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The Long-Term Effective Mechanism of Rural Poverty Alleviation in China from the Perspective of Ecological Management

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Abstract Based on the ecological environmental situation of poverty-stricken areas in China and the domestic and foreign research results, the long-term effective mechanism of sustainable poverty alleviation in China is established (the ideological premise is ecological culture, the material base is ecological economy and the basic guarantee is ecological system) from the perspective of ecological management. To be specific, ecological culture, the ideological premise of rural sustainable poverty alleviation in China, includes two aspects: the first one is upholding the Marxism, passing on the Chinese traditional ecological wisdom and fostering ecological consciousness; the second one is mirroring the thought of western modern ecological ethics, emphasizing ecological criticism and redoubling the ecological education. As for ecological economy, the material guarantee for sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas, also contains two aspects. The first one is promoting the way of "clean production" and developing ecological industry; the second one is building ecological concept of consumption and establishing the ecological lifestyle. In addition, ecological system, the basic guarantee of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas, covers three terms. The first one is implementing the ecological policies and stipulating ecological plan; the second one is establishing perfect ecological legislation and ecological system and intensifying their implementation; the third one is enforcing ecological management in the process of sustainable poverty alleviation. Through the establishment of the above mechanism, we look forward to realizing sustainability of economic development and poverty alleviation effects in the process of poverty alleviation in Chinese rural areas, as well as ecological management of the poverty-stricken areas.

Key words Ecological management, Rural areas, Sustainable poverty alleviation, Long-term mechanism, China

In China, most poor people are peasants who undertake agriculture in rural areas and the overwhelming majority of the poor people are distributed in marginal and remote areas with deteriorated environment. The poverty problems in Chinese rural areas are characterized by geography, variation, seriousness, chronicity and so on. Due to the fragile abilities to ecological restoration in poverty-stricken areas and the sensitiveness to the changes of ecological environment, any tiny ecological changes will heavily hit the life of poor people. Therefore, the ecological situation in poverty-stricken areas is the most sensitive point and alarm in weighing the construction of ecological environment in poverty-stricken areas. The research on the long-term effective mechanism of poverty alleviation mechanism in Chinese rural areas from the perspective of ecological management can provide reference for government policy making. Besides, the research is of great theoretical and historical significance.

1 Literature review

In terms of poverty alleviation theories, there are fruitful results both at home and abroad and the prominent theories are as follows. Through analyzing the relations between the Chinese governmental input on rural poverty alleviation foundation and the effects of sustainable poverty alleviation by using VAR analysis, ZHANG Quan-hong points out that "Chinese rural

poverty alleviation foundation has not become the essential factors in improving the relief of rural poverty", "the management mechanism of poverty alleviation foundation should be further improved and the poverty alleviation funds should be doled out on target"^[1]. From the perspective of investment in human capital, LI Cui-jin analyzes the poverty alleviation policies and points out that "the government should further intensify the investment in education and health in the structure of household human capital investment" and "continuously promote and improve the systems of rural compulsory education and social security; strengthen the coordination of rural medical cooperatives and perfect rural old-age security system"^[2]. WANG Hong-guang *et al* propose that "helping poor people to reconstruct the anti-poverty value system" from the perspective of culture^[3], so as to realize poverty alleviation in rural areas. There is internal relation between ecological problems and poverty problems, but the research results for establishing rural long-term effective mechanism of poverty alleviation from the perspective of ecological management are rare in China. Since 1950s, foreign scholars have studied the ecological environment problems from the perspectives of environmental politics and socioecology. In China, after the concept of "Conservation Culture", first posted by academic circles in 1986, especially after the stresses laid on "Conservation Culture" by the 17th national congress of CPC report, the research on the problems of ecological culture construction become a hot topic in China. In view of this, I study the long-term mechanism of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural areas from the perspective

of ecological management and I expect to provide references for the further discussion of relevant theories and implementation of related policies.

2 The establishment of rural long-term sustainable poverty alleviation mechanism based on the ecological management theory

In the process of solving the poverty problem in Chinese rural areas, we should not only pay attention to the sustainability of economic development and effects, but also pay attention to the ecological management of poverty-stricken areas in China. Essentially, China has not completely transferred the extensive economic growth pattern, which is characterized by high input, high consumption, high emission, unrecyclable, disharmonious and low efficiency, so the pressure on environmental costs and structural adjustment is great. In my opinion, from the perspective of ecological management, the ideological premise of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural areas is ecological culture; the material base is ecological economy and the basic guarantee is ecological system.

