

The health inequalities research of empty nesters under the background of urbanization and occupational mobility

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Abstract—In the case that China's urbanization and industrialization continues to accelerate, there has been a phenomenon that a large amount of rural labor flow into urban, and with the rural migrant labor force, there has formed such a disadvantaged group of rural empty nesters and the number shows a trend of increasing. Offspring's going out as migrant workers make the care for rural empty nesters facing many difficulties. How to solve the problem of rural old-age empty nesters? It has become a phenomenon worthy community to give more attention to.

Keywords- population movements; empty nesters; health inequalities

I. INTRODUCTION

Health inequalities do not refer to all the health disparities, but rather refer to systematic differences in health between social groups that have different advantages^①, for example that the poor, minorities, women and other groups suffered more disease risks than other social groups (Braveman, 2006). In sociological studies, we primarily focus on health inequalities between different socio-economic status groups, thus health inequalities are also called the social inequality of health.

Blake report identifies four basic ideas to explain health inequalities, one of which is the false correlation theory that people's healthy level has no real correlation with their socio-economic status and the appearance of the statistical correlation is only because of measurement errors. This view is not supported by empirical research in countries. Subsequent studies have shown that health inequality in the world is a universal phenomenon and there are no significant measurement errors. The second is the natural or social choice theory that the health of the people determines their class position, and thus the health gradient between different classes is naturally formed. This view is consistent with the logic of social Darwinism, and it is an early version of the

theory of healthy choices. The third is the interpretation of materialism or structuralism. They think that class structure associated with living conditions is an important reason for health inequalities. This view later developed into a theory of social causation. The fourth is the interpretation of cultural doctrine or behaviorist that health inequalities are due to the health risks caused by the behavior of people, such as improper smoking, poor diet, the improper use of public health services, and these behaviors among different social groups have significantly different. The explanation of cultural doctrine or behaviorism generally doesn't regard the individual as the unit of analysis, which is more common when comparing people's health gradient in different industrialized society (Holsteinetal, 2009). In sociology and public health research, health inequalities theoretical explanations and arguments have been carried out about the explanatory power of social causation theory and the theory of healthy choices and continue until today.

II. THE NECESSITY TO BUILD HEALTH EQUALITY FOR EMPTY NESTERS

The health level of the elderly is relatively low. The health ratio of elderly population over 60 years in developed countries exceeds 60%, while ours is only about 43% and the problem of old disease is very conspicuous. The Fourth National Health Service survey in 2008 showed that chronic cases until two weeks increased from 39% to 61%, and chronic disease has become a major problem affecting the health of residents, and the prevalence rate of elderly over 65 years old was 38.6%. By the end of 2011, total prevalence of elderly over 65 years old was 39.85% in Shaanxi Province, and the top five prevalence of the disease were: cardiovascular disease, digestive disease, cerebrovascular disease, respiratory diseases and eye diseases. Through exercise, diet and weight control and other comprehensive prevention, elderly patients with chronic diseases can be prevented and improved. Empty nesters are prone to have "empty nest syndrome", manifesting as loneliness, depression and anxiety. The reasons for empty nesters' psychological problems are various, one of which is their

lifestyle. Due to increased social mobility, upgrade of mass media, many seniors can choose to stay at home, leading that the elderly traditional geopolitical way of communication gradually weakened. Monotonous daily life, a sense of loss in old age, the lack of family care and the reduction of social interaction and other factors make empty nesters feel so lonely and depressed. Physical exercise can eliminate or transfer unhealthy ideas and emotions, enrich the lives of empty nesters, increase social interaction, and improve emotional state, and ease the psychological barrier of empty nesters. So to build empty nesters fitness service system, can promote healthy management of empty nesters, reduce the incidence of chronic diseases, cultivate a favorable external environment for the release of "empty nest syndrome".

III. POPULATION MOVEMENTS' INFLUENCE

A. Rural Empty nesters surge

Family structures in rural China are basically stem family that is made up of three generations of parents and a married cohabiting family. This stem family has changed dramatically influenced by population movements and the reform and opening up.

During urbanization process, a lot of farmers flow into the city, and they are city workers away from home. In some family the son went into the city; or the son or daughter went to town, leaving the elderly and children; some young couples even leave "empty nesters" alone in the countryside. Young migrant labor force, make the original stem families appear left-behind children, the elderly left behind, rendered as a generational families. Unless the elderly have ability to work, fewer seniors go with offspring. Therefore, after the offspring in rural areas go to city to work, older people are always left in the countryside, and the left-behind older people's living gradually show empty nesters and grandparents, forming a huge "empty nesters." The fifth national census results show that China's empty nest families over 65 years reached 15,616,400, taking 22.83 percent of households that have the elderly over 65 years. The number of the elderly living in empty nest families is 2339.73 million, taking 26.51% of the population over 65years old. Among them, number of the rural elderly empty nest households is 11.179 million, taking 71.58% of the total empty nest households. The number of empty nesters in rural areas has reached 1632.90 million, taking 69.79% of the total empty nesters. And the sixth census data show that compared with the fifth national census in 2000, the population whose place of residence and household registration are inconsistent and having left their household registration more than half year increased by more than 116 million, an increase of 81.03 %. During the period the rapid growth of migrant workers adds to the number and proportion of empty nest family in rural areas. In the context of large-scale flow of population, empty nesters in rural isolated with children become a group that requires special attention in rural population, because the material given to empty nesters, the lack of mental health care and physical care are self-evident, and their poverty has both characteristics of poverty in old age and new features generated by population flow. In addition, because of the

long-term implementation of family planning, many parents that have single child are gradually entering old age. Zhou Changhong et al. (2011), survey based on 5 counties in China's eastern, central and western area found that the main structure of rural families with only child and elderly parents is a single generation of the elderly, and the ratio of empty-nest families is close to 60 percent, and most of these empty nest families are the families having only child. The elderly parents of single female child are in a weak position on pension most.

