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Education Demand of New Generation Minority Migrant Workers in Kunming City and Survey of its Influence Factors

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Abstract Based on the questionnaire survey for 431 new generation minority migrant workers in Kunming City, we carried out empirical research on education demands of these migrant workers and its influence factors. Survey results show that their education demands have significant features in learning purposes, contents, expenses, willingness, and manners, which are subject to subjective mentality, economic income, social relation network, as well as shortage in social supply of education and training. Therefore, apart from solving training problem of new generation minority migrant workers, government should also highly value their demands of training and arouse their enthusiasm for participation in training in accordance with cultural and psychological characteristics and living environment of these migrant workers.

Key words Kunming City, Minorities, New generation migrant workers, Demands of education and training, Influence factors, China

New generation migrant workers refer to laborers born after 1980, working outside from middle and later periods of the 1990s, mainly engaged in secondary and tertiary industries, but their registered permanent residence is still agricultural household^[1]. *Research Report on New Generation Migrant Workers* issued by All-China Federation of Trade Unions in 2010 states that there is a total population of 100 million new generation migrant workers in the present stage. This accounts for over 60% of the whole migrant workers, takes up nearly a half of China's 230 million workers, and will play a role of mainstay in economic and social development. At present, self-development of new generation migrant workers is faced with some challenges, which are mainly resulted from their shortage of human capital. Promotion of human capital is of great realistic significance to new generation migrant workers. To promote human capital, we must carry out various education and training. Therefore, through in-depth analysis of education demands of new generation migrant workers and exploring paths and countermeasures to satisfy their education demands, we can improve their human capital and professional ability, to achieve self-development and social mobility.

As capital of Yunnan Province, Kunming holds 33.37% of total minority population in the whole province. More job opportunities and lower costs for survival attract a lot of new generation minority migrant workers from Yunnan Province or even Guizhou Province. To find out whether demands of education and training for new generation migrant workers are the same and make education and training more pertinent and practical, our team carried out a field survey for new generation minority

migrant workers in Kunming City in 2010. The survey is mainly conducted in city villages where minority people (such as Hani people, Yi people and Miao people) concentrate. We adopt random sampling method and take questionnaire survey as major content combined with case interview. In the total 450 copies of questionnaire handed out, we receive 431 valid copies, so 95.8% copies are acceptable. The questionnaire mainly includes basic information, education and training situations, and demands of education and training for new generation minority migrant workers.

1 Basic information of new generation minority migrant workers

Basic information of new generation minority migrant workers includes seven indicators, namely gender, age, marital status, nationality, educational level, occupation, and monthly income. Gender: 358 men (83%) and 73 women (17%); age: 64 persons in 16–17 age group (14.9%), 269 persons in 18–23 age group (62.4%) and 97 persons in 24–30 age group (22.6%); marital status: 319 persons unmarried (74%) and 112 persons married (26%); nationality: 165 Hani people (32.3%), 196 Yi people (45.5%), and 70 Miao people (16.2%). From the above data, we can know that most new generation minority migrant workers are male; their ages concentrate on 20 years old and teenagers take up a certain proportion; unmarried ones are the larger part; Yi people group is the largest one, Hani people groups take the second place and Miao people group is the least one, which is roughly the same as proportion of each nationality population to the total population of Yunnan Province.

General educational level of new generation minority migrant workers is not high. Most of them just receive junior middle school (66.1%) or primary school education (21.7%),

those with technical secondary school, senior middle school or vocational high school education only take up 12.2%, and nearly none of them has academic certificates at or above the junior college level. Analysis of relevant variables shows that the older migrant workers have lower educational level, while there are still some teenagers with lower educational level, some of these teenagers drop out of junior middle school.

These migrant workers are mainly building workers (38.6%), service providers (27.2%), factory workers, individual operators, and temporary workers in government departments and institutions (shown in Fig. 1).

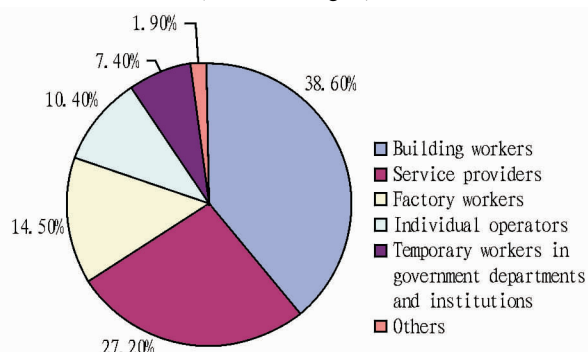


Fig. 1 Occupational distribution of new generation minority migrant workers in Kunming City

As to income situations, migrant workers with monthly income lower than 1 000 yuan take up 19.7%, those with monthly income of 1 000 to 2 000 yuan, 2 001 to 3 000 yuan, and higher than 3 000 yuan respectively take up 56.5%, 18.3% and 5.5%.

