: Crowded Dormitories and Dining Hall

There are more than 1000 people living in the schoolyard in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. First of all, this is a challenge to basic facilities, such as dormitories, dining hall, and hot water room. Since 2005, the number of enrolled students has increased dramatically from four or five hundred to more than one thousand, but investment in and construction of infrastructures like the dormitory and dining hall lag far behind the pace of students' growth. There are now three teaching buildings. The male dormitory buildings include only three rows of single-storey houses. In some dormitories, a dozen beds are to accommodate more than 50 students, and in others, even 60 or 70 students live in one dormitory (Based on Field Survey). There is only one female dormitory building, which used to be a single-store house. It was not until last year that the girls moved into the new female apartment building.

The problems with space extend to the dining facilities. There are only two places for meals—one is for the students, the other is for teachers. The number of population in the school has increased greatly, but one dining hall can only accommodate six or seven hundred people, so teachers' canteen begins to serve the students. Each time after class, the students have to wait in a long line before getting their meals. The so-called dining hall is only a rough room, with only 3–5 cooks (Based on Field Survey). There are not any tables or chairs in the canteens or dormitories. The students generally bring the meals from the canteens back to their dormitories, and then lean against the windowsill or squat at the door of the dormitory to eat.

⁵See Footnote 2.

In addition, food safety and sanitation represent a significant hidden danger. And, as the principal said the school canteen cannot accommodate so many students and some students would like to buy food outside school. Therefore, many students eat outside the school. This imposes major challenges to the school management. One is the food sanitation and safety, while the other is the potential of some conflicts.

Teachers' Voice: Teachers Are vulnerable

To be a teacher in Hualong Ethnic Middle School is not an easy task. In addition to the already heavy commitment to teaching tasks, teachers here in the school have to bear the responsibilities of managing the boarding system and students' everyday life because of the shortage of teachers. An ordinary teacher is at least in charge of the lessons for two classes and is responsible for the management of two students' dormitories as well. Within one semester, every teacher has a two-week duty, during which the teachers live in the duty room and are responsible for care within the students' dormitories. Another principal said: "*The workload of teachers in boarding schools is equivalent to three or even four times that of the teachers in the non-boarding schools. Our teachers have been overworking.*" Schools do not have specific quarters for teachers, many teachers live in the county, and others rent an apartment.

Heavy management responsibilities, together with teaching tasks, can exhaust the teachers. Many teachers are so busy with the work in the school that they cannot take care of their own families. For example, one young female teacher with a two year old was forced to send her child to be with her parents as she struggled to cope with the responsibilities at the school. A few months later when she came to visit her child, she experienced a loss of emotional connection. As the Tibetan language teacher who has worked for more than 10 years and once taught in ethnic middle school for three years said the teacher in charge has a very heavy load including roles as the teacher, administrator, policeman, nanny and overseeing the students' safety (Based on Field Survey). This entails be sure that they do not leave the school and behave themselves including not smoking or consuming alcohol.

Students: Tough Winter in the Boarding School

With high altitude and extremely short spring, the winter in Hualong County is harsh and very, very long. It is often that the mountains remain covered with a thick layer of snow, and temperatures are still very low even in May or June. Stoves are needed for heating indoors. Since the conditions of accommodation and sanitation in Hualong Ethnic Middle School are very harsh, the winter is quite difficult for boarding students. And, although the winter in Hualong County is very cold, there is no heating equipment in students' dormitories due to financial and managerial reasons. When it is especially cold, most students will fill the bottle with boiled water to keep warm (Based on Field Survey). Students face the harsh and difficult environment in a very courageous manner. In one teacher words, the students are patient of hardships.

Self-enclosed Management

The location of Hualong Ethnic Middle School is special. It is not in the center of Hualong County but near the suburbs, with high walls all around the school. The school gate seldom opens. During school hours, it is generally closed. Nearby side door is open only during the break at noon or in the afternoon. The school officer said that this is to protect the safety of students. On the one hand, it is to prohibit students to come in and out at night. On the other hand is to limit the access of youths outside the school to avoid troubles. Every night, there are at least eight school officers and teachers, each of whom will be responsible for a district in the school (Based on Field Survey). The officers and the teachers will count the number of boarding students on time and make sure that students have gone to bed. Some suggested that sometimes students secretly climb over the school wall and surf the Internet outside.

There are mixed views on the security of students. As one teacher suggested it is questionable whether the self-enclosed management is good for students. Too stringent rules and regulations may cause students' antagonism toward schooling (Yu, 2004). It is notable that there is no psychological teacher who can give counseling to students and a lack of activities after school hours for the students. One teacher proposed that the school should spend some money in providing films, CCTV news, lectures or some recreational activities for the students so that the students may not want to go out of the school anymore.

In boarding schools, being homesick is quite common for students. Some students are very young and are not used to the school life at the beginning. They are poorly fed, so they miss their parents and food made by their parents. Because of high fares, it is very difficult for many poor mountain students to go back home. As one student stated the costs of traveling home place a heavy burden on my parents who may be struggling financially. He told us: "Sometimes I go home every two weeks, sometimes once a week. Sometimes fare... my father dig *Cordyceps sinensis* and my mother work at home. She was very tired. My heart aches for her. It cost ten yuan to go home every time."

One student talked about banging on the wall with his hands. Because he has no friends, he would do the same when sometimes he lost books. He said, "Bang the wall several times and then I will be all right." He told us he had this dream:

We sat in a bus and then a gang of bandit stopped the bus. I called home, but no one answered. I was particularly anxious and woke up all of a sudden. The dream was probably at one or two o'clock. I was a little bit scared. I stood up for a moment and then I became all right and forgot the dream. The next day I told my classmates about the dream. They say things like that do exist. I do not know whether it exists. We won't know.

Behind Parents' Meeting

One teacher told us one of her experiences: “Once a student got into the trouble. I asked his parents to see me. I intended to criticize the parents. But I found that the parents scolded the student severely in Tibetan, I nearly burst into tears. The parents felt that the student has let them down and cried out.” This event let her understand that the Tibetan parents attach great importance to their children’s education and want their children to go to college.

The income of many Tibetan families mainly comes from farming and digging *Cordyceps sinensis*. After the *Cordyceps sinensis* season, usually the young man in a family will find some odd jobs. Even so, the income is still very low. Most income comes from digging *Cordyceps sinensis*, but “If you have got the *Cordyceps sinensis* through digging, you’ll get money. Or else, no income at all,” a 52-year-old Tibetan man says. His eighty-year-old mother suffered from ileums. She has been seeking medical treatment since last year and has not fully recovered from surgery. Because of the financial difficulties, now only the third son could continue the study in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. That father would also like to let his daughter go to college.

The man told us that his daughter’s school performance is very good and she is also a very good girl. She lives frugally in the school. In order to save money, she rarely buys food from the school canteen and usually eats steamed bun brought from home. Each time when she comes home, she is ready to help him with his work. She gets home at Friday and weeds the farm on Saturday. Since she has lessons on Sunday afternoon, he would ask her to come back school on Sunday morning. His daughter always would do her best to help.

One day she called the teacher in charge of the class to ask for permission of absence from school, because she wants to weed the farm. It began to rain unexpectedly. She said that if she had known it would rain, she would have returned school so as not to miss the lessons. She is willing to work, but I will not let her do so. I told her that her task is to study, not to work in the farm. I asked:” If you can’t pass the entrance exam for college, are you willing to be an ordinary people? No, you aren’t. You can’t weed or reap the farm. Your task is to study, not to work in the farm.

14.3.2 Bilingual Education

There are 2 modes of bilingual education in Tibetan region, Hualong County—Chinese and Tibetan classes. In one mode, in pastoral areas, apart from separate Chinese, all the other classes are taught in Tibetan. Students learn Tibetan from the Grade 1; It is only at Grade 3 or 4 that students start learning Chinese. The other mode, Chinese is learned from the Grade 1, and there is no Tibetan learning (Based on Field Survey).

Students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School mainly come from the west and east. The west refers to all the way down from Xining. The students in the west live in the mixed community of Han and Tibetan. Their Chinese is good, and they do not

learn Tibetan at childhood. The east refers to Taja and Jinyuan where Tibetan is the dominant language. Many students began to study the Tibetan from Grade 1 or 3. Their Tibetan is good, but their Chinese is poor. Students' uneven proficiency of Chinese and Tibetan imposes a great challenge to bilingual teachers.

