

Research on the Way to College Students' Civic Education in the Process of Implementation of the "Rule of Law"

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Abstract

Cultivating modern citizen consciousness is the result of the development of the times in the process of construction of a modern country ruled by law. Besides, the construction of college students' citizen education not only needs to deal with a few relations from theory but also should create a good social environment of citizen in the practice of legal practice to strengthen college students' civic awareness education.

Key words: rule of law, citizenship education, way

1. Introduction

Taking Citizen Governance and civil society building as a governance mode of modern state has increasingly become a consensus and civic education is a prerequisite for the establishment of civil society and democratic governance of the society. Realization and protection of the citizens' rights are closely linked with the performance and commitment of civic duty. There is no real citizen society without modern civic awareness. Because college students are the elite youth group and the mainstay of the development of the future society whose ideology plays an important role in the future development of the society, it has the important practical significance in discussing their civic awareness in the process of promoting our country's building the rule of law.

2. The citizen education is the necessary demand of construction of rule of law in modern society

The object of civic education is the main body of constructing rule of law of the modern civilized society. Citizen education is a kind of education teaching "how to become qualified people", that is, how to become a qualified citizen and it should take young students as the primary object for educating. Citizen is the main body of constructing democracy and the rule of law and the soil and the foundation of a democratic country under the rule of law. Therefore, there would be no democratic state under the rule of law without free and equal citizens. A citizen is the main body of construction of the rule of law of modern society which manifests concretely in his status as the subject of legislation, implementation supervision and benefit in the construction of rule of law. Since the citizens act as the main body of both building the society ruled by law and enjoying the fruits of a society ruled by law or citizen, the object of civic education in modern society construction has always a leading role through the whole construction of rule of law. The more solid the citizens foundation, the

more fully they play their main role in the construction of rule of law, which will guarantee the smooth progress of the construction of rule of law in our country.

The first, the level of the citizen's quality determines the quality and process of constructing national rule of law. Any political parties and organizations of a country depend on composition, participation and leading its citizens who are the most basic elements of civil society and the cell in the construction of rule of law. So it will depend on majority of citizens' establishment of legal belief and the improvement of the quality of the law if the positive functions and effects of consolidating the power of people's democratic regime, protecting the people, developing and promoting the socialist cause want to be given full play. To some extent, the quality of the citizens plays a decisive role in the national law construction quality, progress and function. Practice shows that, if the citizens' rights awareness and their concepts of freedom and equality are weak, poor or passive at using law and system to guarantee their legitimate rights and interests, the laws and system for them even if relatively sound and perfect, can exist in name only. While the citizens cannot acquire this consciousness of rights, equality and the rule of law naturally, it needs to rely on strengthening the civic education to foster.

The second, citizens' legal consciousness is the thought foundation which the construction of the society ruled by law rely on can be realized. The rule of law in modern sense not only includes legal system and legal order which closely linked with democratic politics, but also the spirit and principle of governing the country according to law. Therefore, as the spiritual core of citizen consciousness, especially legal belief belongs to its indispensable organic part. As Rousseau says the most important of all the laws, is carved neither in marble nor on copper surface, but in people's hearts. What he said shows that, citizens' consciousness of the rule of law is the thought foundation the most profound basis for the construction of rule of law. Therefore, a real sense of the rule of law ought to integrate institutional arrangement and design which belong to "hardware" and the legal quality which belongs to "software" regarding legal consciousness as the core forming the benign interaction. As the spiritual core, "only after injection of the concept of the rule of law and become rational legal awareness, citizens' legal consciousness can provide solid and reliable support of social spirit for the construction of rule of law"⁽¹⁾. The formation of sound law consciousness of the whole society is the intermediary point transition and spiritual pillar from the traditional society to the modern society and also the ideological basis for the realization of the rule of law construction.

As can be seen from the above, the citizen education undoubtedly has the extremely important practical significance for promoting the construction of rule of law in modern society. "The youth strong a country is strong and the youth rich, a country is wealthy". Only firmly set up the modern citizen consciousness and personality, can the young college students of one country give full play of the function and role of the rule of law in modern society? On the other hand, it is hard to play its function and effect of the rule of law in a country where the citizens lack law belief and personality generally.