Survey results indicate that most new generation minority migrant workers are engaged in building industry (including decoration) and have a higher income level, skilled workers may even have a monthly income of over 3 000 yuan. Individual operators are mainly dealing with sales of vegetables, fruits, barbecue or articles for daily use, and they also receive respectable income. However, migrant workers engaged in these occupations say that their income is not stable. Those service providers and factory workers have relatively low income, generally at the level of 1 000 yuan.

2 Survey results and analysis

2.1 Analysis on education and training demands of new generation minority migrant workers The questionnaire is mainly to analyze education and training demands of new generation minority migrant workers from learning purposes, contents, expenses, willingness, and manners. Empirical analysis shows that current education and training demands of new generation minority migrant workers in Kunming City take on following characteristics.

2.1.1 Learning purposes are clear, while training takes on utilitarian and passive features. Survey results indicate that over 80% new generation minority migrant workers approve education and training. Most migrant workers believe that they can find a good job if they receive training. Good jobs can in-

crease their income, improve their living conditions, and raise their social status. The experience of working in cities makes them realize the relation between skills and income, so they have clear learning purposes. Most migrant workers worry about whether they can find a good job after receiving training, which is a key factor influencing their willingness to participate in training and also a criterion for judging the training effect. In this survey, 62.4% migrant workers are willing to "actively participate in training" as long as it is "helpful to finding a good job", and "such training is good training". About 47.5% migrant workers take "issue of certificate after receiving training" as the principal factor that determines whether they will participate in the training. These show that most new generation minority migrant workers have clear purpose of education and training, and whether they can find good jobs, whether their income can be increased, and whether certificates will be issued are decisive factors influencing their enthusiasm for participation in training. Their training willingness has obvious utilitarian tendency. They mainly care about actual benefits of training, while they pay little attention to whether the training can improve their internal quality and inner value.

Besides, a few new generation minority migrant workers are passive in training, which is mainly influenced by their social relationship network, such as fellow villager and friends. Among the surveyed migrant workers, 57.3% persons say that their knowledge of training work comes from their fellow villager and friends, 64% persons express their willingness to "take part if their fellow villager and friends have participated in". These indicate that new generation minority migrant workers have realized the significance of education and training, but they are passive in actual actions.

2.1.2 Learning contents have time connotation, but also have some blindness. At the time of selecting training contents, new generation minority migrant workers favor those with high content of technology and knowledge of advanced management science. Survey results show that 72.4% migrant workers choose training of computer knowledge, 68.3% choose management knowledge, 52.8% choose building engineering knowledge, 47.6% prefer accounting and financial knowledge, and 35.7% like legal regulations. However, the demands is low for such training of traditional skills as electrician, lathe operator, hair dressing, cooking, house keeping, tailoring, etc. Besides, new generation minority migrant workers show great interest in knowledge of undertaking, getting rich and interpersonal communication. These data indicate that new generation minority migrant workers prefer new technologies and skills that can improve their competitive strength in employment and social status. Their education and training demands are multiple-level, diversified and modern. Survey also indicates that selection of new generation minority migrant workers for training contents depends on their intention to stay at or leave the city. Those who plan to go home for starting undertaking are ready to receive training of undertaking and management knowledge, while those who want to stay at the city believe that it is important to improve their interpersonal communication ability and

modern technical knowledge. Especially, most of them have realized that their Chinese Mandarin level and language expression ability play an adverse role in their employment competition and integration into city.

When faced with survival pressure, new generation minority migrant workers show strong demand for new knowledge and technology, but their selection of learning contents is blind to some extent. Our survey indicates that 67.2% migrant workers have group psychology when selecting learning contents. These migrant workers see some friends getting high income from computer knowledge, management work can bring high salary, or starting undertaking can make oneself become a boss, they will take relevant knowledge as their first choice. However, they fail to realize that whether the knowledge is suitable for them, how to learn the knowledge, and whether society demands that knowledge. In this situation, along with rapid development of economy and social construction in western regions, learning demands of new generation minority migrant workers have time connotation, but blind group psychology exists due to lack of planning for career development.

