Social Support for Older Adults in China: Challenges and Policy Development

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Challenges

• Unique challenges when addressing the issue of population ageing in China:
  • the pace of our aging trend and the amount of absolute number of elderly people;
  • the governmental courses of action has played essential role in accelerating the aging transition.
  • migration occurred by urbanization and industrialization makes an increasing number of the left-behind elderly in rural area as well as the empty-nest elderly in urban area.
  • the dual system draws divergent aging trajectories for people in urban and rural areas, and for employees in enterprises and officials in government bodies and public institutions.
Enlarging rural/urban difference
Urban/ rural difference

**City**
- Work, 66.3%
- Pension, 22.4%
- Family member, 6.6%
- Subsidy, 2.3%
- Property, 0.7%
- Other, 1.6%

**Village**
- Work, 41.2%
- Pension, 47.7%
- Family member, 4.5%
- Subsidy, 4.6%
- Property, 0.2%
- Other, 1.8%
Health status

- Healthy: 44%
- Basically healthy: 39%
- Not healthy but independent: 14%
- Dependent: 3%

Pie chart showing the distribution of health statuses.
- Universal coverage of pension and medicare
- To develop the long term care services
- To promote the social participation of the elderly
- To create new culture of ageing society
- Legal protection and age-friendly environment.

Government response
Development of social support for older adults

• Policies and regulations

Based on the ageing situation mentioned above, the central and local governments have attached great importance to social support for older adults.

Community services for the elderly in China: The state has not only issued policies for community services, but also made relevant regulations on that in a series of important policies.
## Policies of Social Support for the Elderly in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Law</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Issuing Authority</th>
<th>Date Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Rights Protection Law (2012 Revision)</td>
<td>Standing Committee of the National People's Congress</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Policies Issued by Central Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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<th>Date Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions on the Strengthening the Work on Aging</td>
<td>the State Council</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions of Accelerating the Socialization of Social Welfare</td>
<td>the State Council</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions of the State Council concerning Accelerating the Development of the Service Sector for the Elderly</td>
<td>the State Council</td>
<td>2013</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Policies Issued by State Sectors

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<th>Date Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opinions of Accelerating the Development of the Service Sector for the Elderly</td>
<td>10 State sectors</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions of Comprehensively Promoting Home-based Services for the Elderly</td>
<td>10 State sectors</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Practice:
  
  • providing care services
  
  (1) Dining service; (2) Personal care; (3) Day care; (4) Health care; (5) Household care; (6) Emergency assistance; (7) Information services; (8) Spiritual care; (9) Legal assistance; (10) Entertainment activities; (11) the improvement of infrastructure.

  • providing economic subsidies.

  Pension subsidy are delivered through two ways: 1) direct allowance, in which the service providers and service consumers can receive the subsidy directly; and 2) indirect way, which is through government's purchasing of healthcare service.
Continuing Challenges

• The fast aging pace and the huge number of aging population make the national finance heavily burdened.

• The support networks, formal and informal, are both struggling.

• In addition, if we consider healthy aging a dynamic process and population-based issue, migrant population caused by urbanization should not be neglected in current China.
Advocacy

- The topic of population aging gradually enters into the public’s view and more frequently appears on the mass media only started in recent years. The invisible but powerful hands behind are the development of related industries.

- Investment follows immediately and makes “aging industry” a “sunrise industry. For the last two to three years, forums and conferences with the theme of aging industry sprang up like mushrooms all over the country and participants came from various

- On the one hand, the market for elderly people as well as the whole population to have a high quality of life would be built and enriched within a short period; on the other hand, the growth in industries will force the government to introduce policies more aged-friendly and address aging issue more concretely and comprehensively.
Thanks for your listening!