

# **The Connotation of Rural Resources and Their Utilization Strategies in Chinese Kindergarten Environmental Creation**

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**Abstract:** As the reform of kindergarten education in rural China advances, there are more and more discussions about rural kindergarten environments. Rural kindergartens in China are rich in local resources, but how to utilize such characteristic resources in creating kindergarten environments is still a problem at both the theoretical and practical levels. On the one hand, the use of local resources is neglected in the creation of environments; on the other hand, the use of local resources in the creation of environments is too superficial and lacks an educational character. To address these problems, we need to re-examine the meaning of "rural resources" and propose strategies.

**Keywords:** Rural Resources, Kindergarten Environmental Creation

## **1. Problem is Put Forward**

Kindergarten is an important place of life and education for young children, and <The Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3 to 6 >and<The Guidelines for Kindergarten Education><sup>[1]</sup> have clearly stated that teachers should provide young children with a rich variety of materials, create a meaningful educational environment, and allow young children to freely and independently acquire useful experience in the environment to promote their growth.

With the advancement of education reform, we have been paying more and more attention to early childhood education in rural China, among which the creation of environment in rural kindergartens is one of the focuses of attention. Because rural areas are rich in local natural elements and humanistic landscapes, the development of early childhood education in most rural areas of China has long been slow due to geographic location, economic development, and many other factors, and there is a lack of teachers. More and more

kindergarten teachers have realized that the development of local resources can help to form a special kindergarten curriculum based on children's lives, and the creation of kindergarten environment is an important part of this system. But in the face of the rich local resources, which are educational resources? And how to utilize them? These have become a problem for many rural kindergarten teachers. From the theoretical level, the creation and utilization of local resources is facing difficulties.

And from the practical level, For rural kindergartens, the integration of rural resources in the creation of the environment is to make good use of local resources. However, when teachers explore the practice, most of the experience comes from urban kindergartens. There is no suitable experience to draw on, which leads to many problems in the creation of the environment in rural kindergartens

This paper compiles the relevant research, on the basis of which, re-understands "rural resources", analyzes the current situation of using local resources in kindergarten environment creation, and puts forward reasonable suggestions.

## **2. What is the Rural Resources**

In practice, we tend to narrow down the term "rural resources" to natural resources, and simply incorporate elements of the natural environment such as plants and animals into our curricular activities. So what else is there besides natural resources? What exactly are rural resources? We need to re-conceptualize rural resources in kindergarten education practice.

The term "rural" is rich in meaning and has been defined by different researchers. In essence, "rural" is a concept of regional space, for example, we usually understand "rural" as a certain rural area, or the place where we were born and grew up, in which there are some unique people, things and landscapes.

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and they have been made with relevant definitions by different researchers. In essence, "rural" is a concept of regional space. For example, we usually understand "rural" as a certain rural area or a place where it is born and grown. On which there are some unique people, things and scenery. At the same time, "rural" is also a social and cultural concept. Xiaotong Fei once said that "Chinese society is fundamentally rural."<sup>[2]</sup>, and it is precisely this "soil" that represents the connotation of traditional Chinese society and sustains its inheritance and development. In this context, the countryside is not just a region, but extends to a cultural world. People living in this region are indoctrinated and disciplined by the vernacular culture, and people, things, and objects in this region produce various relationships, and also produce what we often call "customs and habits" and "local customs", which silently inculcate people's lives.

At this point, we can see that the rural resources are not only the things in nature, but also the people, events, things and their relationships in this region, which really constitute our rich local resources, of which nature is only a small part. Rural resources include natural ecological resources as well as humanistic and social ecological resources; they include flowers and trees around the kindergarten, as well as the experience of production and life around the kindergarten, customs and habits, and so on. Even when we understand the connotation of "rural" as "the place where one is born and grows up", we will find that rural kindergartens have their own local resources, as well as urban kindergartens have their own local resources. What we have to pay attention to is the life of young children itself. On the one hand, we make the child aware of his surroundings, adapting to the existing world of experience and looking towards the future. On the other hand, this understanding of the world of experience around him is also accompanied by the understanding of the local culture, to the identification, and then to the inheritance. Of course, the rural culture in rural areas may be more complete in terms of tradition and history, or what Fei called more "rural".

### **3. The Problems Existing in Using Local Resources**

As we further study the kindergarten environment, more and more teachers have

begun to try to explore the practice of integrating rural resources into the creation of the kindergarten environment. However, in the process of such practice, some kindergartens have not been able to truly integrate rural resources into the educational environment, and some kindergartens have tried to do so, but various problems have emerged.

On the one hand, many kindergartens in the environmental creation, teachers will draw reference to other kindergartens or online examples, which will easily lead to the neglect of their own existing rural resources, and blindly follow the trend of creating other people's rural resources. This kind of kindergarten environment creation is far away from the life of the children in their own class, and is not a real use of rural resources in kindergarten environment creation.

