

The Necessity and Development of Rural Physical Education in the Context of Rural Revitalization—Taking Rural Physical Education in Henan Province as an Example

Jingxuan Wang, Hong Fan

Jilin Sport University, Changchun, Jilin, China

Abstract: The fundamental purpose of rural revitalization is to enhance the quality of life for hundreds of millions of farmers. Strengthening rural education and expanding sports programs in villages serve as crucial tools for implementing the rural revitalization strategy, effectively improving farmers' livelihoods. Village sports education focuses on integrating local resources to develop distinctive cultural programs, upgrading infrastructure, and integrating physical activities into daily life. This approach ensures better health and mental well-being while optimizing rural living conditions. This paper first analyzes the necessity of rural sports education under the rural revitalization framework, examining both its shortcomings and advantages in Henan's context. Subsequently, it explores future development strategies through multiple dimensions including urban-rural resource coordination, organizational structures, cultural development, operational models, and grassroots governance mechanisms.

Keywords: Rural revitalization, Rural areas, Rural physical education.

1. Introduction

The issuance of the "Rural Revitalization Strategy Plan" has accelerated the implementation of rural revitalization initiatives, propelling the initiative into a substantive phase. Since the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee proposed the concept of "new rural construction," the Henan Provincial Government has established pilot programs tailored to local conditions, launching large-scale and diversified rural revitalization efforts. Village sports education, a crucial component of this initiative, focuses on enhancing physical fitness among rural students, fostering sports awareness and athletic capabilities among rural communities, and ensuring public health security. As rural revitalization strategies continue to advance, particular attention should be paid to developing village sports education. By leveraging Henan's unique strengths and addressing existing gaps in rural sports development, the province should integrate urban-rural resources to enrich educational materials for village sports programs. Simultaneously, combining village sports education with primary/secondary education and public sports culture initiatives will explore innovative pathways to elevate physical and mental well-being across rural communities in Henan.

2. The Necessity of Rural Physical Education in the Context of Rural Revitalization

2.1 Analysis from the Perspective of Insufficient Development of Rural Physical Education

An analysis of current developments in rural physical education across Henan Province reveals multiple challenges: Underdeveloped infrastructure. While Henan's tourism-driven economic growth has boosted urban areas, rural regions continue to lag economically. As the material foundation for sports education development, regional economic capacity determines its potential [3]. This explains

why many rural schools in Henan maintain underdeveloped physical education programs and significant gaps compared to urban counterparts. Both curriculum development and public sports facilities remain inadequate, limiting overall progress. Most villages lack professional sports equipment and training facilities, depriving residents of diverse exercise options and professional coaches.

(1) Insufficient family commitment. With most young adults working away from home, elderly parents and children remain in rural households. Conservative elders often prioritize basic needs over physical health, showing little interest in sports education or community-organized activities. Meanwhile, rural residents generally show low enthusiasm for sports. Many villagers believe that children should focus on academic studies while adults should concentrate on earning money. As a result, they not only discourage their children from participating in village sports activities but also avoid engaging in sports education programs themselves, showing little interest in sports competitions organized by the village committee [4].

(2) The widespread use of electronic devices has become an obstacle to the development and implementation of rural sports education. In some economically advanced villages, where nearly everyone owns a smartphone, both adults and children prefer scrolling through social media or playing games rather than participating in physical activities. These mobile devices consume excessive time and energy, leading to diminished motivation for community sports initiatives. It can be seen that at the present stage, there is a large gap in the development of rural physical education in Henan, and there are many obstacles to its development. Rural people lack the correct concept of sports and health awareness. Under the background of rural revitalization, it is very necessary to strengthen rural physical education.

