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Analysis on the Employment of Landless Farmers during the Reconstruction of Urban Village: A Case Study of S Village in Shaanxi Province

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Abstract The re-employment of landless farmers in reconstruction of urban village is an important way to solve the problems concerning farmers. In S Village of Shaanxi Province, the landless farmers are facing the employment problems such as low re-employment rate and quality, lack of employment competitiveness, and weak employment willingness. This paper analyzes the main factors influencing the employment of landless farmers in this urban village such as local government's lack of overall design on the employment of landless farmers, landless farmers' lack of long-term employment concept, poor employment conditions, and lack of vocational education in rural areas. Finally some recommendations are set forth to enhance the employment of landless farmers in S Village: strengthening the institutional support for the employment of landless farmers; perfecting the fund guarantee for the employment of landless farmers; actively expanding the employment channels; enhancing the employability of landless farmers.

Key words Landless farmers, Employment, Urban village

1 Introduction

With the rapid development of China's urbanization, sluggish development of urban village has become a serious problem to be solved by government at all levels. In the reconstruction of urban village, the landless farmers leave the land that they are closely related to, but they lack the knowledge and skills to adapt to urban society. If their livelihood is not resolved, they'll become the city's "new poor", and paying attention to the living and employment of these people is a good way to solve this problem. The survey chooses S Village in Shaanxi Province, and this village was included in the list of urban village to be reconstructed in Shaanxi in 2009. It is surrounded by universities and enterprises, and has convenient transportation. Now there is no arable land in S Village, and the village has more than 800 households and more than 4000 farmers. Most of rural households have a dozen of houses for rent. The tenants in S Village are far more than farmers in S Village. On the one hand, it brings considerable economic benefits to farmers in S Village; on the other hand, it makes the villagers form psychological dependence on rental income, thus resulting in more social problems. The questionnaire is combined with interview in the survey, and the village farmers aged more than 16 are chosen as the respondents. The multi-stage sampling and random sampling are employed; a total of 250 questionnaires are distributed, and 235 valid questionnaires are called back, with validity rate of 94%.

2 Current employment of landless farmers in S Village

2.1 Low re-employment rate and quality of landless farmers in S Village After the natural arable land is expropriated, with rapid urban construction, S village is developed rapidly by geographical advantages. Serried illegal buildings are erected in the village, and rental housing has become the main source of income of farmers, accounting for more than 50 % of the average annual income of farmers. In the survey, the age of 16-59 years is regarded as the standard of labor of the right age. The vast majority of landless farmers in S Village stay at home, and the labor of the right age without being employed accounts for 82.1 % of the persons surveyed. There are very few farmers seeking jobs in the places near the village, a total of 18 people, accounting for only 7.7 % of the persons surveyed. They are basically engaged in the construction, transportation, logistics, property management, cleaning and environmental protection, which are the strenuous jobs that urban people are reluctant to engage in, with low quality of employment.

2.2 Lack of employment competitiveness for the landless farmers in S Village With the deepening of China's economic reform, it has made tremendous demands on job seekers' age, knowledge, technique and awareness of market competition^[1]. During the survey, it is found that landless farmers are generally older, and 40–59 years old landless farmers account for 58.3%. In terms of education level, the landless farmers in S Village receive little education (junior high school and below, 83%; senior high school, only 9%; junior college and above, 8%). The low education level has affected farmers' non-farm employment opportunity. In landless farmers surveyed, most of them lack non-agricultural production skills, only 5.21% of landless farmers once

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received non-agricultural vocational training and only 15.1% of landless farmers once worked in non-agricultural industries. More than 50% of landless farmers of all ages in S Village have not yet been engaged in non-agricultural industries. 93.5% of farmers

aged 50–59 are never engaged in non-agricultural industries (Table 1). Therefore, older age, low education level and lack of non-farm employment skills have severely restricted the farmers' competitiveness in the city's job market.

Table 1 Basic information about landless farmers in S Village

Age	Unit: %				
	16–29 years old	30–39 years old	40–49 years old	50–59 years old	60 years old and above
Below primary school	0.0	2.1	3.2	9.8	50.2
Primary school	5.7	35.9	37.1	51.2	41.6
Junior high school	49.7	41.4	40.0	26.0	7.4
Senior high school	30.1	20.6	19.7	13.0	0.8
Junior college and above	14.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Not engaged in non-agricultural industries	84.9	69.9	58.8	93.5	93.0
Number of people	8.9	22.1	39.6	18.3	11.1

2.3 Weak employment will of landless farmers in S Village

The main income of landless farmers in S village comes from house rent, and the difficulties in finding employment opportunities make them hold negative attitude toward the employment problem. They pay no attention to the free employment training provided by the government, and most of them do not care about the willingness to be trained. Through in-depth interviews, it is found that they do not have a positive attitude towards employment. Their employment will is affected by age, knowledge, skills, current living conditions and other objective and subjective factors. For the 18 people achieving temporary employment, they are young and have received high school education or more. The older farmers have weaker employment will and the farmers with education level below primary school do not want to talk about jobs.

3 The main factors influencing the employment of landless farmers during the reconstruction of S Village

3.1 Local government lacks the overall design on the employment of landless farmers

During the expropriation of farmland in S village, the local government takes the problem of landless farmers as a simple economic compensation problem and does not take appropriate policies to improve employment security. Although the government has launched the employment training for landless farmers, the superior geographical location of S Village and farmers' long-term reliance on rental income make them difficult to have long-term employment outlook, and the local government lacks a positive response. Thus, due to the lack of a systematic management approach, the employment training carried out in S Village is a mere formality. Presently, the tracking and feedback of implementation results is almost a blind spot, and the relevant departments do not make appropriate adjustments on policy for S Village, leading to a serious waste of resources, and reducing people's trust in government.

