

# The Historical Change of Rural Governance and the Choice of Modern Governance Path

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## Abstract

Since the reform and opening up for more than 40 years, the rural governance model is constantly reconstructing. The rapid development of market economy and the continuous acceleration of urbanization deconstruct the integrity of the traditional countryside, and the corresponding social governance system needs to be changed in the new era. The fourth Plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee first put forward the proposition of "to better transform the institutional advantages of our country into the efficiency of national governance ", deeply attached importance to the structural transformation of " native China "to" urban and rural China ", and took the time to change the social governance. In view of the problems existing in the process of rural governance modernization, such as strong administrative color, lax grass-roots organizations, and unreasonable combination of three governance, this paper puts forward solutions from three aspects of autonomy, rule of law and rule of virtue, so as to build a rural governance community with governance efficiency covering all villagers.

## Keywords

Rural Governance; Historical Changes; Modern Governance Path.

## 1. The Internal Characteristics of the Historical Change of Rural Governance

The governance model of a period is closely related to the background of the times and the main contradiction of the society at that time. Reviewing the model of rural governance since the founding of New China for more than 70 years, scholars have divided it into four stages. From the beginning of the founding of New China to the period of "integration of government and society" before the reform and opening up, the stage of "township government and village administration" after the reform and opening up and the implementation of the household contract responsibility system, the period of villagers' autonomy after the promulgation of the 1982 Constitution, and the innovative concept of "combination of three governance" in the new era. The governance characteristics and changes in these stages also reflect the strategic thinking and advantages of our party and state to judge the situation and grasp the direction and pulse of the times.

### 1.1. Promotion of the Main Position of Farmers' Governance

In our country, villagers' participation in rural governance has an indirect to direct transformation, which takes reform and opening up as the obvious dividing point. From the beginning of the founding of New China to the period of reform and opening up, the countryside of our country is still a highly centralized mode. At that time, the focus of national life was to restore order and reconstruct the governance mode of the country, so the state power was extended to every corner of the rural grassroots. After the reform and opening up, the disadvantages of the governance model of "the unity of government and society" show that the

model is more and more unsuitable for the development of rural society at that time Rural governance is in urgent need of transformation and upgrading. The Constitution of 1982 clearly states that the villagers' committee is a grass-roots organization for the realization of autonomy for the rural grassroots. [1] This is the first time in Chinese history to give villagers the right of rural autonomy in the form of law, which has epoch-making significance. With the deepening of rural reform and the rapid development of productive forces, the Party and the state in the new era have vigorously revitalized the countryside, put forward the "three governance in one rural governance" model with villagers' autonomy as the core, and made more clear the main position of the vast number of farmers in rural governance.

### **1.2. The Multiple Expansion of Rural Governance Subject**

In the historical process of the founding of New China for more than 70 years, the main body of rural governance has also experienced a process of transformation from single to multiple. In the early days of the founding of New China, in order to concentrate on socialist construction, the control of rural society was in the hands of the state. As the only subject of rural governance, the government has continued the "three-level ownership, team-based" rural governance model of "integration of government and society ". After the reform and opening up, the role of market in the allocation of resources is gradually prominent, together with the government to govern the countryside, opened the period of rural dual subject governance. After the reform of rural taxes and fees in 2006, the main body of rural governance has become more diversified. Farmers, social organizations and new rural sages all play their own roles in the process of rural governance. In the new era, the CPC Central Committee issued the guiding opinions on strengthening and improving rural governance, which clearly pointed out that a modern rural social governance system with "Party committee leadership, government responsibility, social coordination, public participation, legal guarantee and scientific and technological support"[2] should be established and improved. So far, a standard and complete, clear rights and responsibilities of the multiple subject rural governance model was formally established. The transformation of this process not only guarantees the status of farmers as the main body to govern the countryside, but also makes up for the possible shortcomings of farmers in rural governance, so as to meet the requirements of rural good governance.

