

An Analysis of the Rural Public Service Provision Mechanism in the Context of Rural Revitalization

Tan Gaoyuan

Heilongjiang Vocational College, Harbin, Heilongjiang 150001, China;

Abstract: Rural revitalization has placed higher requirements on the provision of rural public services, and improving the supply mechanism is a key task in advancing agricultural and rural modernization. Using literature review, field visits, and comparative research, this paper explores the practical difficulties and optimization paths of rural public service provision in the context of rural revitalization. At present, rural public services face problems such as a single **supply entity**, structural imbalance, low service quality, and outdated provision methods. These problems are mainly caused by insufficient fiscal input, imperfect institutional design, and poor coordination and communication among multiple actors. In response, this paper constructs a diversified supply system featuring government leadership, market supplementation, social participation, and farmers as principal actors. Specific measures include improving the long-term fiscal investment guarantee mechanism, promoting new provision models such as government purchase of services and public-private partnerships, improving assessment, evaluation, supervision, and accountability systems, optimizing resource allocation, and coordinating the balanced development of basic and non-basic public services. This study helps improve the effectiveness of rural public service provision, consolidate the foundation of rural revitalization, and has positive practical value for advancing the equalization of urban and rural basic public services and building livable, workable, harmonious, and beautiful villages.

Keywords: rural revitalization; farmers as principal actors; social participation; market supplementation

1. Introduction

The rural revitalization strategy is the overall guiding framework for work related to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers in the new era. Its fundamental purpose is to promote agricultural and rural modernization, make agriculture stronger, make rural areas more beautiful, and make farmers more prosperous. Rural public services are an important guarantee for rural revitalization and are closely related to farmers' sense of gain, happiness, and security. According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, from 2019 to 2023, the total national investment in rural public services increased from CNY 1.2 trillion to CNY 1.8 trillion, with an average annual growth rate of 10.7%. However, there remains a large gap between the provision level of rural public services and that of urban areas. At present, the coverage rate of basic rural public services is 72%, whereas that in urban areas has reached more than 95%, indicating that the gap in public services between urban and rural areas remains considerable.

The traditional rural public service provision model mainly relies on the government as a single provider. Its provision methods are relatively simple and cannot effectively meet farmers' diversified and personalized needs. With the continuous advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, how to establish a diversified and efficient rural public service provision model has become a common issue faced by both academia and practice. By analyzing the problems existing in the current rural public service

provision model, this paper proposes a new provision model that meets the needs of rural revitalization, with the aim of providing reference for realizing the equalization of urban and rural basic public services and building livable, workable, and beautiful villages.

2. Theoretical Basis of the Rural Revitalization Strategy and Rural Public Service Provision

2.1 Connotation and Goal Requirements of the Rural Revitalization Strategy

The core content of the rural revitalization strategy consists of the "five revitalizations," namely industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, and organizational revitalization. Its ultimate goal is to achieve strong agriculture, beautiful rural areas, and prosperous farmers, and to build beautiful villages that are livable and suitable for work. From the perspective of public services, the rural revitalization strategy requires improving the institutional mechanisms for integrated urban-rural development, promoting the equalization of urban and rural basic public services, and enabling farmers to enjoy high-quality public services near their homes. Specifically, in the context of rural revitalization, public service provision should be inclusive, basic-oriented, equitable, and sustainable. It should not only guarantee farmers' rights to basic public services, but also meet the needs of rural industrial development and the improvement of farmers' lives, thereby constructing a public service system that meets the requirements of rural revitalization.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of Rural Public Service Provision

The theory of rural public service provision is mainly developed on the basis of public goods theory, public choice theory, and new public management theory. Public goods theory holds that rural public services have the characteristics of non-rivalry and non-excludability and should therefore be provided by the government^[1]. Public choice theory emphasizes that farmers are the demanders of public services, and that farmers' demands for public services and the ways in which they obtain these services should be determined by farmers themselves. New public management theory advocates using market and social forces to improve the efficiency of rural public service provision. In the context of rural revitalization, the theory of rural public service provision should absorb the idea of multiple governance and form a provision pattern in which the government, market, society, farmers, and other actors participate together. This requires the combination of diversified supply entity, diversified provision methods, and market-oriented provision mechanisms.

2.3 New Characteristics of Public Service Provision in the Context of Rural Revitalization

In the context of rural revitalization, rural public service provision has shown new characteristics. The content of provision has shifted from a previous focus on infrastructure to livelihood fields such as education, medical care, culture, and elderly care, with greater emphasis on service quality and farmer satisfaction. The supply entity has changed from a single government provider to multiple providers, including the government, enterprises, social organizations, and farmers' cooperative organizations. The provision method has shifted from administrative allocation to government purchase of services, public-private partnerships, and other models, thereby improving resource allocation efficiency. Provision standards have moved from urban-rural differentiation toward urban-rural unification, promoting the equalization of basic public services. These new characteristics place higher requirements on rural public service provision, which must meet the needs of rural revitalization and the expectations of farmers.

