

## **Abstract**

From the resumption of university entrance examination in 1977 to 1997, china's higher education has remained free of charge for 20 years. But in 1997, china changed its policy of higher education; students are required to pay for their university education. Since then, the tuition fee for university has undergone a rapid increase. By the year 2013, the tuition fee has increased up to 27 times that of 1997. The increase in university tuition has caused much concern from the public, and many people complained that it not fair for students from rural areas and people with low income.

This thesis studies the educational inequality caused by the increase in university tuition and its impact on china's social and economic development. The author applies multiple case studies with the help of official database, the affordability of urban and rural residents to the higher education tuition, university enrollment plan, the financial aid system and government Appropriation over the time period of 2011—2015. The author found that the increased tuition has become a huge economic burden for students from low-income urban families, and thus result in the inequity of access opportunity for those students. It is also found that the disequilibrium enrollment plan among areas caused the inequity of access opportunity.

**Key words:** Chinese higher education, tuition and fees , educational equity