

Analysis and Improvement Strategies of Rural Elderly Care Models in Northern Shaanxi Province

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Abstract: Compared to coastal areas in China, the development of rural areas in the central and western regions faces more challenges and difficulties, with more severe labor loss, more fragile ecological environment, and a shortage of government financial funds. At the same time, the issue of aging is becoming increasingly serious, and rural elderly care has become an important issue that restricts rural development. Northern Shaanxi is located on the Loess Plateau. Through literature review and field research, this article analyzes the main elderly care models in Shenmu County and explores the social security system. Taking people as the core, this study proposes optimization measures for elderly care security. In addition to the support of the government and families, more attention should be paid to forming a community security system and implementing unified management based on the community as a unit, which helps to alleviate the contradiction between population and development.

Keywords: Elderly Care; Northern Shaanxi; Public Management; Rural Community.

1. Introduction

The new trend of China's economic and social development in the new stage is to coordinate urban and rural economic and social development, fundamentally solving the "three rural" issues in the new stage. This has a profound impact on rural elderly care in China, can be said to be a serious challenge, and also has very important strategic significance. Today, as it appears in China with a very serious aging population, it has become more difficult and urgent. However, if it can effectively solve this problem, it can not only solve the increasingly serious aging problem in China, but also better form a model of mutual complementarity and common development between urban and rural areas, providing a good platform for China to further coordinate urban and rural development. Hence in order to better handle the issue of elderly care, it is necessary to stand in the perspective of safeguarding the vital interests of farmers, and also to grasp the overall pattern of urban-rural development integration, make scientific planning, and actively solve it, rather than waiting for problems to arise before making remedies [1-2].

Through research on domestic and foreign literature, the author's theoretical foundation has been enriched, and it also provides good guidance for this article. Foreign scholars' research on elderly care security issues has two characteristics that the main research direction is to care for and take care of the elderly, and there is less research on the economic support for elderly care [3]. Currently, during the period of social transformation, it is particularly rapid, and many scholars have paid widespread attention to the living security of rural impoverished elderly. Secondly, due to the fact that foreign scholars have mostly focused on discussing the rural elderly care security system from the perspective of government transfer payments and industrial feedback on agricultural culture, which is inconsistent with China's economic development level, similar to the external "feedback" of agricultural construction in China's rural elderly care security

system, as this research perspective is only limited to fairness and justice in the distribution field [4]. Too much attention has not been focused on solving the elderly care problem from the perspective of agriculture itself and relying on the development of farmers themselves.

The trend of aging in rural China is higher than that in urban areas, and the issue of elderly care in rural areas is becoming increasingly prominent. China's reform of the elderly care security system always focuses on the arrangement stage of the urban elderly care security system, and the issue of rural elderly care security has not yet been solved [5]. However, most scholars in China have explored the current situation, reasons, and practical problems of caring for rural elderly people, and have rarely proposed a perfect system design. Based on empirical analysis, this article points out that the specific difficulties faced by rural elderly people in different elderly care models have led to the proposal of improving the design of models for elderly care in rural China.

2. Main Modes Analysis

2.1. Family Support

Family elderly care is one of the traditional elderly care methods in the past. The concept of "raising children to prevent aging" in rural areas has been ongoing for a century. Rural elderly people mainly rely on their families for elderly care, which is a characteristic of rural elderly care in China. Family elderly care refers to the elderly who, due to physical weakness and illness, lose their ability to work and cannot obtain the necessary resources for life. They can only rely on family members or relatives to provide corresponding elderly care support, mainly including economic support, daily care, and spiritual comfort. The ability of rural families to provide elderly care security depends on two aspects: firstly, the number of surviving children and the economic capacity of the children themselves; The second is influenced by factors such as local culture, personal education level, and social environment.

In China, the tradition of family elderly care is long and has played a significant role in the old era, especially in rural areas. We cannot deny that its existence still has great value and significance for the present and future. Family elderly care is conducive to the inheritance of filial piety. Respecting the elderly and loving the young is a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation, and supporting parents is also a natural and widely advocated practice; Family elderly care is beneficial for meeting spiritual needs. In rural families, having children and grandchildren under one's knee and having the company of children and grandchildren can bring joy to one's family and a happy mood. The family pension security system will continue to exist in rural areas, and of course, it will continue to change with the development of the times. It also reflects a cultural inheritance that satisfies the physical and mental well-being of the elderly. Compared with the urban areas, the economic capacity of rural areas in Shenmu County, northern Shaanxi province is significantly different. At the same time, the country has not invested enough financial and material resources in the development of the rural economy. The rapid advancement of urbanization has had a significant impact on China's aging population, and rural family elderly care is also facing challenges. According to this survey, the main source of income for rural elderly care in Shenmu County is the living and elderly care expenses provided by their children going out to work. A considerable number of elderly people rely on their own farm work to obtain meager economic income, while their immediate relatives and neighbors provide living materials. A small number of families with better economic conditions will purchase rural pension insurance for the elderly. Due to the development of urbanization, the improvement of productivity, and changes in agricultural production models, the scale of rural migrant workers is gradually expanding, which has led to the emergence of more empty nest elderly people. At the same time, during the cultural exchange period of various countries, people's traditional sense of filial piety has been challenged, and rebellious phenomena such as driving the elderly out of their homes have repeatedly occurred in daily life, highlighting the issue of elderly care. A single-family elderly care model is far from meeting the current needs of elderly care.

