

On Music Education in China's Rural Primary and Middle Schools

Liang Ma

Minzu University of China
Beijing 100000, China

Abstract: Currently, the present situation of early school music education in rural area is not in good states, and many flaws exist. The Department of education excessively address on student enrollment rate has made art discipline course in an overlook position. Music education is vital in all-around education policy. It serves as both method and channel in our aesthetic education program. We have to change our traditional thinking of Examinations-oriented education, in order to do that music education seems to be a logical breaking point. In our rural area, in order to improve their music education status we must keep reform and enhance their teaching methods.

[Liang Ma. **On Music Education in China's Rural Primary and Middle Schools.** World Rural Observations 2012;4(1):45-48]. ISSN: 1944-6543 (Print); ISSN: 1944-6551 (Online). <http://www.sciencepub.net/rural>. 8

Keyword: Primary and secondary school, music education, status, analysis

Since china has reform and opening-up to the world, our music education has took a significant progress, the continuously increasing number of musical institution and the population been taking music education has risen dramatically, it offered many expert to the society. Unfortunately, this pleasant change limited only in metropolis and cities, the most of the rural area school which consist 85% of total number of school in our country is almost a blank sheet in this movements. This had made a significant contradiction to our all-around education policy.

Music is one of the oldest and the most universal and appealing form of art, people's perception of music, performance and creativity reflects their basic human qualities and abilities. Primary and secondary school student must accept the music education; it is the basic content of China's compulsory education policy. Date back to 1999, the state department issued 《The decision of the State Council on deepening educational reform to promote quality education》, after, in 2001 《Full-time

compulsory education in the music curriculum standards》 has been decreed. 《Full-time compulsory education in the music curriculum standards》 seek to reflect the deepening of education reform, Promote fully of the basic spirit of all round education policy, express the aesthetic experience of music, so that learning content is more interestingly and colorfully, and develop a distinct national character, and guide students to actively participate in music practice, respect for individual learning styles of different musical experience and to improve their aesthetic, to develop student's creative thinking, to promote their good human qualities, to lay down a good foundation for life-long love for the music, to study the music, and in the end to enjoy the music.

The new standard of music course has been issued for almost 10 years now, however for the variety of reasons, implementing this program and in-depth education reforming in the majority of rural area's Primary and secondary school progress very slowly. For those reasons our rural area music education should shift our

focus to its music teaching systems, only though that we can comprehend, and implement the all-around education in the sense of national wide.

1. Current status of Primary and secondary school in rural area

1.1 Lack of emphasis from local school

In rural area Primary and secondary school, their emphases on music education are exceptionally low, their philosophy of music teaching is even worst. Some people even believe music course is not necessary, since it has nothing to do with college entry exam; therefore, teaching music lessons is often to be considered as the lowest priority in local school teaching plan. This is especially true in rural school, in rural area some of the school don't even have music course, their music course is often replaced by singing few songs that taught by other teachers who is teaching on other profession such as math, and linguistic teacher. There is not any theoretical knowledge of music at all. During my last field trip I found several phenomena such as after 6 year of Primary school, some student can only sing a few songs; some student can't even sing, because there is no channel to learn song in any means, some student think music class is the same as singing class, and some student don't even know what is piano looks like. Those phenomena clearly show how weak the infrastructure of music teaching in rural area is.

1.2 Lack of investment in manpower material and financial resources

Although after our country's reform and opening up, rural area's education Infrastructure has been improved and developed, it still far from satisfying the demanding of large local population. Their education long has been short of investment from local authority, and only small proportion of those already lacked teaching resource will flow to the music

teaching. For instant, some schools in remote areas only have a small tape recorder with no teaching compatible tape. The most of the school don't have piano, and stereo equipment is more than impossible to have. All of these issue made it almost impossible for developing further of local music teaching.

1.3 Lack of professional teachers

Because of the lacking emphasis from local school, music teacher hiring is the lowest of priority in local school's management agenda, its hiring rate is far lower than math and linguistic teacher. Besides, most of their music teachers are from local area who believed have never receive any formal training from any music institution. Naturally, their teaching methods, teaching philosophy, teaching design becomes inadequate. Furthermore, local school's lacking emphasis on music education makes school impossible to keep any talent teacher. For once I have been a tutor for a school build for children of migrant workers, there are several thousand of students, but only 2 music teacher, weekly course agenda is totally full, every class has 30 to 40 students, certainly there is no time for class preparation. With condition like this, there is no assurance for the quality of the class and students' demand of knowledge will not be satisfy, the music education become perfunctory. This is one of the reasons why rural area music education is in such neglect condition.