Hualong is a Hui Autonomous County, with both livestock and farming. The total population is 245,800 while 124,300 are Muslim, accounting for 52% of the total. 40,000 are Tibetans. There are 12 ethnic groups, such as Hui, Han, Tibetan, and Salar.⁶

This is a Hui autonomous county, so nobody attaches importance to Tibetan lessons. Although there are trained Tibetan language teachers, the principal won't let them teach Tibetan. Tibetan lesson is just a camouflage. Although there are bilingual lessons on school's curriculum, actually there are very few Tibetan lessons every day and these Tibetan lessons are scheduled to be carried out in reading-aloud in the morning or self-study in the evening. So most students' proficiency of Tibetan is far from good.

—by some teachers

Communication Between Tibetan Students and Non-Tibetan Teachers

Most students are Tibetans, and they often use Tibetan in mutual exchanges. In Tibetan lessons, besides Tibetan, they generally speak Mandarin. But in other lessons, the teachers use Mandarin in teaching. So, there are some difficulties in communication between Tibetan students and some teachers do not know Tibetan. As one Tibetan teacher told us communication barriers caused by language barrier lead to estrangement, especially in communication between teachers in charge of boarding management and students.

Dealing with Language Differences

Since students' levels of Tibetan and Chinese are uneven, the school has been trying to stream students in different classes. Students will take a class-division examination first, and then will be put into different classes according to their Tibetan, Chinese, and maths scores, among which Tibetan score is the major reference (Based on Field Survey).

Hualong Ethnic Middle School promotes the use of Chinese, and there is Mandarin speech contest each semester. Since the learning of both Chinese and Tibetan at the same time might mutually interfere with each other, the school's teaching and research center will promote interaction of the two groups, Tibetan teaching and research group and Chinese teaching and research group. There are also some teaching assessments; that is, Tibetan and Chinese teachers listen to each other's lessons and try to find out problems.

Despite these efforts, a lack of teachers whose major language is Tibetan is a problem. According to the ratio of teachers to students set by the state is 1–23 (Xu, 2009). There are 1502 students and 12 Tibetan language teachers, including 10 teachers whose major is Tibetan language (Based on Field Survey). So, Tibetan

⁶See Footnote 2.

language teachers are not enough. This has limited the improvement of the quality of bilingual teaching in this School.

Besides students' uneven bilingual proficiency and a limited number of bilingual teachers, other factors appear to increase the difficulties incurred by the teachers.

One teacher studied Tibetan and English in Tibetan in Ledu Normal School in 1996. After graduation, she taught in another town of Hualong County for 5 years. In 2001, she was transferred to Hualong Ethnic Middle School and has been teaching physics. She speaks Chinese since childhood and learned Tibetan for 3 years in Ledu Normal School (Based on Field Survey). She speaks Chinese in class and Tibetan after class. She remains less than confident about her Chinese language abilities and also is concerned that the students may be disadvantaged as they pursue jobs after graduation. As she noted, Tibetan students mainly write in Tibetan in tests. After graduation, however, the students need to pass tests in Chinese before getting a job, but their Chinese lag behind other people.

Students and Their Parents' Strong Emotion for Tibetan

Through questionnaire and in-depth interviews, we understood that the majority of Tibetan students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School chose Tibetan language lessons when choosing the lessons that they like most and especially like Tibetan language teacher.

As the Tibetan students stated:

Tibetan is the language of our people.

We all love to learn Tibetan language. I choose the school myself, not my parents.

If you don't know the writings, you can't learn a language well.

One student is a Tibetan girl and is in Junior 3 now. She has a younger brother and a younger sister, both of whom are studying in Qunke No.4 School in Hualong County. There are not Tibetan classes in No.4 School. She wanted to study the Tibetan writing, so she asks her parents to send her to Hualong Ethnic Middle School.

When talking about why she learns Tibetan, she says, "We do not understand Qinghai's Mandarin, I watch TV and want to learn that language. I feel that if you don't know the writing, you can't learn a language well."

In contrast, the inverse is often the case for the Han students. For example, Nana is Han Chinese. Besides her, there are two other Han students in the class. All the others are Tibetans. Her best friend is a Han Chinese, and she also has a Tibetan friend named Raj. When asked about lessons that she dislikes, she says that they are mathematics and Tibetan because she suggests that these two are very complicated. Usually, she asks her classmates after class.

I didn't learn Tibetan in primary school. There are many Tibetan people in the place where I live. People in our village speak Tibetan language with Tibetan people. In my family, my parents also can speak Tibetan. Parents sent me to Hualong Ethnic Middle School. It's good for us to learn Tibetan so that we can speak Tibetan. I felt the difference between different ethnic groups. Especially when they're cursing me and said that I'm a Han Chinese, I feel very sad and want to go to ordinary schools at that time.

—Nana, a Han student in Hualong Ethnic Middle School

She speaks Chinese with her parents at home and generally speaks Tibetan with outside Tibetan people and people in the village. There are 12 Han families in the village. In the class, she mainly speaks Tibetan. Sometimes she wants to speak Chinese, but nobody in her class understands.

Tibetan language teachers speak Tibetan and Chinese language teachers speak Chinese. I hope that teachers will speak Mandarin, because I am a Han Chinese. Sometimes I do not understand Tibetan language teachings and feel quite sad. I will ask the teachers after class.

—Nana, a Han student in, Hualong Ethnic Middle School

The cultural connections to languages is quite strong and often results in tensions with which students often have to wrestle. For example, Zhuoma is in Junior 2 this year. She finished her primary study in the village where she lived and she came to Hualong Ethnic Middle School at the 1st year of junior middle school. She has two sisters. One is in Xining, the other is in Hualong No.1 School. Her grandfather wanted her to study Tibetan so she was sent here. Zhuoma returns home after class and studies. If the content that she is reciting is not Tibetan, her grandpa will scold her. He would say: "If you don't study Tibetan well, why should I have sent you to Hualong Ethnic Middle School?" Zhuoma has to recite Tibetan. Zhuoma likes Tibetan language and but she also believes that learning Chinese is the same as learning Tibetan. They all speak Tibetan at home and don't want her to study Tibety TibeAs she stated: "I, she stated: anguage and but she also believes that learning Chin Among those students who study in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, some of them chose to be here on their own, others are sent here by their parents because their parents want them to know their own language and culture. It is as if to know one's is their Ethnic Identity.

14.3.3 New Curriculum Reforms

In interview with an officer from education research center of the Education Bureau of the County, he told us some obstacles to the implementation of the new curriculum locally.

First of all is the quality of teachers. Teachers at local schools are usually citizen-managed teachers who do not receive the normal remuneration from the government. Their level of education is limited and it is hard for them to accept new teaching concept, especially a completely change of thoughts. Therefore, we implemented stratified training for teachers in a successive way in the County. The next is the students. The students are all from ethnic minority areas, and many students have difficulties in Chinese, even in writing self-introduction and written request for leave in Chinese. The last is the lack of some facilities, but I believe that the State will step up its efforts in this area while the further implementation of the New Curriculum Reform.

The education research center in Hualong County has organized some training on New Curriculum Reform. The education research center conducts training and researches through observation of teaching practice, teaching content training, integral study, CD, and case study. The training targets the new curriculum emphasizing on the concept change (Peng & Jin, 2010). For example, what is the new curriculum? How to teach? How to carry out teaching activities?

From the interviews with teachers and students from Ethnic Middle School, we find that the policy is not acclimatized in Ethnic Middle School as a result of the

teachers not digesting the New Curriculum Reform. Some teachers think that students' knowledge level is too low and that the teaching method is so deeply rooted that it would be really hard to address the new curriculum. In other words, they claim that the materials of New Curriculum Reform are too hard to adapt. In the questionnaire for teachers in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, the answers to the question "I think that I fully understand the teaching concept of the new curriculum" is as follows: 1.9% of the teachers' answer is "completely no"; 7.7% of the teachers' answer is "not fully"; 60% of the teachers' answer is "just close to"; 23% of the teachers' answer is "almost."

According to the interview, many teachers would like to accept training for new curriculum as many find it to present major challenges. According to the basic requirements of the New Curriculum Reform, students are the subjects of lessons, and cooperation of exploration and interaction between teachers and students is an important aspect promoted by the new curriculum (Ma, 2004). When we asked teachers about difficulties in the implementation of new curriculum, almost half of them blamed the students for their poor educational background which makes it quite hard to engage them. A teacher has been teaching Chinese for more than 10 years told us that first of all textbooks are not the same as what they had done in the past, so the teachers now need to add a lot of things, especially in conjunction with the politics and history classes. As the teacher stressed we need further training as well as long distance education resources or CD-ROM. But access by the Internet is also difficult as there is only one computer in each office, and sometimes it is hard to hook up to the Internet. There is no specific room with computers and Internet for them to prepare classes. They have to go to the school's computer room. There are few students in the computer room in the morning so they usually try get useful materials from Internet in the morning. In the afternoon, many students are there for computer classes and sometimes the teachers has classes, too. Therefore, it is especially troublesome to get needed materials through computers.

