Agricultural Development Mode Transformation and Government Functions in Guizhou Province

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Abstract  Based on the brief account of the connotation of transforming economic development pattern and government functions, the thesis will introduce the development status of agricultural economy in Guizhou Province; firstly, single agricultural industrial structure; secondly, large gap between urban and rural development; thirdly, low-level utilization of agricultural science and technology; fourthly, fierce contradiction between agricultural mode of production and ecological environment. Then it analyzes the basic requirements for government functions in transforming the development pattern of agricultural economy in Guizhou Province; the first one is the function to guide sustainable development and the structural adjustment of agricultural production; the second is the function to coordinate urban-rural development and equally supply basic public goods; the third is the function to input science and technology to serve agriculture; the fourth one is the dominant function to promote the harmonious development of man and nature as well as to reduce the number of peasants. In order to promote the transformation of agricultural development mode and maintain the sound and rapid economic development, some corresponding measures and suggestions are proposed from the perspective of government functions; firstly, promoting the optimization and upgrading of industrial structure; secondly, the government should take the lead in providing rural public goods; thirdly, strengthening the skills training and technological education of rural labor force; fourthly, reducing the number of farmers and retaining the farmers.

Key words  Agricultural economy, Transformation of development mode, Government functions, Agricultural industrial structure, China

Agriculture is of vital importance in invigorating the country and stabilizing the society. It lays the foundation for the national economy and provides the necessary condition for guaranteeing social stability. The 17th National Congress of the CPC has made it clear that the key to realize the future economic development target is to accelerate the transformation of economic development mode and promote the sound and good economic development. The transformation of economic development mode can be understood as transforming the methods, means and mode of economic development, which involves not only the transformation of economic growth pattern, but also the changes in its structure, quality, efficiency, quality of population, environmental protection, disparity between the rich and the poor, and other aspects. Under the new development concept and development mode, the agriculture of Guizhou Province is confronted with a series of important theoretical and practical problems to be sorted out and solved.

Government functions are the responsibilities and role the government should performed in administering state affairs and managing social and public affairs according to the needs of national and social development during a given period. It mirrors the essence of a government as well as the content and direction of its activities. The agricultural economy in Guizhou Province still mainly relies on two original resources——land and labor, it is managed by a family unit rather than through a market way, therefore, its productivity level is still at the small peasant economy level. Within such a closed form of economic structure, the government should not only conduct the coordination function, but also assume the function to provide public services to transform the closed structure into an open one. As the government itself has the natural function to maintain social and economic development as well as the strong coercive and executive power, it will be no doubt that the government will play an important role in economic development.

1 The development status of agricultural economy in Guizhou Province

Since the reform and opening up, the agricultural economic development of Guizhou Province has made significant achievements. However, while comparing with the connotation of "transformation of economic development mode" proposed by the Central Government, it still faces lots of major development problems.

1.1 Single agricultural industrial structure  So far as the agricultural industrial structure is concerned, the self-sufficient small peasant economy still dominates the agricultural development, the advantages of characteristic agriculture and animal husbandry haven’t yet been brought into full play. Agricultural products structure is epitomized in "five many and five few", that is, many general products but few high-quality goods; many low-grade products but few high-grade products; many common varieties but few special varieties; many unprocessed products but few deep processing products; many self-sufficient products but few commercialized products. Under the dual constraints of industrial structure and product structure, It is difficult to break the traditional pattern of small peasant economy in Guizhou Province, which, as a result, leads to the weak com-
pettiveness of agricultural products, low market share and low agricultural efficiency.

1.2 Large gap between urban and rural development The living conditions in rural Guizhou Province are very poor, the income level of the farmers is low and their income sources are narrow, there is a large poverty-stricken population with high poverty degree. In 2008, the per capita net income of rural households in Guizhou Province is 2,796.93 Yuan, accounting for 23.8% that of the urban households and lower than the national average level by 6.2 percentage points. The total fiscal expenditure of Guizhou Province in 2008 is 105.539 billion Yuan, only 11.53% of which, about 12.171 billion Yuan is spent on agriculture, this proportion, however, is far below the 71.11% proportion of the employed population of the primary industry in the whole employed population of the province during the same period, which is quite incompatible with the serious issues concerning agriculture. As a result of the insufficient fiscal fund for assisting agriculture, the total public goods supply in rural Guizhou Province could not satisfy the development of rural economy and meet the actual needs of farmers. As shown in the investigation, the infrastructure of Guizhou, such as transportation, communication and resources, is generally backward, for example, in 2008 there are 17,332 villagers committee in the whole Guizhou Province, but only 75.7% of which, about 13,113 villages benefit from the running water, the road practicable for automobiles is not available to every village and there are still 1,402 villages inaccessible by automobiles, 1,720 villages cannot get access to telephones and 11,419 cannot receive the cable radio, accounting for 65.9% of the total number of villages.

