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Analysis on Problem of Rural Surplus Labor and Recommendations for Rural Labor Transfer

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Abstract Based on the historical development of the problem of rural surplus labor in China, this paper explored its development path. It made an in-depth analysis of the obstacles in the process of rural labor transfer and put forward relevant recommendations, including strengthening the cultural knowledge and skills training of the rural surplus labor, improving the relevant systems after migrant workers enter cities, strengthening the protection of the legal rights and interests of migrant workers, and vigorously developing the rural labor transfer market.

Key words Rural surplus labor, Migrant workers, Labor protection, Labor market

1 Introduction

Since entering modern times, China has been troubled with the problem of rural surplus labor. At that time, agricultural productivity was relatively low, and the problem was not very prominent. Since the founding of New China, especially since the reform and opening up, with the rapid development of agricultural productivity, the labor force that can be absorbed in rural areas has gradually declined, and the problem of development path of the rural surplus labor needs to be solved urgently.

2 History of the development of rural surplus labor in China

The long-term dual economic structure of China determines that a large amount of rural surplus labor will be transferred to urban areas and non-agricultural industries in the future. The labor force in China is mainly composed of farmers who do not have certain skills, and the total amount is surplus; the urban areas lack workers with certain skills, and most of urban workers need to be transformed from the rural surplus labor. The transfer of rural surplus labor in China has shown different characteristics in different periods. In the first stage, from 1949 to 1957, China focused on economic construction and vigorously developed productivity, and lacked a large number of builders. At this time, the surplus labor in rural areas was spontaneously transferred from rural to urban areas under the call of urban development. In the second stage, from 1958 to 1963, a large amount of rural surplus labor was arranged to the construction of large-scale steel smelting. From 1957 to 1960, the yield of crops, especially grain and cotton, greatly declined^[1]. From 1961, rural labors started to flow back to rural areas. In the third stage, after the reform of the rural economic system, rural labor productivity was liberated. China's

development focus has shifted to urban areas, to industry and service industries. By 1984, the proportion of non-agricultural labor in rural areas reached 15.5%. In the fourth stage, from 1985 to 1991, the main feature of this period is that both the number and speed of the transfer of rural surplus labor are declining. In the fifth stage, since the reform of the market economy system in 1992, China's economy has developed rapidly. China encouraged the accelerated transfer of rural surplus labor to urban areas. Terms such as "temporary labors", "casual girl labors" and "migrant workers" have emerged. As the number of rural surplus laborers going out to urban areas continues to rise, issues such as their social security and urban integration urgently need to be addressed and resolved.

3 Development path of rural surplus labor in China

There are following ways to transfer rural surplus labor. (i) Some farmers have completely separated from the rural areas through capital or technology migration, they bought houses in cities and towns, and achieved complete citizenship. (ii) After arriving in cities and towns, some farmers have difficulty finding high-paying jobs or suitable employment positions due to the lack of corresponding academic qualifications and skills, and cannot afford the cost of insurance for the elderly in urban areas, medical care, and living expenses much higher than those in rural areas. They have to return to their original villages, or they may just stay in urban areas for a time being and may return to the rural areas at any time. The employment contradiction has not been fundamentally resolved. Instead, the life of these rural surplus labors that have not been completely transferred is even more difficult. (iii) Some farmers choose to engage in non-agricultural industries near their homes when they are slack in farming, and go home to work in farming when they are busy. This transfer method is not thorough enough.

4 Obstacles in the process of transfer of rural surplus labor in China

There are various obstacles and difficulties in the process of

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the transfer of rural surplus labor in China. Some obstacles and difficulties need to be solved urgently, and some require a long time and the joint efforts of multiple departments to overcome.

4.1 Rural surplus laborers generally have low education level Among the rural surplus laborers in China, only about one-fifth have a technical secondary school or high school degree or above. Junior high school degree accounts for slightly less than two-thirds, and elementary school and illiteracy account for more than one-sixth. They have low academic qualifications and only about 15% of them have received skills training. The main reason for this is that they have low education level, which makes it difficult for them to receive training of complex skills. In addition, the training of migrant workers cannot keep up with the needs of urban industries and the development of non-agricultural industries in rural areas, while the lack of urban professionals is mainly skilled and professional professionals. Such mismatch increases the effectiveness and difficulty of the transfer of rural surplus labor.

4.2 The dual household registration system that divides urban and rural areas restricts the effective transfer of rural surplus labor The current system for migrant workers to enter cities is much looser than before, but there are still many restrictions, such as the connection of pension and medical insurance. Due to the high mobility of migrant workers, moving between cities and towns in different provinces, migrant workers may return to their hometown in one or two years before returning to the cities. In this case, it is difficult to renew the insurance. Besides, there are still restrictions of household registration for migrant workers in large and medium cities, and their living costs in large and medium cities are also increasing. Housing or renting, children's education, and daily living expenses account for most of their income. In addition, they cannot enjoy the same treatment as urban residents, and many public resources are restricted to them. These policies also dampen the enthusiasm of migrant workers to move to cities.

4.3 There is a big gap between the rights protection of migrant workers in cities and their pursuit of employment After rural surplus laborers enter cities, many rights, especially labor rights, cannot be effectively protected. Migrant workers work long hours and working overtime is common, but it is difficult to get overtime pay. Even if they can get it, it is far less than the pay they deserve for overtime. Their working and sanitation conditions are poor, and labor safety and sanitation facilities and other safe production conditions are still far away from urban workers. Their labor protection supplies cannot be distributed in time. Workers in the open air or in the wild like construction workers are greatly affected by the weather, exposed to the sun, and the special underground geological environment is harmful to their health. Such high temperature allowance or underground allowance is often deducted or even not paid. Some companies often do not sign labor contracts with workers, and once work-related accidents occur, and migrant workers have to consider unlucky.