2.2. Rural Community

Community elderly care refers to the way in which elderly people choose to live in their homes and enjoy their old age in accordance with China's living habits. It is based on the community and effectively integrates various service resources within the community. Funded by the China Home Pension Fund, it provides catering, cleaning, bathing, medical and other services for the elderly. To ensure that the elderly have a sense of care, a sense of support, a sense of education, a sense of action, and a sense of fulfillment. This elderly care model not only solves the problem of indifferent family relationships and single life in nursing homes, but also solves the problem of insufficient traditional home care services. Community elderly care is a new type of elderly care model that lies between family elderly care and institutional elderly care. Due to the current miniaturization of households, the increase in empty nest elderly and solitary elderly, the support for family elderly care functions is gradually weakening. However, in China, where the degree of reform and opening up is increasing, the elderly's elderly care needs are increasing. Traditional elderly care models are no longer able to meet the

needs of the elderly and their current quality of life. The home-based elderly care system, with village and community neighborhood committees as the core and a combination of community-based family elderly care and socialized comprehensive services, has become an emerging product of the current elderly care model.

In addition to family based elderly care, the emergence of community based elderly care in rural areas of Shenmu County has also alleviated the pressure on elderly care in the region. As early as 2008, Shenmu County launched the ceremony of establishing a county center nursing home to solve the elderly care problem of rural left behind elderly people. The nursing home covers a total area of 50 acres and can accommodate 600 people. The facilities in the hospital include table tennis room, chess and card room, book reading room, multifunctional activity hall, etc., providing a variety of leisure and entertainment facilities for the elderly. The service tenet of this nursing home is "people-oriented, filial and warm like children." At the same time, entertainment activities are held during major holidays to improve the quality of life for the elderly. However, due to inconvenient transportation, the population covered by this nursing home is limited to the elderly living in the county town. Rural elderly people in the surrounding areas often can only participate in elderly care services in their own village to enrich their cultural life. The economic source of community elderly care is determined by the collective economic development status of the village, so not all rural areas in Shenmu County have places for community elderly care, which greatly limits the coverage of community elderly care.

2.3. Government Guarantees

The earliest time for government elderly care was in January 1956. It refers to farmers who do not have the ability to take care of their own lives and provide appropriate arrangements in their daily lives, achieving the "Five Guarantees", that is, ensuring food, clothing, burning (fuel), education, and burial, so that this group of people can rely on their elderly. It emphasizes the main position of the government in rural elderly care, emphasizes the government's responsibility in elderly care, and society is in a subordinate position. It stipulates that the rural five guarantees provide pension funds, and financial budgets should be prepared among local governments at all levels. The state encourages all sectors of society and individuals to provide financial support and corresponding services for the protection targets and work of rural five guarantees. At the same time, the central government will also provide appropriate financial subsidies for financially poor areas.

The development of the elderly care model by the Shenmu County government is relatively mature, and the county has implemented a government payment model for its support recipients. As early as 2010, the county provided government support to 1869 people, with 89% of the population aged 60 and above. The supply standard is 2000 yuan per person per year. According to the "Five Guarantees Regulations", the improvement standard is set at 3200 yuan per person per year. Approximately 25% of the total support recipients adopt collective support. The county applies for elderly preferential certificates for elderly people over 60 years old, and provides corresponding preferential treatment for travel or public transportation. Elderly people, such as those aged 70-79, are given 360 yuan per person per year as pension subsidies, while those aged 80-89 are given 600 yuan per person per year.

The distribution of pension subsidies for elderly people promotes the healthy development of the elderly care industry. At the same time, due to the inherent conditions of coal resources in Shenmu County, many private entrepreneurs in the county are also enthusiastic about elderly care after becoming rich. Based on the economic situation of each village and the individual abilities of entrepreneurs, some villages, under the sponsorship of entrepreneurs, distribute living allowances to each household in the entire village. Some villages have built activity venues such as elderly gyms, and even a few entrepreneurs have built well-equipped and top-notch nursing homes for the elderly, providing comprehensive free services for the elderly. Such "giving love and warmth" activities are countless.

3. Strategies

From the current rural elderly care model, supporting three sources of support has its own advantages, unique characteristics, and applicability. Through analysis, it can be concluded that the traditional family based elderly care model not only requires a strong family and good emotional relationships as a support, but also home-based elderly care is more easily accepted by people in terms of spiritual comfort and daily care. Due to the underdeveloped development of rural production capacity in China, there is no sufficient financial capacity to support more elderly care models. Therefore, in the long term to come, family elderly care will still dominate. In China, which coordinates urban and rural development, with rapid economic, political, and cultural reforms, family elderly care will face difficulties. Community endowment funds come from communities and collective economic organizations. Due to the limited economic capacity of villages and community residents' committee, rural community pension should pay more attention to improving pension services by using existing resources; The target of government elderly care is elderly people who are widowed and lonely in rural areas. Government elderly care places greater emphasis on government responsibility, which enables relevant governments to make reasonable budget arrangements and improve social efficiency in poverty alleviation.

4. Conclusion

Each type of elderly care model is different, and there are also shortcomings. The models for rural elderly care do not assume full responsibility, and appropriate combinations must be coordinated based on their respective strengths and weaknesses. The existence of these three elderly care models determines the complexity and diversification of the elderly care support framework in rural areas. For a long time in the future, these three models will be interdependent and complementary, and only by working together can we alleviate the severe situation of aging and meet the elderly care needs of modern elderly people.

In general, we should not only play the role of family basic elderly care, but also establish a rural elderly care insurance system through the country, increase its coverage, improve the social elderly care security system, take the community as the platform, and cooperate with the new rural elderly care model supplemented by self-help for left behind elderly.

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