

Practical Exploring of Rural Community Governance in Guangxi

—A Case Study of Village L

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doi: 10.56397/LE.2022.08.02

Abstract

With the development of China's modernization and the acceleration of the process of urban-rural integration, rural problems are increasingly aggravated. In order to solve the difficult problems of rural community governance in China, village L is used as the research object to explore the path of rural community governance in China. Through fieldwork, it was found that the supply of public services in rural communities was insufficient, rural construction planning is confusing, and rural community workers are not competent enough in community governance in village L; countermeasures such as improving the supervision and management mechanism of village committees, expanding rural economic income channels, strengthening scientific planning in rural areas and encouraging professionals to participate in community governance are proposed to provide reference suggestions for improving community governance in village L.

Keywords: rural, community governance, Guangxi

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Community governance is located at the end of the national governance system, is the cornerstone of national governance, and is the grassroots foundation for the modernization of national governance capacity and governance system (Song Daolei, 2017). Strengthening and improving the community governance system is an important institutional construction for improving people's livelihood.

In April 2017, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued the Notice on National Experimental Zones for Rural Community Governance, calling for the construction of "National Experimental Zones for Rural Community Governance". The notice pointed out that 48 pilot units of the "National Experimental Zone on Rural Community Governance" would be built across the country and were successfully selected as the construction sites. The construction activities will focus on "rural grassroots party building, improving rural community autonomy and service functions". The experimental zone began in January 2018 and will end in 2021.

The 2019 Central Document No. 1 points out that the government should strengthen rural planning and make strengthening planning management a fundamental part of rural revitalization, achieve full coverage of planning management, prepare or revise village layout plans on a county-by-county basis, and county-level party committees and governments should co-ordinate and promote rural planning (Editorial Department of People's Daily, 2019). Therefore, rural community governance is an important part of our government's efforts to improve government management functions.

In the process of consolidating the effective linkage between poverty eradication and rural revitalization, rural community governance, as part of the content of rural revitalization, is of great significance in effectively promoting rural revitalization. In this context, this paper takes village L as an example to study the issue of rural

community governance and explore countermeasures to optimize rural community governance, which is of great significance.

2. Current Situation of Rural Community Governance in Village L

L village has a village party committee and a village committee, two village committees, five members of the party committee and five members of the village committee, two of whom are cross-posted, the two village committees have a total of seven people, four of whom are fully paid, with wages of 1600-2000, two of whom are paid specific wages, and the government also has certain positions according to needs. The highest level of education is high school, with 1 person; junior high school, with 20 people; there is also 1 person with primary school education, and only 2 of the 22 village members are women. The village also has a cultural team, an elderly association, a red and white council, a council for the disabled and a social work station, which is one of the service points of the social work project of Guangxi Zhongyi Social Work Agency.

2.1 Organizational Structure of the Rural Community in Village L

Village L has a village party committee and a village committee, two village committees, five members of the party committee and five members of the village committee, two of whom are cross-posted, the two village committees have a total of seven people, four of whom are fully paid, with wages of 1600-2000, two of whom are paid specific wages, and the government also has certain positions according to needs. The highest level of education is high school, with 1 person; junior high school, with 20 people; there is also 1 person with primary school education, and only 2 of the 22 village members are women. The village also has a cultural team, an elderly association, a red and white council, a council for the disabled and a social work station, which is one of the service points of the social work project of Guangxi Zhongyi Social Work Agency.

2.2 Basic Practices of Rural Community Governance in Village L

2.2.1 Establishing Villagers' Organisations and Standardising Democracy

To address major village issues, Village L has a villagers' committee, a red and white council, a council for the disabled, a civilization association, an association for the elderly and other villagers' organizations. An online and offline discussion platform has been established, and affairs of the village that are closely related to the villagers are released in a timely manner through WeChat, effectively ensuring the villagers' rights to information, participation and supervision. The system of resolving major matters in this village is carried out through the establishment of a joint party and government meeting at the village level, so that matters can be discussed by all, effectively ensuring democratic management at the grassroots level.

