

# Research on the strengthening of the leading role of the government in urban social pension institutions in Hebei Province

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## ABSTRACT

In 1999, China enters the aging society as a whole. How to deal with the aging crisis of Hebei Provincial government is facing a severe test. In recent years, the number of elderly people in the province has continued to rise, and by the end of 2022, the proportion of elderly people over 60 years old has reached 21.01%, and the pressure on social pension has been increasing. On the one hand, in today's era, the family structure is generally small, young people work hard, the change of family mode has impacted the traditional way of providing for the elderly, and it is difficult to meet the growing and diversified needs of the elderly. On the other hand, the concept of old-age care has changed, and the development of The Times has given the elderly more choices to enjoy their later life. Based on this, institutional pension plays an irreplaceable role as an important way of providing for the elderly, and the way of providing for the elderly is no longer just fixed in the traditional home pension. By studying the leading role of the government in urban social pension institutions in Hebei province, this paper finds some problems and explores the causes of the problems, and puts forward suggestions on how to strengthen the leading role of the government in urban social pension institutions in Hebei Province. It is not only of great significance to the construction of a service-oriented and responsible government in Hebei Province, but also conducive to improving the recognition of institutional elderly care, improving the quality of life of the elderly in Hebei Province, and enhancing the sense of happiness and gain of the elderly.

## KEYWORDS

Urban social institutions for the aged; Institutional pension; Government leading role.

## 1. PROBLEMS EXISTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN PENSION INSTITUTIONS IN HEBEI PROVINCE.

### (1) The government has limited funds for development

As a public utility, the construction, operation and development of social pension institutions require sufficient financial support, but due to the large investment in the early stage of the development of pension institutions, the long return period and high operating costs, they are not attractive enough to enterprises [1]. As a result, the government's financial subsidies are likely to become the only source of funding for many urban social pension institutions. In recent years, the economic development of Hebei Province has been at a medium level, and the economy is relatively weak. In 2023, as economic growth declines, fiscal revenue declines, and the ability to improve people's livelihood will also weaken. Overall, the local fiscal revenue of Hebei Province in the first three quarters of 2023 will be 344.34 billion yuan, of which the growth rate of fiscal revenue in the third quarter will be -9.363 billion yuan, and the economic situation is not optimistic. On the other hand, Shandong Province and Henan Province, as neighboring provinces of Hebei Province, have similar geographical advantages

and population sizes, but the public financial revenue and growth rate of these two provinces are much higher than those of Hebei Province during the same period. Although the scale of income in Guizhou Province is not as large as that of Hebei Province due to the geographical environment, the growth rate shown in Figure 1 is rapid.

## (2) Insufficient resource allocation

Talent is the key to development and an important resource, and the elderly care institutions in today's era are multi-demand providers for the elderly to live, rest, seek medical treatment, and recreation, and the most needed is professional elderly care service personnel [2]. Although Hebei Province has been implementing the talent training policy, the government has invested and contributed to the training of professional and technical personnel, but in a short period of time is still in a state of short supply, so a certain number of high-quality and high-quality doctors, nurses, nutrition experts and other professional service personnel are the key to the development of urban pension institutions to open up competitive advantages. However, at present, the staff of urban social pension institutions in Hebei Province are mostly laid, unemployed and retired re-employed people, and their professional level and service ability are increasingly difficult to meet the growing needs of the elderly and their family members.

## (3) The administrative efficiency of government departments needs to be improved

At present, the administrative efficiency and execution of some local government departments in Hebei Province are low, and the standards and norms for the construction of the pension service system still need to be further unified and clarified. For example, the province's unified quality standards, rating and certification system for elderly care services have not yet been established, which may lead to differences in the service quality and management level of some social elderly care institutions, thus affecting the quality of life of the elderly and the effective supply of elderly care services [3]. The management and service capabilities of government departments for pension service institutions need to be further improved. Relevant departments need to provide consultation, guidance and assistance to the construction standards and service specifications of pension service institutions according to their own functions. For example, when dealing with some issues involving multiple departments, if the information between the departments is not exchanged, it may lead to poor decision-making or low efficiency.

