

# Impact of Merging Schools on Primary Education in Poor Minority Areas: the Experience of Guangxi, China

Professor Lu Li

Visit Scholar of Center on Chinese  
Education, Teachers College, Columbia  
University

Guangxi Normal University

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# 1. Introduction

- The implementation of merging primary school in rural areas
  - (1) In 1980's, China carried out the first nation-wide merging of primary and secondary schools, which focused on merging secondary school
  - (2) In 2001, according to the "Decision of the State Council on the reform and development of basic education", China carried out the second merging of primary and secondary schools in rural areas, which focused on merging primary and secondary schools as well as undeveloped teaching points, aimed at adjusting compulsory education

# Objective of Primary School Mergence

## **1. Objective**

Adjust the layout of primary and secondary schools in light of the local situation.

## **2. Principle**

(1) Students' going to the nearest school

(2) Building secondary schools close to each other

(3) Optimization of education resources.

## **3. Attention**

(1) Retain the schools of remote areas to prevent students from dropping out.

(2) Repair dilapidated buildings, regulate education system as well as urbanization development and the relocation of residents.

(3) Allocate education findings directly into constructing education facilities . Lodging schools can also be established if it is feasible.

Table 1: 2001-2005 Primary School Mergence in China

Year Item	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
The number of primary schools (in thousands )	553.6	491.3	456.9	425.8	394.2	366.2
The number of primary schools merged (in thousands)		62.3	34.4	31.1	31.7	28

- **Population Component**

38.4% are minorities

- **Minorities Distribution**

60% of Guangxi

- **Terrain**

70.8% is mountainous.

- **Economic & Education**

(2000)

(1) There are 78 counties and 58 of them are poor

(2) Budget of compulsory education per-capita:

→ 410.59 RMB in elementary education, ranking 21st in China

→ 483.69 RMB in secondary education, ranking 26th in China.

## Primary School Mergence is Inevitable in Guangxi





# Primary School Mergence is Inevitable in Guangxi

- A great number of teaching buildings are dilapidated.



- The declining birth rate leads to the decrease of student sources and thus the waste of education resources

# Implementation of Primary School Mergence in Guangxi

## **1. Principle**

- (1) For the areas without transportation vehicles, a school or a teaching point serves up to 2.5 kilometers in scope around it. If a primary school with less than 40 students or has less than 3 grades, it should be merged with other schools.
- (2) For the areas with good transportation, all teaching points are removed

## **2. Attention**

Since some minorities have different languages, or live in extremely terrible nature environments, there can be additional teaching points.

## **3. Special Implementation**

- (1) Increase the rate of constructing central schools and large-scale lodging schools while merging those teaching points in remote areas
- (2) Construct full-facility lodging schools in large-scale counties

## **4. Expectation**

The number of teaching points in counties will be reduced by 20-30%; the number of schools will be reduced by 10% and 50% schools will become standard lodging schools

