

Discussion on the Path of Rural Revitalization Against the Background of the Transformation of Main Contradictions in China

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Abstract—In the new era, the needs of the people have developed from "material and cultural needs" to "good living needs." Nowadays, urban residents are increasingly demanding the value of agriculture, rural ecology, culture and tourism. Rural residents are increasingly demanding rural infrastructure, public services and ecological environment. The people's yearning for a better life puts higher demands on the development of agriculture and rural areas. However, the current imbalance between urban and rural development and inadequate rural development has constrained the people's satisfaction with the needs of a better life. Implementing the rural revitalization strategy is an inevitable requirement for meeting the needs of the people's better life and solving major social contradictions. To achieve revitalization, China must start from promoting the common development of the five major rural construction projects, adhering to the new development concept, promoting the structural reform of the agricultural supply side, promoting the integration and development of new rural industries, and playing a good role in the macroeconomic regulation and control of the government.

Keywords—main contradiction; rural revitalization; good living needs; unbalanced and inadequate development

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the reform and opening up, China has achieved remarkable achievements. From the perspective of productivity development, the backward productivity situation has fundamentally changed. China has become the world's second largest economy, contributing about 30% to world economic growth. From the perspective of people's needs, people are no longer satisfied with the material and cultural needs, but put forward new requirements for fairness, justice, security, and the environment. To this end, the party's 19th National Congress report pointed out: "In the new era, the main contradiction in Chinese society is not the contradiction between the people's growing material and cultural needs and backward social production. However, it is the contradiction between the people's growing needs for a better life and the unbalanced and inadequate development." [1] The transformation of major contradictions and the upgrading of the consumption structure have put forward higher requirements for the development of agriculture and

rural areas from the demand side. However, the biggest imbalance in China today is the imbalance between urban and rural development. The biggest insufficiency is inadequate rural development. This directly restricts the satisfaction of urban residents and rural residents in the need for a better life. To this end, China must implement a rural revitalization strategy to meet the needs of the people's better life and promote the modernization of agricultural agriculture.

II. THE TRANSFORMATION OF MAIN CONTRADICTIONS IN CHINA

Since the reform and opening up 40 years ago, China's development has made remarkable achievements. From the perspective of the level of productivity development, China has become the world's second largest economy. From the perspective of people's needs, the people's material and cultural needs have been better met, and ecological, environmental, cultural, and safety aspects have raised higher requirements. It has to say that, it is no longer appropriate to describe the main contradictions in China's current society by using "the contradiction between the growing material and cultural needs of the people and the backward social production". To this end, the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has made a new judgment on the main contradiction in the new era of our society. This judgment has a scientific theoretical basis and a realistic basis.

A. The Situation of Backward Productivity and Backward Rural Areas Has Fundamentally Changed

Since the reform and opening up, China's development has achieved remarkable achievements. First, the achievements in economic development are outstanding, and the backward productivity situation has fundamentally changed. In 1978, China's GDP was 367.87 billion yuan. In 2018, it reached 90 trillion yuan¹, more than 200 times that of 1978. At the average exchange rate, the total economic output reached US\$13.6 trillion. According to the population of China's mainland population of 1395.38 million at the end

¹ Data source: National Bureau of Statistics.

