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Social Work Modes of Rural Women Ability Construction: A Case Study of Luzhai Village in Yunnan Province

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Abstract Taking Luzhai Village as a case, this paper discussed social work modes of rural women ability construction using marsh gas project, education project, handicraft project, and healthcare project as operation carrier. It focused on ability restoration and ability improvement to comprehensively respond to women demand and development. In the process of project implementation, it is recommended to avoid gender segregation, pay close attention to women subsistence ethics, properly treat traditional gender mode, and care about girl growth.

Key words Social work, Ability construction, Social gender, Equality of men and women

In present China, social gender theory and development practice are constantly developing. However, intervening of professional social work against rural women poverty work is only limited in project form in some areas^[1]. In this study, using Luzhai Village in Yunnan Province as a case, we summarized social work modes of rural women ability construction, to promote introspection and discussion about intervening against social gender development practice. Luzhai Village consists of 8 natural villager groups, 337 households and 1 469 villagers. 6 natural villages are inhabited by Zhuang people, accounting for 80% of the whole village population, so Luzhai Village is a typical minority mountain village. Villagers of Luzhai take agricultural income as their basic economic source all the time. According to statistics of local government, Luzhai villagers have annual income per capita of 380 yuan and per capita grain of 300 kg. Luzhai Village is an object of help-the-poor campaign at the city level.

1 Connotation of social work modes of rural women ability construction

The ability construction is to cultivate ability and the purpose is to promote endogenous origin of development of weak groups. For social workers, the sustainable development ability construction should solve the problem of building which ability. It is required to focus on two kinds of ability: the first is potential ability and local knowledge of villagers, such as farming experience, ethnical and cultural knowledge, Chinese herbal medicine knowledge, and ethnical handicraft, *etc*; the second is building new ability on the basis of existing ability, for example, increasing rights and improving awareness^[2]. In Luzhai Village, the women ability construction is carried out focusing on the above works.

1.1 Recognizing original ability and exploring potential

ability With building of male-dominated culture, fixing of mainstream scientific knowledge, and impact of material civilization, rural women are marked as backward, ignorant and low quality groups. They deny themselves, have crisis of status recognition, lose ability, and become objects to be supported and weak groups to be enlightened. According to social works, potential is the foundation for individual development and everyone has potential. Fundamental approach for ability restoration is to remove social label and impression fixed on them, recognize their functions in history and reality, and emphasize value of women knowledge. Rural women social work ability construction recognizes experience value of women production and living and takes this as core part of rebuilding women confidence and ability. The most typical method is that social workers go to Luzhai Village and ask women to talk about historical work. This is not only an essential research means, but also a political method. It can confirm women's experience, strengthen their confidence, and grant rights to women^[3]. Besides, the ability restoration also includes discovering and consolidating original social relationship network and social resources. Women are not good at solving problems because they are not good at discovering and bringing into full play existing resource relationship. Therefore, social workers also should help women realize importance of existing resources and relationship, and help them sort out these relationships and resources.

1.2 Improving original ability and building new ability

Original ability of women in Luzhai Village is weak, manifested in low educational level (mainly junior middle school and below). In family, women rely on men; in communities, women's opinion is belittled, and they fail to better participate in public decision making. Thus, it is particularly important to improve educational level. Building new ability is mainly based on satisfying daily living demands and long-term development of women. Health condition of women in Luzhai Village causes worry, especially reproduction health condition. Our survey shows that lack of healthcare awareness and knowledge is an essential reason for this condition. Through operation of healthcare project, it is expected to set up

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healthcare awareness of women and strengthen their ability of preventing diseases and self-protection. The purpose of marsh gas project is also to build new ability. It should be noted that improving original ability and building new ability also includes expansion of original relationship network, building new relationship, and seeking new resources.

2 Operation of social work modes of rural women ability construction

The ability construction is based on current situation of demands of Luzhai Village and its women. It relies on restoration and improvement of women's ability through specific projects. Projects include the marsh gas project, education project, handicraft project, and healthcare project.

2.1 Marsh gas project This project is to provide funds for women in the form of interest-free loan and give related knowledge and technology to women. This project is realized through effective demonstration and gradual popularization. Implementation of the marsh gas project not only saves energy, is favorable for environmental protection, but also reduces economic and labor burden of women, improves women health, stimulates enthusiasm and confidence of women participating in community activities, and further liberates women.

2.2 Education project Education project includes two parts: the first is establishing education fund committee, to subsidize poor children to study, especially dropout girls. The second is running women night schools. Types of night schools are rich and varied, for example, schools can be fixed and floating. In night schools, women can learn knowledge about farming, raising pigs, bringing up children, making handicraft, sanitation and healthcare. Night schools become place of women connecting, communication, and entertainment and recreation. In equal and interactive irregular education, girls also participate and play a great role. For example, the first teachers of night schools are in-school teenagers. They are also responsible for organization and coordination of night schools.

2.3 Handicraft group activities, sanitation and healthcare projects Handicraft groups are made up of spinning, weaving, embroidery crackajacks and interested women. At first, women get together for spinning and weaving. Then they sell spinning and weaving and embroidery products at market. Sales income is firstly distributed among women groups and then reserved for public fund. Use of public fund and making of handicraft are collectively discussed and jointly decided by all women. This project not only responds to livelihood problem of women and protects traditional handicraft art of minority people, but also cultivates calculation, financing, organization, coordination, communication, and cooperation ability of women.

The sanitation and healthcare project, through interview of every household and physical examination of township hospitals, determines education and training items, connects township hospital and village healthcare person, selects and trains backbone

women, promotes continuing healthcare education and support work, and establishes village-wide women healthcare support network. It should be noted that value of traditional Chinese herbal medicine and mutual teaching is also the major teaching points.

3 Characteristics of social work modes of rural women ability construction

The social work mode of rural women ability construction sticks to social work value concept, emphasizes situation principle, pays close attention to participation methods and process theory. More importantly, it focuses on gender segregation, living ethnics of women, properly treats traditional gender mode, and cares about girl development.

3.1 Avoiding the gender segregation The implementation of project is to improve women ability construction and awareness, so social works pay attention to women, but neglect men. In fact, women development should be based on the principle that men and women are always subjects of social development. It is recommended to always insist on the principle of "men and women being the social entirety", *i. e.* men are part of women and women are part of men^[4]. In the process of women ability construction, social workers should notice changes of men brought about by women. The project pays more attention to considering and studying women development from surrounding relationship of women. In substance, the method of ability construction is not to create vacuum environment to protect their development. Instead, it is to stimulate them to analyze and treat existing relationship, including relationship with men, and seek or select a proper and effective approach for their development.

3.2 Considering living ethics of women Living ethics of women takes "living centered" basic principle. Whether women participate in the ability construction? What about the participation degree? These depend on demands of women for self-living and sense of safety. The ability construction is an arduous and long process. Every step of improvement and development of women will inevitably bring about more criticism and pressure of patriarchal society. This will create serious psychological burden of women, threaten their living demands and make them lose sense of safety. The process of ability construction is an arduous process for women, so the willpower of women is also particularly important. Social workers should take notice of this and be patient with women, understand and support women.

3.3 Properly treating traditional gender mode Traditional gender mode results in unequal gender and becomes essential reason for increasing rights of women. Nevertheless, it also should note positive function of social stability brought by traditional gender mode as social regulation. Changing unequal situation does not mean completely get rid of traditional gender mode. If women and men share all social affairs, women value will lose because it takes men indicator as mark of liberating women. A great task of ability construction is to set up independent value of women in communication and understanding of men and women. "Women centered"

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