

Research on the Problem that Youth is the Main Target Audience of Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract: As the main target audience of our country's ideological and political education, youth are defined by their physical and psychological characteristics as well as their important roles in the socialist modernization in China. Youth aren't just experiencing life's most vigorous period both in terms of physical strength and energy, but are also increasingly mature and capable of raising concerns about social and state affairs. As a consequence, strengthening and improving the ideological and political education of our youth is an urgent requirement to ensure that our cause can continue to prosper and find suitable successors. Meanwhile, the ideological and political education of non-college youths should be enhanced for it is at the moment something of a weak link in youth ideological and political education activities.

Keywords: Ideological and political education; Main target audience; Youth

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1. Introduction

Ideological and political education activities are the central link in achieving the party's political missions. Against a special background of rapid changes in the modern international environment and the initial stage of China's socialist construction where doubts exist regarding the external environment, strengthening the construction of the ideological and political education for our youth is of far-reaching significance when it comes to adhering to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

2. Youth is the Future of Our Country and the Hope of Our Nation

It is on the shoulders of our youth that the future of our country and the hope of our nation is borne. The stronger the youth of our nation, the more powerful our country will be. The life pursuit of driven, hopeful young people is to realize their values. As General Secretary Xi Jinping said at the Ceremony Marking the Centenary of the Communist Party of China, "A century ago, a group of young progressives held aloft the torch of Marxism and searched assiduously in those dark years for ways to rejuvenate the Chinese nation. Since then, under the banner of the Communist Party of China, generation after generation of young Chinese have devoted their youth to the cause of the Party and the people, and remained

in the vanguard of the drive to rejuvenate the nation."^[1] This speech fully lays out the central role of the country's youth and their efforts in the founding of the Communist Party of China and that they still shoulder the responsibility for the future progress of our party and nation today.

"The kind of talent we should aim to train and how to train them are the fundamental questions that must be resolved in the development of Chinese socialist education."^[2] The talent we select must possess strong capabilities both in science and in culture, as well as healthy mentalities, bodies, and political thought. As Jiang Zemin pointed out, "In terms of quality, ideological and political quality is of most importance. Youth are required to strengthen ideological cultivation, build temperament, and strive to establish correct outlooks on world, life, and values which have a huge impact on their life."^[3] Strengthening and improving the ideological and political education for youth is an urgent task at present. Youth must be treated as the main target audience of contemporary ideological and political education.

3. Youth is the Main Target Audience of Ideological and Political Education

As the main target audience of our country's ideological and political education, youth are defined by their physical and psychological characteristics as well as their important roles in the socialist modernization in China.

3.1 The Physical and Psychological Characteristics of Young People

Judging from these physical and psychological characteristics, adolescence is a turning point for teenagers as they form outlooks on the world and on life. As they make their way to maturity, they are more easily shaped at this period than at any other later point in life. Their physical growth provides material conditions for mental development, which directly affects their social behaviors. That's why youth is the main target audience of ideological and political education, which must be carried out in accordance with the physical and psychological characteristics of youth. In terms of physiology, teenagers grow rapidly during adolescence. The body's metabolism reaches an extreme rate, while their height and weight increase rapidly. Furthermore, their body shapes come close to adulthood and tend to be permanent while their internal organs and life skills are still becoming mature. In summary, their bodies develop rapidly and enjoy the most vigorous period of physical strength and energy.

In terms of psychology, their personalities fully develop. Their sense of adulthood begins to appear and gradually strengthen, aspiring for national prosperity. With an increase in political participation and democratic awareness, they desire to take part in various social activities like adults and hope that society treats them as adults and respects their views and opinions. Under the influence of this mindset, the independence of youth is greatly enhanced and their rebelliousness becomes a more serious concern. Gradually, they grow dissatisfied with the need to act as their parents, teachers, and elders require. Instead, they strongly demand to act freely on their own volition, to independently make life goals and judge things for themselves. Simultaneously, the youth's self-assessment ability greatly improves, becoming comprehensive and proactive. They become capable of perceiving their own strengths and weaknesses in a calm and objective manner. With more contact with society and more practical moral experience, their moral awareness also greatly develops and they become able to consciously use the prevailing moral standards to evaluate their own behaviors. Additionally, their intelligence develops rapidly in adolescence. Their observation ability undergoes significant improvements, enabling them to realize something's essence through its appearance. Subject to great curiosities and fantasies, their imagination develops to a whole new level. Furthermore, their cognitive ability also reaches a higher level due to their abundant physical strength and energy, the ongoing basic formation of per-

sonality, and the continuous improvement of their thought processes. Moreover, their strength of will become more and more robust. Full of fantasies for the future, their sense of justice and rationality sees great progress. Therefore, youth tend to be tenacious and fearless of failure, becoming staunchly determined to study hard and strive for success.

