

Analysis on the Current Situation of grandparenting education of Urban Household and its Cause in China

---Taking Kunming City as an example

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Abstract—this paper aims at analysis of the current situation of grandparenting education of Urban Household and its cause in China. The author visited some residential areas of Kunming City through interviews and questionnaire survey to study the present situation of grandparenting education and find that with the development of economy and society, grandparenting education has a very high proportion in China and is rising year on year soon. This paper analysis its cause from the social and economic development, the change of family structure, government policy and personal reasons. We must be aware of such a high proportion of grandparenting education which is unfavorable to the family education. Appeal to the state and government attach importance to parenting education and encourage parent to take care and educate their children personally.

Keywords—grandparenting education; current situation; cause

I. INTRODUCTION

There is an interesting phenomenon in China. At the time of kindergarten, there are so many old people crowded at the gate of kindergarten. Who are they? And what are they doing? They are grandparents of the kids in the kindergarten. And they take their grandchildren to school and bring them back everyday. Actually, in the neighborhoods, parks, or everywhere there are infants, you always find the one who accompany infant is their grandparents. This is a very common phenomenon in China. We called it grandparenting education.

With the development of economy and society, the rapidly accelerating pace of life in ordinary people's society and the increasing pressure to survive make many young parents do not have much time and patient to educate their children. Such a social reality promotes grandparents assume more responsibility for their grandchildren's education. Comparison with The West, grandparents and grandchildren are entertainment without too much responsibility.¹ The high proportion of grandparenting education brings new challenges

to the development of family education. With the absence of parents, a series of family education problems have emerged. For a child, we all know how important it is to be accompanied by their parents! This paper analysis its cause from the social and economic development, the change of family structure, government policy and personal reasons. We must be aware of such a high proportion of grandparenting education which is unfavorable to the family education. Appeal to the state and government attach importance to parenting education and encourage parent to take care and educate their children personally.

II. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF GRANDPARENTING EDUCATION

A. Chinese Grandparenting education family classification

It can be divided into Grandparenting education of Urban Household and Grandparenting education of rural area. In this paper, we discuss about Grandparenting education of Urban Household. And take Kunming as an example.

There are two types of Grandparenting education of Urban Household: completely grandfamily and joint grandfamily².

Completely grandfamily means children live with grandparents and grandparents take the guardian's responsibility. They take care of them when a baby was born. Parents give up completely to taking care of children and leave their children with their grandparents who play the role of parents in the whole growth period of the child. It takes them about the whole time to raise a child. Usually the cause of completely grandfamily is poverty which forces their parents to leave their hometown to work; or parents divorce and give up custody of the child. The children nearly can't see their parents only if their parents have a vacation. In this type of

¹ Kathleen M Roe Meredith Minkler. "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Challenges and Responses" [J]. Generations, 1999, 22 (4). pp25—32.

² Li Qinxia, "On the issue of child rearing in grandparents" [J], Studies in Preschool Education, 2001 (3). pp.7-10 (In Chinese)

family, there is “surrogated parents”³ and due to the lack of knowledge of the elderly and backward education conception, children’s education is lagging behind. Further more, the child’s physical and mental development is not very easy to be health without parents’ company. This kind of family in the city is rare, about 5% or so. But in rural areas and remote areas completely grandfamily is very common, about 50% or so.⁴

Joint grandfamily means three or more generations family members live together. In this family, father and mother go to work everyday; grandparents educate and take care of child. Parents accompany child only after work or weekend. In China, the most joint families are based on “421” family structure.⁵(Fig. 1)

Generally, in current situation, “421” family structure is the most important family structure in China. “421” family structure---- 4 means four grandparents, mother’s parents and father’s parents; 2 means father and mother; 1 means a child. Under this family structure, grandparents are the corn of the family. Young parents are busy with working. Grandparents are retired at home. So grandparents take care of grandchildren spontaneously. This situation of grandparenting education is relatively good. Parents have some time with their children.