Some teachers agree that the new curriculum is good to the students in Xining, but not the students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. They said, "As for our students, the old textbooks probably is better. For students in Xining, the new curriculum may be better." On the basis of the original edition of textbooks, PEP edition of textbooks for the new curriculum has deleted some basic knowledge. It has more contents open to explore, which bring a lot of burden to the teachers and students. Although the new curriculum textbooks become simpler, knowledge in supporting workbooks or examination needs to be supplemented so the teachers must add a great deal of the knowledge some of which was deleted by the textbooks for the new curriculum (Sude, 2008).

Adding to the difficulties, interviews with the teachers and classroom observation indicated that the teachers a great deal of difficulty engaging all of the students in their classes due to the uneven level of students' education background. At the same time, the teachers strive to simultaneously engage the students with the curriculum and also prepare them for the examinations. Indeed, when asked about how to strike the balance between the new curriculum and the examination for further studies, the dean of studies told us that junior high and primary schools operate in line with

requirements of the new curriculum, but the senior high must follow the guidance of the examination for higher education.

14.3.4 Teacher Training

From questionnaire for teachers in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, we learned that about 66% of the teachers think that training play a positive role in teacher training. In addition, we learned from interview with an officer in Hualong Education Bureau that expenditure on teacher training is set by the state, which is about 10% of the school budget.

For most teachers in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, the opportunities of training are very scarce. More than 50% of teachers have not received any kind of preparation (Based on Field Survey). However, while chances for participation in provincial, national training are limited, most teachers can participate in training organized by the county or some similar secondary training. Some experts from Qinghai Normal University or Qinghai University for Ethnic Minorities would give lectures in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. We asked a dean of studies about the criteria in choosing teachers for training, and he told us that majors, qualifications, and teaching achievements are main items of the standard. We asked teachers whether they are clear about the criteria in selecting teachers for training; most teachers said that they are not clear or it is all up to the officers in school to decide the person for training without any standards. In addition, training costs are also a thorny issue for teachers in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. Sometimes, the huge cost of training is a great burden for teachers, especially the cost of participating in national and provincial training. Most teachers hope, but are not assured that the school would pay part of the training costs.

Based upon our interviews with teachers, most of the teachers hope to get some training on teaching methods and professional knowledge. Further, they express that they need help overcoming a lack of basic facilities, such as the basic equipments for chemical or physical experiments. As they indicate they cannot demonstrate many chemical reactions or physical experiments.

In addition to professional training, most teachers tried continuously to improve their teaching ability through the CD, teaching and research activities, personal training, etc. Oftentimes the teachers have to spend their own money to buys references for teaching or access support to meet their needs. In terms of the latter, for example, since there is few Tibetan language training in the school, he often goes to the temple and learns from Lama about Tibetan cultural knowledge (Based on Field Survey).

14.3.4.1 Assessment and Evaluation of Teachers

We found that Hualong Ethnic Middle School is featured by a series of agreements and responsibility pledge for objectives, such as the “responsibility pledge for objectives for teachers in charge of a class,” “responsibility pledge for the quality of teaching junior 3,” “requirements for teaching routine management in Hualong Ethnic Middle School,” “agreements to strengthen the management of Senior 3 tutorial classes.” (Based on Field Survey) Unfortunately, the system has its detractors. Its regulatory nature, the evaluation system and salaries for teachers are viewed in a negative light by a number of the teachers.

14.3.5 Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

14.3.5.1 “This Is ‘High-Tension Lines,’ Nobody Dares to Break It”

An officer told us that the policy of Two Exemptions and One Subsidy is to tackle the issue of poverty. Exemption of tuition and costs for textbooks are at the stage of compulsory education. So, the policy is carried out in primal schools and junior middle schools, but not in senior middle schools.

Two Exemptions and One Subsidy is best implemented in our County. It’s fully implemented in accordance with the requirements of the state. People from the state central government will come here to check every year. This is ‘high-tension lines’, nobody dares to break it.

—some officer, Han Chinese, from Education Bureau in Hualong County

The specific implementation of this policy was in 2005. Hualong County Education Bureau primarily communicates through the reports and descriptions with Qinghai Province and the state, which conveyed the spirit and requirements of this policy through stepping up publicity to various schools (Based on Field Survey). When it was introduced, this policy got much attention and the grassroots are particularly interested in it.

For financial issues, an officer told us that the state will provide 60–70% of the funding. Local Government usually does not allocate the money, so the rest of the funding needs to be provided by the township. Therefore, the township needs to raise the funds. This part of the funding partly comes from donation and partly from some businessmen.

One of the major donors is a Tibetan Living Buddha. In addition to financial donations, the Living Buddha plays a significant role in both the control of dropout rates and completion of compulsory education. Indeed, the Government will use the help of religious personnel to ensure the students to go to schools (Wang, 2009a).

“Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” is a special policy. When it was first presented to Hualong Ethnic Middle School, the teacher who took charge of general affairs told us that they held an executive meeting first, in which three principals and all the

directors participated, and they discussed about concrete plan for implementation plan. Then, they sent official documents to the Education Bureau.

“Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” is targeting at poor students. Most students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School come from remote mountainous areas, and the majority of them are poor. The number of students decided by Education Bureau who can enjoy the advantage provided by the policy is different each year, so the amount of subsidy that students can get are subject to change.

Many teachers believe that the policy of “Two Exemption and One Subsidy” is best implemented. Teachers are responsible for putting 150 yuan into the students’ accounts each month. Students can get grants, and that sum of money can guarantee students’ basic needs for food. Students get colored textbooks and subsidies for living expenditure. The policy has solved difficulties of children in poor families to go to school. “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” was carried out in the following way. First, Qinghai Civil Affairs Bureau will allocate the sum of money, and then school officers will go to Education Bureau in the county to draw that sum of money and ask the teachers to distribute the money in an equitable way (Based on Field Survey).

One teacher also believes that the implementation of Two Exemption and One Subsidy plays a great role in the alleviating the burden of students’ family and lowering the dropouts rates.

One facet of the program that has proved important is support for meals. For example, Duojie is 13 years old this year and is provided 500 yuan each year in the meal card, and this sum of money nearly covers the expenditure of his food in one semester. When we asked about meal card and allowance, he pulled out a white plastic card, on which the number is now worn away. He said, “*I can go to Zaoshang to eat since there is money in the card. My family paid 200 yuan and was put into the meal card last year. Later the school gave me 200 yuan and was put into the meal card. This year I recharged the meal card with 300 yuan. There may be 50 yuan left in the meal card.*”

14.3.6 Adjustment/Implementation

Qunke newly planed region laid out by Hualong Education Bureau involves some specific issues about reconstruction of Hualong Ethnic Middle School including the relocation of Hualong Ethnic Middle School to Qunke newly planed region and the establishment of bilingual education. Three functional areas will be established and include a junior education department, senior education department, and ethnic education department. With the increased demand for senior education and the increase of enrollment rate in the senior high school, the senior middle school is jointly operated by all nationalities and ethnic middle schools will be gradually separated. Hualong Ethnic Middle School will still be responsible for bilingual teaching in 19 towns in Hualong County.

The Qunke newly planed region is planning to concentrate 2600 min-kao-min (educated and examined in their own minority languages) students from more than

50,000 Tibetans in the new middle school through layout adjustment of primary and middle schools (Based on Field Survey). Be being jointly operated by all nationalities, the shortage of bilingual teachers or quality of teaching will likely be solved.

Newly planned region is scheduled to be finished after 5 years, so there are transition concerns. One teacher said,

According to the plan of newly-planned region, Hualong Ethnic Middle School will be transferred to Qunke. Various education investments from Education Bureau are greatly impacted. Although the planning is good, the current problems of shortage of basic facilities are hard to solve. We should never wait for the realization of the planning at the expense of concurrently enrolled students. Water afar can't quench the thirsty right here.

—A Tibetan Teacher in Hualong Ethnic Middle School

Some teachers are concerned that the plan is proceeding with little consideration of input from the existing staff.

14.3.7 Ethnic Culture in School

The policy of “ethnic culture into school” was not mentioned in any of the national, provincial, or local documents, and we learned very little about the policy of “ethnic culture into school” in interviews with officers from Education Bureau of the County, principals and teachers in Hualong Ethnic Middle School. Although there are no policy written in documents or any tough regulations, we found the significance and responsibilities for school to address ethnic differences was apparent in many of our discussions of meeting student needs and in terms of the visibility of activities that highlight ethnic cultures (e.g., in schools’ graduation ceremony, the “Culture and Sports Festival” in Hualong Ethnic Middle School).