## **2. THE REASONS FOR THE PROBLEMS OF THE HEBEI PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT IN URBAN SOCIAL PENSION INSTITUTIONS**

### (1) Lack of sources of funds and reasonable arrangements for fiscal expenditures

In 2021, Hebei Province's tax revenue reached 273.568 billion yuan, accounting for 65.64% of public budget revenue, which is far lower than the national average (85.9%). This means that Hebei Province has a relatively high proportion of non-tax revenue, and tax revenue is the main source of fiscal revenue, and the low proportion of tax revenue may reflect the problems of Hebei's economic structure and tax base. In 2023, Hebei Province's tax revenue will be 344.34 billion yuan, and the growth rate of fiscal revenue in the third quarter will be -9.363 billion yuan, which makes Hebei Province the second lowest province in the first three quarters of the country. In addition, the fiscal revenue gap in Hebei Province is widening compared to Sichuan Province and Henan Province.

The lack of rationality of fiscal expenditure in Hebei Province is mainly reflected in the fact that the current fiscal expenditure of government departments mainly focuses on supporting education, while the fiscal expenditure on the supply of pension services is less. In 2021, the total expenditure of the general budget of the local government will be 21,062.304 billion yuan, and the general budget expenditure of Hebei Province will be 884.821 billion yuan, whether in the country or Hebei Province, the largest fiscal expenditure is 3,577.85 billion yuan and 162.881 billion yuan in education,

respectively, while the two common expenditures of financial social security and employment involving the supply of pension services are 3,290.091 billion yuan and 140.503 billion yuan respectively. And the pension institutions are only one part of the pension services, so whether it is the national social pension institutions or the urban social pension institutions in Hebei Province, the financial subsidies are very limited.

## (2) Lack of awareness of talents leading the future

Talent is an important driving force for scientific and technological innovation, and the introduction and training of talents can promote the development of the region and improve the innovation ability and competitiveness of various pension institutions in Hebei Province. The importance of talent to development is self-evident, and the same is true for the pension service industry. In terms of talent introduction, in recent years, more and more local grassroots governments in Hebei Province have realized the preciousness of talents, implemented various talent introduction policies, and injected emerging wisdom and vitality into the local development, but there are still some grassroots governments that do not have a particularly clear understanding of the importance of pension service professionals, and do not realize that the local social pension institutions are inseparable from professional and high-quality pension service personnel if they seek long-term development. Poor stability, lack of security, poor working environment in elderly care institutions, and vague job prospects lack the attraction of talents, and the lack of core competitiveness to attract and retain talents [4]. In terms of personnel training, some grass-roots governments have said more and done less, propaganda more than action phenomenon, Hebei Province in recent years put forward a lot of requirements and routes for the development of the pension service industry, but can not guarantee that each place can meet the standards of the provincial government, overall, Hebei Province is still unable to achieve free unified training for pension service personnel, set a strict assessment mechanism for the training content, and there are very few colleges and universities that open pension services, and based on the above reasons, Hebei Province is still in the current situation of lack of professional and high-quality pension service talents.

## (3) The degree of attention paid by grassroots government departments is not high

The development momentum of urban social pension institutions in Hebei Province is insufficient, and there are problems such as small social support, shortage of funds, and non-standard management, so it is necessary to increase government policy support. Hebei Province is still in a relatively weak stage of economic development, there is no strong economic foundation, and the government's financial pressure is greater, which will affect the supply of social security and other aspects relatively speaking. As an emerging service industry, private pension institutions are social organizations organized by enterprises, public institutions, social groups and other social forces, as well as individual citizens using non-state-owned assets to engage in non-profit social service activities. Its importance has not attracted enough attention from government departments, and its organizational nature determines that it has the characteristics of long payback period and low return on investment, compared with the local grassroots government in Hebei Province, it is more inclined to invest in education, medical care and other areas that need more urgent and effective investment. The grassroots government of Hebei Province is the executor of the will and decision-making of the Hebei Provincial Government and the central government, and the policies and suggestions promulgated by the Hebei Provincial Government to support and promote the development of urban social pension institutions are the core of the government to promote the development of urban social pension institutions, and the local grassroots government of Hebei Province to improve the implementation ability and efficiency is the basis for promoting the development of urban social pension institutions.

