

Study on the Work Succession Mechanism of Village-Stationed Cadres in Rural Revitalization: A Field Survey in X County

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Abstract. Since China's reform and opening up, rural areas have undergone tremendous changes, but there are still some unbalanced and inadequate development problems. To promote rural economic development and social progress, the Chinese government has put forward a series of policies. The system of village-stationed cadres is one of the essential measures. This paper focuses on the work succession mechanism of village-stationed cadres from the perspective of rural revitalization. Through diversified field research methods, the study conducted a comprehensive research on the village-stationed cadre groups as well as other related cadres and villagers in five villages in X County. The study found that the current work succession of cadres faces many problems, which largely affect the sustainable and efficient development of rural revitalization. This paper further analyzes the deep-rooted reasons behind the problems and tries to build a set of sound, reasonable, and feasible work succession mechanisms for village-stationed cadres, aiming to ensure a smooth transition and effective succession of the work. It expects to provide strong support for the steady advancement of rural revitalization at the grassroots level, and to promote the sustainable development of the countryside, to better safeguard the well-being of the peasants.

Keywords: Rural revitalization, resident village cadres, sustainable development.

1. Introduction

In October 2017, President Xi Jinping proposed the implementation of a rural revitalization strategy in the report of the 19th National Congress. *Opinions on Effectively Linking the Consolidation and Expansion of Poverty Alleviation Achievements with Rural Revitalization* specifies the phased task of "comprehensively promoting" rural revitalization by 2025, with the presence of village-stationed cadres being an important guarantee for the linkage [1]. With the in-depth promotion of the national strategy of rural revitalization, village-stationed cadres play an increasingly important role as a bridge between the government and the grassroots. Their functions are shifting from poverty alleviation to broader village construction, with the focus of work tilted to industry and ecology, and the role changing from "blood transfusion" to "blood creation".

Although there is no concept of village-stationed cadres abroad, there are similar studies on leaders in rural areas. Most of the research focuses on the relationship between rural leadership and rural development [2], the impact of rural leaders on rural projects [3], and the problems existing in the governance of rural leaders [4]. Domestic scholars generally believe that the advantages of the village-stationed cadres system can promote the process of rural revitalization, whose research mainly includes the village governance effectiveness of village-stationed cadres [5], village-stationed cadres' competence [6], and the incentive system [7].

In general, the current research results on village-stationed cadres have begun to take shape, promoting the theoretical and practical development of village-stationed cadres research. However, the work succession of village-stationed cadres from the perspective of rural revitalization has not yet received sufficient attention. This paper takes the optimization of village-stationed cadres' work succession from the perspective of rural revitalization as the theme. Through the field survey of X County, it hopes to fill the gaps in the research of this area and provide a reliable theoretical basis for optimization.

This paper selected five representative villages in X County where village-stationed cadres are assigned. Based on the previous research results on cadre succession at home and abroad, the paper

comprehensively examined the work succession mechanism of cadres in X County, combined the Person-Job Fit theory with the SECI model, identified the problems and causes of the work succession mechanism of village-stationed cadres, and put forward targeted improvement measures and policy recommendations, so as to build a more sound, efficient and stable work succession system for village-stationed cadres and promote rural revitalization.

2. Research Methods

2.1 Questionnaire Method

In order to understand the real situation of the work succession of village-stationed cadres, the study formulated a questionnaire for villagers according to the actual needs, with the basic information about the respondents and their feelings about the current first secretary during his tenure. Representative villages in X County were selected to carry out the questionnaire survey, and 273 questionnaires were issued and recovered, which provided the basis to understand the current situation of the work succession of village-stationed cadres in Lijin County. This social survey ensures that every village studied had questionnaires recovered, with the validity of the recovery reaching 96%. The questionnaire's reliability and validity are favorable, providing reliable data support to explore the work succession mechanism of village-stationed cadres in X County.

