



Education and Economy—— In the Perspective of Human Rights and Global Economy

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Abstract: Intersecting and interacting with each other, the phenomena of human rights and the global economy are two of the most prominent and influential features of international relations. Education, whose level is the manifestation of a state's soft power, has been playing a significant role in the development process of a country and the whole world, hence has been attached to more and more importance, even not less compared with economy. This article focuses on the right to education, one specific perspective of human rights, discusses its positive relation with economic development and aims at promoting its better realization

Keyword: Human rights; The right to education; Relation; Economic development

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1 Introduction

As an important sector of human rights^[1], the right to education not only has the characteristics that generalized human rights own, that is, such right is equal, inalienable and universal^[2], but also has self-evident significance. Chapter I outlines the values of education, and summarizes the significance of the realization of the right to education.

In recent centuries, both developing and developed countries have been aware of the importance of improving its national education strength and have been making unremitting efforts to achieve universal basic education and to enlarge the scale and quality of higher education, that is, to ensure better realization of the right to education. Chapter II keeps an eye on

the efforts States already made or have been making, taking Japan and China for example, to prove that the importance attached to human rights nowadays is no less than that attached to economy.

Conclusion summarizes the principle between human rights and economy by presented synchronized development trend of them and puts forward a prospect for the future development.

2 Value of Education and the Right to Education

“Man is the only being who need education”^[3], Kant has observed the right to education as one fundamental human right more than two centuries ago. Today, education lies at the heart of UNESCO's mission and is enshrined in many international instruments concerning human rights including UDHR. According to ISCED, education can be divided into basic education, covering a wide variety of informal public and private activities intended to meet the basic learning needs of people of all ages^[4], and higher education, which is provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities and focuses on learning endeavors in specialized fields, according to UNESCO.

2.1 The value of basic education

Basic education aims at meeting basic learning needs for every one of the society, and the definition of “basic” is to be defined by each country within the context of existing educational situation and its general development plans and strategies^[5]. So firstly and fundamentally, basic education is determined by and contributes to the construction of a country's educational strength.

To read, to write, to count and to communicate, that is, to be not illiterate, is the core of basic education and the most elementary survival skills in society. If a person is illiterate, it would be hard for him to normally live, needless to say to earn a living. Hence secondly, to guarantee a person's basic ability to live a normal life in the society and not being an an-alphabetic is not only the mission but also the value of basic education.

The most obvious and practical function of basic education is its role in improving an individual's personal quality thus removing insecurity by helping people get gainful employment. Upon such basis, it has positive influence on reducing poverty^[6]. As a matter of fact, today's production activities have placed increasing demands on the basic knowledge of employees more than ever before, it can be said that if an individual is absent from or left out of basic education, the chances that citizen get a gainful job are very slim. So ensuring the realization of basic educational rights provides guarantee to a relatively secure economic basis for a country.

By getting chance to access to equal basic education, women are relatively freed from underprivileged social status^[7]. Because of the fact that women have as same basic learning ability and knowledge as men do, more and more opportunities in the workforce are open to women as well, therefore reduces the insecurity of women. Men and women are treated equally in basic education and that contributes to the formation of the idea of gender equality. Because "the little and almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences"(John Locke), that idea would be strong enough to help gender equality become a matter of course in citizens' consciousness, thus help shaping a future without sexism.

2.2 The value of higher education

Firstly, higher education helps to better shape individuals' three views by providing educatees with a broad, high-qualified and academic access to not only knowledge but also the world. Without higher education, a person's achievement shall always be limited, because by receiving higher education, individuals enhance their knowledge reserve, deepen understanding and insight of the outer world and, to some extent, more likely to clarify their pursuit of personal ideals and have more possibilities of leading

an ideal life.

Secondly, higher education plays a role in maintaining public order and morality. The highly educated, with sound and correct three views, would majorly follow legal provisions and social rules of conduct in life, thus help construct orderly society by reducing illegal act and practicing good moral manners.

Thirdly, as being also its pursuit, value of higher education in cultivating high-level talents is apparent. What is generally accepted by the international society is that the more educated the citizens are, the more productive they can be, for it's only by improving the innovation and creativity of the people that the relevant capacity of the society and the country can be enhanced^[8].

