

Analysis of Living Status of the Married Migrant Youth Based on a Sampling Survey

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Abstract

With the rapid growth of social economy and the transfer of the labor force from rural areas to urban areas, the number of migrants in China keeps increasing. The majority of the migrants are the youth, and the married migrant youth faces the individual problems on employment and social insurance and the domestic problems such as education of the left-behind children and support for the old parents. It's of important realistic value to carry out the research on the living status and family function of the married migrant youth in order to provide the equal basic public services for the migrants and promote the living standard of the migrant families. Based on the sampling survey data, it's found that the married migrant youth is characterized by both the rural to urban migration and familial migration. The total family function of the married migrant youth is fine, but it is varying significantly among the different levels of education, income, living condition and the way family members dealing with the important domestic events. Nearly all the research sample believes that the family income can cover or almost cover the basic daily expenditure. Therefore, it can be inferred that the married migrant youth in Jiangsu province don't have the surviving problems. However the married migrant youth are facing the development problems such as (1) Lack of training and employment channels. (2) Hard work and low frequency of returning hometown. (3) Limit of social insurance and support. Aiming at the existing problems, relevant proposals are put forward.

Key words: Migrant population, social insurance, family assessment device, Jiangsu province

1. Introduction

With the rapid growth of social economy and the transfer of the labor force from rural areas to urban areas, the number of migrants in China keeps increasing. According to the 6th population census of China held in 2010, the total population in mainland China was 1.339 billion among which 221 million were migrants, and there were 402 million family households with the average family size 3.10 persons. Compared with the results of the 5th population census, the number of migrants was increased by 82.89% and the average family size decreased by 0.34 persons. The structure of the family households tends to be small and incomplete. The youth makes up the majority of the migrants. However, the migration of the married youth weakened the family function and made the family structure unstable. Recently, the married migrant youth in China encounters many individual and domestic problems.

As one of the most developed provinces in China, Jiangsu is of huge migrants both from the other provinces in China and the other parts within Jiangsu because of the unbalanced economic development among areas. It's reported by the Jiangsu

government organization, the total migrants were 17.88 million by the end of Nov.2011, and 30% of urban population was migrants. Based on a sampling survey, the paper analyzes the living status and the family function of the married migrant youth in Jiangsu province in order to provide the equal basic public services for the migrants and to promote the living standard of the migrant families.

2. Methods

2.1 Concept definition

Youth: There are different definitions for the youth. The youth are the young people aged 15-24 by UN, 18-44 by WHO, 16-34 by UNESCO, 15-34 by National Bureau of Statistics of China and so on. In this paper, the youth are defined the same as that by WHO.

Migrant population: In China, the migrants are referred to those who live in one district or town for more than half a year with HuKo registered in another district or town. There are two types of migrant population. One includes those migrating within a city and the other doesn't. The latter definition is used in this paper.

2.2 Research objects

By judgment sampling 7 cities located from the south to north parts of Jiangsu province are selected. The well trained students sent the questionnaires to the married migrants by accidental sampling in Feb. 2011. There are 703 valid samples among the total 750 migrants sampled. The valid response proportion is 93.7%. Those who are under 45 years old and fill out the family assessment device completely are selected from the valid sample as the research objects. The size of the research sample is 585.

2.3 Research methods

The questionnaire is composed of two parts, self-designed questions and the family assessment device. The former includes basic information about education, work, living condition and so on, while the latter is used to measure the different functions of the family. There are 60 items in the family assessment device, composing 7 scales indicating problem solving, communication, role, emotional reaction, emotional involvement, behavior control and total functions of the family. The score for each item varies from 1 to 4 while 1 indicates healthy and 4 unhealthy. The score of each scale, which is also varying from 1 to 4, is the average score of all the items included. The higher the score, the worse the family function (Wang, 1999).

The data are processed by means of SPSS. The statistical analyses include numerical descriptive measures, crosstabs and χ^2 test, independent-samples *T* test and one-way ANOVA.

3. Results

3.1 The basic characteristics of the sample

Of the 585 migrant youth sampled, 79.7% come from the rural areas and 57.3% are male. The youngest is 21 and the oldest is 44, the mean age is 34.6 years with the standard deviation 3.9 years (34.6 ± 3.9). 47.7% of them experience the junior middle school education, the percentages of primary school and below, senior middle school, college level and above are 19.8%, 22.8% and 9.8% respectively. 97.0% of them are in the first marriage with the mean marriage age 23.3 years old. The research sample

differs a lot in the time away from hometown with the mean of (5.2 ± 4.6) years.

