

Analysis of the Ways of Anti-domestic Violence for Rural Women in China

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Abstract: The promulgation and implementation of anti-domestic violence law have effectively promoted the prevention and suppression of domestic violence, and protected the legitimate rights and interests of domestic violence victims. However, domestic violence is still widespread in rural areas of China, and the frequency of domestic violence is higher than that of urban areas, and the phenomenon of domestic violence is more serious, and victims have difficulties in getting rid of domestic violence and relief difficulties which deserves social attention after the implementation of this law for seven years. Therefore, we should study the current situation and characteristics of domestic violence suffered by women in rural areas of our country, analyze the internal and external causes of domestic violence in rural areas of our country, explore the feasible path of anti-domestic violence of rural women in our country, and escort the prevention and suppression of domestic violence.

Keywords: Anti-Domestic Violence; Applicable Effect; Executive Subject Improvement Countermeasure

1. Presentation of Problems

In China, according to data released by the China Women's Federation News Network, as of the end of 2019, about 30% of China's 270 million families have domestic violence, and a large proportion of them occurred in rural families [1]. The incidence of domestic violence is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. It has been seven years since China's first anti-domestic violence law--the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, was promulgated and implemented. After the implementation of the law, some scholars conducted field investigations in

corresponding rural areas. For example, an empirical investigation on domestic violence among 1,435 women in a village in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in 2020 found that 60.5% of women had suffered domestic violence. Among those who experienced domestic violence, 30.3% frequently, 49.1% occasionally, 12.5% rarely, and 8% only once [2]. In 2016, an investigation in Taojiang County Women's Federation of Yiyang City, Hunan Province in three years, showed that 385 cases were received and handled in three years, of which 230 were marriage and family rights, and 72 were domestic violence cases, accounting for 31.3% of marriage and family, of which 68 were rural women, accounting for 94.4% of domestic violence [3]. It can be seen that rural domestic violence is still frequent. Domestic scholars have also conducted empirical investigations and data analysis on domestic violence in rural areas, focusing on the status quo, causes and countermeasures of domestic violence in rural areas. For example, Chen Wei conducted a social questionnaire survey on rural families in different regions of the country in 2007, analyzed the deep cause of domestic violence against women in rural areas from the perspective of gender, and proposed countermeasures to improve local anti-domestic violence legislation and build a social joint force system to prevent and control domestic violence [4]. Song Yueping, Tan Lin and Tao Yi made use of the data of the third Chinese Women's Social Survey through logistic regression analysis, and concluded that marriage loss increased the risk of rural married women suffering domestic violence from their husbands [5]. As a whole, most empirical investigations and studies on rural domestic violence are carried out around a certain region, and the research conclusions are different with local characteristics, such as the influence of religious factors in Northwest China and local folk customs in some ethnic

minority areas. However, there are some problems in data analysis, such as the selection and control of variables, data errors. Therefore, based on the data of the fourth Chinese women's social status survey and the existing empirical investigation and data analysis on rural domestic violence, this article will analyze the reasons and characteristics of domestic violence in rural areas of China from the perspectives of society, family and individuals, combined with the current situation of domestic violence in rural areas of China. According to the implementation of Anti-Domestic Violence Law in rural areas, the feasible measures to prevent and cure domestic violence for rural women are put forward.

2. Current Situation and Characteristics of Domestic Violence Suffered by Rural Women in China

2.1 Main Types of Domestic Violence

The domestic violence suffered by rural women in China is mainly physical violence and mental violence. Among them, the degree of physical violence reached mild and moderate, but the trend of severe physical violence has a rising trend. In terms of mental violence, according to the survey data in recent years, mental violence shows an obvious upward trend, mainly mild mental violence.

2.2 Awareness of Domestic Violence

In terms of the cognitive aspects of types and the nature of domestic violence, first of all, according to the existing empirical investigation and analysis, the cognition of rural women on the types of domestic violence is still good at physical violence, but the understanding of sexual violence is quite different, and the understanding of mental violence is not ideal. It is difficult for the parties concerned to realize that they have encountered mental violence, because mental violence is usually accompanied by the attack on the ability of the parties, demeaning and emotional manipulation. On the other hand, according to the provisions of Article 2 of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law of China stipulated that "domestic violence as used in this Law refers to physical, mental and other violations committed between family members by means of beating, binding, mutilation,

restriction of personal freedom, and regular abuse and intimidation", domestic violence is an act of aggression, with serious social harm and illegal nature is beyond doubt. However, from the actual situation of solving domestic violence in rural areas of China, whether it is the abuser or the victim, it is common to characterize domestic violence as a "domestic private matter", do not consider domestic violence to be illegal, and rationalize the violence as a marital conflict and a normal life pattern.