On the other hand, some kindergartens have integrated local resources in their environmental creation, but the actual effect is unsatisfactory. It mainly presents:

#### **3.1 The Integration of Rural Resources is Too Shallow**

When integrating rural resources into the kindergarten environment, it is easy for the integration to be superficial. For example, teachers often choose rural resources that are more characteristic of the local area, such as certain scenic spots. Because this kind of rural resources can be better presented in the form of pictures, decorations and so on, and seem to be familiar resources, teachers often make this kind of display area in the classroom environment. Such environments seem to have the use of local speciality rural resources to create environments and carry out related educational activities. However, when teachers use this resource to carry out related educational activities, they feel that there is not much content to develop, and they mainly organise children to learn about the relevant experiences in the form of verbal explanations and displays.

Just because it is a familiar resource in life, teachers often fall into a state of "darkness" when utilising this resource, and instead explore it in depth very little. Behind the seeming understanding, teachers may not know the historical connotations of the local culture. For example, when creating the environment of a kindergarten, the kindergarten incorporates the characteristic landscape elements, but most of

the kindergarten teachers do not know the cultural and historical significance behind it, and they only have a superficial understanding of it by consulting the information, and more often than not, they just decorate the environment of the kindergarten and class by presenting photographs of places of interest and of the process of the activities.

### **3.2 The Utilisation Process is Overly Concerned With Aesthetics and Culture, and Lacks Education**

Kindergarten environments should reflect a sense of aesthetics, thereby promoting the development of aesthetic skills in young children. However, some kindergartens have misconceptions about the creation of environments and are overly concerned with the aesthetics and novelty of their environments. Some kindergartens often choose local resources with artistic characteristics, such as ethnic crafts and costumes, but in order to pursue aesthetics in the presentation, they neglect to establish an experiential connection between the resources and the children, and neglect the educational nature of the kindergarten environment. Or, in order to pursue "rural", they pay too much attention to the cultural significance behind, presenting the kindergarten environment like a large-scale cultural science popularisation, which is detached from the reality of the children.

## **4. How to Use the Local Resources to Create the Kindergarten Environment**

### **4.1 Understanding of the Material and Broadening of Cognitive Horizons**

In order for teachers to make full use of rural resources to create environments, they need to have a good understanding of the materials. However, most teachers only stay at the level of "knowing" about local resources, and the integration of rural resources is rather superficial. A full understanding of rural resources is a prerequisite for integrating them into kindergarten environments. Only by fully understanding the materials and opening up our existing horizons can we better integrate kindergarten environments with rural resources.<sup>[3]</sup>

On the one hand, teachers should break through the existing understanding of rural materials and not equate rural resources with natural resources.

Breaking away from the existing understanding, they should take a systematic and comprehensive view of the contents of local resources in their kindergartens, and think about the use of the materials from multiple dimensions and properties, so as to broaden the breadth of our understanding of local resources. On the other hand, we should strengthen the depth of our understanding of local resources, and not stop at the introduction of some textual data on the Internet. Early childhood teachers can experience these resources to build up their own real understanding of the resources, and then think about how to use them in the kindergarten educational environment after they have a full feeling and understanding. In daily life, they can also pay more attention to the rural resources, not only in the relevant activities, temporary search for information, and become rural for the sake of rural.

### **4.2 Teacher Training to Enhance Teachers' Capacity to Integrate the Use of Local Materials and Early Childhood Education**

More and more teachers have realized the value of integrating rural resources into early childhood education, but lack the ability to combine them with education. In rural areas in particular, there is an abundance of rural resources, but teachers are limited by their level of professionalism and do not know how to use them, where to use them and when to use them. In the beginning, when utilizing rural resources to create kindergarten environments, many kindergartens will choose to learn from excellent kindergarten examples. When imitating them, they should not only see what materials they use and where they are placed, but should also focus on the way they think about the use of rural resources in the creation of the environment, and see the connection between these resources and the lives of young children.

Specialized training on the use of local resources should be carried out before and after school to improve teachers' ability to explore rural materials and to combine them with early childhood education, so that rural resources can be truly integrated into kindergarten environments and give full play to their educational value.

### **4.3 Multi-channel Utilization of Rural Resources in the Creation of Kindergarten Environments**

Teachers should make the environment more deeply integrated with local resources, on the basis of a full understanding of rural resources, and use a variety of ways to create kindergarten classroom environments. For example, when utilizing "tea" as a rural resource, the environment of the theme wall can be created by presenting the process and experience of the children in the class when exploring the subject of "tea". You can also combine "tea" as a resource in group education and teaching activities to learn about tea culture, tea making, tea tasting, and so on. In the regional activities, put and explore the tea experience related materials and tools, so that tea as a resource deep penetration in the classroom environment.

#### **4.4 Integration of Community Resources**

In the context of new rural construction, more and more of our rural areas are focusing on the humanistic construction of their townships, and many public facilities and venues have been added. For example, they have their own villagers' activity centers, and there are regular village public welfare activities such as sending doctors to the countryside, cultural performances, etc. Rural areas have also formed their own communities and community environments rich in special features and styles. Kindergartens can interact with these community resources, which are closely related to the lives of young children, when creating their environments.

#### **4.5 Indicators for Integrating the Use of**

#### **Rural Resources in the Evaluation**

Evaluation has an important impact on kindergarten management. In the evaluation of kindergarten environment, "utilization of rural resources" is taken as one of the evaluation indexes, which is conducive to the conscious incorporation of rural resources in the creation of the environment in each classroom. In the process of evaluation, feedback and discussion, teachers' awareness and ability to utilize rural resources in environmental creation will be continuously improved.

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