Research on the Main Problems Faced by the New Generation Migrant Workers based on Intergenerational Differences

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Abstract
As the structure within rural-urban migrant worker group changes, the new generation migrant workers have become the main part of migrant workers, and appear to have new problems and demands compared with the previous. According to the first-hand data from a large number of questionnaires and combined with related census statistics of State Statistics Bureau and other departments, this research, from intergenerational difference perspective, reveals the core problems of new generation migrant workers in the Citizen Process by empirical analysis. And reasonable countermeasures and ideas are put forward to solve the transfer of rural labor force and new generation migrant workers in China.

Keywords
New Generation Migrant Workers; Intergenerational Differences; Problem; Countermeasures

Introduction
Migrant workers are a unique social group with a nature of half the workers-farmers, who come into being under the Chinese historical conditions of industrialization, urbanization, and the two dual economic structures in urban and rural areas. Starting from the mid-1980s, it has been more than 20 years by far since the rural labor force began to work in the town massively. During this period, the scale of the rural-urban migrant labor force continues to expand. According to the State Statistics Bureau’s projections from sampling survey results, in 2011, the total of China’s migrant workers reached 25,278 million, increased by 4.4% compared to 2010. Among the 25,278 million, the rural-urban migrant workers reached 15,863, increased by 3.4%. At the same time, intergenerational replacement also appeared within the migrant workers. The usually called new generation migrant workers (the rural-urban migrant workers who were born after 1980’s), accounting for about 60% of the total rural-urban migrant workers, have gradually become the main part of peasant workers, and played significant impact on the overall economic society. Grasping accurately the quantity, structure and characteristics of the new generation migrant worker group, finding out the intergenerational differences between the new and old generation migrant workers, and then analyzing the series of major problems faced by the new generation migrant workers, have become urgent needs of drawing up relevant policies on migrant workers.

The Main Problems Faced by The New Generation Migrant Workers

As part of the migrant workers, the new generation migrant workers face some same problems as the older generation, such as: wage arrears, low signed labor contract, low level of social security, lack of occupational health and safety protection and some other basic labor right protection issues. At the same time, differing from the older generation migrant workers, the new generation migrant workers have new features and demands, so the problems they face are specific.

1) High Cost of the New Generation Migrant Workers’ Urbanization and the Lack of the Public Pay the City Invests are the Core Problems that the New Generation Migrant Workers Face in the Course of Urbanization.

It is estimated that when a new generation migrant worker enters the city, it require individual pay cost of 16,500 Yuan/person and public pay cost of 12,500 Yuan/person. So the average total social cost is 29,000 Yuan/person to transform a migrant worker to a urban dweller. Looking for jobs, renting house, paying employment agency fees, dealing with temporary residence permit paper, having medical examination...
and so on, all constitute the heavy employment cost of new generation migrant workers. Besides, the personal training and children’s education relate to the relatively expensive public pay cost. Different city has different urban planning, transportation and resources preparation for infrastructure. Meanwhile, it also shows some differences in the field of social security, health care, education and other public services. Thus in the process of urbanization, the resistance faced by the new generation migrant workers is different. In addition, the lack of preparations for society in conception and policy of social organizations, legal aid and industrial relations results in blockage of the urbanization of the new generation migrant workers.

2) The Low Wage Income Level and High Housing Prices of the Working Place are the Main Difficulties and Obstacles that Restrict the New Generation Migrant Workers to Settle in the City.

In future plans, nearly half of the new generation migrant workers intends to settle in the city (as shown in Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE1: THE FUTURE PLANS OF THE NEW GENERATION MIGRANT WORKERS (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined not to return to villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to stay in the city, or else return to the rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make enough money and return to villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined to return to villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, from a realistic point of view, there are many difficulties for the new generation migrant workers to settle down in city. As the survey results show, the new generation migrant worker groups think that the main difficulties and obstacles to settle down in city are "the low income", housing problems", "imperfect social Security", "untaken care of elder" and "children’s education problems" and so on. 67.2% of the new generation migrant workers think the major difficulties and obstacles to settle down in the city is "low income". While 63.2% of regard the major difficulties and obstacles is "housing problem". It can be seen that the problems of income and housing are the biggest obstacles that the new generation migrants workers are facing to settle in city recently. Meanwhile, they also argue that “children’s education problems”, "untaken care of elder", “imperfect social security ”, "unequal status " and " absense of belonging, difficulty in integration into city life” are also difficulties and obstacles that restrict them on settling in city. The rates of them are 16%, 20.1%, 24%, 7.8% and 13.5% respectively.

