

# Analysis of the Countermeasures for Social Work Participation in Rural Intergenerational Family Education

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**Abstract:** *With the gradual increase of social pressure, intergenerational education has become an increasingly common and inevitable phenomenon. At the same time, China's social work has developed rapidly, and the ways and methods of participating in grassroots social governance have become increasingly diverse. Social workers use scientific theories and professional methods to widely participate in community volunteer activities, maintain social stability and order, and play a significant role in the operation of grassroots society. This article starts with the experience and methods obtained from the intervention of social work in social governance, and explores the ways, methods, and value of social work in intervening in rural intergenerational family education, in order to provide a new perspective for intergenerational family education.*

**Keywords:** *Social Work; Chinese Intergenerational Family Education; Countermeasure*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rapid development of China's social economy, a series of problems, such as unbalanced regional economic development, accelerated urbanization, changes in family structure, and increasing population aging, have caused many "left behind and semi left behind children". The education of intergenerational families has become an important part of China's society. Currently, due to various factors, the elderly are unable to effectively educate and communicate with left behind children. However, the involvement of social work can provide guidance and assistance to address the many issues that arise in "generational education", helping them improve the current situation of generational education, and safeguarding the growth of children. Social work, as an important component of social governance, adheres to the service concept of "helping others and helping themselves", comprehensively utilizes professional knowledge, skills, and methods, and widely participates in social governance<sup>[1]</sup>.

## 2. Definition of Intergenerational Family Education

Regarding the definition of intergenerational family education, research has shown that in family education, there is not only parent-child education from parents to children, but also intergenerational education from grandparents to grandchildren, both of which together constitute the main body of family education. Generational education plays an important role in family education, and its status and level directly affect the quality of family education, which in turn affects the long-term development of society<sup>[2]</sup>. The intergenerational family education involved in social work in this article refers to the way in which both parents of a child go out to work and their grandparents (grandparents or grandmothers) are responsible for supervising and educating the child's life, learning, mental health, and other aspects.

## 3. The Problems in Rural Intergenerational Family Education

### 3.1 At the Level of Alternate Guardians (Grandparents)

Due to the influence of traditional thinking on their ancestors, their educational methods and concepts are outdated, which affects their children's normal growth and personality development. As they age, their physical and psychological changes may cause physical discomfort and psychological

problems. Zeng Jianping and Luo Hongping found in their research on the family education level of guardians of left behind children in rural areas that there are several problems with intergenerational guardians: firstly, due to outdated concepts, they are prone to anxiety in education; secondly, there is a lack of effective communication with children in educating their grandchildren, resulting in many family conflicts; thirdly, the education method is single and lacks social support<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **3.2 At the child level**

Li Yan found in his research on “intergenerational education” in rural areas that children's behavioral control under the first intergenerational education. Generally poor hygiene habits; secondly, there may be mild or severe psychological barriers, such as mental loneliness, stubborn personality, and weak sense of collectivity; thirdly, there is a lack of correct learning objectives and generally poor academic performance<sup>[4]</sup>. Therefore, intergenerational family education can lead to a lack of experience and feedback in children's emotional communication, as well as a lack of companionship and support. The lack of parent-child education can lead to feelings such as anxiety, depression, and loss, leading to problems such as excessive stress.

## **4. The Causes of Intergenerational Family Education**

According to international research, international scholars believe that the main reasons for the formation of intergenerational upbringing are social and family issues. Anltranan Bee pointed out that intergenerational education is caused by many reasons, including parents of children leaving home to work, lack of financial ability to bear the responsibility of child rearing, etc. These reasons make grandparents take on the responsibility of taking care of children voluntarily or involuntarily<sup>[5]</sup>.

Chinese scholars believe that the reasons for the formation of intergenerational education in China are more complex. Currently, discussions on the reasons for the formation of intergenerational education mainly focus on traditional culture and issues such as parents going out to work. Chen Yiling believes that in traditional Chinese culture, it has always been a tradition for grandparents to help take care of their grandchildren. Grandparents, based on kinship, are involuntarily willing to take on the responsibility of taking care of their grandchildren. Due to the extensive parenting experience and high status of their ancestors, they can provide guidance and care for their children. This traditional custom not only contributes to emotional support, but also plays a positive role in the sustained stability of the family<sup>[6]</sup>.

