

Research on Problems and Countermeasures in Promoting Rural Culture for Building Beautiful Countryside in the New Era

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Abstract: The process of modernization has brought economic development to rural society, but it has also accelerated the contradictions in rural culture, leading to the impact of urban culture on rural cultural order, the "rejection" of traditional culture and modern culture, confusion and stagnation in rural farmers' thinking and understanding, and the negative influence of the market economy on rural ideological and moral construction. The comprehensive construction of a socialist modernized country requires not only urban modernization but also agricultural and rural modernization. The modernization of agriculture and rural areas must rely on the implementation of the major decision to comprehensively revitalize rural areas. As the "foundation" and "soul" of rural revitalization, rural cultural construction provides necessary value support for the successful path of socialist rural revitalization with Chinese characteristics in the new era. In the new era, promoting the revitalization of rural culture requires correctly grasping the relationship between conflict and integration, inheritance and innovation, needs and satisfaction, overcoming the cultural challenges faced by rural areas, and providing a powerful spiritual engine for achieving rural modernization and assisting in comprehensive rural revitalization.

With the development of rural urbanization and the construction of beautiful countryside in China, numerous whole-village renovation projects have been implemented, leading to the emergence of rural communities formed through village consolidation, known as "village-to-community" transformations. This article explores the concept of new rural communities, which refer to the integration of several neighboring villages through land exchange and transfer, breaking the boundaries of administrative villages in the process of constructing new rural areas. The construction and development of new rural communities should not be limited to urbanization and infrastructure transformation. It should also focus on the development of rural culture, leveraging its role in fostering social cohesion, integration, and regulating collective behavior. By creating an environment similar to urban communities, rural residents can gradually shed their traditional identities and transition from traditional to modern roles, acquiring modernity through the platform of the new rural community.

1. Rural Cultural Construction and Its Significance

1.1 Rural Culture

Throughout the long history of human social development, culture refers to the capabilities acquired and creations made by humans through social practice. In a sense, culture constitutes a cultural world, encompassing material culture, institutional culture, behavioral culture, and spiritual culture. According to Marxism, culture is the unity of material culture and spiritual culture, including not only the production practice and achievements in the spiritual domain but also embedded in various levels of human civilization, influencing people's life practices, social interactions, and even the development of social economy and politics. Rural culture has its uniqueness as it originates from agrarian civilization, relies on the unique natural environment and economic foundation of rural areas, and plays a crucial role in Chinese culture. "Rural civilization is the mainstay of Chinese national civilization history, and agricultural civilization is our soft power." Rural culture showcases distinctive rural characteristics, continuity, regional features, and actively fulfills social functions such as moral education, ethical standards, and value guidance. It represents the sum of rural production and lifestyle, ideological and moral values, behavior patterns, customs and traditions, scientific culture, and organizational systems.

1.2 The Importance of Rural Cultural Construction in the Strategy of Rural Revitalization

Promoting rural cultural construction holds important theoretical and practical significance in enhancing modernization of rural governance capacity, strengthening social cohesion, inheriting and promoting outstanding Chinese traditional culture, and realizing the strategy of rural revitalization.

1.2.1 Enhancing the modernization of rural governance capacity

Rural culture acts as a bridge connecting the subjects and objects of rural governance. With its components of material culture, institutional culture, behavioral culture, and spiritual culture, strengthening rural cultural construction provides a solid material foundation, institutional support, demonstration and guidance, and intellectual support for rural governance. This not only constitutes an important part of rural modernization but also injects new vitality into rural development. Moreover, the modernization of rural governance capacity relies on an improved rural governance system, which is based on rural cultural construction. This transition from "governance by people" to a combination of "governance by law, governance by morality, and governance by autonomy" is achieved through rural cultural construction.

1.2.2 Enhancing social cohesion in rural areas

Comprehensive development in rural areas is a crucial precondition for advancing the construction of a socialist modern country. This development requires both "great strides in material civilization" and "great strides in spiritual civilization." However, the imbalances and inadequacies in the development of rural culture in China have become significant factors affecting the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas. With the substantial outflow of rural populations and the increasing hollowing and marginalization of rural areas, the rural society gradually loses the spiritual strength that binds people together. Promoting rural cultural construction responds actively to the aspirations of farmers for a better life, plays an important role in developing socialist cultural undertakings, enriching rural cultural life, and promoting harmony and stability in rural society. By guiding culture and actively fostering and practicing socialist core values, occupying the cultural and ideological position in rural areas, and continuously consolidating ideological consensus, a

civilized rural atmosphere can be established.