### **1.3. Comprehensive Introduction of the National Policy for the Benefit of Agriculture**

The reform of rural tax and fee in 2006 is the turning point of the transition from "draw" type to "give" type. Before the reform and opening up, in order to speed up the process of industrialization and urbanization in our country, the state has drawn a lot of human, material and financial resources from the countryside, which undoubtedly increases the financial burden of farmers and causes farmers' dissatisfaction. After the reform and opening up, especially after the overall planning of urban and rural areas in 2002, the state began to lighten the burden on farmers and reduce the absorption of rural resources. In 2006, the reform of rural taxes and fees was carried out throughout the country, and the state began to help the rural economy, reduce the burden on farmers, and increase farmers' property income. In compulsory education, rural cooperative medical system, land-expropriated farmers social security expenditure and other aspects of security support. The new era puts forward the development strategy of "rural rejuvenation ", and the policy of benefiting farmers and rich peasants is fully issued, which provides a lot of material support for rural governance.

## **2. Problems and Challenges in Rural Governance**

### **2.1. Unclear Responsibility Governance Subject and Relatively Strong Administrative Color**

The prominent symbol of the modernization of rural governance is the multiple subject with autonomy as the core and the cooperation of government, organization and township virtuous to participate in the governance of rural affairs. At present, the autonomy of other subjects other than government has not been fully stimulated, and the government's control of rural society is more than the top-down administrative compulsion, which equates governance with previous governance, so it is difficult to coordinate among the pluralistic subjects, so as to achieve the effect of two-way interaction and cooperative governance. Secondly, the villagers' political participation and subject cognition are also very indifferent. In the process of rural governance, as long as they do not involve the issue of their own interests, they will be wise to protect themselves and seek nothing wrong. A large number of rural youth migrant workers also make the main body of rural governance blank or aging dilemma. These traditional administrative inertia and the passivity of the governance subject restrain the effective promotion of the modernization of rural governance system and destroy the effective pattern of rural governance modernization.

### **2.2. Weak Grass-roots Organizations and Prominent Problem of Formalism**

Another outstanding problem caused by the lack of the main body of rural governance is the weakness and laxity of various organizations at the rural grass-roots level, including grass-roots party organizations, villagers' autonomous organizations and other mass organizations. Rural grass-roots party organizations should have played a vanguard role in the process of rural governance, but the slackness of grass-roots organizations directly suppressed the timeliness of timely implementation of the party's line, principles and policies in rural areas, and the insufficient exemplary role of party members reduced the enthusiasm of the people around them to participate in rural governance, thus weakening the effect of rural governance. Secondly, some village cadres use their power to turn villagers' autonomy into village cadres' autonomy. In the course of governance, the problem of formalism is prominent, and they seek to make no mistakes within the scope of the system. They cannot effectively govern according to the actual situation in the villages, there may also be cases of ineffective governance due to the inability of rural organizations to take on such factors as funding and resources.

### **2.3. Solid Acquaintance Social Concept and Uncontrolled Combination of Three Governance**

Compared with the coastal areas, the traditional rural economic which is mainly concentrated in the remote area of China, is not very developed. Blood relationship and clan are still the main ties and emotional maintenance of villagers' social life. The law is ignored in the traditional rural areas, and the villagers have no sense of respecting the authority of the law, which leads to the weakness of the legal system in rural areas. Democratic elections are the main manifestation of villagers' political rights, but some villagers rely on huge family forces, and some irregularities appear in democratic elections, which will indirectly lead to the disorder of rural governance and promote unhealthy practices. In the new era, the Party and the state proposed to establish a system of rural governance with autonomy, rule by law and rule by virtue. But in the process of rural actual governance, whether the three can reach a benign interaction mechanism is still a process to explore practice, how to combine local characteristics to explore the local three governance model, and summed up the practical experience to promote is still worth thinking.

