

中国儿童生存性别差异 的研究和实践

RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY PRACTICE ON GENDER DIFFERENCE IN CHILD SURVIVAL IN CHINA

李树茁 Li Shuzhuo 朱楚珠 Zhu Chuzhu

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李树苗	朱楚珠	著
Li Shuzhuo	Zhu Chuzhu	
金安融	英文翻译	
Jin Anrong		

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李树苗 朱楚珠 著

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序

20 世纪 90 年代以来,国际社会在解决人口与社会发展的重大课题中,表现出两个显著的特点。第一是注重从性别角度分析与解决社会发展存在的问题,促进妇女在社会、经济和政治生活中的广泛参与,提高妇女地位,具体体现在 1994 年开罗国际人口与发展大会和 1995 年北京第四次世界妇女大会的行动纲领中。第二是注重保护社会上处于“弱势”人口群体的权益,例如对老人、儿童和贫困人口群体的保护与帮助。西安交通大学人口与经济研究所的李树苗和朱楚珠撰写的《中国儿童生存性别差异的研究和实践》一书,将以上两个特点紧密地融合在一起,是与国际社会研究和解决实际人口和社会问题的主流相吻合的。

从生物医学角度出发,在现代社会中女孩同男孩相比在生存上存在先天的优势。而我们在一些人口群体中所观测到的女孩死亡水平相对偏高于男孩,已经不是生物医学研究的范畴,而需要从社会学层次分析男女孩在生存方面的差异,即国际社会通常所称的社会性别(GENDER)差异。反映在儿童生存方面,社会性别差异主要表现在由社会中存在的男孩偏好所导致的对女孩在营养与医疗保健等方面的歧视性待遇,这种歧视性待遇直接导致女孩生存从相对

优势变成相对劣势。它实际上也是妇女地位较低的状况在儿童段的直接反映。

女孩生存处于相对劣势是一个国际性的问题,在一些男孩偏好比较强烈的国家中普遍存在。联合国曾在专题研究报告中指出,女孩死亡相对偏高问题在东亚、南亚、北非和西亚等地区比较严重,而且这种现象并没有明显的转变。各国政府和国际组织对此非常重视,作出了多种努力试图促进解决这个重要的问题。

就中国而言,由于历史上根深蒂固的男孩偏好观念的影响,女孩死亡水平相对偏高在 20 世纪 50 年代以前的中国社会中普遍存在。新中国建立后,这个问题有所弱化。但自 80 年代初起,在低生育率的环境下,男孩偏好观念有一定强化,女孩死亡水平偏高问题有一定发展。虽然中国政府已经制定了多种保护妇女和儿童权益的法规和条例,但实际社会生活中侵犯妇女特别是女孩权益的事件仍有发生。这也是中国人口和社会发展中亟待解决的问题之一。同成年妇女相比,由于女孩处于生命历程的早期阶段,缺少自我保护能力,她们的生存与发展主要依赖于社会和家庭。因此从这个意义上说,研究儿童生存的性别差异,提出保护女孩生存的政策建议,并在社区层次进行提高妇女地位和保护女孩生存的实践,具有非常重大的现实意义。李树茁和朱楚珠撰写的这本专著,反映了近年来中国人口学界就此问题所做的努力。

本书的两位作者长期从事中国人口与计划生育的研究与实践,近年来在各级计划生育委员会的支持下,深入进行与男孩偏好相关联的女孩生存的研究与实践,取得了可喜的成果。在本书中,他们本着认真、客观、求实的态度,在对国内外研究成果系统总结的基础上,从宏观、微观、政策分析和社区实践四个层次,对中国儿童生存的性别差异问题进行了系统、深入、全面的定性和定量分析,得到了一系列的重要结论,对国内外学

术界在此问题上的一些重大争论给出了可靠的回答。同时他们还提出了通过再造社区新生育文化,改善女孩生存环境的具体政策建议,并在社区层次进行了初步实践。这些无疑对实际改善女孩生存环境具有重要的推动作用。