2.2 Interview Method

In order to explore the current status of village-stationed cadres' work succession and problems in X County, this study chose the interview method. This study mainly took the form of field interviews and conducted a total of five rounds of interviews in X County, with 16 people interviewed in depth. After summarizing the interview data, a deeper understanding of the actual situation of the work of local village-stationed cadres has been gained. It provides solid research data to build a sound, efficient, and stable work succession system for village-stationed cadres, reflecting the authenticity and effectiveness of the data.

3. Operation of the Work Succession Mechanism for Village-stationed Cadres

3.1 Main Bodies of Work Succession

The main bodies of work succession consist of the cadres who deliver and those who take over. Cadres who deliver can be divided into three categories. The first category consists of village-stationed cadres whose terms of office have expired or who are about to leave due to job transfer. In the succession, these cadres bear an important responsibility, not only to organize their own work of all kinds of information during the period, but also to sort out the key points of village development and difficult problems. The second category is the village-stationed cadres in the Rural Party and Village Committee, not only to summarize the work with the former cadres to deal with, but also to provide help for the latter cadres to accept the work faster and better [8]. The third category is the villagers, whose understanding of the village development as well as their personal needs can effectively help the latter cadres to grasp the work focus.

The work is taken over by newly selected village-stationed cadres. They come to the village with new ideas and vigor, but are relatively unfamiliar with the local situation. In the process of succession, they actively and proactively learn and obtain information about the village through various ways [9]. At the same time, they also need to integrate into the village as soon as possible and establish a good relationship with the villagers, so as to lay the foundation for the subsequent work.

3.2 Institutional Safeguards for Work Succession

X County has formulated a series of detailed policies for village-stationed cadres. The Organization Department of the County Committee has also specially formulated the management

methods, which provide a clear direction for the succession of village-stationed cadres' work. The policy clearly states that the management of each batch of dispatched cadres is led by the county's first secretary in the village, and the task force work team under the leadership of the county party committee and the county government. All relevant departments and units at all levels are responsible for their own duties and work together [10]. Party committees play a central organizational safeguard role in village-stationed cadres' work succession. Party committees at all levels in X County have also set up special working groups responsible for supervising and guiding the work succession. At the same time, the party committees are also responsible for integrating the resources of all parties to provide support for the village-stationed cadres to carry out their work. Furthermore, X County has also set up a special financial fund to support the work. At the same time, each unit also guarantees the expenses incurred in the work succession of the village-stationed cadres dispatched by the unit. Adequate financial support ensures the smooth progress and provides a strong material guarantee for the development of the villages.

3.3 Main Contents of Work Succession

The content mainly includes the basic situations of the villagers, the leadership team, the infrastructure construction, the industry and project development, and the cultural construction. The basic situation of the villagers mainly includes the population size, age structure, cultural level, family income sources, and other information, which helps the village-stationed cadres to better formulate work plans that meet the needs of the villagers. The composition, division of responsibilities, working ability, and teamwork of the leadership team are essential parts since the new cadres need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the members in order to better cooperate with them in carrying out their work. In addition, the current status of the village's transportation, water, electricity, communications, and other infrastructure construction is one of the key elements. Those who deliver need to explain in detail the progress of the infrastructure construction, the problems that exist, and the subsequent plans for maintenance and upgrading. It is also very important to understand the industrial projects that have been carried out and those that are under planning. The person to deliver should introduce the current development status of the industrial projects, their profit models, and the challenges they are facing. Understanding the cultural traditions of the village and the implementation of cultural activities will help village-stationed cadres better explore the cultural resources of the village and enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the villagers as well.

3.4 Specific Methods of Work Succession

There are three main ways, written documents, face-to-face exchanges, and summarizing conferences. The written document is an important carrier of work succession, which is used by most villages. The person to deliver will organize a detailed document covering the main contents, which is in a standardized format and detail for the convenience of the successor to access at any time. Face-to-face exchanges are a direct and effective way. Cadres can exchange experiences and problems and discuss issues that are difficult to express clearly in written documents. Summarizing conferences have been convened by only one village so far. In the conference, the person delivering makes a comprehensive summary of the work done during the tenure, and reports the results of the work and lessons learned to the committees, the village representatives, and the successor. At the same time, the village representatives and members of the committees put forward their views and suggestions to provide reference for the work carried out by the successor.

