

## A Study on Vocational Training in Labor Transfer in Ethnic Minority Regions - Taking Wuling Region as an Example

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**Abstract:** Taking Wuling Region as an example, this paper conducts an in-depth study on the issue of vocational training in the process of labor transfer in ethnic minority regions. It focuses on analyzing the problems existing in vocational training during labor transfer in Wuling Region, such as insufficient training resources, a disconnect between training content and market demand, and an imperfect training system. To address these challenges, the paper proposes measures such as increasing government investment to optimize the allocation of training resources, strengthening cooperation between schools and enterprises to achieve alignment between training and employment, and innovating training models to enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of training. Through this research, we can deepen our understanding of the relationship between vocational education and labor transfer in ethnic minority regions, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting balanced regional development and achieving social harmony and stability.

**Keywords:** Ethnic Minority Regions, Labor Transfer, Vocational Training

China, as a large agricultural country, sees its agricultural development as not only crucial to national food security and economic stability but also as an indispensable part of fully building a modern socialist powerful nation. "Advancing China's transition from a large agricultural country to a powerful agricultural nation is both an essential requirement for fully building a modern socialist powerful nation and a significant task in comprehensively promoting the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation through Chinese-style modernization.[1] The concept of a powerful agricultural nation is rich in connotation, aiming to achieve high-quality agricultural development, pursue higher production efficiency, more equitable resource

allocation, a more sustainable development model, and stronger international competitive advantages. [2]The construction of a powerful agricultural nation needs to be supported by higher-quality production factors, including a high-quality talent pool, advanced technological equipment, and comprehensive agricultural infrastructure. [3] Talent is the core factor in agricultural development. Only by cultivating a rural labor force with good labor skills and qualities can we provide a solid talent guarantee for the construction of a powerful agricultural nation.

### 1. Main Characteristics of the Rural Labor Force in the Wuling Region

The total population of the six cities, prefectures, and districts in the Wuling region reaches 15,644,000 people, with the agricultural population accounting for more than half, totaling 8,430,000 individuals. This vast agricultural population constitutes the main body of the labor market in the region. Although rural labor may face employment difficulties in specific situations, overall, the rural labor force in this region remains active. In terms of employment stability, only 62% of the labor force is stably employed throughout the year, while 81% are employed for at least half a year. Those employed for less than three months account for 3.5% of the total. This reflects a certain degree of seasonal fluctuation in labor employment in the region.

In terms of gender ratio, the labor force in the Wuling region has a slight male majority, with a ratio of 56:44 males to females. From the perspective of age structure, the average age of the labor force is 37.5 years, with a significant concentration between 35 and 52 years old, accounting for 54% of the total. This age group constitutes the mainstay of the labor market, possessing relatively good physical condition and work experience. In terms of cultural quality, the labor force in the Wuling region is generally low. Nearly 70% of the labor force has an

education level below junior high school, which limits their competitiveness in the labor market. To improve the overall quality and employability of the labor force, strengthening vocational education and training is particularly important. Regarding employment, the labor force in the Wuling region exhibits obvious migration characteristics. Due to the region's heavy reliance on agriculture, yet with insufficient land to accommodate all laborers, a large number of laborers choose to work outside the region, accounting for 67.2% of the total. In contrast, only 7.4% of the labor force is locally employed, highlighting the prominent contradiction between supply and demand in the regional labor market. Among those locally employed, family-operated contracted work is dominant, accounting for 12%. The employment rates in local collective enterprises and private enterprises are relatively low, at 2.1% and 2.8% respectively. Additionally, 22% of the labor force is still engaged in agriculture-related work.

## **2. The Necessity of Labor Force Training in the Wuling Region**

### **2.1 Labor Transfer Employment Training Facilitates Social Development**

As of 2022, the total area of the Wuling region reached 100,000 square kilometers, with rural areas accounting for 10,000 square kilometers, or 10% of the region's total area. The agricultural population stood at 8.43 million, representing 58% of the total population. In terms of economic output, the region's gross domestic product (GDP) reached 644.8 billion yuan, with agricultural value-added amounting to 128.3 billion yuan, secondary industry value-added at 268.9 billion yuan, and tertiary industry value-added at 247.6 billion yuan.