2.2.2 Government-Led Promotion of Rural Community Construction

The village was listed as a poor village in 2016 and is supported by the Civil Affairs Bureau, Kwangsi Forestry Field (which sends out village staff) and the Veterans Affairs Bureau. 3 support units have chosen to send a first secretary to the village and 2 village staff, so that each poor household has a specific cadre to contact and help, thus effectively carrying out the work in the village. the village leader in the village coordinates, guides and plans the overall work of rural community governance. The village leaders and task force have a clear division of labour, with households and everyone implementing the work, strengthening work discipline and accountability, and working solidly to effectively address the last mile of governance.

2.2.3 Active Improvement of Rural Infrastructure

L village infrastructure construction according to the principle of precision, project work arrangement precision, the use of funds precision, closely around the poor village "ten have a lower" exit indicators, strengthen access, water, electricity, broadband, public services, housing and other infrastructure construction. The cadres stationed in the village led the team, and the two village committees actively promoted, strictly according to the needs and requirements of the configuration of L village infrastructure shortcomings.

2.2.4 Establishing a System to Safeguard Rural Social Undertakings

Village L has established a system to safeguard social undertakings such as employment assistance, education assistance, medical coverage and universal insurance coverage. Encourage employment, strive to promote stable employment for the poor, improve the professional skills of poor farmers, and actively carry out training in various skills for production and employment with a focus on practical rural skills; encourage households with established cards to participate in skills training such as cooking and electrician; education help, the leading cadres in the village and the village leadership team comprehensively sort out the policies on school assistance, look for the basis of rural school-age children, and follow the "The whole village, in accordance with the principle of everyone participating in medical security, the village leadership cadres and the village leadership team conducted a household-by-household survey and a precise household-by-household inspection to the people; at the same time, outpatient clinics were carried out to guide the village health office to improve its services so that the masses could receive basic medical services.

2.3 Effectiveness of Rural Community Governance in Village L

2.3.1 Gradually Forming a Pattern of Good Governance at the Village L

The traditional single subject of governance has gradually formed a community governance pattern with the participation of multiple subjects in the process of carrying out democratic councils, joint party and government councils, supervision by cadres stationed in the village and participation by social workers. village L has effectively solved the problem of the one-way nature of public power in rural areas, optimized the governance structure of rural communities and gradually formed a pattern of good governance at the village level.

2.3.2 Transformation from Management-Oriented to Service-Oriented

The traditional village committee team is management-oriented, with village affairs managed directly by the village committee leadership team in accordance with relevant government departments, but this management lacks mobility, and the team management is old-fashioned and single-minded. “The village cadres have gradually changed to middle and high education level, and the number of elderly village cadres has gradually decreased from 90% to 65%, and the village has gradually formed a change from management-oriented to service-oriented.

2.3.3 The Rural Living Environment Has Improved Significantly

By renewing the infrastructure, building a rural activity centre, a village treatment room, and erecting other facilities such as access roads to water, electricity and the internet, L Village has achieved access to water and electricity for every household, concrete hardened roads for all five tunnels, and modern technological products for poor households. The living environment of the villagers has improved significantly compared to that before they were lifted out of poverty. The spiritual outlook of the ecological countryside and civilized countryside has improved significantly, gradually forming a livable rural environment.

2.3.4 Increasing Profit-Making Channels

Through the development of the breeding industry, sugar cane planting 2018/2019 the whole village into the factory 14,630 tons of sugar cane; grain 400 mu; forest planting 1,500 mu, chicken and duck annual output of 2,000 village collective economic income as of September 2019, to achieve a collective economic income of 41,000 yuan. p green breeding cooperatives operating sales of selenium-rich rice profit 15,000 yuan; photovoltaic power generation income of 26,000. In terms of housing security, a total of 27 households have received subsidies for the renovation of dangerous houses since 2016, and 11 households have been relocated easily. The village has 481 households with 1,609 people, all of whom have housing security. In terms of medical security, 1,517 people have enrolled in the village’s new agricultural cooperative, with a participation rate of 98.7%. All households with cards on file are paid for by the government, and 25 of the poor households with chronic diseases have all been issued cards. In terms of education, there are 220 people of compulsory education age in the village, all of whom enjoy the basic protection of compulsory education. 42 people enjoy compulsory education subsidies (including 3 in pre-school, 19 in primary school and 20 in junior high school); 19 people are enrolled in high school, 1 in undergraduate and 11 in senior high school, and enjoy subsidies under the Rainbows programme. In terms of pensions, more than 65% of the people eligible for insurance in the village participate in pension insurance, with 295 people over 60 years of age receiving pensions, and also actively carrying out pension insurance for urban and rural residents. At the same time, we are also actively engaged in the purchase of social services and are implementing a project to care for the elderly left behind in village L. The total amount of the project is 100,000 yuan. The project is aimed at providing education, employment, medical care, old age care and housing.