2.1 Ecological culture—the ideological premise of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural areas

How to integrate various kinds of cultural resources and effectively display the important role played by cultural soft power in the process of sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological management is a notable subject. "Ecological culture includes sustainable agriculture, sustainable forest; ecological industries, ecological projects and green enterprises which do not harm environment at any costs; ecological awareness, ecological philosophy, environmental esthetics, ecological arts, ecotourism and green ecological sports, ecological ethnics, ecological education which are of the meaning of green and various other aspects"^[4]. In my opinion, as a vital ideological premise in the practice of realizing sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological management in rural poverty-stricken areas in China, the ecological culture includes the following phases.

2.1.1 We should insist the Marxism, pass on Chinese traditional ecological wisdom and fostering ecological consciousness. "Marxism environmental philosophy is the important philosophy basis for fostering ecological culture and the integration and overriding of western environmental philosophy"^[5]. Therefore, we should insist the importance of Marxism in the formation of ecological culture of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas. Chinese traditional culture boasts numerous and profound ecological wisdom concerning the relations between human and nature. It can be seen from the analects of Confucian, Buddhism and Taoism. The Confucian ecological wisdom takes "moral" as core and advocates treating nature by a caring heart and expanding the moral principles of family and society to the nature. For example, *The Doctrine of Mean* says "if individual fully displays his moral, then one can stimulate other people to display their moral; if individual can stimulate other people, it can stimulate the nature". The Taoism ecological wisdom, which takes the "Taoism nature" as hub, emphasizes that human should take the

responsibility to nature as the highest principle, take the natural advocating as the basic convert of human behaviors, which are relevant to modern ecological ethics. In Buddhism, which advocates treating every thing kindly, putting the "no killing" in the primary stage of the "five commandments" of Buddhism. Buddhism thinks that everything is the unification of the Buddha-nature, everyone is equal and everything has the right to life. To sum up, Chinese traditional culture conveys the ecological wisdom that "if you respect and love the nature, it would give you hundred times of benefits in return"^[6]. We should insist the Marxism and pass on Chinese traditional ecological wisdom, then the ecological awareness would be formed and the quality of environment would be improved. JIANG Ze-ming once pointed out that "the awareness of environment and the quality of environment is an important mark for measuring the civilization degree of a country or a nation". Ecological awareness can improve people's sense of responsibility in sustainable poverty alleviation and is the key to handling the relations between human and the nature by using ecological wisdom.

2.1.2 We should mirror the ideas of western modern ecological ethnics, pay attention to ecological criticism and enforce ecological education. Ecological ethnics is the basis for the conservation culture, the moral standard and behavior norm to natural environment and the ultimate limit for realizing Chinese rural sustainable poverty alleviation. Ecological ethnics sprouted from the romantic view of nature in the end of 19th century, conceived in the idea of right to life in the early 20th century and be formed in the middle of 20th century. In 1962, Rachel Carson published the *Silent Spring*. In the book, she revealed the harm to creature and human caused by pesticide abuse. In 1972, Club of Rome and MIT Research Team mutually published *The Limits to Growth*, in which the problems such as population growth, resources consumption, and ecological pollution and so on were posted at the first time. After the 1990s, problems of ecological ethnics become the hot topic gradually. At the same time, as a scientific current of value criticism, ecological criticism was of great importance to maintain ecological justice. "The immediate cause of the birth of ecological criticism is the increasingly serious ecological crisis and the development of ecological movement; the academic background of its birth is the backwash of the literary criticism which tries to avoid the ecological crisis and the ideological foundation of its birth is the development and maturity of ecological philosophy"^[7]. In the process of sustainable poverty alleviation of rural poverty-stricken areas in China, the development and discard of ecological criticism can not decouple from the basis of ecological ethnics, for ecological ethnics is the theory basis and basic limitation used for guiding practices. Besides, the most important thing is changing ecological idea in the process of sustainable poverty alleviation. Lester R. Brown once pointed out in *The World State* in 1990 that "without the change of individual emphasis and value, the continuous progress of the society will not appear". Therefore, strengthening the ecological education is the key. Ecological education in China dated from 1970s and it is simultaneous with the stipulation of the environ-

mental protection policies. In 1990, the State Council reiterated in *Decisions on Further Strengthening Environmental Protection* that: "the primary school and kindergarten education should involve the contents and knowledge about environmental protection. After entering the 1990s, ecological education has been paid much attention to and certain effects have been obtained. It can be seen that strengthening the research on ecological culture; promoting conservation culture; carrying forward the ecological value of the harmonious relations between human and nature; comprehensively improving people's ecological awareness and conducting ecological education are of great importance in fully displaying cultural soft power and realizing sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological management of China.