Moreover, the level of democratization, nomocracy and political order depends largely on higher education. The highly educated are not always satisfied with the rights they are presently enjoying and require more on not only freedom to exercise legal rights but also accesses to more varieties of social, political and economic rights, raising a higher demand to life and society. As a consequence, the more requirements citizens make, the more mature and thorough the national policies, laws and social systems shall be for they are coordinated and corresponding. Also, in circumstance where leaders of all walks of life are all highly educated, leadership and governance capacity would be much more advanced.

To read broadly, to write logically, to think dialectically and to communicate globally, core of higher education, is essential to widespread participation in a globalized world. So Fifth, in a global view, higher education inspires and contributes to deeper communication and cooperation, closer connection and more opportunities of the world.

Upon such values, the right to education should be attached greater importance to and better realized for shaping the future of citizens and strengthening the power of the nation.

3 States' Measures

Both developed and developing countries has made efforts to guarantee the right to education upon realization if its significance and there are figures and evidence proving that the reform on education has an

interaction with the economic situation.

3.1 Educational Reform in Japan

As the most developed and the best-educated country in East Asia, the history and experience of Japan's development in both education and economic area are worth learning.

It can be dated back to the mid-19th century, around the Meiji Restoration, when the task of realizing universal basic education has been seen with remarkable clarity in Japan. In 1886, Japan promulgated the Elementary School Order, stipulating that the State should set up four-year elementary schools, and parents and guardians have the obligation to enroll their children and persons under guardianship to elementary schools. Issued in 1872, as an important turning point in the process of universal basic education in Japan, The Fundamental Code of Education expressed the public commitment to make sure that there must be "no community with an illiterate family, nor a family with an illiterate person". In 1990, the State revised the Elementary School Order to further clarify the specific content of compulsory education, mainly including: 1) children reached the age of six shall attend school; 2) the school period is four years; 3) tuition is exempt; 4) the employment of school-age children is prohibited. In 1908, the length of compulsory education in Japan was extended to 6 years, and the enrollment rate at that time reached 90%. In 1946, Japan promulgated its new Constitution, determining the right to education a basic human right of its citizens. In 1947, by enacting the Basic Act on Education and the School Education Law, Japan legally laid the foundation for its modern compulsory education. According to a series of laws, Japan carried out educational reform, extending the period of compulsory education to nine years. In 1950, the enrollment rate of compulsory education in Japan reached 90% and has remained at 99.9% after 1980.

Together with the pace of basic education reform did the rapid economic development proceed. In that period, Japanese automobile industry had not only met the needs of the domestic as well as foreign

markets, but also surpassed Europe and the US, resulting from the improvement of the quality of labor and the maturity of technology. The output of Japan's merchant ships was 49000 gross tonnage in 1915, but increased to 610000 gross tonnage in 1919, ranking third in the world. As of 1934, there had been 60 large and medium-sized shipyards and more than 140 berths in Japan, and nearly 400000 employees were serving in the industry. Moreover, the output of naval vessels reached 374 with a total of 408000 tons^[9].

It's undeniable that the universal basic education and the improvement of its level played a positive role in the economic development of Japan in that period. And the concentration on basic education determined, to a large extent, the nature and speed of economic and social progress of Japan.

From 1960 to late-1970s is the period during which the policies concerning higher education greatly proceeded, known as "Great Expansion" period. The government encourages popularization of higher education by paying government grants to private universities^[10] and expanding institutions of short-term higher education. During two decades, the enrollment rate of four-year universities increased from 8% to 28%, and from 10% to 40% if short-term universities are included (Chart IV)^[11]. It can be denoted that Japanese higher education made a rapid transition during the period from what is identified as "elite stage" to "mass stage"^[12]. What's more, rapid economic growth during that period can be seen from positive economic growth rate (Chart I) and the upward trend of both GDP per capita (Chart II) and PPP (Chart III). It's academically recognized that on the basis of educational reform and economic development, Japan has achieved popularization of higher education at the beginning of the 21st century.

What can be demonstrated is that there is a close connection and strong interaction between education and economy. By attaching equal importance to the right to education, economic development gets guarantee to proceed synchronously, and by developing economy, realization of the right to education gets more solid support.