1.3 Low-level utilization of agricultural science and technology According to relevant studies, during 1979 – 2004, the contribution rates of land, capital and technology to the agricultural economic growth were respectively 15%, 49% and 36%. If taking into account the natural disasters, the rates would be 15%, 51% and 34% respectively, during 1995 – 2004, the average contribution rates of land, capital and technology to the agricultural economic growth were respectively 6%, 57.7% and 36.3%. The contribution rate of technology to the agriculture in Guizhou Province is lower than that in the whole nation as well as that in Western China (38%) [3]. As far as the agricultural mechanization level is concerned, the agricultural mechanization level in Guizhou Province is very low, relying mainly on the animal draught. As for the total power output of agricultural machineries, the agricultural machiniry power in Guizhou Province is 15,375 million KW, accounting for only 1.87% of the total amount of the whole nation, the machine-ploughed area of Guizhou Province in 2008 is 380,340 hm², accounting for 8.5% of the total cultivated area but far below the average national level [1].

1.4 Fierce contradiction between agricultural mode of production and ecological environment Subject to technical competence and production mode, the rapid growth of traditional agriculture is actually the extensive growth achieved through deforestation, the extension of cultivated areas and over-grazing. As Guizhou Province is covered by karst landscape, when the output of a certain area of land could not satisfy people's needs, people will seek agricultural growth at the sacrifice of resources and ecological environment. Characterized by the constant reclaiming land for cultivation and the predatory management of lands, the extensive growth causes serious damages to ecological environment, which, as a result, leads to some ecological problems such as desertification, rocky desertification, and soil pollution and so on.

2 The basic requirements for government functions in transforming the development pattern of agricultural economy in Guizhou Province

2.1 The function to guide sustainable development and structural adjustment of agricultural production For years, Guizhou Province has always taken grain as the key link, changed slope into terrace and cut the mountains for arable lands, it tries to reclaim more lands for cultivation in the area with broken topography, high mountains, steep slopes, and more rocks but few soil, hoping to increase the farmers' incomes through enlarging the cultivated areas, which, however, essentially stagnates at the traditional agriculture and is still the grain-based self-sufficient small peasant economy, this, however, not only fails to achieve an all-around, coordinate, sustainable and opening-up development, but also runs into a vicious circle, that is, we open up more lands in order to get rid of poverty, which, however, makes us even poorer, in the end, we get no land for reclaiming.

Therefore, in order to realize the transformation of rural economic development mode, the government should break through the singly grain-oriented agricultural industrial structure which has entrenched for centuries, and give full play of its guidance function. The adjustment of rural economic structure is an important component part of the government policy towards rural industry, the government should take part in the adjustment through the way of active guidance. At present, the market economic system in rural Guizhou Province is imperfect, the government should perform the function of guidance to fix the defects in the market allocation of resources, and employ various methods to regulate the unreasonable allocation of resources caused by the imperfect market. The cultural quality of the farmers in Guizhou Province is low and the idea of traditional agriculture is deeply rooted in their mind, therefore, it is indispensable of the government's strenuous guidance to break this thought pattern and transform development mode of agricultural economy.

2.2 The function to coordinate urban-rural development and equally supply basic public goods Over the years, the expansion of urban-rural gap is embodied in the injustice in the supply of public goods and public services. It is the duty of the government to solve this problem, which calls for institution building and adjustment policies.

In the supply of the public goods, we should stick to the
2.3 The function to input science and technology to serve agriculture The low agricultural science and technology content is an important reason leading to the slow agricultural development in Guizhou, while to promote the technical development of agriculture is one of the basic functions of the government. We should use modern technology to transform traditional agriculture, rearrange the elements of agricultural production, improve the added value of agricultural products, develop new modern agriculture and build resource-saving rural areas, a top-down promotion and support from the government is the key to successfully establishing a technical innovation mechanism. For a long time, due to the inconsistent government administrative system, technology and economy are managed under different departments, the separation between the departments makes it hard to adapt to the requirements of market economy and lacks the flexibility to meet the changing market, the great human impact factors, many administrative interventions and the separated management are all not conductive to the combination of technology and agricultural economy. This uncoordinated management system and imperfect operation mechanism have become a shackle of transforming scientific and technological achievements. The government should guide the technological transformation in agriculture, encourage and lead the enterprises, research institutions, universities, financial institutions and other social, scientific and technological resources to actively join the scientific and technological innovation area through the financial, policy, administrative, legal and other means.

2.4 The dominant function to promote the harmonious development of man and nature as well as to reduce the number of peasants The rural economic activities in Guizhou have always relied on the expansion of cultivated areas and the increase of grain output to maintain the simple production of the materials and the reproduction of the population in rural areas. Due to the vast land, dense population and bad natural conditions, in order to survive, people constantly open up new lands even by deforestation and cultivating on those rocky desertification lands, which destruct the vegetation and aggravate the soil erosion. Due to the high proportion of slope lands, serious soil erosion, the farmlands become thinner and thinner, their chemical properties are deteriorating and the soil fertility is declining. In order to ensure the total agricultural output, more labor inputs are needed, as a result, the fertility rate has always been remaining obstinately high, thus forming a vicious circle that “the poorer the more lands are cultivated, the more cultivated lands the poorer” and “the poorer the more children are given birth, the more children the poorer”.