In recent years, Wuling Region has made certain progress in economic restructuring, with gradual optimization of its industrial structure and urban-rural structure. However, Compared with coastal developed regions, Wuling Region significantly lags behind in rural industrialization and urbanization. In terms of rural economic indicators, Wuling Region ranks relatively low in China. Traditional agriculture dominates the region, with an excessively high proportion of the "grain-hog" structure. Most agricultural products are of poor quality, and the development of non-agricultural industries is slow. This "convergence-oriented" production

layout, "extensive" mode of operation, and "short-chain" production model are particularly prominent in Wuling Region. [4] In the total rural social output value of the entire region, the structure of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries is unhealthy, with an excessively large proportion of the primary industry, a low level of the secondary industry, and lagging development of the tertiary industry. Grain and hog output value account for 50.8% of the total agricultural output value, while the high-quality rate of major agricultural products is only 38%, the commodity rate is 39%, and the processing conversion rate is as low as 20%. Employees in the secondary and tertiary industries in rural areas account for only 36% of the total rural workforce. Agricultural industrialization is still in its initial stage, and leading enterprises lack overall strength. The level of agricultural science and technology in Wuling Region is relatively low, and the quality of the rural labor force needs to be improved.

### **2.2 Labor Transfer and Employment Training Enhances the Competitiveness of Agricultural Products**

With the deepening of globalization, especially after China's accession to the WTO, agricultural products from Wuling Region face intense competition from high-quality, low-priced agricultural products both domestically and internationally. Competitors often possess more advanced production technologies, more efficient production models, and more sophisticated marketing systems, giving them a clear advantage in market competition. In this context, labor transfer and employment training provides an opportunity to enhance the competitiveness of agricultural products in Wuling Region. Through training, rural surplus labor can obtain a wider range of employment opportunities, reducing the number of laborers in the agricultural sector. This not only helps alleviate the pressure on agricultural production and increase agricultural labor productivity, but also effectively lowers the production costs of agricultural products.

### **2.3 Labor Transfer and Employment Training Facilitates the Development and Upgrading of Non-Agricultural Industries**

Within the agricultural sector, labor transfer employment training can encourage the rational flow of labor among planting, breeding, animal

husbandry, and sideline occupations. This mobility not only helps improve production efficiency and specialization levels across various agricultural sectors but also facilitates the optimization and adjustment of the internal agricultural structure, making agricultural production more aligned with market demands and resource endowments. Labor transfer employment training can also guide the transfer of rural surplus labor to non-agricultural sectors such as the secondary and tertiary industries.[5] This transfer process not only alleviates the pressure on agricultural production and enhances agricultural labor productivity but also provides sufficient human resources for the development of the secondary and tertiary industries. With the continuous influx of rural labor, the secondary and tertiary industries can grow rapidly and thus promote the upgrading of the industrial structure of the entire rural economy.

#### **2.4 Labor Transfer Employment Training Facilitates Agricultural Modernization**

The Wuling region is characterized by a large agricultural population and a significant accumulation of agricultural labor. Without large-scale rural labor transfer, it would be difficult to achieve agricultural scale and intensive management, thereby severely hindering the progress of agricultural modernization. As a large number of rural surplus labor is transferred, the pressure on agricultural production is alleviated to some extent, providing favorable conditions for agricultural scale and intensive management. The reduction in labor forces prompts agricultural producers to seek more efficient and scientific production methods to increase agricultural production efficiency and yields. Simultaneously, labor transfer accelerates land circulation and concentration, enabling agricultural production to become more scalable and specialized.[6]

### **3. Major Issues Facing Labor Transfer Training in the Wuling Region**

#### **3.1 Large Base Number of Rural Labor Force**

In 2022, the total population of the six prefectures and cities in the Wuling region was 15.644 million, with an agricultural population of 8.43 million, accounting for 53.8% of the total population in the region (17.44% higher than that of China). The total cultivated land

area in the Wuling region is approximately 10,000 square kilometers. Due to its mountainous terrain, the per capita cultivated land area is only 0.89 mu, lower than the national average. According to estimates, the productivity in the Wuling region is relatively low, and the labor demand per unit area is relatively high. Even if one laborer is needed for every 7 mu of cultivated land, the cultivated land in the Wuling region can only accommodate about 2.2 million laborers. Including other industries such as forestry, animal husbandry, sideline production, fishery, etc., the total demand for labor will not exceed 3.5 million. The surplus rural agricultural labor force in the Wuling region is approximately over 5 million, [7] accounting for about 60% of the agricultural labor population.