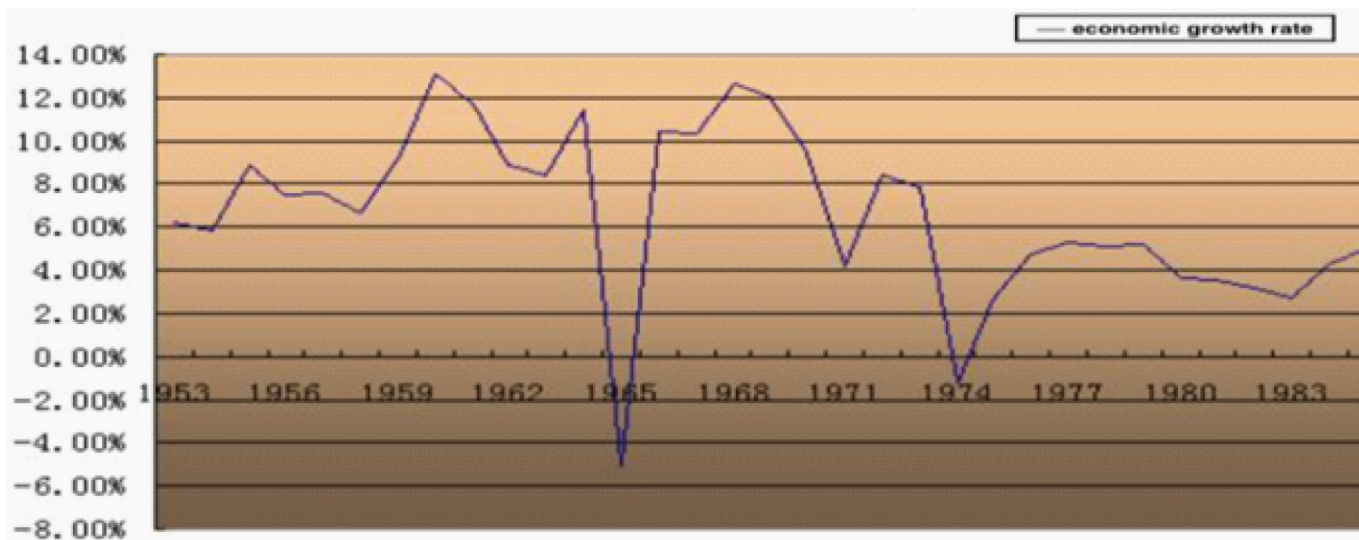


Figure 1. Economic Growth Rate of Japan (1952-1985)