3) The Education and Occupational Skill Levels of the New Generation Migrant Workers Lag behind the Needs of the Urban Labor Market, which is the Key to Preventing Their Long-term and Stable Employment in City.

According to the published information from China’s labor market net; in 2009, the demand of the city labor market in senior high school and above education level was 60.2% of total demands. While in junior high school and below it was only 39.8%. However, according to the current survey data, there are only about 30% of the new generation migrant workers who have senior high school or higher education level. At the same time, the labor force which is in the greatest demands in urban labor market is the technical secondary school, professional secondary school and skill school labor force who have received highly specialized vocational education, or, and have certain professional skills of the labor force, and this part is only 56.6% of the total demands.

However, there are only 20% of such force in the new generation migrant workers. In other words, under the background of simple manual labor is gradually replaced by knowledge and skills as the standard of labor market choice, if the education and skill level of the new generation migrant workers can not develop in accordance with the demand of the labor market, estimated by their current skill level, only about 30% of them can have long-term, stable employment in city.


Among the new generation migrant workers, 54.4% of them did not sign labor contracts with the unit or employer. But in the earlier generation, the number was 61.6% . Among all these jobs that the new generation migrant workers work on, 32% of the jobs do not require security measures. However, in the jobs that require protective measures, 35% have more complete protection measures, 53% have some
protective measures, and 12% have no protective measures.

If the new generation migrant workers come across labor disputes, they tend to solve the problems by "consult between employers and employees", "legal channels" and "government". 39.9% of the new generation migrant workers always choose "consultation between employers and employees". And those who prefer "legal channels" and "government" accounted for 25.1% and 19.8% respectively. It can be observed the new generation migrant workers are more likely to rely on themselves and the "legal channels" to solve problems.

![Fig.1: THE SOCIAL SECURITY OF NEW GENERATION MIGRANT IN DIFFERENT REGIONS](image)

**TABLE 2: THE SOCIAL SECURITY COVERAGE RATE OF THE NEW GENERATION MIGRANT WORKERS IN MAJOR INDUSTRIES (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major industries</th>
<th>Pension insurance</th>
<th>Injury insurance</th>
<th>Medical insurance</th>
<th>Unemployment insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>manufacturing industry</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction industry</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, storage and postal services</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, storage and postal services</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and catering industry</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident services and other services</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the rate of the new generation migrant workers who participate in Social Security is very low, which is no significantly different from the other age group of rural-urban migrant workers. From the point of the whole country, the rate of paying pension insurance, injury insurance, medical insurance and unemployment insurance for the new generation migrant workers by unit or employer were 7.6%, 21.8%, 12.9% and 4.1% respectively. For the new generation migrant workers, not only the rate of Social Security is very low, but also the differences between regions and industries are large. Figure 1 and Table 2 shows the social security coverage of new generation migrant in different regions and (input places) and major industries.

5) Restricted by the Household Register System, it is Difficult to Meet the Public Demand of the Migrant Children's Education. This is the Realistic and Urgent Problems for the Migrant Workers to Work and Have Long-term and Stable Life in City.