How to react to and deal with domestic violence? After rural women suffer from domestic violence for a long time, they are often prone to ignore or underestimate their own resources, overestimate their husband's resources or role, and generally rationalize the interpretation of domestic violence, such as "fatalism" and "normal phenomenon", and choose to suffer and tolerate marital violence for a long time. In dealing with domestic violence, most women do not take the initiative to give priority to the police or the use of legal means to solve domestic violence, on the one hand, due to the appearance, their own traditional concepts or coercion. On the other hand, because the police is difficult to solve the problem, their own lack of legal awareness and funds, places and other forces to support. In practice, the way to deal with domestic violence in rural areas is more to solve the problem within the family and mediate with grass-roots organizations such as village committees, police stations and women's federations, but most of them have not achieved relatively stable and effective relief effect, but provoke continuous domestic violence.

2.3 Characteristics of Domestic Violence in Rural Areas of China

First of all, the occurrence of rural domestic violence has the characteristics of a long duration. In practice, many social workers' service cases in response to domestic violence incidents have reflected that the majority of victims are from rural areas, and when they finally seek help, the number of times they have been abused is already high, and most of the time they have been abused has been more than ten years or even decades. Once most of the victims tolerate the violence, the perpetrator's domestic violence will become

more and more serious, and the cycle of violence will continue again and again, and the independent will of the victim will be gradually consumed in the cycle. Even if the victim resists the violence for a long time, when the resistance fails, it will be difficult to escape from domestic violence, which called "Battered woman syndrome", referred that women often believe that they are powerless to change the situation, suffer in silence, and no longer resist until the severity of the domestic violence exceeds their tolerance, and choose to end the domestic violence by means of violence after enduring a long period of domestic violence. They are pessimistic in the face of domestic violence, and give up resistance to the abuser, which indirectly contributes to ongoing domestic violence.

Secondly, the types of violence are diverse and psychological violence is on the rise. Although beating and abuse are still the main forms of rural domestic violence, the current violence perpetrated by the abuser is not limited to physical violence and mental violence, there are physical violence, sexual violence, mental violence and economic control appear together or alternately, and the trend of mental violence is on the rise. For example, a survey on domestic violence among 3998 married women in rural areas of Jilin from November 2004 to January 2005 showed the incidence rates of total violence, psychological violence, physical violence and sexual violence in married women were 64.8%, 58.1%, 29.7% and 16.75% [6]. In 2010, another survey conducted on 1,577 women in a county in Ningxia, found that among the domestic violence suffered by women, 30%, 16.3%, 1.8% and 6.4% were mental violence, physical violence, sexual violence and physical injury [7]. Through the proportion of mental violence, it can be seen that the phenomenon of women suffering from mental violence in rural areas of China is serious.

Finally, domestic violence is becoming more and more insidious. Firstly, most rural areas live in independent courtyards, and the place of domestic violence is generally hidden at home. On the one hand, due to the traditional concept of "family dirty linen should not be aired in public", most incidents of domestic violence do not want to publicize. On the other hand, even if some major domestic violence or violence occurs outdoors, with the change of

social atmosphere, most villagers begin to focus more on their own family affairs, and less and less participate in the public life of the rural collective. Villagers have a strong sense of distance, regard domestic violence as a private family matter, and quickly fade their attention to domestic violence in their neighbors. Secondly, domestic attention to domestic violence in rural areas is low. According to the Monitoring Report on the fourth anniversary of the implementation of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the People's Republic of China, compiled by the Beijing Women's Rights Organization, 84 percent of all domestic violence areas were reported in cities, while only 14 percent were in rural areas. It can be seen that the visibility of victims of domestic violence in rural areas is lower than that in cities, and domestic violence incidents in rural areas are also secretive to the outside world, which makes it difficult for outsiders to know the victims' experiences, and how to accurately locate and help victims of domestic violence in rural areas is also a problem.