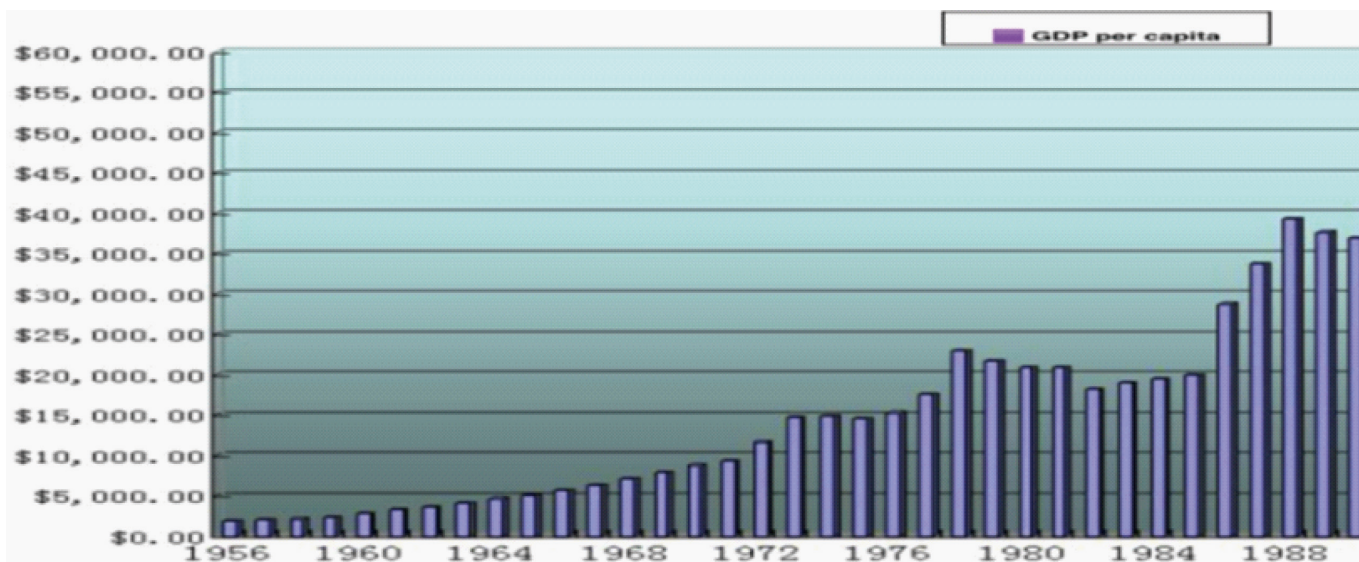


Figure 2. GDP per capita of Japan (1956-1990)

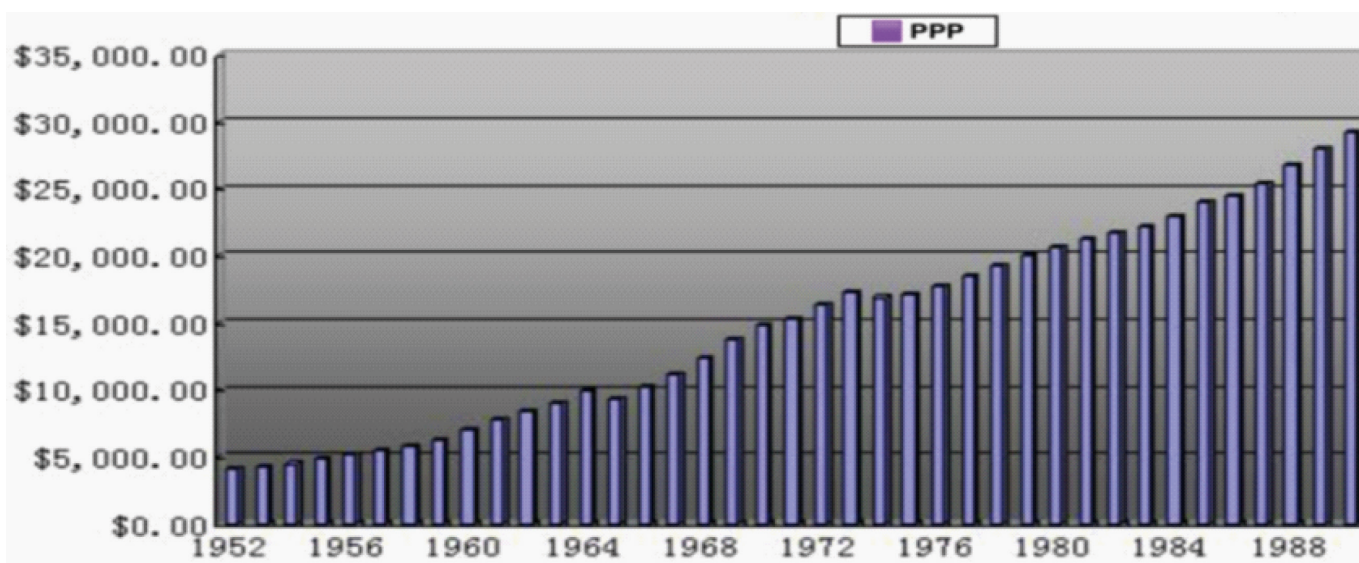


Figure 3. PPP of Japan (1952-1990)

