

A Literature Review of Poverty Alleviation in the Spirit of the Elderly*

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Abstract—The aging society is one of the most urgent social problems in this century, which has attracted the attention of academia and government departments. Poverty alleviation and the problem of the elderly are accompanied by each other, which constitutes a major and urgent problem in China. By combing the research in China and foreign countries, this paper finds the significance and value of poverty alleviation, especially the spiritual poverty alleviation for the elderly, which provides ideas of poverty alleviation for the elderly in China.

Keywords: *the elderly, poverty alleviation, poverty alleviation by spirit*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese government has paid more attention to the poor and the low-income groups than simple policies. By means of compulsory administrative measures, it has taken narrowing the social income gap, sharing the achievements of social reform and promoting social progress and civilization as the first task in recent years. But in the national poverty alleviation route, because of the complexity and diversity of poverty alleviation objects, it also brings many challenges to the government. In many poverty-stricken areas, poverty alleviation means helping the elderly. Poverty alleviation for the elderly is considered to be the focus of poverty alleviation, especially the spiritual poverty alleviation for the elderly. It is the hard core of poverty alleviation work and is discussed by the academic community as a key point.

II. A SUMMARY OF THE SPIRIT POVERTY ALLEVIATION OF THE AGED IN CHINA AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES

A. Foreign research

The study of spiritual poverty in foreign countries has gone through a process from one-way to multi-dimensional perspective. Bourguignon (2003) and Duclos (2006) believed that not only the multidimensional factors of poverty should be measured, but also the most active factors affecting poverty should be compared. Duclos (2018) believes that poverty is not only multidimensional, but also multidimensional elements interweave and influence each other. The above research provides a reference for targeted poverty alleviation. Mtapuri, Oliver (2013), on the basis of predecessors, turned the focus of poverty alleviation to the spiritual field, believing that the spirit is closely related to poverty, and proposed that the solution of poverty should not blindly copy the Western model, but consider the local social consciousness, concepts and customs, and incorporate the local culture into the poverty alleviation system.

In the aspect of mental poverty alleviation for the elderly, most of them focus on psychological, social and self-development. Linda A. Ross (1997) discusses the spiritual needs of the elderly in terms of religion, meaning, love and belonging, morality, death, etc. Clayton ALDERFER (1972), an American psychologist, pointed out that mental care for the elderly should be based on the ERG model, i.e. existence needs, relationship needs and growth needs. David L. Decker (1986) thinks that the elderly often feel the sense of exclusion, inner emptiness and boredom, loneliness and fear, etc. Therefore, it is an important content of the elderly's spiritual poverty alleviation to strengthen the communication with friends, relatives and neighbors to promote the elderly to form a good mentality. Zhang Xuan (2007), Yin Yin Yin (2009) and others believed that the Japanese government also considered the influence of caring for the relationship circle on the emotional needs of the elderly before implementing the community-based pension model.

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To sum up, foreign scholars attach importance to the characteristics of the psychological and spiritual needs of the elderly, starting from the needs of elderly mental care, to find various conditions to meet the spiritual needs of the elderly, and improve the quality of spiritual life of the elderly.

B. Research in China

The essence and connotation of spiritual poverty alleviation is that the essence of spiritual poverty alleviation is the deepening of "precision poverty alleviation", such as Xi Jinping (2014) and Zhao Xiuhua (2016). Hang Chengzheng and Hu Angang (2017) think that the remedy of "individual failures". Zhao Xiuhua (2016) and Wei Liping (2017) pointed out that the essence of spiritual poverty alleviation is the lack of subjective initiative. Li Runqiang (2017) and Shen Zejin (2016) think that the connotation is the lack of "ambition" and "intelligence". The above shows that the essence of spiritual poverty alleviation is that the main body fails to play its potential and needs to supplement the internal nutrition of "ambition + intelligence" in order to explore the endogenous power.

The necessity and importance of spiritual poverty alleviation, Xi Jinping (2014), Cheng Zhaoji (2016), Wan Yuanying (2017), Xin Qiu Shui (2013) and so on, generally believe that spiritual poverty alleviation is an important prerequisite for poverty alleviation. Chen Yongsheng (2017) and Zhang Shiquan (2008) believe that the lack of spiritual poverty alleviation will lead to a similar phenomenon of poverty alleviation as charity.

Wu Hongkai, Xu Hongliang (2016), Xiao Feijie (2017) and others emphasized that "supporting morality" should be the first step in poverty alleviation. There are also many scholars who think it is education, such as Wang Zongli (2017), Yang Jianyi (2017), Wang Jiayi (2016), Wang Xuejian (2017), etc. He Yongming (2017) and Zhao Xiuhua (2016) specified the education content as "supporting the will" and "supporting the wisdom". Other scholars believe that culture is the key, such as Huang Ji (2016). It can be seen that scholars who regard culture and education as the content of spiritual poverty alleviation account for a large proportion in the academic circle.

Liu Guixiang (2017) thought that poverty alleviation should be carried out in three steps: why, what and how. Wei Liping (2017) believed that it was necessary to establish precise objectives, make efforts to break through difficulties and carry out assessment. Hang Chengzheng and Hu Angang (2017) thought that we should put changing customs first, then psychological intervention, and then help with professional poverty alleviation team. Above all, Liu Guixiang talked about ideas, Wei Liping and others proposed classification and breakthrough, while hang Chengzheng only focused on psychology and lacked consideration of culturology.

