

Strategy of Chongqing Rural Labor Resources Development: From the Respective of Urban-Rural Coordinated Development

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Abstract

The development and utilization of rural labor resources are major problems bothering urban-rural coordinative development of Chongqing. In order to improve peasants' ability to get used to the coordinative development of urban and rural areas, we should proceed from the development of rural labor resources. Chongqing, as a national experimental district for urban-rural coordinative development, still has lots of problems to be solved, such as the existence of urban-rural dual economic structure, deficient play of government functions, unbalanced allocation of education resources between urban and rural areas, etc.. To improve the situation, we need to strengthen systems of organization, build learning-oriented villages, reasonably promote the flow of labor resources between areas and optimize the allocation of resources and so on.

Key words: Coordination of rural and urban areas; Villages; Development of rural labor resources

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INTRODUCTION

Chongqing, as the only Direct-controlled municipality in the West of China, is featured by large city and numerous villages. Its urban areas are relatively developed, yet its rural areas are quite backward. These are typical characters of western China. To eliminate dual economic structure and to narrow urban-rural gap and therefore to realize the strategic goal of coordinating urban-rural development, we should manage to coordinate social and economic development in all round, which certainly includes the coordinative development of labor resources especially in rural areas.

1. RELATION BETWEEN URBAN-RURAL COORDINATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL LABOR RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Urban-Rural Coordinative Development Is A Guarantee of Rural Labor Resources Development

Previously, in dealing with "agriculture, village, and farmer" issue, we attached too much importance on village itself, carefully took agriculture, village and farmers into consideration. This thinking has a flaw, it researches the issue of "agriculture, village, farmer" alone and thus isolate it from other social units. Therefore, if we can develop rural labor resources under the condition of coordinately developing urban and rural areas, consider these two areas as a whole while making plans and clear away the barrier between urban and rural areas through institution reform and policy adjustment, then we will turn labor resources into human capital advantage and thus coordinately promote social and economic development of the whole city.

1.2 The Development of Rural Human Resources Is an Important Way to Generate Farmer's Income and Narrow Urban-Rural Gap

While we are promoting urban-rural coordinative development, we should make efforts to ensure the increment of farmers' income. Currently, though operating income is still a main source of average income of Chongqing rural residents, the percentage it covers is decreasing. The percentage wage income covers is getting bigger and bigger and has already become a more and more stable source of rural family incomes (Figure 1).

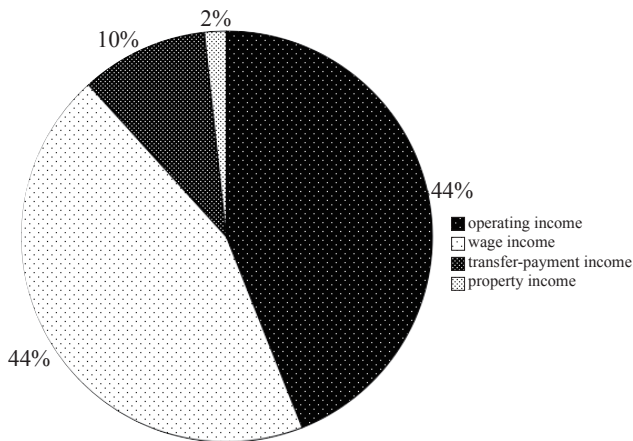


Figure 1
Proportion of Rural Residents' Average Income in Chongqing
Date source: Chongqing Annual Statistics (2012).

The figure suggests that wage is quite an important source of farmers' income, hereby a necessary method to increase farmer's income and to narrow the gap of urban-rural income is paying more attention to how to increase farmers' wage income. Therefore, as far as the duty of narrowing urban-rural gap concerned, it is necessary to develop rural human resources and improve rural population quality in terms of general knowledge and technology skills.