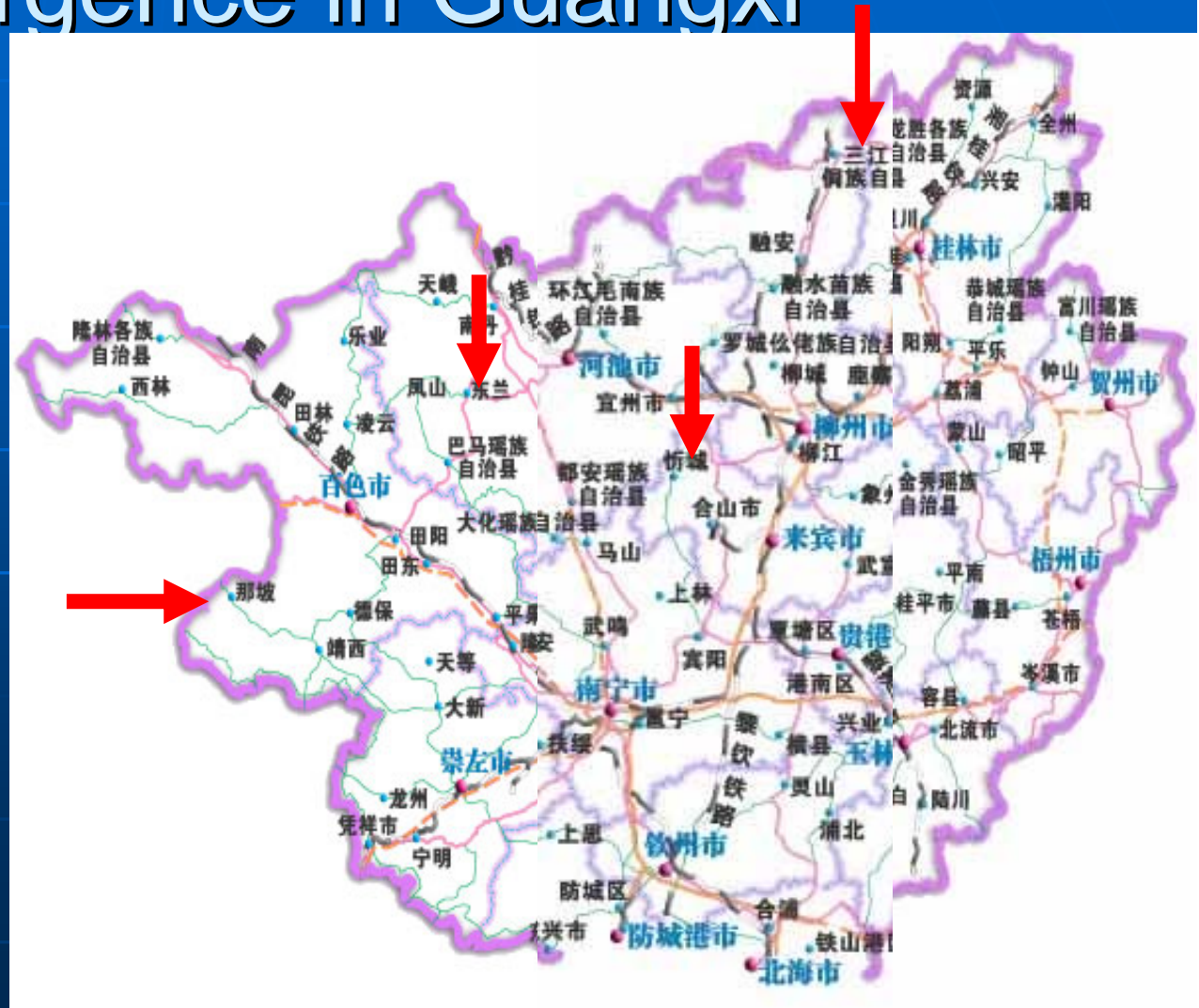


# Question

What are the benefits and potential problems from this merging school reform?

## 2. Investigation for Primary School Mergence in Guangxi

- 4 sample counties:
  - (1) San Jiang
  - (2) Xin Cheng
  - (3) Na Po
  - (4) Dong Lan
- More than 70 schools investigated (2002-2003)



# Sample Counties

Table 2

	Population (in Thousands)			Fiscal Revenue (in Thousands- RMB)			Fiscal Expenditure (in Thousands-RMB)	Farmers' income per-capita (RMB)	Compulsory Education (Primary Education)	
	Total	Farmer Percentage	Minority Percentage	Total	Local Fiscal Revenue	Subsidy from Central Government			Primary School Enrollment %	Drop-out %
Guang Xi	4,744	80.44	38.40	27000180	14705390	12294790	25848660	1864.5	98.68	0.42
San Jiang	340.8	91.90	83.27	95280	34190	61090	90460	1108	95.98	8.89
Xin Cheng	402.3	91.00	93.60	116190	56580	59610	108210	1107	98.65	0.96
Na Po	190.9	91.72	94.20	73020	12960	60060	73380	721	97.90	2.30
Dong Lan	287.0	89.20	88.29	95960	24072	71888	88820	1026	96.31	2.00

## Why did we choose these four counties?

1. Population Component: Minorities & Farmers
2. Social Economic Status: Low-income
3. Local Fiscal Revenue: Depending on government subsidy
4. Compulsory Education: Lower than the average level in Guangxi

# Terms and Methods

## ■ People Interviewed

- (1) Local officials
- (2) Teachers in those investigated schools
- (3) Students in those investigated schools
- (4) Parents



## ■ Method

- (1) Hand out 1080 questionnaires, 1040 are reliable (170 from teachers, 572 from students, 298 from parents)
- (2) Visit and interview local officials, teachers, students and parents (almost 300 people)





# Consequence

- (1) 2001 -2003, government reduced 502 primary schools and the rate of merging schools reached 30%
- (2) The average school service radius increased: from 1.84 kilometers in 2001 to 2.13 kilometers in 2003, an increase of 0.29 km
- (3) The pace of building lodging schools fell behind the pace of mergence
- (4) Family economic burden increased

Table 3

Sample Counties	2000				2003			
	School Numbers	Undeveloped Teaching Point numbers	Students Per School	Service Radius	School Numbers	Undeveloped Teaching Point numbers	Students Per School	Service Radius
San Jiang	187	172	1828	2.04	166	92	2064.5	2.17
Xin Cheng	167	247	2341	2.22	136	152	2875	2.44
Na Po	133	232	1429	1.50	133	99	1429	1.80
Dong Lan	157	382	481	1.60	143	254	714	2.10
Guang Xi	15985	26347	2968	5.51	15092	15419	3159	5.71



# 3. Analysis

1). It is hard to go to school after the reform of merging schools in rural areas. Some students even drop out of school



Table 4

Year County	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Enrollment %	Drop-out %	Enrollment %	Drop-out %	Enrollment %	Drop-out %	Enrollment %	Drop-out %
San Jiang	95.98	8.89	97.9	1.88	96.63	1.68	98.29	2.95
Xin Cheng	98.65	0.96	98.65	1.15	99.27	1.83	99.28	2.36
Na Po	97.90	2.30	96.00	3.62	98.27	2.34	94.12	1.77
Dong Lan	96.31	2.00	95.15	2.63	95.20	2.67	95.57	2.83

2). Untimely merging primary schools leads to the unbalance of education facilities for minorities in rural areas



### 3) . Obstacles of implementing the primary education mergence:

- (1) Heavy economic burden
- (2) Children taking part in the household activities



Table 5: The average time for household and farming activities per student

Question	Answer	Percentage
How often do you do household?	never	2
	sometimes	50
	everyday	48
How many hours do you need for household	more than 3 hours	27
	2-3 hours	12
	1-2hours	19
	less than 1 hours	42
How often do you do faming work?	never	3
	sometimes	71
	all day except for school hours	26
When do you do the faming work?	everyday	47
	weekend	19
	winter or summer holiday	23
	busy faming season	11

## 4. Recommendations for the Policy

1. Emphasize both equity and efficiency for minorities in rural areas
2. Different strategies should be applied to different contexts
3. Construct central schools before removing the undeveloped teaching points to guarantee compulsory education
4. Give subsidy to those family who cannot improve their education situation from primary education mergence

An aerial photograph of a traditional Chinese village. The buildings are constructed from dark wood and feature prominent, dark grey tiled roofs with characteristic upturned eaves. The village is built on a hillside, with lush green terraced fields visible in the foreground and middle ground. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic, showcasing traditional architecture and agricultural practices.

**Thank you**