The Culture and Sports Festival in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, is now in its sixth year and is very popular with students and teachers. It is rich in content with officials’ opening speeches, student art performances and displays assembled from each class, the top ten singer’s competition, essay competition, Mandarin speech contests, 2–3 day track and field games, closing ceremony, and awarding ceremonies (Based on Field Survey). It lasts a week each year. Teachers and students in the school pay much a great deal of attention to this Festival, the event itself and preparations. Indeed, sometimes teachers in charge of a class will squeeze out time from lessons to give students the opportunity to rehearse.

14.4 Discussion

14.4.1 Boarding School System

There are a number of difficulties in the implementation of boarding system in Hualong Ethnic Middle School.

1. The insufficiency of fundamental facilities, accommodation conditions and funds.
2. The influence of lodging system on emotions of teachers, parents, and students.
3. The need for the teachers play several roles poses high pressure on teachers leaving little time for the teachers to engage with their own family members or their children.

The negative impacts on students and parents mainly involve the separation of children from parents. Students being separated from their parents are expected to, but often struggle with adapting to the new environment and life alone in the boarding school. With large number of students and small number of teachers in boarding schools, teachers are too busy to take care each student's emotional change. Hence, boarding schools can be harmful for students, especially if they experience an environment of emotional deprivation for a long time. It will have a negative impact on the formation of students' character, values, and self-confidence (Wang, 2007).

And, while there is some financial support or subsidies for students in boarding school, the families need to pay additional transportation fees, accommodation fees, and also bear the risk of safety on the road. This means that the costs of education have increased for the families.

From the central government to the local government, the first priority of framing the policy of boarding school system is the consideration for the finance and funds. It lacks strong systematic regulations and safeguards when it comes to the specific boarding management in a school.

The current management of students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School is self-enclosed. It is a low-level management, similar to a state of "custody," which only requires no accidents among students (Wang & An, 2009). Currently, the quality of teaching and the safety of students are two major items that the officials use to evaluate the principals. If a major accident happens among students, principals are to be blamed, and bear the corresponding legal responsibility. The system of emphasis on management over education has the potential to highlight efficiencies rather than effectiveness (Chen, 1999).

Lack of specialized teachers for management and students' life causes the teachers in Hualong Ethnic Middle School to bear the tedious quarter's management and other responsibilities concerning students' life, in addition to the already heavy commitment to teaching tasks. In particular, the workload of the teacher in charge of a class is even heavier, but their additional benefits are few. The pressure and workload of teachers in boarding schools are far more than that of teachers in non-boarding schools (Gui & Zhong, 2010). Evaluation of teachers is linked to teaching quality,

students' test scores, and dormitory management such as cleanness, students' discipline, and students' safety. And, series of agreements and responsibility pledge for objectives are signed. Soft indicators such as the sense of responsibility, patience, and dedication are seldom considered. Teachers with strong sense of responsibility, love, and enthusiasm may fail under the current evaluation system of teachers. This is harmful to stability, continuity, and innovation of ethnic education development (Jiang, 2009).

14.4.2 Bilingual Education

Hualong is a Hui Autonomous County. Hualong Ethnic Middle School mainly adopts Type II mode of bilingual education. The main subjects are taught in Chinese, plus Tibetan language classes. However, in some pastoral areas in Hualong County, type-I mode of bilingual education is used. It is a recycling mode. The main subjects are taught in Tibetan, plus Chinese language classes.

14.4.2.1 The Function of Bilingual Education

We found that some of the relevant officers from Education Bureau and Hualong Ethnic Middle School had some mistaken notions in their understanding of bilingual education. Their opinions are categorized into three kinds. (1) Tools for further education—the Tibetan language is an advantageous subject for ethnic students who take Min-Kao-Min examination. (2) Tools for employment—some officers and parents believe that learning the Tibetan language can increase students' competence in getting jobs like tour guides, Thangka painting, chanting lection, and so on; (3) conflicts between Chinese and Tibetan (Based on Field Survey). From the perspective of employment, school teachers and the directors think that job opportunities for students of bilingual education are not enhanced if they fail to learn the Chinese well.

14.4.2.2 Contradictions Between Language Learning and Lessons in Three Languages

The incontinence of such a bilingual education system has also posed great pressure on students in the later period of learning Tibetan. The first is the textbook. Junior 1 students who never studied the Tibetan language before will study Tibetan language materials for primary school, and then study all the Tibetan language materials and finish rather difficult corresponding exercises in junior middle school during Junior 2 and Junior 3. The second is the pressure on language learning. In addition to learning Tibetan language, students also have to learn Chinese and English (He, 2009). If students do not lay a solid foundation for their mother tongues in primary schools,

the learning of three languages will mutually interfere with each other since two different languages are added in junior middle schools. Today, under the evaluation mechanism of Min-Kao-Min, the scores of English is only a reference, which has put the local English teacher in an awkward position (Sude, 2004). We always emphasize that Chinese brings us to China and English brings us to the world. In the context of today's globalization and multiculturalism, the importance of English as the tool for learning and information exchange is self-evident (Sun, 2010). Now in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, most students think that as long as he or she does not get zero in English test, it is OK. This caused great challenges to the teaching of English. As a result, a variety of English teachers is a great waste. We cannot help thinking that whether it is a too-heavy task for students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School to learn Chinese, Tibetan, and English at the same time or the wrong guidance of completely exam-oriented education. These issues must be resolved in bilingual education.

14.4.3 New Curriculum Reforms

There exist many problems in the implementation of New Curriculum Reform in Hualong Ethnic Middle School; they range from a lack of understanding of the New Curriculum Reform to problems with the textbooks for new curriculum, to the shortage of teaching aids and course resources and contradictions between examination for further and New Curriculum Reform.

The New Curriculum Reform is proposed for our nation to conduct the all-around quality education and is originally aimed to change the traditional exam-oriented education and too much homework, and to help students studying actively and experiencing inquiry-oriented study through teachers' guidance (Wang, 2009b).

Based on the comments of leaders of the Educational Bureau, directors and teachers of Ethnic Middle School, the New Curriculum Reform is not actually acclimated in Ethnic Middle Schools in many ways, such as problems for teachers to digest the idea of New Curriculum Reform, adaptiveness of teaching materials for the New Curriculum Reform, the insufficiency of teaching assistance facilities and course resources, and the imbalance between the New Curriculum Reform the issue of students' advancing to a higher school; thus, the policy is very difficult to conduct.

14.4.4 Teacher Training

Teacher training in Hualong Ethnic Middle School is still a big problem. For example, standards of selecting teachers for training are not open; opportunities for teachers to participate directly in national or provincial training are scarce, and as a result, not all teachers could benefit from national or provincial training. Although there are many opportunities for secondary training in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, as far as we know, the effect of such training is limited. Secondary training is not attractive

to teachers, and it is questionable whether or not it is effective in improving teachers' teaching abilities. A lack of basic facilities and shortage of teachers have limited the teacher training. Unfortunately, oftentimes teachers are forced to use their own resources to buy reference books and related materials for self-improvement and their classes.

Given the role that teachers need to serve opening the world to their students, the teachers preparation and background of experience is key (He, 2007). It is noteworthy that due to harsh geographical conditions and economic pressure from families, few students in ethnic minority regions can go out of Qinghai to see the outside world. Some students have never been to Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province. If teachers' horizons are broadened, so will students' in ethnic minority regions. Teachers are a lighthouse which will guide the students. From this perspective, the extent and quality of teacher preparation and experiences also determines that of ethnic education development.

14.4.5 “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy”

Officers of the County Education Bureau, the school's principal, the school's director, and teachers all agreed that the implementation of “Two Exemption and One Subsidy” is the best among that of all the other policies. It has largely mitigated economic burden of poor families in ethnic minority regions, reduced dropout rates, and guaranteed children's rights and obligation of nine-year compulsory education.

Why is it viewed so favorably? From the interviews and materials collected, it was not difficult to find the answer, which is the corresponding inspection and the establishment of incentive mechanisms from the state influence or determine the outcome of the implementation of a policy to a great extent.

14.4.6 Layout Adjustment and Implementation

In the long run, Hualong Qunke newly planned region is a major landmark of great significance in the development of education in Hualong County. Qunke newly planned region will thoroughly solve some problems in Hualong bilingual education system, such as inconsistency, shortage of teachers, uneven distribution of teaching resources and uneven levels of teaching quality, limited financial investment, and so on. By then, the layout of the school will be further optimized, while the size of the school will be enlarged. Hopefully, the quality of education will also be upgraded and bilingual education system will be improved. Moreover, the quality of teaching will be improved hopefully and balanced development among different cities, villages, and schools will be promoted to further narrow down the gap in education between cities and rural areas (Xu, 2009). In turn, we would hope that more students enjoy equal rights to get a solid education and social harmony will be promoted.