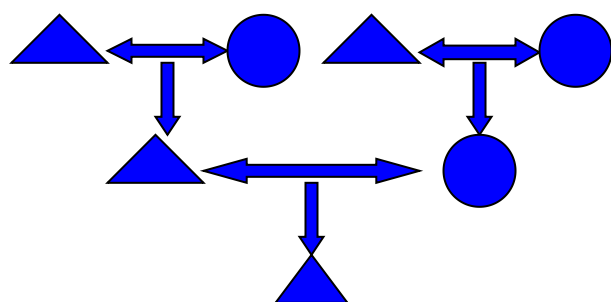
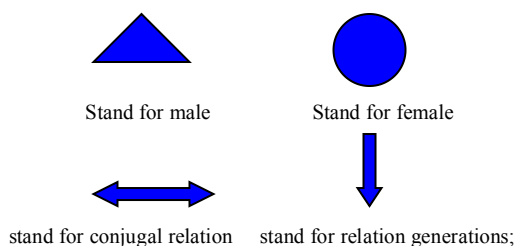


Fig. 1. “421” Family Structure



III. THE PROPORTION OF GRANDPARENTING EDUCATION

The proportion of grandparenting education increased year by year. Especially in the developed regions with the rapid economic growth. Chinese aging scientific research center conducted a survey of elderly policy research. 20083 elderly people in urban and rural areas were interviewed who look after their grandchildren occupy a large proportion, up to 66.47%. The time of the investigation is in the year of 2000. Over the past 10 years, to 2010, it climbed to 69.73%. Taking Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou as an example, the proportion of grandparenting education is 80%, even nearly 90%.

In this paper, the writer make a survey about the proportion of grandparenting education family and the age of children grandparenting educated in Xishang District of Kunming. From the year of 2008 to 2016, we can see that the high proportion of grandparenting education in Kunming, and is rising year on year soon. (Fig.2)

Besides, the younger the children are the higher proportion of grandparenting education. In most case, grandparents take care of children or more when he or she was born. They come back to their parents when they go to primary school or secondary school. (Fig.3)

That is to say, for various reasons, more and more parents leave their children with grandparents to take care of. All these data indicate that grandparenting education is our national conditions. Its existence and development is inevitable and has exuberant vitality.

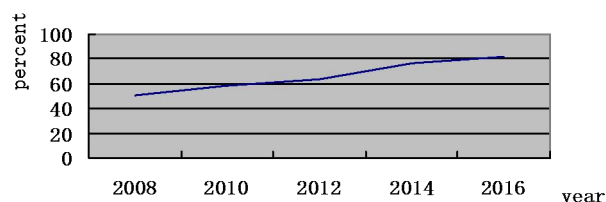


Fig. 2. The proportion of grandparenting education in Xishang District of Kunming

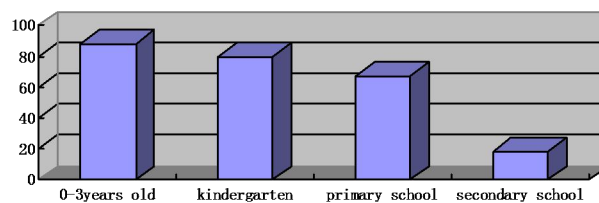


Fig. 3. The age group of grandparenting education

³ Qiu Zhenwan, “The change of family----Grandparenting”, Xuefu Culture, Tai Wan, 2004, pp78—79 (In Chinese)

⁴ Zhu Yongliang, “Investigation and Analysis on the present situation of unattended children”, Gan Su Science and technology, 2007, 23(12), pp146—147(In Chinese)

⁵ Li Jingjing, “The research of modern family---Based on “421” family structure”, Hua Dong Traffic University, 2013, pp10—11(In Chinese)

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSE OF GRANDPARENTING EDUCATION

A. The change of family structure, “421” family structure increase is the primary cause of grandparenting education.

With the economic development, the pressure of life and high price of house, the family structure in China has undergone tremendous changes. Generally speaking, there are about five types of families in Chinese family structure. “Extended family is members of three or more generations, related by blood or marriage, which live together or near each other. Stem family is parents, married children and grandchildren live together. Nuclear family is parents and unmarried children live with each other. Dink family means double income, no kids. And bachelordom family.”⁶

From Fig. 4. We can know Stem family is the main important form in China’s family structure.

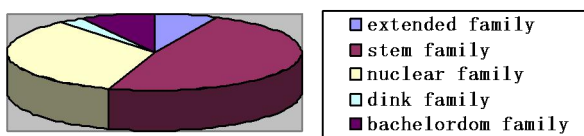


Fig. 4. Family structure in China

(Data sources: The fifth national census bulletin of National Bureau of Statistics of P.R. of China)

In 1979, family planning---one child policy was promulgated, so far, 30 years past, the first generation only child become parents which marks the Chinese traditional family has changed. They, their parents and their children make a family which is stem family that is the primary family structure in China now. That is the “421” family mentioned above. The sixth national census bulletin of China in 2010 boards that there are about 2 million families which is only-child family. Further more, the figure is growing at a rate of one percent a year and total population growth was less than one percent. After 40 years, the number of only-child family will grow to 20 million if family planning---one child policy does not change. With the increase of only-child, there will be more and more “421” family structure. However, grandparenting education is usually in this family structure.