## **5. Countermeasures for the Participation of Social Work in Rural Intergenerational Family Education**

Social work is a profession that focuses on practice, serves vulnerable groups in society, and aims to improve and protect people's welfare. Social work has provided some practical and feasible participation methods and paths to address the issue of education for rural intergenerational families, and has actively played an important role. The specific measures are as follows:

### **5.1 Strategies for Social workers to Intervene in Rural Intergenerational Family Education through Support and Advocacy Methods**

Social work adheres to the principle of “helping others and helping themselves”, upholds the service concept of altruism, uses scientific and professional methods of helping others, and guides people to support compliance with policies, regulations, and rules during daily life by promoting health knowledge and conducting psychological counseling, making important contributions to grassroots social governance. Similarly, the concept of intergenerational family education also faces many practical and contradictory issues, such as difficulty in communication and exchange, insufficient family counseling support, and high difficulty in children's learning. Social workers can intervene in intergenerational families as supporters to “cross the generation gap and help grow” without interfering with the family structure.

#### **5.1.1 Emphasize the Importance of Family Education and Advocate for Social Support for Intergenerational Family Education by Social Workers**

Children from intergenerational families may not be able to actively participate in school

parent-child activities and become discouraged, reflecting the important position of family education. Vigorously developing the local economy and keeping parents working locally, social workers can appeal to all sectors of society to support intergenerational family education through publicity, community participation, government issues, and other means. For example, in the “Intergenerational Education Support Group” action in Suzhou, a mutual aid group was established to help children grow. Subsequently, we will strengthen the guidance of social public opinion and promote the formation of a good public opinion environment that values intergenerational education throughout society. We will strengthen the positive promotion of intergenerational education and actively explore guidance models suitable for grandparents to carry out intergenerational education, continuously improving the quality of intergenerational education<sup>[7]</sup>. At the same time, it is further advocated to open social and cultural resources to intergenerational families, reduce the economic burden of education for intergenerational families, and help them overcome the problem of insufficient educational resources.

### ***5.1.2 Understanding Family Situations and Building Trust with Them, Social Workers Advocate for the Democratization of Family Education***

Social workers should first understand the specific situation of intergenerational families, including the number of family members, age, family income, housing conditions, etc., and establish trust relationships. From the perspective of social work, it is believed that the family is the factory that shapes human nature, emphasizing the communication forms of family members in the family, and constructing family rules<sup>[8]</sup>. Social workers can serve as advocates for intergenerational family education, paying attention to the current development status and problems of intergenerational family education. Through propaganda, organization, participation, and other forms, they advocate for more high-quality, diversified, and democratic intergenerational family education, promote the development of intergenerational family education, and provide social strength for the harmonious development of intergenerational families.

### ***5.1.3 Social Workers Provide Psychological and Emotional Support to Family Members as Supporters***

The problems faced by intergenerational families may have an impact on the psychological and emotional well-being of family members. Therefore, social workers can provide psychological and emotional support to family members through conversations and counseling, addressing their concerns and problems, and indirectly helping children grow up healthily.

### ***5.1.4 Coordinate Relevant Training and Education through Social Workers to Promote Diversified Educational Methods***

In recent years, traditional face-to-face education methods have been restricted. Social workers can help intergenerational families find relevant training institutions and learning resources, encourage them to try diverse forms of education, improve the education level and work skills of family members, help them increase their income sources and improve their quality of life, and enable intergenerational families to better adapt to the educational needs during the epidemic.

## ***5.2 Strategies for Social Work Intervention in Rural Intergenerational Family Education under Treatment Methods***

During the intervention period, social workers flexibly provide emotional intervention, adjust psychological behavior, collect and evaluate residents' health information, and other volunteer activities through various strategies to help people develop good habits, smoothly overcome difficult periods, and make society more stable. Referring to the intervention experience of social workers, as therapists, social workers are providing guidance to elderly educators and parents of children to help them better cope with the problems in intergenerational family education.

### ***5.2.1 Helping Elderly Educators Understand the Educational Concepts of the Younger Generation***

In intergenerational family education, there are significant differences in the educational concepts of elderly educators compared to the younger generation in modern society, resulting in different educational methods and methods. The lower education level, narrow knowledge range, rigid thinking patterns, old ideological concepts, limited range of communication activities, and the advantageous psychology of “past generations” of their ancestors make them extremely dependent on experience when educating their grandchildren. Their vision and ideas are inevitably disconnected from modern society, and may actually delay the socialization process of their grandchildren<sup>[9]</sup>. Social workers can use training, discussions, and other means, such as in the “Family and Plan” project in Chongqing to

carry out the “Generation Passion, Generation Passion” study group, where guardians of generations can learn how to let go, in order to solve intergenerational conflicts, help elderly educators change their grandparents' upbringing concepts, change old educational methods, and effectively communicate with their grandchildren to reduce intergenerational conflicts.