Just as what a teacher in Hualong Ethnic Middle School has mentioned, how will the interests of teachers and students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School be balanced? According to Qunke planning, Hualong Ethnic Middle School will be moved to a new area. This will inevitably affect investment in and construction of some facilities from the Bureau of Education and the school. It will also affect the life, the study, and the work of teachers and students in this School in recent years. The new district of Hualong County is scheduled to be completed within five years, but the funding for construction of the new district is still yet to be solved. So, the five-year plan for the new district is only a conservative estimate by the government. In this case, who will be responsible for the interests of teachers and students in Hualong Ethnic Middle School in these 5 years or even longer? Or will the current needs of students and the teachers be sacrificed the interests of teachers and students knowing that change is underway?

14.4.7 Ethnic Culture in School

There are not any official documents or materials concerning the integration of ethnic culture into schools in Qinghai Province. From the following facts, for example, Culture and Sports Festival in Hualong Ethnic Middle School, Youth League secretary Father Jia's dedication for the Tibetan students and insights into the ethnic culture, student's passion for folk dance and culture, we cannot help but wondering whether these suffice for building cultural ethnical awarenesses. It seems that there is more significant need to develop and enlist methods, practices and content which respects and builds upon local knowledges, cultural and language experiences. Do we truly understand and implement "Different teaching methods according to pupil's different backgrounds and potential" (Sude & Feng, 2004).

14.5 Recommendations, Countermeasures and Suggestions

14.5.1 Suggestions on the Boarding School System and Layout Adjustment/Implementation

First, the states should enact appropriate laws and boarding school should add formal and specialized teachers responsible for boarding management and affairs concerning students' life.

Second, the government should increase the investment in the infrastructure in ethnic regions to make sure that there are adequate dormitories, dining rooms, bath-houses, clinics, and other basic facilities in boarding schools and properly resolve the problems of basic food and shelter for boarding students.

Third, attention should be paid to the inner needs of boarding students. A variety of recreational activities and extracurricular activities could be organized to enrich students' life (Wang, 2004). The teacher in charge of students' life in the boarding school should take the initiative to communicate more with the students in an effort to better understand, respond to and guide the students.

Fourth, the state and local governments should organize seminars and training for boarding school management. Policymaking in the future must set some restrictions and supervision mechanism for school management and aims to explore better quality management strategies and programs as well as staffing (Wang & An, 2009).

14.5.2 Suggestions on Bilingual Education

First, education authorities should increase the number of bilingual teachers and improve bilingual teachers training in ethnic primary and middle school.

Second, support for ethnic education should be resourced and supported by various means including digitally.

Third, the governments at all levels should increase the investment in ethnic education.

Fourth, the school should not only to strengthen bilingual education for students but also for teachers so that teachers and students in Tibetan schools can better communicate and teachers can play a better role in teaching, imparting knowledge and guiding students.

Education officials, school teachers, and students should be properly guided in the understanding of the targets and values of bilingual education (Sang, 2001). The understanding should not be driven by the too much emphasis on the practical function of language or the interests of market economy. We should support, properly guide and enhance the students' engagements with their ethnic histories, experiences, knowledge, and culture.

14.5.3 Suggestions on New Curriculum Reform

First, government of all levels should increase the investment in education in ethnic regions. In particular, funds for some basic facilities and teaching aids and resources must be put in place in a fashion that is timely (Wang, 2010). As to the expenditure of the educational funds, there should exist oversight and evaluation department from the state, education bureau of different levels, to schools in different regions.

Second, the Education Bureau should strengthen teachers' preparation with the new curriculum and how to address the needs for students in ethnic regions. There should be flexible approaches to teacher preparation, for example, enhancing targeted support to individual teacher; exchange of learning among teachers both in urban

area and rural area and a range of ways to meet the needs of different students (Dong, 2009).

Third, the related departments should encourage the development and procurement of textbooks which are suitable to New Curriculum Reform in ethnic minority areas. Personnel responsible for the preparation of teaching materials should involve scholars and teachers who have deep understanding of the social and educational status in ethnic minority areas (Teng & Li, 2010). They should pay attention to the localization of teaching materials and strengthen the adaptation of textbooks to the culture and region.

Fourth, the evaluation mechanism for the implementation of New Curriculum Reform should be more student-based than skill or test driven. It should not blindly pursue the quality of teaching and rates of students going to further study, but focus on the concern of and encouragement for teachers and students' development.

14.5.4 Suggestions on Teacher Training

First, the criteria for selecting teachers for training should be transparent and principled. All teachers should be guaranteed the equal right to participate in the training.

Second, the management of the costs for teacher training should be transparent and institutionalized. Funding for teacher training invested by the school should be strictly in accordance with state regulations (He, 2009). Education Bureau of all levels should have oversight and mechanisms for monitoring activities.

Third, training content should be diversified and the form of training should be flexible. In addition to improving general teaching approaches, training should include bilingual training, boarding school management and principal training, financial management training, and other areas. In order to reduce secondary training and to secure its effectiveness, the training should activate the teachers to be actually involved in the experience.

Fourth, the training costs should be mainly borne by the schools. Schools should have appropriate mechanisms to encourage teachers' participation into self-refreshment and professional study (Cui, 2010), in addition to training.

Fifth, the government should guarantee the construction of and investment in teaching aids and curriculum resources.

14.5.5 Suggestions on Two Exemptions and One Subsidy

First, the establishment and improvement of stratified evaluation and monitoring mechanisms play a direct role in promoting and facilitating the implementation of a policy.

Second, the idea and intention of a good policy must be based on the interests and well-being of local communities and their families. Only those policies which really work for the grassroots' interests can ultimately win the people's heart and will form a strong national cohesion which will positively influence the process of educational, economic, social and cultural development.

Third, the framing and implementation of some policies need to consider ethnic culture and cultural relevance. The government should take advantage of the religious belief in local culture, senior citizens in the village and other symbols or things which carry cultural significance to promote the implementation of policies (Wang, 2009a).

14.5.6 Suggestions on the Integration of Ethnic Culture into the School

First, classroom teaching should reflect the content of ethnic culture.

Second, the school should involve qualified music, art and PE teachers. Gifted students need the guidance of a professionalized teacher for their development.

Third, all students including the ethnic minorities need qualified support in examinable subjects. The fact is that ethnic minority students usually fail in the common subjects.

Fourth, we should actively carry out various activities of ethnic culture and give full play to students' talents of singing and dancing and other artistic skills. We should provide students with a platform to show themselves and build up self-confidence. We can also combine the learning of ethnic culture with the study of Chinese, mathematics and Tibetan, so as to mobilize students' enthusiasm for learning and intrigue students' curiosity and thirst for knowledge (Ma, 2004).

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Chapter 15

Findings, Countermeasures, and Recommendations



This chapter reviews and discusses the findings from our policy analyses, fieldwork research, and ongoing exchanges. It includes countermeasures and recommendations. Despite the progress in the education of ethnic minorities in China over the last several years, there is still significant room for improvement. We hope that the discussion that follows will not be seen as discounting the progress made, but be viewed as ways of guiding future policies and practices.

15.1 Findings

15.1.1 Findings from Policy Analyses

Our research covered a wide range of policies, including policies directed at the distinctiveness of ethnic minority education, ethnic minority education-related stipulations in nationwide policies for basic education, central-level and local-level policies, educational programs and speeches delivered by national leaders. Special attention was paid to policies made by the targeted provinces. As mentioned earlier, we analyzed the policies from two dimensions: enhancing the educational attainment of ethnic minorities and improving the cultivation of cultural sensitivity.

First, the policies have focused on safeguarding the rights of ethnic minorities to education. Policy analysis indicated that policies, both at state and local levels, embodied the idea of realizing equality, solidarity, and harmony among ethnic groups and achieving common prosperity (Chen, 2008). The aim has been to guarantee ethnic minorities' right to education and to promote the development of ethnic minority education.

