

The Dilemmas and Countermeasures for the Development of Elderly Human Resources under the Background of Rural Revitalization: A Case Study of Handan City, Hebei Province

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Abstract: Currently, the aging population in rural areas of China is constantly intensifying. In order to further promote the rural revitalization strategy, consolidate poverty alleviation achievements, develop elderly human resources, fill the local labor gap, promote economic development, and improve the level of rural social governance, this article takes Handan City, Hebei Province as an example to propose solutions to the difficulties faced in the development of elderly human resources in rural areas.

Keywords: Elderly human resources; Obtain employment; Rural revitalization

1. Background of Rural Elderly Human Resource Development

The author of this article conducted on-site visits and investigations in various counties of Handan City in May 2024. Handan City has achieved significant results in its rural revitalization strategy by improving rural transportation infrastructure, developing agricultural industries, and deepening rural reforms. At the same time, the demand for labor is constantly expanding.

According to the data from the 7th National Population Census, the current population of Handan City aged 60 and above is 1614956, accounting for 17.15%. Among them, the population aged 65 and above is 1124913, accounting for 11.95% of the city's permanent population. Compared with the sixth national population census, the proportion of people aged 60 and above has increased by 5.78 percentage points, and the proportion of people aged 65 and above has increased by 4.9 percentage points. The degree of population aging is constantly deepening.

With the acceleration of urbanization, a large number of young labor force are flowing from rural areas to cities, leading to a shortage of rural labor force. Among the permanent residents of Handan City, 5485163 people live in urban areas, accounting for 58.27%; The population living in rural areas is 3928827, accounting for 41.73%. Compared with the sixth national population census in 2010, the urban population increased by 1499477 people, the rural population decreased by 1260170 people, and the proportion of urban population increased by 14.83 percentage points.^[1]

It can be seen that the shortage of rural labor force will continue to deepen. In order to further promote the rural revitalization strategy, consolidate poverty alleviation achievements, and develop elderly human resources, it can effectively supplement rural labor force and alleviate this problem.

2. The dilemma of elderly human resource development in the context of rural revitalization

2.1 Low education level and insufficient skill training

Due to the relative scarcity of educational resources in rural areas, the education level of rural residents is generally not high. This limits the knowledge updating and skill enhancement of elderly people in rural areas, causing them to face a shortage of skills when participating in rural revitalization. Lack of targeted skills training: Currently, there are relatively few skills training programs for rural elderly people, and the training content and methods are often disconnected from actual needs. This makes it difficult for rural elderly people to play their due role in participating in rural revitalization.^[2]

2.2 Incomplete social security system

The pension sources for rural elderly mainly rely on government subsidies and child support, but these two sources are relatively limited.

This makes it difficult for elderly people in rural areas to fully devote themselves to rural revitalization due to the lack of economic security.^[3] At the same time, elderly care service facilities in rural areas are generally backward, unable to meet the diverse elderly care needs of rural elderly people. This not only affects the quality of life of elderly people in rural areas, but also limits their enthusiasm and ability to participate in rural revitalization.^[4]

2.3 Limitations of Culture and Social Cognition

The insufficient recognition of the potential and value of rural elderly human resources by various sectors of society has led to the neglect of the development and utilization of these resources in rural revitalization planning. At the same time, influenced by traditional beliefs, many people believe that the elderly should withdraw from the labor market and enjoy their later years. Children will also be influenced by traditional filial piety and will not support the elderly to participate in labor. This concept constrains the development and utilization of rural elderly human resources, resulting in their low participation in rural revitalization.

2.4 Health issues

As they age, some elderly people may face challenges in their physical health, which can affect their ability and scope to engage in labor.

3. Measures for the development of elderly human resources in the context of rural revitalization

3.1 Develop policies to encourage employment among the elderly

Local governments can introduce relevant policies, such as local regulations such as the “Equal Employment for the Elderly”, to refine the employment security process for rural elderly people. Allow enterprises to hire elderly people who continue to work at relatively low wage levels, and the government can establish a subsidy fund for elderly people in need, providing wage subsidies based on the nature of their work.

3.2 Strengthening Social Security

Improve the rural social security system, including retirement insurance, medical insurance, and unemployment insurance, to enhance the welfare level of rural residents. This not only enhances the sense of achievement and happiness of elderly people in rural areas, but also provides them with a more stable living environment, thereby actively participating in rural revitalization.

3.3 Enhancing education and training

Provide specialized education and training programs for rural elderly people to enhance their professional skills and innovative abilities. Education and teaching reforms that are suitable for the characteristics of the elderly can be carried out, such as setting up courses that are in line with modern agriculture, so that they can become new types of silver haired farmers with knowledge, understanding of technology, and business skills. Carry out online teaching while cultivating the ability of elderly people to use electronic devices such as mobile phones and computers. Establish cooperative relationships with relevant departments and enterprises to provide more employment opportunities and vocational training for the elderly.^[5]

3.4 Strengthening Health Management for the Elderly

Before participating in work, provide a comprehensive health assessment for the elderly to understand whether their physical condition is suitable for continuing work. The elderly should choose suitable job positions based on their physical conditions and avoid engaging in high-intensity or high-risk labor. After participating in labor, the local government should regularly organize physical health examinations for the elderly in order to timely detect and address potential health issues. And establish personal health records for each elderly person, recording information such as physical condition and medication use, in order to provide them to employers or medical institutions when needed. At the same time, according to the physical condition of the elderly, work hours should be arranged reasonably to avoid prolonged continuous work. Implement a flexible work system that allows elderly people to adjust their work hours and intensity based on their physical condition. Establish a comprehensive emergency rescue mechanism to ensure that elderly people can receive timely treatment when they encounter health problems at work.

3.5 Building an Employment Service Platform

Guided by employment, we aim to build an urban and rural human resource market and employment service platform that meets the characteristics of the elderly population, providing channels for the elderly to participate in work. Realize equal exchange and two-way flow of employment factors between urban and rural areas, and stimulate the vitality of rural elderly human resources.^[6]

3.6 Strengthen publicity work

Emphasize the positive significance of elderly people participating in work, such as improving quality of life, enhancing social participation, and promoting physical and mental health. Promote successful cases of rural elderly employment to stimulate the enthusiasm of other

elderly people for work. Popularize relevant laws, regulations, and policies to enable elderly people to understand their rights and protection.

Utilize traditional media such as rural radio, bulletin boards, and banners to regularly release information and policies related to the employment of the elderly. Utilize online media platforms to produce and publish promotional materials such as short videos, images, and text, and expand the coverage of publicity. Carry out offline promotional activities, such as lectures, consultation meetings, etc., to have face-to-face communication with the elderly and answer their questions and confusions. Based on the actual situation in rural areas, provide examples to illustrate the specific ways and means for elderly people to participate in work, such as agricultural production, handicraft production, rural tourism, etc. Invite elderly people who have already started working to speak up, share their experiences and feelings, and enhance the persuasiveness of the promotion. Establish a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of publicity, regularly collect feedback from the elderly, in order to adjust promotional strategies and content in a timely manner. Encourage rural communities and family members to support elderly people in their work and create a positive social atmosphere.

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