3. Several relations about rule of law should be well dealt with in college students' citizen education

3.1 The rights, obligations and education in sync

Civic education takes the realization of the citizens' basic rights and obligations as the prerequisite. On one hand, citizen education gives emphasis on teaching citizens how to perform civic responsibility such as patriotism and obeying the law and so on; On the other hand, it emphasizes how to realize their civil rights and make themselves become the real masters of their country. A man with a civic consciousness is not only a good citizen in the traditional sense with the qualities of patriotism, loyalty and obedience to the nation, but also a citizen able to evaluate the state and capable of participating and improving their state. So the standpoint of

citizen education is to make the citizen with the corresponding knowledge and ability not only can keep the identity with mainstream values of the state and the society, but also can take an active part in the country's social and political life capable of practicing their own responsibilities and tasks and claiming their rights, so as to maintain development through the cultivation of citizen consciousness and the moral. The so-called "the balance of rights, obligations and education" refers to that citizens should get educations in cultivating their consciousness both in the obligations and civil rights.

3.2 The combination of era innovation and traditional inheritance

The evolution of history is a process of inheritance and development and its traditional factors brought obvious difference to different national civic education. In Japan, South Korea and Singapore, for example, the citizen education under the background of confucianist culture shows great different from that in Britain and the United States under the background of "freedom, and democracy" of western culture. It is also fully reflected from the fact that almost all countries of citizenship education is often associated with history. In spite of this, the historical tradition is not static and it always constantly updated with the development of the times. Thus, the updating of the historical tradition, especially the political and cultural traditions will also cause the change of civic education. Taking South Korean for example, despite the civil education full of "national spirit education" has been the core content since the 60's of twentieth century, its carrying forward and beyond to the historical tradition since the metaphase of 80's, has made its civic education got more openness and more broad perspective. That is to say, at the same time of attaching importance to the education of the national spirit, both cultivating the "citizen of democratic society" and "citizen of the world" are absorbed into the goal of civic education at this stage. Because the similar cultural traditions between China and South Korea, its content of civic education that realizes its innovation with the development of the times while inheriting the tradition is worth learning.

3.3 Docking of internationalization and localization

From the development trend of modern democratic society, the citizen education in most countries emphasize on civic identity with the state, and focuses on training citizen's abilities of communication, critical reflection and value judgment. Nevertheless, an action which plays a role in a certain social context cannot be simply transplanted into another social background and reference to another country's citizenship education in any country need to carefully accept according to its actual situation rather than the overall acceptance. Taking South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries and regions as an example, in addition to absorbing and drawing lessons and practice experience from some developed countries, these countries carry out their civic education according to their own cultural tradition and social conditions of economic and political development whose educational objectives and content has focused not only on the social public life but also paying attention to understanding and recognition towards these countries on the basis of democracy and rule of law, with a particular emphasis on training patriotism and social morality. In addition, the East Asian countries and regions integrated Confucian ethics and civic education.

4. The construction of college students' civic education and practice from the perspective of the rule of law

The concept of "rule of law" not only provides a new way of practice for colleges' organization and management, it also provides a new path for the citizen education in school education. In other words, full and

sound development of citizen quality can be promoted depending on cultivating their awareness of civil rights, a sense of civic responsibility and civil action ability through the students' active management and participation.

4.1 Creating a good environment of rule of law and cultivating college students' citizen consciousness of rule of law

Optimizing the social environment for the rule of law refers to the continuous optimization of all aspects based on overcoming the traditional thought and concept of rule by man including three aspects of legislation, law enforcement and judicial. Firstly, legislation should be strengthened. Reasonable and scientific law and regulation should mainly manifest that it reflects the people's will, protect the interests of the people and put the people's rights and interests in a supreme position. In addition, it itself should embody the spirit of the law as justice, justice, harmony, freedom, order and efficiency, thus becoming the people's standard of value and goal pursuit which is worth relying on. Secondly, the law should be strictly enforced. The justice and authority of law is achieved to a great extent through the executive law enforcement and if the administrative organ enforce the laws strictly and defend the dignity of the law and authority in accordance with the law, it will impel people close to law and trust it. The thirdly, Promoting the reform of the judicial system, ensuring the judicial justice, in order that a good law environment can be formed to promote the cultivation of university students' citizen consciousness.