1.3 How Rural Human Resources Is Developed Determined Whether Urban-Rural Development in Chongqing Could Be Coordinative

Since Chongqing became a direct-controlled municipality, the gap between urban and rural areas is not narrowed, but widened. Based on the reality of Chongqing, the development of rural human resources are both a barrier and key to coordinately developing both areas. In rural areas, population is large, its potential is huge yet its quality is relatively at a low level. While boosting the prosperity of rural economy and society, we should keep sustainable development. To achieve such a development, we should know how to improve rural population quality and motivate their initiatives as an engine of that. Therefore, we should coordinately promote urban-rural development with a view to improving farmers' culture cultivation and technology skills and on the foundation

of efficiently developing rural human resources, through which we shall open a new situation of town-driving-country and urban-rural interaction.

2. DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF CHONGQING'S RURAL HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Rural Human Resources: Large Population, Fast Growth

In 2001, Chongqing's permanent resident population was 29.19 million, including 13.13 million rural residents, reaching up to 44.98% of its whole population. In terms of age composition, the international world generally defines people around 15-64 years old as working-age population. A sample survey on national demographic changes showed that, among whole 13.13 million rural population, 2.91 million of the population are from 0 to 14 years old, 8.73 million are from 15 to 64, 1.49 million are older than 65, respectively covered percentages of 21.16, 68.49 and 10.35, presenting an olive shape (Figure 2). This fully demonstrates the richness of its labor resources(around 66% of its rural population are at working age). In terms of population growth, in 2001, its birth rate and natural growth rate respectively reached up to 12.44‰ and 6.54‰, higher than the other three direct-controlled municipalities.

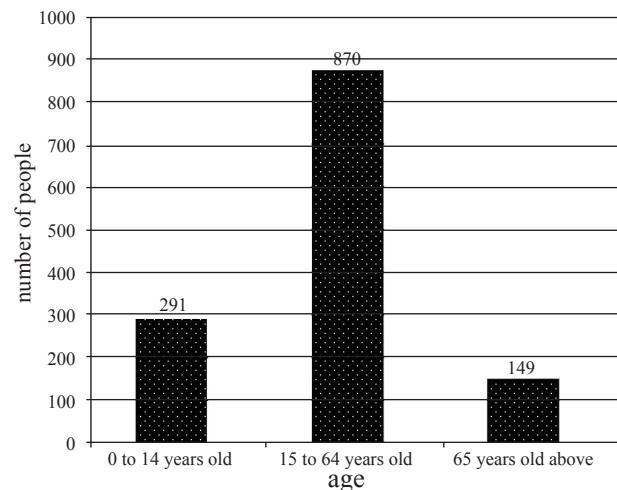


Figure 2
Age Structure of Population, Chongqing Rural Areas, 2011 (Ten Thousand)
Date source: China Annual Population and Employment Statistics, 2012.

2.2 Overall Quality of Rural Human Resources Is at a Low Level

2.2.1 Physical Quality Is Poor

The physical quality here I mean a man's body-building and his energy, including health condition, constitution, life span, nutrition condition and ability to resist illness. It is the foundation of one's working ability. Restricted by natural geographical environment and a variety of social

factors in this city, the physical quality of rural residents is much poorer than that of urban residents. In a health condition survey for rural residents, we found that among all labor forces 21.17% had mild disease but not disabled; 9.46% had serious disease but not disabled; 10.06% were slightly disabled; 1.80% had serious disability in their eyes, ears, nose or brain. Currently, in Chongqing's distant mountainous areas, sickness rate remains high for lacking general health-and-medicine knowledge. These residents or families are very likely to become poor once any member of the family gets a serious disease.

2.2.2 Poor Education

A worker's cultural quality depends on how much education he has received. In Chongqing, the cultural quality of rural labors cannot meet the demand of effectively promoting social and economic development in rural areas. Till the end of 2011, in Chongqing's rural areas, among a hundred people, 3.9% were illiterate, 18.7% only received primary education, 61.3% attended junior high (5.1percent lower than average national level), 8.6% attended senior high, 1.9% attended technical secondary school, only 1.8% entered college. In Beijing, the percentage of rural workers attending technical secondary school and college are 9.2% and 13%, its workers' educational degree is obviously higher than Chongqing's.

