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Election Procedure for Rural Two Committees

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Abstract In order to further strengthen the construction and improvement of villager autonomy system with democratic election, democratic decision making, democratic management, and democratic supervision of rural two committees with Chinese characteristics, experience of work team of Longyang District Agricultural Technology Extension Station dispatched to villager committees (or offices) and their guidance on election of rural two committees in 2007–2016 were used, and exploration was made for election of rural two committees from the third to the sixth committees. It summarized achievements and main problems in election of rural two committees and came up with pertinent recommendations. The results of this study are expected to provide certain reference for theory and practice of future villager autonomy.

Key words Rural two committees, Election procedure, Villager committee

1 Introduction

Election of rural two committees is an essential part of the construction of rural grass-roots organization. It directly relates to the overall situation of rural reform, development, and stability. In February, 1980, Guozuo Villager Committee elected by the farmers appeared in Guozuo Village, Pingnan Township, Yizhou City in Guangxi, and the legal status of villager committee was established as mass autonomy organization in *Constitution of 1982*^[1]. After 1998, with the promulgation of *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China* and *Election Procedure for Villager Committee of Yunnan Province*, the villager autonomy had laws to comply with. From May 2000 to August 2001, Yunnan Province fully implemented the villager autonomy and directly elected the villager committee^[2]. On May 30, 2016, the election of the sixth rural two committees finished. In this period, there were extensive reports. Ma Quanjiang *et al.*^[3] elaborated the method of "two recommendations and one election". Chen Jianguo^[4] studied the villager committee in developed rural areas, Longzheng Lin^[5] studied rural areas of minority ethnic areas, Wang Sen *et al.*^[6] studied rural areas with many appeals of villagers, Liu Gao *et al.*^[7] studied western rural areas, Shao Dan *et al.*^[8] studied villager committee of urban villages, Deng Chao *et al.*^[9] studied villager committee with intervention of township cadres, Wang Yun^[10] studied bribery in election of villager committee, and Xue Haiming^[11] made an empirical study on rural two committees, identified problems and came up with recommendations. The results of these studies have accumulated precious ex-

perience for the election of rural two committees. On this basis, combined with our experience and actual situations in the election of rural two committees, we analyzed achievements and existing problems in the election of rural two committees, to provide help for future election of rural two committees.

2 Main achievements and practice

2.1 Main achievements In accordance with *Party Constitution*, *Regulations on the Election of Grassroots Organizations of the Communist Party of China*, and *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China*, and according to the spirit of file of election of rural two committees of Longyang District Committee and People's Congress, it formulated the procedures for election of rural two committees from the third to the sixth committees, and the election of rural two committees was carried out in accordance with these laws and regulations. On April 20, 2007, it successfully completed the election of the third rural two committees of Wafang, Xuzhang, Bailongjing, Meilanshan, and Guihuashu villages in Wafang Town; on May 10, 2010, it successfully completed the election of the fourth rural two committees of Bailongjing, Meilanshan, and Guihuashu villages in Wafang Town; on May 30, 2013, it successfully completed the election of the fifth rural two committees of Damenkan Village in Mangkuan Town and Wuma Village in Xiyi Town; on May 30, 2016, it successfully completed the election of the sixth rural two committees of Tuguan, Anhe and Yakou villages in Wadu Town. According to election results, the percentage of posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person was 38.5%; the percentage of village party branch secretary being re-elected consecutively was 38.5%; the percentage of villager committee head being re-elected consecutively was 30.8%; the percentage of cross appointment of head of party group and head of villager group was 41%; the percentage of head of villager group being a party member was 86%; the percentage of cross appointment of member of the branch committee and member of the villager

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er committee was 61%.

2.2 Main practice

2.2.1 Setting up institutions and formulating schemes. Leading group for electing rural two committees was set up, to elect the villager election committee and formulate the schemes for election of rural two committees, conduct auditing of the village finance of the previous committee, and carry out election of rural two committees.

2.2.2 Election of village party branch. The election of village party branch implements the method of "two recommendations and one election". One recommendation: the party branch holds meeting of party member and villager representatives, the number of representatives should be greater than half of the participants, to recommend the preliminary candidates of village party branch committee members, secretary, and deputy secretary, and report to the township party committee for investigation and disclosure. The other recommendation: the township party committee holds meeting, to recommend the preliminary candidates of village party branch committee members, secretary, and deputy secretary, and report the names to the village party branch, and disclose 15 days. One election: the party member meeting is held with more than 80% participants, to elect 7 or 9 members of village party branch committee in the form of secret ballot, and the meeting of village party branch committee is held to elect secretary and deputy secretary of the village party branch, and report to the township party committee for approval. Upon approval, they can perform their obligations. Then, the village party branch organizes each party group to elect the head of party group.

