

## **A Review on the Educational Welfare System of Chinese College Students**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The higher education welfare system is highly related to its politics and economy. Through combing the history and state quo of the welfare system of Chinese colleges and universities, this article finds that with the continuous improvement of Chinese market economy system, the educational welfare system of colleges and universities in China has correspondingly enhanced. With the continuous improvement of Chinese higher education welfare system, remarkable results have been achieved. Of course, there is still a lot of room for reform in Chinese higher education welfare system. This paper discusses the direction of Chinese higher education welfare system future reform from expanding its coverage, enriching its objective demands, constructing a fair distribution mechanism, and diversifying its content forms.

**Keywords:** Higher education; Educational welfare system; Grants; Scholarship

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education welfare is a social welfare system that provides people with a means of access to education and conditions in the form of offering tuition waivers and low-price tuition. The terminal goal of this system is committed to maintaining educational equity, fostering a balanced environment with sharing educational resources and enhancing corporate culture, and helping to establish a harmonious society. In China, investment in higher education is intensively substantial. Whether it is the cultivation of teachers, the investment of education funds, or the improvement of educational infrastructure, China has always been at the forefront of the developing world. From the perspective of the development process of China's higher education welfare system and the award and assistantship system, this paper will sort out and analyze the current situation and problems in Chinese higher education welfare system. Afterward, through the discussion about its reform direction, research will provide implications for the further improvement of the higher education welfare system in China as a reference.

### **2. THE DEVELOPMENT STAGE OF THE EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SYSTEM IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA**

In China, the progression of the educational welfare system of colleges and universities is divided into three stages, namely, a) the educational welfare under central planning the national economic system, b) the educational welfare under the market economy system and c) the return of the educational welfare under the market economy system, comprising of the

elements including school setting, admission policy, and investment in public education of colleges and universities present diverse patterns.

### **2.1 Educational welfare under central planning the national economic system**

In the period of the planned economy, the higher education welfare system in China mainly refers to the welfare system mode of Soviet envoys, which focuses on the advantages of socialism. The specific situation is as follows: First, there are some comprehensive universities that only set up three colleges in terms of the College of Arts, the College of Science, and other colleges. As the representative founded in the early time, Harbin University of technology devices its teaching mode and textbook compilation in the Soviet model. Second, in the aspect of college admission, the welfare system of reducing the scores of the offspring of workers, peasants, and soldiers has been implemented. At the same time, the welfare system of "tuition waivers admission" and " exam-free enrollment" has also been carried out, mainly for students from working-class and peasant families with poor financial situation and outstanding achievements. Third, in the case of the investment of college education funds, the central government adopts a unified fiscal appropriation method, which means that the funds for colleges and universities nationwide are allocated by the finance, so students' tuition and miscellaneous fees can be appropriately reduced so that the family burden for students to enroll is alleviated.

### **2.2 Marketization reform under the market economy system**

During the market economy period, the demand for education and part-time education by citizens were also significantly boosted along with the hierarchical and diverse requirement, leading to the emerging of the adult college entrance examinations, junior college entrance examinations, and other forms of college enrollment. The main body of investment in higher education is distributed from the Ministry of finance only to the form of the Ministry of finance working as the main function and other social channels working as the supplemental. However, the diversification of educational progression has also generated some severe problems, such as the inflation of school-selection fees, the exorbitant tuition fees set up by schools which reaps huge profit with an elaborate pretext, and other unreasonable policies increased the burden of parents. Also, some education welfare policies which have not been complemented successfully were the direct reasons that triggered the disadvantaged college students little funding and made them drop out of school. All these chaotic phenomena are severe consequences of the industrialization of education. As far as colleges and universities are concerned, China has promulgated a series of higher education welfare policies in the late 1980s in advance. For instance, the welfare for teachers, the allocating housing policy for university teachers, raising financial aid to college students, and adopting the policy of "award, assistance, supplement and reduction" to reduce the burden of college students' enrollment. Besides, in 2005, China formally has undertaken "National Scholarship" policy to address the needs of rural students, and its official document pinpointed that the Chinese government will allocate 1 billion RMB annually for the "National Scholarship Fund" to support full-time college students with family economic difficulties.

