Research on China's Employment Poverty Alleviation Policy From the Perspective of Policy Tools

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ABSTRACT

Employment poverty alleviation plays a paramount role in establishing a stable long-term mechanism for poverty alleviation by improving the ability of poor labor force and promoting the income of the poor population. A two-dimensional analysis framework of "policy tool - release hierarchy" was established. Based on the policies related to employment poverty alleviation by the central government and local government in China from 2016 to 2019, Nvivo was used to code and analyze the policy contents. The results show that supply-oriented policy tools account for 49% of the central government's policy tools and 58% of the local government's policy tools. Secondly, environment-oriented policy tools account for 41% of the central government's policy tools and 37% of the local government's policy tools. Then, demand-oriented policies account for 10% of the central government's policy tools and 5% of the local government's policy tools. Both the central government and the local government prefer to use environment-oriented and supply-oriented policy tools, and the demand-oriented policy tools are underused. At the same time, the internal structure of supply-oriented and environment-oriented policy tools is not balanced. In the supply-oriented policy tools, capital investment accounts for a large proportion, and yet the proportion of personnel training and technical support is relatively low. In the environment-oriented policy tools, the proportion of strategic measures and system planning is larger, and yet the proportion of tax incentives and regulation is low. In the future, the government should appropriately increase the proportion of demand-oriented policy tools, and pay attention to the internal structure optimization of supply-oriented and environment-oriented policy tools.

Keywords: *Employment poverty alleviation, Policy tools, Policy text analysis, Long-term poverty alleviation*

1. INTRODUCTION

The report to the 19th National Congress of the CPC points out that China will resolutely win the battle against poverty. We will ensure that the number of poor people living in rural areas under the current poverty line will be lifted out of poverty by 2020, and that all poor counties will be stripped of their poverty caps to alleviate overall poverty in other regions. In the closing year of targeted poverty alleviation, a breakthrough has been made in the battle against poverty, with the number of people living in poverty being significantly reduced, infrastructure in poor areas being built and improved, and people living in poor areas significantly improved. However, it remains to be improved to consolidate the achievements of absolute poverty alleviation and establish a stable and long-term governance mechanism for relative poverty. With the continuous development of society, the traditional relief poverty alleviation has some limitations. Employment

poverty alleviation can improve the income of the poor through employment and improving their own quality, which should be paid full attention to and explore effective strategies to give full play to its long-term role. China's employment poverty alleviation is mainly a government-led governance model, which promotes the stability and continuity of employment poverty alleviation mechanism through continuous policy innovation. Therefore, it is helpful to reveal the regularity of employment poverty alleviation policies by combing the overall employment poverty alleviation policies, summarizing the development characteristics of employment poverty alleviation policies, and analyzing the focus and policy tool preferences of the central and local governments under the institutional environment. At the same time, through the systematic research on the application of different policy tools in the employment poverty alleviation policy text, it offers reference for consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation and establishing a stable long-term mechanism for poverty alleviation.

2. RESEARCH OVERVIEW

2.1. Research Status of Poverty Alleviation Policies

Taking the time when the concept of "targeted poverty alleviation" was proposed as the node, the research on poverty alleviation policy can be roughly divided into two stages [1]. In the first stage, scholars focused their research on rural poverty, and proposed to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas by means of village renovation and agricultural tax cancellation in order to promote rural poverty alleviation. With the economic development and the establishment of the corresponding mechanism for poverty alleviation in rural areas, the poverty alleviation work has made preliminary progress. Scholars have turned their attention to the poverty alleviation in poverty-stricken areas, emphasized the cultivation of endogenous motivation for poverty alleviation [2]. In the second stage, scholars focused their research on poverty alleviation policies, gradually transforming the analysis units from poor areas to poor households and making the research fields and contents more specific and detailed. Research hotspots in this stage focus on the country's targeted poverty alleviation strategy, the implementation effect and evaluation of poverty alleviation policies [3], poverty alleviation through education, industrial poverty alleviation, financial security and financial innovation of poverty alleviation [4]. Currently, the content of policy analysis on poverty alleviation policies mainly focuses on targeted poverty alleviation policies, and the analysis objects are mostly selected from a certain provincial government [5]. Less emphasis is placed on employment poverty alleviation policies and comparative studies on the central government and local governments. Therefore, this work mainly focuses on the tool preference of central and local governments for employment poverty alleviation policies.