### **3. EXCELLENT CASES OF OTHER URBAN GOVERNMENTS IN CHINA LEADING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PENSION INSTITUTIONS**

#### **(1) The basic measures of the Shandong Provincial Government to promote pension institutions**

As a neighboring province of Hebei Province, Shandong Province is also located in the north of China, and its economic development has been quite strong in recent years, and the proportion of fiscal expenditure on people's livelihood in 2022 is comparable to that of Hebei Province, but the utilization rate and effectiveness are better than those of Hebei Province. As the capital of Shandong Province, Jinan Municipal Government has adopted a series of implementation opinions and measures to accelerate the development of pension services. First of all, according to the relevant national requirements and the spirit of the "Implementation Opinions of the General Office of the People's Government of Shandong Province on Promoting the Development of Pension Services", measures to accelerate the construction of basic pension service facilities are proposed, including promoting the construction of pension service institutions. On the one hand, compared with Hebei Province, Shandong Province's pension service system is more perfect, the proportion of nursing beds in nursing institutions has reached more than 60%, the coverage rate of regional comprehensive pension service centers in streets and towns has reached 100% and 60% respectively, the standard rate of community pension service facilities has reached 100%, the monthly visit rate of the elderly with special difficulties has reached 100%, and the coverage rate of medical and elderly care services in elderly care institutions has reached 100%. This shows that Shandong Province has done a more comprehensive and meticulous job in the construction and management of the pension service system. On the other hand, as of the end of 2019, the number of elderly care institutions in Shandong Province was 2,332, with a total of 350,000 elderly care beds, and there were 1,507 elderly care institutions in Hebei Province with a total of 198,000 beds in the same period.

#### **(2) The basic measures of the Henan Provincial Government to promote pension institutions**

Henan and Hebei are two provinces in China, and together they constitute an important economic region in northern China. Both provinces have a long history and cultural heritage, and each has unique geographical characteristics and natural resource advantages. Henan Province encourages giving full play to the guiding role of local government funds, and eligible local governments can establish market-oriented industrial investment funds with social capital as the main body in the field of social capital according to the actual situation. For example, Fan County, Henan Province, is located at the intersection of Henan and Shandong provinces, with the embankment in the north and the Yellow River in the south, with beautiful natural scenery and good ecological environment. Relying on this advantage, the local government has promoted the local economic development by introducing the green project of the pension estate. It is understood that after the completion of this project, it will become the foundation for elderly care and recuperation in the Central Plains, and will also become a comprehensive ecological zone integrating leisure and entertainment, tourism and vacation, and rehabilitation and recuperation. The completion of the green ecological pension manor allows the elderly to breathe in the natural landscape, sow in the countryside in spring and harvest, and enjoy professional services in the apartment into reality, and the completion of the project fills the gap of large-scale pension projects in Henan. In contrast, Hebei Province is relatively lacking in characteristics, large-scale pension institutions pension project planning and construction, Hebei's pension service market vitality has not been fully released.

As the capital city of Henan Province, Zhengzhou pays attention to seizing the opportunity to build the characteristics of elderly care institutions, and governments at all levels strive to seize the historical window period, actively coordinate and cooperate in their work, vigorously promote the development of community home-based elderly care services, improve the county and rural three-level elderly care service network, and build a pension service system with Henan characteristics. Implement and improve the supervision system and standards for the socialization of pension services, strengthen the supervision and management of pension service institutions in the entire Zhengzhou

area, strictly follow the "Zhengzhou City Pension Service Specification", "Zhengzhou City Pension Service Specification" and other specifications, notices and documents to strictly enforce, according to the law for the protection of the rights and interests of the elderly, to ensure the administrative examination and approval of the pension institutions, to ensure the legal operation of the pension institutions and other work. Strengthen the implementation and supervision of the preferential treatment measures for the elderly in provinces and cities, and carry out special inspections of pension institutions, community pension service centers and community pension service stations from time to time once a year to ensure that the laws and regulations on preferential treatment of the elderly can be implemented and put in place.

