Special Report

on Compulsory Education for Children
Migrating with Parents and Left-behind Children

Development and Planning Department of the Ministry of Education

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Special Report on Compulsory Education for Children Migrating with Parents and Left-behind Children

The population movement triggered by industrialization and urbanization has constituted a biggest social change taken place in China since the reform and opening up, and will remain the major content and influencing factor of the social change in China in a fairly long time to come.

With the population movement and migration, China is witnessing a growing number of migrant workers in cities in China and their children migrating with them as well as left-behind children\(^1\) in rural areas. In 2008, 30.25 million children migrating with parents and left-behind children received compulsory education across the country, accounting for 19% of the total amount of students. The education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children concerns the vital interests of hundreds of millions of migrant workers, relates to the success of urbanization and the improvement of the overall quality of the entire people of the nation. A successful solution to the problem plays a vital role in promoting social harmony and stability. It’s an important step in realizing education equity and significant embodiment of implementing the idea of the human-oriented, sustainable development theory.

\(^1\)Since 2007, Ministry of Education has made statistical analysis of children migrating with and left behind by migrant workers in rural areas in compulsory education schools approved and filed by education administrations. Children migrating with migrant workers refer to those who are registered in rural areas and migrate with parents to provinces (districts, municipalities) outside their hometowns or other counties (districts) within their hometown provinces to receive compulsory education; rural left-behind children refer to those whose parents leave home to work for more than 3 months and entrust the children to the domiciliary authority, who receive the compulsory education under the custodianship of one parent or other relatives, same below.
This report, based on policy changes of the Chinese government, analyzes the basic conditions of the compulsory education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children in terms of scale, distribution, sources and education status, etc., and comes up with corresponding policy proposals.

I. The education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children has become a major social mission

The industrialization and urbanization has brought about extensive and profound changes in China's socio-economic development, the population flow has exerted a major influence upon the mid- and long-term national development as well as the current systems. As a result, problem with the compulsory education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children occurs and is attached great attention by governments at various levels and all sectors of the society.

A. The population flow will remain an accelerated upward pace during industrialization and urbanization

Driven by industrialization, the urbanization in China has maintained a sustained development. Between 1990 and 2004, the level of urbanization in China had risen from 26.4% to 41.8%. For every one percentage point of improvement, there were about 10 million rural laborers transferred. Meanwhile, large amount of people migrated from areas with low productivity to those with high productivity. From 1995 to 2000, the net amount of people migrated to the eastern part of China
was about 20 million, the net influx rate was approximately 1.57%; the net amounts of people migrated from central and western parts of China were over 13 million and 7 million respectively, the net migration rates reached 1.07% and 0.56% respectively.

Based on UN estimation, in the wake of economic society, knowledge-based economic society in particular, the proportion of world urban population will keep on rising, it will reach 64.6% between 2000 and 2025. In the first half of the 21st century, the urbanization of the world population will accelerate its pace instead of remaining static. And the acceleration is mainly driven by urbanization in developing countries. The estimation shows that the proportion of urban population of developing countries between 2000 and 2025 will rise from 45.1% to 61.2%.

Currently, the urbanization of population in China is featured by rural population migrating to small towns and population of small and medium towns migrating to big cities. Despite of the optimization and upgrading of industrial structure, and the ups and downs of influx of rural laborers, China still will go a step further to accelerate its pace of modernization as a developing country and its economy will maintain its rapid growth. China’s dual economic structure determines the backward urban-rural structure of population and low urbanization level. Population flow in China will be intensified in future.

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1 Population Geography of China by Zhangshanyu, Page 372.
B. The government introduced several major policies to address the compulsory education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children

For a long period of time, the Central Committee of Communist Party of China (CPCCC) and the State Council (SC) of China have attached great importance to the education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children. In 1996, former State Education Commission issued Measure on School Education for Migrant School-age Children in Towns (for Trial Implementation), stipulating the requirements on compulsory education for children of migrant population. In 1998, the State Education Commission and Ministry of Public Security distributed Interim Measure of School Education for Temporary Migrant Children and Adolescents, stipulating that migrant children receive transient education mainly in public primary and secondary schools in areas receiving their influx.