The occurrence of the above problems is not only related to

the companies problems, but also related to China's old management ideas. Besides, farmers have a low education level, have little knowledge of the law, have a weak conception of the legal system, are not clear about their responsibilities, rights and obligations, let alone take up the weapon of law to protect themselves, and they are afraid of conflict with the company leaders. The basic remuneration and survival and development rights of migrant workers are not guaranteed, which greatly dampens the enthusiasm of rural surplus labor to transfer to urban areas and towns.

4.4 Imperfect labor market development slows down the process of rural surplus labor transfer At present, most of the rural surplus labor in China does not seek jobs through the labor market, employment agencies or other forms of intermediary organizations. Most of them seek jobs through relatives, fellow villagers or friends. Such disorder has made it very difficult for the government to control the transfer of rural surplus labor. There is a lack of information exchange channels between migrant workers and enterprises, and their flow and transfer are purposelessness, disorganized and disorderly. In addition, the government lacks scientific planning and active guidance for the transfer of rural surplus labor. The management of the migrant labor market is chaotic, and the basic rights and interests of migrant workers fail to be fully protected. Work-related accidents or wage disputes occur frequently, and the surplus labor that has been transferred flows back to rural areas.

5 Recommendations for solving the obstacles in the process of rural surplus labor transfer in China

5.1 Strengthening the cultural knowledge and skills training of the rural surplus labor In the first place, four-fifths of the rural surplus laborers have a junior high school education level or below, some farmers are illiterate. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen their cultural knowledge training to improve their humanistic literacy and lay a solid foundation for helping them change from farmers to citizens in the future. In the second place, it is recommended to strengthen the technical or skill training for the rural surplus labor, so that they can master the skills, and it will be easier for them to find a higher-income job after transferring to urban areas, and the possibility of staying in the urban areas will be greatly increased in the future, so as to realize the successful transfer to the urban areas. In the third place, it is recommended to strengthen the legal knowledge training for the farmers transferring to urban areas, especially the labor law knowledge training, so that they know how to protect their labor rights when they encounter labor disputes. Once they encounter labor disputes that are difficult to solve by themselves, they will know who to help and what ways to seek help.

5.2 Improving related systems after migrant workers enter the urban areas It is necessary to establish a new system or improve the existing related systems for farmers entering the urban areas. (i) It is necessary to establish and improve the relevant insurance system. It is necessary to increase the pension insurance

benefits of migrant workers in urban areas and increase the proportion of medical reimbursement. Since most of the migrant workers are engaged in work with high risk factors such as underground and construction, it is especially necessary to improve the work-related injury insurance system for them. (ii) It is necessary to further relax the restrictions on household registration, and provide migrant workers who meet the conditions with citizenship to help them settle in cities. Affordable housing or low-rent housing should also allow migrant workers to apply. It is necessary to attach great importance to the education of the children of migrant workers. For migrant workers who have reached a certain number of years of work, their children should be able to attend local public schools like children from urban families, instead of going to schools for children of migrant workers who have relatively poor educational resources. (iii) It is necessary to increase the opening of public resources to migrant workers. Women and children's centers, libraries, and public cultural and entertainment facilities should be open to migrant workers. Many city libraries are only open to citizens with citizen cards, which is not conducive to the recharge and humanistic quality improvement of migrant workers.

5.3 Strengthening the protection of the legal rights and interests of migrant workers

In the first place, it is necessary to restrict the working hours of migrant workers. In some factories, in order to keep up with the schedule, workers have to work long hours of overtime, which seriously affects the physical and mental health of migrant workers. The labor supervision team should reinforce inspections and set up reporting hotlines. Once verified, apart from keeping the information of the reported person confidential and protecting their personal safety, it is required to give rewards. In the second place, companies must pay migrant workers' wages in a timely manner. It is a common phenomenon for enterprises, especially construction enterprises, to default on wages to migrant workers. It is necessary to establish wage payment guarantee funds for various enterprises under the guidance of the government so that the wages of migrant workers can be paid in time. For field, underground, high temperature, high altitude and other special operations, labor safety and protection must be put in place, and corresponding allowances must be paid in full. Finally, it is necessary to guide migrant workers to learn to protect their legal rights and interests. Migrant workers should urge the enterprises or companies to pay work injury, unemployment, medical and pension insurance, etc. for them in time, and get timely com-

pensation in the event of an accident. When the rights and interests of migrant workers are infringed, they should apply to the mediation committee for mediation. If mediation fails, they should apply to the labor arbitration institution for arbitration. Those who disagree with the arbitration can file a lawsuit in the local people's court.

5.4 Vigorously developing the rural labor transfer market

On the one hand, the government and related rural organizations should actively connect with the labor market, and cities with large demand for rural surplus labor must send special personnel to do so, so that the transfer of rural surplus labor becomes orderly. On the other hand, cities with high job demand for migrant workers should also develop a special market for migrant workers, which is different from the general market for middle and senior technical talents and college graduates. The migrant worker market is targeted at their positions, help them to find suitable positions in the migrant labor market, and the demand organizations can communicate face-to-face with farmers and workers to increase their success rate of job hunting.

In summary, it is necessary to take a diverse manner to strengthen system construction, expand employment information, promote the construction of rural surplus labor market, strengthen the skills and technical training of rural surplus labor, and guide rural surplus labor to transfer to urban areas, to strengthen their awareness of protecting their legal rights and interests. Only in this way, can migrant workers transfer to cities in a more effective and thorough manner, and accelerate their integration into the process of urbanization and modernization.

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