Nonetheless, there are still drawbacks:

1. Inconsistencies in the understanding of communities in the importance of the policies. Especially, there were different understandings about ethnic minority education, in terms of the relationship between ethnic minority culture and school

education, which led to problems such as how to position bilingual teaching in practice. Furthermore, there were inconsistencies between the value orientations of nationwide educational policies and what others perceived as the special needs of ethnic minorities (Mao & Bai, 2008). Contributing to these problems of mismatch and differences in interpretation, there were inconsistencies between the different policies themselves. In particular, there were several levels of government and department concerned in the implementation and execution of the policies for the basic education of ethnic minorities. They held various perceptions about ethnic minority education and even about the same policies and viewed the characteristics of ethnic minority education differently, so their focus on education and their supplementary measures for education turned out to be different (Chen & Li, 2010).

2. Failure to address context-specific needs. There was also a problem that was more overriding: the gap between nationwide educational policies and the characteristics of ethnic minority education. Oftentimes, nationwide educational policies valued universality more than distinctiveness. As a result, some of these policies such as “Structural Adjustment” and the “New Curriculum Reforms” impeded the development of ethnic minority education. We would suggest that the characteristics of ethnic minorities need to be taken into consideration when making policies. At the same time, there did seem to be an attempt by policymakers to afford customization of policies to local needs. Certainly, many of the policies for basic education of ethnic minorities often used expressions like “we can,” “according to different situations,” and “in principle” (Ma, 2009). The downside was that these discourses could seriously lessen the potency and authority of the policies. Usually, people considered these policies as privileges for ethnic minorities, denying the fact that they were actually designed to meet their special needs. Without rigorous supervision, evaluation, and feedback mechanism, the policies can never function to the fullest or be implemented in ways that address different needs and cultures as intended (Teng & Li, 2010).
3. Problems with implementation. In terms of implementation, sometimes progress was confounded when rights and liability divisions in allocating education expenditure were left unclear (Cao & Wang, 2010). Policies for basic education of ethnic minorities often stipulated that local governments gave financial support to ethnic education, while some areas, especially some western areas, had no capability of sponsoring it. Also, there was no clear stipulation of how much should be invested into education or what proportion of the expenditure each level of government should reserve for ethnic education. Furthermore, without calculating the cost of basic education of ethnic minorities in advance, the policies turned a blind eye to the high costs in the execution of the policies.

Local governmental agencies were granted some executive and explanatory power by the state law, but some of them did not have enough initiatives to develop basic education of ethnic minorities, due to either their economic limitations and performance-based evaluation system or the rigorous enforcement of one-size-for-all policies for nationwide basic education (Ma, 2010). Meanwhile, in contrast

to the policies for nationwide basic education, those for basic education of ethnic minorities had a less effective management mechanism, which hardly regarded the effective implementation of ethnic education-related policies as an indication of excellent administrative performance.

4. Sustainability and revision of policies and practices. Some of the stipulations in the policies for basic education of ethnic minorities were outdated. Others, though not obsolete, were implemented in a rigid and less innovative way (Ye, 2010). There was also a disconnection among some policies; for example, major projects were usually adopted to mobilize social resources in the short run, which proved to be somewhat effective but discontinuous and unstable.
5. Lack of cultural awareness. In a number of different ways, cultural awareness seemed to lack. Our research shows that the evaluation of basic education of ethnic minorities paid more attention to enrollment rates than to the students' cultural awareness and the cultural factors in school and teaching. There appeared to be a lack of cultural awareness of policymakers and administrative working staff too. Local policies either ignored ethnic minority culture or had misconceptions about it, which usually resulted in oversimplified implementation of the policies and brought about other negative effects such as inconsiderate teaching strategies (Chen & Chen, 2010).

15.1.2 Findings from Field Research

Through field research, we found that the implementation of the policies for basic education of ethnic minorities played a significant role in safeguarding ethnic minorities' rights to education and promoting the educational development of ethnic minorities. Let's take "Two Exemptions and One Subsidy" and "Building of Teachers' Team" as examples. The former largely reduced the likelihood of ethnic minority children and youth's dropping out of or discontinuing school because of poverty—the enrollment rate of school-age students in our 11 case studies was 100% while dropout rate zero (based on our field survey); the latter mattered a great deal in stabilizing teachers' teams in ethnic minority areas.

However, we also discovered that, if not remedied in the execution process, some drawbacks of the policies for basic education of ethnic minorities widened the gap between the expectations and results of the policies.

Based upon our observations in the field, we discerned the followings:

- (1) Differences in the value orientation related to policy interpretation contributing to policy execution inconsistencies and in turn errors.

As policies moved across levels in the administration, they often shifted in ways that lessened their intent and nature. This was mainly reflected in the different levels of departments, the various interpretations and selection practices (Mao & Bai, 2008).

Thus, this sometimes resulted in variations in the values reflected in and results achieved in the implementation of education policies.

For example, our field research found that bilingual education reflected different values and resulted in significant inconsistencies. The bilingual education policy represented in practice different approaches tied to competing agendas and sometimes ignoring the importance of the role of Mandarin alongside other languages (Cai & Halimulati, 2010).

Field research shows that this understanding and selection strategy resulted in front-line education workers ignoring the special characteristics of ethnic minority education and the needs of ethnic minority children. In practice, it is also easy to cause some phenomena such as conflicts between teachers and students, students being weary of studying and playing truant.

Our field studies also show that, in the process of policy implementation, one can easily ignore the special needs of education in minority areas.

The State has always emphasized the construction and training of minority teachers. However, the amount of minority teachers in most areas is very small (Jiang, 2009). The recruitment and training of ethnic minority teachers and cadres are limited in these regions. Some areas emphasized exam results in teacher recruitment, but most minority candidates cannot apply because their results do not reach the requirements, which aggravates the lack of local minority teachers. This is a negative practice for the development of local minority education.

(2) Policy implementation tends to be “one size fits all.”

Although the Central Government’s education policy requirements should be universally implemented throughout the country, local authorities have a certain level of flexibility to meet the actual local needs. But, the local government often either disregards the local reality, or disregards the flexibility of the policy, and aligns to the dominant policy implementation mode (Cao & Wang, 2010). In some cases, implementation has deviated from the original purpose of the policy, which has led to a lack of attention being paid to vulnerable groups in policy implementation.

Take the layout adjustment policy as an example: “Reasonably plan and adjust the school layout, according to the principles of entry into primary school and junior high school entrance and optimizing the allocation of education resources,” but at the same time the following regulation is also set: “rural elementary school can be merged under the prerequisite that students nearby can easily enter schools, and in some regions with bad traffic, necessary teaching points should be preserved, avoiding students’ dropout for layout adjustment.” (Chen, 2008). Our field studies show that local governments ignore the objective factors behind minority education, such as bad natural conditions, children’s culture, the lack of minority teachers, language differences, low-age boarding children, existing school facilities conditions, and put too much emphasis on the “merge rate” and on implementing “scale,” causing students’ security issues, the financial burden on students’ families, the decline of the teaching quality by inadequate infrastructure and some other issues.

(3) Contradictions in different policies cause difficulties in policy implementation.

Field research found that there are conflicts between different policy texts, characterized by conflicts between national policies themselves and local policies. These conflicts can lead to problems and difficulties in the implementation of policies.

Let us take “Two Exempts and One Subsidy” as an example. “Two Exempt and One Subsidy” includes teaching materials free of charge, but not the textbooks written in the ethnic language. However, because of this, bilingual education is not implemented effectively (Li, 2009). This is caused by the shortage of funds and free teaching materials.

(4) The lack of supporting measures during the implementation of policies.

The local educational department needs to improve the execution of policies by cooperating with other departments and through the help of supporting measures. Actually, the realization of the ethnic fundamental educational policy largely depends on whether the supporting measures can be set correspondently (Peng & Jin, 2010).

Take the boarding measure as an example, the shortage of funds, staff, and infrastructures leads to potential health safety hazards, and to adverse effects on students’ school life.

(5) Tendency of seeking quick success in the implementation of policies.

We found that there was a tendency toward pursuing quick success in the implementation of the policy about ethnic basic education. By disregarding the reality, but also the appetite to meet the immediate goals of senior administrators, can lead to focusing on short-term goals and addressing a restricted set of interests rather than meeting long-term goals, directions, and aspirations (Sun, 2010).

Take the “Layout Adjustment” policy as an example. In some cases, the action of such policy leads to unexpected adverse effects as symptoms of problems rather than addressing causes. Sometimes immediate solutions were sought which did not solve the actual problems, such as the needs of students and the need to improve the school conditions in a sustainable fashion. Sometimes, the teaching staff and local administrators sought quick success.

(6) The lack of children care and culture-related index in the assessment of policy implementation.

The ultimate purpose of educational policies is to guarantee the children’s healthy development. From our investigation, however, the evaluation of educational policies lacks concerns about the children’s development, such as their emotional cultivation, cultural awareness, identity formation and the ethnic cultural heritage, etc. And the current assessment has not yet taken into account, e.g., the social effects of the policies on the children and their families (Sang, 2001).

