

Exploration of Paths and Empirical Cases of Youth Empowerment in Henan Province's Rural Revitalization in the New Era

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Abstract: In order to explore the roles and paths of youth in the rural revitalization of Henan Province in the new era, this paper provides a detailed analysis of the multiple roles that youth play in rural revitalization and discusses how to better tap into the potential of these roles. The paper emphasizes that to encourage youth participation in rural revitalization, it is necessary to continue optimizing the rural development environment, enhance youth's sense of identity with rural areas, and enrich current policy support. It is hoped that through these measures, the initiative and creativity of the youth can be stimulated, contributing to the rural revitalization of Henan Province.

Keywords: New Era Youth; Henan Province; Rural revitalization; Main force

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1. Introduction

Comprehensively promoting rural revitalization is a major strategic deployment of the Party and the country. To build beautiful villages and achieve modernization of agriculture and rural areas, it is necessary to focus on enhancing the endogenous dynamics of rural development. Rural construction relies on human practice, and the younger generation is the main force in labor practices. With abundant energy and active thinking, the youth are the most creative group in society and play a crucial role in promoting the country's rural revitalization strategy. Today, the rural revitalization cause is in full swing, and the youth face new opportunities to participate in rural revitalization. Therefore, it is crucial to seize these opportunities, fully unleash the innovative thinking and capabilities of the younger generation, and explore a new path for rural revitalization.

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2. The Current Situation of Rural Revitalization in Henan Province

The current situation of rural revitalization in Henan Province exhibits several positive trends, primarily manifested in key areas:

Industrial Development: Henan Province is committed to diversifying rural industries, particularly achieving significant success in the development of local agricultural products, such as Yucai (Henan specialty vegetables) and prefabricated vegetables, through collaborations with regions like Shanghai. Additionally, the province has vigorously developed characteristic industries such as Artemisia medicinal products and premium snowflake beef, significantly enhancing rural economic vitality^[1].

Environmental Improvement: Henan Province prioritizes the protection and improvement of rural ecological environments, resulting in a beautiful transformation of rural areas. Various regions actively promote the construction of ecological, nostalgic, pastoral, and homestay brands, aiming to optimize the ecological environment and continually enhance the living quality of rural residents.

Infrastructure and Public Services: Henan Province has made significant progress in improving rural infrastructure and enhancing public services. Initiatives include the construction and renovation of rural roads, increased accessibility to rural tap water, the transformation of sanitary toilets, and the improvement of rural waste disposal systems. These efforts aim to elevate the living standards and quality of life for rural residents.

Collective Property System Reform: Henan Province has accelerated the reform of rural collective property rights, fostering the development of family farms and farmers' cooperatives. This has injected new vitality into social service organizations in rural areas, contributing to the comprehensive revitalization of the countryside.

Spiritual Civilization and Governance: Henan Province, through the construction of spiritual civilization and rural governance systems, has continuously elevated the overall development level of rural areas, unlocking the potential for rural development.

Encouraging Return-to-Hometown Entrepreneurship: Henan Province encourages and supports entrepreneurship in rural areas, generating numerous employment opportunities and providing new impetus for rural revitalization. These achievements demonstrate Henan Province's comprehensive development in rural revitalization, not only promoting the development of agriculture and rural economy but also enhancing the quality of life for rural residents, making a significant contribution to the economic and social development of the entire province.

3. Roles of Youth in Rural Revitalization in the New Era

(1) Youth as actors in rural industrial revitalization

Youth can act as key players in rural industrial revitalization. In the current process of rural economic transformation, young people, with their fresh thinking, modern knowledge, and technical abilities, can play a central role in diversifying and modernizing rural industries. They can introduce new agricultural technologies, innovative management concepts, and inject new ideas from areas such as e-commerce, green agriculture, and leisure agriculture into rural development. For example, a young individual with a background in internet technology can establish an online platform for selling local agricultural products, expanding the market reach and injecting new vitality into the rural economy, contributing to the development of traditional agriculture towards a more efficient and sustainable direction.

(2) Youth as the main force in rural talent revitalization

Youth can serve as the main force in the revitalization of rural talent. Rural revitalization relies on talent support,

and the youth of the new era are an indispensable and crucial force in this process. They typically have received good education, possess strong learning abilities, and innovative thinking, enabling them to play a significant role in various fields such as rural education, healthcare, and technology. For instance, young teachers and doctors working in rural areas can elevate local education and healthcare standards, while young scientists can contribute to improving rural production efficiency and product quality through the promotion of advanced agricultural technologies. The arrival of these young talents not only enhances the talent structure of rural areas but also injects new momentum into the long-term development of rural areas.