3. Problems in the Governance of the Rural Community in Village L

3.1 Insufficient Supply of Public Services in Rural Communities

The Rural Revitalization Plan (2018-2022) points out that in order to build rural communities, it is necessary to accelerate the equalization of basic public services in urban and rural areas one by one. The task of rural community construction is to focus on “enabling rural community residents to enjoy a wide range of basic living security and public services”. China’s rural society has been lagging behind the urban economy since the reform and opening up, and it is undoubtedly difficult to change the gap between urban and rural public services within a short period of time. Despite the government’s efforts to improve the community environment and increase funding, basic public services are only marginally guaranteed. These efforts are still unable to change the social fact of the urban-rural gap, yet it will still take a long time to improve the level of basic public services in rural communities. On the other hand, the services provided to villagers at the Village Committee Activity Centre in Village L are largely at variance with the actual needs of villagers, and the service hours of some of the services are short-lived, making these services virtually useless. In the village centre, there is a reading room for village books, but the number of books is relatively small, mostly reading materials for primary school students and

agricultural production guidance books. In addition, as the elderly population in village L accounts for 25% of the total population, the community is unable to provide enough space for the elderly to carry out their activities to meet the needs of the villagers.

3.2 Confusing Planning for Village Construction

During the early development of L Village, the planning showed unreasonable phenomena. Firstly, the construction of houses is unreasonable. In the construction of houses in L Village, many villagers do not follow the regulations on the approval of documents and change the pattern of house construction without permission, basically increasing the area of house construction arbitrarily on top of the area of the original construction, causing conflicts with the overall public construction needs of the village, while there is also arbitrary erection and lack of reasonable planning schemes, resulting in chaotic planning and no planning resulting in the dense construction of houses in L Village. Various types of houses and their sizes, narrow village roads, rough land use and waste of resources. Secondly, the planning of agricultural production is chaotic. There are five cantons in L village, and each canton needs to reclaim water drains for agricultural production, and the villagers of each canton conflict with the township planning for the benefit of the canton. Thirdly, village life is chaotic, with sewage and rubbish being discharged indiscriminately, a lack of unified management and varying opinions among the population.

3.3 Inadequate Capacity of Rural Community Workers

Village L has concentrated on the low level of community services and low efficiency of community work in the process of modern institutional reform. Rural community workers are in the traditional management style, using the same old empirical way to manage L village, lacking the ability to innovate. Modern management methods require rural managers to have strong information processing skills and strong learning abilities, but there is only one manager in village L who can use computer technology, and he is not yet fully skilled in its use, and he has not yet mastered some advanced office software. 20 of the community managers in village L are middle-aged and elderly, and there is only one young person (aged 30-40). It is often difficult to promote the implementation of a policy smoothly.

4. Analysis of the Causes of the Problems of Community Governance in Village L

4.1 Insufficient Government Investment in the Construction of Public Services in Rural Communities

There is no doubt that the construction of rural communities is inseparable from capital investment, and there is a large gap in the construction of rural communities. The main manifestation is that the collective income of rural communities is small, and the funds that can be replenished for rural construction basically require government allocations, which are also small. In September 2018, a collective economic income of 41,000 yuan was achieved, of which the green breeding cooperative made a profit of 15,000 yuan from the operation and sale of selenium-rich rice and 26,000 yuan from photovoltaic power generation. In 2018, the government financial allocation of L village totaled 400,000 yuan, of which the salary expenditure of village cadres was 103,800 yuan accounting for 23.5%, and infrastructure expenditure totaled 184,000 yuan accounting for 41.8% (including a total of 34,000 yuan for basic medical care, environmental health, etc., and the rest was a special allocation of 150,000 yuan for agricultural production), and social poverty alleviation expenditure accounted for 85,000 yuan accounted for 19.3%, with a thin base of community economy and insufficient funds for the construction of community public services. Rural public services are extensive, problematic and require long-term operational construction. With the development of the community-building rural economy, the salary level of rural community workers gradually rose, requiring the government to bear the corresponding financial expenditure and amount of subsidies, which increased the financial burden of the government, resulting in the expansion of the community building funds gap. On the other hand, labour salaries and material prices in rural construction are increasing, leading to higher community construction costs. At the same time, rural communities also suffer from a lack of openness in the use of funds and a lack of professional supervision, which also increases construction costs.

