

Social Support of Sports Services for the Senior Citizens in Chengdu under Co-governance

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Abstract:

To clarify the contradiction between the needs for physical services and social support among the senior citizens in Chengdu, and to manage social support in an overall way more effectively, firstly, 118 senior citizens and 5 community managers in 4 communities of Chengdu City were randomly selected for visiting and research by literature, field investigation, logic analysis, etc. Then, the current situation of sports service needs of the senior citizens was analyzed from three aspects: organization and guidance team, site facilities and activity content, service content and information acquisition. Next, the difficulties faced by social support are analyzed from the aspects of supporting subject, contents, channels and forms, so as to find out the crux of the contradiction between the two. On this basis, applying the theory of "co-governance" and combining the background of "healthy Chengdu", the following suggestions are put forward: building special site facilities for the senior citizens; improving the guidance team; and improving policies and regulations.

Keywords: Co-governance, Sports services for the senior citizens, Social support, Management.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the *Report on the Information of the Elderly Population and the Development of the Elderly Health Cause in Chengdu in 2019*: as of the end of 2019, the registered population of Chengdu was 15.0007 million, of which, the aged population (aged 60 and above) was 3.1604 million, representing an increase of 9,800 or 0.31% over 2018, accounting for 21.07% of the registered population. The aging rate is higher than the national average (17.9% in 2018) and close to the provincial average (21.13% in 2018) (Note: the national and provincial data in 2019 are not published)^[1]. Thus, it is clear that the senior citizens in Chengdu are large in both number and advanced age. Therefore, how to make full use of the sports service system for the senior citizens, manage their social support more effectively, fully mobilize all social forces and manage them as a whole, and create a comfortable living environment for them is of great significance under the background of "healthy Chengdu".

From August to September, 2020, a more in-depth survey was conducted on 118 senior citizens (57 men and 61 women) and 5 community managers of 60-70 years old randomly selected from 4 communities in Chengdu. According to the interview, under the premise of promoting the national fitness process by governments at all levels, the awareness of national fitness has been gradually improved, the number of people participating in sports activities has increased significantly, and the enthusiasm of the senior citizens to participate in sports activities has been unprecedented improved. However, there are still some contradictions between the current demand for physical services and social support among senior citizens for multiple reasons. Therefore, based on the theory of "co-governance", this paper makes a more in-depth discussion on each link of social support in the sports service system for the senior citizens in Chengdu, and puts forward some opinions and feasible suggestions.

II. ANALYSIS ON CURRENT DEMAND FOR SPORTS SERVICES OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS IN CHENGDU

2.1 Organization and Guidance Team

An organization refers to a system in which the organization develops and improves to a certain extent, and forms a tight and relatively independent structure, which transmits or transforms energy, material and information to each other. Sports associations are common organizations for sports activities. The interview also revealed that 76.3% (n = 90) of senior citizens wanted a dedicated physical activity organization for them, but which were none in most of the communities in Chengdu. Only one of the four communities visited had an organization that provided geriatric services focused on living services, which created an unorganized, irregular, and unsystematic pattern of physical activity among senior citizens and became one reason that hindered senior citizens from maintaining a constant and gradual participation in physical activity.

The results of the interview were unexpected in terms of the need for guidance team. 27.1% (n=32) of the senior citizens did not think it was necessary, 47.5% (n=56) of them considered it necessary, and the remaining 25.4% (n=30) of them considered it unnecessary. After a thorough understanding of the reasons, it is known that those in need are mainly concerned with their own safety while exercising, while those without need believe that the sports activities they are engaged in are simple with no need for guidance. This can also reflect that the cognitive level of the senior citizens on sports activities is still at a low level, which also becomes a factor that hinders the development of sports work for them.

2.2 Site Facilities and Activity Contents

Senior citizens of different genders had quite different needs in terms of space facilities and activity

contents that 68.9% (n=42) of the female seniors considered the field facilities to be inadequate, and 66.7% (n=38) of the male seniors considered the field facilities for physical activity to be basically adequate. With deeper understanding, such a distinction is made mainly because most of the current sport activities of female seniors were well developed. Although the awareness of participating in physical activities increased gradually, most of them were confined to simple physical activities such as walking, strolling, and square dancing, and 57.4% (n =35) of them would prefer less well for broadening their participation in physical activities. In contrast, the awareness of male participation in sports activities has been maintained to a high level. In addition to routine walking and strolling, fishing, chess, cycling, diabolo playing, kite flying and so on, 73.4% (n=42) of the male seniors showed strong willingness to expand their participation in sports activities and were willing to accept new challenges. Thus, senior citizens of both genders display a quite different trend with respect to the need for site facilities and activity contents based on differences in cognition, life experience and skills.

2.3 Service Content and Information Acquisition

Service content mainly covers six aspects: sports organization service, sports facilities service, sports activities service, sports guidance service, physical fitness monitoring service and sports information service. In the interview, the respondents were asked to rank according to their needs in these six areas. 89.4% (n=51) men and 91.8% (n=56) women chose to rank the fitness monitoring service first, mainly because the they have strong health awareness and pay more attention to their health status. However, due to lack of awareness, their understanding of health is limited to whether they have suffered from diseases, and their awareness of prevention is weak, so they do not know much about how to prevent the disease. In-depth interviews revealed that most people are worried about chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and hope to alleviate and contain these diseases through their own physical exercise. They hope that the combination of physical fitness monitoring and health protection can provide convenient service in their life circle, and also expect professional sports instructors to provide information consultation, problem solving, exercise guidance and other services.

