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# Research on the Development Path of Cultural Pension for the Elderly in Rural China

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**Abstract:** As an important part of the rural pension system, cultural pension is an important way for the rural elderly to meet their spiritual and cultural needs and enhance their sense of well-being and access. However, at present, the development level of China's rural elderly cultural pension is low, and it is difficult to meet the needs of the vast number of rural elderly. The study found that the difficulties faced by the rural elderly cultural pension mainly include: the government has less investment in the construction of rural cultural pension, the function of rural family cultural pension is weakened, the service mechanism of rural cultural pension is not perfect, the infrastructure of rural cultural construction is weak, and the supply of rural community cultural pension is lack. In view of the current cultural pension dilemma of the rural elderly, it is necessary to construct the path from the following aspects: vigorously strengthen the propaganda and education of filial piety culture, increase the financial investment in rural cultural pension, enhance the cultural construction infrastructure of the rural elderly, improve the cultural pension regulations and systems and improve the participation of multiple subjects, so as to take scientific and effective measures in order to promote the further improvement of the cultural pension of the rural elderly. Promote the comprehensive and balanced development of the cause of aging and enhance the sense of access, happiness and security of the rural elderly.

**Keywords:** Cultural Pension, Rural Elderly, Difficulties, Development Path

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## 1. Introduction

The issue of elderly care has always been the focus of research in political and academic circles, and the Chinese government attaches great importance to the issue of elderly care services. The Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee proposed "implementing a national strategy to actively cope with population aging". This is the first time that the Party's Plenum elevated actively coping with population aging to a national strategy, signifying that the implementation of a national strategy to actively cope with population aging has become a major task for China's long-term population development, and also provides the basic guidelines for coping with population aging in the 14th Five-Year Plan period and even in the longer period to come. According to the data of China's seventh census, 18.7% of the total population is aged 60 and above, and the aging of the population has further deepened. For this large group of elderly people, under the reality of achieving a well-off society, the elderly, especially the rural elderly, have a lower

level of cultural pension due to the relative backwardness of rural economic development and infrastructure. This study takes the rural elderly as the research object, and researches the problems and development paths of cultural aging in the right to development of the rural elderly.

The research on cultural aging is currently focused on five aspects:

First, the connotation of cultural pension. Cultural pension refers to a positive and healthy way of pension that takes the basic material life needs of the elderly as the premise, satisfies the multi-level and diversified spiritual needs of the elderly and exchanges thoughts and feelings as the basic content, and aims at Tao's personal sentiment and enjoyment of old-age life [1], cultural pension is based on traditional culture and contemporary humanistic care as the core, various cultural and recreational activities and their services as the carrier [2], and he use of concepts, ethics, customs, patterns, systems and activities to ageing [3].

Second, the function of cultural pension. It was found that cultural pension can promote the function of physical and

mental health of the elderly [4], and most of the pension in the form of children in the family for aging or spend their old age in the community, if we can add elements of cultural pension in the community will be a powerful way to fill the shortage brought by the state aging [5]. The social, cultural and historical aspects of the world of life in the old age are of great importance [6]. Studies have shown the importance of culture in the process of aging in old age and found that one factor that plays a positive influence is community theater activities that enrich the cultural and recreational life of the elderly [7].

Third, the dilemma of cultural pension. The current awareness of cultural pension is weak, the related supporting facilities are not perfect, and the content of pension mode is single [8]; the ideological understanding of cultural pension is not in place, the policy promotion is not strong enough, and the service management is not perfect [9]; the resources of cultural pension are not invested enough and the development is backward; there is a lack of talents in the cultural pension industry [10]; the positioning of cultural pension is not clear, and the cultural pension service needs to be enriched [11].