1.2.3 Promoting the inheritance and promotion of outstanding Chinese traditional culture

Rooted in Chinese culture, rural culture carries the "genetic code" of the enduring Chinese civilization, manifesting the intellectual wisdom and spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation. On one hand, it represents the "soul" that sustains the reproduction and prosperity of rural society, while on the other hand, it serves as the "root" that maintains the reproduction and prosperity of rural society. Promoting rural cultural construction helps to draw upon the ideas, humanistic spirit, and moral standards contained in outstanding Chinese traditional culture. By extracting the essence and eliminating the dross, it continuously nourishes people's spiritual world, invigorates their spiritual strength, and facilitates the innovative development of Chinese traditional culture. It endows traditional culture with new temporal connotations and expressive forms, demonstrates its contemporary value through innovation and creation, and realizes the dialectical unity of cultural inheritance and innovation. Strengthening the influence and appeal of outstanding Chinese traditional culture facilitates its integration with the mainstream socialist ideology of the new era.[1]

2. Issues in rural cultural construction.

2.1 Insufficient infrastructure and inadequate funding for rural cultural construction

Insufficient funding is a significant factor constraining the development of rural cultural construction. The characteristics of political construction in rural communities in China determine that the state is the main investor in rural cultural construction and development. The continuous input of resources from the state into rural areas has transformed the social conditions in rural areas and demonstrated remarkable effectiveness. However, this top-down approach cannot solve all the issues related to rural construction and development. The government cannot handle everything. The limitations of this political construction in rural communities, to some extent, hinder the construction and development of rural culture. Insufficient financial investment or uneven distribution of funds lead to a dilemma of "having no money to carry out the tasks" in rural cultural construction. Limited participation of residents hinders the establishment of long-term community mechanisms. The passive participation of farmers results in many of them developing a mentality of dependency on others, expecting assistance without taking active roles.

2.2 Relatively low cultural literacy of community residents restricts the development of rural culture

Low cultural literacy and lack of skills among rural laborers are the biggest obstacles and constraints to the current rural development. The low cultural literacy and lack of skills, coupled with the absence of a reasonable industrial structure in communities, including necessary secondary and tertiary industries, severely limit the employment opportunities and conditions for residents. Faced with life pressures, they have little time or energy to focus on cultural and recreational activities. The foundation of rural cultural construction lies in development. Only when residents' basic material needs are met through production development can they have the energy and enthusiasm to pursue spiritual life.

2.3 Insufficient understanding of rural cultural construction by managers and rural community residents

Rural society has historically been a relatively closed society. Generations of farmers have lived

in economically underdeveloped, socially limited, and narrow living environments, resulting in less exposure to modern culture and a relatively impoverished cultural and spiritual life. At the same time, influenced by the pursuit of GDP growth and the emphasis on economic achievements in recent years, some grassroots officials believe that economic development is the top priority and that as long as the economy improves, all problems can be solved, deeming cultural construction as insignificant. Moreover, the assessment standards for cultural construction are often overly formalistic, primarily based on the quantity of facilities such as rural libraries, cultural activity rooms, and movie screenings in rural areas, with little regard for their effectiveness and utilization rate. According to feedback from residents, many of the books in rural libraries are not practical for them, and the updates are slow. Only a few people actually read them. The movies shown in rural screenings often do not match their preferences, and few people watch them, considering it better to watch TV at home. Cultural activity rooms in residential areas are often seen as mere decorations.

3. Strategies to overcome cultural challenges and highlight cultural values in rural cultural construction in the new era.