Table I. Statistics on the need of senior citizens for different sport information types (n=118)

	Fitness knowledge	Skill training	Events	Policy document
Number of people	112	32	56	75
Proportion	94.9%	27.1%	47.4%	63.6%

In terms of information acquisition needs, there are also different needs in terms of access, in addition to the anticipated different types of sports information (see Table 1 for details). Sports information service mainly refers to the sports services provided to the senior citizens through the popularization of sports knowledge and the promotion of fitness methods in various forms such as TV, network, newspapers, magazines and community bulletin boards^[2]. 83% (n=98) of the senior citizens wanted to get information through TV media, followed by 64.4% (n=76) by lecture training. Newspapers, magazines, online media and community bulletin boards ranked the third to the fifth in turn.

III. DIFFICULTIES FACED BY SOCIAL SUPPORT OF SPORTS SERVICES FOR THE SENIOR CITIZENS IN CHENGDU

3.1 Supporting Body

Social support includes formal social support and informal social support, the former refers to material and spiritual assistance provided by the government or social organization in accordance with relevant policies or laws, which is regular and stable, showing the support relationship between the organization and the individual, and the latter refers to assistance provided by informal organizations or individuals such as family, neighbors, colleagues and friends, which generally has no policy or law to rely on and is uncertain, and more shows the relationship between individuals^[3]. However, either of them has some problems and deficiencies, mainly as follows: insufficient government support, weak support from sports associations, insufficient services from sports voluntary organizations, low participation of market subjects, and need for improved community support, the lack of family support caused by the change of family structure, and the lack of support from friends and neighbors caused by the slowness of neighborhood relationship.

3.2 Supporting Content

Insufficient supply of sports facilities and low efficiency of resource allocation; insufficient information resource service and insufficient publicity and promotion methods; insufficient strength of health monitoring and promotion and low popularity for the senior citizens; lack of talent cultivation and gradual standardization, lack of macro-design and follow-up management; sports activities focusing on events with few interesting sports activities; weak social sports organizations and lack of professional community managers^[3].

3.3 Supporting Paths

At present, the investment to public sports service for the senior citizens mostly comes from the government. The social subjects only participate in some specific activities and skills training, while the

market subjects are rarely involved. The lack of funds greatly limits the development of special public sports facilities for the senior citizens, especially sports medical and rehabilitation facilities. In developed countries such as the United States, Germany and Sweden, the public sports services for the senior citizens are generally provided through close cooperation among the government, society and the market through contract outsourcing and other means. However, in fact, the elderly public sports service market in China is not mature, the number and quality of sports non-profit organizations are not high, the reform of sports management system is lagging behind, and the government lacks the initiative to cooperate with the market and society. Therefore, on the surface, the society and the market have participated in the supply of public sports services for the senior citizens in China, but in fact, most of the work is still to be completed by the government, which affects the supply effect of public sports services for the senior citizens in our country^[4].

3.4 Supporting Forms

From the perspective of the government and its administrative departments, the main purpose of the supply of public sports services is to enhance the legitimacy of existence, obtain the support of the majority of the public, improve the social reputation of the government and reduce the obstacles to the policies implementation.

Although the level of socio-economic development has been greatly improved after more than 30 years of reform and opening up, there is still a large gap with developed countries, such as still limited government finance. In the supply of public services, efficiency is a current priority for the government and the sports management sector, while insufficient attention is paid to the public physical service needs of the vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities^[5]. The purpose of market players participating in the supply of public sports services is to obtain corresponding profits, because the pursuit of profits is the essential feature of the market. Therefore, the market of public sports for the elderly in our country is not developed yet, thus leading to the lack of incentive of market players to participate in older public sports service as well^[6].

IV. STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL SUPPORT OF PHYSICAL SERVICE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN CHENGDU CITY

The theory of collaborative governance, which is a combination of the theory of collaboration in natural sciences and the theory of governance in social sciences, has a strong explanatory power to explain the collaborative development of social systems.

4.1 Building Special Site Facilities for the Senior Citizens

First of all, the activity space for the senior citizens should be considered in the planning design and

architectural transformation of the city. Secondly, the government should formulate and promulgate preferential policies for sports activities for the senior citizens, reduce the investment threshold for individuals and enterprises, publicize social pension support, and guide enterprises and individuals in society to participate in the construction of sports venues and equipment for the aged^[7].

4.2 Improving Guidance Team

Led by relevant government departments, sports experts and scholars should jointly participate in the research of activities suitable for the senior citizens, and compile relevant guidance manuals and books to guide their practice in sports. At the same time, PE teachers in schools, PE majored students in colleges and universities, excellent coaches and athletes should be organized to carry out extensive volunteer-assisted sports activities for the senior citizens, backbones for nationwide fitness programs should be cultivated and excellent volunteer teams should be established. In addition, some experienced senior citizens who have been engaged in physical training for many years can also be found as the backbone among the elderly group, which not only makes up for the shortage of sports service human resources, but also reflects their dual values of self and society, so as to make them feel satisfied in the process^[7].

4.3 Improving Policies and Regulations

Relevant policies and incentives should be further formulated and improved, the leisure sports of the elderly groups in institutions should be vigorously developed, the attention to the daily life and management functions of the elderly groups should be increased, and an evaluation system conducive to improving the quality of life of the elderly groups should be established, and scientific sports training methods and high-quality sports services should be included in the evaluation scope of the system^[7].

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