2.2 Ecological economy—the material guarantee of sustainable poverty alleviation of rural poverty-stricken areas in China

The report of the 17th Congress of Chinese Communist Party posted that "we should construct ecological culture and foster the energy-saving and environmental—friendly industrial structure, growth pattern and consumption model", but our country has not changed the backward economic growth, low resource utilization rate and some other disadvantaged situations. However, "ecological economy is the result arising from the fierce conflict between development and environment and the result arising from reflections of human on traditional economic development, especially production way and life style"^[8]. I think that ecological economy takes ecological culture construction as the fundamental value orientation of economy and social development. Ecological economy mainly includes production mode with ecological orientation, life style, and ecological space for production and life. The specific practice of sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological management in rural poverty-stricken areas in Chinese rural areas covers the following two aspects.

2.2.1

The government should promote the way of "clean production" and develop ecological industry. The hub of ecological industry is clean production. The concept of "clean production" originated from the international conference on no waste technique and no waste production technology held in Paris by European Economic Community in 1976. In that conference, the idea of "eradicating the roots of pollution" was proposed and later on the policy of clean production was enacted. In May, 1989, the Industry and Environmental Planning Centre of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) stipulated the *Clean Production Programme* according to the UNEP council resolutions. After entering the 1990s, the way of clean production has been accepted gradually in the international community. From the introduction and the establishment of experimental units of our government in 1993 to the implementation of the *Cleaner Production Promotion Law* in 2003, the ecological culture policy of Chinese government has brought along good environmental and economic interests. In the process of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas, the following aspects should be paid much attention to. Firstly, we should apply the micro ecological cycle of "clean production" in enterprises to motivate the medium ecological cycle of

the ecological industrial zone in the medium phase, and then push forward the macro ecological cycle covering the ecological villages, counties, cities and provinces. Secondly, we should fully make use of the advantages of rural poverty-stricken areas and use the products, raw materials and equipments with high technology content, no pollution or less pollution to replace the products and raw materials, so as to improve the sustainability of economic development and reduce the damage to ecological environment. Thirdly, we should introduce the way of "clean production" to the production of ecological industry, so as to change the traditional production mode, which is characterized by "high input, high consumption, and high pollution". We should develop the ecological industry which is recyclable and clean, by using ecological technology, following ecological rules, the carrying capacity of ecological environment and ecological capacity. Fourthly, the agriculture should apply the clean production to develop ecological agriculture. The development of ecological agriculture should be improved according to the natural situation and resource base and on the basis of southern Jiangxi Province. Fifthly, our government should develop special ecological industry and open ecological tourism. Since 1983, when Ceballos-Lascurain, H. a special adviser of International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), first mentioned the words "ecotourism" in a document, the ecotourism has developed rapidly. According to the statistics of World Tourism Organization (WTO), the ecotourism has taken up 15%–20% of world tourism. China boasts rich ecological resources, so developing the ecological tourism is an effective way of realizing sustainable poverty alleviation.

2.2.2

We should establish the ecological way of consumption and the ecological life style. Consumption is one of the key problems of the ecological culture construction. According to Marxism, "People need to consume from the first day in the world, and it is all the same whenever before he can produce or in the process of production"^[9]. In a certain extent, modern society has changed from the society dominated by "manufacturing" to "consumption". "Ecological consumption covers two aspects: the consumption on ecological products by consumers and the consumption way of consumers"^[10]. In the process of poverty alleviation of rural poverty-stricken areas in China, the following three phases should be laid stress on. Firstly, active consumption concept should be established. According to the relevant Marxism theory of "alienated labor" and "commodity fetishism", the consumption which takes consumption as the target violates the ultimate purpose of all-around and free development of people. Marx has ever pointed out that: "in the consumption of eating and drinking, people produces his own body"^[11]. Therefore, right concept of consumption should be established. Secondly, we should produce ecological products and consume ecological production. "Production does not only provide the subjects of consumption but also provide provisions for consumption to complete the consumption. As well as Consumption makes the products to become products; production makes consumption to be con-

sumption"^[11]. As for the sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural areas, we should start from the two phases of production and consumption, which is more beneficial to promoting the ecological way of production and life. Thirdly, we should build up conservation awareness and pay attention to reasonable consumption. People should change their behaviors of wasting resources and raw materials, so as to make the consumption level to fit the population, economic development level and production capability. People should not disobey the demands of environment and human and let the consumption based on existence, enjoyment and improvement to develop harmoniously.