The promulgation of the Decisions on the Reform and Development of Basic Education in 2001 and Notice of the General Office of the State Council on Employment Administration and Services for Migrant Workers in Cities in 2003 have improved compulsory education for children of migrant people to a certain degree. In 2006, the Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on Several Great Issues of Building Harmonious Society was issued, in which guaranteeing the compulsory education for children migrating with migrant workers (hereinafter refers to as children migrating with parents) was regarded as an important task in sticking to the principle of giving priority to education
and promoting education equity. The newly revised Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China provides legal protection in this regard.

To properly address the education for children migrating with parents and caring for left-behind children, relevant departments under CPCCC jointly staged a number of policies. In 2003, Ministry of Education, together with 5 other departments introduced the Opinions on Strengthening Compulsory Education for Children of Migrant Workers in Cities, clarifying the enrollment means and financial support for children of farmers, stipulating “the compulsory education for children of migrant workers in cities is mainly the responsibility of the governments receiving the influx, whole-day public primary and junior middle schools mainly take the children”; the opinions require that the financial departments of the governments receiving the influx shall finance those schools with relatively large number of children of migrant workers in cities. There shall be a part of extra charges in urban education funds set aside for the compulsory education for children of migrant workers in cities. 

Organization Department of the Central Committee, All-China Women’s Federation and 5 other ministries and departments jointly introduced the Notice of Implementing the Instructions Given by CPCCC on Actively Caring for Rural Left-behind Children. The SC Joint Committee on Migrant Workers set up a working panel specially to instruct the work for left-behind children. In addition, the departments concerned endeavored to resolve the problems with the studying and living of left-behind children by accelerating the construction of boarding schools.
in rural areas. The governments intensified their support and administration of private schools for migrant workers, and are gradually integrating the schools financed by migrant workers or other interested parties and specially established to receive children migrating with parents into the scope of private education administration.

C. Active efforts have been made by different parts of the country to implement policies to promote the compulsory education for children migrating with parents

Local governments made active efforts in implementing the instructions by central leadership, enhancing the capacity of public schools in accepting children migrating with parents by intensifying inputs, renovating and expanding the construction of public schools, revising the layout of schools, adjusting enrollment plans and other approaches. In 2008, 78.5% of children migrating with parents attend public schools, and a pattern of public schools playing a major role in receiving children migrating with parents has been established at its preliminary stage.

First, constant efforts have been made to increase input and significant progress has been made in the safeguarding mechanisms of fund raising for compulsory education for children migrating with parents. For instance, the Chengdu Municipal Government of Sichuan introduced Opinions on Implementing Compulsory Education for Children Migrating with Parents in Chengdu (for trial implementation), which requires that the city-level financial departments, financial departments of five boroughs and high-tech zones give special subsidies for schooling of
children migrating with parents, which shall be under the budget administration of education departments at the same level. The municipal education bureaus allocated the special subsidies to regional educational administrations by proportion. The Shanghai Municipal government enlarged its investments in special funds for compulsory education of children migrating with parents to help increase and improve the educational facilities and equipments of primary schools for children migrating with parents. The special funds were mainly allocated to areas with poor financial support and densely located areas of primary schools for migrant children. The education administrations of various districts and counties signed agreements on purchasing services with primary schools for children migrating with parents, providing subsidies to the schools according to the enrollment number and on the basis of cost accounting.