### **2.3 The education welfare under the market economy system**

With the development of the market economy, the educational welfare system of colleges and universities in China has been further reformed and improved. Since 2007, China has vigorously launched a new type of educational welfare funding system for higher education institutions. Based on the original scholarships, student loans, student subsidies, and student tuition waiver policies, it has further rendered plentiful forms of students' welfare in terms of education national inspirational scholarships, university student assistantship and, tuition fee reduction policy. Since then, in the light of the implementation situation and subsequent effects, the welfare policy has been revised and completed, and the regulations and details concerning financial assistance funding have been further refined as well. In general, several new regulations were issued to increase the amount of financial aid and further broaden the welfare coverage, expanding from ordinary colleges and universities to private schools and vocational colleges. In 2009, China established a college tuition compensation system,

with a standard amount of 6 thousand RMB per year for full-time ordinary college students who enlisted in the military while setting up a policy to encourage students to take root in the teaching profession. This system has played an integral role in inspiring and guiding college the financially strapped students that not only effectively ease their financial burden, but also revitalizes the education environment in China. In 2012, the government further processed the welfare system of teachers by increasing salaries of teacher and bringing more needed personal into the college education industry.

### **3. THE STATE QUO OF THE GRANT AID SYSTEM IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN CHINA**

#### **3.1 National scholarship scheme**

National scholarships are set up to reward inter-disciplinary talents with outstanding achievements in colleges. In 2002, China officially stipulated the establishment of the "National Scholarship" policy, which is evaluated once a year. At first, 4,5000 people were being selected annually, and the top 10,000 students won a scholarship of 6,000 RMB, meanwhile, the remaining students received a scholarship of 4,000 RMB. By 2007, the amount of national scholarships for undergraduates and junior colleges has been uniformly adjusted to 8,000 RMB. Substantially, the quota f undergraduates receiving the "national scholarship" is determined based on the quality of the university, the capacity of university students, the number of scholarship applicants, and the type of university. Also, among graduate students, the selection of obtaining the national scholarship is restricted to the number of 3.5 million people each year, with 20,000 RMB award each. Besides, the annual number of doctoral students obtaining national scholarships is 10,000, awarding 30,000 RMB for each. Whether it is the college student or a master's, doctoral students, the procedure of applying national scholarships also contains a series of underlying conditions, such as a strong attachment for the motherland, law-abiding, good moral character, and subjective initiative to social practice.

#### **3.2 National student financial aid scheme**

Since the second semester of 2010, CPC Central Committee and local governments jointly established the National Grants to fund college students with financial deficiencies. Scope of funding accounts for about 20% of the total university students, which occupies the eastern proportion of 10%, the central region occupies 20% of the proportion of the western region holds 30% of GDP. With regard to the planning of specific funding audiences, regional administrations can appropriately tilt to underdeveloped rural areas and minority areas in light of their real living state quo. Unlike the national scholarship, the provision of National Grants aims to assist students from the working class, subsidize them to finish college study successfully. Embedded in the National Grants system, the subsidy standards are divided into three levels, namely 1,000 RMB, 2000 RMB, and 3000 RMB. Moreover, national scholarships can also be obtained while receiving national grants; these two welfare systems do not conflict with each other, but the quota is still limited. Basically, only students without the ability to work, or who lacked family support, could apply for assistance from the government.

#### **3.3 National student loan program**

The national student loan system is a product of the socialist market economy. With the booming of the market economy, China's securities market has begun to surge, and the allocation of resources has gradually become financialized. In order to further develop the education and welfare policy system of colleges and universities, the Party Central Committee has used financial means to enhance financial support for college students with financial difficulties as well as established a national student loan system. In other words, students from economically disadvantaged families can apply for loans through the platform of colleges and universities. These loans include all expenses in school, but in principle, the maximum amount of full-time undergraduate students can loan of 8,000 RMB per academic year, while the maximum amount of loans can be full-time graduate students 12,000 RMB per academic year. The national student loan system is carried out in the form of a one-time application and installment, that is, students can sign a loan agreement with the bank for multiple academic years at a time, successively, and the bank issues the loan amount every year. In the following year, students do not need to go through other processes, and the bank will issue the loan amount automatically. National student loan system stipulates that throughout college time, students can use loans without incurring bank interest, this part is mainly subsidized by the national

grants, and interest after the completion of studies undertaken by themselves.