of 2018, the population per capita was close to US\$10,000². Second, the level of urbanization has increased significantly. In 1978, the urbanization rate was only 17.92%. In 2018, the urbanization rate reached 59.58%³. It can be seen that since the reform and opening up, China's urbanization development has made outstanding achievements. Third, the income level and consumption of residents have grown steadily. In terms of income level, the per capita disposable income of urban residents and rural households in 1978 was 343.3 yuan and 133.6 yuan respectively, and increased to 39,251 yuan and 14,617 yuan in 2018 respectively. From the perspective of consumption level, the Engel coefficient of urban residents and rural residents in China was as high as 57.5% and 67.7% in 1978, respectively, to 27.7% and 30.1%⁴ in 2018, close to the UN's 20%-30% rich standard. It reflects the improvement of people's quality of life. Fourth, the problem of food and clothing has been solved. In 1978, China's total grain output was 307.765 million tons, and in 2018 it reached 665.89 million tons⁵. It can be seen that agricultural production capacity has increased significantly since the reform and opening up. Fifth, rural infrastructure has gradually improved. According to the third national agricultural census data of the National Bureau of Statistics, at the end of 2016, 99.3% of the villages had access to highways, 99.7% of villages had access to electricity, and 25.1% had e-commerce distribution sites. 91.3% of townships concentratedly or partially supply water, and 90.8% of township household garbage is dealt intensively or partially⁶. Sixth, the level of basic public services in rural areas has increased significantly. At the end of 2016, 96.5% of towns and villages had kindergartens and nurseries, 98.0% of townships had primary schools, 99.9% of townships had medical and health institutions, and 81.9% of villages had health clinics⁷. Seventh, the living conditions of farmers have been improved. At the end of 2016, 99.5% of the households owned their own houses, 47.7% of the households used purified tap water, and 36.2% of the farmers used flushing sanitary toilets⁸. Eighth, the effectiveness of poverty alleviation has been remarkable. At present, the incidence of rural poverty in China has dropped to 1.7%⁹. It can be seen that most of the peasants have got rid of poverty and are getting closer and closer to the goal of a comprehensive moderately prosperous society.

B. People's Consumption Level Is Improved, and the Consumption Structure Is Optimized and Upgraded

Accompanied by these achievements is the optimization and upgrading of the people's consumption structure, and the desire for a better life after the material culture needing to be satisfied. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out: "It is necessary to create more material wealth and spiritual wealth to meet the people's growing needs for a better life, and to provide more high-quality ecological products to meet the people's growing needs on the beautiful ecological environment." [1] This puts higher demands on the development of agriculture and rural areas from the demand side. For the urban citizens, they not only demand good food, but also demand healthier, more diastotic and more nutritious foods, especially for green ecological agricultural products. The demand for ecological environment with bluer mountains, clearer water and fresher air is getting stronger and stronger, and the interest in rural cultural tourism and leisure tourism is also getting stronger and stronger. Taking rural tourism as an example, according to the China Rural Tourism Development Index Report, in 2016, the number of rural tourists in China has reached 1.36 billion, with an average of one person per year, which is the fastest growing field [2]. For farmers, they not only hope to have higher incomes, more stable employment, but also hope to enjoy the same level of public services as urban citizens, and hope that the society will be fairer and more justice.

III. UNBALANCED URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND INADEQUATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAVE CONSTRAINED PEOPLE'S SATISFACTION WITH THE NEEDS OF A BETTER LIFE

The improvement of people's consumption level and the optimization of consumption structure put forward higher requirements for the development of agriculture and rural areas. However, at present, the biggest imbalance in China is still the imbalance of urban and rural development. The biggest insufficiency is inadequate rural development, which directly restricts the people's yearning for a better life.

A. Urban and Rural Development Is Not Balanced

First, the imbalance between urban and rural development is first reflected in the income gap between rural residents and urban residents. In 2018, the per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents was 39,251 yuan and 14,617 yuan¹⁰, respectively, and the income difference between urban and rural residents was as high as 2.69. In the same year, the per capita consumption expenditure of urban and rural residents was 26,112 yuan and 12,124 yuan respectively, and the difference between urban and rural residents' consumption expenditure was as high as 2.15. Second, the basic public services in urban and rural areas are not balanced, which are reflected in education, employment, medical and health care, and social security. It is difficult to meet the requirements of farmers for equalization of public services. Taking medical and health

² Data source: National Bureau of Statistics.

³ Data source: National Bureau of Statistics.

⁴ Data source: National Bureau of Statistics.

⁵ Data source: National Bureau of Statistics.

⁶ Data source: Bulletin of the Main Data of the Third National Agricultural Census.