2.2.3 Lack of Labor Skills

The labor skill here I mean how much scientific and technological knowledge a labor masters, reflected in how well he or she can apply those knowledge to agriculture production practice. From a general view, most farmers in Chongqing are short of occupational skills, reflected in lacking professional training and practical talents. During the first two month in 2007, we conducted a survey on employment status and living condition of migrant workers and small traders, which showed that, only 24.7% received occupational training before seeking a job in city, among whom, 18.2% received training less than a week, 23.1% from a week to a month, 23.2% from one to three month, only 35.5% received training over three month. The tradition of paying attention to production but neglecting management is becoming a bigger and bigger barrier to the restructuring of agricultural industry and leads to inefficiency in social and economic profits.

2.2.4 Lack of Ideological and Ethical Standards

Ideological and Ethical Standards is a man's relatively stable quality in terms of political trend, belief, thoughts and morality formed in self-recognition and social practice influenced by social environment and education. In some distant poverty-stricken areas, the petty farmer sense can be seen on the majority of farmers: they are easily contented, they do not seek progress, and they are short of market awareness and sense of competition. In a survey on stay-behind farmers' quality status we found that among all farmers, over 75% will deposit or spend their

money instead of investing, less than 10% will choose the latter. In some extremely poor mountainous areas, bad things run wild, feudalistic superstition, cult, extravagance and waste, profile wedding and funeral, gambling and bad public security condition all become barrier of its development; Even worse, some people seek power and benefit at the cost of justice.

2.3 Labor Resources Structure: Out of Balance

Unbalance of labor resources structure here I mean the irrational proportion of rural labors in three industries and unreasonable distribution of areas. In terms of industrial distribution, in 2011, there were 7.9446 million rural labors in Chongqing, 60.50% of whole rural population, among whom, 3.0519 million labored in agriculture industry (38.14% of whole rural labors), 1.984 million labored in secondary industry (24.97% of whole rural labors), 2.9799 labored in the third sector (36.62% of whole rural labors). Almost half of its working population labored in agricultural industry, less labored in the second and third industry.

2.4 Rural Areas' Human Resource Loss

Rural labor's export is good for relieving poverty, for increasing rural families' income, and for improving their family welfare. In 2009, the whole city exported 8147 thousand rural labors, covering 54.1% of whole rural labors. But these people are not real surplus labor but the main force of agricultural production, they are younger and stronger and have a higher degree of education than those surplus labor. Compared with its large-scale, fast-growth population export, Chongqing has no advantage in absorbing foreign population. In 2011, only 1210 thousand floating population came to Chongqing, 168 thousand more than the past year. Therefore, as a result of long-term disequilibrium population mobility, Chongqing is facing a serious problem of labor resources loss in rural areas.

3. REASONS FOR THE DIFFICULTIES TO DEVELOP HUMAN RESOURCES IN RURAL AREAS

3.1 Limitation of Urban-Rural Dual Economic Structure and Government Functional Deficiency

Urban-rural dual economic structure, based on the identity discrimination (discriminate farmers), becomes an insurmountable high wall between urban and rural areas, makes resources and profits unavailable for rural areas, results in the unbalanced situation of interests distribution, which is definitely bad for the improvement of rural labor's quality and sustainable healthy development of rural areas in the long run. The government should be a main participant in developing rural labor resources. While what we see is the un-fully play of government functions. Some governments

have not attached enough importance to their duty and failed to bring the task into their development plan. Many officials while dealing with rural issues only

concentrate on economy issue but not on education, training, illiteracy elimination or other issues related to labor resource development (Cao, 2010).

Table 1
Comparison of Compulsory-Education-Phased Schooling Condition Between Urban and Rural Areas in Chongqing, 2009

School	Rural and urban areas	Floor area occupied per student (m ²)	Normal classroom owned per student (m ²)	Gymnasium owned per student (m ²)	Books owned per student
Primary school	City	10	2.8	3	13
	The county town	12.5	2.6	4	11
	Rural	24.3	3.9	7.6	12
Junior high school	City	9.4	1.9	2.8	8
	The county town	12.1	1.5	3.1	7
	rural	15.7	1.8	4.3	8

Date source: China's Annual Education Statistics (2010).