### ***5.2.2 Guide Parents of Children to Establish Good Communication Channels with Elderly Educators***

In intergenerational families, there is intergenerational estrangement and poor communication between parents of children and elderly educators, leading to difficulties in educating grandchildren. Grandfathers have rich practical experience, while fathers have rich theoretical knowledge. If there is a lack of effective communication in the process of raising and educating children, it can easily trigger conflicts between two generations, leading to family disharmony<sup>[10]</sup>. Social workers can establish effective channels of interaction between both parties, such as family meetings, to enable them to communicate and exchange more fully, reduce family conflicts caused by intergenerational differences, and reach consensus. For example, in the public lecture on improving the ability of intergenerational education held in Chengdu, how to create a harmonious family atmosphere was discussed.

### ***5.2.3 Assist Elderly Educators and Parents in Developing Education Plans***

In intergenerational family education, elderly educators and parents often have different educational plans when educating their grandchildren, leading to certain problems in the growth and development of children. The differences in family education concepts between grandparents and parents may result in some bad habits that children may develop not being corrected in a timely manner, which can have a certain impact on their healthy development<sup>[11]</sup>. As a result, social workers can assist elderly educators and parents of children in formulating educational plans that are tailored to their children's actual situations and needs, and cultivate their interests, hobbies, and talents.

### ***5.2.4 Providing Psychological Support as a Therapist***

In intergenerational family education, elderly educators and parents of children face some psychological problems, such as stress and emotional issues. By providing psychological support to them, social workers can effectively help them relieve pressure and adjust their mentality, and can transfer family education expertise, including educational theory, psychology, interpersonal communication communication, to children's parents and elderly educators, in order to improve the effectiveness of education and provide more comprehensive support and help for intergenerational family education.

## ***5.3 Strategies for Social Work Intervention in Rural Intermittent Family Education through Linking Resources***

When facing sudden difficulties, social resources and social assistance systems will be severely impacted. Social work can use its functions of solving difficulties and developing, collecting and evaluating social needs, timely coordinating government and relevant departments for feedback, and linking social organizations, public welfare institutions, foundations, enterprises and other social resources to accurately and quickly integrate social resources. It plays an important role in connecting and coordinating the material supply chain during special periods. Similarly, in the practice and guidance process of intergenerational family education, it is also necessary to integrate and link social resources to effectively help intergenerational families solve their difficulties.

### ***5.3.1 Identify the Needs for Intergenerational Family Education***

Firstly, social workers can understand the key issues and required resources in intergenerational family education through surveys, symposiums, and other means. Through this approach, we can gain a deeper understanding of the issues in intergenerational family education. For example, Longnan City focuses on intergenerational education. In the “escort” action of social workers for children's growth, they visit households to fully understand their problems and needs, and better serve next-generation families.

### ***5.3.2 Social Workers Collect Resources in the Community as Resource Linkers***

Social workers can collect information, professional knowledge, and resources related to family education by contacting various resources in the community, such as community groups, resource centers, daycare centers, libraries, etc. And actively coordinate community resources to provide necessary support and assistance for intergenerational families.

### 5.3.3 Social Workers Coordinate Advantageous Resources among All Parties as Resource Linkers

Social workers can use the internet, social media, and other means to transmit information about related resources to intergenerational families, such as family education regulations, opinions and information from family education experts. They can also coordinate and utilize family and community resources, such as domain experts and volunteers, to organize community activities at the community level, increase the social circle and family support network of intergenerational families, and collaborate with local government agencies and non-profit organizations, And provide more education, funding, medical and other assistance through cooperation.

### 5.3.4 Social Workers Provide Training and Guidance as Resource Linkers

According to the needs of next-generation family education, social workers can organize family education training and counseling courses to help them solve educational problems. For example, professional family education experts can be invited to give lectures, and experts proficient in social and communication skills can also be invited to help next-generation families learn educational and communication skills.

## 6. Conclusions

From the perspective of intergenerational family education, social work can effectively alleviate the shortcomings of intergenerational family education and promote its healthy and beneficial development. Social work has the characteristic of keeping up with the times and adapting to changing circumstances in the concept and methods of participating in intergenerational family education, timely compensating for the shortcomings of parent-child education, and innovating traditional book education. Social work can timely intervene in promoting, guiding treatment, and linking resources in the education of intergenerational families, helping them to operate sustainably, reducing family conflicts, enhancing family cohesion and education, achieving the goal of children and the elderly progressing together, education and family harmony, and providing a new perspective for the innovation of China's education system. In the future, society needs to be more proactive in playing the role of social work, Strengthen the professional training and practical abilities of social workers, and combine with the local situation to carry out more social work projects suitable for rural intergenerational families, in order to improve the education issues of rural intergenerational families and improve the quality of life of rural social groups.

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