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A Survey on the Problems of Family Education of Rural Stay-at-home Children

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Abstract: As the imbalance between urban and rural economic development intensifies, many young rural labor force choose to go to the city to work, this trend directly leads to the emergence of a large number of left-behind children in rural areas. These children have encountered multiple difficulties at the level of family education, which are embodied in the lack of family affection, the lack of educational resources and mental health. Through a comprehensive analysis of the research literature on the family problems of left-behind children in rural China in recent years, this paper discusses the status quo, causes and countermeasures of left-behind children's problems.

Keywords: Rural left-behind children family education

Since the reform and opening up, along with the rapid growth of China's economy and the acceleration of urbanization, a large number of young and middle-aged laborers in rural areas choose to go out for employment, which directly makes the problem of rural left-behind children become more and more significant and urgent attention. The parents of these children work for a living all year round, while their children stay in the countryside under the care of their grandparents (usually grandparents), forming the so-called "intergenerational families".

As intergenerational guardianship is common in rural areas, left-behind children face multiple challenges. In view of these problems, the community has launched a wide range of research and discussion, and put forward a variety of countermeasures and suggestions.

Research status

1. Domestic research status

1.1 Research on guardianship in family education of left-behind children in rural areas

Some scholars focus on the study of guardianship in the family education of rural left-behind children. First, they examine the current situation of guardianship of left-behind children, and deeply analyze the root cause of the lack of guardianship. Solving this problem has far-reaching positive significance for improving the quality of the people in the future, promoting the harmonious progress of the rural economy and society, and accelerating the construction of a new socialist countryside.

In addition, some scholars have conducted research on the impact of the lack of guardianship of left-behind children. Studies by Yin and others have shown that left-behind children suffer significant problems in moral character, mental health and academic performance, which can be attributed to dispersed guardians, vague definitions of responsibilities and inadequate educational abilities. In view of this, they emphasize that the education of left-behind children is a comprehensive and complex task that requires the cooperation of the state, schools, families and communities to jointly address the challenges that left-behind children encounter in the field of education, so as to improve the overall quality of the future workforce and lay a solid foundation for sustainable development in rural areas. In single-parent guardianship families of left-behind children in rural areas, the father's cultural level and learning ability are often better than the mother, but the actual situation is mostly the wife stays at home, the husband goes out to work. Left-behind mothers need to take care of housework, support the elderly and children's education, which is a huge pressure, difficult to fully invest in children's education, and the quality of education is difficult to guarantee.

Aiming at the root causes of left-behind children, scholars have carried out an in-depth analysis. Zhou Aimin and Wang Ya put forward that "the educational dilemma of left-behind children is a unique representation of China's economic and social transformation stage" ^[1].

1.2 A study on the influence of family education of left-behind children in rural areas on their physical and mental health development

Some scholars have conducted in-depth discussions on the influence of family education on the physical and mental growth of rural left-behind children. Yue Qing pointed out that because their parents are not around for a long time, left-behind children do not get enough educa-

tion and their values are not fully formed, and they are susceptible to the influence of the idea that "reading is useless", and they may become complacent and disdisciplined, thus deviating from the correct life path. Especially in the critical period of growth, if the lack of necessary guidance and family care, coupled with the interference of complex social environment, some left-behind children may enter the wrong path of crime.

Researchers such as Yang Huiqin, Zhang Bo and Guo Xueping compared and analyzed the differences in the mental health status of left-behind children and non-left-behind children, and deeply discussed the various factors that affect the mental health level of left-behind children. The research results show that left-behind children show more significant mental health problems in learning anxiety, interpersonal skills and emotional management, and their overall mental health status shows a more unfavorable trend compared with non-left-behind children. In addition, different types of guardianship have a significant impact on the mental health level of left-behind children.

Yuqiang Lv explained the close connection between family education and students' mental health development, pointing out that a harmonious family atmosphere helps students to form a positive world outlook, outlook on life and values, as well as high moral character. A cold or disharmonious family atmosphere will have a negative impact on students' personality and behavior. He analyzed the influence of defective family education on students' mental health from the aspects of parents' lack of education, improper family education methods and backward parents' education ideas, and put forward some suggestions^[2] to improve the effect of family education through parents' example, listening to children's voices and improving education methods. UNESCO pointed out that left-behind children often show negative emotions such as rejection, anger, anxiety, fear and loss in their behavior, and because their parents are not around, these emotions must be faced and dealt^[3] with by themselves.