2.2. Policy Tools Theory

Policy tools serve to achieve policy goals [6], which can be a way of government action, and can also be used in other ways to indirectly affect government behavior. Due to different definitions, the classification criteria are also more diverse. Employment poverty alleviation activities not only need to consider government supply, but also fully mobilize the indirect impact of the environment and policy demand. Therefore, this study adopts Rothwell and Zegveld's classification of policy tools, and analyzes the employment poverty alleviation policies of central and local governments from the perspectives of supply, demand and environment.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Data Sources

The selected policies mainly come from the government portal website, and the time span is 2016-2019. The types of policy selection are mainly related laws and regulations, implementation opinions, methods, notices and announcements, etc. Eight documents related to employment poverty alleviation from the central government and 54 documents related to employment poverty alleviation from the provincial government (except for some provinces which cannot find public documents on the Internet) were initially collected. After further reading, screening and eliminating the texts with low relevance and repetitive contents, 7 documents related to employment poverty alleviation from the central government and 20 documents related to employment poverty alleviation from the provincial government were finally sorted out.

3.2. Analysis Framework

3.2.1. X Dimensions

Based on the three policy tools of supply, demand and environment, the X dimension of the employment poverty alleviation policy analysis framework was established. The role of policy tools on employment poverty alleviation is shown in Fig. 1. Among them, supply-oriented policy tools are the driving force for the government to directly act on poverty alleviation, and environment-oriented policy tools have indirect influence on the overall external environment of employment poverty alleviation. Then, demand-oriented policy tools are the driving force for the government to actively develop and stabilize the poverty alleviation work, thus reducing the uncertainty of the market in the employment poverty alleviation work.
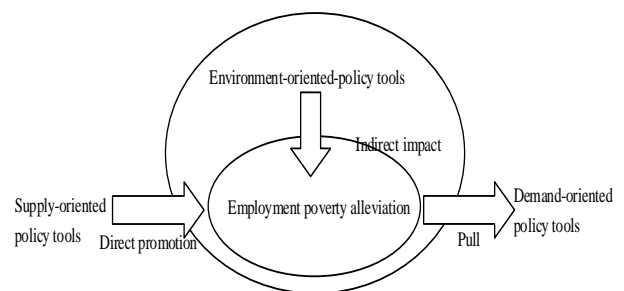

Figure 1. The impact of policy tools on employment poverty alleviation.

3.2.2. Y Dimensions

Based on the different levels of policy release, employment poverty alleviation policies can be divided into two categories: central government and local government. The Y dimension of employment poverty alleviation analysis framework is combined with the X dimension to form the two-dimensional analysis framework of "policy tools - release hierarchy" (see Fig. 2). Based on this framework, the employment poverty alleviation policies are coded and analyzed.
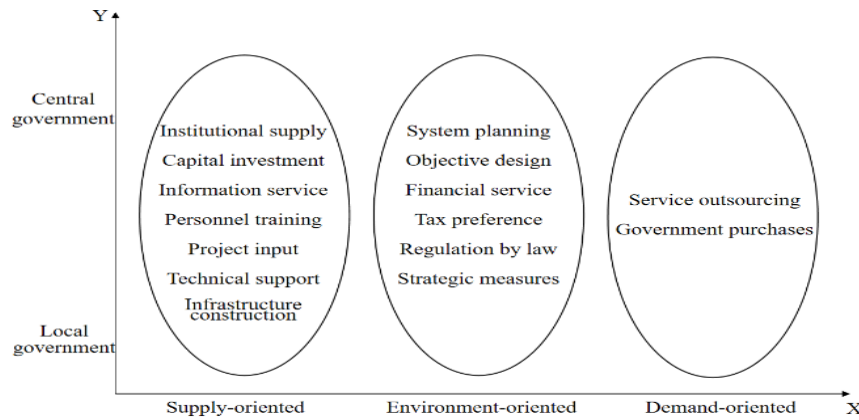

Figure 2. Two-dimensional analytical framework for employment poverty alleviation policies

3.2.3. Content coding

27 policies related to employment poverty alleviation from 2016 to 2019 were imported into Nvivo qualitative analysis software for coding and subsequent analysis. Taking the employment poverty alleviation policy codes issued by some central governments as an example, "giving a certain period of vocational subsidies" were incorporated into the sub-node of "capital investment", and finally integrated into the parent node of "supply-oriented policy" for unified counting (see Table 1).

Table 1. Example of employment poverty alleviation policy codes.