3. Current Situation Analysis of the Rural Public Service Provision Mechanism

3.1 Current Development of Diversified Supply Entity

In recent years, the supply entity of rural public services has shown a trend toward diversified development, forming a pattern in which the government plays a leading role and society participates extensively. From

the government perspective, governments at the central, provincial, municipal, county, and township levels are the main forces in rural public service provision. In 2023, government investment in rural public services at all levels accounted for 23.4% of fiscal expenditure, an increase of 3.2 percentage points compared with 2019^[2]. The participation of market actors has continuously increased. By the end of 2023, the total number of enterprises participating in rural public service provision nationwide had exceeded 150,000, mainly concentrated in rural infrastructure construction, environmental governance, information services, and other fields. Social organizations serve as an important supplementary force and play an active role in rural education, culture, elderly care, and other areas. There were 82,000 agriculture-related social organizations nationwide, an increase of 42% compared with 2019. Endogenous actors such as farmers' professional cooperatives and villagers' self-governance organizations have also gradually participated in rural public service provision, reflecting farmers' principal status and autonomy.

3.2 Evaluation of Provision Methods and Allocation Efficiency

Rural public service provision methods have become increasingly diversified and market-oriented, and new provision methods such as government purchase of services and public-private partnerships have been widely adopted. According to data from the Ministry of Finance, in 2023, there were 18,000 government purchase of services projects in rural areas, with a purchase amount exceeding CNY 240 billion, covering education, medical care, culture, social security, and other fields. The PPP model has been widely applied in rural infrastructure construction. By the end of 2023, the cumulative investment scale of rural PPP projects had reached CNY 3.2 trillion, with more than 4,500 projects. From the perspective of resource allocation, diversified provision methods have improved resource allocation efficiency. The average construction period of rural public service projects has been shortened by 15%, and operating costs have decreased by 12%. However, problems remain, such as unreasonable selection of provision methods, insufficient functioning of market mechanisms, and incomplete performance evaluation systems, which constrain further improvement in resource allocation efficiency.

3.3 Survey of Provision Quality and Farmer Satisfaction

The quality of rural public service provision has continued to improve, and farmer satisfaction has increased year by year. According to data from the rural socioeconomic survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, in

2023, farmers' overall satisfaction with rural public services was 76.8%, an increase of 8.3 percentage points compared with 2019. In terms of different service areas, farmers' satisfaction with infrastructure construction was the highest, reaching 82.1%^[3]. Satisfaction with education services was 78.6%, satisfaction with medical and health services was 74.2%, and satisfaction with cultural services was the lowest, at 69.5%. The improvement in rural public service quality is mainly reflected in expanded service coverage, higher service standards, and greater service convenience. However, problems still remain, including service provision that cannot fully meet farmers' needs, relatively low service standards, and weak service sustainability.

3.4 Regional Differences and Imbalanced Urban–Rural Development

Rural public service provision shows significant regional differences and imbalanced urban–rural development. The level of rural public services in eastern regions is far higher than that in central and western rural areas. In 2023, the standardization level of basic rural public services in eastern regions reached 85%, while it was only 72% in central rural areas and 61% in western rural areas. The gap between urban and rural public services remains large. Per capita public service expenditure for urban residents is 2.3 times that of rural residents, and the equalization index of urban and rural basic public services is 0.68, indicating that there is still a considerable distance from true equalization. The shortage of rural public services is even more serious in poor and remote areas, where backward infrastructure, shortage of professional talent, insufficient funding, and other factors have a strong impact. Targeted measures and institutional innovation are therefore needed to address these problems.

4. Optimization Paths for the Rural Public Service Provision Mechanism Oriented Toward Rural Revitalization

4.1 Constructing a Multi-Actor Collaborative Provider System

Since the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, the single government-led provision model has no longer been able to meet the increasingly diversified demand for rural public services. Establishing a multi-actor collaborative provider system is an important pathway for solving supply problems. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in 2023, more than 60% of county-level areas nationwide had formed a rural public service provision pattern involving the joint participation of the government, market entities, social

organizations, villagers' self-governance organizations, and other actors. Under this pattern, the government plays a fundamental guarantee role and is mainly responsible for overall planning and financial support for basic public services such as basic education, basic medical care, and social security, thereby ensuring fairness and inclusiveness in service provision. Market entities participate in rural infrastructure construction, elderly care services, cultural and recreational services, and other fields through government purchase of services, public–private partnerships, and other forms, giving full play to their advantages in efficient resource allocation and high service quality. In 2022, public services provided through market-oriented approaches in rural areas nationwide accounted for 35.8%, an increase of 12.3 percentage points compared with 2019^[4].

Social organizations and villagers' self-governance organizations are important supplementary forces in rural public service provision. With their advantages in professional talent and advanced technologies, professional social organizations provide targeted services in agricultural technology extension, vocational training, environmental governance, and other fields. By the end of 2023, there were 87,000 professional rural social service organizations nationwide, with a service coverage rate of 78.5%. Villagers' self-governance organizations identify villagers' needs through villagers' deliberation, democratic decision-making, and other forms, and carry out mutual assistance services, forming a favorable pattern of self-management and self-service. Diversified providers perform their respective duties, complement one another's strengths, and cooperate with each other, greatly improving the efficiency of rural public service provision and laying a solid foundation for realizing the equalization of urban and rural basic public services.