2.2.3 Election of villager committee. First, the villager election committee presides over and holds meeting of the head of villager group and villager representatives, formulate villager committee election methods, determine the election day, determine recommendation and election methods of villager representatives, village affair supervision committee, and head of villager group, and report to the villager representative meeting for approval and disclosure. Second, villager committee member candidates are determined through general election. Registration and announcement of voters, announcement of name list of entrusting person and entrusted person, arrangement of polling station, convening of voter meeting, and selection of head villager committee, deputy head, and committee members. Third, voters elect the villager committee members, and then hold the election meeting. Fourth, under the presiding of the villager committee, the villager group holds the voter meeting to elect the head of villager group.

2.2.4 Election of village affair supervision committee. After election of the fifth and sixth rural two committees, the village affair supervision committee will be elected. First, meetings are held for villager committee members, head of villager group, and villager representatives, to elect 5 – 7 members of village affair supervision committee in the manner of secret voting according to the provision that members of village affair supervision committee, and then elect the head of village affair supervision committee among these 5 – 7 members in the form of secret voting.

2.2.5 Election of the Communist Youth League and women representative conference. Finally, it enters the election of the Communist Youth League and women representative conference. The village party branch organizes and holds meeting of the Communist Youth League members and women representatives to elect the secretary of the league branch and head of women representatives.

2.2.6 Setting up regulations and pre-post training. After the end of the general election, works mainly include handover of assets, resources, funds, common seal, files, and accounts, summary and report, and improvement of regulations and pre-post training of "three committees".

3 Problems

3.1 Enormous influence of village-level historical leftover issues To improve water, electricity and road infrastructure, village groups have accumulated enormous debts, the conflicts and disputes and imbalance in granting of various relief funds and poverty relief are not properly solved. The debts of 13 villages for improving water, electricity and road infrastructure reached 10 million yuan. The main reasons include the backward education, the lack of subject consciousness, the lag of social development and the weak collective economy. These problems are gradually exposed and become hot spots of the villager election, and affect the smooth implementation of general election.

3.2 Occasional occurrence of misplacement of strengthening of the mass democratic awareness and correct exercise of rights The democratic ability of some masses is uneven and it is difficult to realize improvement in short period. Besides, the understanding is not clear about forming gangs, clans, lobbying and bribery in election. In the proper exercise of rights, there is deviation and it is easy to be used by people with ulterior motives. As a result, candidates may obtain gratitude ballot, yield ballot, and benefit ballot may appear.

3.3 Big gap between working ability of cadres and expectation of the masses Theoretical level, ability, policies and regulations, sci-tech, cultural, and economic knowledge and economic development idea of some village cadres lack systematic training and improvement. In the new situation of high demands of three rural issues, new socialist countryside construction, and targeted poverty alleviation for cadres, villagers expect that village cadres should know policies and regulation, and have skills of helping the masses to get rid of poverty, and deal with the cause of the public good, to realize openness of administrative affairs of village, disclosure of financial affairs, and honesty in performing official duties. However, in practice, there is a big gap between play of the cadre's duties and expectation of the masses, leading to weak enthusiasm of the masses in participating in election of village cadres, especially in election of head of villager group.

3.4 Conflict between increase in people eager to become village cadres and scarcity of excellent village cadres The monthly remuneration income of village branch secretary and head of Longyang District is 1450 yuan, the monthly remuneration in-

come of deputy secretary and head of village branch is 1400 yuan, the living allowance of village cadres has been greatly increased, the pension is paid half by the individual and half by state finance, which makes the post of village cadres greatly attract the masses. Most of the rural young residents with high cultural level go to urban areas for development. In 13 villages, there are less than 150 people with education of high school (vocational high), secondary school. This greatly influences infusion of new blood of rural cadres and party members, leading to prominent conflict between increase in people eager to become village cadres and scarcity of excellent village cadres.

3.5 Increase in difficulty of election due to many voters going out to work or do business According to our survey, about 10% voters go out to work or do business, and some whole families of voters go out. Because the election of villager committee takes a long time, it is difficult for villagers going out for a long distance to participate in election. Besides, each elector accepts up to 3 entrusted votes. In addition to low cultural level and weak democratic awareness of left behind women and old people, it is easy for them to get controlled or neglect their democratic rights, which will increase the difficulty in democratic election.

