

Research on the Optimization of Rural Pension Service System in Jilin Province under the Background of Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: The in-depth advancement of the rural revitalization strategy has provided important opportunities for the construction of the rural elderly care service system, and also put forward higher requirements for solving the problem of aging in rural areas. As a major agricultural province, Jilin Province has a deep degree of aging among its rural population and a high proportion of empty-nest elderly. Traditional elderly care models are difficult to adapt to the new era's elderly care needs, and the elderly care service system faces prominent problems such as low security level, uneven service supply, and insufficient resource integration. This paper, guided by the rural revitalization strategy and based on the current development of rural elderly care services in Jilin Province, systematically analyzes the practical challenges faced by the elderly care service system in institutional development, service provision, and talent support. Drawing on local practical experiences such as mutual assistance elderly care centers and rural senior dining halls, it proposes optimization pathways from four dimensions: institutional improvement, service innovation, resource integration, and talent cultivation. The study system that aligns with rural revitalization efforts.

Keywords: Jilin Province; Rural Revitalization; Mutual Assistance for the Elderly; Elderly Care Service System; Optimization Path

1. Introduction

The Rural Revitalization Strategy explicitly states the need to "improve the institutional mechanisms and policy systems for integrated urban-rural development, and accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas." As a vital pillar of rural revitalization, the construction of rural elderly care services

directly impacts the quality of life for rural seniors and the social harmony and stability of rural communities. Jilin Province has a high proportion of rural residents. According to the latest data, the elderly population aged 60 and above in rural areas now accounts for over 25% of the total rural population, significantly exceeding the provincial average aging rate. With the acceleration of urbanization, rural youth and able-bodied workers continue to migrate out, exacerbating the "hollowing-out" phenomenon. This has severely weakened traditional family-based elderly care systems, leaving rural seniors facing multiple challenges including inadequate economic security, lack of daily care, and insufficient access to medical resources. Therefore, based on the requirements of the rural revitalization strategy, optimizing Jilin Province's rural elderly care service system and solving rural elderly care problems have become an important topic for promoting rural social development.

2. Current Development Status of Rural Pension Service System in Jilin Province under the Background of Rural Revitalization

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2.1 Home Care Dominates

In rural China, elderly care in Jilin Province remains predominantly home-based, with approximately 80% of seniors relying on family support, land-based income, and urban-rural basic pension insurance for daily sustenance. However, as the proportion of empty-nest elders increases, the caregiving capacity of home-based support is gradually diminishing. This

leaves some elderly individuals vulnerable to situations where they lack daily assistance and emergency aid when needed.

2.2 The Scale of Institutionalized Elderly Care Remains Constrained

The province has a limited number of rural elderly care facilities, mostly concentrated in county towns and central townships, with insufficient coverage in remote rural areas. Existing facilities are rudimentary, offering basic daily care services. They lack professional medical care, rehabilitation services, and recreational facilities, making it difficult to meet the diverse needs of the elderly population [1].

2.3 Mutual-Aid Elderly Care Thrives

Leveraging rural revitalization policies, some regions in Jilin Province have pioneered mutual elderly care models. Examples include the Elderly Care Center in Yushu City and the Mutual Happiness Home in Yanji City. Through village-led initiatives, community support, and government subsidies, these programs provide rural seniors with meal assistance, cleaning services, cultural activities, and recreational programs. This has established a preliminary model of elderly care services characterized by “village-based care, low cost, and human warmth” [2].

2.4 Increased Policy Support

The Rural Revitalization Strategy has prioritized the development of rural elderly care systems. Jilin Province has introduced multiple policies to support this initiative, including the “Jilin Rural Revitalization Promotion Regulations,” which explicitly states: “Enhance rural elderly care services and advance the construction of related facilities.” This policy framework provides essential safeguards for optimizing the rural elderly care system.

2.5 Resource Integration and Space Expansion

Rural revitalization drives the development of rural industries, infrastructure construction, and public service upgrades, creating opportunities for integrating resources in rural elderly care systems [3]. For instance, idle rural properties and land can be utilized to build elderly care facilities, while rural tourism and specialty agriculture can be integrated with elderly care

services to diversify service offerings.