3.1 Strengthen the construction of new rural housing and rural cultural facilities, and expand funding sources through multiple channels

According to surveys, insufficient funding is a bottleneck that hinders the development of rural cultural undertakings. Expanding funding sources through multiple channels becomes a necessary prerequisite for the development of rural culture in new rural housing. It is suggested that municipal, county, and township-level governments should attach greater importance to the construction of rural culture in their financial budgets by allocating specific funds for cultural activities. Cultural authorities, especially rural cultural centers, should enhance communication and collaboration with relevant higher-level departments to strive for dedicated funding. Rural cultural administrators can cooperate with enterprises to secure sponsorship for rural cultural and entertainment activities, thereby expanding the influence of enterprises in the community while obtaining funds for cultural activities, achieving mutual benefits. "Cultivate culture with culture" and engage in cultural operations, utilizing the income generated for rural cultural construction. It is necessary to economize on the activity funds of rural culture, seeking both internal and external sources of funding.

3.2 Implement a responsibility system for cultural construction and link it to performance assessments

Influenced by the narrow pursuit of GDP growth, insufficient attention is given to cultural development, especially in rural areas, where it is reflected in the inadequate infrastructure, insufficient supply of cultural products and services, and relative scarcity of cultural activities. While the construction of basic facilities such as transportation, healthcare, and education has made breakthrough improvements in new rural housing communities, the construction of rural cultural facilities remains significantly inadequate. Some residents have reported delays in the establishment of planned facilities such as basketball courts. It is suggested to establish a system of inspection, assessment, rewards, and punishments, as well as competition for job positions, to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of professional cultural workers.

3.3 Cultivate and attract professionals from various fields, mobilize residents' enthusiasm, and strengthen rural cultural services

The development of rural culture in new rural housing communities requires supportive national policies for talent introduction. By recruiting and selecting talented individuals with good ideological qualities and high professional standards, they should be employed in the workforce of new rural housing communities to enrich the ranks of dedicated cultural management and service personnel. The continuing education and training of rural cultural workers should be strengthened to improve their political and professional qualities. We encourage cultural experts to actively participate in the construction of rural culture in new rural housing communities, tap into the resources of amateur cultural talents, cultivate amateur cultural teams, provide free training for cultural backbone personnel, and offer appropriate spiritual or material rewards. Community management departments can collaborate with industrial parks and relevant training institutions to organize regular training programs, providing residents with various vocational skills training to enhance their employability. Rural cultural centers can also cooperate with universities, developing the community into a social practice base for college students to conduct value and legal education for residents. Additionally, fully leverage the initiative of community members themselves, allowing them to utilize their respective strengths and engage in cultural, sports, and entertainment activities, as well as conduct promotional activities for behavioral norms and voluntary services.[2]

3.4 Strengthen rural ethical and moral development, focusing on cultivating a civilized rural atmosphere, fostering positive family values, and nurturing a simple and honest rural culture.

3.4.1 Cultivate a civilized rural atmosphere

The government and relevant authorities should properly balance the relationship between building a civilized rural atmosphere and economic development. They should promote socialist core values and strengthen rural ethical and moral development, integrating these values into all aspects of rural social development and transforming the emotional identification of the rural population into behavioral habits.

Efforts should be made to emphasize the improvement of the rural living environment and ethical and moral development. This can be achieved by establishing and improving grassroots mass organizations such as villagers' assemblies and moral evaluation councils, as well as strengthening the construction of grassroots party organizations in rural areas. Additionally, positive rural trends should be commended, and undesirable behaviors should be opposed.

3.4.2 Advocate positive family values

Family values are the spiritual core of a family and an important component of social ethos. It is essential to "emphasize family construction, focus on family, emphasize family education, and prioritize family values." The authorities and community leaders should strengthen ethical and moral development and actively promote the establishment of good family values characterized by mutual assistance, unity, hard work, adherence to rules, honesty, moral integrity, diligence, frugality, self-reliance, respect for the elderly, love for the young, and kindness towards others.

3.4.3 Foster a simple and honest rural culture

The local authorities and cultural experts should actively take measures to discard the negative aspects of traditional rural culture and continuously promote a shift in customs and practices. They should focus on cultivating a rural civilization characterized by diligence, thrift, harmony, and

mutual affection, with the aim of continuously enhancing the level of rural social civilization. Furthermore, there should be support for the preservation and development of outstanding folk culture in rural areas, ensuring the inheritance of moral norms and humanistic spirit present in rural traditional culture. To achieve these goals, mechanisms should be established for pairing assistance in literary and artistic activities, curbing outdated customs, and promoting a new era of positive trends in rural communities.

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