

Analysis on the Predicament of the Mate Selection of the Elderly Unmarried Man in Rural Areas and Its Social Impact

Bo Xing

Xi'an Peihua University, Xi'an, China

Keywords: rural areas, elderly unmarried men, the difficulty of mate selection

Abstract: At present, the phenomenon of the cluster of rural elderly unmarried men is obvious. And they facing serious difficulties in choosing a spouse, which bringing many negative effects to the society. To solve this problem, it is necessary to rely on the continuous efforts of the elderly unmarried young men in rural areas. However, as a social issue, it is also necessary to rely on the joint efforts of the family, the government and all sectors of society. Only by the coordination of these four parties can this problem be alleviated.

1. Introduction

Under different cultural traditions and levels of development, there are large differences in the identification of the normal age range of marriage by society. Therefore, the definition of the concept of "elderly unmarried man" is more complicated. Due to the widespread practice of early marriage (that is, the marriage age that earlier than the legal age) in China's traditional rural areas, most young men began to look for a mate around the age of 20, and the difficulty of finding a spouse over 25 years old began to increase with age. And once you are over 30 years old, it is difficult to find a spouse in the marriage market. Therefore, this paper defines the ages of young rural youth from 30 to 45 years old.

2. Analysis of the Status Quo of Mate Selection Among Elderly Unmarried Men in Rural Areas

2.1 The phenomenon of the cluster of elderly unmarried men is obvious, facing the difficulty of severe crowding of mate selection

Due to the influence of the concept of "patriarchal", many rural families would rather at the risk of being fined to have more boys. Nowadays, when the son arrives at the marriage age, it is a big problem for parents to look for a mate for his son. In the rural areas, when the matchmakers introduce the mate, the first concern is the age of the man, and other conditions are ranked second. Therefore, once many young men over 30 years old, and there is almost no "matchmaker" wants to introduce the mate for him. Taking the Yangpo group of Maiwang village at Xiquan street office, Lintong District in Xi'an for example, in this small village of more than 200 people, there are four or five elderly young people who have not married. In the Sansheng group of Maiwang village, there are more than 300 villagers now, and 8 elderly unmarried men that aged from 30 to 45 are not married, facing the possibility of becoming a "single bachelor". The 7 group of Mazhai village, Xinhe Street office, Baqiao District, 6 kilometers away from here, is the village of more than 700 people. In the age of 30 years old or so, there are 20-25 men who are not engaged and not married. The difficulty of mate selection of rural elderly young men has become a common social phenomenon.

2.2 The prevail of marriage comparing, the common high payment of marriage

The intensification of marriage squeeze in rural elderly young men has led to the prevalence of marriage competition and marriage comparison. Nowadays, most of the rural bride price start at 100,000 yuan. In some places, the woman in order to ask more money, she will demand the

matchmaker to make a match in the both sides. If more than a certain amount bride price is given, a certain amount of commission will be given to the matchmaker. In the villages visited, the phenomenon of overwhelming bride price is not only widespread, but also has a growing trend. High bride price of marriage has become a widespread social reality in rural marriage practice. Even in some families with poor status, in order to make their sons get married, they regard their daughters as a cash cow, and they are asking for an extreme high bride price. Therefore, for most ordinary families, taking a wife really has a feeling of bankruptcy. Some families who are much difficult and cannot afford a bride price, it is more difficult for these people to get married. Only those good families that can afford the bride price have girls willing to marry.

2.3 Great reduction of mate selection standard for elderly unmarried young men

Nowadays, "more men and fewer women" has become an indisputable fact in the rural area. Whether it is a wealthy village or a poor village, women of marriageable age are scarce resources. At present, the time for blind date and engagement in rural areas is greatly advanced. Many young men are less than 18 years old, and their families will be eager to look for a mate for them. For this reason, "the matchmaker" always give priority to young people when they introduce a mate, which virtually add a lot of pressure to the men of marriageable age, especially the elder unmarried young men. In this scarce of the women and highly competitive marriage market, many elder unmarried young men have to lower their mate selection criteria in order to find a marriage mate. Consequently, they marry someone older than themselves, marry a mentally handicapped woman or a detested divorced women have also become the marriage partner to scramble for. This kind of tense "supply and demand" relationship has also made the matchmaker become professional. Even some matchmakers are popular enough to ask for a gift before they open their mouths and firstly charge telephone fees of one or two hundred yuan for them.

2.4 Single way of mate selection of rural elder males, mainly adopting a way of blind date

The way of mate selection refers to the means by which men and women know and combine as a spouse, and is an important indicator to measure the autonomy of mate selection. Generally speaking, mate selection mainly includes free love, introduction of relatives and friends, introduction of matchmakers, and through the Internet etc. Due to the narrow social scope of rural elder young men, their channel of mate selection is very single. Generally, acquaintances such as matchmakers, relatives or neighbors help to make a match, arrange for the blind date to introduce the two sides, and then let them get along with each other, if both sides feel satisfied, then discuss the matter of getting married. If one side of the two do not agree in the process of blind date, then the mate selection is a failure, and they will be able to enter the next mate selection. Through interviews, the research team found that the way of mate selection of rural left-behind young men who have been married or engaged are mostly through blind date, while the proportion of free love and online marriage or engagement is low. The bar chart is shown in Fig.1.