Fourth, the path of cultural pension realization. Explore the scientific connotation of cultural pension and promote the contemporary concept of cultural pension [12]; optimize the institutional environment and continuously promote the cultural pension service system [13]; carry out diversified cultural activities for the elderly; and improve the policy system of cultural pension service [14]. Construct the elderly cultural education system and vigorously develop the elderly cultural industry [15]; in addition, there are studies that point out the current need to enhance the attention of rural cultural pension research and promote the construction of cultural pensions from the theoretical level [16].

From the analysis of the existing literature on cultural pension, it can be seen that the research on cultural pension in China is still at an early stage, and the main research objects on cultural pension are mostly urban elderly people, but fewer rural elderly people, and there is a lack of research specifically for cultural pension of rural elderly people. With the gradual improvement of the material living standard of the elderly, the spiritual needs of cultural pension are also growing. The development of cultural pension requires the support and efforts of all sectors of society to provide motivation for coping with aging. Therefore, this study takes rural elderly people as the research object to find out the dilemmas faced by rural cultural pension and propose practical and relevant countermeasure suggestions.

## **2. Analysis of the Difficulties Faced by Rural Cultural Pension**

At present, "cultural pension" in China's rural areas is still in its initial stage, and the development of cultural pension has been promoted to a certain extent by means of policy support, financial investment, infrastructure construction and organization of cultural, sports and recreational activities in various places in practice, although the cultural poverty alleviation and rural

revitalization strategies have laid a certain foundation for cultural pension, the implementation of cultural pension in rural areas still faces great difficulties. The implementation of cultural pension in rural areas still faces great difficulties, which are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

### ***2.1. In Sufficient Government Investment in Cultural Pension in Rural Areas***

For a long time, the government has mainly focused on the material aspects of the old-age service in rural areas, and less on the spiritual aspects, and the investment in rural public culture is very low, which is the main reason affecting the development of cultural pension in rural areas. In some rural areas, there are no public sports and fitness venues specifically for the elderly, and the elderly use traditional and single ways for fitness, such as a few elderly people walking around the village in pairs, and individual villages with a good foundation of mass organizations call for the mobilization of villagers with better economic status to make donations for the construction of village public fitness venues and the purchase of equipment. For most villages, due to the lack of government funding for rural cultural pensions, the development of cultural pensions is progressing slowly.

### ***2.2. Weakening of Cultural Pension Function of Rural Families***

Urbanization has led to the reduction of the scale of supporting the elderly in rural areas and the change of living style, which affects the behavior of children's financial support, emotional consideration and life care for their parents, and the reduction of family support resources inevitably leads to the weakening of the family pension function. The decline of filial culture in rural areas is an indisputable fact. Some children of the elderly mainly give the elderly a certain amount of economic support, with less regard for the psychological and spiritual needs of the elderly, and lack of emotional care for the elderly. The concept of pension is backward. In rural areas, there is a widespread phenomenon of material pension rather than cultural pension, and the obligation of support is one-sidedly understood as material support, seriously ignoring the "cultural pension" of the elderly. At present, the spiritual needs of the elderly in rural areas, especially those who are empty nesters and live alone, are often neglected, and there is a serious lack of spiritual life from family support.

### ***2.3. Inadequate Cultural Pension Service Mechanism in Rural Areas***

The mechanism of cultural pension service is missing in the rural pension service. Although the state is constantly improving the rural pension service system, there is no clear policy document to guide the cultural pension service, and there is a lack of top-level design. Due to the economic conditions, social resources and service products, the construction of cultural facilities in rural areas lags behind. In cities, there are resources such as senior universities and

libraries, but in rural areas, these facilities are relatively lacking. The lack of experience and enthusiasm in building social organizations for rural residents makes it difficult to build social organizations. In short, the mechanism of rural cultural pension service is not sound, which leads to the slow development of rural cultural pension.