Second, efforts have been made to explore effective mechanisms for the education of left-behind children. Local governments, for the aims of achieving integrated rural-urban educational planning and promoting balanced development of compulsory education, made the education for left-behind children as an important entry point for strengthening and improving compulsory education in rural areas. For example, Sichuan province, as a big labor exporter, had the number of workers employed outside the province rising year by year. Its number of left-behind children who needed to board at school therefore also increased substantially, reaching 2.93 million in 2008, accounting for 33% of the total amount of rural students during compulsory education. In that year, Sichuan Province decided to invest RMB300 million from its financial budget to the Programme of Boarding Schools for Left-behind
Children, constructing and renovating schooling buildings and student dormitories of 400 boarding schools for left-behind children in rural areas. As a result, phenomena of large-size classes, big dorm beds and house renting outside school were basically eliminated in project schools. The studying and living conditions of the students improved remarkably.

Third, constant efforts have been made to intensify the standardized management over simply equipped schools for children migrating with parents. In 1998, the Wuhan Municipal government of Hubei province worked out Criteria of Running Simply Equipped Schools for Migrant Children by Social Forces in Wuhan. It aimed to uniformly regulate the examination and approval of privately run simply equipped schools in the city in terms of sponsors, teachers, goals of running schools, school sites and facilities and funds, etc. and has proved effective. The Shanghai Municipal government integrated the existing basically qualified primary schools for children migrating with parents into the administration scope of private education, and required preliminary completion of the integration by 2010, by when those schools which still found unqualified shall be closed.

D. The education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children has aroused wide public concern.

The education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children has increasingly aroused wide public concern. Women's Federations at various levels of Jiangxi Province, in collaboration with other authorities concerned, has set 5 patterns of implementing care project for left-behind children, i.e. site pattern, system pattern, pairing
pattern, organization pattern and activity pattern.

Since 2001, Qingshen County of Meishan City in Sichuan Province has established a working mechanism with government leadership, departmental cooperation and public participation, and an education protection network with left-behind children as the core position which integrated families, schools and the society. A Qingshen Model has been gradually established which was spoken highly of by experts from Asian Development Bank.

Shiquan County of Shaanxi Province integrated the issue with left-behind children into the overall planning of socio-economic development and the operation and performance assessment system for party committee and governmental work, and has established a long-acting working mechanism of left-behind children education, caring and protection, integrating all related parties of party committee, government, departments, schools, families, society and children. It aimed to see the left-behind children educated, protected, cared for, assisted in life and helped in time of difficulties, and gradually formed the "Shiquan Pattern" of managing and maintaining the education for left-behind children in rural areas.

Kaifeng of Henan, in implementing the Programme of Caring for Migrant Children, established 5 major networks of caring and protection, i.e. home caring, school assisting, public caring, legal protection, organization managing and protecting. To effectively directing family education for left-behind children, Kaifeng established family education centers, family education stations and other organizational networks of
family education for rural left-behind children, 687 schools for parents of left-behind children, and 328 schools for parents of migrant children.

II. Major characteristics of compulsory education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children

A. The overall scale of children migrating with parents continued to expand and regional distribution differs significantly

The number and proportion of children migrating with parents who board at school and are now at compulsory education stage increased substantially over the previous year and mainly concentrated in the eastern region. In 2008, the number of children migrating with parents at compulsory education period reached 8.847 million, an increase of 1.19 million in number from the previous year, or up by 15.5%; of which, 6.777 million were primary school students, 857 thousand more than last year; 2.07 million were junior middle school students, 333 thousand more than last year.

Eastern region ranked first in the county by the number of children migrating with parents. In 2008, 4.117 million primary school students in eastern region were children migrating with parents, a rise of 620 thousand over the previous year, accounting for 60.7% of the total in the county, or 1.6 percentage points higher than that of the previous year; 1.075 secondary school students, 223 thousand more than last year, or 2.9 percentage points higher, taking up 52% of the total.
Regardless of the increase in the number of school children migrating with parents in central and western areas, the proportion dropped to various degrees. In 2008, 950,000 primary school students in the central region were children migrating with parents, an increase of 114,000 over the previous year, making up 14% of the country’s total, down by 0.1 percentage points; 392 thousand junior secondary school students were children migrating with parents in the central region, an increase of 44 thousand over the previous year, accounting for 18.9% of the total of the country, down by 1.1 percentage points. 1.701 million primary school students were children migrating with parents in the western region, 126 thousand more than last year, making up 25.2% of the country’s total, down by 1.5 percentage points; 603 thousand junior secondary school students were children migrating with parents in the western region, an increase of 66 thousand, making up 29.1% of the country’s total, down by 1.8% percentage points.