Based on their own experience, the new generation migrant workers have very high expectations on their children’s education. It is right because they want their children to receive better education that more and more new generation migrant works choose to work and settle down in their working place. According to China’s floating population monitor report, in 2009, among the children of rural floating population, 70.2% of them transferred along with their parents, and only 29.8% still stayed at the village. However, these migrant children of the migrant workers still have much difficulty in entering the school. According to a research report from the Ministry of Education in 2008, the studying rate in public school of the migrant children of migrant workers was 63% in Beijing, 49% in Shanghai, and only 34.6% in Guangzhou. The rate of school-age children who have not attended school are 3.81% in Beijing, 3.56% in Shanghai, and up to 7.19% in Guangzhou. More than half of the migrant children of migrant workers have transfer experience, and among the rate of transferring at least 3 times, the big cities are the highest, while the medium-sized cities are the lowest. Some urban public schools still charge each week and collect sponsorship fees, and the big cities are the most prominent. As the new generation migrant workers get older, more and more of them will enter a stage of childbearing age. And at the same time, their children’s education problems will increasingly become the realistic and urgent issues that they have to face in order to live and work steadily in their working places.

6) Being Awkward between "Farmer" and "City Resident" Identity and Lack of Happiness, the New Generation Migrant Workers’ Mental Health and Psychological Counseling Issues Need to be Taken Seriously Attention.

As for status identification, the new generation
migrant workers are in an awkward position between "farmer" and "city resident". The rate of new generation migrant workers who strongly agree with the statement of the "belonging to the hometown" is 46.3% while "relatively agreement" is 41.6%; While for the statement of "being farmers", the rate of "strongly agreement" and "relatively agreement" are 23% and 45.5%, respectively; And for the statement of "being city residents", the rate of "strongly agree "and" relatively agree" are 4.3% and 18.5% respectively. From the perspective of merging into city, these data show that most of the new generation migrant workers do not consider themselves as city residents, and prefer the statement of "belonging to the hometown" and even farmers' status in status identity.

However, when choosing "If you need to compare with others about the living conditions, who will you compare with?" The new generation migrant workers choose: urban residents, migrant workers in the city, the relatives of the village, countryside and their county, people indefinable. The rates are respectively: 23.4%, 23.6%, 6.8%, 19.3%, 6.7%, 3.6% and 16.7%. It can be seen that when choosing the frame of reference of the life, the new generation migrant workers tend to compare with the people in the city. This means, that when the new generation migrant workers are aware of the gap between them and the urban residents in lives and status, they will have stronger reverse psychology and depressed mood.

Overall, the new generation migrant workers are lack of well-being. The rate of the new generation migrant workers who feel "relatively happy" and "very happy" are only 30.6% and 5%. And the rate of those who feel "totally unhappy" and "not too happy" are 3.2% and 7.7 % respectively. In other words, there are 11% of the new generation migrant workers who feel totally unhappy or not too happy. Those workers' psychological counseling and mental health problems need enough attention from enterprises and relative government departments.

Conclusions

It can be indicated from the above analysis, that as the structure within rural-urban migrant worker group changes, the new generation migrant workers have become the main part of migrant workers, and appear to have new problems and demands compared with the previous. This will have a profound impact on the entire process of China's urbanization and economic and social development. Therefore, we need appropriate institutional arrangements to protect the new generation migrant workers to gradually integrate into urban society, and let them enjoy the equal rights as residents in employment, social security, access to public services, and solve the problems and difficulties they meet in the process of urbanization.

Firstly, migrant workers' urbanization is the major strategic option on promoting urban and rural development jointly, eliminating the contradictions of two dual economic structure and solving the "Three Rural Issues". The urbanization of migrant workers is the progress of realizing a series of power protection and enjoyment of public services. We need to increase relative investment, with focus on resolving the financial difficulties in the urbanization of migrant workers and share the social cost of the urbanization of migrant workers. All these costs can only be collected from the social wealth created by migrant workers, the transfer of agricultural and urban land, so essentially migrant workers bear the cost of urbanization of themselves.

But nominally, it need other social organizations to participate and share. At the same time, based on the principle of taking government as the main part and taking into account the enthusiasm of the local economic development and the development needs of the enterprises where migrant workers work, the co-participant social cost-sharing mechanisms of migrant workers and their working enterprises can be constructed in which the local government public finance expenditure is the main part and the central government transfer payments is an assist.

