



# Social Mobility, Role and Dilemma of the New Generation of Migrant Workers

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**Abstract.** The study of migrant workers has always been a topic of concern and discussion in academia. In recent years, more and more migrant workers choose to return home under the cross influence of various factors, playing an increasingly prominent role in the transformation of rural society, and gradually becoming the backbone of Rural Revitalization. With the arrival of the large-scale return tide, the social mobility of the new generation of young migrant workers has attracted more and more attention from the academic community. By combing the research of migrant workers in recent years, this paper makes a preliminary summary of the reasons, functions, difficulties and solutions of migrant workers returning home. This paper finds that the existing research on the return of the new generation of migrant workers needs to be further discussed, especially the interactive research with rural revitalization is less. This paper hopes to provide reasonable suggestions for the study of Rural Revitalization Strategy in the future.

**Keywords:** Migrant workers, New generation, Rural Revitalization Strategy.

## 1 Introduction

Rural Revitalization is inseparable from the role of farmers, especially migrant workers returning home, who will effectively improve the endogenous force of Rural Revitalization. Different scholars have different views on the concept of migrant workers. Someone believes that migrant workers are also farmers who work in cities, that is, a social group who work in cities all year round or most of the time, but whose registered residence is still in rural areas and has land in rural areas [1]. From a narrow perspective, this view regards migrant workers as the unique product of China's social transformation with the brand of agricultural household registration and urban-rural dual system. Other scholars point out from a broader perspective that migrant workers are the people who transfer rural labor to non-agricultural fields or work in cities and towns. Their living conditions are unstable and their mobility is strong. This kind of view generally believes that migrant workers are not a unique group in China, and they are common in all countries in the world.

The term "entrepreneurship" was first put forward by the French economist Richard Cantillon, who believed that entrepreneurship represented taking risks. At present, the academic circles have not formed a unified and clear definition for returning home to

start a business. Liu defined it as the phenomenon since the 1990s, some migrant workers have returned to their hometown after several years of working life, and used the insights and skills gained from working to establish enterprises in villages and small towns, develop industrial and commercial services, and invest in commercial agriculture [2]. Shi believes that returning home to start a business covers a wide range, including not only investing money to set up an enterprise, but also investing money to open a hotel, do business, or enter non-agricultural sectors or engage in agricultural production activities in a non-agricultural sense [1].

## **2 Reasons for migrant workers' returning home in the new era**

Based on the upsurge of returning home since the 1990s, the academic community elaborated its influencing factors from a multi-dimensional perspective. The author divides the influencing factors into active level and passive level. On the passive level, with the transformation and upgrading of modern industries, the proportion of the primary and secondary industries in the city has decreased, and the proportion of the tertiary industry has increased. The cultural quality and vocational skills of migrant workers cannot match it. With the reduction of enterprise scale under the current epidemic and other uncertain factors and the layoffs of enterprises under the development of modern science and technology, migrant workers gradually lose their jobs. Secondly, the cost of living in cities has soared, the income of migrant workers is small, the living pressure is great, the income can not make ends meet, and they can not afford to go home. Thirdly, the older generation of migrant workers are facing retirement. Their labor skills and efficiency have reached the ceiling, and the age advantage no longer exists.

In terms of initiative, after years of training and hard work in cities and towns, migrant workers have improved their labor skills, accumulated work experience, and broadened their network resources. In particular, they have learned modern professional skills different from ordinary farmers. In addition, they have formed a certain amount of capital accumulation abroad. Most migrant workers choose to return home with the acquired objective material conditions, so as to achieve a higher expected return and self-worth of entrepreneurship. This is also the most important factor affecting the return of migrant workers. As Huang said, the values deeply rooted in the society strengthen the expectations of migrant workers and their family members. Once enough resources are accumulated to achieve specific goals, migrant workers will return home. The improvement of skills after working experience plays an obvious role in entrepreneurship. The acquisition of vocational skills has a positive effect on the return of migrant workers to their hometown and obtain government support [3]. In addition, the government have issued a series of preferential policies for migrant workers returning home to start businesses, so that more returnees can enjoy bonus treatment [4]. Yan collected survey data from several villages and towns in Bengbu City, Anhui Province through questionnaires and interviews, and made an in-depth study on the support of home entrepreneurship policies. He pointed out that Bengbu will provide factories, shops and corresponding service platforms for migrant workers who meet the standards