⁷ Data source: Bulletin of the Main Data of the Third National Agricultural Census.

⁸ Data source: Bulletin of the Main Data of the Third National Agricultural Census.

⁹ Data source: National Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Bulletin of National Economic and Social Development in 2018.

¹⁰ Data source: National Bureau of Statistics.

conditions as an example, in 2017, the number of health technicians per 1,000 populations in the city was 10.87, and that in rural areas was 4.28; the number of beds for medical and health institutions per thousand populations was 8.75, and that in rural areas was 4.19. Hygienic conditions in urban are far better than rural areas¹¹. Third, urban and rural infrastructure is not balanced. Although the infrastructure in rural areas has been greatly improved compared with the past, there is still a certain gap compared with urban areas. "In 2016, 46.2% of households in rural areas used ordinary dry toilets, and even 2% of households did not have toilets; 26.1% of village domestic garbage and 82.6% of village domestic sewage were not treated centrally or partially concentrated; 38.1% villages have no street lights on the main roads in the village."¹² Inadequate rural infrastructure has directly affected the investment environment in rural areas, leading to the one-way flow of capital, technology, and talents into the cities. The gap between urban and rural areas has gradually widened.

B. Insufficient Agricultural Development

Insufficient agricultural development is mainly manifested in the fact that agricultural production is difficult to meet the needs of the people, and a structural contradiction between supply and demand is not formed. This contradiction is mainly manifested in the following four aspects:

1) *The contradiction between the people's demand for high-quality agricultural products and insufficient supply of high-quality agricultural products:* At present, the supply of agricultural products is large and the quality is not good. The supply of agricultural products in the road is sufficient, and the supply of high-quality agricultural products is in short supply.

2) *The contradiction between the people's demand for safe agricultural products and the current lack of safety protection for agricultural products:* Due to the lack of trust in the safety and security of some domestic products, the production of agricultural products is not good enough to produce ineffective supply.

3) *The contradiction between the people's demand for green ecological agricultural products and the extensive development of agriculture:* In the past, in order to solve the problem of food and clothing, China focused on food production, used pesticides and fertilizers in large quantities, and neglected the protection of rural ecological environment, causing rural soil pollution, water pollution, and threatening the safety of agricultural products.

4) *The contradiction between the people's pursuit of agro-ecology and cultural values and the current lack of agricultural versatility:* For a long time, China has emphasized the function of food production in agriculture and neglected its value in ecology, culture and tourism. This

is not only difficult to meet the needs of urban residents for agro-ecology, tourism value, but also to help farmers get rich.

C. Rural Development Is Not Sufficient

First, the large number of young and middle-aged rural people lost, causing problems such as land abandonment, rural governance difficulties, rural population hollowing out, and aging. According to some data, the idling rate of land in some areas such as Hubei and Henan is as high as 20%-30%. About 30 million mu of cultivated land is abandoned every year in China. Second, the peasants' income is not enough. According to statistics, from 2014 to 2017, the per capita disposable income growth rate of farmers fell from 11.2% to 8.6%¹³, which directly restricted farmers' yearning for a better life. Third, the rural collective economy is extremely weak. According to statistics, in 2017, the number of villages with no operating income in the country accounted for 46.5%, and those with operating income accounted for 53.5%. In the villages with operating income, the people whose operating income are below 50,000 yuan account for 24.3%, 50,000-500,000 account for 22.7%, and more than 500,000 account for only 6.5%¹⁴. It can be seen that most rural areas have no stable economic source. Fourth, rural industries are underdeveloped. The nature of capital is profit-seeking. Under market economy conditions, capital always flows from a place with low profits to a place with high profits. Compared with cities, rural infrastructure is poor, and investment environment is not good, which makes it difficult to attract investment from enterprises, leading to backward development of rural industries. Fifth, the ideology and moral quality of the peasants need to be improved, and the spirit of the rural spirit needs to be improved. At present, the protection and attention to the excellent traditional culture in rural areas is insufficient, the resistance to bad customs and habits is insufficient, and the modern values and legal consciousness are not enough.