Take the boarding policy as an example. In favor of their easy management, political achievement and bureaucratic assessment, local administrative departments pay more attention to the quantity of infrastructures but not to the language barriers, adjustment to boarding life, academic training, and mental health of the children.

There is no relevant assessment index during the construction of boarding schools. And there is not enough preparation for the large number of young boarding children during, e.g. school mergers. Therefore, the disregard of ethnic children's emotional needs and their cultural background during school cultural development, boarding student living arrangements, and the teaching management will not only go against the children's development, but also be an obstacle to ethnic cultural heritage (Wang, 2010).

(7) The operational staff lack cultural sensibility.

Too often, local staff lacked sufficient cultural awareness and the tools to address cross-cultural needs. Sometimes staff did not understand the distinctiveness of the nature, history and cultural environment in the ethnic minority's habitat; the staff may not approve of the local ethnic culture, appreciate or be sensitive to the parenting practices, and bridge the cultural customs and practices of the students. Too often, the needs of ethnic children, tied to their cultural difference, were not addressed, and their heritage, language, and sense of identity of ethnic children were disregarded (Wang, 2009b).

We would contend that, with full understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing the policy, being practical and realistic, staff could do better at translating and mobilizing the local cultural resources to improve the policy, to promote local educational development and to upgrade educational management.

From our research, the consequences of the biased policy implementation are reflected in bilingual education, the New Curriculum Reforms, the remote village teacher system, and boarding measures.

(8) There are different policy initiatives in different areas.

For different districts and departments, local situations and realities are quite different. Our investigation reveals that for different areas, the effectiveness of implementing the policy and the emphases are dissimilar.

Take the "lay out adjustment" policy as an example. Too often, the merger of local schools as a way to solve problems was listed as a solution for the shortage of infrastructures and funds without regard to the possible adverse outcomes of the policy. In some cases, the local officials, in order to match the needs of administrative assessment and to satisfy political achievement, blindly improved the merger rate and expanded the scale, which, in the end resulted, in a disastrous problem.

(9) The failure of feedback systems.

Our observations highlighted communication problems and the lack of relevant supervise-feedback system. These included 1. the lack of, or no standard of, relevant supervision systems including executive bodies being often supervised by themselves; 2. the exclusion of interest groups from relevant information, reviews or supervising bodies.

Let us take again the "Layout Adjustment" policy as an example. In several areas, the administrative department ignored the needs of relevant interest groups, which led to the fact that the teachers, students and the parents knew nothing about the merging

policy. When the implementation was confronted with protest and resistance, the operators did not reconsider the operating processes and tended to be too focused on policing rather than supporting parents and others. This kind of way of “resolving” can never solve problems, but result in more problems, such as high dropout rates (Zhang, 2009).

15.1.3 The Effectiveness of Provincial Training and National Seminars

(1) Provincial-level Training

The main approaches to provincial training projects were lectures, policy discussions, and participatory learning (Wang, 2007). Training lasted for three days and was divided into three stages: the opening ceremony, multicultural training and eight focus policy discussions and summary of the meeting.

Training sessions were held at the provincial level by the local education administrative departments. Teachers said that they shared about their experiences; they also reflected on the problems encountered in the management of teaching and found a way to solve the problem together. Although not all problems could be solved, the training meetings helped the teachers to realize that minority education is different from general education. The sessions emphasized that the implementation of national policies should not be done in a manner that is rigid or uniform, rather implementation requires one to be engaged in addressing local realities, and taking into account a consideration of the special needs of minority groups in education (Wen, 2009). For example, the representative of Mangshi in Yunnan Province, who participated in the conference said, “through this training, we are fully aware that our front-line education workers can be local policy makers, we can be masters, we can contribute to local minority education.”

At the same time, training at the provincial level was reported by the local news media, which had a big impact on the ground. The opening ceremony of the training seminars in Mangshi, Yunnan Province, was reported on May 11, 2011; training sessions in Kaili, Guizhou Province, were reported on June 22, 2011; training sessions in Xining City, Qinghai Province, were broadcasted on July 11. The opening ceremony of the training session in Yunnan Province on May 11 was reported in the “Yangcheng Evening News,” which caused great concerns by local leaders.

(2) National seminars

National seminar activities have four aims: to introduce the conceptual framework of the project; to share the research results of the projects; to fully communicate with the national policymakers, college education experts and education policy performers; to discuss about the problems we found and a series of policy suggestions in this research, and to point out problems in order to perfect the formulation and implementation of China’s ethnic minority basic education policy.

The scholars who participated in the conference gave high praise to the research results of the project. They argued that the project on the development of minority education in present China had great significance. For example, Mr. Du Yue claimed that this project could effectively meet the needs of policy development and implementation. At the same time, the national conference received attention from a number of newspapers and media, such as “People’s Daily,” “Chinese Education Newspaper,” “Journal of the Chinese Society of Education,” “Chinese Minzu Education,” “Chinese National Newspaper,” “Guangming Daily,” “the Xinhua News Agency Newsweek,” “the Education Observation on Science and Technology Daily,” “China’s Top Political Newspaper,” the CCTV education channel, Sina, “Chinese Social Sciences Newspaper,” CETV, “the Education Research,” “Chinese Education Newspaper International Edition,” and aroused extensive attention of the whole society.

2. Future directions: Recommendations for countermeasures and suggestions

Based on the analysis of the policies for basic education for ethnic minorities of China, field investigations and the feedback from provincial and national seminars, the research team not only appreciated the efforts and achievements made by the governments at all levels to improve minority education but also brought up some suggestions for handling the problems and overcoming the difficulties existing in the process of carrying out minority education.

(1) Focus on the cultural particularities of minority education.

Our observations and analyses suggested that mistakes were made when implementing these policies due to the particularities of minority education being ignored, especially cultural factors. There needs to be a fuller consideration of the complexity and particularity of natural and sociocultural environments, the poorer education conditions that currently tend to exist and costs entailed in minority areas.

We hold that in order to integrate the cultural resources in school education, so as to promote the combination of education and cultural inheritance, we should make more efforts in the following four aspects:

First of all, we should implement the strategy of giving priority to the development of minority education. Considering the local languages and cultures in minority areas, we should give priorities to support minority areas, strengthening the local curriculum development, the construction of teaching staff, investing more funds as well as speeding up the information construction of education.

Second, we should investigate the corresponding adjustments before implementing the policy and carry out basic education policies according to the needs and complex local situations. We can say that the policies of layout adjustment and boarding schools have played a great role to optimize teaching resources and to improve the students’ academic achievements. But, we want to emphasize that we should consider the local needs and social reality when speaking of the policy feasibility. For example, we can reduce teachers’ burden by adjusting the teacher–student ratio per class in minority regions.

Third, we stress that there is an enormous need to strengthen the policies and practices for bilingual education. The biggest challenges of bilingual education are the needs for qualified bilingual teachers equipped with the understandings, practices, tools, and teaching material to meet the varied language needs of ethnic students (Sude, 2004b). Teachers need to be able to bridge from and to different languages at the same time as they address Mandarin language needs.

Fourth, we encourage adopting various ways to introduce ethnic culture in schools. When the policy is implemented, we can develop a school-based curriculum which satisfies the local needs to teach the students, combine extracurricular activities with cultural activities and encourage them to participate in local community activities (Sude, 2004a). Besides, in order to make education play an important role in cultural inheritance, we should give priority to integrating minority culture and language into the basic education curriculum.

- (2) Strengthen the policies and operations needed for the implementation of minority education in different locations.

Despite the national government's policies for minority students, there is a problem with implementation and interpretation—there is a need for proper supervision, assessment, and feedback based on local needs by administrative officials and school principals.

First, we should formulate detailed rules to regulate policy implementation behaviors, especially to clarify specific rights and responsibilities.

Second, we should establish a sound policy supporting system to guarantee fund support, infrastructure construction, management measures, supervision, and feedback mechanism during the process of policy implementation.

Third, we should establish a sound policy incentive system to improve the enthusiasm of basic education workers.

Fourth, we should establish a cross-functional communication cooperation system in order to solve the education problems. For example, some schools lack teachers while there are too many administrative clerks.

- (3) Improve the understanding and capabilities of policy executives for minority education.

Our investigation highlights the important role that the local teaching staff play in the execution of the policy. It is essential that they have the support and capacity to pursue, adjust, improve, and monitor their practices.

We also need to strengthen the corresponding training and guidance, improving their understanding, and to enhance cultural sensitivity to improve their ability to address the goals of the policy. During the process of supporting teachers, we should set different policy implementation strategies and modes of thinking according to different ethnic cultural characteristics and different school situations in order to avoid the problematic view that *one-size-fits-all* situations.