Guangdong, Zhejiang and Jiangsu had the largest numbers of children migrating with parents. These three provinces added up together had 41.4% of the country’s total number of children migrating with parents at the primary education stage, of whom Guangdong Province claimed the highest proportion of 23.8%. These three provinces added up together had 31.9% of the country’s total number of children migrating with parent at the junior secondary education stage, with Guangdong Province having highest proportion of 17.9%.

Figure 1    Regional distribution of children migrating with parents during compulsory education in 2008
The proportion of children migrating with parents to the total number of students increased a little, with that of the eastern region obviously higher than that of the central and western regions. In 2008, of the students during compulsory education, the children migrating with parents accounted for 5.6%, up by 0.9 percentage points over the previous year.

Of the primary school students across the country, the children migrating with parents made up 6.6%, up by 1 percentage point. The eastern region claimed a proportion as high as 11.6%, up by 2 percentage points. In Beijing, Shanghai and Zhejiang, the proportion approached or even exceeded 25%, in Tianjin, Fujian and Guangdong, the proportion was over 15%.

Of the junior middle school students throughout the country, the
children migrating with parents accounted for 3.7%, up by 0.7 percentage points over the previous year. In eastern region, the proportion reached 5.3%, up by 1.2 percentage points. In Beijing, Shanghai and Zhejiang, the proportion approached or even exceeded 10%.

Table 1  The proportion of children migrating with parents to the total amount of school students during compulsory education in different regions in 2008 and changes over the previous year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Primary school</th>
<th>Junior middle school</th>
<th>Increase over the previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In one fifth of county-level primary schools across the country, children migrating with parents accounted for over 10% of the total number of the students in the schools. In Beijing, Tianjin, Liaoning and Shanghai, over half county primary schools claimed a proportion exceeding 10%. While in Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Heilongjiang, Jiangxi, Anhui, Tibet, Shaanxi, Gansu and Qinghai, over half county primary schools had a proportion lower than 1%.

In 13.8% of county-level junior middle schools across the country, the children migrating with parents accounted for more than 10% of the
total amount of the students. In Shanghai, in 60% of the districts and counties, the proportion exceeded 10%. In 31.7% of the county junior middle schools all across China, the children migrating with parents made up less than 1% of the total amount of students. In over half of the counties of Anhui and Gansu, the proportions were lower than 1%.

B. The origin of children migrating with parents varied considerably from region to region with eastern region featured by migration from other provinces while the central and western regions featured by migration from other counties within the provinces

In 2008, of 8.846 million children migrating with parents receiving compulsory education throughout the country, 49% migrated from other provinces, 51% from other counties within the provinces. Over half (51.6%) of the primary school students migrated from other provinces, while the migration of junior middle school students were mainly from other counties within the provinces, making up 59.5%.

In the eastern region, more than two thirds of children migrating with parents were from other provinces. In 2008, the proportion of primary school students migrating from other provinces among all primary school migrating children in the eastern region reached 67.3%. In the 3 municipalities directly under the central government, i.e. Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin, the same proportions were all over 97%. In Zhejiang, the proportion reached 82%. In the eastern region, of all junior middle school children migrating with parents, 55.9% were from other provinces. This proportion exceeded 95% in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai, and
reached 66% in Zhejiang. The autonomous regions of Xinjiang and Tibet enjoyed higher proportions, too, 75% and 70% respectively.