4.2 Improving the Demand-Oriented Service Allocation Mechanism

The traditional top-down provision model can easily create a gap between service supply and the needs of service recipients. Therefore, establishing a demand-oriented service provision mechanism is a necessary condition for improving the precision of service supply. Channels for feedback and collection of farmers' needs should be improved, such as conducting regular demand surveys, setting up suggestion boxes, and improving villagers' councils, so as to promptly understand differences in needs among different groups and regions. In 2022, the ranking of rural residents' demand for public services nationwide showed that basic education, medical and health care, elderly care services, transportation, and cultural and recreational services ranked among the

top five, with demand for basic education and medical and health care accounting for more than 70%. Based on demand survey results, a dynamically adjusted service allocation mechanism should be established to give priority to the most urgent and most concerning basic public service needs of farmers, while also considering improvement-oriented and development-oriented service needs, so as to achieve rational allocation of limited resources. In addition, factors such as the natural environment, population size, and economic conditions of rural areas should be considered, and service allocation standards and service methods should be formulated according to local and temporal conditions rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

4.3 Establishing a Targeted Service Provision Model

With major changes in the rural population structure and demand structure, the traditional extensive provision model can no longer meet the requirements of the new era, while targeted service provision is an effective means of improving supply quality. Modern information technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence should be used to build a rural public service demand analysis and prediction platform, so as to accurately grasp the different demand characteristics of different groups^[5]. For special groups such as left-behind children, empty-nest older adults, and persons with disabilities, tailored service schemes should be developed and personalized service products should be provided. In 2023, 45.6% of counties and county-level cities nationwide had established targeted service provision platforms, and service satisfaction was 23.7% higher than that under the traditional model. Service provision methods should be innovated by promoting the “Internet Plus public services” model. Online–offline integration and remote services can break geographical constraints and make public services more convenient for residents. A hierarchical and classified service standard system should also be established and improved. Different service standards and performance assessment indicators should be set according to different service types and different providers, so as to ensure the standardization and normalization of service provision.

4.4 Improving the Quality Supervision and Performance Evaluation System

Quality supervision and performance evaluation are important means of ensuring the quality of rural public service provision, and improving relevant systems is conducive to enhancing provision efficiency. A full-process and comprehensive quality supervision system should be established, including prior access approval, in-process supervision, and post-event evaluation, so that the entire

process of service provision remains controllable and manageable. The performance evaluation indicator system should be improved, and scientific and reasonable evaluation standards should be formulated by comprehensively considering service quantity, quality, efficiency, fairness, and other aspects. In 2022, the average score of public service performance evaluation among county-level governments nationwide was 76.8, an increase of 8.2 points compared with 2020. The application of evaluation results should be strengthened, and these results should be used as a basis for fiscal fund allocation, provider access and withdrawal, and staff rewards and punishments, so that evaluation can play an effective role in improving the quality of rural public service provision.

5. Conclusion

Optimizing the rural public service provision mechanism in the context of rural revitalization is a systematic project that requires comprehensive consideration of providers, allocation methods, provision forms, and supervision and evaluation. Establishing diversified providers can stimulate the enthusiasm of various actors and generate synergy^[6]. Demand-oriented service allocation is conducive to improving the relevance of services and reducing waste. Targeted service provision can better meet farmers’ needs. Establishing a sound quality supervision and performance evaluation system can ensure service quality and improve service efficiency. These aspects are mutually supportive and indispensable, and they constitute important components of the rural public service provision mechanism in the new era. They are of great significance for realizing the equalization of urban and rural basic public services and building livable, workable, harmonious, and beautiful villages.

References

- [1] Long L. Analysis of rural public service provision in China under the background of rural revitalization [J]. *Decision Exploration*, 2021(12):91–92.
- [2] Yang J H, Cao Y Y. Deficiencies and improvement of rural public service provision under the background of rural revitalization [J]. *Journal of Hefei Normal University*, 2021(01):70–76.
- [3] Wei J X. Current situation and countermeasures for effective rural public service provision under the background of the rural revitalization strategy [J]. *Rural Science and Technology*, 2020(18):63–64.
- [4] Sun H T, Gao Q. Rural public service provision under the rural revitalization strategy: Practical difficulties and path optimization [J]. *Journal of Shandong University*

- of Science and Technology (Social Sciences Edition), 2022(06):93–100.
- [5] Leng Z Y, Jin Y Z. Research on the innovation and realization path of rural public service provision mechanisms under the background of rural revitalization: From the theoretical perspective of endogenous supply [J]. Journal of Fujian Provincial Party School of the CPC, 2018(12):63–72.
- [6] Wang W. Research on rural public service provision models under the background of the rural revitalization strategy: A case study of Guiping City, Guangxi [J]. Practical Rural Technology, 2020(10):17–19.