3. Analysis of the Causes of Domestic Violence Suffered by Rural Women in China

3.1 Individual Reasons

From the perspective of the perpetrator of domestic violence, combined with the existing domestic investigation and interview results on domestic violence incidents in rural areas, in addition to the perpetrator's own education level, moral level, emotional management ability and bad habits, such as drinking, gambling and other factors, the more significant feature of the perpetrator of domestic violence is a strong desire to control the other. This desire for control stems from the abuser's inner power mentality, that is, in intimate relationships, one party thinks that he has the right to dominate and control the other party, and the rights that the abuser thinks he deserves are usually violations of the rights of the other party [8]. The reason why abusers in rural areas have a sense of power mentality, in addition to family reasons and personal reasons, is more obviously affected by regional marriage customs, such as the high cost of marriage. In the remote rural areas of China, such as Ningxia, Qinghai and other areas,

affected by ethnic customs, men need to pay high dowry to women for marriage. However, the marriage established with high dowry lacks emotional basis and promotes the commercialization of women. Once there are disharmonious factors in marriage, men are easy to fall into psychological imbalance. They think their expense is not equal, and they control each other through domestic violence. From the perspective of the victim women, from the above-mentioned reaction and handling methods after suffering domestic violence, based on the long-term socialization process, children's hindering and husband's economic control, the abused rural women generally acquiesce or tolerate domestic violence and regard domestic violence as a natural phenomenon in marriage. The pattern of family life in which domestic violence occurs is mixed with the marital relationship. On the other hand, the injured party may be unaware of certain aspects of domestic violence. First of all, they do not know the types of domestic violence, especially mental violence and economic control. In some field survey results, in terms of cognition of the types of domestic violence, the proportion of women who think physical violence is domestic violence is much higher than that of verbal abuse, interpersonal control and other mental violence, and other economic control. The cognition of mental violence and economic control is ambiguous. The perpetrator of violence usually goes through the process of name-calling, pushing, and then violent beating. Some women who experience domestic violence think that only name-calling, pushing, and economic control are not domestic violence. The rural women's cognition of domestic violence focuses on physical violence, and their cognition of mental violence and economic control is fuzzy [9]. Secondly, after suffering domestic violence, the consciousness and willingness to help are relatively weak. Some rural women, after suffering domestic violence for many times, still regard it as a family matter, and are ashamed to ask their relatives and the outside world for help. This sense of shame comes from the traditional family concept, the awareness of the surrounding group, the individual's unconscious fear of domestic violence, and the difficulty to speak up in the intimate relationship, which is a contradictory

and complex emotion.

3.2 Social Reasons

3.2.1 Imbalance of gender structure in marriage market

Before the reform and opening up, the geographical scope of rural activities in China was relatively closed, and the cross-circle flow was small. The marriage circle in rural areas mostly overlapped with the regional scope, and the marriage market was generally balanced. However, after the reform and opening up, the flow of people in rural areas gradually increased, and "cross-province marriage" appeared [10]. This has prompted changes in the traditional marriage market in rural areas. On the one hand, the rural marriage circle has expanded to the whole country, forming a marriage gradient market. Compared with the low flow of rural men, young women tend to flow to developed areas, so the gender structure of the marriage market between developed areas and underdeveloped areas, urban areas and rural areas begins to be unbalanced. Against the background of unbalanced gender structure in the marriage market, blind date introduction is the mainstream marriage mode in the marriage market in most rural areas of China, and family economic conditions become the main screening criteria for women. In order to make up for potential losses caused by regional conditions, women often choose to ask for high bride prices from men, especially in some remote areas, which greatly increases the cost of marriage in rural areas. After the occurrence of domestic violence, most men will not choose to divorce, but continue to choose violent ways to vent discontent. In addition, most rural couples in this mainstream marriage mode lack emotional basis, which is easy to stimulate family conflicts and violent behaviors.

3.2.2 Public relieves are weak

The anti-domestic violence law provides for the anti-domestic violence of the two weapons, warning letters and personal safety protection order system, in rural areas, these two weapons have not been well implemented. Firstly, the propaganda coverage of warning letters and personal safety protection orders to prevent the escalation of domestic violence in rural areas is insufficient. On August 28, 2023, the anti-Domestic Violence work report

pointed out the problems in the seven years since the implementation of China's Anti-Domestic Violence Law, among which, from the point of view of the propaganda object, the propaganda coverage of warning letters and personal safety protection orders to rural, remote and underdeveloped areas is insufficient. Second, the issuance rate of warning letters and personal safety protection orders is low. One of the reasons for the low issuance rate of warning letters is that according to the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, when the public security organs receive domestic violence police reports, they should give criticism and education to the abusers or issue warning letters. According to this regulation, the system design of "giving criticism and education" and "issuing warning letters" are two choices. When the public security organs deal with rural domestic violence cases, as long as no serious situation is found, take the form of giving criticism and education. One of the reasons for the low issuance rate of personal safety protection orders is that rural women have a weak awareness of collecting evidence in the process of domestic violence, and the channels available are relatively limited. In judicial practice, due to evidence problems, grassroots judges are extremely cautious in the issuance process and often adopt mediation to solve rural domestic violence cases.

