

Analysis of Rural Elderly Care in China: Problems and Countermeasures

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Abstract. Rural elderly care is related to social stability and harmony and is a key link in rural revitalization. Properly addressing the issue of elderly care in rural areas not only ensures the basic livelihood of the elderly, but also promotes rural economic and social development, laying a solid foundation for building a harmonious society. With the rapid development of the economy, society, and urbanization, rural elderly care in China has become an important social issue that urgently needs to be solved by society and families. This study summarizes the current situation and existing problems of rural elderly care in China and conducts in-depth analysis of potential countermeasures for these problems, which has a certain reference value for the future development of rural elderly care. Through analysis, this study believes that there are four problems with rural nutrition in China, namely weak information literacy, incomplete elderly care facilities, insufficient financial security, and excessive family responsibility. Targeted recommendations are also proposed.

Keywords: Rural revitalization, rural elderly care, harmonious society.

1. Introduction

With the changes in population structure, the trend of aging is becoming increasingly significant, which has had a profound impact on society, economy, and culture [1-3]. Research on aging not only helps us to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and issues of the elderly, but also provides scientific basis for formulating relevant policies. Through research on aging, we can better predict and respond to the challenges brought by aging, such as pension security, medical services, etc. At the same time, research on aging can also promote social innovation and explore new models and paths to adapt to an aging society. Therefore, strengthening research on aging is of great significance for achieving social harmony and sustainable economic development.

In this context, actively developing the elderly care financial service market is an important strategy to promote sustainable development in the field of elderly care financial services. However, the development of elderly care financial services in China is still in its infancy and exploratory stage, with many problems, especially in rural areas. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, as of the end of 2022, there were 28.04 million elderly people aged 60 and above in China, accounting for 19.8% of the total population. Among them, there were 20.978 million elderly people aged 65 and above, accounting for approximately 14.9% of the total population. Among them, the elderly population in rural areas is nearly 130 million, accounting for 46%. It can be seen that the number of elderly people in rural areas of China is huge, and the growth rate is fast. These elderly people who can enjoy pension subsidies are mostly in cities, while rural elderly people are basically not enjoying them. This is currently the primary problem of rural elderly care, with low pension subsidies. Therefore, exploring the problems and countermeasures of rural elderly care finance is of great significance for promoting the development of an aging society and economy, and ensuring the living conditions and standards of farmers.

2. Problem

2.1. Weak Information Literacy

According to the definition of international authoritative institutions, information literacy refers to the ability to "identify one's own information needs, and discover, evaluate, effectively utilize, and

innovate information in a specific cultural and social context [4-6]. Compared to young people, the elderly group lacks more awareness of the outside world and understanding of information from the outside world. cognitive decline, older people's cognitive abilities decline as they age, and they become more easily confused by complex information. The second is limited access to information: many older people may lack formal access to information, in which case they are more susceptible to online rumors from informal sources. In addition, compared with young people, the elderly think slowly and need more time to learn new things. Therefore, it is difficult for many rural elderly people to resonate with new things outside the world, and they will be out of touch with the times. This will bring many problems to society and cause many Troubles.

2.2. Incomplete Elderly Care Facilities

The elderly care facilities in rural areas are much worse than those in urban areas, including nursing homes, home-based elderly care services, medical institutions, etc. The living environment and facilities of the elderly not only affect their quality of life, but also increase their physical burden. Because the country invests a lot of money in emerging technologies and higher education for young people. Therefore, it is rare to manage or attach importance to elderly care facilities. With the increasing aging population in China, the country has begun to pay attention to aging, which is a very important thing. The elderly group does not have a rational choice, so they are always deceived, sometimes losing money, or even losing their lives. Shortage of elderly care facilities and insufficient investment in construction funds. The development of elderly care services in rural communities is slow, and there is a lack of professional institutions and personnel for the elderly. It is difficult for the elderly to get appropriate services and care for the elderly, and the resources for the elderly in the community have not been fully utilized. There is a significant gap in quality between rural elderly care institutions and urban areas [7-8].

2.3. Insufficient Financial Security

The social security system in rural areas is not perfect, and coupled with a single source of income for the elderly, it is difficult to meet their elderly care needs. Some elderly people find it difficult to have a stable source of income because they lack the ability to work. Moreover, the skills of the elderly are limited, but even though they have skills, their elderly bodies are not enough to support them to continue working because they lack the ability and physical function to work, thus having no source of income. The only source of income may be government pension and some subsidy policies from the state to seek benefits for the elderly. There is a significant difference in the economic situation between urban and rural areas, with urban economies developing rapidly while rural economies are relatively lagging behind. The old-age security system in rural areas is relatively unsound, lacking perfect old-age insurance, medical insurance and other systems. Many older people do not have access to adequate financial support and medical care, which affects their quality of life. The problem of difficulty in realizing rural pension has become a focus of social attention. In rural areas of our country, the pension security system is relatively incomplete, and as an important economic source for the elderly, rural pension funds face many difficulties.