**Figure 2** Origin of children migrating with parents during compulsory education in 2008 by region

In central and western regions, the children migrated mainly from other counties within provinces with their parents. In 2008, the children migrating from other counties accounted for 80.4% and 68.4% of the total number of primary school students migrating with parents in central and western areas respectively. To give a more detailed analysis, in Jiangxi, Sichuan, Hunan, Henan, Anhui, Guizhou and Guangxi, the proportions exceeded 80%. Children migrating with parents from other counties accounted for 83.8% and 71% of the total number of junior middle school students migrating with parents in central and western regions respectively. To give a more detailed analysis, in Jiangxi, Sichuan, Henan, Hunan, Anhui, Guangxi, Guizhou and Heilongjiang, the proportions exceeded 80%.
C. One fifth of the children migrating with parents were at private primary and junior middle schools with eastern region claiming a higher proportion and western region coming second

In 2008, there were altogether 1.994 million children migrating with parents studying in private primary and junior middle schools in the country, an increase of 305 thousand over the previous year, or up by 15.3%, accounting for 22.5% of the total amount of children migrating with parents, up by 0.4 percentage points over the previous year.

The eastern region claimed the highest proportion of children migrating with parents studying in private schools. In 2008, the proportions were 28.7% and 26.9% in private primary and junior middle schools respectively, up by 1.2 and 0.8 percentage points over the previous year; the western area came the second, with proportions of 19.9% and 15.2% respectively. The central region had the lowest proportion of 5.3% and 10.5% respectively.

Table 2  Children migrating with parents receiving compulsory education in private schools by region in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total No. of migrating children studying in private schools (10 thousand)</th>
<th>No. proportion to total No. of children migrating with parents? %?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of migrating children studying in private schools (10 thousand)</td>
<td>proportion to total No. of children migrating with parents? %?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>199.4</td>
<td>157.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>147.1</td>
<td>118.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regionally speaking, in Guangdong, Hainan, Guizhou and Guangxi, over 30% of the children migrating with parents were in private primary school students. Guangdong had the highest proportion of 51.4%. In Guangdong, Hainan and Guizhou, the proportions of children migrating with parents studying in private junior middle schools also exceeded 25%, of which Guangdong claimed the highest proportion of 53.9%.

D. The scale and proportion of rural left-behind children to all in-school students during compulsory education increased a little, with over 80% in central and western regions

In 2008, China had 21.403 million rural left-behind children as compulsory school students, 1.029 million more than last year, making up 16.4% of the total amount of rural students, up by 1.1 percentage points over the previous year. The central and western regions both claimed relatively high proportions of around 20%.

Among all primary school students, 13.979 million were rural left-behind children, 371 thousand more than last year, accounting for 16.4% of the total amount of primary school students in rural areas. In the central region, the proportion was as high as 21%; in western area, it reached 19.8%; in Chongqing, Hunan, Sichuan and Jiangxi, it exceeded 30%, with Chongqing claiming the highest proportion of 42.2%.

Among all junior middle school students, 7.424 million were rural left-behind children, 658 thousand more than last year, accounting for
16.4% of the total amount of junior middle school students in rural areas. Both central and western areas enjoy a relatively high proportion of 20%; in Chongqing, Hunan, Sichuan, Jiangxi, Anhui and Guangxi, it was higher than 25%, with the proportions in Chongqing and Hunan exceeding 40%.

Table 3  The amount of in-school rural left-behind children during compulsory education and the proportion by area in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of rural left-behind children (10 thousand)</th>
<th>proportion to rural in-school students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2140.3</td>
<td>1397.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>329.3</td>
<td>199.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>941.4</td>
<td>625.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>869.7</td>
<td>572.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By county, 21.4% county primary schools had over 20% of their students being left-behind children, among which 12.2% of the counties had the proportion of over 30%. In Hunan and Chongqing, over half of the counties had the proportion exceeding 30%. Left-behind children accounted for over 25% of the total amount of rural students in 12% of county junior middle schools in China. In Hunan and Chongqing, over half of the counties had the proportion exceeding 25%.