4.2 Lack of Scientific Planning for Rural Construction

The Strategic Plan for the Revitalisation of the Countryside (2018-2022) states that in accordance with the general requirements of prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilised countryside, effective governance and prosperous living, a phased plan is made for the implementation of the rural revitalisation strategy, and work priorities and policy measures are refined and actualised to ensure that the rural revitalisation strategy is implemented and put into practice (Editorial Department of People's Daily, 2018). The unscientific construction of houses in Village L is mainly due to Rural residents are backward in their thinking and deeply influenced by traditional feudal superstition, neglecting the scientific nature of house planning, with the selection of sites decided by feng shui masters, which brings difficulties to the planning and management of modern village construction, as well as the villagers and their emphasis on personal interests, thus resulting in contradictions

with the original village planning. On the other hand, villagers have a weak sense of the legal system. During the interviews, we learnt that villagers in village L ignored the provisions of the documents and insisted on changing the area of house construction, which not only aggravated the destruction of the rural ecological environment, but also posed a great problem to the government in governance.

4.3 Low Level of Education of Community Workers

Talent has an important influence on good community governance and determines the level of community governance and service. the education level and age composition of L village cadres are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

From Tables 1 and 2, it can be seen that the education level of the village cadre team is low, the degree of aging of the village cadres is high, and the elderly and those with low education clearly show a lack of ability in the community governance, old-fashioned thinking, inability to adapt to the modern governance system, derailment of village planning from national planning, and poor learning ability and innovation, which is not conducive to the scientific planning and long-term development of L village. The rapid pace of community development requires village committees to have high computer application skills. Older people are not competent enough to learn computer applications in modern technology and have poor reserves, poor handling of village affairs and corresponding government information documents, low efficiency and quality of work to be improved.

Table 1. Literacy composition of L village officials

Education level	High school	Junior High School	Primary Schools	Tertiary and above
Number of people	1	20	1	0
Ratio	4.5%	91%	4.5%	0%

Note: Source L Village Committee

Table 2. Age composition of village officials in L Village

Age of village officials	Over 50	40s to 50s	30s to 40s	Under 30
Number	16	3	3	0
Percentage	73.5%	13.5%	13.5%	0%

Note: Source L Village Committee

5. Optimisation Measures for Community Governance Problems in Villages L

First, improve the supervision and management mechanism of the two village committees. According to the famous scholar Yu Keping, the foundation of good governance is in the citizens or civil society, and good governance depends on the voluntary cooperation and conscious recognition of the authority of the citizens; without the active participation and cooperation of the citizens, at most, there will be only good governance, but not good governance (Yu Keping, 2000). Villagers are the mainstay of rural community governance, the main force in improving the level and capacity of rural governance, and the direct beneficiaries of rural governance. To raise the villagers' spirit of rule of law and sense of ownership, and to give full play to the villagers' role in democratic management, decision-making and supervision, Village L has made use of modern internet technology to establish a villagers' WeChat group to release timely information on village affairs and agricultural policies.

On the other hand, the Civil Affairs Bureau and other relevant government departments are also making every effort to promote the modernisation of the local governance system and governance capacity by adopting various measures and methods in order to further strengthen the standardisation of the two village committees, safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of villagers and effectively improve the service capacity of the village committees and villagers' committees. In terms of improving the relevant legal provisions, the relevant government departments formulated a new Village Mass Autonomy System on 25 October 2019 in accordance with the Autonomous Region's Implementation Opinions on Further Strengthening the Standardisation and Standardisation of Village Supervision Committees. Through this system, it is further clearly stipulated that village committees shall: standardise the content, procedures, time, form and management of village affairs in several aspects, and the system requires that the villagers' satisfaction with the openness of village affairs be improved, with the standard being to reach more than 85%; further improve the democratic decision-making system and strengthen the democratic decision-making in villages in accordance with the "four deliberations and two disclosure The system should further improve the democratic decision-making system and strengthen village

democratic decision-making in accordance with the “four deliberations and two disclosure” procedure; further improve the system of monitoring village affairs and strengthen the management of these systems on the ground. It provides strong legal and regulatory support for good rural community governance and the improvement of the supervision and management mechanisms of the two village committees.