2.4. Excessive Family Responsibility

In rural areas, family members bear more responsibility for caring for the elderly than urban residents. However, with the departure of young people and changes in family structure, some elderly people's family relationships have become increasingly weak, leading to serious impacts on their mental lives. And most young people choose to develop in big cities, which leads to elderly people living alone at home and causing them to lose a lot of happiness. It may also lead to their excessive lack of attention and love, which may cause trouble for their descendants and society, without the company of mother and daughter, the elderly will feel lonely and will bother their children and bring trouble to the society, it is a very big problem, because their son or daughter don not have time to care with those elderly people. With the acceleration of urbanization, young people from rural areas go to

live and work in cities, which leads to the gradual weakening of family pension function. Many elderly people in rural areas cannot get financial support, daily care and spiritual comfort from their children. Rural elderly people are gradually marginalized in the family and society, and often feel lonely and lost. They lack social activities and entertainment, and their spiritual needs are not met.

3. Countermeasures

3.1. Age-friendly Digital Environment

Training courses on the use of these devices and software can be provided to help older people get up to speed and master basic operating methods. In the process of learning information technology, the support and help of relatives and friends are very important. Family members can regularly accompany the elderly to learn and use new technological equipment to answer their doubts and questions. In addition, the community can set up a team of volunteers to provide technical support and guidance to the elderly. These measures can make the elderly feel the warmth of kinship and community, and enhance their confidence and interest in learning and using new technologies. The government will give some welfare to the elderly in rural areas, give them a TV set, and invite some volunteers or nurses to take care of the elderly and explain some new knowledge to them, so that they can understand better. Such a large elderly population has a huge demand for daily life, medical care, rehabilitation, elderly care services, and care. The elderly have a strong desire to improve their quality of health and life.

3.2. Community

Overall planning of existing resources, through appropriate new construction, purchase, replacement, leasing, etc., strengthen the construction of community home care service facilities, and innovate operation management methods and elderly care service models. It is necessary to strengthen care services for elderly people who are disabled, live alone, and have empty nests, and renovate homes for elderly, disabled, and disabled people that are included in dispersed support for people with extreme poverty. And improve the service level of institutional elderly care. It is necessary to vigorously develop inclusive institutional elderly care services and continue to promote the transformation of qualified training and nursing institutions into inclusive elderly care services. It is necessary to establish and improve the rural old-age security system and improve the old-age insurance and medical insurance systems. Besides, financial input for the elderly in rural areas should be increased to improve their living standards and medical security.

3.3. Pension

First, it is necessary to increase the standards for pension payments to ensure that the basic needs of the elderly are met. At present, the pension level in our country is relatively low, which has a gap with the actual living standard of the old people [9-10]. Therefore, pension payment standards should be appropriately raised according to the actual needs of the elderly to ensure that they can live a decent life. Secondly, the pension period should be extended to better protect the life of the elderly. At present, the period of pension payment in China is relatively short, generally more than 70 years old. However, with advances in medical technology and longer lifespans, many elderly people still need pension support after the age of 70. Therefore, an extension should be considered. In addition, an individual account system should be established to make the pensions of the elderly more sustainable. Strengthen policy guidance and support the government should increase investment in rural elderly care, formulate relevant policies and regulations, and encourage and support social forces to participate in rural elderly care. At the same time, strengthen the supervision and management of rural elderly care services to ensure service quality and safety. The government can use more money to improve the financial security of the elderly, set up insurance for the elderly, or provide social welfare to the elderly, so that they can enjoy more discounts and benefits from society.

3.4. Social Activities

In order to meet the different needs and interests of the elderly, social organizations and communities can provide a diverse choice of social activities. For example, cultural and art courses, fitness and health activities, volunteer services, etc., allow the elderly to choose the activities to participate in according to their own interests, and improve their participation enthusiasm. In order to make the elderly more willing to participate in social activities, a friendly social environment should be created. The government and social organizations can increase care and support for the elderly, provide convenient transportation and barrier-free facilities, and make it easier for the elderly to participate in social activities. Associations and communities can establish mutual assistance networks for the elderly to enhance their contact and interaction by organizing mutual assistance activities and sharing experiences and resources. To enrich the spiritual life of the elderly, various forms of social activities and cultural and recreational activities should be carried out to meet the spiritual needs of the elderly. And it is necessary to strengthen education for the elderly and improve their cultural quality and social participation. In addition, psychological counseling services for the elderly will be strengthened to help them solve psychological problems [11].

4. Conclusion

Solving the problem of elderly care in rural areas is an important part of achieving rural revitalization. This study provides an in-depth analysis of the current problems in the elderly care process in rural China from four aspects: information literacy, elderly care facilities, funding, and family, and proposes some potential feasible solutions. However, there are also some shortcomings in this study. For example, this study did not involve any model-based empirical analysis in the analysis process, which deserves further research in the future.

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