The people's longing for a better life and the imbalance between urban and rural development and the insufficient development of agriculture and rural areas are prominent. It is urgent to implement a rural revitalization strategy, promote the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, and make the development of agriculture and rural areas better meet the needs of the people's better life.

IV. PATH SELECTION FOR IMPLEMENTING RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

In order to solve the main social contradictions and meet the needs of the people's better life, China must implement a rural revitalization strategy. The current implementation of the rural revitalization strategy needs to start from the following aspects.

¹¹ Data source: China Statistical Yearbook 2018.

¹² Data source: Bulletin of the Main Data of the Third National Agricultural Census.

¹³ Data source: Calculated according to the per capita disposable income of the National Bureau of Statistics for 2013-2017.

¹⁴ Data source: China Rural Management Statistics Annual Report (2017).

A. *The Five Major Constructions Will Develop Together to Meet the Needs of the People*

There are three levels of human needs: the first level is to meet the people's needs for material culture through economic construction and cultural construction, the second level is to meet the people's need for fairness and justice through political construction, and the third level is to meet people's needs for safety and the environment through social construction and ecological construction. Entering a new era, "the people's better life needs to be more and more extensive, not only to put forward higher requirements on material culture, but also in the requirements of democracy, the rule of law, fairness, justice, security, and the environment." [1] This requires strengthening rural economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological construction, and promoting the modernization of agriculture and rural areas in accordance with the general requirements of industrial prosperity, ecological livability, rural civilization, effective governance, and affluent living.

Compared with the requirements of the development of the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee, such as production development, ample life, civilized villages, clean villages, and democratic management, the requirements of the 19th National Congress report are higher. The prosperity of the industry not only promotes the transformation of agriculture from the direction of increasing production to improving quality, taking the green, ecological and sustainable modern agricultural development path, but also increases rural infrastructure construction, improves the rural investment environment, and promotes the integration development of rural primary, secondary and tertiary industries. Living in prosperity requires not only increasing the income of farmers, but also improving the basic public service level in rural areas. How to increase farmers' income? First, employment is the foundation of a prosperous life. China must adhere to the employment priority strategy and active employment policy to enable farmers to achieve higher quality and fuller employment. Second, it is necessary to use the transformation of the major contradictions, optimize and upgrade the people's consumption structure to develop rural tourism and ecological agriculture, and increase the income of farmers' tertiary industry. Third, it will also be needed to extend the agricultural industrial chain, increase the added value of agricultural products, and make farmers share intermediate income. Fourth, it will be of great significance to deepen the reform of the rural land system and the collective property rights system, and increase the property income of farmers. Fifth, it will also be important to establish a joint interest mechanism between farmers and agricultural cooperatives, leading enterprises and other entities, so that enterprises can drive farmers to get rich together. Ecological livability means protecting the rural ecological environment, following the objective laws of rural development, promoting the construction of beautiful and livable villages, and meeting the needs of farmers for the beautiful ecological environment. Effective governance means not only giving play to the role of traditional governance resources such as township covenants, but also introducing modern governance concepts and means to achieve an organic combination of

autonomy, the rule of law, and the rule of virtue. Only by achieving effective governance of the countryside can China lay the foundation for achieving other goals of rural development. The folk culture must inherit and protect the outstanding traditional culture of the countryside, abandon the bad atmosphere of the countryside, and meet the spiritual needs of the farming civilization and traditional culture. It must also guide the peasants to establish modern values and legal consciousness, and improve the ideology and moral quality and scientific culture level of the farmers.

B. *Using New Development Concepts to Guide Rural Revitalization*

China should insist on innovation and change the way of agricultural development. It is necessary to increase investment in science and technology in agriculture, and promote the transformation of agriculture from factor-driven to innovation-driven, from production-oriented to quality-oriented, from excessive dependence on resource consumption to sustainable change in green ecology.