#### **3.2 Low Quality of Rural Labor Force**

Due to regional disadvantages, low productivity development, weak economic strength, and lagging development of social undertakings such as education, science and technology, culture, and health in the Wuling region, these factors directly lead to the low quality of the agricultural labor force, embodied in the following aspects: Firstly, backward ideological concepts. Farmers in the Wuling region have backward ideological concepts, a weak sense of market economy, conservative and narrow thinking patterns, and a relatively severe dependency mindset. Their habitual mindset is to work from sunrise to sunset, leaving them helpless in the face of market economy challenges. With short-sighted and conservative thinking, they are basically content with subsistence or semi-subsistence conditions. Due to the care provided by national ethnic policies and poverty alleviation policies, the mindset of "waiting, relying, and demanding" is severe. Some farmers lack confidence in local economic development, always focusing on other places, forming a narrow mindset of working away from home to become wealthy, which affects and weakens the momentum for local economic development. Secondly, low educational attainment. Farmers in the Wuling region have a short average duration of education and an overall low cultural level. The proportion of laborers with an educational attainment of junior high school or below is as high as 67.8%, higher than the national average. The specific educational structure of the rural labor force in

the Wuling region is distributed as follows: 1.4% are illiterate or semi-illiterate, 21.1% have completed primary school, 46.3% have completed junior high school, 13.7% have completed senior high school, 9.9% have completed vocational school, and 7.6% have completed college or above. Only 19.6% have received professional skills training. The low quality of the rural labor force not only restricts the scale and speed of rural labor transfer but also hinders the improvement of the level of rural labor transfer. According to sample survey data, among the rural labor force transferred in 2022, only 22.7% had undergone professional training. Therefore, rural labor can only engage in relatively low-level labor and find it difficult to enter higher-level industries. Moreover, in the long run, with the improvement of economic development and the rise of high-tech industries, the transfer areas for low-quality labor will become narrower and narrower. Thirdly, poor labor skills.

### **3.3 Unreasonable Structure of Rural Labor Transfer**

Firstly, in some places, labor transfer is not just a transfer of surplus labor; locally required agricultural labor is also transferred out. Secondly, the main body of the transfer consists of young and middle-aged farmers with higher educational attainment, who are the "elite" in rural areas and the main force in new rural construction and the pursuit of prosperity and well-being. Those left behind in rural areas are mostly elderly, weak, sick, and disabled individuals. Thirdly, the transfer is mainly unilateral outflow, and the farmers who are transferred mostly engage in low-level, low-income industries in cities, with low social status and limited ability to bring money back home or return to their hometowns to start businesses. This situation has greatly weakened the force of new rural construction in the Wuling region and hindered and delayed the process of new rural construction.

### **3.4 Single Type of Labor Training in the Wuling Region**

During the investigation, we learned about the expectations of farmers regarding vocational skills training. Among them, 32.2% chose agricultural production skills training, with 15.3% hoping to acquire skills in planting and 28% in breeding. In the Wuling region, there are

many unemployed women who hope to receive vocational skills training in the following order: household services, the clothing industry, beauty and hairstyling, cooking, and typing skills. The proportions are 12.3%, 10.2%, 7.8%, 6.4%, and 5.8% respectively. Regarding training fees, farmers generally have low expectations for the amount they can afford. They indicated that 55% can bear training fees of less than 300 yuan, and 82.9% can accept training fees of less than 600 yuan.

### **3.5 Lack of Professional Skills Among Labor in the Wuling Region**

In the Wuling region, the main obstacle to labor employment is the lack of professional skills. Due to their low cultural quality and older age, women account for 70% of the overall unemployed labor force, with an average age of 42.5 years, and 74.3% have educational attainment below junior high school level. Among the unemployed labor force, the majority do not have an urgent desire for employment. Only about 40% of the labor force expresses an eagerness to find work, with an average age of only 36.6 years and 37.7% having an educational attainment of high school or above. The reasons for unemployment are varied. For women, the primary reason is the need to take care of the family, accounting for 30% of cases. Those staying at home and seeking employment opportunities account for 27.6%. Lack of employment information and professional skills accounts for 10% and 7.2% respectively. Among those who choose to shift to non-agricultural employment, 87.7% fall into this category. Among the 60% of the group that is not urgent in seeking work, women account for 73.5%, with an average age of 46.1 years, and 80% are over 40 years old. Those with educational attainment below junior high school account for 82.4%. Among this group, 57.9% choose not to seek employment due to illness, disability, or family care needs within a certain period. Among them, 44.5% do not urgently seek work due to family care needs.