In terms of regional distribution, more than 80% of the rural left-behind children during compulsory education concentrated in central and western regions. In 2008, there were 11.98 million rural left-behind children at primary schools in central and western areas, accounting for
85.7% of the country's total amount; 6.13 million at junior middle schools, making up 82.5% of the country's total. In such big provinces with left-behind children as Sichuan, Hunan, Anhui, Henan, Jiangxi and Guangxi, the amount of rural left-behind children exceeded 1.5 million, and 12 million in total, accounting for 58.8% of the total amount of the left-behind children in the country, with Sichuan claiming the biggest proportion of 13.7%.

**Figure 3  Regional distribution of rural left-behind children during compulsory education in 2008**

![Chart showing regional distribution of rural left-behind children in 2008]

E. Challenges with education for children migrating with parents during compulsory education

Insufficiency of fund remains a big obstacle to the education for children migrating with parents. With the rapid increase in the number of children migrating with parents, the public schools, those in eastern region in particular get increasingly heavy pressure. Huge amount of fund is needed to solve the problem. Presently, local governments
receiving the influx are given major administration duties yet no rights and interests accordingly. It’s difficult to basically solve the problem when standard educational input system has yet to be established for various levels of governments. In addition, with unbalanced supply of public education in various parts of the country, it’s hard for them to realize on their own the equity in compulsory education for children migrating with parents. Therefore, it has become an urgent task for the central government to set up a special fund. The provincial government shall, according to the scale of children migrating with parents, invest more in education to share the financial burden of the cities within the administrative area receiving these children.

Children migrating with parents still face barriers to varying degrees in receiving compulsory education. In some areas, children migrating with parents have to meet certain requirements to be admitted into public schools. For example, some local governments have designated certain schools to receive children migrating with parents; some local public schools have separated classes for children migrating with parents.

Further efforts are still needed to innovate on the system for children migrating with parents to receive compulsory education. The national principle of public schools as the major education means does not conflict with the participation of other social forces in the education for children migrating with parents. Currently, simply equipped schools and private schools have shared the duties of the governments by receiving a considerable amount of children migrating with parents, which has relieved the pressure on public schools and public financing. However, constrained by policies and systems, simply equipped schools and
private schools differ obviously from public schools in conditions for running schools and teacher resources. Given different scales and distribution features of migrant population in different areas, and the fact that their vocations, cultural backgrounds and economic conditions differ even in the same area, to address the education of children migrating with parents, we should stick to the principle of focusing on full-time public primary and junior middle schools while seeking comprehensive solutions through various levels, multiple channels and different means. System reform and mechanism innovation are needed.

High mobility of children migrating with parents adds difficulty to the education administration in places receiving the influx. In 2006, the State Council reiterated in Opinions about Solving the Issues concerning Migrant Workers that local governments shall integrate the education for children migrating with parents into local educational development plans. But the implementation faces lots of objective challenges: first, the difficulty in managing student registration records. Many migrant workers do not have relatively stable jobs and their working places change frequently, and the mobility of children migrating with parents is high. There is no uniform method for student registration records management throughout the country, and in some areas there is no strict requirements for certifying the transfer of student registration records. Many children migrating with parents enter schools and transfer to other schools easily. Whether in small schools or public schools, the transfer frequency of this type of students is very high, causing significant challenges to the educational administration of schools. Second, it’s very difficult to estimate the scale of children migrating with parents. It’s impossible for educational administrations to learn the
number of migrant children of school age. This also makes hard for educational departments to arrange school distribution plans and educational development plans as well as to estimate the demands for teachers. All these have severely affected the implementation of Universal Compulsory Education.

Feasible requirements are needed for addressing the problems with compulsory education for children migrating with parents and left-behind children. Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China stipulates that “for school-age children and adolescents whose parents or guardians work or live in non-registered permanent residences and who are receiving compulsory education at the places where their parents or guardians work or live, the local governments shall create equal conditions for them to receive compulsory education”.