Secondly, we should set up equal employment system both to rural and urban areas, and speed up the establishment of the unified labor market of rural and urban areas. It is the most important institutions for the urbanization of new generation migrant workers to establish and improve the unified employment policies and realize the equal employment opportunities and securities as urban laborers. First of all, we should establish a unified labor market of rural and urban areas, then cancel the discriminatory policies and regulations on the employment of migrant workers in urban, and sign the labor contracts strictly according to the provisions of the "labor law"
to protect the basic rights and interests of laborers. Secondly, we should establish a rural-urban unified system of employment and services to achieve equal treatment between the new generation migrant workers and urban laborers in employment policy consult, registration of the unemployed, unemployment assistance, personnel files proxy, employment information publishing and employment agencies and so on. In addition, we should strengthen vocational skill training for the new generation migrant workers. And the government finance should burden the training funds to provide free vocational skills training for the new generation migrant workers. In this way, the human capital of the new generation migrant workers can be enhanced, their employment can be promoted, thus carrying forward the process of urbanization.

Thirdly, deepen the reformation of the household registration system. The current household registration systems determine that residents can only enjoy the benefits of the ordinary citizen in their household registration place. Flowing between urban and rural areas, if the urbanization of the new generation migrant can not be realized as soon as possible, they are likely to be missed out of the urban and rural social security system. Therefore, it is a must to deepen the reformation of the household registration system and give the new generation migrant workers the equal rights and interests as the urban residents. We should accelerate the policy and measures to make the new generation migrant workers settle down in city and transfer the new generation migrant workers with stable jobs and income and their children into urban residents. And by this way, the institutional system of unified identity, consistent rights and equal status of the new generation migrant workers and urban residents can gradually form. Now, we should consider the development of small and medium-sized towns as the important point of solving the problem of the outlet and home of the new generation migrant workers. Loosening the household settling policy in small and medium-sized cities and towns; then promote the shift of agricultural population into urban residents and make them enjoy the same rights with the local urban residents. Meanwhile, we should strip the rural resident rights of the new generation migrant workers, especially the rights of use and distribution to promote the transfer of rural land and the massively operations and improve the efficiency of the agricultural industry.

And based on these, the income level of rural residents can be improved.

Fourthly, adapt to the characteristics of the new generation migrant workers, and promote the social security system of the new generation migrant workers. The core of modern social security system is social insurance, including pension insurance, medical insurance and unemployment insurance. The new generation migrant workers have a very urgent urbanization and strong sense of belonging to city, but they often have no assurance when facing the risk of unemployment, work injury and disease, which objectively makes the new generation migrant workers hard to integrate and root in city. Therefore, we should establish the social security system whose kernel is the pension, health care and unemployment insurance for the new generation migrant workers to enhance their confidence of merging into city and eliminate the concerns of inequality between them and the urban residents.

Fifthly, promote the equalization of basic public services, and actively create the social atmosphere where the new generation migrant workers merge into the city. The current “two-track system management mode”, does not regard the migrant workers as equal elements in the community and does not involve them into local economic and social development plan. We should regard the migrant workers in urban as part of the residents of city, change the two-track management mode and eliminate discriminatory policies on migrant workers. Overall, we should give all consideration about the public service demand of migrant workers especially for the new generation migrant workers, and try to set up the public service system which suits the features and meets the needs of the new generation migrant workers. We can gradually realize the same treatment of the new generation migrant workers as the urban residents enjoying in children’s education, public health care, house renting and buying, and social security, and make them really merge into the city, the community to promote social justice, fairness and harmony. Another important point is that the low-rent houses are very important to the new generation migrant workers. The new generation migrant workers lack the basic ability to purchase the bulk commodity. Generally, it is impossible for them to settle down in the city. To the new generation migrant workers, even if the relatively cheap "affordable housing" is too expensive to them.
Finally, strengthen the psychological counseling to the new generation migrant workers. Government departments and enterprises also need to increase the attention and investment in the mental health of the new generation migrant workers and help them promote self-management and reduce the psychological pressure. At the same time, only by gradually eliminating the institutions discrimination of household registration, employment, social security and so on, can we make the new generation migrant workers really enjoy the treatment of urban residents, which is the fundamental way to solve the problems of the new generation migrant workers' mental health.

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