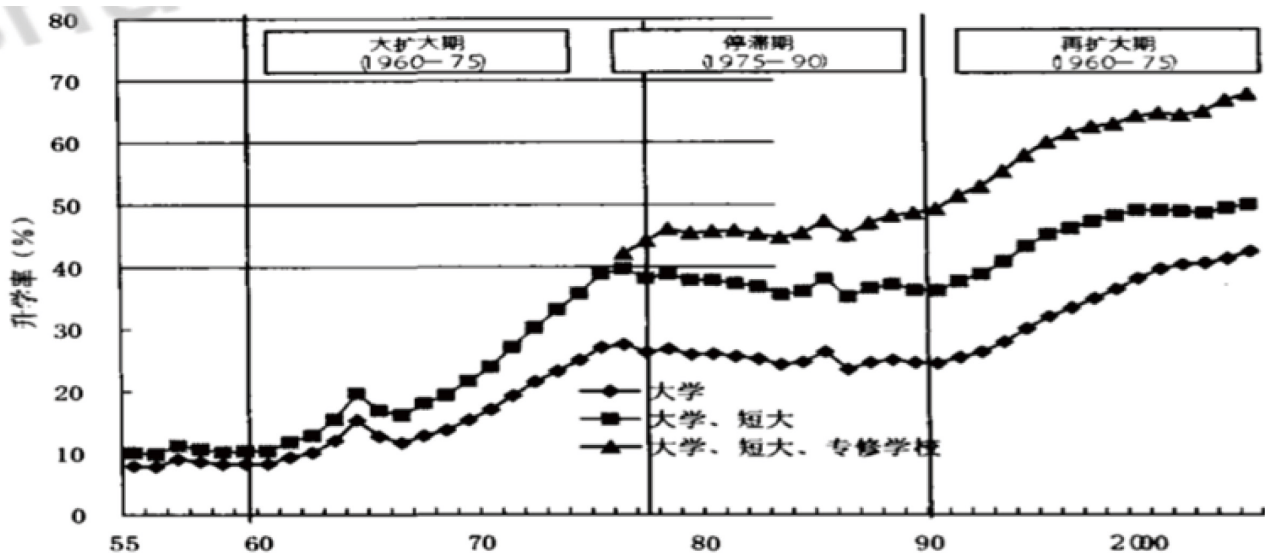


Figure 4. Changes in Higher Education Enrollment Rate in Japan^[13]

3.2 Educational Reform in China

As the largest developing country with a large population, China has been making unremitting efforts in educational reform.

In 1903, the Qing Government promulgated the Zoujing School Regulations, the first school education system promulgated in the form of decree and promoted nationwide in the history of Chinese modern education. Old China formally proposed to pilot compulsory education by resolving Proposal for Pilot Compulsory Education Regulations in 1911, initially stipulated that the compulsory education should be four years. In 1912, the Ministry of Education of the Provisional Government of the Republic of China promulgated the School System Order, officially stipulating that “four years of elementary primary school is compulsory education”. After the founding of the PRC, universal basic education has been put in a strategic position in national development plan. Common Program promulgated in 1949 stipulated that universal compulsory education shall be implemented in a planned and step-by-step manner throughout the country, and National Program of Agriculture Development (Draft) enacted in 1956 wrote that compulsory primary education shall be universalized within five or seven years according to local conditions. In light of these primary policies, enrollment rate from elementary schools to junior school increased significantly (Chart V & Chart VI). After launching Reform and Opening-up, universal basic education of China has reached a new level.

Constitution promulgated in 1982 stipulates that “the state shall organize various schools to popularize compulsory primary education”, Compulsory Education Law enacted in 1986 confirmed the implementation of nine-year compulsory education, and the revised Compulsory Education Law made it clear that “compulsory education shall be implemented without tuition and miscellaneous fees” in 2006. At the beginning of the 21st century, universal basic education has been basically realized in China and its consolidation rate reached 95% in 2020^[14].

The economic development of China in the past 70 years is remarkable and has amazed the globe, especially after the Reform and Opening-up, which can be denoted from positive and stable annual GDP growth rate(Chart VII & Chart VIII). By providing more national funds to basic education, particularly in poor and rural areas, China has primarily realized universal basic education, contributing to the realization of poverty alleviation plan vice versa.

According to the Ministry of Education, China has built the largest higher education system in the world and its penetration rate has reached 50% in 2020^[15], meaning that higher education in China has realized transition from “mass stage” to “popularization stage”^[16]. And China would keep perfecting its higher education system with focus on developing connotation and improving quality.