of social capital and private enterprise incubation base. If the site rent does not exceed the average monthly rent of the same type and region, the property fee will not exceed 70% of the average [5]. Moreover, with the vigorous promotion of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, rural infrastructure and public services are becoming more and more perfect. Many traditional industries in large and medium-sized cities are transferred to the countryside. Migrant workers can find jobs and start businesses at home, eliminating commuting costs and other expenses. The new generation of migrant workers are eager to make up for their debt to the left behind elderly and children and choose to return home to accompany them. The new generation of migrant workers are old and young. Returning home to start a business is not only to raise children, but also to take care of the elderly. Wang found through on-the-spot investigation and interviews in 15 administrative villages in Guangdong that most of the time, returning home to fulfill family responsibilities is not forced by parents or external forces, but driven by the internal sense of responsibility, gratitude and affection [6].

### **3 The role of returning migrant workers**

Rural Revitalization is a comprehensive revitalization that includes industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization and organizational revitalization. As the main force, returning migrant workers are the endogenous backbone of Rural Revitalization. Many scholars have made in-depth research on their practical mechanism of promoting rural revitalization.

#### **3.1 Drive industrial development**

Industrial revitalization is the material basis of rural revitalization, and its fundamental role in Rural Revitalization can not be ignored. A large number of studies have shown that, with the advanced technology and management experience that migrant workers have mastered abroad, most of them will choose to establish enterprises related to the industries they are engaged in abroad after returning home. Therefore, most of them are secondary and tertiary industries, which has optimized the rural industrial structure and changed the previous situation of "outshining others" in agriculture. Liang Wei and Chen Feng believe that not only the secondary and tertiary industries, but also the returning migrant workers can help the effective connection between traditional agriculture and modern agriculture by developing tourism, tourism and other industries with regional characteristics and relying on local industrial resources to achieve derivative development [7].

#### **3.2 Promote cultural revitalization**

Cultural revitalization is the ideological guarantee for Rural Revitalization. Culture is the root, and the root will not die out. Even a disaster will spring again. Most scholars agree that after the baptism of the city, the returning migrant workers have gradually formed the advanced business philosophy, the concept of rule of law and the awareness

of moral norms that are quite different from the rural inherent small-scale peasant thinking and feudal concepts, which should promote the spread of urban modern civilization and advanced lifestyle and have a positive impact on the innovation of rural social atmosphere. In addition, some scholars believe that some returned migrant workers play the role of cultural provider of public services by engaging in Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance, rural cultural workers and other occupations [8].

### **3.3 Promote organizational revitalization**

Organizational revitalization focuses on ensuring the political basis for rural revitalization, and the flock of geese should be led by geese. The new era is committed to building a grass-roots governance system that integrates autonomy, rule of law and rule of virtue. Cao Jiming and Fu qiong believed that the rural Party organizations took the lead in considering the outstanding young people who went home to invest and start businesses as development objects, which stimulated the enthusiasm of young farmers to join the party and improved the structure of the party members [9]. Liu pointed out that some returned migrant workers actively participate in rural governance, or are elected as village cadres, or become villagers' representatives to speak for the people, or actively participate in various political activities. The main social value of such returning migrant workers lies in promoting good governance in rural areas and helping to achieve the goal of "effective governance" for Rural Revitalization [8]. Liang believes that "who will be the village cadre" has increasingly become a problem of village governance. The knowledge literacy and cultural level of the new generation of returning migrant workers are far higher than that of traditional village cadres, which can inject new ideas into village governance. After serving as village cadres, they can timely obtain policy information and resource information. It can be seen that returning migrant workers are more likely to serve as village cadres as Party members, which has further consolidated the role of grass-roots party organizations as a fighting fortress in Rural Revitalization. Cui and Liang also pointed out that migrant workers participating in returning home and entrepreneurship can become representatives of different types of migrant workers, take the initiative to speak and put forward targeted and reasonable suggestions and opinions in the process of participating in relevant affairs, so as to obtain the greatest policy support for migrant workers engaged in Entrepreneurship in the same industry, and make the work related to grass-roots governance and government governance interact and link up effectively [4].