In addition, temporary shelters have problems of low accessibility and inability to provide professional services, due to non-mandatory requirements, high entry thresholds, lack of confidentiality, short cycles, lack of training. And the effectiveness of temporary shelters is not obvious. Article 18 of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law provides that the people's management at the county level or at the municipal level divided into districts may set up temporary shelters alone or with the assistance of management agencies to provide temporary living assistance to victims of domestic violence. The establishment of temporary shelters is a non-rigid legal requirement. In practice, the popularization rate of temporary shelters established by the people's management at the county level or the district level is not high, and most of the temporary shelters are established in the relief stations in individual regions, but the utilization rate is not high, many people in

remote areas and rural areas know nothing about the existence of temporary shelters, and the rescue stations are listed, lack of confidentiality, and have hidden dangers for the safety of victims. In addition, shelters have high entry thresholds, such as having to be accompanied by women's federations or police officers, showing identity cards, and even having geographical restrictions, while established temporary shelters can only provide temporary shelter, usually for 10 days, and no long-term mechanism has been formed. Rural women victims still suffer domestic violence after returning to their families, and temporary shelters have not formulated standardized and effective supervision and restriction measures at the later stage. It is difficult to effectively curb domestic violence in a long term.

3.2.3 Lack of social assistance

According to the results of the Survey on the Status Quo of Anti-Domestic Violence Social Organizations published by Beijing Woqi Public Welfare Foundation in 2023, the anti-domestic violence social forces providing direct services in 2022 are mainly concentrated in economically developed area, and are concentrated in first-tier cities or the Pearl River Delta cities. If there are still nearly one-third of the provinces in China that have not yet found or have been engaged in anti-domestic violence organizations. According to its 2018 survey, only 23.3% of institutions are able to serve remote and underdeveloped rural areas. However, in fact, the situation of domestic violence in rural areas is more serious than that in urban areas, especially in some ethnic areas. The vulnerable environment of women in rural areas makes the problem of domestic violence more complicated. Thus, it can be seen that the resources and needs of anti-domestic violence in rural areas, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas, are unmatched, and social assistance is lacking.

3.2.4 The cultural norms of domestic violence in rural communities are weakened

The weakening of the norms of domestic violence in rural communities is mainly reflected in the fact that the deviant behavior of marriage is regarded as normal, and the domestic violence against husband and wife is regarded as normal and "traditional culture". First of all, with the development of social

economy, long-term migrant work has become the main source of income for most rural families, and couples usually live apart from each other, leading to a widening gap in values and re-socialization level between husband and wife. Marriage deviance has become a major hidden danger affecting family harmony, according to relevant surveys. In some rural areas, extramarital affairs are no longer regarded as deviant behavior, but have become the norm and a new trend, prompting the rationalization of domestic violence. Secondly, in some underdeveloped areas of our country, there is still the barbaric custom of "wife beating", which considers it normal for a husband to abuse and beat his wife. Finally, in practice, the village committee, as the main mediation body of rural disputes, has not played a practical role in the issue of rural domestic violence. On the one hand, domestic violence in rural areas has become increasingly private, making it difficult for village officials to know; On the other hand, women victims of domestic violence are not willing to take the initiative to seek help after suffering domestic violence, and village committees do not take the initiative to intervene on the principle of "avoid trouble whenever possible" and "Not even good officials can settle family troubles". Generally speaking, the restriction of local community culture on rural domestic violence is gradually losing its effectiveness.