The migrant youth almost have no training experience in both hometown and working place. The percentages of those without training are 92.5% in hometown and 83.7% in working place. The most common way to find a job is by the introduction of friends and the recommendation of relatives, taking 44.4% and 25.2% respectively. 76.6% of the youth sampled have stable jobs, 20.8% temporary jobs, and 2.5% no jobs or no plan to work. As for those at work, 54.7% are manufacturing workers, 16.6% construction workers, 13.3% storekeepers, and the others work in wholesale markets, barber shops, domestic service and so on. They usually need to work overtime, with the mean working time per day (9.5 ± 1.7) hours. In addition, 50.5% of them work more than 10 hours per day in average. In 2010, the yearly income of them varied a lot with the mean of RMB (34 ± 26) thousand yuan.

Among the migrant youth at work, only 65.7% of them signed labor contracts. Answers for why not signing the labor contracts were quite different. 51.0% of the respondents didn't know to sign the labor contracts, 24.8% were not willing to and 24.2% said their employers would not like to. Among the all, the percentage of taking part in endowment insurance is the highest reaching 78.4%, then the basic medical insurance 66.3%. And the percentage of unemployment insurance is a little lower than 20% and those of employment injury insurance and accident insurance are both higher than 20%. The percentages in other commercial insurances are approximately zero. Although more than half sample took part in the basic medical insurance, only 42.7% of them attended medical check-up in the past two years. As for the reasons to have medical check-up, 58.0% were organized by the companies, 22.8% feeling unwell, 14.0% due to healthcare consciousness and 5.2% organized by family planning committee, etc. The distribution of charge for medical check-up is 43.6% totally free, 23.2% partly free and 33.2% totally on their own. It should be noticed that when the respondents are ill, 44.4% of them will buy medicines by themselves, 27.3% will go to see a doctor, and the rest will decide on the situation or put up with it.

3.2 The living status of the sample's family

The sampling survey shows that only 22.2% of the migrant youth are working out alone, the percentages for 2 and 3 family members working out simultaneously are 68.1% and 6.5% each. While working outside, 61.1% are living with their spouses, 30.0% with their spouses and children, and 4.3% with their spouses, children and parents all together. Furthermore, 37.3% of them rent apartments with their family members in the working place, 23.6% live in dormitories, 20.2% rent apartments by themselves, only 8.9% could afford to buy apartments, and the rest live in stores, employers' homes or with other people. The housing condition are quite different with the mean area (48.7 ± 39.3) m², correspondingly, the mean cost for housing per month is RMB (429.6 ± 527.6) yuan, and the most expensive one is RMB 5,000 yuan. Although the majority of the migrant youth think that their incomes are almost the same compared with the people nearby, there is significant difference between the evaluations of working place and hometown (See table 1). It's also showed that 37.3% believe that the family income could cover the daily expense, 59.3% could cover the basic daily expense and only 3.5% think the family income is insufficient.

Table 1 Self-evaluation on the yearly income by the migrant youth sampled

income	Comparing with those in the working place		Comparing with those in hometown	
	cases	percentage	cases	percentage
higher	58	10.3	142	25.2
the same	405	71.8	378	67.0
lower	101	17.9	44	7.8

Note: $\chi^2=60.987, p=0.000$

Most of the migrant youth sampled have 1 or 2 children, 65.9% and 27.9% each, and only a few have 3 or more children. 65.5% of them leave their children behind, e.g. living and going to school in hometown, while 31.0% bring their children with them to the working place and attending school. Only 3.5% have children both in the working place and hometown. 82.0% of their children in the working place are going to the public school, the percentages for attending the key school and the schools for migrant workers' children are 12.9% and 5.1% respectively. Although the migrant youth sampled care a lot about children's education, 41.7% of them often communicate with their children and 21.2% often offer counseling on study. Besides, 56.7% often talk about children's education with their spouses, 24.2% communicate with the old in the family and 19.7% with the teachers at school. Because of the hard work and living pressure the migrant youth spend little time on their children and the old in the family, especially for those left behind. The distribution of their returning frequency to the hometown is 43.8% once a year, 35.4% twice a year, 10.9% often or once a month, and 9.8% once more than 1 year.

It's found by the sampling survey that 71.1% of the migrant youth often deal with the important domestic events by communicating with the family members, 26.3% occasionally do so. Once on emergency, the comfort mainly comes from the spouse, friends, relatives, and the ratios are 74.5%, 52.6% and 40.7% respectively. The financial support and the help to solve the problems are from the same resources, but the order is changed with the ratios of 60.9% from the spouse, 56.8% from the relatives and 48.4% from the friends. The ratios of the comfort, the financial support and the help to solve the problems are about 20% from the colleagues, less than 6% from the company or employer, and less than 1% from the government or non-government organizations. During their spare time, the migrant youth seldom engages in recreational activities. The top 3 activities they usually do are doing housework 47.5%, watching TV 34.0% and teaching children 15.9%.