Besides vocational and undergraduate education, China include postgraduate education into the system of higher education popularization. Opinions on Accelerating the Reform and Development of

Postgraduate Education in the New Era (hereinafter “the Opinions”) issued in September 2019, proposed that a country with Chinese characteristics in postgraduate education will be initially established by 2035, marking a new level and fast track in postgraduate education development.

Together with the system construction, Chinese government has been supporting educational career by financing. According to the statistics released National Bureau of Statistics, the total national education expenditure exceeded 5 trillion yuan for the first time in 2019 and remained to enlarge in 2020, regardless of the economic decrease resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The global economic situation has been bleak during COVID-19 pandemic, however, China's economy is forging ahead in the

face of adversity. Its GDP reached 1015986 billion yuan with a year-on-year growth rate increased by 2.3%, being the only major economy with positive economic growth in the world^[17]. The impressive GDP and resilience (Chart IX) are powerful testaments to China's economic strength.

What is clear is that China has attached no less than equal importance to the right to education and economy. Moreover, education has been a basic section of economic development and a fundamental career of the nation. By better realizing the right to education, China is about to accomplish the poverty alleviation plan with support in educational area. Meanwhile, by having national economy as support, the right to education have been realized in a nicer method.

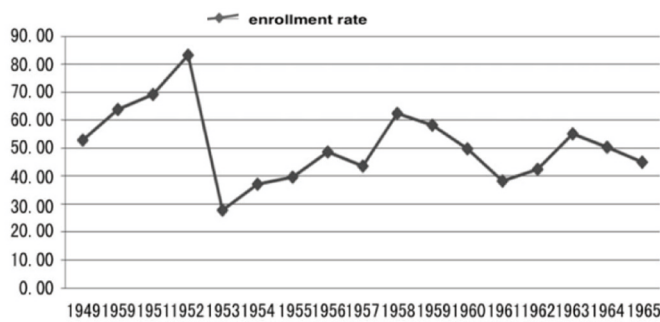


Figure 5. Enrollment Rate from Elementary Schools to Junior Schools (1949-1965)

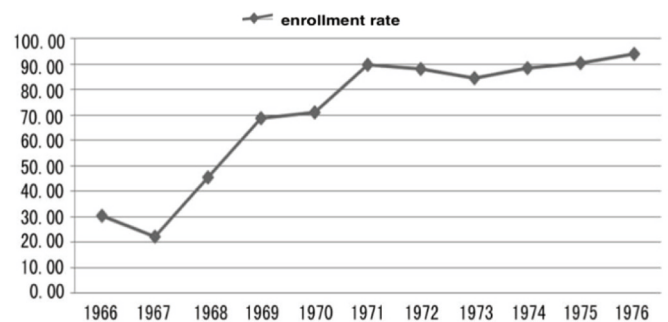


Figure 6. Enrollment Rate from Elementary Schools to Junior Schools (1965-1976)