When farmers reflect on the main problems in employment, they cite low cultural quality (35.9%), lack of specialized skills (46.9%), advanced age (31.9%), lack of information (21.2%), and unequal treatment compared to urban residents (21%) as the primary issues. Therefore, low cultural quality and lack of professional skills are the main obstacles for the



unemployed in choosing employment.

#### **4. Main Pathways and Measures for Labor Transfer Training in the Wuling Region**

##### **4.1 Combining Guiding Training with Vocational Skills Training**

Guiding training involves encouraging and supporting farmers to migrate to cities for work. This requires both promotional slogans and policy support to ensure that farmers' mobility is in accordance with the law, simplifying various procedures for cross-regional employment and reducing farmers' employment costs and risks. Efforts should be made to strengthen the tracking management of migrant workers and safeguard farmers' legitimate rights and interests. A sound labor export network should be established and labor intermediary organizations should be standardized to comprehensively collect and promptly provide information on employment opportunities across regions, providing accurate and timely labor information for farmers. The labor training channels should be improved to build up skills and qualities, facilitating gradual outward transfer.

Vocational skills training for rural labor primarily focuses on non-graded position adaptability training, with teaching plans developed with reference to corresponding occupations (trades), emphasizing adaptive operational training. Technical grade training involves formulating teaching plans based on nationally promulgated standards and conducting skill training, including elementary, intermediate, and advanced vocational and technical training. The goal is to improve laborers' vocational skills, enhance their market competitiveness, and achieve employment with qualifications.[8] Vocational colleges should conduct vocational skills training based on the specific circumstances of the labor force in the Wuling region, striving to cultivate the labor force into "new highly skilled talents and industrial workers" and improving their ability to compete in the market.[9]

##### **4.2 Emphasizing Training Effectiveness and Implementing Classified Training**

Training should implement a brand strategy, arranging training content based on market demand and the skill requirements of different industries and trades for the labor force in the Wuling region, to improve training quality and

emphasize effectiveness. During the training process, it is important to accurately identify market positioning and conduct labor training and education in a planned, purposeful, multi-layered, multi-channel, and multi-form manner, shifting the labor force from physically-oriented to technically and intellectually skilled. Efforts should be made to create high-quality labor services to promote rapid growth in both the quantity and quality of labor transfer.[10]

##### **4.3 Emphasizing Modern Quality Training for Labor Force and Strengthening Management Talent Training**

High-quality labor force is a core element of modern economic growth. The overall quality of laborers in the Wuling region is relatively low, and the structure of labor force quality does not match the transformation of economic growth patterns. Vigorously developing vocational education, strengthening labor skills training, and comprehensively enhancing the modern quality of the labor force are significant strategic measures to fully implement the rural revitalization strategy, promote industrial upgrading and economic growth patterns in the Wuling region, and facilitate steady and sustainable economic development.

According to the needs of regional economic development and the construction of new ethnic regions, targeted, multi-layered, and multi-form training should be implemented to comprehensively improve the quality of laborers in ethnic regions, cultivating practical talents, new socialist farmers, and a workforce for industries in these regions. Firstly, a project for cultivating practical talents in ethnic regions should be implemented. Based on the requirements of documents such as "Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Practical Talent Teams in Ethnic Regions" and "Planning for the Construction of Practical Talent Teams in Ethnic Regions After the 20th National Congress," efforts should be intensified in cultivating practical talents, with a focus on implementing practical talent programs and strengthening the cultivation of entrepreneurial practical talents in ethnic regions. Secondly, a project for cultivating new farmers should be implemented. The focus is on cultivating "educated, skilled, and well-managed" new socialist farmers. [11]

Excellent management talents contribute to

attracting talent to join agricultural development, enhancing efficiency, improving labor skills and abilities, and furthering the development of agriculture, rural areas, and farmers. The core of township and village enterprises lies in qualified employees. Only by properly training these employees can the smooth operation of the most critical assets of township and village enterprises be ensured, and only then can these enterprises improve their efficiency and achieve better results.