It must adhere to coordinated development and narrow the gap between urban and rural areas. Under the conditions of a market economy, the elements flow from rural to urban areas. To narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, China must not rely solely on the market. It must give full play to the government's macro-control role and fill the shortcomings of agriculture and rural areas. It is necessary to "implement the guiding ideology for the priority development of agriculture and rural areas, further adjust and rationalize the relationship between urban and rural areas, prioritize cadre allocation, prioritize the allocation of factors, give priority to capital investment, and prioritize public services." [4]

It will be very important to adhere to green development and take the road of sustainable agricultural development. Green is a necessary condition for sustainable development and an important manifestation of the people's pursuit of a better life. The key to realizing the green development of agriculture is to transform the mode of agricultural development. The fundamental approach is institutional reform and mechanism innovation. It is necessary to give play to the role of the state's macro-control, guide and motivate enterprises to carry out green production and meet people's needs for green products.

China needs to adhere to open development and promote urban-rural integration. It is necessary to establish and improve the institutional mechanism and policy system for promoting the integration of urban and rural development, change the current situation of rural people's property and one-way flow to the city, open up the countryside, discover the rural potential, and promote the full flow of urban capital, technology, talents and other elements to the countryside, to promote prosperous development of new industries, new formats and new models in rural areas.

Sharing is the essential requirement of socialism. To use the concept of sharing development to guide rural revitalization is to let farmers share the great achievements of reform and opening up. China must do everything

possible to increase the income of farmers, improve rural infrastructure, improve rural public services, make agriculture a pioneering industry, make the farmer an attractive profession, and make the countryside a beautiful home for living and working.

C. Promoting the Structural Reform of the Agricultural Supply Side to Meet People's Needs for Green, Safe and High-quality Agricultural Products

The current mismatch between supply and demand in the agricultural sector is a quantitative problem on the surface. It is actually a structural problem, and the main aspect of structural contradictions is on the supply side, that is, supply cannot meet demand well. This supply and demand mismatch includes quantity mismatch, quality mismatch, and product warehousing due to less competitive. The fundamental reason lies in the lack of scientific and technological innovation and institutional innovation. Therefore, the fundamental way is to promote the structural reform of the supply side of agriculture. Through reforms, agriculture will be transformed from over-reliance on resource consumption to green ecology: from demand that satisfies the quantity to demand that mainly meets quality; from supply-adapted demand to initiative to lead demand and create demand. The current focus of agricultural production is to enhance safety, quality, and green orientation: First, it is necessary to meet people's needs for safe agricultural products through legal protection and industrial integration. It is necessary to improve the quality and food safety standards system and supervision system of agricultural products, and provide legal protection for meeting the needs of the people for safe food. China must also "shorten the distance from sweetness to the table through industrial integration... to solve the problem that China's agricultural industry chain is too long and product quality is not safe"[4]. Second, it is needed to give full play to the role of market mechanisms to meet the people's needs for quality agricultural products. Since 2004, in order to stimulate agricultural production and ensure the safety of national food quantity, China has implemented a series of agricultural support and protection systems such as minimum food purchase price and temporary storage price. This has played a good role in increasing agricultural output, but it also caused problems such as the sale price of major agricultural products peeling from market prices, the excessive financial burden of the state, and the neglect of market demand for agricultural production. "In particular, the supply of high-quality, specialized, and branded agricultural products is insufficient, and it has a lot to do with the distortion of agricultural product price formation mechanism." [5] Therefore, it is necessary to play a decisive role in the market, so that agricultural producers can produce according to the needs of consumers. Third, it will be important to change the way of agricultural development, take the road of sustainable agricultural development, and meet the people's demand for green ecological agricultural products. On the one hand, China must increase investment in agricultural science and technology, and strive to achieve "zero growth of fertilizer and pesticide use, straw, livestock and poultry manure, and full use of agricultural film through

scientific and technological innovation"; on the other hand, China must establish and improve the institutional mechanism and policy system for green development of agriculture to provide institutional guarantee for agricultural green production.