This is the first time that a fundamental law explicitly states that local governments receiving the influx shall assume the responsibility of providing children migrating with parents with equal opportunity for compulsory education, indicating the establishment of policy towards compulsory education for children migrating with parents in the form of basic laws. However, the law itself does not include specific implementation instructions. It just stipulates that specific measures can be worked out by provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Therefore, the progress, ways and effects of compulsory education for children migrating with parents vary from place to place to certain extent.
III. Countermeasures and suggestions on the education for children migrating with and left behind by parents

An essential way to solve the education issue for children migrating with and left behind by parents in a scientific way is through overall planning and coordination and progress at all fronts, which is also an important element to deepen reform, improve public service system and implement the scientific concept of development. To address the compulsory education for children migrating with and left behind by parents, governments at various levels shall regard compulsory education law as the basis of work, master correct orientation of public opinion, unify ideas, raise awareness and treat compulsory education for children migrating with and left behind by parents as a long-term social mission and systematic programme, strengthening overall policy research and the implementation of relevant policies.

A. To establish a resident population-based compulsory education system and support the rights of children migrating with parents to compulsory education according to law

A. To establish a resident population-based compulsory education system. The implementation of relevant provisions in Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China shall be guaranteed by corresponding management system. Authorities concerned may conduct feasibility studies on resident population-based compulsory education system, so that restrictions brought by the household registration-based
education management system can be broken through and that non-household registered population can also enjoy equal local public education services.

Student registration records and education management systems for children migrating with parents throughout the whole process from enrollment to entering higher schools need to be studied to alleviate the impacts from high mobility of students upon school administration. Efforts shall be made to explore and establish electronic student registration records with prefectures and cities as the units so as to help schools to make reasonable arrangements and admission offices to make overall plans. Reasonable connections with pre-school education and the entrance examination to senior secondary education shall be taken into consideration.

The governments shall fulfill the responsibilities of ensuring compulsory education for children migrating with parents through innovating systems and mechanisms. For instance, governments can purchase compulsory educational degrees from private schools as a form of service purchase and provide them to children migrating with parents for free.

A compulsory education voucher system can be built and implemented to safeguard the rights and interests of children migrating with parents, so that the educational funds dedicated to children migrating with parents can be converted into special checks that can be cashed, and which children migrating with parents may receive compulsory education in the places they flow into.
B. To reinforce financial inputs and transfer payment, providing powerful support for the implementation of “two orientations” policy

A financial supply system can be built with governments receiving the influx playing a major role. Governments receiving the influx shall integrate compulsory education for children migrating with parents into the overall plan for the development of local education, and the funds for compulsory education for children migrating with parents into local education budget. The governments may allow certain proportion of urban education fee to be used on the education for children migrating with parents.

The transfer payment system shall be established and improved to provide financial support to the compulsory education for children migrating with parents. Transfer payments shall be intensified from central and provincial budgets to those central and western provinces and certain counties in eastern provinces where there are large amount of children migrating with parents and financial capacity is low, guaranteeing the compulsory education for children migrating with parents.

Governments exporting migrant workers and their children shall be responsible for necessary fund investments based on balanced rights and obligations principle. Governments of national poverty regions and the national poverty counties shall transfer the special transfer fund from central budgets to the governments receiving the influx. This may
be piloted in selected prefectures and cities.

Policy support shall be strengthened to arrange special education funds for children migrating with parents and implement key projects to help address the major problems with education for children migrating with parents.