Only the outflow of a large number of rural people, a significant reduction in the demand for food and the declining demand for cultivated lands could provide a rare prerequisite for transforming the grain-based single planting rural industrial structure which has existed for thousands of years. Therefore, to reduce the number of peasants provides a basis in reality to break the centuries-long historical vicious circle of "population-food-ecology" in rural areas of Guizhou Province, develop non-food production, adjust agricultural industrial structure, return farmlands to forest and reconstruct the ecology.

3 Measures and suggestions in promoting the transformation of the development mode of agricultural economy in Guizhou Province

3.1 Promoting the optimization and upgrading of industrial structure The optimization and upgrading of industrial structure is the main content and basic requirements of transforming the economic development mode. So far as Guizhou Province is concerned, it should focus on transforming the grain-based plane reclamation industrial structure into a three-dimensional one. The so-called "three-dimensional structure" means that, we should put great efforts to transform traditional plane industrial structure with the farmlands as the core, establishes a structural type compatible with the three-dimensional rural resources of Guizhou Province and transform the single planting type industrial structure into comprehensive economic structure; the so-called "comprehensive" means to transform traditional single-type agricultural economic structure, achieve the integral management of agriculture, industry and commerce, increase the added value through multiple processing times and improve economic efficiency as well as transform the partly self-sufficient and closed industrial structure into open economic structure; the so-called "open" is to transform the closed partly and wholly self-sufficient economic structure, forming a structure in which the strong demands and resources could be exchanged among the industries, among the areas, as well as between inner and outer mountainous area within the agriculture of Guizhou Province.

3.2 The government should take the lead in providing rural public goods In the supply of rural public goods, the government should act as the main provider, fundamentally straighten out the financial relations of the governments at all levels, dispel the institutional factors of the township govern-
ment shifting the financial burdens onto the farmers, and rad-
ically change the unreasonable situation that rural public goods
are mainly supplied by the farmers. Since there is a large gap
between the urban and rural areas in Guizhou Province, the
supply of rural public goods submits to the financial budget, far
behind the urban areas, even in the rural areas there are dis-
parities in wealth, as a result, the poorer, the less the supply of
public goods, the lack of public goods has restricted the de-
velopment of production, leaving a growing gap between the
rich and the poor. Therefore, we should further make clear that
the main providers of rural public goods are the government at
all levels rather than the farmer self-governing organizations.
The government at all levels should not shirk its responsibility to
supply public goods, especially in those impoverished and
backward regions like Guizhou Province, if the burden of provi-
ding public goods is past on to the farmers whose per capita in-
come is the least compared to other regions in the whole na-
tion, then it is definitely a double blow for the farmers, which
will not only lead to the serious inefficiency of public goods sup-
ply, but also directly make life hard for peasants.

3.3 Strengthening the skills training and technological
education of rural labor force According to the 2004-2010
Migrant Workers Training Plan in Guizhou Province, the voca-
tional technical training is enhanced so as to improve the quality
of the workers. Guizhou should continue to focus on "Sunshine
Program" and "Labor Force Transfer and Training Program" in
poor areas and gradually form a government-led, uniformly-co-
ordinated and all-party-involved rural labor transfer and training
system. In each county it needs to establish farmers vocational
and technical training centers specialized in the vocational and
technical training of rural labor force as well as the safeguarding
awareness and legal consciousness training of the migrant
workers. The rural broadcast and television schools, vocational
schools, Party schools and rural distance education network at all
levels should actively participate in the scientific and cultural ed-
ication of the farmers, encourage the intermediary agencies
and employers to provide specific trainings to the migrant
workers, and continue to focus on the program under which the cul-
ture, health and technology go to the countryside. The develop-
ment of rural education, culture, health and other social un-
ertakings lays the foundation to improve the quality of rural la-
bor force.

3.4 Reducing the number of farmers and retaining the
farmers Transforming more farmers into urban citizens is an
inexorable approach to solving the problems concerning agricul-
ture, rural areas and rural people and realizing the transforma-
tion of agricultural development mode. Facts fully prove that,
the farmers’ working out relieves the pressure of population and
food, contributes to a series of significant changes in the rural econ-
omy of Guizhou Province and has transformed the agricultural
development mode to a certain degree. But if the concept of "retaining
the farmers" could not be established, the farmers
would not become one of the city citizens, and then a large
number of migrant workers would sooner or later return back to
the densely populated rural areas. Around the concept of "re-
taining the farmers", the government of Guizhou Province at all
levels should conduct corresponding system construction. So
far as the basic ideas and general principles of the concept are
concerned, its core is the national treatment of the migrant
workers. It is considered that some corresponding reform could
be conducted in the social security system, registration policy,
education resources, the system of economic house and unem-
ployment insurance.

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