4.2 Cultivating college students' awareness of civic responsibility through the practice of "rule of law"

Civic responsibility includes not only the general meaning of citizen's moral responsibility, but also responsibility enhancement of public welfare and participation in public life. Moreover, launching the education of civil responsibility based on the "rule of law" practice does not mean using compulsory way instilling knowledge or value to impel students to learn "idea about civic responsibility", but to allow the students to form a "the concept of civic responsibility" truly and make it reflected in the life practice. Obviously, the activities of "rule of law" is not to let the students study and remember the abstract and theoretical concept of "citizen responsibility" but require them to exercise their civic responsibility and form the concept of civic responsibility really in their inner hearts. That is to say, the notion of responsibility was not born in citizen education of the knowledge, but originates from their practice consciously correspondent to their life and practice. As one scholar has pointed out, "the education which is once away from the students' life and absent of responsibility is doomed."⁽²⁾ Practice education of civic responsibility is trying to get rid of the knowledge model and the concept of the previous model, get rid of the alienation between civic education and student life, seek organic fusion between citizenship education and students' life world, let students understand and experience their own civic responsibility by participating in school's activities of organization, management, consultation, joint decision making and other governance activities, and actively participate in practice and action in public life so as to make themselves become full citizens whose right and duty are integrated. Moreover, by the governance construction of civic responsibility education, students in the governance activities can understand better self's responsibility for other citizens, for the school organization, for the civil society, etc. In a word, through governance activities, students' awareness and actions of responsibility can be really connected together, which can promote the effect of civil responsibility education.

4.3 To build a good innovation perspective and the cultivating college students' awareness of modern citizens

To find out the methods of cultivating college students' awareness of modern citizens needs to go on from multi

angles facing the complex social change. First of all, to “cultivate public spirit” should be regarded as the goal of value. The primary task of strengthening college students’ citizen education is to train the university students “public spirit”, such as the use of new media platform to encourage students to actively participate in politics, and the use of We Chat, micro-blog and other new media to offer suggestions for the party and the governments for creating a highly democratic political environment. Secondly, to establish the subjectivity spirit should be regarded as the fundamental requirements. Spirit of subjectivity is a basic idea of college students’ civic education from the view of the development of social ethics. Therefore, higher education should help students to strengthen the citizen identity so that they can fully understand the profound and the importance of civic education theoretically and in practice, provide an opportunity for the practice of college students’ civic role on the people-oriented concepts, cultivating their abilities and respecting their personality. As what one scholar said, “When reform citizenship education, strengthening the training and educating of their participation skills is a pressing matter of the moment”.⁽³⁾ The third, the public domain should be regarded as the development space of citizen education.

Strengthening of college students’ citizen education should be carried out not only using the classroom teaching mode, but also using public sphere of practice classroom to raise its connotation and nurture civic culture atmosphere. In addition, strengthening the university students’ group and individual awareness of social service should condense the excellent character in the traditional morality and the requirements of the times into a new civic awareness and expand the new space of civic education continuously in order to make the students’ promotion of social responsibility and all-round and healthy development of civil society achieve a “soft landing”.

5. Conclusion:

In a word, to build a real country under the rule of law still needs a lot of ways to cooperate and the development of economy, the improvement of cultural quality of the citizens and the development of democratic politics are all the conditions of comprehensive development. In order to cultivate citizen’s consciousness of rule of law, a variety of methods should be adopted to popularize and instill legal knowledge to the subjects in order to accelerate growth of their consciousness of the rule of law and ultimately make the legal belief formed. Only in this way, the laws can be kept for a long life and rule of law can be realized basically and effectively.

Notes

(1) Lian Ying Miao (2005). Study on the citizen's legal quality [M], Zhengzhou: Zhengzhou University press, P28.

(2) Pinching Yan (2005). Responsibility education: new topic of the citizen’s moral education [J], *Academic forum* 9, P176-178.

(3) Baicai Xu (2008). Exploration and research of college students’ ideological and political education [M], Wuhan: Huazhong Normal University press, p212.