1.4 Music course's text book is not compatible with actual teaching

As result of unbalanced regional development, it is difficult to select and apply a text book which suited all condition in national wide. Some of the existing text book has been proven too difficult to comprehend for both rural area's teaching stuffs and students; in some region, some of the student due to their different level of understanding, cannot

comprehend even a basic music theory. The student lose their interest, the music education lost its “fun” and “attractiveness”, teaching method is lack of diversity, richness. This is also another reason why the development of rural area music education is in this unfavorable state.

2. Some thinking on rural area music education

2.1 Change the obsolete teaching concept

Currently, our government is strongly advocate for strengthen and improve rural area’s all around education, to change the most of their school’s leaderships and teachers’ teaching management, and their teaching concept. This will fundamentally reverse the neglect on music education and bring it out of its former prejudice and cold states. Additionally, the major music colleges, music training institutions should have also vigorously support the majority of college graduates and young professionals to teach in rural areas, so that they can bring new ideas, new concepts, new teaching methods and management to the rural areas, to assist their local music education development to a better direction.

2.2 Increasing investment on rural area primary and secondary school

In order to enhance the rural primary and secondary’s music education effect, Manpower, Material, and Financial resources should be increased on music education’s investment. As we all know, music class is not only a pure singing class, but also the class need to consist the knowledge of music, the music appreciation, and musical instruments playing. Without appropriate resources, there will be no general sense music class. Music education in rural primary and secondary school need to increase their investment on music teaching in 2 ways: firstly increasing their number of classroom teaching equipment. Classroom music teaching

normally need intuitive teaching equipment such as Cards, flip charts, multimedia (such as tape recorders, teaching tapes, DVD players, teaching CD-ROM, broadband network), etc, those equipment allow student have direct perception on music itself along with that their perceptual knowledge on music will start to accumulate. Secondly, actively organize extra-curricular music education activities, by organizing choirs, bands, etc which require investment on both human and financial resources to purchase clothing and organize variety of music activities.

2.3 Re-organize the local music teacher for re-education

Existing rural areas’ local music teachers can go to regular schools, training institutions to pursue further studies, to improve their music literacy, learning new teaching methods, teaching techniques, after graduation they can become the backbone of music education in their original school. During the study, the state and society should offer some degree of finance support such as: free tuition, free room, etc. In addition, major music colleges, educational institutions, need to select expert and professional, down to the grassroots level in rural area to carry out short-term field guidance, this will allow local music teachers have better proficient on their both theory and fieldwork also it will help them to improve their music literacy in a short-term time.

2.4 Music teaching material needs to be realistic

The music teaching material need to prepare for different regions, we cannot use a universal textbook to teach everyone. We should study other country’s teaching material but combine with the Chinese nation's cultural achievements of music, let student enjoy study music, instead of get bored with them. Some internationally advanced teaching methods such

as teaching methods of Dahlkrauze, Kodak, Suzuki etc, all start with perspective of raising student's interest. In addition, different ethnic groups and region need their own characteristics of teaching---"local music text book", so that student will feel belonging. When students back home parents can singing with them, in this way student will comfortably understand and remember what they have learn in class. As for the music theory, its need step to step build on, even blend into story, only that teacher and student will learn the beautiful of music.

In conclusion, rural primary and secondary school music education is very important, but very weak in the level of its Infrastructure. Music education represents the overall quality of the nation, it express our country's cultural power and an important manifestation of our nation's overall strength. Music education play a role in forming up a person's world view, cultivate their thinking, enhance their

inter-personal communication skills, to help rural area to promote all-around education policy, we must make firmly effort on rural area's music education.

References

- [1] Ai-qing Yin. School Introduction to music education and teaching materials and methods [M] Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2001.
- [2] Ministry of Education. Music curriculum standards [M] Beijing: Beijing Normal University Press, 2001.
- [3] The State Council, The decision of the State Council on deepening educational reform to promote quality education [Z]. 1999.
- [4] Da Ma, The 21st Century School Music Education [M] Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press, 2005.

1/26/2012