3.2 Poor Basic Education and Inefficient Occupational Skill Training

The preliminary education in Chongqing rural areas is backward, compared with its urban areas, and it falls quite far behind in terms of educational input, education quality, schooling condition and faculty quality. In 2010, educational fund expenditure on each rural student in primary and secondary school were respectively 3297.56 Yuan and 2551.58 Yuan, lower than that on students in urban areas (China Education Annual Statistics, 2011). There are more schools in city than in countries (Table 1). The migrant workers were given priority in skill training, while surplus farmers were ignored. The training content and method cannot meet the needs of farmers, making the training not effective as required. For lacking a powerful faculty team, many training agency have to train those labors only in classroom by teachers who have no professional knowledge.

3.3 Irrational HR Flow Restricts the Development of Rural Manpower Resource

In Chongqing, population flowing into rural areas are divided into two kinds: One kind is professional talents represented by college graduates who are a powerful driving force to promote rural area's development but who simultaneously are hard to kept in country for not being used to the terrible natural environment, poor material living condition and bad infrastructure and information in rural areas. Another kind is migrant workers who finally return to countries and start their own enterprises after broadening their horizons in city. Because of basic-level government's poor service awareness and imperfect banking and financial policy, these enterprises started from scratch all facing different degree of developing dilemma. On the contrary, rural population flowing into city is mainly young adults and groups of higher education, leaving the olds and the disables at home and deteriorating the labor quality in rural areas. This phenomenon is called "Liu Shou".

4. CHONGQING'S SOLUTION—IN DEALING WITH RURAL LABOR DEVELOPMENT, IN PROCESS OF COORDINATELY PROMOTING URBAN-RURAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Improving System and Mechanism to Safeguard Rural Labor Resource Development

To successfully develop rural labor resources, we should break the urban-rural separation system created by urban-rural dual-structure system. We should build a new system to guide unrestricted flow of labor in which the visible hand and invisible hand shall work together. Meanwhile, we should build a fair social security system to ensure urban residents and rural residents enjoy the same treatment. Government should play its leading role and consider the task as system engineering and make sure that governments at all levels know their responsibility. Meanwhile, government should provide powerful financial support, bring the development into the strategic layout of Chongqing's social economic development and make it normal.

4.2 Building a Learning-Oriented Society and an Effective Educational System in Rural Areas

To effectively develop labor resource in rural areas, we should reform and perfect our current educational system in rural areas and build a new one according with local nature. We should enhance basic education and equip local population with knowledge and skills. We should increase educational input to narrow the gap between city and countries. We should further improve the quality of rural areas' education. Moreover, we need to develop vocational education to create a new generation of farmers with professional skills. We should bind this training with market and employment, shift the principle, the mode and the thought of running a school, and reform the content and method of teaching, and also we need to foster their practice ability and professional skills.

4.3 Gearing up Exchange of Labors and Talents Between Urban and Rural Areas, Optimize Allocation of Resources

One difficulty in rural labor resource development is the unbalance between labor supply and demand; rural area's labor is not enough for a large number of them flowing into city. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures to attract labors in city to work in country. To achieve the goal, we need to rationally allocate labor resources between urban and rural areas with a method called "cut the peak to fill the valley" (use urban labor resource to develop rural areas). Governments of all degrees should attract city talents to countries to start enterprises and provide pre-production, in-production and post-production services in order to attract more city talents to participate in modern agricultural industry, and based on these, construct socialist new countryside and build a bridge connect city talents with country demand.

Enhancing rural human resource development, implementing scientific management strategy, creating healthy environment for the development of rural areas, and improving urban-rural relationship are four effective measures to meet the demand of urban-rural integration and urban-rural coordinative development. In dealing with the labor resource development task, we should broaden our scope and take the coordinative development model into account, and we should also build an unified labor market to resolve problem of surplus labor flow, and meanwhile, we need build an effective mechanism for rationally develop rural labor resources and make farmers play well their part. Last but not least, we should explore the way with innovative sprit.

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