Secondly, expand the channels of rural economic income. Marxism holds that the economic base determines the superstructure. Improving the supply capacity of rural public services is obviously determined by the economic base. First, expand the financial input of rural communities, expand the path of fund-raising, increase government financial support, encourage the participation of social organisations and social donations, and guide villagers to make good use of their own funds. In rural industrial development, Village L has planted sugar cane, with an output value of 6.6 million yuan; chicken and duck industries, with an annual output value of 600,000 yuan; and planted selenium-rich rice with an output value of 500,000 yuan. In 2019, Village L sought higher-level investment in rural construction of more than 600,000 yuan, including 300,000 yuan for Po Tan Tun, 200,000 yuan for the autonomous model village, 100,000 yuan for the municipal “four good” village in Xin’an Tun, and 80,000 yuan for the county level in Hsien Na Burying, Pack West and P Tun. The village committee organised a series of environmental improvement projects in the villages, such as the hardening of lanes, the construction of drains, children’s playgrounds, information boards and pavilions, to further strengthen rural infrastructure and enhance the rural public service system.

Once again, the science of scientific planning in rural areas was strengthened. Reasonable rural planning is an important responsibility of the grassroots government, which actively implements the requirements of the document “Strategic Planning for Rural Revitalisation (2018-2022)”. The land is the basic resource for rural planning, and is the primary condition for rural planning. Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the rules for the use of rural land and prohibit all kinds of haphazard construction. From the actual situation of L village, the government is required to introduce compulsory relevant policies to prevent the slightest change, and at the same time to punish the past haphazard construction. Secondly, we should do a good job in the coordinated design of housing construction, in the case of L village, that is, according to the needs of the villagers, the housing design should adhere to the principle of diversification and characterization, and be consciously registered and reported. Thirdly, we should do a good job of publicising rural laws and raising villagers’ awareness of legal norms and the consequences of violations. Scientific rural planning will not only bring benefits to rural governance, but will also enhance villagers’ spiritual needs and sense of access, and build a harmonious social environment.

Finally, encourage professional talents to participate in community governance. Talent is a central part of community governance, and retaining talent is the only way to keep good governance in the countryside. Continue to encourage the promotion of university student village officials and selected students to join the grassroots, increase the proportion of highly qualified talents in rural governance, and improve the remuneration package for grassroots community governance staff. At the same time, increase the training of local talents in the villages. Rural areas are societies of acquaintances, and local villagers who have lived in the village for a long time have a high level of knowledge and considerable interpersonal relationships, and can gain the trust of the villagers in the village more quickly. In addition, professional social workers are encouraged to enter the grassroots. The greatest advantage of social workers stationed in rural areas and participating in community governance can reflect social justice, reduce villagers’ discrimination against society and enhance social integration. L Village has been focusing on the cultivation of social work talents since 2016. Through a series of professional service activities, social workers have built a service platform at the project site. Through the platform, local social workers and volunteers are attracted to participate in the activities to enhance their service capacity and improve the quality of services through the activities. Zhong Yi social workers actively carry out special training work for the following four categories of people: training targets recommended by the local Civil Affairs Bureau, village grassroots cadres, villagers’ activists and local volunteer organizations. After a certain amount of training, they are assisted to summarize their own work experience and improve the organization of their actions, so as to eventually realize the localization and regularization of professional services.

6. Discussion

Grassroots governance is the end of the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity, and is the foundation of the overall governance of the country (Huang Lei, 2017). In the process of modernization, the pace of urban-rural integration has gradually accelerated, and rural community governance has gradually become an important element of grassroots governance. This paper analyses the practices of community governance in L village and the results achieved through field visits and a study of the community governance work in L village. Through literature research and understanding of the current situation of community governance in L village, it attempts to identify its problems, and proposes corresponding countermeasures and suggestions to address the problems identified.

Fund Project

2022 Guangxi Postgraduate Education Innovation Program Project (No. YCSW2022401).

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