

The Construction of Departments of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education During Social Changes

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Abstract

Based on the detailed collating of the original archival materials, this paper combs and analyzes the construction and adjustment of departments at Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education in the course of its development over the past 15 years, and draws inspiration from it. The survival and development as well as the construction of departments of higher education institutions must conform to the needs of social change, serve the requirements of social change and have timely reform. At the same time, colleges and universities are bound to have a positive effect on social change.

Key words: Social change; Sichuan provincial institute of education; Construction of departments

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INTRODUCTION

In 1936, Sichuan Rural Construction Institute was changed into Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education. After the war of resistance against Japan and the liberation war, in 1950, it was converted into Southwest Normal College and Southwest Agricultural College. In the course of its 15 years of development, the Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education made big contributions to social development. We have reasons to study this section of

history, especially the construction of its departments in order to get new inspiration in history.

1. THE MISSION OF SICHUAN PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

According to archival records, after Sichuan Rural Construction Institute was restructured and changed into Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, its initial core work was still “to focus on rural construction” (Gao, 1937). After the outbreak of the war, faculties of the institution believed that China’s economy is “based on agriculture” and “to support long-term war and ensure its success, we should still stick to the construction of agriculture” (Du, 1937). In 1938, due to the serious national crisis, the national government provided for that higher education should also include social education; therefore, in 1939 the Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education adjusted its purpose to namely “develop social education and agricultural education talents”¹. In October, due to financial difficulties in running the institute, “the provincial government issued an adjustment approach,” and the institute “changed the school objectives to focus on training teachers at all levels and professionals for universities in the province as well as in-service teacher training”². In 1941, Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education once again adjusted the school’s purpose “to study advanced educational academics, train professionals for social education and agricultural education talents and train education administration professionals and practical

¹ Organizational Outline of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol.103.

² Overview of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol. 640.

talents for disciplinary teaching depending on the needs of the province”³. In 1947, according to the instructions of the National Government Ministry of Education, it changed the original purpose of running a school to “study advanced educational academics and train specialized talents for education”⁴.

Just in ten years, as society continued to change, the purpose of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education also continued to be adjusted.

2. DEPARTMENTS OF SICHUAN PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Departments of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education changed with the change of the purpose of running the school and they were constantly adjusted according to the needs of social change. In 1936, when Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education began to reorganize, there were only two departments. By 1949, it grew to nine departments with an overall trend of increase. During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the development of departments was slow. The situation was relatively improved after the Japanese imperialism was expelled from China and the school developed relatively rapidly.

In 1936 when Sichuan Rural Construction Institute was reorganized into Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, the original departments of Sichuan Rural Construction Institute were changed to the Department of Rural Education and the Department of Agricultural Education⁵. In 1937, a specialized household repair program was added. In the affiliated agricultural experimental field, there were animal husbandry and veterinary group, crop group, horticultural group, plant pest and disease group, agricultural production group, forest group, silkworm mulberry group, agricultural extension group, agricultural laboratory and agronomical exhibition hall⁶. Research and experimental department is mainly “studies piloted local education administrative and education practical problems”. It included three research offices: rural education research office, agricultural education research office and family education research office. At the affiliated experimental field of the research and experimental department, there were local education experimental area, experimental schools at all levels and agricultural test field⁷. In 1938, as ordered, rural

education department was changed into social education department⁸. In the autumn of 1941, “to meet the needs of the designated training for education administrative personnel in various counties in Sichuan, Sichuan Provincial Department of Education”⁹ established two-year specialized education¹⁰ and various training courses for educational administrators. It also established agricultural experimental field, Jialing Experimental Primary School, Geleshan rural construction area¹¹. In autumn of 1942, “in order to meet the needs of the Sichuan provincial government,” it established a three-year accounting program in Chengdu and also established a three-year Chinese language program to improve students’ Chinese language level in Sichuan. In 1943, as requested, it passed the accounting program to Sichuan Provincial Accounting College¹², and as it is shown in the organizational outline, it withdrew the specialized household repair program¹³. In January 1945, as requested, it changed the specialized Chinese language program into the Department of Chinese Language and Culture and leaped to a higher level. In 1946 just after we gained the victory in the war, it expanded the agricultural and changed agronomy and agricultural system divisions into two departments. It also added English department and mathematics department. According to the organizational outline of this year, the two-year specialized education program was cancelled. At the affiliated experimental field, there were agricultural pilot field, preparatory class, affiliated secondary school, Jialing Experimental Primary School, Geleshan rural construction area¹⁴. In 1947, as requested, it changed the social education department into education department; agricultural education department stopped admitting students; department of history and geography and department of museums¹⁵. “嘉陵实验小学改称附属小学” “Jialing Experimental Primary School was renamed Affiliated Primary School”¹⁶. Since then, until 1950 before the reorganization there was no further change.

According to the organizational outline of every calendar year, the author lists all the department of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education from 1936 to 1949:

⁸ Same source as Footnote 2.

⁹ Hand Copied Answers of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol.362.

¹⁰ Written Report of Teacher Education Conference, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol.437.

¹¹ Same source as Footnote 3.

