CHAPTER 8

Enabling Migrant Workers’ Children to Take the College Entrance Exam in the City Where Their Parents Work and Live Moving Forward

Xiong Bingqi

Abstract

Until the end of 2012, 27 provinces around China including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong except Tibet, Qinghai, Tianjin and Hainan, have announced the policy to enable migrant workers’ children to take the college entrance exam in the city where their parents work and live. Those programs create a substantial activity of “ice-breaking” to the reform of National College Entrance Exam. However, there are two problems on advancing migrant students to take College Entrance Exam: one is the establishment of threshold permissions attributed to the local government without national standards; the other is the lack of hearing civil suggestions and open legislation mechanism in governmental departments. To completely solve the problem of migrant students to take College Entrance Exam, it is needed to combine with the reform of National College Entrance Exam, and vigorously promote the reform of autonomous recruitment of new students in key universities.

Keywords

Migrant Students to Taking College Entrance Exam – College Entrance Examination Reform, Legislation – Education Equity

The reform of National College Entrance Examination was clearly mentioned in Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform

* Xiong Bingqi 熊丙奇, professor at Shanghai Jiaotong University, Vice Director of the 21st Century Education Research Institute.


and Development (2010–2020) which was published in 2010. One important part of this reform is to explore ways to enable migrant workers’ children to take the College Entrance Exam in the city where their parents work and live, also known to the public as “Offsite Exam Taking (异地高考)”. It not only directly reflects the legal right of migrant students to receive education, but also moves forward the education equity in China in general. Constitution of People’s Republic of China entitles every citizen equal right to education. Education Law makes it clear that the right to education is not limited by citizens’ identities. It is a fundamental requirement for equal education rights to enable citizens to register for College Entrance Exam and matriculate in colleges in any place of the country. However, the implementation of Offsite Exam Taking has met many obstacles in reality, especially in areas like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong where there is an increasing population influx into the cities. The obstacles include, but are not limited to, the existing household registration system, the imbalanced development of education in different regions and the unequal quota of college matriculation in different regions. How the central and local governments are going to solve this problem will be not only a demonstration of the government’s determination to overcome difficulties and push forward education equity, but also a test for the government’s wisdom.

I Overall Progress of the Offsite Exam Taking Policy

On August 31, 2012, the General Office of the State Council forwarded the circular from the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Public Security: Opinions on Enabling Children of Migrant Workers to Take the College Entrance Examination in the City Where Their Parents Work and Live After Completing Compulsory Education (Opinions for short).1 According to Opinions, guided by the principle of “adjusting measures to local conditions”, each province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the central government was supposed to have carried out an implementation plan about migrant students taking college entrance exam locally by the end of 2012.

The Opinions has been anticipated by the public for a long time. As early as 2009, the Ministry of Education declared to explore methods to enable

1 http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2012-08/31/content_2214566.htm.