C. The connotation, importance and countermeasures of the spiritual needs of the elderly

According to Mu Guangzong (2004), the spiritual needs of the elderly include self-esteem, expectation and kinship. Liu Song (2002) found that the emotion of the old left behind in rural areas is empty and lonely, and the demand for emotional support for their children has far exceeded the requirement for material conditions.

Importance Liu Song (2002), Yang Chun (2011), Huang Keqi (2012) and others believe that the spiritual needs of the elderly are higher than the material needs, and the spiritual needs have a great impact on physical and mental health. Zhou Shaobin (2005), based on the lessons of western welfare countries, put forward that vigilance should focus on material and facilities, and pay more attention to the satisfaction of spiritual needs. Zheng Gongcheng (2005) proposed that the spiritual security should be included in the administrative target and scope.

Some scholars think that the spiritual care for the elderly should start from the system and policy, for example, Yang Chun (2011) thinks that through the system and policy to create public opinion and guide information, to provide services for the elderly to participate in society and realize self-service; some scholars think that the care for the elderly should be established from primary group to secondary group, such as Liu Song (2002), Gao Lingzhi (2003), Liu Jinhua (2009) proposed to build the spiritual life of the elderly through the community, and to solve the problem through multiple models. Zeng Shu (2013) believed that the spiritual care for the left behind elderly was carried out through the state, family relatives, rural grass-roots autonomous organizations, non-profit social organizations and other aspects. There are also some scholars who care for the elderly according to the family or social worker intervention model, such as Zhou Shaobin (2006), Shi Mingqian, Zhou Xizhe (2013), etc.

D. Spiritual needs of the elderly of ethnic minorities and poverty alleviation measures

Guo Hong, Zhu Mingxi (2011) and others talked about the poverty alleviation in rural areas of ethnic minority areas as a problem of "emphasizing the development of economy rather than the spiritual and cultural factors", and put forward the poverty alleviation countermeasures that should explore the advantageous resources in traditional culture and customs of ethnic minorities to combat poverty. Yang Guocai (2010) believes that the lack of research on the aging of ethnic minorities is the consensus of scholars. Zheng Changde (2014) talked about the importance of social resources, social organizations and volunteers in the aging of ethnic minorities. Zhou Aiping (2012) thought that the spiritual belonging of the elderly of ethnic minorities was difficult to maintain, and the spiritual support was obviously lacking. Other scholars, such as Wu Ping (2015) and Zhang Wenzheng (2014), respectively discussed theoretical standards, target models, social pension security and service system construction. He Zhenhuan and Zhou Jianchu (1988) believed that the aging sense of the elderly was closely related to such problems as

old age, poor health, loss of labor ability and economic difficulties. In addition to the irreversible age factors, we should improve the living and medical conditions of the elderly, improve their health and social status. The elderly living alone and in empty nest family have a strong sense of loneliness, coupled with weakness and disease. Economic difficulties are prone to depression and pessimism. To change this situation, first of all, we need to change the traditional habits of separation of the elderly and married children.

Wu Ningxia (2013) investigated 171 cases of severe mental patients in Ebian County Yi Autonomous County and Jinkouhe Yi Autonomous Region, including 137 cases of schizophrenia and 34 cases of other mental diseases. Most of the patients were rural patients, with poor family economy. Serious mental patients have trouble causing, difficult communication, isolation and laziness, moodiness, and great social harm. It is of great significance to strengthen the standardized treatment and management of the severe mental patients and maintain social stability through the intervention of the severe mental patients in the Yi area.

III. RESEARCH TRENDS IN CHINA AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Domestic and foreign studies generally believe that mental care for the elderly is very important, and there are differences in specific measures and ways. Foreign research on poverty alleviation focuses on multi-dimensional investigation, measurement and comparison, and emphasizes the presence of culture in theory. In the aspect of mental poverty alleviation for the elderly, most of them take the research on the elderly in western developed countries as an example, and generally think that mental factors have a great impact on the health of the elderly. They pay more attention to the research on the relationship between individual psychological feelings and social relatives, but lack of research on the mental care for the elderly of ethnic minorities, especially in the quarterly poverty-stricken areas.

Domestic research, in terms of methodology, tends to be single factor research, lack of multi-dimensional comprehensive research, and the number of empirical research is less. There is less research on the mental poverty of the left behind elderly in rural areas, and less attention is paid to the spirit of the elderly in the areas with special poverty of ethnic minorities. From the existing point of view, we have basically reached the consensus of "the elderly problem is the mental care problem", but the connotation boundary of the elderly's mental needs has not been defined authoritatively, such as relevant indicators, scales and questionnaires. In addition, in the aspect of countermeasure research, most of the researches tend to be herd behavior, and seldom consider the potential and strength of local cultural resources. In terms of research groups, there are few detailed studies on the definition of the elderly according to age and actual ability, and no achievements have been found to explore the mechanism of poverty alleviation and endogenous motivation of the elderly through experimental research, which provides a great research space for this topic.

IV. CONCLUSION

Poverty alleviation is significantly important in development countries and rural areas, including the county like China, also, we have to consider what is more important in poverty alleviation than material-centralism is spiritual poverty alleviation, especially when food and clothing problems has been solved in last many years. Obviously, the elderly needs much more spiritual social support. If not so, we might be in materialistic thinking.

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