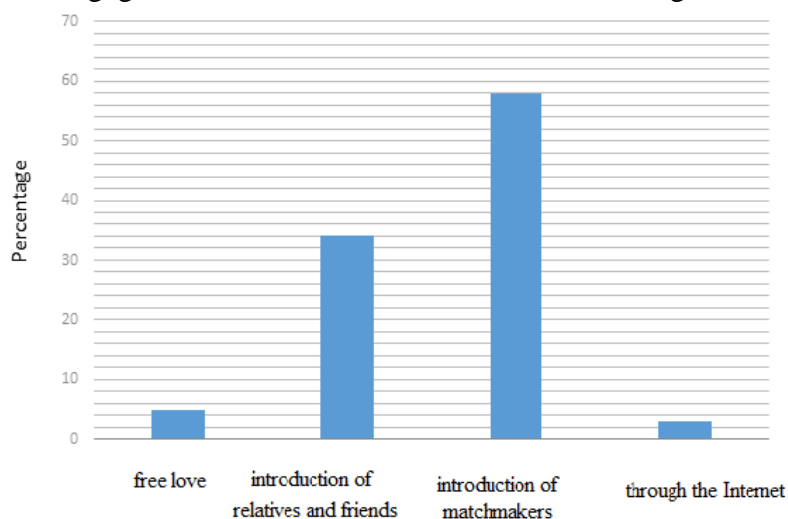


Fig.1 Way of mate selection

3. The Adverse Effects of the Difficulty of the Mate Selection for the Elderly Young Male in Rural Areas

Getting married, start one's career and having children is one of the major events in life. As one of the most basic relationships in human society, marriage not only bears many social responsibilities, but also undertakes many social functions. The problem of mate selection difficulty of an elder young men in rural areas is not only a matter of individual family, but its existence will have a certain impact on the normal life and production of peasant families, as well as the construction and development of rural communities.

3.1 Impact on the Rural Areas

(1) Affecting development in rural areas. Spouse selection, marriage frustration and failure of left-behind unmarried young people in rural areas will lead to various problems in the process of socialization. The emergence of such a potential problem group of left-behind unmarried youth in rural areas is not conducive to play their due role in the construction of rural society. Because these people can't find the spouse at the marriageable age, they have no "motivation" in life, so have no desire to get rich. Most of the farm works in the family depends on their parents. Their lack of progress will not be conducive to the sustainable development of the rural economy and the construction of a well-off society in rural areas. In addition, "difficulty of marrying a wife" may also lead to the rise and growth of some unhealthy ways and customs, such as the increase of early marriage and the common practice of high bride price, which will have a certain hindrance to the development and construction of rural areas.

(2) Affecting normal marriage activities in rural area. The prevalence of mate selection difficulty of rural left-behind young men has formed a potential "market" for women's needs, providing a breeding ground for criminal activities such as trafficking women and defrauding marriages. It is also easy to trigger rural early marriage competition, which in turn affects the implementation of the policy on rural late marriage and late childbirth etc.

(3) Affecting the harmony and stability of rural area. The deviance theory holds the idea that when the social structure does not provide legal and institutionalized means for everyone to achieve their legitimate goals, some people will take illegal measures to achieve this goal. As a basic human needs, marriage life should have been satisfied. However, in the context of the difficulty of choosing a spouse, the realization of a legitimate marriage life goal becomes very difficult. Then, the deviant behavior of the rural "single bachelor" group which exists in large numbers will inevitably increase due to the difficulty of mate selection. In the interview, some villagers reported that some elder unmarried men participated in illegal pyramid schemes because they had nothing to do. Some of them gather together to drink and make troubles and gambling from time to time, and cause illegal crimes such as fighting, stealing, robbing, and abduction. And some act as "the other woman", causing the conflict of the married family. Even causing malignant cases, which have largely undermined the harmony and stability of the community, causing people to reject and discriminate against elder unmarried men and are unwilling to communicate and get along with them. In recent years, the number of cases of rape of rural women has increased, which is related to the increase of "leftover men" at a certain level.

3.2 Impact on the Family

In the traditional rural society, it is still the top priority for rural villagers to carry on the family line. The problem of "difficulty of taking a wife" for left-behind youth in rural area is not only a big problem for their families, they can't let their parents enjoy their old age in peace, enjoy family life and even let their parents be scared for them and bear the dual pressure of spirit and finance, which affects normal life and production.