#### **4.4 Strengthen the Construction of Farmer Training Bases and Enhance Vocational Skills Education for Farmers**

The confidence in rural revitalization stems from talent. In recent years, to deeply implement the rural revitalization strategy, Wuling Region has fully explored local resources, adhered to overall planning, highlighted key points, and emphasized practical results. It has authorized multiple rural revitalization training bases, laying a solid foundation for workforce training in the region. Based on actual conditions, specific requirements have been proposed. Firstly, strengthen the service organization and network construction for rural workforce training. Establish a four-level network and base for rural workforce education and training covering cities, counties, townships, and villages. Emphasize the construction of township adult schools, village-level farmer cultural schools, and other farmer vocational training bases. Focus on resolving issues related to staffing, funding, and equipment and facility investments. Accelerate the construction of farmer training venues in remote mountainous areas to facilitate local participation in training by the workforce in Wuling Region and strengthen the functions of county-level agricultural radio and television schools in farmer training. Secondly, establish a number of labor transfer training bases that demonstrate and drive development. Fully leverage educational training resources, renovate and improve educational training institutions, strengthen base construction, improve teaching conditions, guide and encourage joint training among educational training institutions, increase training programs, expand training scale, and enhance training quality and effectiveness. Wuling Region adheres to the principle of selecting the best and outlines specific measures for workforce training in the region. Five standard conditions are proposed: exemplary

leadership teams, developmental achievements with driving effects, standardized operational mechanisms, foundational work with guarantees, and positive public reputations. Clear hard indicators include activity venues capable of accommodating more than 100 people for simultaneous training and meeting the "six-have" standard, as well as village collective economic annual incomes exceeding RMB 300,000. The Rural Revitalization Training Base in Qianjiang District has constructed a 1,500-square-meter training base, a video screening room accommodating 3,000 people, and seven on-site teaching sites equipped with a Party building education plaza, Party history education, and a village history museum. It scientifically sets up "six series of courses" on developing and strengthening the collective economy, industrial revitalization, party spirit education, rural governance, women's entrepreneurship, and filial piety and kindness culture, achieving deep integration of industry and education. The Rural Revitalization Training Base in Yuanling County, Huaihua City, covers an area of 1,000 square meters and has built an on-site venue for Party member education integrating "training + visits + experiences + education." It offers more than 20 elite courses focusing on Party building, village collective economic development, and social governance, and has created multiple on-site teaching sites such as Party-mass service centers and new-era civilization practice centers. With an average of over 5,000 visitors per year, it has become a showcase for rural revitalization in Wuling Region and a research and exchange base for Party members and cadres.

Enshi Vocational and Technical College has established branded and distinctive majors with the aim of serving "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers." It actively adapts to the agricultural industrial structure adjustment and talent demand in Wuling Region, constantly adjusts and reforms its majors. The college has transformed its previous few traditional majors related to animal husbandry into five departments: Animal Science, Animal Medicine, Agriculture and Forestry Science, Agricultural Economics Management, and Information Engineering, as well as a Basic Education Department. It offers 19 majors, including Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Animal Epidemic Prevention and Quarantine, Animal Science and

Technology, Pet Medicine, Grassland and Feed, Crop Production Technology, Agricultural Economics Management, Landscape Technology, Agricultural and Animal By-product Processing, Computer Application Technology, Financial Information Management, and Secretarial Science, effectively achieving the internal transfer of labor within Wuling Region.

### 5. Conclusion

Vocational training in the context of labor force transfer in ethnic minority regions is of great significance for increasing farmers' income, promoting new rural construction, and achieving regional economic development. Through vocational training for labor force transfer, it is not only possible to enhance the vocational skills and competitiveness of the labor force but also to strengthen their market awareness and legal consciousness, providing strong support for farmers' employment and entrepreneurship in both urban and rural areas.

Vocational training in the context of labor force transfer in ethnic minority regions is a systematic project that requires the joint efforts of the government, vocational colleges, enterprises, and the labor force itself. In the future, greater efforts should be made to intensify training, optimize training content and methods, and improve training quality in ethnic minority regions, making greater contributions to the comprehensive development of the labor force and the in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

### Acknowledgments

This paper is supported by Annual Project of the National Social Science Fund: Interim Results of the Research on the Process and Path of Ethnic Minorities in Wuling Area Integrating into the Chinese National Community (Project Number: 22BMZ034).

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