In addition, the pace of poverty alleviation by migration should be accelerated and the ecological towns should be constructed, so as to provide ecological space for production and daily life. Most of the poor people in China lives in the environment-deteriorated areas, hence, if the government does not implement effective immigration, the ecological environment will be further deteriorated and the sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas can be realized. The construction of ecological towns provides effective platform for the sustainable poverty alleviation of rural poverty-stricken areas and ecological management. Through conducting migration on ecological fragile areas and important conservations, the long-term effective mechanism of sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological management in China can be attained.

2.3 Ecological system—the basic guarantee of sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas

DENG Xiao-ping has mentioned the importance of the construction of system for many times. He pointed out that: "good system can restrict the behaviors of villains and bad system may limit the behaviors of kind persons or even go to the opposite side"^[12]. Therefore, in order to change the situation of rule by man, our government should push forward the progress of legal system. And then the functions of punishment can be effectively enacted and the functions of education, precaution, stimulation and deterrence and so on can be realized. Making laws for conservation culture is the demands of the times and the ecological system is based on the problems of fighting against ecological crisis. The problems, such as ecological rights, ecological value, and ecological compensation and so on, require the government to bring the ecological problems into the normal construction framework of system and law. The construction of ecological culture is not only the governmental behaviors but also the systematic behaviors for the improvement of the whole society and the human. "The formal ecological system includes ecological awareness, ecological rules, ecological policies and so on; informal ecological system includes ecological awareness, ecological concept, ecological customs and so on"^[10]. There are mainly the following aspects in the sustainable poverty alleviation in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas.

2.3.1 The government should carry out the ecological policies and stipulate ecological planning. The ecological policies

of a country directly related to the overall degree of its ecological culture construction, as well as to the ecological planning, ecological legislation and ecological management. Since 1970s, China has determined that environmental protection and family plan to be the basic national policies and the historic process of the birth control, social construction, economic development and harmonious development were gradually pushed forward, which have lightened the burden of ecological environment caused by population growth and economic development to a certain extent. The implementation of the policies "to put prevention first, to hold those who cause pollution responsible for cleaning up" and so on has protected the ecological environment on the whole. Combining with the local conditions of sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological management in Chinese rural poverty-stricken areas, the following two aspects should be realized: for one thing, on the strength of ecological policies of rural poverty-stricken areas, local fiscal system, which covers environmental-favorable prices, tax, finance, land and other terms should be stipulated as soon as possible. The government should adopt the way of global design and gradual advancement to improve the organic integration among the policies of economic development, sustainable poverty alleviation and ecological environment protection. For another thing, in the overall ecological plan of rural poverty-stricken areas, the priority should go to the optimization of the structure of heavy industry, the adjustment of industrial structure according to the ecological environment functions and ecological environment carrying capacity in rural poverty-stricken areas, and the multi-layer demands of optimizing development, emphasizing development, limiting development and prohibiting development, so as to form the development way standardized by ecological construction.

2.3.2 The ecological legislation and ecological system should be perfected and truly implemented. In the later 1960s, the ecological crisis was serious gradually, which stimulated the environment legislation of various countries. For instance, *Environmental Six Laws* of Japan, *Pollution Control Law* of British, *Nonproliferation Act* of Germany, and *Pollution Control Regulation* of Sweden and so on. In 1978, China first added the "the national protection, improvement of living environment and ecological environment; prevention of pollution and other hazards" to the *Constitution*. In 1979, the nation enacted *Environmental Protection Law of the PRC (for Trial Implementation)*. With the enacting and implementation of a series of ecological protection laws, ecological environmental protection entered a new historic stage in China. In the sustainable poverty alleviation of rural poverty-stricken areas, the law is the tough leader, which has the irreplaceable functions of restriction and warning. Taking environment tax as an example: "environment tax is valid in reasonable conditions—at the same time, in the sense of expenditure and environment……it can provide motivation of research and investment in the terms of environmental-friendly technology and energy-saving technology"^[13]. Therefore, the perfect legal system of ecological environmental protection should be established; environmental

laws, regulations, standards and technological system which are in accordance with the current economic development characters of western Jiangxi Province should be stipulated; the professional execution teams should be trained and effective ways for carrying out laws should be adopted. The construction items which have high pollution, backward technology, skills, equipments, production capability and products should be abandoned; industrial enterprises which surpass the standard line of environmental protection should be closed; any individual or units whose actions do harm to environment should be punished. At the same time, the cooperation with local government, departments and individuals should be paid attention to, so as to ensure the implementation of ecological legislation and ecological system.