2.2 Analysis of the Advantages of Rural Village Physical

Education

In the context of rural revitalization, the development of village sports education serves not only as a sports education initiative but also as a key component in implementing new rural construction. It effectively enhances farmers' mental well-being and physical fitness, acting as one of the measures to prevent them from falling back into poverty [5]. Regarding the advantages of developing village sports education in rural areas, these can be specifically manifested in: (1) Reducing "poverty relapse due to illness". At the National Poverty Alleviation Summary and Commendation Conference, President Xi Jinping stated: "Under current standards, all 98.99 million rural poor have been lifted out of poverty, with 832 impoverished counties removed from the list, completing the arduous task of eliminating absolute poverty." Although the overall battle against poverty has concluded, newly liberated rural families may face financial strain if sudden illnesses occur or family members are too weak for labor. Developing village sports education in rural areas can guide farmers to shift their mindset, emphasizing the importance of health while providing exercise opportunities. During agricultural off-seasons, villagers can participate in sports activities organized by village committees, improving blood circulation and cardiopulmonary functions. This reduces the likelihood of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, thereby alleviating poverty relapse caused by illness in rural households. (2) Promoting rural sports education industries to address the "hollowing-out" phenomenon in Henan's countryside. The "hollowing-out" is a widespread issue in rural Henan, resulting from the mass migration of young and middle-aged laborers for employment, leading to a reduction in rural workforce. The exodus of young and able-bodied workers has not only strained rural development resources but also hindered the progress of rural revitalization initiatives. By vigorously developing village sports education and promoting its integration with related industries, rural areas can create more job opportunities, enabling young adults to support their families without leaving their hometowns [1]. In advancing village sports education, governments and village committees should encourage farmers to participate in community sports activities and rural sports programs, thereby creating more income-generating opportunities. This approach helps retain rural labor forces, providing stronger internal momentum for the sustained implementation of rural revitalization strategies and the development of a new socialist countryside.

It is evident that village sports education demonstrates significant advantages in both implementing rural revitalization initiatives and enhancing the development capabilities of rural communities. Therefore, to effectively achieve new rural construction goals and sustainably implement the rural revitalization strategy, it is imperative to vigorously develop village sports education and establish a high-quality model for its development.

3. The Future Development Path of Rural Physical Education under the Background of Rural Revitalization

3.1 Village Physical Education Connects Urban and Rural Educational Resources, and the Two-way Integration Reflects Rural Revitalization

The underdevelopment of rural sports education in Henan Province stems not only from insufficient educational resources but more critically from a shortage of qualified instructors and quality sports curricula. This resource gap directly hampers the establishment of robust village sports programs and impedes diverse community sports activities. To advance high-quality rural sports education under the rural revitalization initiative, priority should be given to resource integration and recognizing the vital importance of these assets. It is recommended that government authorities take the lead in consolidating urban-rural sports resources, fostering integrated development between city and countryside sports education. This would facilitate the infusion of urban sports philosophies, knowledge, and professionals into rural areas, thereby ensuring sustainable growth of village sports programs and embodying the rural revitalization vision [2]. Relevant departments should actively mediate partnerships with well-equipped primary and secondary schools through mentorship programs and support collaborations. Additionally, implementing mobile teaching services could provide external reinforcement for rural sports initiatives. Furthermore, targeted training initiatives should be implemented for current physical education teachers in rural schools, along with coaching staff and instructors. Regular urban training programs should be organized to update professionals with advanced sports theories and health knowledge, enhancing their expertise and enabling them to deliver high-quality community sports programs.

3.2 The School Cooperates with the Village Committee to Expand the Ways of Carrying out Physical Education in the Village

Rural schools serve as vital platforms for advancing sports education in villages. School administrators should proactively assume their responsibilities in developing rural sports programs, actively collaborate with village committees to expand sports activities, and jointly establish a vibrant sports landscape in new rural areas, thereby implementing the rural revitalization strategy. To fully engage in this initiative, rural schools must extend beyond campus boundaries to integrate into village environments, fostering positive interactions with villagers. Through cooperation with village committees, schools can encourage community participation in sports activities and enhance public awareness of physical health. Research indicates that Henan Province has seen improvements in rural sports education and fitness culture over the past eight years. Some economically prosperous villages have established integrated school-community sports systems, moving toward standardized development. Building on these achievements, schools should deepen partnerships with village committees to continuously improve sports education quality and meet diverse age-specific needs. It is recommended that schools and village committees organize sports performances and competitive events to boost villagers' enthusiasm for physical activities, encouraging greater voluntary participation in community sports programs.