3.2 The Position and Role of Youth in China's Socialist Modernization Drive

When we judge the status and role of youth in Chinese socialist modernization, it is clear that they shoulder the heavy responsibility of socialist modernization against the background of a glorious revolutionary tradition. In all historical Chinese revolutions, the majority of young people are involved in the forefront of the struggle, playing an indispensable role as the main driving force. The revolutionary movements since the May 4th Movement have all been linked with youth. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, a vast number of youths, together with people of all walks of life from across the whole country, have struggled and died, fought bravely, and made great contributions to overthrowing imperialism, bureaucracy, and feudalism. After the founding of New China, they actively devoted themselves to socialist construction and became an important force in promoting the continuous development of the socialist cause. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, our nation entered a new period of historical development. Since then, the younger generations have shown their talents in reform and opening up and socialist modernization. Actively participating in and devoting themselves to these reforms, they have continuously played a significant role in socialist modernization.

The history of social development in China shows that youth development cannot be separated from the leadership of the party and the cause of socialist construction. Only on the stage of modernization can youth realize their ambitions, give full play to their talents, and contribute to the motherland and the people as a whole. Similarly, the cause of socialist modernization is inseparable from youth. Without a youth generation who have ideals, morals, education, and discipline, socialist modernization will be difficult to achieve. The significant task of realizing China's modernization has fallen on their shoulders. Therefore, it is necessary to make youth the main target audience of ideological and political education, and cultivate their positive, pioneering, and enterprising spirits to undertake the task of socialist modernization.

Consequently, youth represent the future and the hope of China. In the primary stage of socialism, the historical tasks of the party are to realize socialist modernization and the great rejuvenation of China, move forward, and eventually build a communist society – all of these tasks require that our youth strive to achieve them. That is to say, the future and promise of China are largely determined by the younger generations. As Lenin said: “The task of truly establishing a communist society is to be completed by the youth.”^[4] This quote makes it clear that ideological and political education should focus on our youth, aiming to comprehensively improve not only the ideological and moral quality but also the scientific and cultural quality of our youth, and train them as successors to the socialist cause to ensure our national energy and strength.

4. Insisting that the Object of Ideological and Political Education is All Young People

When it comes to the exact definition of this ‘youth’ who are the main target audience of ideological and political education, people have a tendency to narrowly interpret this as simply meaning college students, thinking that only college students can become nation-builders and successors through ideological and political education. But if we only consider college students to be our youth, then youths outside of higher education are overlooked. We cannot deny that college students are outstanding members of our youth and are very valuable and talented contributors to the country, but it does not mean the ideological and political education of youths outside of higher education can be ignored.

Stepping into society too early, they do not have the same expertise as college graduates, but their rich social experience is still practical and extremely precious. The reason why non-college youth are one of the great potential destabilizing factors in society is that they can find it difficult to find a job with their limited academic backgrounds. As a consequence, strengthening the ideological and political education of non-college youth is significant in Chinese modernization. On the basis of leveraging personal characteristics, we should help them establish a positive, healthy, and progressive ideology. Moreover, not only ideological and political education focused on ideals and firmly held beliefs but also in-depth education on the correct outlooks on the world, life, and proper values should also be carried out. Effective ideological and political education ensures that young people who do not attend college still understand the ardent expectations the

party and the people place on them, so that they may consciously shoulder this important historical responsibility and more effectively maintain social stability and harmony.

5. Persisting in the Significance of Youth as the Main Object of Ideological and Political Education

Adhering to youth as the main target of ideological and political education is a grand strategic plan to ensure the success and the prosperity of the socialist cause. We must build a well-off society in a comprehensive way and in so doing realize the great rejuvenation of China. From the overall perspective of establishing and implementing the Scientific Outlook on Development, adhering to the people-oriented concept of governing for the people, we are required to not just fully understand the importance and urgency of strengthening and improving youth ideological and political education, but also to adapt to the requirements of the new situation, actively respond to challenges, strengthen weak links, pay attention to the entire ideological and political education target audience, and make every effort to forge a new status quo in the ideological and political education of youth.

In conclusion, youth is a transitional stage in life from adolescence to middle age, one in which the natural and social attributes of human beings gradually develop and mature; therefore, strengthening ideological and political education for our youth will surely guide them properly in terms of physical and psychological maturity. As the previous General Secretary Hu Jintao said: “Only under the leadership of the party, can youth actively participate in the fiery battles of the people’s creation of history. Only by adhering to the same pace with history, the same destiny with China, and the struggle with people can they realize lofty aspirations and great ideals in youth.”^[5]

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