2.3.3 The ecological management in the process of poverty alleviation should be enforced. "The hub of ecological civilization is that in a healthy community, the government, social intermediary agencies or private organizations take the public interests as the highest pursuit. They make reasonable decisions which meet the interests of the majority, through multi participations and the mutual agreements on public interests in the process of dialogues, communications and exchanges. "Through this kind of multi participations, good interaction and harmonious management for pursuing public interest is the very ecological management"^[13]. However, as the result of the discrepancy and diversity of the construction of ecological civilization and ecological management, "two relations should be well handled in understanding ecological management: the relations between ecological management and environmental protection and the relations between ecological management and development"^[13]. In the first place, the public participant system should be perfected. The government should motivate the masses; display the functions of social communities; provide platforms for the participations of powers from various cycles of the society; establish effective participation mechanism; encourage the masses to protect the ecological environment and push forward the environmental socially useful activities. In the second place, the promotion and education about ecological environmental protection should be launched. The government should promote the knowledge, laws and regulations of environmental protection from the multi-forms, multi-directions and multi-phase; develop ecological culture; promote ecological civilization and foster the cultural atmosphere in which the whole society care about, support and participant in ecological environment protection. In the third place, the cooperation among departments should be strengthened, for example, coordinating the relations among poverty alleviation office, birth control office, development and reform committee, technology department and environmental protection sections and so on. According to the environmental pollution situation of rural poverty stricken areas in southern Jiangxi Province, the research on the causes and environment trend of ecological problems should be enforced to integrate the technology innovation, economic development, poverty alleviation and ecological protection. In the fourth place, the administration

system of ecological protection should be enforced. The government should publicize the information environment quality, environment management, enterprises' environment and so on to maintain the masses' right of know, participation and supervisory. Besides, the government should implement the system of ecological environmental accountability, system of making inquires, system of hearings and so on. As for the developmental plan and construction items which concerning the interests of public, the hearings, discussions and public notices are necessary to hear the masses' opinions and accept supervision from the media. At the same time, the advisory services for the construction of ecological civilization should be set up to ensure that the decisions can meet the demands of ecological environment protection.

3 Conclusions

The relation between human and nature is the key problem of Marxism and the basic concern of the ecological culture construction. From the perspective of history, human culture has mainly experienced three stages from original civilization, agricultural civilization and industrial civilization, but human culture is experiencing the transitional stage from industrial civilization to ecological civilization. Therefore, the government should "design the development mode reasonably, and form the development pattern of 'connecting the points into line and line into face'"^[14]. If we take the idea of harmonious coexistence between human and nature as the ultimate target of ecological construction; then it is the inevitable choice for the development of human history to solve the poverty problems in Chinese rural areas from the perspective of ecological management. In addition, solving the poverty problems in Chinese rural areas is also a pressed subject for the construction of socialist with Chinese characteristics.

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Seen from the extension, from 1978 to now, vocational differentiation in rural China has been very clear. In practice, it generally divides into eight classes: agricultural working class, peasant-worker class, employer class, peasant intellectual class, individual worker, individual business class, private businessman class, township business management class and rural manager class. What should be pointed out is that vocational differentiation of China at this stage is only a vocational differentiation and far from been stereotype. For example, boundaries among these classes are still not clear, phenomenon of various diversified management is obvious^[7]. But it may be confirmed that vocational differentiation of peasants inevitably leads to on longer tightness of direct connection between peasant and land.

Seen from the connotation, the vocational connotation is changing and adjusting unconsciously, that is, changing from producer to operator. Based on actual outsourcing in actual production process (sowing, reaping and *etc.*), peasants have been become actual operators instead of traditional producers. So, autonomy in management requires more input in type selection, scale design and management and control in actual process, it often goes beyond traditional scope of produces. This characteristic is clearer under the land circulation system today.

3.3 Economic influences of peasants change and penetrate from part to entirety The leading position of agriculture decides the status of peasants in social development. In agricultural production process (almost equal to social economic production process), land has a decisive sense. The form of ownership of land decides the degree of dependence and the political and economic status of peasants, and also decides the level of cultural education, comprehensive quality and world view of peasants.

After the reform and opening up, along with social development, the traditional binding connection between peasant and land has been changing continuously. This kind of bind gradually looses with the change and adjustment of land policy. However, development of market economy and flow velocity of labor force, especially, the low comparative interest of agriculture makes principle part of peasant and flow direction change a lot. Some of them leave villages for cities; some turn into non-agricultural industries in villages; some truly say goodbye to traditional agricultural production mode, although they haven't change professions, they gradually become new-type peasants managing commodity agriculture^[8].

For their status and influences in economic life, relatively

dependent economic system and partial economy has been gradually broken up. The economic influence constantly extends along with universality and accelerated speed of flow filed. It embodies as a comprehensive penetrative tendency, and develops from "using the rural areas to encircle the cities" to "mixing together rural areas and cities" in practice.

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