3.5 Effectiveness of the Work Succession Mechanism

Through the standardized process and multiple methods, the efficiency of work succession for village-stationed cadres in X County has been significantly improved. The successors were able to quickly obtain the required information and enter the working state. At the same time, the cadres have passed on and exchanged advanced governance concepts and methods during the process, which promotes the level of village governance. The succession process is also a process of talent experience

inheritance and capacity enhancement. The former cadres pass on their work experience and professional skills to the successor, while the new thinking and new methods brought by the successor inject new vitality into grassroots work. This orderly turnover of talents and transmission of knowledge provides continuous talent support for grassroots development [11].

4. Problems in the Practice of the Work Succession Mechanism

4.1 Differences in Main Body Constrain the Continuity and Stability of Village-based Work

Different village-stationed cadres have big differences in their ability and resources. Some experienced cadres have advantages in terms of human resources and project operation ability, and they can get more external support for villages during their tenure and promote the smooth implementation of industrial projects. However, when such cadres leave and their successors are relatively weak in terms of capacity and resources, this may lead to difficulties in work coordination [12].

Village-stationed cadres' work philosophy and methods are often influenced by their own educational background, work experience, and other factors. Some cadres focus on the development of industries to drive the economic growth of the village, with attention on the introduction of external enterprises and funds to promote large-scale agricultural industry projects, while others may be more concerned about the spiritual and cultural construction of the villagers, being committed to enriching the cultural life of the village and improving the civilized outlook of the countryside. When cadres with different work philosophies and methods are in succession, the lack of effective communication and coordination can easily lead to a shift in work priorities.

4.2 Inadequate External Supporting Conditions Hinder Effective Operation

Although X County has policies related to village work, in terms of work succession, it did not form a systematic management document. In the actual implementation, the lack of supporting policies brings many inconveniences. The duties of village-stationed cadres during the work succession period are not clearly defined, leading to the shirking of some tasks. In terms of project connection, there is a lack of clear policy guidance on how to deal with the flow of funds and the division of responsibilities for unfinished projects, which has caused some projects to come to a standstill during the succession. Meanwhile, in terms of training policies for village-stationed cadres, there is a lack of systematic training courses for work succession, which leads to a lack of professional guidance for cadres, making it difficult for them to complete the succession efficiently.

In the rural environment of County X, a strong concept of work succession has not yet been formed. On one hand, villagers do not have a good understanding of the importance of work succession for village-stationed cadres and lack the awareness of active participation and supervision. On the other hand, within the group of village-stationed cadres, a good tradition of succession culture has not been formed. Some cadres are eager to return to their original units and work perfunctorily during the succession, while some new cadres do not fully realize its importance. The absence of such makes the succession often a mere formality, unable to truly play its proper role.

4.3 Work Succession Content Remains Superficial

At present, most contents for succession in X County are stuck in a simple list of written materials and general descriptions of the basic situation of the villagers, infrastructure construction, and other contents without an in-depth understanding of the villagers' character traits, family conflicts, and other hidden information. These invisible contents are crucial for new cadres to carry out their work with the masses. The lack of mastery of such information has led to new cadres getting into trouble when dealing with villagers' problems due to a lack of understanding of the actual situation.

In the process of the succession, many village-stationed cadres do not distill and summarize the key elements of their work. The former cadres have accumulated a wealth of experience for some common problems, but they do not organize these key elements into information that can be passed

on. When new cadres encounter similar problems, they have to feel their way through them again, resulting in low work efficiency. In terms of promoting village industrial development, some successful industrial development models and market development experiences are also not effectively passed on, making it difficult to achieve a sustainable breakthrough in village industrial development. This neglect of key work content not only results in a waste of work experience but also hinders the long-term development of villages.

