

Spiritual Elderly Care in Rural Areas: Practical Dilemmas and Development Paths Based on Marx's Theory of Human Needs

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Abstract: With the deepening of population aging, the spiritual needs of the rural elderly population have become increasingly prominent. Compared with material care, spiritual elderly care focuses more on emotional support, social interaction, and the realization of self-value, which constitutes an important dimension in improving the quality of life of the elderly. From the perspective of Marx's theory of human needs and all-round human development, human needs are not limited to basic material requirements but also include the pursuit of spiritual and cultural development. Under the background of social structural transformation and population mobility, rural spiritual elderly care still faces multiple practical difficulties in terms of family emotional support, public cultural supply, and the participation of elderly individuals. Based on the analysis of these issues, this paper proposes several development paths from the perspectives of elderly individuals, family relationships, social support, and grassroots governance, aiming to provide theoretical reference for improving the spiritual well-being of the rural elderly.

Keywords: spiritual elderly care; rural aging; spiritual needs; all-round human development

DOI: 10.69979/3041-0843.26.02.005

1 Theoretical Foundations of Spiritual Elderly Care

1.1 Marx's Thought on Human Needs and Spiritual Development

Within the theoretical system of Marxism, human needs are regarded as an important driving force for social development. In the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Marx pointed out that human needs possess multiple levels, including not only basic material needs but also spiritual and cultural needs. With the development of productive forces, human needs continue to expand and diversify, and spiritual needs have gradually become an indispensable part of human comprehensive development.

When discussing human development, Marx emphasized that people will not only be satisfied with the improvement of material living conditions, but also pursue the enrichment of spiritual life and the realization of self-worth. When analyzing the development of the working class, he pointed out that people "because of their needs, that is, their nature" not only need material means of life, but also yearn for knowledge, culture and spiritual growth. This shows that spiritual needs are a basic dimension of human development and an important part of realizing comprehensive human development.

From the perspective of Marxism, human spiritual development is inseparable from social practice. Material production provides a realistic basis for spiritual life, and spiritual needs in turn will promote people to participate in social practice and create richer forms of social life. In this way, a mutually promoting relationship is formed between material conditions and spiritual development.

With the development of society, basic material living conditions are becoming more and more secure, and people also value spiritual life more and more. In addition to basic survival needs, new needs will emerge, which reflects the characteristics of people as social and cultural subjects. Whether spiritual life is rich is not only related to the happiness of the individual, but also reflects the development level of the whole society. Therefore, under the background of deepening population aging, paying attention to the spiritual needs of the elderly is of great significance.

1.2 The concept of spiritual support in traditional culture

In traditional Chinese culture, family ethics has always been regarded as an important foundation of social relations, among which filial piety is at the core. The traditional concept of filial piety not only emphasizes providing material support to parents, but also requires emotional care and spiritual respect.

For example, Liji describes in detail how children should take care of their parents in daily life, emphasizing that true filial piety includes careful care, emotional companionship and due respect. This view shows that the support of parents is not limited to meeting material needs, but also pays more attention to spiritual care and emotional connection.

In modern society, social mobility has accelerated, family structure has also changed, and the traditional family oriented elderly care model has gradually changed. Due to the spatial separation of family members, daily emotional interaction is reduced, which affects the source of spiritual support for the elderly to some extent. Therefore, under new social conditions, how to explore diversified forms of spiritual elderly care while inheriting traditional ethical values has become a question worth studying.

2 The real dilemma of rural spiritual elderly care

2.1 The elderly have limited spiritual self care ability

Spiritual elderly care depends not only on external support, but also on the elderly's own adjustment ability. The so called spiritual self care refers to the elderly taking the initiative to pursue spiritual satisfaction and self development by participating in meaningful activities,

social exchanges and self realization.

However, in rural areas, some elderly people are not highly educated, have limited access to information, and do not have enough opportunities to participate in social activities. In this way, their spiritual life is relatively monotonous.