In addition, some studies have pointed out that the increase in family economic income brought by parents' migrant work has a positive impact on the living standards and health service quality of left-behind children.

1.3 Research on family education of left-behind children in rural areas under single-parent guardianship

Scholars have deeply subdivided the types of left-behind children in rural areas. Ye Jingzhong and Wang Yihuan divided them into four categories: single parent guardianship (father or mother), separated generation (grandparents) guardianship, elder relatives guardianship and peer guardianship (siblings). Zhang Xiaoping made a thorough comparative analysis and comprehensive discussion on the socialization status quo of left-behind children under different guardianship modes from six different dimensions: self-care ability, interpersonal interaction, goal planning, value shaping, self-cognition and social behavior. The research results show that the overall socialization level of this group is low, and there are significant differences in the performance of the socialization process between different guardianship types. Among them, the performance of left-behind children under single parent guardianship is relatively better, while some left-behind children under intergenerational guardianship and mixed guardianship are facing more prominent challenges^[4] in the socialization process.

In the discussion of the many factors affecting the family rearing mode of left-behind children, Duan Lilin emphasized that the family education of left-behind children in the rural single-parent custody mode should focus more on the comfort of the soul and the comprehensive development of the children, advocating the use of understanding and respect attitude, equal dialogue and positive appreciation strategies to implement family education^[5]

2. Review of foreign research

Compared with China, the research on left-behind children in foreign countries is relatively limited, and there are relatively few experiences for reference. In the process of industrialization and urbanization of western society, although it also experienced a large-scale transfer of surplus rural labor force to cities, due to the relatively sound social security system, the children of these labor force can enjoy the same right to education and employment opportunities as urban residents. Therefore, the problem of left-behind children is not significant in the West. The phenomenon of prolonged separation between parents and their children is also relatively rare. Foreign scholars' research on left-behind children mainly focuses on the physical and mental health status, medical security system, social adaptability and education level, etc. In addition, there are some in-depth studies on the adverse effects caused by long-term separation between parents and children.

2.1 Research on intergenerational family education

Susie Spence pointed out that as parents go out, the role of grandparents in family education changes from assisting to leading, which has an important impact^[6] on the healthy physical and mental development of children. with concentration, mood swings, and a lack of empathy. Mary L. Blackburn emphasizes that grandparents' age and health may affect their ability to care for grandchildren, while inadequate financial support may also increase the burden on grandparents, which in turn affects the quality^[7] of care. Anna Beltran further points out that in developing countries with inadequate social protection systems, grandparents with limited financial means may have difficulty supporting their grandchildren on their own, affecting the children's quality of life and physical and mental development^[8].

2.2 Measures to solve the problem of intergenerational family education

Holdsworth suggests that even if parents live in different places, they should still be actively involved in their children's education. In the process of parenting, alternate guardians should incorporate valuable experience from traditional education, as well as modern educational concepts and methods, in order to promote the healthy development^[9] of children. Ribbens also stressed that even if parents have for some reason delegated the responsibility of parenting to grandparents, the presence of parents and the building of a strong bond still play an irreplaceable role^[10] in a child's development.

3. Review of domestic and foreign research

To sum up, although some research results have been achieved in the field of left-behind children at home and abroad, the research focus is mostly on left-behind children, and the research on left-behind children in rural areas, especially those left behind by single parents, is relatively scarce and systematic. In addition, most domestic researches focus on the guardianship status and physical and mental health of left-behind children, while the discussion on the education of left-behind children under single-parent guardianship, especially family education, is still insufficient. In foreign countries, in view of the differences in national development and social systems, Western developed countries have more complete social security systems, and rural population flow has limited impact on children's education. Therefore, the problem of left-behind children is not prominent, and relevant studies are also few.

The family education of left-behind children in rural areas is a complex social issue, which needs the concerted efforts of the government, schools, families and all sectors of society. In the future, we should deepen the research on the problem of family education for left-behind children, explore more effective solutions, and provide a solid guarantee for the healthy growth of left-behind children.

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