

The Rural Shift Towards a Learning Society: A Study on the Transformation

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Abstract. Based on the current national strategy of rural revitalization and the reality of rural areas, this paper presents a preliminary exploration of the transformation towards a learning society in rural areas. It points out that contemporary rural society has the characteristics of interactivity. The agricultural transformation in rural China, as well as the innovation and development of the secondary and tertiary industries, the exploration of cultural values in rural areas, and the participation of diverse stakeholders are all new opportunities for the construction of a rural learning society under the background of urban-rural integration.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization; Learning Society; Rural Learning Society.

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further emphasizes the comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization. The prosperous development of industries is the key focus of rural revitalization, and overcoming the talent bottleneck constraint and activating rural creativity are crucial for achieving industrial prosperity. In the current re-evaluation of the urban-rural relationship in China, it is necessary to seek opportunities for China's economic transformation and industrial advancement in rural areas, and promote the development of a learning society to meet the new demands of the times. Although the "Opinions on Promoting the Construction of Learning Cities" also proposed the principle of urban-rural integration, and various development plans for learning cities have included it as a principle, the research and exploration of the construction path of learning society in rural areas by the education community has been insufficient. Scholars have generally focused on rural issues such as weak basic education, low educational attainment among the rural population, difficulties in transferring surplus rural labor, and uneven distribution of educational resources in their research on rural learning societies. These issues are predominantly addressed through government-led efforts to strengthen adult education and vocational education, as well as through the utilization of distance education technologies to facilitate the sharing of educational resources in rural areas. However, there has been limited exploration of the developmental patterns and changes in Chinese rural society.

Although there is still a huge gap in educational resources between rural areas and cities, the current rural society also contains abundant development opportunities, which precisely require the development of a learning society to discover and nurture them.

Contemporary rural communities have independence and subjectivity, and they are neither urban communities nor traditional rural areas. Rural communities have the characteristic of "intermediacy," which brings about great potential in terms of time and space in the urban-rural relationship. "Intermediacy" refers to a relational structure formed between the subject and the object, creating a huge field. In this field, the subject and the object form a situation of coexistence, communication, dialogue, and integration. Some scholars even argue that relationships are crucial within intermediacy, and the ideal state of intermediacy is a state of connectivity. Therefore, the world is a constantly changing, composing, and reconstructing whole process with mutual connections and interactions. By examining it from the perspective of "intermediacy" theory, we can gain a new understanding of urbanization, urban-rural relationships, and rural communities. Cities and rural areas are two irreplaceable objective existences, and there is a huge interactive

"intermediacy" field between them, with rural communities as important carriers. Rural communities have characteristics such as richness, potential, ambiguity, and compatibility, and as a result, they are rich in exploration and innovation. By reevaluating rural society from a developmental perspective, we can expand the academic imagination of rural learning societies, which are new phenomena that occur in a traditional context but are endowed with modern significance.

2. Dimensions of Constructing a Learning-Oriented Rural Area

2.1 Rural Industrial Upgrading

Although the modernization process of contemporary rural society has led to a shift from traditional isolated settlement patterns, agriculture remains the main industry model in contemporary rural China. To ensure an increase in China's grain production, it is necessary to pay further attention to agricultural technological innovation and industrial structure upgrading. The notice also explicitly stated the requirement for technological improvements in grain production and the retention of secondary and tertiary industries in rural areas, with the aim of providing more employment and entrepreneurial opportunities as well as increased value-added benefits to farmers.

To achieve this principle, it is essential to base it on the improvement of agricultural human capital. Rapid and effective improvement of agricultural human capital is a crucial element for the success of rural revitalization, under the premise of introducing advanced technology and industrial techniques. First, the enhancement of human capital in the primary sector requires agricultural workers to have knowledge of new agricultural mechanization technology and improve their personal agricultural mechanization skills. Second, with the widespread adoption of mechanization, more laborers who were originally engaged in agricultural work will be released. It is important to ensure their smooth transition to employment in the growing secondary and tertiary sectors. This requires strong social education support and innovative thinking to facilitate industry upgrading and structural adjustment, with a focus on the practical application of knowledge in the construction of a learning-oriented rural area.

Therefore, in the context of a learning society, rural learning no longer solely focuses on improving the educational level of the rural population. It also encompasses continuous learning for high-end talents engaged in agricultural technology exploration, as well as technical support for industrial innovation, and other diverse aspects. The learning-oriented rural areas in the new era need to establish channels for industry and knowledge learning to ensure the practical impact of learning.

2.2 Local Cultural Heritage Revitalizing

The rapid urbanization in China has led to the decline and fragmentation of traditional Chinese culture. Individuals in the atomized urban life have lost their spiritual homeland and an increasing number of people begin to attach importance to the value of rural heritage. The improvement of rural transportation conditions, the popularity of the internet and smartphones have eliminated the isolation between urban and rural areas, and the exchange of urban and rural cultures has become a reality. The cultural collisions that occur during this exchange can lead to a deeper exploration of cultural capital.

Attracting urban labor capital back to rural areas through local culture and seeking new development opportunities in the collision of urban and rural cultures is one of the key paths to rural revitalization. Whether it is potential returning labor capital or local residents, they all need knowledge and a new perspective to understand local culture and find new economic opportunities. For laborers living in fragile production environments, it is even more important to gain a new perspective on the world through lifelong learning, rediscover the relationship between individuals and collectives, and reevaluate the resources around them. In the face of the reality of crisis and opportunity, they can seek new business opportunities.

2.3 Multi-Stakeholder Governance in Rural Areas

In contemporary China, there is a trend of multiple stakeholders, including the government, businesses, urban residents, and rural residents, paying attention to rural areas. This has led to a new situation in rural governance, transforming Chinese rural areas from relatively closed living spaces into fields of diverse experiences. Mutual learning in daily interactions has become an important means to promote the integration, co-governance, and development of new rural communities. The external cultural changes and internal composition changes have turned rural areas in modern China into living spaces where numerous political, economic, and cultural variables converge. Contemporary Chinese rural communities still retain some of the governance characteristics of traditional communities. In the process of introducing external cultures, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of and respect for the existing local development characteristics of rural areas. Community governance participation pathways should be designed based on the diverse interests and demands of various stakeholders to gradually promote community integration. Through discussions and practices, community public life can be fostered to facilitate interactions between new and old villagers and enhance community identity.

The construction of a learning-oriented rural area, as an important tool for community governance, encourages residents to participate in rural life and is an essential method for constructing a sense of community. The formation of diverse governance mechanisms can promote the development of a communicative atmosphere and the formation of an informal learning environment. The educational care of diverse stakeholders naturally emerges in the process of shaping the atmosphere of community governance.

3. Summary

Under the background of rural revitalization, it is necessary to re-plan the possible paths for the construction of a learning-oriented society in rural areas based on a re-understanding of rural society.

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