During the succession, village-stationed cadres often focus on the past work and neglect to communicate their expectations and plans for future work. The former cadres have their own ideas and plans for the future development of the village, but they do not fully communicate with the new cadres, resulting in a lack of clear direction for the new cadres to carry out their work. At the same time, the villagers also have their own expectations for the village, which are not sorted out and communicated, making it difficult for the new cadres to meet the needs of the villagers in their work.

4.4 Work Succession Methods Lack Substance

The current form of succession in X County is mainly centered on written materials and face-to-face exchanges, being relatively simple. Although the written form can provide certain textual information, it often lacks vividness and interactivity. The new cadres may have difficulties in understanding during the reading process. Although face-to-face exchanges are able to conduct real-time communication, due to the limitations of time and occasions, it is not possible to explore all issues in depth. Moreover, it is difficult to fully demonstrate the complexity and diversity of village work singly. For some large-scale projects involving overall village planning, it is difficult to give new cadres an intuitive feeling and in-depth understanding through written and face-to-face forms alone, which is not conducive to a smooth succession and subsequent promotion of projects.

Informal methods are not sufficiently emphasized in the process of work succession. Informal occasions such as exchanges in daily work and joint participation in village activities are good opportunities to pass on work experience and understand the actual situation in the village. However, at present, village-stationed cadres are mostly confined to the formal process and ignore these informal channels.

After the succession is completed, the new cadres often lack feedback and confirmation on the work content. The new cadres may have doubts, but due to the lack of timely feedback, some problems are gradually exposed in the subsequent work, which affects the normal development of the work. At the same time, the lack of confirmation also makes it impossible for former cadres to know whether the succession has achieved the expected results, which is not conducive to the improvement and perfection of the work.

5. Optimization Strategy of Work Succession Mechanism

5.1 Promote Scientific Cultivation and Rigorous Personnel Selection

Establishing a competency assessment model for village-stationed cadres is a key step in optimizing the selection mechanism. First of all, it is necessary to combine the concept of competency to clarify the core competency requirements of the position [13]. In the selection process, accurate matching should be realized through multi-dimensional assessment, which covers professional knowledge, grassroots experience, leadership, and other aspects. The professional knowledge assessment can be a combination of written tests and interviews. Such a comprehensive and detailed assessment can ensure that the selected cadres are highly compatible with the position in terms of ability.

Combining the SECI model to promote knowledge sharing is an important means of building a dynamic talent pool. In the socialization stage, experienced village-stationed cadres are organized to have face-to-face exchanges with reserve cadres to share their actual experiences and insights in village work. In the externalization stage, cadres are encouraged to transform tacit knowledge into explicit one, such as writing work cases and experience summary reports. In the combination stage,

this explicit knowledge is sorted out, summarized, and integrated to form a systematic knowledge system. Finally, in the internalization stage, the reserve cadres internalize this knowledge into their own abilities by learning it.

5.2 Strengthen Institutional-Cultural Safeguards for Greater Continuity and Stability

The formulation of a special policy on the work succession in villages is the key to solving the problem of insufficient policy protection. The special policy should clarify the succession process, including the preparatory work before, the specific steps during the process, and the follow-up matters after. At the same time, the main body of responsibility should be determined, and the responsibilities of former cadres, new cadres, and relevant organization departments in the succession process should also be clearly defined [14]. In addition, the party committee and organization department should establish a special supervision team to supervise the whole process. In the supervision of financial resources directed support, it is necessary to ensure that funds are earmarked for the smooth implementation of the work in the village.

An atmosphere that emphasizes work succession through experience-sharing sessions and publicizing typical cases should be created. Regularly organizing experience exchange meetings and inviting cadres who have done well in succession to share their experience can make others realize the importance. At the same time, typical cases can be collected and organized, and publicized through internal publications, work groups, and other channels. The effectiveness of the succession can also be incorporated into the cadre performance appraisal system to form positive incentives. In the performance appraisal index, the assessment standard of the succession work should be clearly defined. Cadres with remarkable effectiveness are given priority in the evaluation of excellence and promotion. Cadres whose work is not in place are deducted and criticized accordingly, so as to prompt cadres to take the succession seriously and form a long-term mechanism.