(3) Youth as innovators in rural cultural revitalization

Youth can act as innovators in the revitalization of rural culture. The younger generation's natural curiosity and receptiveness to new things allow them to combine modern cultural elements with traditional rural culture, creating new forms of rural cultural expression. For example, by organizing rural tourism activities that integrate natural scenery and folk culture with modern leisure and entertainment, young people can attract more attention and participation in rural life. Moreover, young individuals can utilize their knowledge and skills to promote unique rural culture through social media or revitalize rural culture through cultural and creative products, enriching the cultural connotations of rural areas and contributing to the inheritance and development of rural culture.

(4) Youth as drivers of rural ecological revitalization

Youth can serve as drivers of rural ecological revitalization. With an increasing environmental awareness, the younger generation is more focused on sustainable development and environmental protection. They can utilize their professional knowledge and technology to actively participate in rural ecological protection and construction. For instance, involvement in projects such as forest restoration, water resource protection, and biodiversity conservation, or the promotion of green and renewable energy usage. The efforts of young people significantly improve the quality of the rural ecological environment, providing robust support for the sustainable development of rural areas. The youth of the new era have demonstrated their unique value and critical role in promoting the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas.

4. Challenges Faced by Youth in Henan Province in Supporting Rural Revitalization

(1) Lack of attractiveness of the rural development environment for youth

Disparities between rural and urban areas in Henan Province manifest in various aspects, with a notable issue being the inadequate infrastructure and public services. Insufficient medical and educational resources, coupled with a lower level of digitization, collectively impact the appeal of rural areas to the youth. Despite some progress in rural infrastructure development in recent years, particularly improvements in public facilities, a significant gap still exists compared to urban areas. Moreover, the limited career opportunities, lower income levels, and restricted career development prospects in rural regions make them less attractive to ambitious and skilled young individuals. Consequently, against this backdrop, an increasing number of young people are opting to stay and develop in urban areas or relocate to more developed regions in search of better opportunities.

(2) Lack of youth identification with rural areas, low emotional attachment to returning or staying in hometowns

The lack of youth identification with rural areas and the existence of low emotional attachment to returning or staying in hometowns stem primarily from cultural and lifestyle differences between urban and rural areas. Young individuals, especially those who have received education and worked in urban settings, often lack a profound understanding of rural lifestyles and harbor a limited sense of identification. In their perception, rural areas are synonymous with backwardness, monotony, lacking the conveniences of urban life, and appearing less dynamic.

As economic development and societal changes unfold, traditional rural culture and values are gradually fading, further weakening the sense of identity young people have towards rural areas. For instance, in certain rural areas of Henan, as the younger generation migrates away, many traditional customs are disappearing, leading to a severe cultural gap and making it increasingly challenging for young people to find a sense of belonging in rural areas.

(3) Insufficient policy supply, bottlenecks in rural youth talent pool construction

Despite the introduction of a series of policies encouraging youth participation in rural revitalization by national and local governments, these policies often face limitations and shortcomings in practical implementation. Some policies reveal specificity and inefficiency, failing to genuinely address the challenges faced by young people. Furthermore, the talent cultivation and introduction mechanisms in rural areas are not well-established, lacking sufficient incentive measures. This makes it difficult for young people to achieve long-term and stable development in rural areas. While some regions in Henan Province have attempted measures such as entrepreneurship subsidies and housing incentives to attract young talents, these measures often fall short of fundamentally solving the issue and fail to effectively stimulate the intrinsic motivation and creative potential of the youth.

5. Countermeasures and Suggestions for Promoting Youth Participation in Rural Revitalization in Henan Province in the New Era

(1) Optimize the real environment for youth development to attract youth in supporting rural revitalization