Code		Analysis unit
Supply-oriented policy tools	Capital investment	Giving a certain period of vocational training subsidies
		In areas where conditions permit, the base for employment poverty alleviation with a large number of poor workers and good results may be granted one-time fund awards and subsidies through employment subsidy funds in accordance with regulations
		Giving subsidies for employment and entrepreneurship services and appropriately raising the subsidy standards
	Information service	Organizing the staff to come to the home and going deep into the grass-roots and remote areas in combination with the actual situation, so that the poor workers obtain the employment information

4. ANALYSIS ON EMPLOYMENT POVERTY ALLEVIATION POLICY TOOLS

4.1. Preference for Policy Tools Use

Generally, the central government and local governments have a consistent preference when using policy tools. In using supply-oriented policy tools, the proportion of provincial local governments is 58%, which is higher than that of the central government (49%). In using

environment-oriented and demand-oriented policy tools, the proportion of central government is higher than that of local government (see Fig. 3). It can be seen that local governments tend to directly intervene in employment poverty alleviation work when formulating corresponding local laws and regulations, such as capital investment, information services, infrastructure, etc. However, the central government plays the role of overall planning, and thus it is superior to the local government in using environment-oriented policy tools related to target design and planning. Due to the three policy tools contain multiple sub tools, the next step will be to compare and analyze the internal structure of three policy tools in more specific detail.
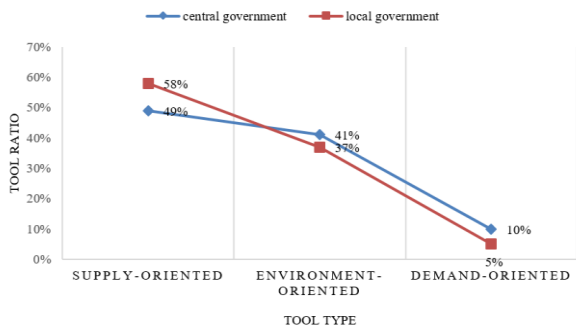

Figure 3. Comparison of employment poverty alleviation policy tools between central government and local governments.

4.2. Composition of Policy Tools

4.2.1. Supply-oriented policy tools

It can be seen from the internal composition of the central government's supply-oriented policy tools (see Fig. 4) that the distribution of various policy tools is relatively uneven. Whether it is the central government or the local government, "capital investment" and "information services" are the focus of their employment poverty alleviation work. The employment skills and subjective initiative of the poor labor force can be improved through the capital investment in poor areas, such as subsidies for vocational training of poor and subsidies for their entrepreneurship. On the other hand, poverty alleviation projects can be encouraged in poor areas, such as the establishment of employment bases. Information service plays an important role in the employment poverty alleviation work, which greatly eliminates the information asymmetry between the poor labor force and the employing units. Therefore, it is also the work focus of the central and local governments. There are various ways for the government to provide information services, such as carrying out employment demand registration at the initial

stage, extensively collecting the post information suitable for the poor labor force, establishing a cross regional post information sharing and publishing mechanism, sending employment information to the poor workers in grassroots and remote areas, etc.
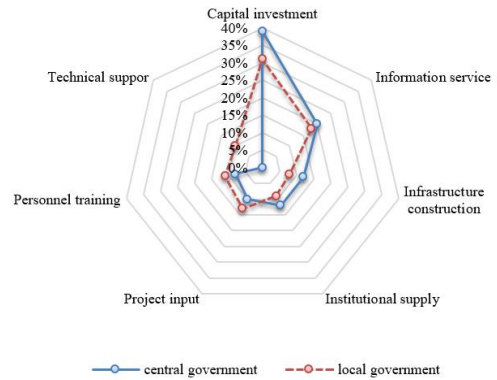

Figure 4. Comparison of the internal composition of supply-oriented policy tools between central government and local government.

4.2.2. Environment-oriented policy tools

Compared with the distribution of supply-oriented policy tools, the distribution of environment-oriented policy tools between central government and local government is quite different. This is embodied in "system planning", "strategic measures", "financial service" and "objective design" (see Fig. 5). Due to the policy text must involve the planning and arrangement of employment poverty alleviation work, system planning and strategic measures account for a relatively high proportion of rationality. Meanwhile, considering the different causes of poverty in poor areas, it is necessary to adjust measures to local conditions and fully understand local characteristics when formulating strategic measures. Local governments will give more specific definitions of strategic measures in policy formulation. For example, Zhejiang Province makes full use of e-commerce advantages to create e-commerce employment and poverty alleviation. With regard to financial services, the central government's policy planning is relatively macro. For example, it mentions "entrepreneurial loans and discount interest". However, local governments will make specific provisions on what kind of loans should be granted, which reflects the effective transmission of policies. In terms of target design, the central government needs to plan and explain the target design in detail, so that the local government can understand and implement it. Therefore, the proportion of the central government's goal design is higher than that of the local government. Generally speaking, the distribution of environment-oriented policy tools is in line with the