B. Effect of migration on the welfare of the rural elderly

Empty nesters, as a new vulnerable group or group vulnerable to poverty, have inseparable relations with population movements. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of 2011 Monitoring Report survey of migrant workers, the data show that the number of migrant workers continues to grow nationwide in 2011, and the total reached 25,278 million, of which 15 863 million were migrant workers, and number of local workers reached 9415. What is in concert with this is that the large-scale rural empty nesters are growing continually. It is generally believed that migrant labor can increase revenue and increase transfer income of the elderly through remittances, but some research results given show it is not entirely true. First of all, the children of migrant workers may have increased the burden on the rural elderly, and make elderly welfare damaged. The most direct impact of adult children's going out is increasing the agricultural burden of the elderly in rural areas and reducing the welfare of the elderly in rural areas.

Du Peng and Ding Zhihong (2004) pointed out that the burden of chores and agricultural labor burden of the elderly left behind will be increased, and they will face new difficulties in life and economic aspects. Bai Nansheng et al (2007) also suggested that the most direct impact of adult children's going out is increasing the agricultural burden of the elderly in rural areas and reducing the welfare of the elderly in rural areas, despite the transfer of the children of migrant workers' incomes will improve rural elderly welfare. Hu Feng et al. (2008) have found that families of migrant workers and migrant workers having been unemployed give fewer remittances. Similarly, Li Qiang, et al (2008) found that migrant families have a wide and profound impact on the remittances of migrant workers, and the probability of migrant families to remit is lower than migrating to go out alone about 14% and migrant families reduced remittances amount. Second, empty nesters are most vulnerable to be marginalized and suffer poverty. Migration of people impact women, children and the elderly and other groups differently. Tan Shen's research and analysis (2009) believe that the influence for different family members of the flow of migrant workers is not the same, regardless of the degree of positive or negative impact. Such as changing power relations in the family is positive for young people, but for older people it is negative, and relative to the non-poor households and young people, poor households and older people are more marginalized. Luo Fang et al. (2007) micro-level empirical results about the children of migrant workers' impact on supporting empty nesters in rural areas show that

children's going out to work produce a significant impact on empty nest family on economic support, life care, spiritual solace and many other aspects. The direction and extent of the impact varies from their parents' economic level, physical and mental status, children's income and family situation, as well as the elderly spouses and number of children and other conditions.

Finally, despite the economic conditions of empty nesters could have been improved, they generally feel heavier loneliness. Zhang Kai Ti et al study(2010) showed that, compared with non-empty nesters, a higher proportion of rural empty nesters feel loneliness, reaching 34.3%, and the elderly living alone also have nearly 3 percentage points higher to suicide than non-empty nesters. The study also made a comprehensive assessment of the risk of survival mode on rural empty nesters and non-empty nesters. The occurrence of a survival risk for the elderly households living alone is higher than non-empty nest elderly households by 10 percentage points, and the proportion of the risk of the occurrence of the two survival risk is seven percentage points higher than the latter.

From previous studies, on the whole, the children going out increases the possibility of the elderly obtaining more financial support, but the elderly will be lack of care from children and feel stronger loneliness. Children of migrant workers' impact on supporting the elderly in rural areas cannot be generalized. It is not only because these effects vary in multiple dimensions of economic support, life care, spiritual consolation, but also even within the same dimension, such as economic support, it will be influenced by the form of migrant and caring grandchildren or not and so on. From the perspective of multidimensional poverty, the impact of migration on the welfare of the elderly needs further study.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS ON RURAL EMPTY NESTERS' PENSION PROBLEM

We shall focus on the "culture of filial piety" training advocate and develop piety, especially Confucius Filial Piety, and inherit and develop it. And we need promote and honor the traditional virtues of caring for the elderly, and raise children's pension responsibility, which are of great significance for coping in rural areas Empty nesters pension issues.

Strengthen social policy's support. Whether for the care for vulnerable groups, or for resolving the rural social issues, the government should assume the responsibility of supporting the empty nesters.

Focus on Empty nesters' spiritual and cultural activities. For rural empty nesters, the material difficulties are one hand, and the problem of spiritual emptiness and loneliness is also another aspect worthy of attention. So we need implement more activities for seniors to rich old people's daily life, and then elderly activity center really work.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The government shall take appropriate efforts and encourage the migrant population to go home to do pioneering work. During the migrant working times, due to the dual system, they will be subject to a number of unequal treat more or less. For example, they cannot be settled at the local, and will be discriminated against during working, and so on. But migrant workers accepted a variety of influence of economically developed coastal areas, and learned some management and business knowledge. Their ideas have changed, and their courage has been exercised. They have evolved into a kind of human resource that is precious. Coupled with the impact of the financial crisis, most of the migrant workers will return home, and at this time the local government should to make relative work well done and introduce appropriate policies to encourage the migrant personnel back home to do pioneering work.

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