3. Problems in Rural Pension Service System in Jilin Province under the Background of Rural Revitalization

3.1 Low Elderly Care Service Guarantee and Insufficient Economic Support

3.1.1 Limited pension benefits

The basic pension standards in Jilin Province's urban and rural areas remain relatively low, with monthly per capita pensions barely covering basic living needs and insufficient to meet elderly residents' additional expenses like medical care and nursing services. Meanwhile, rural seniors face limited income from land transfers, while their children's ability to support them weakens due to unstable employment earnings, creating significant financial pressure on the elderly.

3.1.2 An imperfect financing mechanism

Rural elderly care services are primarily funded through government budgets, with limited collective support, low social capital participation, and a lack of diversified funding sources. The shortage of funds has resulted in delayed infrastructure development, low compensation for service personnel, and constrained sustainable development of the elderly care system.

3.1.3 Poor policy coordination

There are obstacles to the connection between rural pension security and medical security, social assistance and other policies, such as the low reimbursement rate of medical insurance and the narrow scope of assistance. Some elderly people are in financial difficulties due to diseases and find it difficult to obtain effective security and assistance.

3.2 Uneven Supply of Elderly Care Services, with Limited Quality and Coverage

3.2.1 Unreasonable layout of service facilities

In Jilin Province, most rural elderly care facilities are concentrated in county towns and central townships, while remote rural areas suffer from severe facility shortages. Approximately 40% of administrative villages lack any elderly care facilities, making it difficult for seniors to access nearby services. Existing facilities are rudimentary, with insufficient age-friendly adaptations and deficiencies in professional medical equipment, rehabilitation devices, and

cultural/entertainment amenities.

3.2.2 Single service content

Rural elderly care services primarily focus on basic living assistance and meal provision, while insufficient coverage exists for specialized nursing care for incapacitated seniors, mental and cultural needs, and health management. Additionally, there is a lack of tailored services addressing the specific requirements of rural elders, such as ethnic minority seniors' dietary preferences and home-based care for advanced-age individuals.

3.2.3 A shortage of skilled professionals

Rural elderly care workers are predominantly village cadres working part-time or volunteers, lacking professional training and adequate service skills to meet seniors' needs for nursing, rehabilitation, and psychological counseling. Furthermore, their low compensation and lack of social recognition have led to severe talent loss and unstable workforce stability.

3.3 Insufficient Resource Integration and Poor Service Coordination

3.3.1 Poor interdepartmental coordination

The lack of coordinated efforts among civil affairs, health, social security, and agriculture departments in rural elderly care services has resulted in fragmented operations, leading to minimal policy synergy and significant resource waste. For instance, the absence of integrated planning between elderly care facilities and medical infrastructure makes it difficult to effectively advance the integration of medical and elderly care services [4].

3.3.2 Imbalanced allocation of urban and rural resources

Urban areas boast abundant elderly care resources, while rural regions face resource shortages, resulting in a significant disparity in elderly care services between urban and rural areas. The limited extension of high-quality urban care resources to rural areas, coupled with the absence of effective resource-sharing mechanisms, makes it difficult to meet the growing demand for high-quality elderly care services among rural seniors [5].

3.3.3 Low degree of industrial integration

The integration of rural elderly care services with rural tourism, characteristic agriculture, cultural industry and other integrated development is insufficient, and the coordinated development mode of "pension + industry" has not yet been formed. The economic value and

social value of elderly care services have not been fully utilized, which restricts the sustainable development of the elderly care service system [6].

3.4 Weak Grass-Roots Service Capacity and Policy Implementation Blockages

3.4.1 Low level of service delivery

There is a shortage of rural elderly care service personnel and limited business ability, and the publicity of elderly care policies is not in place. Some elderly people do not know enough about the elderly care service policies and application procedures, so it is difficult for them to enjoy corresponding services and guarantees.

3.4.2 Underdeveloped supervision mechanism

Rural elderly care institutions lack standardized regulatory standards, with incomplete service quality evaluation systems, safety hazards, and inadequate services. Additionally, there is insufficient oversight of elderly care fund usage, posing risks of misappropriation and waste.

3.4.3 Outdated elderly care concepts

Some rural elderly people, influenced by the traditional concept of "raising children to support their old age", are less receptive to institutional care and mutual care, and prefer to stay at home. Meanwhile, their children, under the pressure of traditional filial piety, struggle to balance work and care, further aggravating the dilemma of elderly care.