3.3 Strengthen the Construction of Sports Culture and Create a Good Atmosphere for Village Sports Education

A positive cultural environment serves as the cornerstone for developing village sports education. In the context of rural revitalization, advancing new countryside construction through sports education requires strengthening cultural development in rural communities. By cultivating a vibrant sports culture, we can foster an educational atmosphere that guides villagers to shift mindsets and nurtures positive attitudes toward physical activities among youth. On one hand, relevant authorities should enhance sports education initiatives in rural areas through regular lectures on sports science and mobile fitness seminars, helping villagers gradually understand sports knowledge and develop proper perceptions about physical exercise. Practical approaches include launching live-streamed sports education programs where villagers can watch broadcasts and participate in prize quizzes, making learning more engaging and enjoyable. Another strategy involves creating village WeChat official accounts to regularly share event schedules and photos from past sports activities, encouraging active participation. On the other hand, cultivating exemplary leaders in village sports education is crucial. By organizing online Q&A sessions and offline sports competitions, we can select top performers to set benchmarks for community engagement. After that, the top ten will be focused on training to shape the village sports leaders, who will initiate more sports education learning activities in the village, so as to create a good sports education atmosphere.

3.4 Integrate Village Physical Education with Rural Agriculture to Create a Characteristic Village Sports Model

In the context of rural revitalization, the development of village sports education aims to better implement rural revitalization plans and accelerate new countryside construction. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize both social and economic benefits in this field. It is recommended to integrate village sports education with agricultural industry development, leveraging the “sports education + industry” model to boost rural enterprise performance and drive rural economic growth. A common approach involves combining rural ecotourism with sports education by organizing eco-themed village marathons. Participants who complete the full marathon can receive cash prizes and free enrollment in sports interest classes at rural enterprises. Remaining marathon finishers may be invited to serve as paid sports instructors, creating dual opportunities: generating income for villagers and expanding the influence of regional ecotourism while stimulating rural economic development. Additionally, initiatives like sports-themed agritourism and local sports lantern festivals can be developed. These activities engage villagers who regularly participate in sports education into festive events and industrial services, showcasing the community's positive spirit to visitors while highlighting the unique characteristics of rural sports education.

Furthermore, we should seize the opportunities in rural sports education development by strengthening sports infrastructure construction. Upgrading outdated facilities will provide better sports equipment for villagers. On one hand, installing fitness equipment in rural areas can serve as auxiliary tools for daily physical education and support villagers' regular exercise routines. On the other hand, establishing dedicated sports

teaching rooms in villages can improve educational environments and promote the advancement of rural sports education.

4. Conclusion

Village sports education serves as a vital initiative under the rural revitalization strategy to advance new countryside development, while also effectively enhancing the physical and mental well-being of rural residents. Current developments in Henan's rural areas reveal multiple shortcomings in village sports education, primarily manifested through monotonous formats and insufficient resources. Nevertheless, the advancement of village sports education demonstrates distinct advantages for both consolidating rural revitalization achievements in Henan Province and promoting self-development among local communities. This fundamental rationale explains the persistent emphasis on expanding village sports education. Moving forward, it is recommended to integrate village sports education with rural school physical education, sports culture development, specialized rural challenge resolution and model innovation, as well as grassroots governance enhancement. By establishing a multi-dimensional development framework for village sports education, we can continuously elevate the spiritual vitality of rural populations and contribute to advancing the rural revitalization strategy.

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