#### **2.4. Weak Cultural Construction Infrastructure in Rural Areas**

The construction of cultural infrastructure directly affects the supply of cultural pension social security system and resources for rural elderly people. In terms of the supply of spiritual needs in traditional rural society, the collective recreational activities of rural elderly mostly stay in the social network formed by relying on blood and local ties, which hinders the implementation of the social security system for rural cultural pension. At present, the platform carrier of cultural construction for the rural elderly is mainly the rural community, but most of the rural communities lack professional organizations and professional guidance, neglect the cultural construction of the elderly, fail to fully mobilize and integrate the community cultural resources, and invest little in the community cultural activity facilities for the elderly, which leads to insufficient supply sources of cultural construction for the elderly and indirectly affects the willingness of the rural elderly to participate in their own cultural construction.

#### **2.5. Lack of Cultural Pension Supply in Rural Communities**

Currently, there is a lack of cultural elderly organizations in rural communities. There is still no special cultural pension guidance organization in rural communities, and other organizations such as community mutual aid organizations, senior citizens' rights organizations, and volunteer organizations are also seriously lacking. Moreover, senior citizens' interest organizations such as senior citizens' singing and dancing groups, chess and card clubs, reading clubs, calligraphy associations, musical instrument associations, handicraft associations, and fishing associations, which are more common in cities, are also almost absent in rural areas. Secondly, there are not enough community cultural elderly facilities. At present, in most rural areas, cultural pension service facilities are very scarce, and even in rural communities with slightly better economic conditions, there is a serious shortage of cultural pension service facilities such as senior activity centers, senior fitness places, recreational activity places and senior library. For example, as a pioneer in opening China's first university for the elderly, Shandong University for the Elderly released official data in 2022. It can be seen that as of February 25, 2022, Shandong University for the Elderly has more than 800 teaching classes and 24,000 registered students [17], but among these registered students, there are very few rural elderly people. The cultural and educational participation rate of the elderly in rural areas is extremely low. Another study analyzed the questionnaire survey of 600 students from three universities for the elderly in Shanghai, and found that most of

the students enrolled in universities for the elderly had urban household registration, and most of them had high school education or above. Before retirement, most of them engaged in relatively stable jobs with high income level, and 83.57% of the elderly had a monthly income of more than 2,000 yuan [18]. It can be seen that the elderly who are able to participate in the education of the elderly in the state are still a minority group, and this group of people generally live in the cities with more developed economy and more open environment, and there are few rural elderly people.

### **3. The Development Path of Cultural Pension for the Rural Elderly**

In order to better solve a series of problems faced by the rural elderly cultural pension, it is necessary to start from the rural areas themselves, build a new mechanism of cultural pension in rural areas, explore the optimal path of rural cultural pension, is to improve the rural pension service system, promote the process of cultural pension construction, and meet the diversified needs of social security of the rural elderly.

#### **3.1. Strengthen the Propaganda and Education of Filial Piety Culture**

After the elderly have solved the problems of old age support and medical care, cultural pension becomes a more advanced old-age care demand of the elderly. To enhance the consciousness of cultural pension, it is necessary to strengthen the propaganda and education of filial piety culture. Inherit the excellent traditional culture - "filial piety" culture. This includes supporting the elderly, taking care of them and caring for them. The main content of cultural pension includes strengthening spiritual companionship for the elderly, thus the inheritance of filial culture remains the basis for the deepening of the concept of cultural pension. At the same time, the new concept of cultural pension is promoted. Innovative publicity methods are used to enhance the awareness and acceptance of cultural pension among the population and create a good atmosphere for cultural pension through rural radio, network TV, emerging media platforms and rural community lectures.

#### **3.2. Increase the Financial Investment in Rural Cultural Pension**

Insufficient financial investment in cultural pension is the main reason that restricts the development of cultural pension in rural areas. The government should pay attention to the infrastructure construction of cultural pension in rural areas through financial support and other means, so that the idea of cultural pension takes root and benefits more rural elderly people. The government should establish a long-term mechanism to guarantee the supply of cultural pension services, include major cultural pension service projects and public welfare cultural activities into the recurrent expenditure budget of public finance, and carry out various forms of cultural pension activities. In addition, it should establish a transfer payment mechanism for cultural pension fund input,

and give a higher transfer payment ratio to economically backward areas according to the local economic development and financial income level in rural areas to support the construction of rural cultural pension.