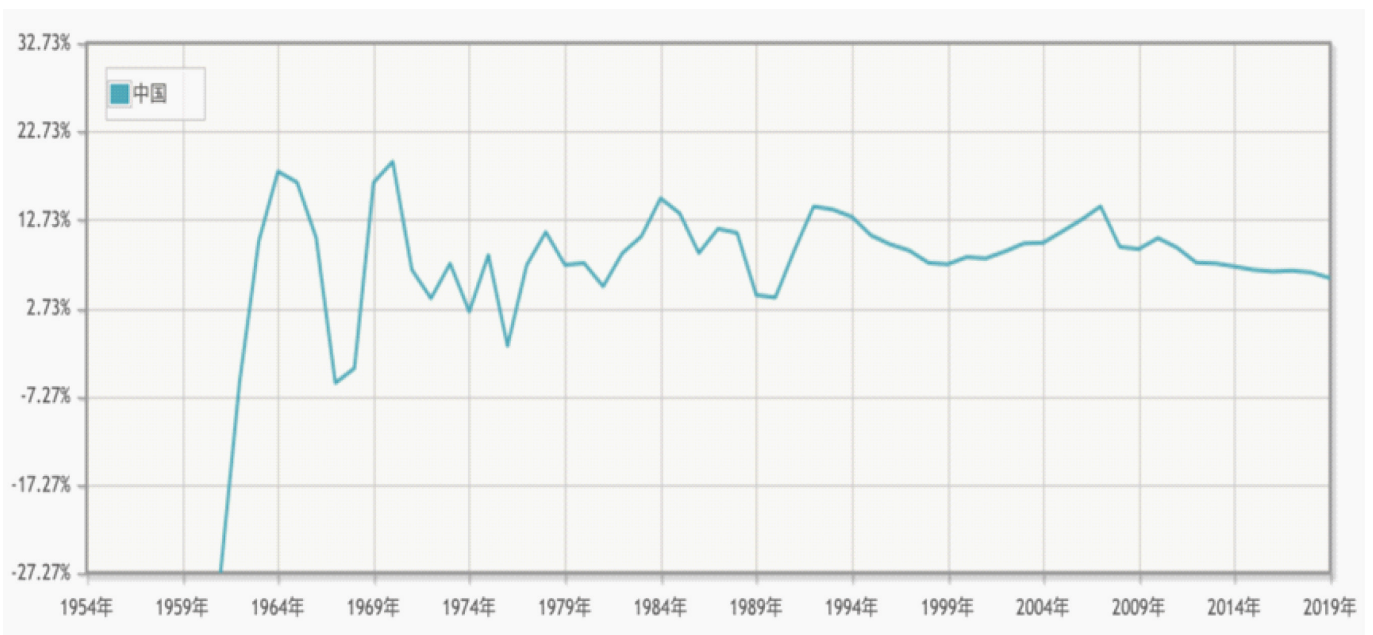


Figure 7. GDP Growth Rate of China (1960-2019)