4. Optimization Path of Rural Pension Service System in Jilin Province under the Background of Rural Revitalization

4.1 Improve the Elderly Care Security System and Strengthen Economic Support

4.1.1 Improve elderly care security benefits

Establish a regular growth mechanism for basic pension funds in the urban-rural residents' basic pension insurance system, dynamically adjusting pension standards based on economic development levels and price fluctuations, while increasing local government subsidies [7]. Improve the preservation and appreciation mechanisms for individual account funds, expand investment channels, enhancing fund returns, and increasing pension income for the elderly. Simultaneously, raise the reimbursement ratio for rural seniors' medical insurance, broaden the scope of coverage, and alleviate their medical burdens.

4.1.2 Strengthen the diversified financing

mechanism

Strengthen the government's fiscal responsibility by incorporating rural elderly care funding into the budget and progressively increasing the investment ratio. Encourage village collectives to establish special pension funds from land transfer revenues and collective economic profits, while enhancing collective subsidies. Guide private capital to participate in rural elderly care services through tax incentives, venue support, and financing guarantees to attract corporate investments in elderly care projects. Simultaneously, promote social donations to establish a diversified financing framework involving "government + collective + society + individuals".

4.1.3 Strengthen policy coordination and synergy

To strengthen the coordination mechanisms between rural pension security, medical insurance, social assistance, and disability protection policies, we should standardize policy criteria, streamline application procedures, and achieve resource sharing. For instance, include rural elderly with disabilities in long-term care insurance coverage while raising nursing subsidy standards. Implement fee reductions for elderly in extreme poverty and those receiving subsistence allowances, ensuring policy benefits precisely reach target groups [8].

4.2 Optimize the Supply of Elderly Care Services and Improve Service Quality

4.2.1 Improve the layout of service facilities

County-level planning should coordinate rural elderly care infrastructure development, establishing a three-tier service network: County Elderly Care Service Centers, Township Elderly Care Stations, and Village Elderly Care Points. Standardized elderly care service centers will be built in county towns, equipped with professional medical care, rehabilitation facilities, and cultural entertainment amenities. Township Elderly Care Stations will provide daytime care, meal assistance, and bathing support services. Village Elderly Care Points will utilize idle resources to deliver neighborhood-based care, ensuring full coverage of elderly services. Concurrently, service facilities will undergo age-friendly renovations including handrails, emergency call systems, and barrier-free access pathways to enhance safety and comfort [9].

4.2.2 Enriching the supply of service content

We are expanding basic services such as meal assistance, bathing assistance, cleaning assistance, medical assistance, emergency assistance, and recreational assistance. For elderly individuals with disabilities, we provide professional services including home-based care, rehabilitation guidance, and long-term care. For empty-nest elders, we offer emotional companionship and psychological counseling. In line with rural revitalization initiatives, we are developing integrated service programs like "elderly care + rural tourism," "elderly care + specialty agriculture," and "elderly care + cultural activities." These include organizing seniors to participate in agricultural experiences, rural tourism, and intangible cultural heritage activities to enrich their spiritual and cultural lives. Additionally, we pay special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups such as ethnic minority elders and senior citizens, providing personalized and differentiated services [10].

4.2.3 Strengthen the training of professionals

To establish a talent development system for rural elderly care services, we will collaborate with vocational colleges and technical schools to offer specialized programs in elderly care and health management, cultivating targeted professionals for rural elderly care. Regular skill training sessions will be organized for existing service personnel to enhance their service capabilities and professional competence, with certification requirements enforced for employment. Compensation packages will be improved, and incentive policies including social security guarantees and professional title evaluations will be implemented to attract local workforce and returning youth to participate in elderly care services. Simultaneously, volunteer service teams will be formed, encouraging retired medical professionals, college students, and villagers to engage in elderly care services, creating a complementary talent structure combining professionals and volunteers [11].

4.3 Integrate Elderly Care Resources and Enhance Coordination Efficiency

4.3.1 Strengthen inter-departmental collaboration

Establish a government-led, multi-department collaborative mechanism for rural elderly care services. This framework coordinates resources from civil affairs, health, social security,

agriculture, and cultural tourism sectors to develop unified development plans and policy standards, preventing resource waste and policy conflicts. For instance, it promotes coordinated development of elderly care facilities and medical infrastructure, enabling township health centers and elderly care institutions to be built adjacent to each other with shared resources. By integrating rural medical resources, the system provides medical staff and equipment support for elderly care facilities, advancing the deep integration of healthcare and elderly care services.