3.3 The analysis of the sample's family function

According to the responses to the family assessment device, the mean score of the total family function of the sample is (2.08±0.36). The influencing factors of the total family function are further studied from the different aspects such as sex, age, education level, Huko, income, the number of persons working out in the family, living condition in the working place, the frequency of returning hometown and the way family members dealing with the important domestic events.

The independent-samples *T* test indicates that the mean scores for total family function of the female and those with agriculture Huko are higher, but the differences are not significant under the significance level $\alpha=0.05$ (See Table 2).

Table 2 Scores of the total family function and the *t* test results

factor	level	cases	mean	standard deviation	<i>t</i> value	<i>P</i> value
sex	male	333	2.06	0.36	-1.250	0.212
	female	248	2.10	0.36		
Huko	agriculture	417	2.08	0.34	1.913	0.056
	non-agriculture	106	2.01	0.37		

Note: The total number of cases is less than 585 because of non-response. The same is true in table 3.

By means of one-way ANOVA, the results indicate that the scores of total family function vary significantly among the different levels of education, income, living condition and the way family members dealing with the important domestic events (See Table 3). The more the education and the income, the better the total family function. The less the frequency family members deal with important domestic events, the worse the total family function. Generally speaking, those respondents with higher income, more education and own apartments have healthier family function.

Table 3 One-way ANOVA of total family function

factor	level	cases	mean	standard deviation	<i>F</i> value	<i>P</i> value
Age	<30 years	43	2.18	0.44	2.586	0.052
	30-34 years	242	2.05	0.38		
	35-39 years	237	2.06	0.31		
	≥40 years	63	2.14	0.35		
Education	primary school and below	115	2.20	0.36	9.708	0.000**
	junior middle school	278	2.08	0.33		
	senior middle school	433	2.01	0.34		
	college and above	57	1.94	0.43		
Yearly income (RMB)	<20,000	88	2.24	0.35	12.582	0.000**
	20,000-40,000	303	2.06	0.34		
	40,000-60,000	90	2.07	0.36		
	≥60,000	68	1.91	0.33		
Number of family members working out	1	110	2.05	0.33	0.661	0.517
	2	338	2.09	0.36		
	3 and more	47	2.09	0.38		
Housing condition	dorm	138	2.10	0.36	4.867	0.001**
	rent alone	118	2.18	0.36		
	rent with family	218	2.04	0.36		
	own apartment	52	1.94	0.37		
	other	59	2.05	0.26		
Frequency of returning hometown	once a month	64	2.01	0.36	1.704	0.165
	twice a year	207	2.07	0.36		
	once a year	256	2.10	0.34		
	once more than 1 year	57	2.02	0.41		
Ways of dealing with important domestic events	often	414	2.01	0.35	25.758	0.000**
	occasionally	153	2.22	0.31		
	never	15	2.37	0.35		

Note: The sign ** represents there is very significant difference under $\alpha=0.01$.

4. Conclusions

Based on the sampling survey in 7 cities in Jiangsu province, the married migrant youth is characterized by both the rural to urban migration and familial migration similar to the existing results (Li,2010; Duan,2008). The mean income and housing condition are better than the previous survey results in Jiangsu (Ge,2010; Wang,2005). The total family function is fine while the mean score varies significantly among the different levels of education, income, living condition and the way family members dealing with the important domestic events. Nearly all the migrant youth sampled believe that the family income could cover or almost cover the basic daily expenditure. Therefore, it can be inferred that the married migrant youth in Jiangsu don't have the surviving problems, they are facing the development problems such as (1) Lack of training and employment channels. (2) Hard work and low frequency of returning hometown. (3) Limit of social insurance and support.

Being the critical link between the urban and the rural life, married migrant youth plays an important role in social and economic development. It's of great importance to protect their legal rights and enhance their development abilities. Based on the results found in the sampling survey, the suggestions are put forward in order to provide the equal basic public services for the migrants and promote the living standard of the migrant families. First, the migrant population should be empowered to have the same rights as the citizens. The migrants should enjoy the public welfare in all aspects such as purchasing or renting apartments provided by the government, children's education, joining the basic medical insurance and endowment insurance. Then, the government should improve the basic public service system. The skill training for migrant youth should be provided on community level and more channels for employment both in rural and urban areas. The left-behind children and the aged are cared and supported by government and non-government organizations. Finally, the labor rights and interests should be protected under the regular and strict administration. The labor contracts must be signed and the employees should work and be paid under laws and rules. The migrant youth could be protected once out of work or hurt in employment injury or accident, and enjoy leisure time with their family members.

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