(1) It is difficult for parents to enjoy their old age in peace and enjoy family life. From the family perspective, generally parents assume the responsibility and obligation to raise their children. In the

traditional concept of rural residents, children are all get married which means to truly bring them up, and the tasks of parents are completed. For the parents of young men who have never been able to get married, their responsibilities are still not fulfilled. This problem is also a torment for their parents' body and spirit. The problem of children's marriage is finally a problem that lingers in the hearts of parents and the big thing they are worried about. They cannot really let go of their burdens, and even they can't fully enjoy the family life of full of children and grandchildren.

(2) The economic burden of the family has increased. First of all, the cost of a young man's marriage is a huge financial burden for his parents. According to the survey, the family economic income level of unmarried young men is generally average, while the cost of taking a wife in rural areas is not a small amount. It is truly not a small expense for parents who rely on field income. Secondly, the difficulty of taking a wife causes many rural parents panic. They are afraid that the bride price will soar like a house price, so it is better to get married early. Therefore, in many rural areas, the child at the age of 17 or 18, they begin to get married and have baby, and give up to go to school. In such an age, he is still a child, let alone talk about family responsibilities. He was at the age when he should go to school, but he stepped into the society early and engaged in some work at the bottom of the society. So living off their parents became an inevitable thing, which enhance the pressure on rural parents.

3.3 Impact on elderly unmarried young men

Too severe marriage squeeze can easily cause depression and other psychological problems in unmarried men. Especially for elderly young male in poor families, the long-term single status is mostly caused by poor economic conditions of the family, low academic qualifications of their own, insufficient work capacity, or physical disabilities. Among the interviewees, more than half of the elderly unmarried young men thought that these constraints would lead to a feeling of inferiority and fear in their hearts. Thus making them afraid to actively communicate with young women, fearing that they would be laughed at and finally leading to their social circle smaller and smaller, and then falls into this vicious circle of continuation of being single. Research shows that the lack of marriage makes some elder unmarried men show the characteristics of the negative attitudes towards life, enhanced mental stress, and lack of motivation to work.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

It has become a common social phenomenon for rural elderly young people to choose a spouse. Such problems exist in both poor and rich villages, and this phenomenon is even more obvious in poor village because of its poor economic and cultural conditions. At present, the unmarried status of most elderly young men is forced and caused by objective factors, rather than voluntary non-marriage.

4.2 Countermeasures and suggestions

Alleviating the plight of elder young male in rural areas requires a long-term process and it depends on the joint efforts of young men themselves, their families, the government, and all aspects of society. Only the coordination of these four parties can alleviate this problem. From the government perspective, it is necessary to strengthen the comprehensive skills training and employment guidance for rural elder young men, so that they can have professional skills, and increase their employment opportunities. To encourage capable elder unmarried men to start their own businesses, and improve the support for entrepreneurs so as to improve their economic conditions and their competitiveness in the marriage market. From a social perspective, it is necessary to strengthen rural cultural construction, promote transform social traditions in the new situation, and educate the public to form a rational marriage concept. We must also actively create a marriage platform in rural communities to provide more opportunities of the mate selection for elderly young men in rural areas. From the perspective of the family, we must change the concept of

choosing a spouse. For elderly young men with financial difficulties, they can also choose the marriage model of Zhaozan to achieve marriage. From a personal level, elderly rural young men themselves must actively learn cultural knowledge and skills to improve their competitiveness in the marriage market.

Acknowledgement

Fund Project: This article is the phased result of the Xi'an Social Sciences Planning Fund Project of "Study on the Problem of 'Difficulty of Mate Selection' of Rural Left-behind Youth in Xi'an" in 2019. The project number is 19S70.

References

- [1] Zhiqiang Li. Spouse Mating Predicament of Rural Young Men in Underdeveloped Area and Its Derived Social Risks [J]. Journal of Zhengzhou University of Light Industry. Social Science Edition, 2014 (05). □
- [2] Yingxia Guo. A Study on the Difficulty of Taking a Wife for Young Men in Rural Areas: A Case Study of G Village in S City, H Province [D]. Master Degree Thesis of Hebei University, 2018. □
- [3] Donglian He. An Analysis of the Difficulties of Taking a Wife for Elderly Young Men in Rural Areas in Underdeveloped Areas—Taking Weixi County as an Example [J]. The Journal of Yunnan Provincial Committee School of the CPC. 2015 (02)
- [4] Yating Xie. The Impact of Marriage Squeeze on the Security of Different Groups in Rural China [J]. Journal of Northwest A & F University, 2015 (3).
- [5] Qi Sun. A Study on the Marriage of Elder "Left Men" in Rural Areas: Taking Simenqian Town, Shaoyang City as an Example [D]. Master's Degree Thesis of Hunan Normal University, 2017.
- [6] Zhike Jia, Di Sha. Analysis of the Marital Dilemma of Elderly Unmarried Young Men in Impoverished Rural Areas—Based on a Field Study in Henan S Village [J]. Journal of Hebei University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition). 2016 (03).
- [7] Shuang Liu, Shengzhang Cai. Who is "left over"? -Rethinking the "elderly Unmarried" Problem in China [J]. Youth Studies, 2015 (04).