4.3.2 Boost the sharing of urban and rural resources

Establish a resource coordination mechanism for urban-rural elderly care services, encouraging collaboration between urban nursing homes, medical institutions, and rural care facilities. By implementing entrusted management, technical guidance, and staff training programs, we will extend high-quality urban elderly care resources to rural areas. Promote the interconnectivity of digital platforms for urban and rural elderly care services, enabling precise matching of service demands and supply to enhance resource utilization efficiency.

4.3.3 Facilitate the integrated development of industries

Leveraging the industrial foundation of rural revitalization, we promote deep integration of rural elderly care services with tourism, specialty agriculture, and cultural industries. For instance, idle rural houses are repurposed as wellness retreats to attract urban seniors seeking retirement living. By combining specialty agriculture development, nutritious health foods are created to provide elderly nutrition services. Traditional rural cultural resources are tapped to establish senior education centers offering calligraphy, painting, and opera training programs. Through industrial integration, this approach achieves dual economic and social benefits for elderly care services while enhancing the sustainability of the care system.

4.4 Enhance Grassroots Service Capabilities to Ensure Policy Implementation

4.4.1 Strengthen the construction of operational services

To strengthen rural elderly care service teams, we will expand grassroots staff through open recruitment and personnel reallocation. Staff

will receive professional training to enhance their skills in policy interpretation, service delivery, and emergency response. An integrated digital platform will be established to streamline online processing of applications, approvals, and supervision, thereby improving service efficiency. We will also intensify policy promotion through village broadcasts, information boards, door-to-door visits, and social media platforms, ensuring comprehensive awareness of care policies, service offerings, and application procedures to boost participation from senior citizens and their families.

4.4.2 Improve the regulatory evaluation mechanism

Establish service quality standards and safety regulations for rural elderly care, specifying requirements for service content, operational procedures, and safety management. A regular supervision mechanism will be implemented, led by the civil affairs department in collaboration with health authorities, market regulators, and fire departments, to conduct periodic inspections and evaluations of rural elderly care institutions, promptly identifying and resolving safety hazards and service issues. Third-party service quality assessments will be introduced with public disclosure of results to ensure transparency. A robust fund supervision mechanism will be established to strengthen oversight of fiscal allocations and private capital utilization, ensuring dedicated and efficient use of funds [12].

4.4.3 Change the concept of old-age care

Through educational campaigns and exemplary demonstrations, we aim to promote modern elderly care concepts, shifting rural elders' and their children's traditional mindset of "relying on children for support in old age" while increasing acceptance of institutional and mutual assistance care models. By upholding the traditional virtues of filial piety and family bonds, we organize events like "Respect for the Elderly Month" and "Civilized Family" awards to foster a social atmosphere that values elderly care and strengthens children's responsibility to support their parents. Simultaneously, showcasing innovative rural elderly care practices allows seniors and their families to experience firsthand the convenience and advantages of these services, thereby enhancing trust in the elderly care system.

5. Conclusion

In the context of rural revitalization, the development of Jilin Province's rural elderly care service system serves as both a vital livelihood project and a crucial pillar for advancing the rural revitalization strategy. While the province has initially established a diversified framework for rural elderly care services, it still faces prominent challenges including inadequate social security coverage, uneven service distribution, insufficient resource integration, and weak grassroots capabilities. To address these issues, Jilin must ground its efforts in local realities and leverage the rural revitalization strategy. This requires multi-dimensional initiatives such as improving pension security systems, optimizing service delivery, integrating elderly care resources, and strengthening grassroots capacities. The ultimate goal is to build a rural elderly care service system characterized by "government leadership, collective support, social participation, family responsibility, and urban-rural integration".

In the future, as the rural revitalization strategy advances and elderly care policies continue to improve, Jilin Province should deepen reforms in rural elderly care systems, strengthen policy innovation and practical exploration, and ensure rural seniors share the fruits of economic and social development. This will help achieve the goal of "adequate support, medical care, recreational activities, and meaningful contributions for the elderly", laying a solid foundation for building a happy countryside and a harmonious Jilin.

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