In addition, some elderly people do not pay much attention to their spiritual needs and focus on maintaining their daily life. The lack of cultural resources and social platforms further limits their possibility of participating in beneficial social activities.

In addition, as the traditional acquaintance based social structure in rural areas slowly weakens, the social circle of many elderly people has become smaller, and the network of emotional support has become more unstable, which may cause them to feel lonely and isolated.

2.2 Family emotional support is gradually weakening

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In modern society, social mobility has accelerated, the family structure has also changed, and the traditional family-oriented old-age care model has gradually changed. Due to the spatial separation of family members, the daily emotional interaction is reduced, which affects the source of spiritual support for the elderly to some extent. Therefore, under the new social conditions, how to explore diversified forms of spiritual old-age care while inheriting traditional ethical values has become a question worth studying.

3 The development path of rural spiritual elderly care

3.1 Enhance the subject consciousness of the elderly

The development of spiritual elderly care cannot be separated from the active participation of the elderly themselves. The first thing to do is to promote them to participate more in social exchanges and public activities, which is conducive to improving their sense of self worth and social belonging.

Through some public education or community activities, the elderly can realize that they still have the potential for independence and self realization. Encourage them to participate in cultural, educational and social activities, so that the elderly can find their social values again and slowly form a positive view of elderly care.

In addition, a mechanism of psychological support should be established to help the elderly improve their ability to regulate their emotions and self adjust. Community and social organizations can provide some psychological counseling, emotional support programs, and educational activities on mental health.

In addition, grassroots communities can also encourage the elderly to form mutual aid groups, interest associations, or develop some informal mutual aid networks so that they can provide emotional companionship and support to each other.

3.2 Reconstruct the family emotional support network

The family is still an important pillar of spiritual elderly care. To strengthen family emotional support, we must not only reactivate traditional ethical concepts, but also adapt these concepts to the actual situation of modern society.

Through some cultural activities and family education projects in the community, we can advocate a culture of respecting the elderly and emphasizing affection within the family. At the same time, modern communication technology can also be useful to help the elderly maintain emotional contact with their children living in other places.

Besides, family support can be combined with the community service platform, and the community provides psychological counseling, conflict mediation, social support and other services. Family, community and social organizations can work together to create an environment

that is more conducive to the family's spiritual elderly care.

3.3 Enrich the supply of rural cultural resources

To improve the spiritual elderly situation in rural areas, we must constantly enrich cultural resources. Governments, communities and social organizations should work together to promote more diversified cultural services for the elderly.

Public cultural facilities such as community activity centers, cultural activity rooms and rural libraries can provide important social and cultural participation spaces for the elderly. In addition, literary and artistic performances, reading activities, educational lectures, etc. can also be organized to enrich the spiritual life of the elderly.

Financial support and policy encouragement can also attract social organizations and professional institutions to participate in rural elderly care services, slowly forming a diversified service system.

3.4 Improve the service capacity of grassroots organizations

Grassroots organizations play a key role in the organization and coordination of spiritual elderly care services. Improving their service capabilities requires both institutional guarantee and organizational innovation.

Village level organizations can integrate spiritual care into their daily management responsibilities and regularly organize some cultural activities for the elderly. At the same time, a collaborative mechanism should also be established between local governments, social organizations and community groups to integrate resources and improve service efficiency.

In addition, some new organizational forms can be explored to combine administrative support and community participation. For example, volunteer teams, elderly associations and community service teams can contribute to the establishment of a sustainable rural spiritual elderly care system.

4 Conclusion

With the continuous deepening of population aging, the spiritual needs of rural elderly groups have attracted increasing attention. Spiritual elderly care not only concerns the quality of life of elderly individuals but also reflects the overall level of social development.

From the perspective of Marx's theory of human needs and all-round human development, attention to the spiritual life of the elderly has important theoretical and practical significance. In the future, further exploration of diversified spiritual elderly care models is necessary in order to better respond to the challenges of an aging society and promote the well-being of rural elderly populations.

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