2.1.3 Expenses for study take on obvious rational feature. New generation minority migrant workers clearly understand that it is hard to find jobs and survive in cities without adequate ability and quality. In this survey, most new generation minority migrant workers are willing to "spend money to learn skills", but how much they will spend depends on the learning effect. Therefore, investment level of new generation minority migrant workers in human capital depends on rational cost-benefit criterion. Survey results show that 38.7% migrant workers say "they are ready to spend money as long as they can learn professional skills", while 58.3% ones choose "they are willing to spend money if only the knowledge or skill is helpful to their job hunting". In the aspect of expenses (mainly measured by the proportion of individual willingness to pay for training fees to his total income), only 12.5% migrant workers say it is acceptable if the proportion is within 10% to 15%; 23% migrant workers think the proportion is acceptable if it is lower than 5%; but many migrant workers are still unwilling to participate in the training if the effect is not good, even though the training expenses are low. From the above survey, we can see that most new generation minority migrant workers accept the value of education and training, and are willing to bear certain education expenses. However, since their income is low and unstable, they are more rational in human capital investment and likely to accept training of skills and useful contents.

2.1.4 Learning manners conform to demands of social development and actual situations of individuals. Our survey discusses learning manners of new generation minority migrant workers from teaching methods, teaching time, and nature of opening, *etc.* Along with social development and scientific and technological progress, teaching manners are increasingly diversified, such as classroom teaching, field learning, distance education and on-line learning, *etc.* New generation minority migrant workers like modern teaching manner and prefer experience-type field teaching, while hold a negating attitude towards

traditional teaching methods. In our survey, 52.6% migrant workers choose distance education and on-line teaching, 40.2% select field teaching, and only 7.2% surveyed persons choose traditional classroom teaching. In addition, many surveyed migrant workers hope to adopt combination of multiple teaching manners.

In the teaching time, 72.5% migrant workers like short-term training (for example, within one month), 51.6% persons choose weekends or holidays, and 36.2% ones select two or three evenings every week. Many new generation minority migrant workers are in the stage of survival as main demands, working is the only source of income. If the training is too long or centralized, there will be huge opportunity cost and crisis of survival. Therefore, short-term and decentralized learning time is a practical first choice. Survey data also indicates that new generation minority migrant workers spend an average of 10.7 hours daily in working. Over 60% of them work more than 10 hours every day, and over 50% persons do not have off days. Teaching training requires time and effort, which cannot be achieved for most migrant workers, especially building workers and individual operators. They work for a long time and do not have off days.

Teaching class mainly includes two types, formal education and informal training. In general, after receiving formal education, migrant workers will be issued with professional qualification certificate, but there will be no certificate for informal training. Survey indicates that 83.6% migrant workers accept formal education and training and believe that they can obtain certificates after receiving formal education and training. Besides, many migrant workers expect to participate in those formal training classes organized by government, because these classes have "low expenses, good and trustworthy certificates". In the new situation, many industries implement professional qualification certificates and employment access system, and many new generation minority migrant workers begin to pay close attention to formal education and qualification certificate.

2.2 Analysis on factors influencing transformation of education and training demands of new generation minority migrant workers Our survey shows that new generation minority migrant workers have strong willingness of participation in education and training, hope to learn knowledge and are willing to spend money in education and training. However, their demand is just a type of subjective demand, still in the stage of perceptual knowledge and not transformed to practical demand of education and training. Our survey analyzes factors influencing transformation of education and training demands from following aspects.

2.2.1 Individual contradictory psychology and inferiority psychology lead to their lack of enthusiasm for participation in training. As per strong or weak willingness of migrant workers to stay at cities, we can divide them into "Returning type", "Staying type" and "Wavering type". Different types of new generation minority migrant workers have different enthusiasms for participation in education and training. For "Returning type" migrant workers, their working in cities is just for short-term

benefit and city is just a place for earning money, so what they consider is whether the training is useful after their returning home. For "Staying type" migrant workers, they take themselves as "urban residents". Such migrant workers are persons with economic independence or great development potential. They have enthusiasm for self-learning and participation in various trainings to adapt to city demands. For "Wavering type" migrant workers, they do not have clear plan or arrangement for staying or leaving. They want to stay at city but also feel it is unlikely^[2]. In our survey, quite a few of new generation minority migrant workers are wavering. They want to return home and also want to stay at city. Such thought makes them do not know which type of training to participate in.

Due to difference of sense of value, life style, and language habits between urban and rural areas, obstacle to employment and integration into city is posed for new generation minority migrant groups, and consequently they cannot get rid of inferiority thought. In the interview, many new generation minority migrant workers think that "their Mandarin Chinese is not fluent and it is difficult to communicate", and many migrant workers believe that "cultural difference" is an obstacle to their employment and living. Frustration in cities seriously weakens their confidence in self-development, makes them lack of voluntariness, and is also one of factors influencing their participation in education and training.