To address the challenges faced by youth in supporting rural revitalization in Henan Province in the new era, it is crucial to optimize the real environment for youth development and attract more young individuals to actively participate in rural revitalization. Firstly, improvements should be made in the infrastructure related to education, healthcare, and information and communication technology. Enhancements in public services, increased internet coverage, and improved network quality in rural areas are necessary to facilitate the convenience of information access, online learning, and participation in the digital economy for young people. Additionally, upgrading the level of medical services in rural areas, establishing more health stations, and introducing modern medical equipment can enhance the quality of life for local residents, attracting more young individuals with a concern for family health to return to rural areas for development. The development of diversified rural economies, policy support in the form of entrepreneurship training, favorable loan conditions, and tax incentives should be provided to encourage and support young people in starting businesses in rural areas^[5]. Industries such as specialty agriculture, rural tourism, and handicrafts should be developed to create more employment opportunities, utilizing local culture and natural resources to increase the appeal of rural areas. Establishing effective talent introduction mechanisms, improving talent cultivation mechanisms, providing scholarships, internship programs, and skill training courses, and attracting young individuals educated in urban areas to return and work in rural areas are essential for enhancing their professional capabilities in agriculture and rural development. Strengthening publicity and cultural construction related to rural revitalization, increasing the sense of identity among youth, and using various channels such as social media, television programs, and campus activities to convey the significance and achievements of rural revitalization can enhance their interest and emotional attachment to rural life.

(2) Raise awareness and inspire proactivity in youth support for rural revitalization

In the process of promoting youth support for rural revitalization in Henan Province in the new era, efforts should be made to raise awareness and inspire youth proactivity. To achieve this goal, emphasis should be placed on ideological education and cultural construction. Various channels should be utilized to strengthen ideological guidance for youth, shaping their correct values. Advocacy of the importance of rural revitalization should be incorporated into school education, integrating the concept into the curriculum to instill a sense of social responsibility in students from an early age. Organizing youth participation in rural research and practical activities,

allowing them to experience rural life firsthand, understand the real issues in rural areas, and strengthen their awareness of rural revitalization, is crucial for creating a sense of urgency. Modern media tools such as social media and online videos should be fully utilized to release success stories related to rural revitalization or exemplary deeds of young individuals, positively inspiring more youth to engage in rural revitalization. Government and relevant organizations can regularly host youth forums, seminars, and training sessions, inviting experts and scholars in the field of rural revitalization to share experiences, conduct policy advocacy and skill training, enhance youth professional literacy, and reinforce their practical operational capabilities, allowing youth to obtain more information about rural revitalization, exchange thoughts with like-minded individuals, and boost their confidence in participating in rural revitalization. Strengthening support for youth voluntary service and social practice activities, providing project funds, technical guidance, and policy consultation, encouraging youth to actively explore new ideas for rural development, and establishing a youth innovation and entrepreneurship fund to support projects in areas such as new agriculture, rural tourism, and cultural heritage should be considered. Establishing an effective interaction and feedback mechanism with youth, creating efficient communication platforms, involving more youth in decision-making and management of rural revitalization through regular forums, surveys, and online forums to collect youth opinions on rural revitalization, is necessary for providing references for effective policy improvement.

(3) Improve policies and establish a high-quality rural youth talent pool

To effectively support rural revitalization and establish a high-quality rural youth talent pool, it is essential to promptly improve relevant policies and ensure the rational utilization of youth talents in rural areas. Policy measures should prioritize comprehensive talent cultivation and introduction, offering generous scholarships, research grants, and housing subsidies to attract young talents with professional skills and innovative capabilities to develop in rural areas. Policy initiatives should address the economic pressures faced by young people living and working in rural areas, enhancing their enthusiasm for work and nurturing their entrepreneurial spirit ^[6]. Henan Province can establish a dedicated fund to support projects by young people in areas such as agricultural technology innovation, rural education, and health services. Policies should also focus on the long-term growth and development of young talents, potentially establishing a youth talent database and a career development platform, providing opportunities for youth career planning, skills training, and professional promotion. Encouraging and supporting youth participation in rural governance, providing practical platforms for them to gain experience and enhance their skills in areas such as rural planning and design, agricultural technology improvement, and rural cultural construction, should be emphasized. Establishing an effective incentive and evaluation system, rewarding and commending young talents who excel in rural revitalization, encouraging more youth to engage in rural construction, and policymakers should consider regional differences, formulating more targeted talent policies based on local agricultural characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and economic development levels. Establishing effective interdepartmental cooperation mechanisms, coordinating education, human resources, agriculture, and other relevant departments to collectively promote the cultivation and utilization of youth talents in rural areas.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the involvement of young individuals injects a continuous stream of endogenous energy into the long-term national strategy of rural revitalization. In the future, the rural revitalization efforts in Henan Province should focus on addressing current challenges, optimizing the development environment for youth supporting rural revitalization, and instilling in young people a firm belief in shouldering the heavy responsibility of rural revitalization. This will contribute to the comprehensive advancement of socialist modernization and the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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