¹² Name List of the Faculties and Students of Accounting in the Institute in 1943, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol. 421.

¹³ Same source as Footnote 10.

¹⁴ Same source as Footnote 1.

¹⁵ Same source as Footnote 2.

¹⁶ Same source as Footnote 4.

³ Same source of Footnote 1.

⁴ The Revised List of Organizational Rules of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol. 640.

⁵ Same source as Footnote 2.

⁶ Organizational Rules of Agricultural Experiment Field in Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol.26.

⁷ Same source as Footnote 1.

Table 1
Department of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education (1936-1949)

Year	Department
1936	Department of Rural Education, Department of Agricultural Education
1937	Department of Rural Education, Department of Agricultural Education, Specialized Household Repair Program
1938	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Specialized Household Repair Program
1939	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Specialized Household Repair Program
1940	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Specialized Household Repair Program
1941	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Specialized Household Repair Program, Two-year Specialized Education Program
1942	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Specialized Household Repair Program, Two-year Specialized Education Program, Three-year Specialized Accounting Program, Three-year Specialized Chinese Language Program
1943	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Two-year Specialized Education Program, Three-year Specialized Chinese Language Program
1944	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Two-year Specialized Education Program, Three-year Specialized Chinese Language Program
1945	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Department of Chinese Language and Culture, Two-year Specialized Education Program
1946	Social Education Department, Agricultural Education Department, Department of Chinese Language and Culture, English Department, Mathematics Department, Agricultural Production Department, Department of Agronomy
1947	Department of Education, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Department of History and Geography, Department of Mathematics, Museum Department, Department of Agronomy, Department of Agriculture System, Department of Horticulture
1948	Department of Education, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Department of History and Geography, Department of Mathematics, Museum Department, Department of Agronomy, Department of Agriculture System, Department of Horticulture ¹⁷
1949	Department of Education, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Department of History and Geography, Department of Mathematics, Museum Department, Department of Agronomy, Department of Agriculture System, Department of Horticulture

As can be seen from the table, the long-lasting departments were Department of Social Education “which had the purpose of training social education staff with a focus on the practical application of rural social education” and Department of Agricultural Education “which had the purpose of cultivating faculties for senior agricultural schools and specialized on advanced and professional fields”¹⁸. The long-term existence of these two departments has laid the foundation and provided conditions for the later restructuring of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education into Southwest Normal College and Southwest Agricultural College.

It should be noted that, in 1939 Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education followed the instructions of the Sichuan Provincial Government and worked with the Third District of Sichuan Administrative Ombudsman Bureau to implement the “rural construction and other special rural construction graduate students with the

mission to develop high-level agricultural practical talents for the province”. The entry qualifications are as follows: undergraduate students of all department with excellent academic performance and good character can fill out a statement form if they are willing to continue to study and then submit a research proposal. Once they pass the physical examination and the review process, they will be admitted as graduate students. Students who go to similar national, provincial or approved private universities and graduate and are willing to serve in the rural areas with excellent academic performance and good character can fill out a statement. With the recommendation letters of the president and a director professor at the university as well as a research proposal, students will be admitted as graduate students if they also pass the physical examination. The duration of study is one year. The first year enrollment is 12 students. The training for graduate students “does not use the ordinary way of class, but pays attention to research and discussion of practical issues”, so that graduate students can “share the actual duties, engage in research, find problems and grow experience from the participation of field work”. At the end of the one-year study, graduate students are supposed to submit a study report for review. Professors in the department should guide students in the process. On education, “it focuses

¹⁷ Organizational Chart of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol. 670.

¹⁸ Guilin Vocational Guidance Institute Survey of the Major High Schools and Specialized Schools, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol.197.

on local education, administrative rural teacher education, rural primary schools, rural social education and other practical problems.” “On the agricultural system, it pays attention to agricultural extension, agricultural cooperation, rural sideline, agricultural engineering and other practical problems”¹⁹. After graduate, students will be retained by the Institute and the bureau.

3. INSPIRATIONS FROM SICHUAN PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

From the construction history of departments of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, it is not difficult to find out the survival, construction and reform of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education were always around social change and always conformed to social change. At the same time, the existence of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education is bound to have a positive effect on social change.

Colleges and universities are the product of social change. If schools want to survive and develop, they must be based on social needs, strengthen the internal construction and reform and serve social development. Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education always determined its purpose of running the school in

accordance with the needs of social development and conducted timely reform, which made the size of the school expand year after year. In spite of difficulties of the situation then, Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education encountered some difficulties and setbacks in the course of running the school, but in the end it survived in the extremely complex and difficult social environment, and continuously developed and expanded. It has made great contribution to the social development. In the history of today’s Southwest University, Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education also left its important page that cannot be ignored: Today’s Southwest University cannot be separated from the foresight of staff in Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education; Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education adapted to the times to implement reform and has been widely recognized by the community. It continued to develop and become a valuable asset in the development history of Southwest University.

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¹⁹ Rural Construction Graduate Program Outline of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education, “Archives of Sichuan Provincial Institute of Education”, General Archive No. 0122, Directory 1, Vol.147.