2.2.2 Economic pressure restrains demand of human capital investment. Most new generation minority migrant workers are faced with actual problem of low income, especially the new migrant workers who do not have enough working capital to consume. In this situation, if they invest human capital in the form of currency of payment, they will have to sacrifice current living demands. In this survey, over 75% migrant workers have income less than 2 000 yuan (most migrant works just 1 000 yuan or so). Among those new generation migrant workers who are willing to take part in training, over 60% persons accept the payment level of only 5% to 10%. Practical pressure of low income not only limits their human capital investment, but also brings about bounded rationality. Scömann & Siarov believe that when personal capability and resources are limited, it is impossible to predict decision result, and this feature is so-called "bounded rationality". In bounded rationality, individual may be shortsighted and only care about income and neglect long-term benefit. Under conditions of limited personal capability and resources, some new generation minority migrant workers may doubt or underestimate value of education and training. Even if they realize advantages of education and training, they may be still unwilling to pay much cost in investment^[3]. Survey results show that 73.5% migrant workers say "if expenses are acceptable and training effect is good, they will take part", and 15.2% migrant workers are unwilling to pay training costs by themselves.

In addition, most new generation minority migrant workers come from poor mountain areas, and their purpose of working in cities is to relieve family burden and share family responsibilities. The survey indicates that about 40.5% migrant workers

have to hand over their income to their families. 26.3% have source of income mainly from migrant working. Some migrant workers say they have to support their sisters or brothers to go to school, and have to save up money to repair their houses. Since training needs costs, including direct costs (for training costs) and opportunity cost (money loss incurred from participation in training but actually should be obtained in the equivalent time), this will make their families and themselves faced with crisis of survival. Economic pressure severely restrains achievement of education and training demands.

2.2.3 Involution of social relationship network leads to closed information transmission channel. New generation minority migrant workers take sibship, geo-relation and national identity relation as links to get a foothold in cities through network relationship of primary groups. However, due to their professions and features of their living places, although they live in cities, differences in economic status and cultural ideas result that their interaction is limited to internal groups, for example, within "fellow villagers" and "friends". Consequently, there appears such special living place as "villages in cities" and special social community as "fellow villagers in citizens", which is hard to achieve a comprehensive social interaction with urban residents^[4]. If this social relationship network exists for long time, it will form an involution structure, leading to many tangible and intangible resource elements exchanged or flowing through a closed relationship network. Nevertheless, new generation minority migrant workers transmit information of employment, living and education and training in reliance on such relationship link. Our survey indicates that 75.3% new generation minority migrant workers say that their jobs are introduced by relatives, fellow villagers or friends. 76.5% of Hani people migrant workers are engaged in building, 55.7% of Miao people migrant workers are individual retailer and 52.4% of Yi people migrant workers are engaged in service industry. In the survey of channel for training information, 77.4% of surveyed migrant workers say that it is introduced by relatives, fellow villagers or friends. This situation also affects their willingness and attitude of participation in training.

2.2.4 Vacancy of organization leads to shortage of education and training supply. Vacancy of organization is one of major reasons for hard transformation of training demands to practice. This is mainly manifested in two aspects. Firstly, propaganda of government of labor force exporting place is not put in place. According to survey, 62.7% migrant workers do not know training works organized by government, not know deduction and exemption policies of training expenses, not clear about which kind of labor force the city demands, and not know where to learn skills. Information asymmetry results in shortage of opportunity resources for training. Survey results also indicate that over 75% migrant workers have never participated in training organized by government. Secondly, few opportunities are provided by employing units. Many new generation minority migrant workers work in labor-intensive private small and medium-sized enterprises. For these enterprises, their neglect of training is for consideration of cost investment, because a com-

plete internal training scheme may need costs higher than expected benefits. Besides, due to high mobility of migrant workers, spillover easily happens in investment of employing unit in migrant worker training. As a result, employing unit has little enthusiasm for training migrant workers, leading to employing unit paying close attention to employment but not to cultivation^[5]. In the survey, only 10.4% migrant workers have received training provided by employing units and only 4.6% surveyed persons say that their employing units regularly organize training of knowledge and skills.

3 Conclusions and suggestions

In general, most new generation minority migrant workers are willing to receive education and training. However, for self reasons and influence of current training works, their actual actions are not strong.

Therefore, apart from solving training problem of new generation minority migrant workers, government should also highly value their demands of training and arouse their enthusiasm for participation in training in accordance with cultural and psychological characteristics and living environment of these migrant workers, to achieve a two-way interactive mechanism between supply and demand, and between migrant workers and government. Firstly, it is proposed to gradually improve cultural quality of new generation minority migrant workers and strengthen propaganda effort, to make them fully realize value of education and training. Secondly, it is required to reform education and training system, and pay special attention to parti-

nence, suitability and value of education and training. Thirdly, it is recommended to make clear public service function of government, further strengthen investment effort of government, and establish a multiple education and training system with government as leader and joint participation of market and social organizations. Fourthly, it is proposed to establish and perfect series of security policies and safeguard vital interests and rights of migrant workers. Finally, we should remove system barriers between urban and rural areas and implement integrated household registration, employment, training, and social security system.

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