### **3. Effective Implementation Path of Rural Governance**

#### **3.1. Taking the Villagers as the Center and Giving Play to the Core Role of Villagers' Autonomy**

he realization of villagers being masters of the country is not only the perfection and implementation of the standpoint of "taking the people as the center" emphasized in the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, but also the core link of realizing good governance in rural areas. First of all, it is necessary to give full play to the leading core role of grass-roots party organizations, clarify the functional division between village Party branches and villagers' committees, strengthen the role of grassroots party branches in promoting rural governance, and do a good job in the exemplary role of Party members as "pacesetters". Secondly, we should institutionalize democratic supervision. The villagers' right to know, to participate and to supervise should be put into practice. The system of opening village affairs should be strengthened to form an open, transparent and efficient supervision environment. In terms of financial disclosure and village affairs operation, villagers' supervision should be accepted at any time. [3] Third, we should build a multiple governance mechanism. At present, there is a lack of rural mass organizations to organize the villagers, which leads to the villagers' autonomy but cannot effectively exercise their rights. As the representatives elected by villagers spontaneously, the members of the scholar council can effectively represent the villagers' will. Of course, this measure does not violate the spirit of autonomy. The grass-roots government and squires only have the right to make suggestions, and do not infiltrate the administrative power and their personal subjective will into the construction.

#### **3.2. Taking the Rule of Law as the Guarantee and Strengthening the Mechanism of Benign Interactive Dialogue**

It is an inevitable requirement for the modernization of rural governance to build the rule of law countryside and strengthen the bottom line of the rule of law. First, strengthen the cultivation of rural legal consciousness. On the basis of understanding the law, we can really abide by the law and use it. In particular, we should strengthen the cultivation of rural cadres' legal thinking, and put the law through any link in the process of rural governance. At the same time, the effectiveness of the rule of law should be taken as the dimension of grass-roots cadres' assessment, including their own law-abiding situation, honest law enforcement situation, and the ability to prevent and resolve contradictions at the grass-roots level. Second, we should strengthen the publicity of the rule of law and explore a new mechanism for law popularization in the "field", so that the majority of farmers can understand, like to listen to and use it. We should urge the masses to develop the legal thinking of seeking the law in case of trouble, handling affairs according to law, resolving contradictions by law, and solving problems. Third, improve the construction of rural legal service system platform. In the urbanized villages, two or three rural legal service personnel can be allocated, while in the traditional villages, the law popularization rate is low. According to the actual situation, the corresponding mechanism between the legal service institutions and specific villages can be realized, and the rural judicial channels can be unblocked, so that the villagers can better protect their own interests and effectively improve the modernization level of rural governance.

#### **3.3. Building an Effective System of Rural Governance based on the Rule of Virtue**

The rule of virtue is the traditional strategy and moral code of China. To promote the realization of rule of virtue in rural areas is conducive to the cohesion of public spirit and the purpose of good governance of villages. First of all, guided by the socialist core values, we should improve the moral cultivation and cultural quality of grass-roots villagers. The socialist core values are

the broad consensus that we have formed, which "casts the soul" with excellent culture "strong roots", inherits and innovates on the basis of practice, so as to lay the ideological foundation for the modernization of rural governance. Secondly, we should actively cultivate the culture of rural sages. In the new era, the rural sages have high cultural quality and strong organizational ability. They not only get rid of the monopoly status of the traditional gentry, but also better inherit the Confucianism, which has a high credibility and prestige among the villagers. Let the rural sages participate in all aspects of rural construction, can give full play to the role of lubricant between rural and grass-roots organizations. Finally, we should carry forward and cultivate excellent family tradition in the new era. Family tradition has an important impact on the cultivation of a person's correct values. In the process of rural governance, through the selection of "the most beautiful family" and the advanced model of filial piety and love for relatives, the villagers' internal moral cognition is stimulated and externalized into practical actions. In the new era, we should endow the family tradition with a new era connotation and create a new excellent cultural system so as to condense the public spirit and govern the beautiful countryside together.

## References

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