D. Promoting the Development of New Rural Industries, New Formats, and New Models

"When the urbanization developed to a certain level, the rural areas will be the scarce resources and the opportunity for development." [6] The value and function of the village will become more and more prominent, which requires the development of agriculture and rural areas to actively meet the requirements of the optimization and upgrading of people's consumption structure, and to focus on the orientation of meeting the needs of the people to promote the vigorous development of new industries, new formats and new models such as ecological agriculture, leisure agriculture, rural tourism, and rural e-commerce. In recent years, various new industries have developed rapidly in rural areas, driving farmers to increase their income. However, the development of rural industries still needs to pay attention to the following aspects: First is to adapt to local conditions and develop industries that are suitable for them. Second is to follow the objective laws of rural development. For example, the development of rural tourism should pay attention to the protection of the rural ecological environment, inherit the excellent traditional culture of the countryside, highlight the regional characteristics and architectural style of the village, and let the peasants "see the mountains, see the water, remember the feeling to live in the countryside." Third is to improve rural infrastructure. For the development of rural tourism, there are facilities such as hotels, parking lots and the Internet. Only when the infrastructure is perfect will it attract enterprises to invest in the countryside and people will go to the countryside to consume. Fourth is to establish a joint mechanism of interests between enterprises and farmers. The development of new rural industries needs to encourage enterprises to invest in rural areas, but the boss cannot exclude the fellows from the countryside and cannot deprive the fellows, and must promote the common prosperity of the farmers.

E. Giving Better Play to the Role of the Government and Promoting the Priority Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas

To implement the rural revitalization strategy to meet the needs of the people's better life, the government must not only play the role of the market in the supply of agricultural products, but also play a supporting role in the priority development of the agricultural and rural areas. Since the reform and opening up, agriculture, rural areas, and peasants have made tremendous contributions to industrial and urban development. Nowadays, China's industrialized urbanization has reached a high level, and agricultural and rural modernization has become a prominent shortcoming of national modernization. To this end, it is necessary to fill the shortcomings of agriculture and rural areas. In addition to complementing the shortcomings in rural areas and

promoting the priority development of agriculture and rural areas, China must not only shout slogans, but must implement the development to the ground. This requires the government to play a regulatory role, prioritize the allocation of cadres, prioritize the allocation of factors, preferentially guarantee capital investment, and prioritize the arrangement of public services. First, it is necessary to increase investment in rural infrastructure construction. Only by improving rural infrastructure can the rural areas attract capital, technology, talents and other factors, promote the integration and development of rural primary, secondary and tertiary industries, and drive farmers to become rich. Second, it will be needed to increase investment in rural public services and promote equalization of basic public services in urban and rural areas. This is an inevitable requirement for satisfying farmers' longing for a better life and improving farmers' sense of acquisition, happiness and security. At present, there are still big gaps between urban and rural areas in terms of social security, education, health care, etc. To this end, it is necessary to raise the level of rural social security, improve rural medical and health conditions, and increase investment in rural education.

V. CONCLUSION

The transformation of the main contradictions in Chinese society is closely related to the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. On the one hand, the transformation of the main contradictions in Chinese society requires the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, that is, the proposal of the rural revitalization strategy is an inevitable requirement for solving the main social contradictions and meeting the people's growing needs for a better life. On the other hand, the transformation of major social contradictions is another development opportunity for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. Nowadays, people are increasingly demanding green high-quality agricultural products and agricultural and rural ecology, culture, tourism and other values, which will promote the development of eco-agriculture, brand agriculture, healthy pension, culture and education industries, and then promote rural economic prosperity and farmers to become rich. To implement the rural revitalization strategy in the new era, China must proceed from meeting the needs of the people's better life, promoting the structural reform of the supply side of agriculture, promoting the integration and development of new rural industries, adhering to the new development concept, and exerting the government's macro-control role, to promote agricultural and rural modernization.

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