## **4 The dilemma of migrant workers returning home**

### **4.1 Inadequate implementation of policies**

Most scholars believe that in reality, some regions do not recognize the significance of migrant workers' returning home to start businesses, and lack preferential policies. Han pointed out that some places place too much hope of changing the underdeveloped local economy on the introduction of foreign investors and large enterprises. Some counties and cities let the introduced large foreign enterprises enter the industrial park, while

migrant workers cannot enter the park when they return home to start their own businesses [10]. Jiang and Gao believe that the inadequate publicity of policies and the difficulty in ensuring the implementation of policies seriously restrict college students from returning home to start businesses. Some government workers are perfunctory and formalistic when carrying out policy publicity. Most of them just tell the villagers about these policies, or post slogans in the village streets and houses, which is regarded as the completion of the task of policy publicity. For the entrepreneurial college students who really need to understand these policies, the local government has not really effectively publicized them, and has not really patiently and carefully interpreted them [11].

#### **4.2 Difficulty in finance**

Li believes that there is a lack of rural financial services, and the majority of migrant workers can only turn to banks or usury for smooth financing to start a business in their hometown. In the process of applying for loans for entrepreneurship, migrant workers have limited financial institutions to choose from, and the types of bank credit are relatively few, which is difficult to truly and effectively meet the needs of migrant workers. Therefore, when most migrant workers return home to start a business, they basically start a business with the help of their own accumulated funds or by borrowing from relatives and friends. The risk of starting a business is relatively high, and it is easy to break the capital chain in the later stage [12]. Jin Xiaotong and others pointed out that the increasing difficulty in credit rating is another important aspect that leads to financing difficulties. Migrant workers need a lot of funds to develop their own companies and enterprises when they return home to start a business. However, due to the small amount of their own deposits and the lack of credit activities, they are faced with credit difficulties, unable to obtain bank loans, and their development is greatly restricted [13].

#### **4.3 Weak rural infrastructure and administrative services**

Jia Wanjin believes that there is a big gap between rural infrastructure construction and cities, which cannot provide a strong guarantee for migrant workers to return home and start businesses [14]. Huang believes that the aging and disrepair of rural roads have led to low product circulation efficiency. In addition, the imperfect rural information service platform and e-commerce platform have seriously affected the entrepreneurial efficiency [3]. Xue believes that the three-level government departments at the county and village levels act in their own way, and the synergy is not high. One procedure requires seals and licenses from multiple departments, which greatly increases their entrepreneurial costs [15].

### **5 The feasible path to resolve the dilemma**

In view of the financing difficulties, Huang Jianxin proposed to innovate the featured mortgage loan products such as forest right and sea area use, and promote the mortgage

of agricultural production facilities' property rights, production orders, agricultural policy financing and other services [3]. Xue Jie believes that the government should set up special institutions to guide entrepreneurs to put idle funds into professional investment and financing companies and broaden financing channels [15]. Zhang Hui believes that in order to realize the gradual transformation from price subsidy to unit direct subsidy, we should focus on subsidies related to basic agricultural tools and seeds [16].

With regard to policy services and infrastructure, Xue Jie believes that the government should actively implement the requirements of streamlining administration and delegating power, constantly reduce the entry threshold of the entrepreneurial market, and simplify the entrepreneurial approval process. At the same time, we should build a solid entrepreneurial foundation for returning migrant workers, such as improving infrastructure such as roads and communications, and strengthening the transmission of market information [15]. Zhao Liang believes that the entrepreneurship of migrant workers should be included in the planning of the whole city, the rural infrastructure and information construction should be continuously strengthened, the administrative approval process should be optimized, and a more relaxed environment should be created for the entrepreneurship of migrant workers [17].

## 6 Conclusion

Through combing the previous literature, the author finds that there are few academic studies on the interaction between returning migrant workers and ecological revitalization, and the only studies only link ecological livability with the social services of returning migrant workers, without practical demonstration. In addition, the realization of the goal of affluence of life can not be achieved without a large number of modern social talents. The rare talents who return home to work for the new rural construction actually directly or indirectly promote the realization of the goal of affluence of life in the way of talent revitalization, but so far, the above mechanism has received less attention. The author believes that these two aspects can be used as future research directions.

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