5.3 Strengthen Systematic Training and Knowledge Updating

Strengthening pre-service training for new cadres with a focus on policies and regulations and rural governance practices can help new cadres quickly understand the basic requirements and working methods of village work. Regularly organizing training for incumbent cadres, inviting industry experts to introduce the latest models of agricultural industry development, and explaining the use of digital governance tools and platforms are able to help cadres constantly update their knowledge and improve their working ability.

The “mentor-apprentice system” combined with the SECI model promotes the explicitization and sharing of experiential knowledge. New village-stationed cadres are assigned to experienced mentors who pass on the tacit knowledge they have accumulated in their long-term work to their apprentices through teaching by example [15]. In this way, the problem of insufficient succession of tacit content is effectively solved, so that the new cadres can adapt to the work more quickly.

5.4 Deepen Content and Method Innovations for Precise Transition

The development of the *Checklist for Village Work Succession* is an effective means of addressing the problem of generalized content. The list should cover explicit content such as villagers’ information and project progress. At the same time, a module on “Work Expectations and Risk Reminders” can be added to convey implicit experience and planning. Former cadres should record the expected goals for subsequent work, possible risks encountered, and suggestions for coping in this module [16], so that new cadres can have a more comprehensive understanding of the work situation and be prepared to cope with it in advance.

An “online + offline” succession mode should be implemented, using a digital platform to archive working documents, pictures, videos, and other information, so that new cadres can access them at any time. Simultaneously, the introduction of informal forms, such as village logbook co-writing, key villagers’ interviews, and field visits, should be used to have new cadres understand the situation of the project implementation on the ground and be familiar with the villagers’ living environment.

5.5 Establish a Supervisory Feedback and Dynamic Adjustment Mechanism

A three-month follow-up period should be set up after the succession. New cadres should also regularly submit reports on the effectiveness of the succession for the organization department to keep abreast of the work, identify problems, and resolve them promptly. Furthermore, a third-party assessment can be introduced to quantitatively assess the quality. Based on the assessment results, a quantitative score is given to the succession, providing a reference basis for the organization department to make effective improvements for issues in lack of feedback.

Regular joint meetings with village-stationed cadres and staff from relevant departments should be organized. At the meetings, problems encountered in the course of work can be shared and analyzed to propose solutions. Based on discussions, the existing policy on village-based work can be iterated and improved.

6. Conclusions

Based on the field survey in X County, this study finds that the effectiveness of the work succession mechanism of village-stationed cadres is directly related to the sustainability of rural revitalization. During the fieldwork conducted in X County, several systemic challenges were identified in the work succession mechanism. Disparities among handover personnel undermine the continuity and stability of rural assistance efforts. Inadequate external safeguards hinder the effective implementation of the work succession mechanism. Superficial content is transferred with perfunctory formalities in work transition procedures. By strictly controlling the selection and employment of personnel, strengthening institutional and cultural safeguards, enhancing systematic training and knowledge updating for village-stationed cadres, deepening the innovation of content and methods, and constructing a mechanism for supervisory feedback and dynamic adjustment, the individual capabilities of cadres can be transformed into the organizational and systematic capabilities. The coherence of policies is also guaranteed through standardized processes, and tacit knowledge is made visible through the use of technological tools as well. At the same time, the assessment, incentives, and supervision form a closed-loop management. This not only provides stable human capital support for rural revitalization, but also provides a practical paradigm for similar counties to solve the problem of intergenerational faults of village-stationed cadres through the iterative accumulation of grass-roots governance experience. In the future, it is necessary to further promote the in-depth integration of the succession mechanism with the local governance ecology and to seek a balance between institutional flexibility and rigid constraints, so that village-stationed cadres can truly become a lasting link that activates the endogenous dynamics of villages and connects urban and rural elemental flows.

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