

# 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 km<sup>2</sup>, 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 km<sup>2</sup>, 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 m<sup>2</sup>, with 2800 m<sup>2</sup> 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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