Improving Minority Compulsory Education in Yunnan, China: Challenges and Policies

Mun C. Tsang
Teachers College Columbia University
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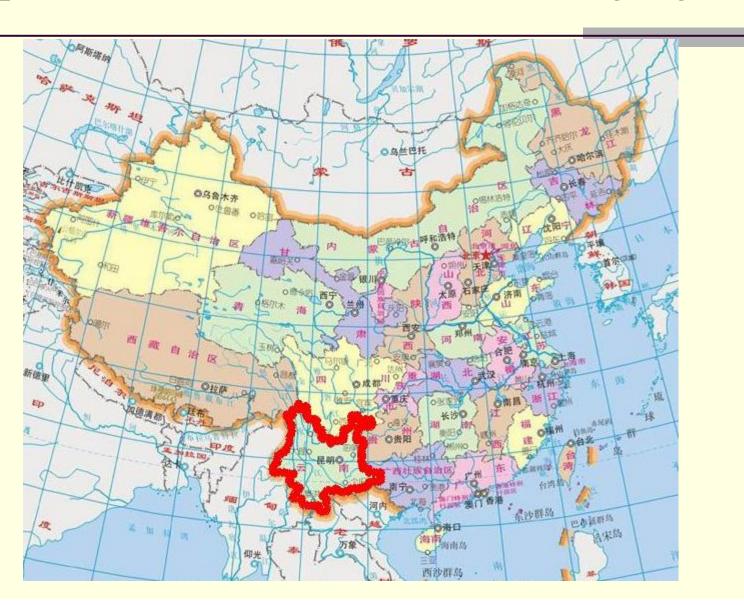
Outline of Presentation

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Forthcoming in Tsang, M. et. al. (2007). Studies on the Financial Reform of Compulsory Education in China. Beijing, China: Education Science Press.

Publication A-11, www.tc.edu/centers/coce

Map of China with Yunnan Province Highlighted



(I) Background: Yunnan

- 43 million people
- Frontier (stability)
- Mountainous (94%)
- Minorities (14 million, 25 minorities with over 5,000 people)
- Multiple spoken and written languages
- Among the least developed provinces in China (2003-04)
 - > Per-capita rural income: 1,697 Yuan (64% of national average)
 - > Per-capita income: 7,643 Yuan (90% of national average)
 - No. of post-secondary students: 80 per 10,000 people (56% of national average)
- Economy
 - > Tobacco
 - Tourism & Cultural Services
 - > Hydropower
 - Biological resources
- History of Educational Development (see paper on CoCE website)

(II) Key Research Questions

- Concepts: Minority population, Minority Areas,
 Minority Education, Minority Compulsory Education
- Importance of minority education in achieving quality compulsory education in Yunnan
- What are the key challenges confronting the development of minority compulsory education today?
- What policies may contribute to the improvement of minority compulsory education?

(III) Methods and Data Sources

- Literature review
- School and community visits
- Discussion with policymakers
- Experience from education development projects
- Government policy papers

(IV) Major Challenges in Minority Compulsory Education

- (IV.a) Expanding education opportunities for minority children
- Significantly lower enrollment ratios
- Inadequate funding
- Higher dropout rates
- Cultural & religious impacts

- (IV.b) Raising the quality of compulsory education for minority children
- Significant lower learning outcome
- Inadequate resources & poor school facilities
- Lower teacher quality
- Inadequate bilingual instruction, curriculum, & textbooks

- (IV.c) Improving efficiency in minority compulsory education
- Significant dropout rates in certain minority counties (Deqin, Lu Jiang)
- High unit cost in teaching points and low quality
- Outdated teaching technology

(V) Policy Goals, Strategies, and Interventions

(V.1) Factors constraining the development of minority (compulsory) education in Yunnan

- Weak economic & cultural foundations, highly uneven development
- Weak education foundation, rapid expansion with limited resources
- Dispersion of minority populations, in rural/mountainous/border areas
- Large varieties of languages & ethnic groups
- Impact of religious and diverse cultures

(V.2) Factors influencing minority education policies in Yunnan: Policy-making Contexts

- Macro-economic and social policies of the country (rapid growth vs. balanced growth, growth vs. social inequality, etc.)
- Central policies (fiscal and education) towards poor, rural, and minority areas
- Yunnan provincial socio-economic policies
- Yunnan response to central policies

(V.3) Policy Goals, Strategies, and Interventions (1)

Goals	Strategies	Interventions
Increase coverage	Expanding supply	Rational distribution of schools; boarding schools; remove dilapidated buildings; strengthen education technology; significant increase in government resources; guaranteeing funding for poor areas
	Strengthening household demand	Establishing & improving financial aid scheme for poor students; strengthening school-community relation; properly dealing with religious & cultural factors

Goals	Strategies	Interventions
Improving quality	Increasing education funding	Developing a qualified teaching force; assisting low-performing schools
	Improving instruction	Strengthening bilingual instruction, the use of education technology, parental involvement, school-community relation
	Raising learning outcome	Curriculum reform & better knowledge and skills

Goals	Strategies	Inventions
Improving efficiency	Improving internal efficiency	Strengthening board schools; Economies of scales & school distribution
	Improving external efficiency	Strengthening parental & community participation in school; curriculum reform & learning goals for 21st century

Policy Recommendations

- Significant increase in funding for compulsory education, especially in minority areas
- Establishing and improving the system of financial aid for needy students
- Establishing a stable and qualified teaching force
- Eliminating unsafe school buildings
- Achieving efficient distribution of schools and strengthening boarding schools
- Strengthening bilingual education at the primary level
- Strengthening information and technology education
- Improving school community relationship
- Implementing curriculum reform
- Strengthening research on minority education

(VI) Looking Ahead

- Implementation of selected policies
- Macro economic, political, and social stability
- Social inequality vs. harmonious society
- Strategic role of Yunnan Province
- Cautious optimism