### ***3.3. Enhance the Cultural Construction Infrastructure of Rural Elderly People***

Rural culture is a culture created by farmers and used by farmers, and its social function is to enable the whole society, especially farmers, to enjoy more spiritual and material cultural achievements. As the main body of rural culture, the spiritual needs of rural elderly people come from the cultural value system formed by the village as the ontology. Therefore, while improving the infrastructure, the cultural construction of rural elderly people should be integrated with the rural social lifestyle, recreational methods and rural culture, and establish infrastructure places and recreational activities suitable for rural elderly people with rural culture as the carrier, and grasp the farmers' cultural needs and their ability to create culture, i.e. by revitalizing rural culture, cultivating rural elderly people's positive and optimistic attitude towards life and enhancing their recognition of the social security system for rural cultural pension.

### ***3.4. Improve the Regulations and Systems of Cultural Pension***

Regulations and systems are notable factors affecting cultural pensions. Improve the cultural pension regulation system and make top-level design for the cultural pension of rural elderly from a strategic level. In terms of relevant policies, China does not have a systematic policy system specifically for cultural pension at present. Currently, the only regulations related to cultural pension are those related to spiritual comfort services for the elderly and the enrichment of their spiritual and cultural life, but they only appear as subsidiary contents of the relevant policies, scattered among the relevant policies containing the construction of social pension service system, the development of the cause of the elderly, elderly education and other relevant policies to deal with pension problems and improve public cultural services. China does not have special regulations on cultural pension. According to the changes of the situation, we should gradually establish a system of regulations on cultural pension and make clear legal provisions on the subjects, contents and obligations of cultural support and the maintenance and protection of the spiritual rights and interests of the elderly.

### ***3.5. Improve the Mechanism of Cultural Pension with the Participation of Multiple Subjects***

Cultural pension for the rural elderly is a complex system project. Cultural pension is an institutional arrangement led by the government and participated by multiple subjects to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the rural elderly and provide cultural welfare with the goal of improving the quality of cultural life of the elderly. Therefore, rural cultural pension requires the joint participation and support of the government, family,

community, society and market. The government, as a public administration department, should give full play to the leading role of the government for the development of rural cultural pension. At the same time, it is also necessary to strengthen the function of family cultural pension, improve the capacity of community cultural pension service, guide the active participation of society and market, build a government-led multi-subject pension mechanism, and form a socialized supply system of cultural pension service. Actively create a healthy social environment that respects, honors and loves the elderly, and make efforts to improve the happiness and sense of attainment of rural elderly people's life from the spiritual aspect.

## **4. Conclusion**

As an important part of rural old-age care system, cultural pension and material pension complement each other and are indispensable. Cultural pensions and material pensions should be implemented in the whole life of the elderly in their old age at the same time to improve the quality of life of the elderly. However, there are still many shortcomings in the construction of cultural pension care in rural areas in China: the government invests less in the construction of cultural pension care in rural areas, the cultural pension function of rural families is weakened, the service mechanism of cultural pension in rural areas is not sound, the infrastructure of cultural construction in rural areas is weak and the supply of cultural pension in rural communities is lacking. Therefore, scientific and effective measures are needed to vigorously strengthen the propaganda and education of filial piety culture, increase the financial investment in rural cultural pension, enhance the cultural construction infrastructure of rural elderly, improve the cultural pension regulation system and sound multi-body participation in order to promote the further improvement of the cultural pension of rural elderly. Not only let the urban elderly enjoy the cultural pension, but also drive the rural elderly towards the new mode of cultural pension. Promote the comprehensive and balanced development of the cause of aging, and enhance the sense of access, happiness and security of the rural elderly.

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