

# Study on the Current Employment Situation of Migrant Workers

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## Abstract

After the *Opinions of the State Council on Solving Problems of Migrant Workers* is carried out, the migrant workers' situation has been improved, especially that their income has been increased greatly, the problem of wages in arrears has been abated, and the services provided by the government have been enhanced. However, some basic problems such as the migrant workers' low income and difficult life have not been changed fundamentally. Thus, in order to carry out all of the policies of solving migrant workers' problems, we should promote the institutional innovation, increase related investment, and gradually eliminate the institutional and financial obstacles of the citizenization of migrant workers; only in these ways can we solve the migrant workers' problems.

## Keywords

Migrant Workers, Citizenization, Income, Education Level

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## 1. Introduction

The migrant workers are a unique social group which is generated with the process of China's industrialization, urbanization and non-agriculturization of rural population. According to the estimate result of the State Council research [1], the number of migrant workers into the city in the year 2004 is 120 million, which is more than the urban workers and has grown into the second largest working group in China after the group of farmers. They have made tremendous contribution to the city and even to the whole nation's economy during these years. However, they are also the disadvantaged group as they are often treated unreasonably, and there exist many problems within this group. In March 2006, the State Council carried out the *Opinions of the State Council on Solving Problems of Migrant Workers*, which is the first comprehensive file on the issue of

migrant workers in China. Then the government has carried out a series of regulations, guidelines and policies in recent years in order to solve the migrant workers' problems. Now how is the current situation of migrant workers? And what are the reasons of causing the current situation? What measures should be taken to solve the current problems? As to these issues, the Institute of Economics Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Science conducted a survey of the latest situations of migrant workers in some provinces like Beijing, Shanghai, Shandong and Henan provinces. The survey gives out 1000 copies of questionnaires, collect back 825 copies, among which there are 780 effective questionnaires. According to the result of the questionnaires, we know that the education level of migrant workers is raised but still low in general, the wages of migrant workers is increased, but still lower than citizens', and there are still many young migrant workers and most migrant workers still concentrate on manufacturing and construction fields.

Comparing the China Statistical Yearbook [2] with the China Labor Statistical Yearbook [3], together with the statistic of this survey, we analyze the current situation of migrant workers, the reasons which caused the problems and give some suggested measures.

## **2. The Basic Situations of Migrant Workers and Changes of the Situation**

### **2.1. The Average Age of the Migrant Workers Increased Slightly, But Still with Young Adults Mainly**

In the 780 samples, the average age is 33 years old, among which 28.6% is the age between 16 and 25 years old, 12.4% is the age between 26 and 30 years old, 31% is the age between 31 and 40 years old, and 28% is the age above 40 years old. Compared to the statistics in 2015, the average age of migrant workers has been increased by 2 years old, the workers under 30 years old has been decreased by nearly 12%, while workers above 40 years old has been increased by almost 13%. Looking from the gender structure, the average age of female migrant workers is lower than that of the male migrant workers. The average age of female migrant workers is 30 years old, and the average age of male migrant workers is 34 year old.

### **2.2. The Education Level of Migrant Workers Has Been Improved, But Still Low**

Looking from the cultural level in this research, the illiterate and semiliterate migrant workers account for 2.3%, the migrant workers with primary school education account for 16.6%, the migrant workers with junior high school education account for 59.6%, the migrant workers with high school or technical secondary school education account for 19.8%, while the migrant workers above college education account for 1.7% [4]. Compared to the statistics of 2010, the education level of migrant workers has been increased, but is still low in general. Details are in **Table 1**.

### 2.3. Migrant Workers Engaged Industries Have Been Widened, But Still Mainly in Manufacturing and Construction

The survey shows that migrant workers employment is almost in every sector of the national economy, but concentrates in several industries [5]. In the 760 samples, the distribution of migrant workers' employment in different industries is shown in **Table 2**. The majority of migrant workers are still in the manufacturing and construction fields [6].

### 2.4. The Wages of Migrant Workers Have Been Increased, But Still Their Economic Status Is Low

The Survey shows that the average income of migrant workers' family is 33889 RMB in the year 2016, which increased greatly compared to that of the year 2010. But the income is still less than the income of urban resident's. The income situation of migrant workers is shown in **Table 3**. And from the statistics, we also conclude that migrant workers in metropolis earn more than the migrant workers in smaller cities [7].

**Table 1.** The changes of education levels of migrant workers.

Time	Year 2010	Year 2016
illiterate and semiliterate	11.1%	2.3%
primary school education	15.1%	16.6%
junior high school education	58.3%	59.6%
high school or technical secondary school education	15.2%	19.8%
above college education	0.3%	1.7%

**Table 2.** The distribution of migrant workers' employment.

Time	Year 2010	Year 2016
Manufacturing	39.2%	37.6%
Construction	30.3%	29.8%
Social Service	5.8%	6.1%
Wholesale and Retail sales	3.9%	4.2%
Lodging and Catering	3.6%	4.1%

**Table 3.** The migrant workers' income situation by the survey.

Time	Year 2010 (RMB)	Migrant workers' income in Year 2016 (RMB)	Urban residents' income in Year 2016 (RMB)
Beijing	26891	58676	65432
Shanghai	27865	58761	68431
Shandong	16985	29864	38964
Henan	15867	28647	36785

### 3. The Reasons for the Current Situation of Migrant Workers

First, the social security legislation system is not perfect. Migrant workers live between the town and countryside, the status is special. Some of the company managers do not sign contract with the migrant workers. They only have verbal contract which can not help the migrant workers when they encounter some problems.

Second, the migrant workers have limited access to social resources. Most of their time is spent on working, other time they mainly get together with their friends to talk, or play poker or surf the Internet which do not cost money or cost little money. Most of the workers don't know the free library in the city. Besides, due to the registered permanent residence system, many migrant workers can not get the city living allowance [8].

At last, the migrant workers get less education, so they don't know how to protect their rights when they encounter problems. And their legal consciousness is dim.

### 4. Conclusions and Suggested Measures

Considering the above problems, we provide some measures. First, the government should execute strictly the national compulsory education policy and encourage the migrant workers to get high education by investing more funds.

Secondly, government should help the migrant workers to develop their local economy. In this way, migrant workers can get more opportunities in their home places. Society companies can also develop rural economy by developing rural tourism or modern agriculture and so on [9].

Third, government or media should provide more information to migrant workers so that they can get more access to the social resources. Government should build more schools for migrant workers, so migrant workers can learn more technical skills or cultural knowledge after work, which can also enrich their life after daily work.

Besides, we should also promote the innovation of institutions. The policy of point-based Hukou system has been carried out in some places like Beijing. Migrant workers can finally get registered as the permanent resident in the city, which can help the migrant workers get equal rights with the urban residents. They will also have chance to have a real home in the city. So we recommend more cities conduct this policy. It is also their citizenization process.

At last, the migrant workers should work hard and try best to learn more knowledge. And every person should care about the migrant workers and take them as a normal part of the society, just same with other people in the city. Only in this way can we truly solve the problems of migrant workers.

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