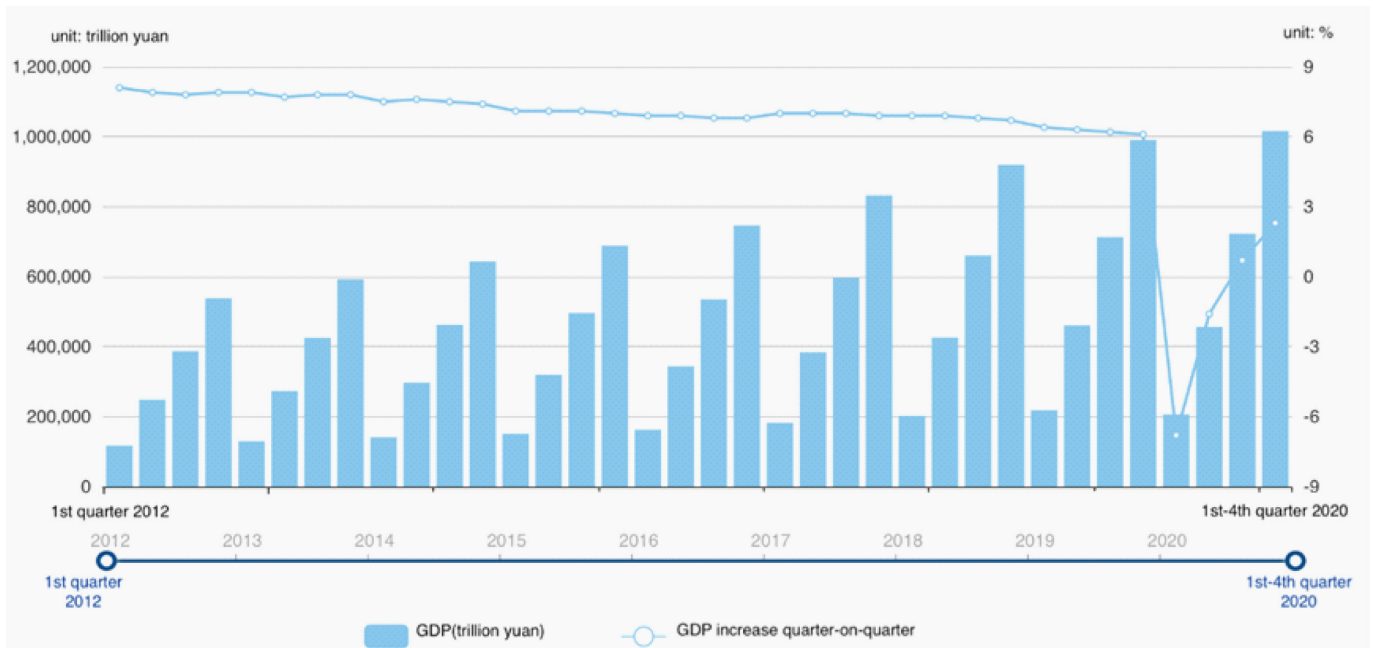


Figure 8. GDP and GDP Growth Rate of China (2012-2020)

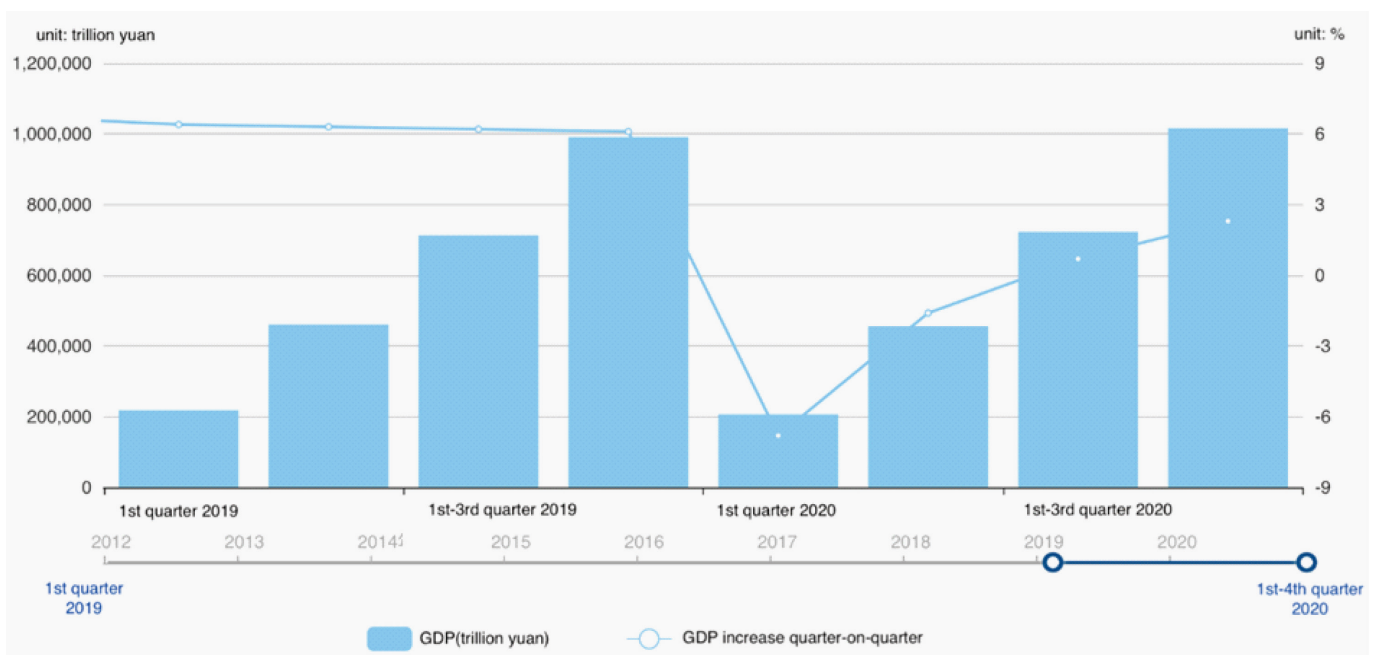


Figure 9. GDP and GDP Growth Rate of China (2019-2020)

4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the right to education has been attached more and more significance to in the process of economic development in present society and there's close connection and positive interaction between education and economy^[18] who share synchronized development trend. It is due to the profound impact of the right to education on economic development that it should be better respected, guaranteed, protected and taken seriously,

so does it to all rights concerning humanity. Only by realizing human rights can economic development of a nation and the world be realized, so realization of human rights should be put in the core position in the country's development plan.

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