Research on the Collaborative Mechanism of Rural Public Service Supply

Caisheng MAO, Wei LIU*, Shanhui WANG and Yan WU
Ningbo Institute of Technology, Zhejiang University, Ningbo 315100, Zhejiang, China
*Corresponding author

Keywords: rural revitalization; rural public service; coordination mechanism; supply subject

Abstract. With the development of China’s economy and society, the economic development has entered the new normal. In this context, farmers’ demand for public services is increasing and the rural revitalization strategy also proposes to increase the supply of rural public services. These changes have put forward realistic requirements for the supply mode and mechanism of rural public services in China, and also pointed out the path of further improvement. Therefore, this paper deeply analyzes the problems existing in the current rural public service supply, proposes a collaborative mechanism for constructing farmers’ demand expression, collaborative decision-making, supply subject selection, supply financing, performance evaluation and supervision and gives a path selection of the effective operation of the collaborative mechanism.

1. Introduction

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly put forward the strategy of rural revitalization, which is an important means to solve the major social contradictions in the new era. The imbalance between urban and rural development and the imbalance of internal development in rural areas are crucial aspects of the main contradictions in China's society in the new era. The imbalance of public services is an important manifestation of the imbalance between urban and rural development. At present, the insufficient supply of rural public services, the imbalance of supply structure, and the low supply efficiency have become a serious shortcoming in rural development, which has seriously restricted rural economic and social development as well. Thus improving the supply of rural public services has a significant role in promoting the development of “agriculture, rural areas and farmers” and the process of urban-rural integration.

2. Literature Review

In terms of the basic theory of public services, following the development of new public administration, new public service and governance theory, western scholars has deduced the multi-center governance model of market, government, private sector and non-profit organizations from the single supply model of traditional marketization, government intervention and market-oriented. Based on China's national conditions, domestic scholars, Liu Houjin [1], Zhang Jin [2], Shang Haitao [3], Li Hongjia [4] and Tang Ming [5] studied the subject, mode and mechanism of China's public service supply. In the study, they have carried out continuous practice and research in China's rural areas on the basis of learning from domestic and foreign public service theories. Generally speaking, the research of rural public services carried out by the Chinese scholars mainly focuses on the supply mode [6, 8, 9], the supply subject [10, 11], the supply structure, the supply problems and the solutions [7, 12], which provides theoretical reference for the research of rural public services in China. However, how to innovate the operation mechanism of rural public service is still a research hotspot, especially the research on the design of multi-subject collaborative mechanism of rural public service.
3. The Problem of Rural Public Service Supply in the New Era

Rural public service is the core notion of new rural construction. Its quality will directly affect the coordinated development of urban and rural areas and the socialist modernization. In the new era, the rural public service should have a sustainable development in different aspects, including education, health care, public culture, and infrastructure. However, at present, there are still a number of problems in the rural public service system in our country, which hardly meets the diversified and multi-level needs of rural residents.

3.1 Insufficient participation of rural residents

High quality rural public service supply needs the active participation of rural residents. From the current situation, the enthusiasm of rural residents to participate in the supply of rural public services needs to be improved. The main reasons can be listed as follows: firstly, problems such as the administration-oriented organization, compulsory participation and content formalization have arisen in the process of providing public service. Besides, the coverage and fields of public services are narrow and limited so that few activities can be provided for residents to participate in. In addition, there is a lack of platforms and carriers for residents to take part in public services. Due to the serious shortage of public service management resources, the grass-roots staffs are busy with administrative affairs all day and tired of dealing with them in the face of diverse service needs from thousands of households. However, some returned migrant workers, rural sages, retired workers and other kinds of people who are unemployed and have rich social experience suffer from the lack of channels and platforms to participate in public services.

3.2 Single supply subject

Currently, rural public services are usually regarded as welfare benefits. With the development of agricultural industry and market economy has improved in recent years, the supply mode of rural public service has gradually changed from government supply to mixed supply of government and market, which means government can provide rural public service directly or purchase public service from the market. In 2013, the Guidance of the General Office of the State Council on the Government's Purchase of Services from Social Forces was put forward. The guidance pointed out that the government should entrust some public services that directly provide to the public to qualified social forces, and the government should pay them according to the quantity and quality of services. But as a whole, the market supply mode has not been popularized, and the supply quantity is limited. In addition, for the long-term lack of social organization support in rural areas, it is difficult to provide strong support for the improvement of rural public service supply. As the only main provider of rural public service supply, the grass-roots government needs to strictly control the production and price of public services. However, the lack of supervision and management of use in the supply of public services leads to the low efficiency and the insufficient supply.