3.6 Prominent rural clan concept Voters and candidates have strong clan awareness. There is frequent occurrence of the situation that all clan members get benefited from one clan member getting power. Some candidates take advantage the influence of their clan to strengthen the contention of rights, make efforts to draw all voters over to their side, so as to ensure their ballots, which will naturally increase the possibility of their election and make the election results unexpected by voters.

3.7 Poor coordination of rural two committees Some village cadres have not fully understood the villager autonomy. The new head of villager committee thinks that he is elected by the villager meeting, so he has the final say of all village affairs and gets separated from the party leadership. Such problem is mainly manifested in (i) conflict of role and mutual contention of rights, (ii) the head of villager committee does what he thinks is right, (iii) occupation of empty position and inaction, and (iv) illegal conspiracy and grabbing rural public resources.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions There are few systematic findings of election reform of domestic and foreign parties in the academia. Zhao Ke^[12] and Chen Mingfan^[13] summarized some new measures in election reform of domestic and foreign parties, and pointed out that some socialist countries such as Cuba and Vietnam constantly improved the election procedures and methods of the ruling party, which increased the proportion of differential election and stimulated democratic participation awareness of party members. Sun Jingfeng^[14] analyzed that People's Action Party of Singapore attached importance to the role of grassroots in the election, and stated that the grassroots conduct political mobilization, communicate with voters, conduct propaganda, and seek votes, thus play an es-

sential role in helping the People's Action Party to win the election. Xie Feng^[15] analyzed the intervention type election model of western parties and introduced appropriate means of intervention of many parties. In view of the situation that many people are eager to become village cadres, Wu Shimao^[16] classified candidates into working in earnest, developing with the aid of force, political progress, clan benefit safeguarding, and benefit driving types. Li Lianfen^[17] stated that it is required to solve the problems such as excessive intervention, bribery in election, and low participation of villagers. Jiang Ping^[18] pointed out that reasonably bringing into play the functions of township party and government organs, implementing rural two committee works using the thought of rule by law, villager committee should carry out villager autonomy activities under the leadership of the village party branch, build harmonious relationship of two committees. Han Desheng^[19] concluded that it is able to solve the potential problems corruption due to cross appointment of village-level two committees, posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person through strengthening institutional design, avoiding conflicts through institutions, regulating operation through institutions, and increasing the efficiency through institutions. Huang Kaibin^[20] believed that it is not suitable to implement posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person in mountain areas, and the key to treating the relationship between village party branch and villager committee is how village party branch leads. However, Tang Ming *et al.*^[21] concluded that the posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person is an effective approach for coordinating the relationship between rural two committees and eliminating the conflicts of rural two committees. Yu Biao^[22] stated that it is feasible to prevent the posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person, rule by the voice of one man alone, and deterioration of conflict between masses and cadres through establishing the supervision by the township party committee and villagers. Huai Shui^[23] pointed out that the election of fourth committees was different from the third committees, the village party branch was first elected, then the villager committee was elected, and it avoided single solution for diverse problems. Wu Zhaohui^[24] studied and concluded that through developing rural economy, improving the villager autonomy system, improving the cultural quality of farmers, and expanding the political participation of farmers and implementing publicity, *etc.*, it is able to increase the political participation of farmers in election of rural two committees. Li Lianghua^[25] stated that the present election of rural two committees makes the bribers have no way to go. Su Wenping *et al.*^[26] held that gradually promoting and improving the selection mechanism of college student village cadres are helpful for solving the problem of scarcity of village cadres.

4.2 Recommendations (i) The election of rural two committees should not implement the mode of posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person. In some poor mountain areas or underdeveloped rural areas, it is feasible to