4. Suggestions on Ways for Rural Women to Counter Domestic Violence

4.1 Establishing a Multi-institutional Social Support System

According to the investigation, many countries and regions with mature social mechanisms against domestic violence have established comprehensive and diversified social support systems to effectively avoid individual isolation. For example, in the "knocking movement" in the United States, when neighbors find signs of domestic violence, they often knock on each other's doors for timely detection and daily help [11]. In some other areas, communities and managements have established corrective mechanisms, not only to rescue victims, but also to implement mandatory psychological intervention against abusers. In another areas, some women who

have been victims of domestic violence have spontaneously set up women's rights associations to help other women victims with their own personal experience. Anti-domestic violence is not only the responsibility of the management and law enforcement departments, if we prevent domestic violence at the source and prohibit further harm, we also need the strong support of the society, and truly establish the whole process of anti-domestic violence system that prevents in advance, stops in the incident and provides relief after the incident. Anti-domestic violence in rural areas of China should implement social co-governance, involving the support of multi-agencies and multi-departments such as police stations, civil affairs departments and professional social service agencies. For example, grassroots managements should take the lead in "purchasing folk services", encourage private individuals or organizations to establish and operate domestic violence shelters, guide and supervise civil services, and provide technical and financial support, and attract the participation of social forces.

4.2 Multi-departmental Coordination to Intervene in Domestic Violence According to Local Conditions

The "family" is not a product of nature, a private organization, but a product of the state, and is subject to public scrutiny. Under this premise, the prevention and suppression of rural domestic violence, mainly by the management, public security organs, women's federations, village committees in accordance with local conditions coordinated intervention in domestic violence. On the one hand, county-level managements should establish and improve the anti-domestic violence joint working mechanism, jointly handle major cases with relevant departments, and clarify the "first responsibility system". The second is to clearly require the public security organs to include domestic violence police into the "110" police work scope, timely police, investigation and evidence collection, classified disposal of domestic violence, assist in contacting medical institutions for treatment, injury identification, and assist civil affairs departments to settle victims of women, for domestic violence cases with light circumstances, according to law not public security management penalties, focusing on

the issue of warning letters. For those who violate the administration of public security or are suspected of committing crimes, a hierarchical punishment and prevention mechanism shall be implemented, such as "one warning, two summons and three detentions". Thirdly, the women's Federation will include the personnel and families with domestic violence records into the key groups and family accounts, do a good job of connecting with the management and public security organs, and return visits to the families of violence in a timely manner. Finally, the village committee should continue to disseminate the law through multiple channels, enhance the intensity of anti-domestic violence publicity, use radio, publicity bars and other functions, actively guide the masses to establish correct family ethics and moral concepts, clearly incorporate anti-domestic violence content into village rules and conventions, pay attention to strengthening the creation of anti-domestic violence community atmosphere, strengthen rural neighborhood relations, and remind and supervise each other. In addition, local public security organs, especially the majority of police stations, should combine with village committees and women's federations, give full play to the advantages of familiar people and places, establish and improve the working mechanism for the investigation and settlement of disputes, take the prevention and suppression of domestic violence as the basic work, and promptly investigate the hidden dangers of domestic violence, and curb domestic violence in the bud. Of course, in what way? Who will take the lead? How to cooperate? What are the closing criteria? These issues should be tailored to local conditions and clarified before linkage.

4.3 Two-way Guidance for Perpetrators and Victims of Domestic Violence

According to the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, authorities can educate abusers on the rule of law and provide psychological counseling to both parties if necessary. But in practice, the work of mentoring abusers is often neglected. In order to effectively prevent, alleviate and stop domestic violence in rural areas, it is necessary to do a good job in psychological adjustment and improve the psychological quality of both husband and wife. First of all,

for abusers, social work can take joint actions with local women's federations or village committees, and on the premise of good connection with the service families, through face-to-face visits or participatory observation, explore the factors that cause domestic violence, formulate a scientific case service plan for the husband and wife, and resolve the bad psychological state of the abuser. Secondly, for women victims, the focus is on the reconstruction of rural women's personality and behavior, and guiding women victims to establish a sense of risk assessment and learn to protect domestic violence. Finally, for both perpetrators and victims of domestic violence, both sides need to pay attention to the influence of the family of origin and reflect on whether their family model is healthy. Village committees, township managements, social workers, legal professionals and women's federations can form professional teams to organize domestic violence groups to focus on learning laws and moral norms on prohibiting domestic violence. To promote domestic violence perpetrators and victims to clarify the normative and protective role of the law, self-regulation and restraint in daily life.

5. Conclusion

The problem of domestic violence suffered by women in rural areas of our country is worthy of social attention and further study. This paper aims to understand the current situation of domestic violence suffered by women in rural areas, and unite the whole society to form a strong force against domestic violence. At the same time, it calls for the enhancement of the victim women's self-protection awareness and ways, hoping to provide ideas for rural women's domestic violence.

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