3.3 Insufficient capital investment

Although the government has continuously increased financial input, the average investment in each village is still limited due to the large number of villages. Moreover, the status of villages receiving financial support varies widely. According to the survey of the Rural Public Service Research Project under the Background of Transformation by the Institute of Rural Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the five years since 2006, 46 villages have received a total of 236.6143 million yuan of special funds allocated by the superior government, with an average of 5.1438 million yuan per village. However, eight villages have not been allocated any special funds in five years, six villages have only received 10-100 thousand yuan, and 12 villages have allocated 105-1000 thousand yuan; only seven villages have exceeded the average, four of which have received more than 20 million yuan of special funds, the highest of which is 85.6 million yuan. The reason for this difference is that the financial support of villages often depends on the personal ability of village cadres. Because of the difference of financial support, the imbalance of village development is widespread. Although the demand of farmers for public services has gradually increased with the development of China's economy and society, but in some areas,
especially in the underdeveloped areas, the grass-roots government, restricted by the limited finance, can only reduce the supply of public services or the level of public service supply.

3.4 The lack of supervision of supply
On the one hand, the supply process lacks supervision. Since the government is both a referee and an athlete in the service, it is almost impossible to control and supervise its own behavior. Second, there is a gap in the supply of rural supply services by relevant departments. Each department not only has the common problem of "emphasizing management while neglecting service", but also pays too much attention to the division of the relationship between interests and full responsibility, which often leads to mutual disputes due to the conflict of interests or full responsibility in the actual work, and also pushes off each other in the supervision of the supply of rural public services.

3.5 Inefficient supply
Rural social management and administrative services are also an important part of rural public services, and their supply efficiency needs to be further improved. It is mainly reflected in the following aspects: first, the village affairs of some villages have not been made public, such as the handling of matters and procedures have not been disclosed to rural residents, which leads to rural residents having no idea about when they can handle them and how to handle them. Second, rural residents often need to deal with matters involving different departments at the county level, township level and village level, sometimes even visiting many departments many times, but things don't necessarily succeed. Third, some village cadres are not familiar with their business and have low efficiency because they have not received relevant education and training. Therefore, how to improve the efficiency of rural social management and administrative services has become an urgent problem.

4. Construction of Collaborative Governance Mechanism of Rural Public Service Supply under the Guidance of Rural Revitalization Strategy
As a new mode of government governance, collaborative governance mechanism advocates that the government, the market and the society should establish a collaborative and interactive relationship based on public interests. Through collaborative governance of public affairs, public interests and social equity can be realized. Collaborative governance theory promotes the supply mechanism of public services from single to multiple, which provides a new research perspective and analysis framework for the realization of collaboration.

4.1 Construct a coordinated expression mechanism for farmers' demands
The key to improving the supply of rural public services lies in building a dynamic demand expression mechanism with multiple perspectives, which will pay attention to listening to the public opinion, learning from the wisdom of the people, and gaining the support of the people. In addition, we should improve the citizen consciousness of farmers, because farmers often attach importance to the explicit and short-term public service supply, but not to the invisible and long-term public service supply. This kind of demand expression only from themselves will weaken the citizen consciousness.

4.2 Construct a collaborative decision-making mechanism centered on farmers' needs
Farmers are consumers of public services, the only goal of supply decision-making is to meet their needs. Although the "top-down" supply decision-making can effectively ensure the performance of the supply responsibilities of all levels of government backed by the authority of the government, it cannot make a good response to the public demand of farmers. The key of collaborative supply decision-making mechanism is to take the demand of farmers as the core, especially to choose the key areas of public service supply according to the differences in the economic development level, farmers' income level, customs and habits in various rural areas. Therefore, it is necessary for farmers to realize the reasonable combination of "bottom-up" and "top-down" in the process of democratic participation in decision-making.
4.3 Construct a selection mechanism in which government leads and diverse collaborative supply subject exist side by side

At present, the grass-roots government is the main subject of rural public service supply, but the function of the government not only includes the provision of public services, but also other functions, such as administrative management, economic development, social security, etc. Therefore, whether in terms of financial resources or ability, simply relying on the government is unable to meet the needs of farmers. We need the participation of the market, society and farmers and should give full play to various advantages of their cooperative partnership on the basis of reasonable division of labor. Specifically, the government should make full use of the power of the market and society to hand over rural public services that are not suitable for direct intervention or have high cost to the third sector, and support the third sector to become an important force for rural public service supply. In addition, some public services can also be funded and produced by farmers according to the degree of benefit.