解决女孩生存相对劣势是一个长期的任务,需要社会各个方面作出实质性努力,实实在在地改善女孩生存条件。现在西安交通大学人口与经济研究所在国家计划生育委员会的支持下,结合全国“婚育新风进万家”活动,在全国 39 个社区发展网络县中,进行旨在改善女孩生存环境的生育健康培训和社区发展活动,这项工作有重要的意义。我希望这项社会工程能够取得成功,为将来的工作提供更好的模式和经验。

蒋正华

1999 年 9 月于北京

PREFACE

Since the 1990s, international society has shown two features in dealing with important issues in population and development. One emphasizes the role of gender in analyzing and resolving social development problems that are important for promoting women's participation in social, economic, and political activities and improving women's status. This is apparently embodied in the platforms and action plans of the International Population and Development Conference held in Cairo in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The other emphasizes the protection of the rights and interests of the vulnerable population groups in society, such as the elderly, children, and the poor. These two features are clearly manifested in this book *Research and Community Practice on Gender Difference in Child Survival in China*, written by Li Shuzhuo and Zhu Chuzhu of the Population and Economic Research Institute at Xi'an Jiaotong University. This is consistent with the mainstream of international approaches to studying and resolving practical population and social issues.

In context of effects of biomedical factors, girls have innate advantages in child survival relative to boys in contemporary society. However, excess female child mortality observed in some populations is not an issue related to biomedicine. It needs analysis of sex difference in child sur-

vival related to social environment, namely, study on gender difference prevalent in international academic world. In the aspect of child survival, gender difference is mainly manifested in discrimination against girls in food and nutrition as well as medical care resulting from son preference in society. This has directly resulted in a change for girls from relative advantageous to disadvantageous in child survival. Actually, it is the reflection of women's low status in the stage of childhood. Relative disadvantage in female child survival is an international issue, existing extensively in some countries with strong son preference. A special study report of the United Nations points out that excess female child mortality is relatively serious in regions of East Asia, South Asia, North Africa and West Asia. Moreover, this situation has not been obviously changed yet. Various governments and international organizations in the world have paid much attention to this issue, and have made substantial attempts and efforts in order to tackle this important issue.

Because of the influence of the deeply rooted son preference in history of China, excess female child mortality existed extensively in Chinese society before the 1950s. It was alleviated after new China was found. However, since the early 1980s, son preference has intensified and excess female child mortality has become serious under low fertility condition. Although various laws and regulations protecting the rights and interests of women and children have been made in China, affairs infringing on rights and interests of women, especially girls, take place here and there in real social life. It is one of the issues to be urgently resolved in population and social development in China. Contrast to adult women, being in an early stage in life course, girls lack of ability to protect themselves. Consequently, survival and development of girls can only be ensured by family and society. Therefore, in this context,

it is of remarkable significance to study gender difference in child survival, to put forward suggestions on policy-making about protecting survival of girls, and to improve women's status and protect survival of girls at community level. This monograph written by Li Shuzhuo and Zhu Chuzhu reflects attempts and efforts of Chinese population scientists to tackle the issue in recent years.

The two authors of this book have been actively involved in study and practice of population and family planning in China for a long time. In recent years, with support from family planning committees at various levels, they have conducted thorough studies and practices on female child survival related to son preference and have obtained meaningful achievements. Based on the systematic summary of the domestic and foreign research results, the authors, with both serious, impersonal and factualistic attitude and qualitative and quantitative research methods, systematically, thoroughly and roundly analyzed gender differences in child survival. In this book, a series of important conclusions have been drawn, which offer reliable answers to some prime disputes over this issue. Meanwhile, they provided detailed suggestions for improving female child survival environment by way of building new community childbearing culture and carrying out the preparatory practice in communities. It is no doubt that these attempts play an important role in improving female child survival environment.

To resolve the problem of female's disadvantages in child survival is a long-term task and needs substantial endeavors of all sectors in society to improve female child survival environment. With support from the State Family Planning Commission and framework of "New culture of marriage and childbearing entering into families", the Population and Economic Research Institute at Xi'an Jiaotong University is now conducting national reproductive health training and community activities

in 39 community network counties to improve female child survival. This is an important social intervention program. I hope this program success so as to provide better working modes and experiences for the future.

Jiang Zhenghua
Beijing
September 1999

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