(4) Strengthen the development of teaching staff.

Our research reveals that the qualification of teachers in the project areas needs improvement. The demands upon minority teachers and bilingual teachers are not being fully addressed.

We suggest that we should set up a policy to encourage educational institutions for teachers to recruit and prepare more bilingual teachers. To this end, we would strongly encourage the recruitment of bilingual teachers who are of ethnic minority background. What's more, we should provide more incentives and professional support to motivate qualified teachers, especially bilingual teachers, to stay in the minority regions.

(5) Strengthen the synergies of different policies.

The research shows that different policies may involve the same issue and the carry-over effect of different policies may influence each other. So, it is very important to strengthen the connection between different policies.

During the process of implementing policies, we should fully consider the relationships between different policies and see how they function together and avoid that one policy implementation affects others.

(6) Increase funding for education in ethnic minority areas.

Our investigation shows that, due to the location in harsh natural environments and inconvenient transport facilities, most of the required materials are from the interior of China and other regions, so the infrastructure and teaching material development of ethnic minority regions costs are far higher than the inland schools. Therefore, we have to address the high cost of minority education and increase investments.

First, for the construction of school facilities, special funds should be set up, and we should make efforts to improve school conditions of the project area schools, so as to solve the basic problem of inadequate educational facilities.

Second, we should increase funding for preparing, hiring, and retaining teachers.

Third, for the development of teaching skills and material, special funds should be set up to improve the development of local practices and materials in the project areas and put an end to the lack of bilingual material and support funds.

Fourth, in the project area, post allowances for teachers in poor areas should be set up, so as to improve the welfare of teachers, the classroom environment, and fully mobilize the enthusiasm of teachers.

Fifth, we should set up government scholarships in the high schools of poverty-stricken ethnic minority areas to encourage and support outstanding students to continue their education.

(7) Strengthen the construction of minority basic education policy monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Our investigation shows that, in the implementation process of minority basic education policy, both monitoring and the evaluation system are weak, resulting in information biases and other issues. Therefore, developing a comprehensive monitoring,

evaluation, and feedback mechanism for basic education of ethnic minorities is necessary, especially developing indicators for minority children, such as language and cultural factors in teaching.

15.2 Summary

For three years, the “Minority Basic Education Policy Research” project team did research on policy documents, examined many case studies, developed training materials, and carried out capacity training and a series of practical activities.

The “Minority Basic Education Policy Research” covers all aspects of minority education issues, such as the layout adjustment of schools, bilingual education, teacher training, and ethnic culture in schools. These provide a comprehensive understanding of ethnic-based education policy implementation in China. With the goal of “helping the relevant policymakers and implementers to enhance awareness of minority cultural sensitivity and service capabilities,” our provincial trainings were not only about sharing research results, but also to help reflect on the implementation experience of minority education policies (Wang & An, 2009).

The project team gained a lot due to using international experiences as reference in the study of local education, which improved the ability of team cooperation and laid a solid foundation for their engagement in minority education on the international scene.

Further research is much needed to deepen and refine our understanding of ethnic minority education in China and elsewhere. We hope that this book lays solid foundations for the future.

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Afterword

When I was introduced to *Minzu education* (my preferred concept to refer to “Chinese ethnic minority education”), I knew straight away that there was something special and different about the way it problematizes diversity in education. As a professor of *multicultural education* (or *intercultural education*, a phrase I use more often in my work), I have been very dissatisfied with the way diversity education has been “done” in Europe, and how “our” “ready-to-think” and “ready-to-speak” about it have spread to the rest of the world, as a (problematic) complement to American multicultural education.

In a bibliometric analysis for the knowledge of intercultural competence between 2000 and 2018 (a key concept in multicultural/intercultural education), Peng et al. (2020) show that the first five highly cited authors (Byram, Deardorff, Kramsch, Hammer, and Bennett) are all white British or American scholars. Although their work differs slightly in terms of ideologies (because of the different scientific, political, and economic “tribes” they belong to), there are many similarities in the ways they “discourse” and analyze this central concept.

These “modern Eurocentric epistemological perspectives” (Paraskeva, 2016) tend to be very much Anglo-centric, ‘globalish-centric’ (see the work of the OECD and the UNESCO on global and intercultural competence), and they provide educators, decision-makers, and scholars with the illusion that their ideologies are somewhat universalistic. What is more, these perspectives tend to reject and/or show disinterest in other knowledge and epistemology, claiming that they are not “scientific” enough or too “political”—or simply the authors are unaware of alternative knowledge.

But let us be clear about this: any approach to diversity in education is influenced by both scientific and political forces (in Europe: the European Union and the Council of Europe). *Diversity education is about diversity, but diversity is not part of our working methods.* Of course, there are alternatives available on the market: Postcoloniality, Critical interculturality, *Interculturalidad*, etc. However, these are sometimes represented through the voices of what we could consider to be “tokens” (Freire, Mignolo, Said, Sen, etc.), and the powerful are still talking for the voiceless... (see, e.g., a rare good critique of Edward Said in Belleau, 2015).

Any perspective on diversity education should thus consider the following questions and try to explore real alternatives to help education move forward around the globe:

- *What meaning/s is/are given to terms used to describe both the learning and treatment of diversity in education (e.g., tolerance, open-mindedness, cultural awareness, etc.)? Who decides on the terms we use and what they mean?*
- *Are these terms understandable, meaningful to all those involved? In different languages? Can they be (re)negotiated?*
- *What ideologies are to be found behind diversity perspectives in education (The OECD, The Council of Europe, Microsoft, etc.)?*
- *How could we open up the field of diversity education to other voices?*

When my two co-authors, Sude and Mei Yuan, told me about the amazing work that they had been doing on Minzu education in China, I was thoroughly impressed. At first, it took a while to enter this new world of diversity, to understand its specific epistemology, politics, discourses, realities, and practices. I had read about Chinese minority education in English, but the authors' negative descriptions and evaluations of Minzu education always discouraged me (e.g., Chen, 2008; Gao, 2010; Zhao, 2010). I have reread some of these publications recently and can see some clear biases as well as gaps between the theoretical and methodological perspectives and the Minzu contexts under review. Like every existent policy, practice, and epistemology, Chinese Minzu Education is also multifaceted and has "good" and "bad" points. It would be foolish not to admit it. However, I feel that it is one of the necessary counterhegemonic platforms to disrupt the authority and current cognitive injustice represented by "Western" diversity education (see de Sousa Santos, 2010).

By problematizing Chinese Minzu Education from a rich and open perspective, starting from multiple voices (decision-makers, teachers, parents, students, etc.), instead of imposing a "Western" cosmology, we can contribute to diversifying epistemology and politics of diversity in education. The reader will at first be surprised by the specific language, discourses, and realities described in our book and be transported into another world. In order to enter this world, we suggest that the reader considers the following principles and attitudes:

● Principles

- Be open to Minzu and specific Chinese epistemology, politics, knowledge, and perceptions of the world (民族知识与认识论, *Minzu zhishilun yurenshilun*)
- Practice reflexive translation (反思翻译, *fansifanyi*)

● Attitudes

- Apply genuine generosity (真正宽宏大量, *zhengzhengkuanhongdaliang*)
- Experience *depaysement*: the feeling of not being at home (异境茫然, *Yi jing mang ran*)

In our joint work, we have tried to take these into account for every single aspect, in order to avoid contradictions, confusion, and/or mere politeness. Openness to other

knowledge and critically and reflexively discussing translation issues are basic principles in cooperation across borders. The English language often gives the illusion of transparency and universalism, but the language is always politically and ideologically tainted. A concept or a notion may not always mean the same in different contexts and different languages. All of these elements are more necessary than ever to think about and work on diversity education.

Since the early 2010s, the world has entered a new phase in the way it is globalizing. The position of China is increasingly preeminent, and “centers” are thus shifting or multiplying. We believe that our book can contribute to two major issues in world research on diversity education: (1) The way “Western” scholars and educators, but also many Chinese educated in the “West,” perceive China and Chinese education, is often misleading. There is thus a need for revising some of the misperceptions and to listen to “real” Chinese voices with an open mind. (2) Views and epistemology about diversity education are far too “Western,” which is highly problematic. In my country, Finland, the way diversity education is done is a good example of eurocentrism/US-centrism. Many so-called (still privileged) critical scholars parade façade critical perspectives, biting their own tails.

Minzu education has a lot to offer. We need to listen. I hope that this book will be the first foundation stone of a new era for global diversity education.

Fred Dervin

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