4.4 Construct a multi-channel collaborative supply financing mechanism

To achieve an effective supply of diversified needs, it is necessary to establish a supply financing mechanism with public finance as the mainstay, market and social forces to participate together, and adopt multiple investment channels with multiple investment entities and multiple financing models, which is also the key to the normal and sustainable operation of the collaborative supply mechanism. In addition, it is allowed to introduce market-oriented financing channels in some profitable and competitive fields. By providing preferential policies, using enterprise investment, equity financing, overseas investment and personal equity participation, we can improve the financing ability of rural public services and make full use of social funds.

4.5 Construct performance evaluation and supervision mechanism of rural public service supply

The evaluation and supervision of rural public services is an important means to ensure the effectiveness of rural public service supply. Its evaluation results can better provide important guidance for the next stage of public service supply. To construct the performance evaluation of rural public service supply, we need to start from the satisfaction of farmers with public service, and the evaluation index system of rural public service supply should be able to comprehensively reflect the collaborative supply of rural public service. In addition, we need to focus on results-oriented outcome testing. With improving the feedback system of evaluation, we should improve the mechanism of rewards and punishments, and implement it according to the results of performance evaluation, so as to encourage multiple subjects to participate in the supply of rural public services and supervise the condition of supply.

5. The Realization Method of Rural Public Service Supply Collaborative Mechanism

5.1 Build smooth channels for farmers to express their opinion

In the supply of rural public services, we should listen to the opinions of farmers through building multiple channels and understand their real needs for public services. We should protect people's rights to stay informed about, participate in, express views on, and oversee government affairs by establishing a bottom-up demand expression mechanism and public service supply decision-making mechanism.

5.2 Widen channels for investment in the rural public services supply

In order to meet the requirements of entering a new stage that the industry will provide a feedback to agriculture and the city will give a support to countryside, we should adjust the distribution pattern of national income and the structure of fiscal expenditure so that we can make the national income and fiscal expenditure more inclined to the rural areas and establish a sound mechanism for the steady growth of financial support for agriculture. In addition, it is necessary to
expand the investment channels of the market and social organizations so as to increase the supply of public service funds in many ways.

5.3 Pay attention to the cultivation of market and social organizations

On the one hand, we should promote orderly market intervention by expanding market competition in the government public projects. The market method can be adopted in the operational or competitive public services, which will help to create a market competition environment and introduce market competition in an all-round way. On the other hand, we should also actively cultivate the social organizations through enhancing their autonomy and self-construction, moreover, we should further simplify administration and decentralization to reduce unnecessary restrictions on social organizations by improving relevant laws and regulations as well as increasing government support.

5.4 Improve performance evaluation and supervision mechanism

By improving the supervision mechanism of rural public service, we can improve the management of rural public service funds. In the course of operation, we should put public services under strict supervision of the society to prevent black-box operations: through the implementation of financial disclosure, i.e. regular disclosure of specific revenue and expenditure, we should carry out supervision and inspection on the use and supply process of rural public resources to ensure the rational use of public resources, so as to realize the exclusive use of funds and improve their use efficiency.

6. Conclusion

The governance of rural public service supply is an important measure to settle the problems of the farmer, farming and countryside. To improve and perfect the quality of rural public service supply is a vital part of the implementation of Rural Revitalization Strategy under the new historical background. The main reasons for the low quality of rural public service supply are the insufficient participation of farmers, the single supply subject, the insufficient capital investment, and the lack of supervision and low efficiency. Therefore, we need to construct the expression channels of farmers' demand, broaden the channels of capital investment, cultivate the market and social organizations, and carry out performance evaluation and supervision, so as to realize the effective collaborative mechanism of rural public service supply.

Acknowledgement

This work is supported by Major projects of Natural Science Foundation of Zhejiang Province (No. LY18G030001), the Ministry of Education Humanities and Social Sciences Research foundation (No. 18YJA630081), 2019 Natural Science Foundation of Ningbo (Research on Dynamic Matching Mechanism and Model Construction of Public Service Cooperative), and The Fifth Round of Ningbo Philosophy and Social Sciences Leader Cultivation Project (Research on the Construction of Ningbo Public Service Supply Model Based on Synergy Theory).

References