solve the conflict between village party branch and villager committee through implementing the mode of posts of village party branch secretary and villager committee head held by one person, to improve ability of administration of rural party branch, and effectively promote various social construction; in economically developed areas or surrounding areas of urban areas, village party branch secretary and villager committee head should be held by different persons. (ii) It is recommended to strengthen the leading position of the township party organization, to provide organizational security for the implementation of village-level election work. In the first place, township party committee should bring into play its role in leading the rural party branch. In the second place, township people's government should effectively guide, support and help the villager committee to carry out autonomy. (iii) Election in compliance with laws is a magic weapon for election of village-level committees. The election must be strictly accord with the law and regulations, and should not have any idea of saving trouble, taking the shortcut or taking simple road, and it is required to ensure every procedure is not changed and every step is not omitted. (iv) It is recommended to conduct wide propaganda to create conditions for the election. For example, it is recommended to propagate provisions of *Party Constitution*, *Regulations on the Election of Grassroots Organizations of the Communist Party of China*, and *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China* to every family of villagers. (v) It is recommended to properly deal with the relationship between the old and new village cadres, to help the new leading team to get into fast traffic lane. (vi) It is recommended to gradually promote and improve the college student village cadre selection mechanism. College student village cadres are outstanding young people having received higher education. They have professional knowledge and rapidly accept new things. If they are elected as the village cadres, it can effectively improve the village cadres in the knowledge, age and gender structure. (vii) Implementing pre-post education and training is the fundamental work for improving the overall quality of the village cadres. First, it is recommended to provide education for cadres of rural two committees in party spirit, life belief, and moral character. Second, it is recommended to provide training of new village-level cadres in skills of developing modern agriculture and promoting increase of farmers' income, and development ideas. Third, it is recommended to provide training of new village-level cadres in properly treating the relationship between rural two committees and in how to do a good job in being village cadres. (viii) Implementing target management and establishing supervision mechanism. First, it is recommended to establish and improve the county, township, and village levels of target management system. Third, it is recommended to position the responsibilities and rights in accordance with laws and regulations. Third, it is recommended to improve the supervision mechanism and establish and improve the supervision mechanism suitable for actual situations of rural election. The

present study made analysis of 13 villages in the whole district, but did not study all villager committees in the whole district. In future, it is necessary to expand the scope and further discuss the election of other rural two committees.

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Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen cultivation of new professional farmers, and accelerate construction of high quality modern agricultural production and management team, to provide human resources and guarantee for construction of agricultural modernization, and to fundamentally solve the problem of "who will do the farm work and how to do the farm work".

5.2.2 Further strengthening construction of rural cooperative economic organizations. Japanese Agricultural Association, developed under the conditions of legal protection, government support and farmer support, belongs to the special legal person who is not for making profit, and plays a great role in economic recovery and social development of Japan after the World War II. For Anhui Province, the most important matter is to standardize the development of rural cooperative organizations. It is recommended to take the measure of legislative protection and standardize management, bring into play the leading role of the Party, innovate upon the rural management of government, improve the villagers' autonomy system, and further strengthen the construction of rural professional cooperative organizations, and include the construction of rural professional cooperative organization into the track of rule by law. It is also a challenge of responding to the globalization of market economy to bring into play the function of farmer economic organizations and improve the organizational degree of farmers. It is recommended to raise market position and pricing power of farmers, safeguard rights and interests of farmers, continuously increase farmers' income, and create a harmonious society.

5.2.3 Strengthening extension of agricultural technology and application of technology. At current stage, main problems of extension of agricultural technology mainly include: (i) the technology extension system is not suitable and the achievement transformation force is not strong; (ii) the ability of independent innovation is not strong; (iii) there are few agricultural science and technology leaders; (iv) the investment in agricultural science and technology is relatively little. For this, Anhui Province should establish a diversified agricultural technology extension service network taking the national agricultural extension system as the primary part, and agricultural research, teaching units, rural mass scientific and technological service organizations and agriculture-related

enterprises as auxiliary part. Besides, it is recommended to increase the basic funds for the extension work, cultivate a number of agricultural science and technology leaders, further strengthen the township agricultural technology extension organization management, make clear responsibilities and requirements, and effectively strengthen the construction of grassroots agricultural extension team, to make the extension really become the driving force for accelerating the development of modern agriculture of Anhui Province.

5.2.4 Energetically promoting standardized, branding, and characteristic local agricultural production. Japan's agricultural products have the biggest characteristics of excellent quality and high prices. The reason for high price is closely connected with standardized production implemented in Japan. The implementation of standardized production is not only a prerequisite to ensure the quality of agricultural products, but also an important means of creating the agricultural brand. Brand is aggregate of quality, reputation and service. Promoting the agricultural branding is not only an important means and mark of development of modern agriculture, but also an essential measure for the establishment of national food safety system. It is recommended to promote products through brand, product promotes market, market promotes enterprises, and enterprises promote industries. Anhui Province is rich in local characteristic resources. However, the achievement conversion rate is low and it lacks strong brands and high-end technologies, and can not form the integrated pattern of industrial chain. Local government should optimize local resources and industries, cultivate leading industries and special agriculture of rural areas, so that a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises can enter the rural areas, change the industrial structure of the rural areas, provide a broader space for part-time work of farmers, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, and promote the integration of three industries. In this way, it is expected to continuously optimize the quality of products, increase the added value of agricultural products, build the existing agricultural products into those suitable for farmers, grain crops, and industrial crops, one product for one village, one industry for one town, and create autonomous brand of characteristic products, to help farmers to obtain higher economic benefits.

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