#### **4. THE REFORM DIRECTION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP AND WELFARE SYSTEM OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA**

With the continuous improvement of the educational welfare system in universities and colleges, the gross enrollment rate of higher education has increased year by year. In 2018, the higher education gross enrollment rate in China reached to 48.1%, which achieved 27.7% growth compared with the data in 2007. It is expected that the gross enrollment rate will consistently escalate and reach approximately 50% by 2020. Despite the fact that the educational welfare system of Chinese colleges and universities has achieved considerable results, there is still a range of problems that need to be resolved.

##### **4.1 Expand the coverage of education benefits**

In the past, the education and welfare system usually only targeted a small group of poor students. Over time, the public gradually formed a solidified view that education welfare is only a kind of social redemption or charity for poor students, which is only related to money. However, in the context of the new era, people understands of poverty is not only limited to deprivation of material and economy, but inequality leading to a deficiency of capabilities and concepts. With the introduction of the concept of "social exclusion," people began to aspire to change this chaotic phenomenon through the improvement of the educational welfare system. As to the welfare system, it should no longer focus on the target minority group of the poor student, but should gradually cover the working community, the floating population and the disabled, only, in that case, they can access the benefits of higher education. Therefore, the current evidence suggests that the coverage of the educational welfare system in colleges and universities should be more extensive, so that it is no longer restricted by factors such as age, gender, region, household registration and social status.

##### **4.2 Enriching the education welfare objectives**

As a vital embodiment of the education welfare system, the system of awards and grants should be improved in practice. In addition to academic performance as the primary manifestation of students' learning achievements, it is determined to set as the leading indicator of the award and assistantship system, and at the same time, it also requires to take into account the moral appraisal. What's more, the welfare assessment should take the actual implementation of the need to cultivate fully-developed talents as the ultimate goal rather than being formal rather than a mere formality. Also, the goal demands of the higher education welfare system should not only meet the requirements for the comprehensive development of students but also reflect in fostering and constructing talent reserve teams to boost national momentum and comprehensive national capacity. To sum up, the extension and improvement of the higher education welfare system should serve the goal of social progression.

##### **4.3 Setting equal distribution of educational welfare resources**

As an essential part of the social security system, education welfare has made a significant contribution to the promotion of education equity and the realization of high-quality distribution of social resources. Therefore, the reform of the higher education welfare system in China should be more committed to maintaining the fair and reasonable allocation of resources. In addition to offering all citizens the opportunity to receive higher education as much as possible, the government should also take into account the social demands of people with different identities, families and social status, reduce the level differences caused by background differences, and make them possess the opportunities getting assess to educational resources, and truly realize equality for all. Besides, modifying the public educational welfare system in order to maximize its social power and narrow gap brought by the inequality of social status could be a seasoned measure. To sum up, escalating the quality of citizens through education investment via creating a fair and justice, benign social competition environment, especially for disadvantaged groups, is another indispensable indicator for future policy development.

#### **4.4 Diversifying forms of educational benefits**

With the successive progression of the social economy, the content and form of the educational welfare system in China should present its vigor and diversification. Beyond allocating free textbooks and various government subsidies, the provision of imputing higher education benefits could comprise of free lunch and school bus transfer services, making a full endeavor to provide adequate protection for the healthy growth and travel safety of students. For this reason, some developed countries will provide travel and meal allowances and renders students from disadvantaged families affordable computers and other items to support their studies, while maintaining the reasonable progress of their campus life. It is crucial for the Chinese government to draw lessons from evidence on the redistributive effects of its system as well as those from other countries to build a genuinely sufficient and effective education welfare system to serve its targets. In addition to the specific entity of welfare, the forms of welfare distribution should also have diversity. Above all, the outlay of the education welfare system should be more humanized. For example, in Japan, education welfare takes into account the social needs of college students and provides graduation travel expense subsidies and financial assistance for college students with financial difficulties.

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Enabled by the inclusion of investigating history, current situation, problems of the higher education welfare system, this paper provides new perspectives to tackling the existing issue and direction to establish a complete welfare system in China. The popularization of higher education has a far-reaching impact on the development of a country's political experience. While considering the progression of Chinese higher education welfare system, the government should transfer the concern from promoting efficiency to creating equity distribution of education resources and remember that the education welfare system is an indispensable measure to realize social justice and the pave a solid foundation for our country development from time to time.

We look forward to this research providing useful evidence and reference for the improvement of the educational welfare system of colleges and universities in China for related research, to make a modest contribution to the vigorous and rapid development of China's education. However, due to the limited ability, this paper is still immature, while I still expect scholars can carry out in-depth research in this field in the future.

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