#### **4. COUNTERMEASURES TO EFFECTIVELY STRENGTHEN THE LEADING ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN URBAN SOCIAL PENSION INSTITUTIONS IN HEBEI PROVINCE**

##### **(1) Increase government revenue and improve investment in social pension institutions**

The development of urban social pension institutions is inseparable from strong financial support, and due to the low return cycle and long cycle of social pension institutions, they are less attractive to enterprises, so they need to rely on government financial allocation support and a series of preferential policy support to a large extent [5]. In terms of government appropriation support, due to the unstable fiscal revenue and weak economic development of Hebei Province, the government departments first need to appropriately enrich the fiscal revenue and increase the financial funds to better support and help the local people's livelihood. In terms of preferential policy support, the government should promulgate and implement a series of preferential policies and implement them scientifically and rigorously, such as preferential tax policies and operational development subsidy policies, tax reduction and exemption measures and development funds in relevant fields of social pension institutions, and simplify the procedures for social pension institutions to accept investment. The government's preferential policies and assistance policies should be constantly updated and improved with the times and local development, and the innovation, pertinence and practicability of the policies should be improved in a timely manner on the premise of ensuring that the main direction remains unchanged.

##### **(2) Implement an effective talent strategy and increase professional pension service talents**

In order to increase the number of professional pension service personnel in pension institutions, first of all, it is necessary to increase the financial subsidies and policy support of the local governments in Hebei Province, and pay attention to the cooperation between the upper and lower regional governments and government departments in the process of training professional pension service personnel, and closely follow the instructions of the "14th Five-Year Plan" National Aging Development and Pension Service System Plan, promote the cooperation between professional training institutions and high-quality pension institutions, carry out the training of elderly care workers, and gradually improve the professional level of the pension service team. At the same time, in order to ensure the quality of service, we should further standardize the management of employees, establish a qualification certification and title evaluation system for pension service personnel, adhere to the certificate system, and gradually improve the treatment of employees, so as to stabilize the pension service team.

In addition, vocational colleges and universities should be guided to open relevant majors, and the catalog of vocational education majors in the field of elderly care services should be dynamically adjusted to expand the scale of training of technical and skilled talents in elderly care services, and senior care related majors should be established, such as nursing, elderly service and management, medical care and management, and social work, so as to cultivate medical and health care professionals [6].

(3) Improve the ability of grassroots governments to understand and implement, and extend the scope of services

Hebei Provincial Government Departments for the elderly, urban social pension institutions to serve is within the scope of the government's responsibilities, if the government departments and the upper and lower levels of government coordination will affect the efficiency of government services, so to improve the grassroots government to the provincial government instructions and orders to understand the ability, the ability to implement. To improve comprehension, it is necessary to strengthen policy publicity and interpretation, and can help grassroots governments and the public understand and grasp policy content through press conferences, open government affairs, platform training and seminars. It is also important to establish and improve the policy feedback mechanism, some grassroots governments in Hebei Province in the process of implementing the policy, may encounter a variety of practical problems, these problems and suggestions can be reported through the feedback mechanism in a timely manner, for the higher level of government to revise and improve the policy to provide reference. To improve the implementation capacity, it is necessary to establish a sound mechanism of reciprocity of rights and responsibilities. This means that governments at all levels should also bear corresponding responsibilities while exercising their powers, and grassroots governments should be held accountable for problems in implementing the decisions of higher levels of government[7]; Similarly, if the policies of the higher-level government are unreasonable, the grass-roots government also has the right to provide feedback and suggestions, and different departments of the same government should also cooperate in an orderly manner, perform their own duties, and clarify their powers and responsibilities.

Government departments should also do their best to serve the people, actively expand the scope of services, and improve the level of government services. Hebei Province should follow the instructions of the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Aging Undertakings and Pension Service System", gradually and comprehensively establish an open, competitive, fair and orderly pension service market, further relax the access to the pension service market, and support social forces to participate in the provision of pension services. This not only helps to improve the efficiency and quality of the provision of pension services, but also provides more space for the development of social forces.

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