working logic of the central and local governments. However, it should be noted that "regulation by law" and "tax incentives" still account for a relatively low proportion.
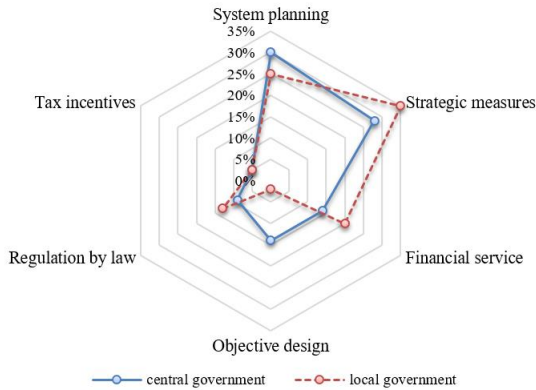

Figure 5. Comparison of the internal composition of environment-oriented policy tools between central government and local government.

4.2.3. Demand-oriented policy tools

For both central and local governments, the proportion of demand-oriented policy tools is the lowest. Considering that employment poverty alleviation is a significant livelihood project and its social value is huge, it cannot be completely operated by the market. Therefore, it is reasonable that the demand-oriented policy tools account for a small proportion in employment poverty alleviation. Demand-oriented policy tools can reduce the uncertainty of employment poverty alleviation work to a certain extent by introducing multiple subjects such as enterprises or other organizations. In the employment poverty alleviation, it is mainly manifested in the cooperation between the government and social capital, the government purchasing services, guiding the relevant volunteer organizations and charitable social organizations to carry out caring activities for the poor labor force and their families, etc.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the perspective of policy tools, a two-dimensional analysis framework is established to analyze the employment poverty alleviation policies between the central government and local governments from 2016 to 2019. The results show that both the central government and the local government prefer to use environment-oriented and supply-oriented policy tools, and the demand-oriented policy tools are underused. Supply-oriented policy tools account for almost half of the central government's

policy tools (49%), and yet supply-oriented policy tools have reached 58% in the local government level. At present, policy makers from top to bottom prefer to use direct supply or indirect shaping environment to carry out employment poverty alleviation actions. Demand-oriented policies account for 10% of the central government's policy tools and 5% of the local government's policy tools. Its role in promoting employment poverty alleviation is not fully reflected. The internal structure of supply-oriented and environment-oriented policy instruments is not balanced. In the supply-oriented policy tools, capital investment accounts for a large proportion, and the proportion of central and local governments is more than 30%. However, the proportion of personnel training and technical support is relatively low. Among the environment-oriented policy tools, both the central government and local government attach more importance to the use of strategic measures and system planning. However, the proportion of tax incentives and regulation is relatively low. Based on the analysis results of the employment poverty alleviation policy, this work puts forward some targeted suggestions to offer reference for the effective implementation of employment poverty alleviation policy and the establishment of long-term poverty alleviation mechanism. First, the proportion of demand-oriented policy tools should be appropriately increased. It is necessary to realize that there is an "overflow" issue in using supply-oriented policy tools and environment-oriented policy tools, thus appropriately increasing the proportion of demand-oriented policy tools. Second, the internal structure of supply-oriented and environment-oriented policies should be optimized. Due to the employment poverty alleviation policy is aimed at the employment of poor labor force, talent training and technical support are the key. The government needs to increase the proportion of personnel training and technical support policy tools, such as actively introducing talents, innovating training forms and contents, hiring technical experts, etc. At the same time, relevant laws and regulations should be formulated for the effective operation of the implementation environment for the employment poverty alleviation work. Also, supervision and restriction should be carried out on the enterprises, poverty alleviation funds, behaviors of poverty alleviation workers, etc., involved in the employment poverty alleviation work, thus ensuring the sustainability of the employment poverty alleviation work. It is necessary to actively develop financial services and tax preferential projects to attract multiple social subjects to participate in the employment and poverty alleviation work, and then play the role of demand-oriented policy tools.

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