3.2 Landless farmers lack positive employment outlook

The landless farmers in S Village currently take rent and collective dividends as the main income, and rental income will be the main source of income for farmers over a period of time. Due to weak employment awareness and conservative vision, they only seek

short-term economic interests, but ignore the importance of long-term employment, so that young people are easy to form unhealthy values, doing nothing all day. In the long run, this is not conducive to maintaining a stable life and further improving the quality of life for landless farmers.

3.3 The employment environment is not conducive to the employment of landless farmers

3.3.1 Unsound job market. Due to employment information asymmetry, landless farmers do not know how to find the right job. Shaanxi Province has introduced a number of policy measures to support the employment of landless farmers in the urban village, and publicize the policies through e-government platform, online newspapers and other media channels. However, due to the age and education level of landless farmers and the environment, they have little access to the Internet and newspapers, making some landless farmers want to start up their own undertaking, but no one well knows the entrepreneurship policy in the region. In addition, the development of tertiary industry in S Village is slow, and rural enterprise development is not mature enough, so there is a limited amount of labor that can be absorbed.

3.3.2 Unstable financial support for employment and entrepreneurship. In the survey, it is found that some young landless farmers in S Village have a very strong desire to start their own businesses, but they do not have a lot of money and do not know how to obtain venture capital. At the same time, there are some idle funds that have not been put to good use in a number of small local banks.

3.3.3 Competition between a lot of young migrants. The transportation is convenient around S Village, and there is an influx of young migrant workers from elsewhere. Most of these migrant workers are influenced by urban civilization, and they have advantages in age, educational level and working experience as well as active employment and market awareness, compared with the landless farmers in S Village. In addition to social demand for skilled personnel, the landless farmers have not a very good competitive advantage in employment.

3.4 It lacks rural vocational education The survey of vocational training in S Village shows that it lacks vocational training

for landless farmers. First, S Village has no special training institution of rural vocational education. Second, there is a shortage of training programs for those older landless farmers with poor knowledge and skills. Third, there are no mandatory requirements on the training for landless farmers, and the training elasticity of landless farmers is large, resulting in low training rate.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions This paper analyzes the main factors influencing the employment of landless farmers in S Village as an urban village in Shaanxi Province, such as local government's lack of overall design on the employment of landless farmers, landless farmers' lack of long-term employment concept, poor employment conditions, and lack of vocational education in rural areas. Finally the following recommendations are set forth to enhance the employment of landless farmers in S Village.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Strengthening the institutional support for the employment of landless farmers. (i) The local government has the responsibility to offer preferential policies to help landless farmers to be employed. The local government should give play to the fiscal transfer payment function, create employment security fund for landless farmers to subsidize the cost vocational and technical training, and support the landless farmers to run collective enterprises or individual enterprises. (ii) It is necessary to improve the employment service system, establish employment information service platform for landless farmers, and include landless farmers into this platform to provide them with timely and valuable employment information. The relevant government departments should strengthen ties with various vocational intermediary organizations and set up special hotline telephone to provide more useful services to landless farmers. (iii) In accordance with the principles of urban and rural coordination, it is necessary to establish the unemployment compensation mechanism for landless farmers in S Village. The compensation content should include hard compensation such as money and soft compensation such as vocational training, and there is a need to implement differentiated compensation before compensation.

4.2.2 Perfecting the fund guarantee for the employment of landless farmers. (i) It is necessary to solve the funding problem. At early stage, the special employment funds are raised from local government and civil society; in the later period, it mainly depends on S village's collective circulating funds. (ii) It is necessary to establish corresponding funds. Local governments should establish special funds for job training, expand training service channels to fund the employment-oriented vocational skill training, and establish the unemployment funds for landless farmers so as to provide a solid foundation for landless farmers to integrate into a

new life^[2]. (iii) It is necessary to offer preferential economic incentives to entrepreneurs among the landless farmers in S Village, for example, the financial institutions can give preferential loans, and government can consult with relevant legal person to reduce the rent.

4.2.3 Actively expanding the employment channels. (i) It is necessary to establish the business center and encourage farmers to start their own businesses. The business center can form a linkage mechanism with business management and consultancy agencies, training institutions and other relevant agencies to help entrepreneurs in S Village to choose business programs. (ii) It is necessary to vigorously develop community jobs. We can combine the greening, environmental protection, health, transportation and other services in S Village, to provide a certain amount of jobs for landless farmers, so that landless farmers can realize employment locally. (iii) It is necessary to introduce market mechanism, develop the village and town enterprises, implement market-based reform on organization system and operational mechanism of the village collective economy, and create a lot of jobs.

4.2.4 Enhancing the employability of landless farmers. (i) It is necessary to change the employment outlook. Improving the employability is a fundamental way for landless farmers to achieve sustainable employment^[3]. Government should actively guide landless farmers in S Village to accept the new identity, and regularly set up some courses online to change the concept of farmers' employment and popularize knowledge of the relevant laws. (ii) It is necessary to carry out employment training. The employment training can be led by the relevant government departments, combined with some universities, vocational training institutions and enterprises^[4], to improve the professionalism of landless farmers. (iii) It is necessary to strengthen the neighborhood. The local government should organize more related activities, and strengthen links between the landless farmers in S Village, to enhance the collective sense of honor and promote joint entrepreneurship and employment.

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