B. The rapid economic growth increase the pressure of life and high price of house led to grandparenting education

In recent years, Chinese economy was growing up at a very high speed. It brings great changes in turn the world upside down in people’s life. The first is to rise the standard of living and the price of goods. Young parents have to go to work to support a family. Grandparents have to share responsibility for their grandchildren. Taking Kunming city as an example for the cost of raising a child, the cost of raising a

child is about 2500RMB to 3500RMB per month for 0 to 3 years old children. The cost will go up with the growth of the age. But for ordinary family, a person’s average earnings are about 3000RMB to 4000RMB per month in Kunming. In such conditions, only father go to work which can’t take the whole family life. So father and mother have nothing to do but go to work to earn money.

On the other side, the price of house is at a very high level. In large and medium size cities, as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, the average price of an apartment is about 20000RMB to 30000RMB per square meter or more. In Kunming, this small city, the average price of an apartment is about 5000RMB to 10000RMB per square meter. For an ordinary family, they can’t afford an apartment, especially for families with children. So for young couples have no choice but living with their parents after married. This is the direct cause of “421” family structure growth.

C. The government does not have the corresponding policy which support mother to stay at home to educate their children.

In China, women’s maternity leave only have for 3 months. In some private enterprises, it just lasts one month. Furthermore, there is no guarantee of income during maternity leave. Women have to go to work immediately after production. By contrast, western countries have long maternity leave. Such as Russia, women can take 4 and half years of paid maternity leave. In addition, some countries have adopted some policies to encourage women to stay home with the kids. Like America, housewife can enjoy tax relief and get food stamp. The same as Japanese, housewife in Japan can enjoy duty-free, housewife subsidies, raising subsidies and so on. All these policies provide a strong guarantee for women at home with children. If there is sufficient economic capacity, I think, most parents still want to accompany their children at home.

D. Parents who take care of child at home are difficult to be accepted by the public

In China, there a lot of parents who have too much hope for their children. At most of the time, the ability to have a good job with high salary become a standard for the success of the general public. If young mother or father take care of their children at home instead of going to work, their parents can’t agree at first. Because Chinese parents are proud to cultivate a successful child who must has good job with high salary. To take care of a child at home means nothing in Public opinion in China. So grandparents assume the obligation to take care of grandchildren, and force their parents to go to workplace.

Otherwise, housewives will be discriminated against. People will think you are lazy or a parasite if you don’t go to work and just do the housework or take care of the child. The housewife’s housework is not recognized. So the public is encouraging women to be self reliant and economic independent; to go to workplace to compete with men. Therefore, it is seems that parents don’t take care of their

⁶ Wang Yuesheng, Analysis of contemporary Chinese family structure, Chinese Social Sciences, 2006(01), pp96-108(In Chinese)

children is a normal phenomenon. Instead, parents who take care of their children at home became the object of being condemned.

E. Irresponsible parents, and high divorce rate is also one of the reasons caused grandparenting education

Now most parents are the only child in the family. They grow up in an over protective and pampered environment. They are not independent and heavily reliant upon their parents. To be parents, they are afraid of trouble and don't fulfill the responsibility for their children.

Finally, with the rising divorce rate, the number of single parent families increased exponentially which also lead to the proportion of grandparenting education growth.

V. CONCLUSION

Family education will be a long term issues. Parenting education is the foundation and core of family education. A child's character and habit is usually formed by the age of 3 years old. So from 0 to 3 years old, parenting education is the most crucial. But the fact is nearly all children are educated by grandparents from 0 to 3 years old. But in a short term, the current situation of grandparenting education in our country can not be changed. That indicate grandparenting education is our national conditions. Its existence and development is inevitable and has exuberant vitality. We must be aware of such a high proportion of grandparenting education which is unfavorable to the family education. Grandparents will never replace their own parents. Although they have some experience in feeding the children, in the education of children they lack of knowledge and are conservative and backward. In most cases, children are easily over protected by their grandparents and their nature and creativity are killed. In addition, because of old age and limit energy, the elderly who take care of children are under tremendous physical and psychological pressure. The Youth education is very important to our country's development. All we can do is pay attention to it. Appeal to the state and government attach importance to parenting education and encourages parents to take care and educate their children personally. More critical is that the government should develop appropriate policies to protect the rights of parent who take care of child at home. On the other side, parents must take the responsibility for their children. Coordinating the work and life, parents should try to spend more time on their children after work.

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