C. To strengthen innovation of education management system to provide more adequate and varied educational opportunities for children migrating with parents

Standards shall be established to regulate schools for migrant workers. More efforts shall be made to supervise, manage and support existing schools for children of migrant workers. They shall be treated properly according to actually conditions such as being regulated, brought under trusteeship or banned so as to improve the educational environment for children migrating with parents. Local governments shall work out standards accordingly on the basic conditions of schools for migrant workers. The schools for children of migrant workers with better basic conditions may be allowed to apply for opening private schools with improved conditions for running schools through investments by the sponsors and necessary financial support from governments; or make full use of social resources to allow qualified private schools to put some schools for children migrating with parents in their custody and improve the capacity of running schools; those schools which can not satisfy the set requirements shall be banned resolutely.

Cost sharing mechanism shall be explored for the education following
compulsory education to create room for policy for children migrating with parents to receive senior secondary education in places receiving their influx. Governments shall innovate on cost sharing mechanism while strengthening its financial support to senior secondary education, providing more opportunities for children migrating with parents to seek further study in senior middle schools. Families with better conditions may send their children to senior middle schools by bearing proper costs.

Great efforts shall be made to develop rural and urban vocational and technical education to provide left-behind children and children migrating with parents more opportunities for vocational education. In places with large amount of left-behind children, secondary vocational schools shall be fully open to recent and former junior middle school graduates, policies shall be implemented to finance secondary vocational school students or provide them with free education to get older left-behind adolescents to receive necessary training on working skills. In areas receiving children migrating with parents, the educational administrations shall innovate on the enrollment system for secondary vocational school students, creating conditions for children migrating with parents to receive vocational and technical training. The rural and urban secondary vocational schools in corresponding areas shall tap the educational potentials, set relevant specialties according to the needs of relocating local industrial structure to provide skill training for local labor forces.
D. To establish a social support system with the participation of schools, families and the public and explore a long-acting working mechanism for the education for left-behind children

Caring left-behind children is a complicated systematic project, with the overall planning and coordinating by party committees and governments at various levels, the women's federations, communist youth leagues and other social organizations shall be fully mobilized to bring their advantages into play, various departments shall integrate resources and cooperate fully with each other, make more efforts in legal protection of left-behind children, endeavor to establish a long-acting working mechanism combining schools, families and the public for the education for left-behind children.

With local juvenile protection offices taking the lead, village committees and other grassroots organizations given a full play, a custody system shall be established with family custody as the major form, community, school custody and other custodians as guarantee and state custody as supplement. It aims to safeguard the rights and interests of migrant and left-behind children, to promote their health growth, thus relieving migrant workers from anxiety and misgivings.

More efforts should be devoted to develop boarding schools in rural areas, improve the level of basic livelihood guarantee, the quality of education and teaching, to establish an education management mechanism with schools playing major roles. Boarding junior middle schools shall give priority to including left-behind children into the
compulsory education.

More efforts shall be made to attract public active care, so that the public can help left-behind children as much as possible through ways like counterpart assistance, acting parents, psychological consultation, holding up a sky for the healthy growth of left-behind children.

Intensify the instruction and services on family education, extending guidance and trainings to the custodians of left-behind children. The guidance on family education may be added to training programs for the transfer of rural labor force implemented by government departments, social intermediate agencies with corresponding qualifications are entrusted to guide family education, enhance the conscientiousness and educational abilities of parents as the first custodians. Strengthen the function of directing and serving family education and improve the effectiveness of the supporting system.

E. To establish dynamic information monitoring system to provide a reliable basis for children migrating with parents and left-behind children to receive education

Local information and data shall be improved on children migrating with parents and left-behind children to provide necessary information for the compulsory education for children migrating with parents. Given the inadequate statistical information available and the missing data relating to migrant and left-behind children, their enrollment opportunities and popularization can not be analyzed accurately. The information shall be shared within province while being reported to state authorities
concerned.

On basis of local information platform and supported by basic education examination center and quality examination center under the Ministry of Education, information monitoring platform shall be established at national level for children migrating with parents and left-behind children. Aside from acquiring basic information, the key point is to conduct systematic analysis of the origins and mobility of the children, providing Ministry of Education with scientific basis for decision-making and planning on compulsory education for children migrating with parents.