

# Comparative study on the optimization strategies of the human settlement environment of the rural settlements in Asia

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**Abstract.** There is a similar cultural background between Japan, South Korea and China. The construction of Japanese village has gone through three stages including conception, improvement and promotion, and that of Korean countryside has also experienced three stages of start-up, transformation and development. In the rural construction in both Japan and South Korea, government orientation has sped up the modernization of rural areas in the short term, but has gone against the law of development and the will of farmers in the long run. The key to rural construction is to improve the initiative and enthusiasm of farmers and to stimulate their sense of ownership. During the process of promoting the development of rural economy, we shall also pay attention to the improvement of farmers' spirituality.

From the experience of rural construction in Asia, the development of rural areas cannot be separated from the support and creativity of the villagers, and it is also the process of synchronous coordinated transformation of social culture instead of the single industry adjustment and space construction. The social benefits brought from the modern transformation and cultural activities of the villagers are beneficial to promote the sustainable development of modernization of agriculture and rural areas.

## 1. The present situation and optimization strategies of the human settlement environment of rural settlement in China

### *1.1 Revolution and improvement: The practice of rural construction in the 20s and 30s*

The opening and development of Rural Anthropology and Sociology stays in the 20s and 30s of the twentieth Century when is also the peak of rural construction practice. During this period, rural construction focused on the issues like the quality of farmers, land structure and agricultural development.

Some scholars think the rural construction movement in the early Republic of China to be an improvement movement essentially with the purpose of saving the nation and transforming society, which is the subsidiary product of the revolution. Based on China's national conditions, the movement has provided the new idea for rural construction, and combined intellectuals with farmers, technology promotion and quality education with agricultural economic development. It has also advocated the



participation of the whole people and the in-depth study of the countryside, and the complex development exploration based on the local is still of great significance to the current rural construction. In the research on village autonomy of Wanxi in Henan in 30s, some scholars have pointed out that the strong or weak change between the state and the local has come into being owing to the difference existing in the local management structure and social conditions of state power construction. Wanxi autonomy has represented the spontaneous action of local elites and shown the endogenous endemicity. In the case of limited capacity of the country, the active village elites can effectively promote rural stability and development, and the locality do not run counter to the development of the nation.

### *1.2 Exploration: The practice of rural construction in the early period of reform and opening up*

Since 80s, China has reflected on the rural construction in the early stage of the founding of the People's Republic of China, gradually changing the control of local government behavior on the local and positively promoting the development of independent innovation in rural areas. All countrysides have begun to explore the suitable development model, and many of rural areas have accelerated the development of collective economy and township enterprises after developing non-agricultural industries with the help of resources carrying local characteristics. In that way, a number of distinctive 'Star Village' like Nanjie Village, Wan Feng Village and Huaxi Village have sprung up, and these economic-oriented models have stimulated the initiative of the countryside and presented the a positive role in promoting local development. However, the industrial development model based on economy is more likely to cause serious damage to the natural ecological environment and traditional style. At the same time, in most of the rural areas where the resources and manpower are insufficient in China, agriculture is still the foundation of our country, and such kind of non-agricultural development is difficult to be promoted in other rural areas.

### *1.3 Transformation: The practice of rural construction in the late 1990s*

In the face of the development pattern of 'thousands of similar villages' and excessive urbanization in varied countryside, construction strategies of 'beautiful countryside' and 'one village one style' have been put forward, and the characteristics of the village shall be based on the natural environment and social human culture. On account of the similarity of regional environment and social environment, there is a great difference and excessive pursuit of uniqueness existing in the adjacent villages. So, it is prone to appear the vague positioning divorced from reality or to produce the special symbol that is not in accordance with reality like painting the walls and making up the local historical stories. In addition, many scholars have studied the development and construction of new rural area, and there are also non-governmental organizations involved in the practical construction in the countrysides. All of the practices have been affected by both the participation of external forces and the spontaneity of internal force. From the experience of the construction of these villages, it can be found that the rural construction is gradually transformed from a single external force into a stage affected by main internal forces and auxiliary external forces, and the rural internal force plays an important role in rural development.

## **2. The present situation and optimization strategies of the human settlement environment of rural settlement in the Republic of Korea**

South Korea had been a colonial country that was invaded and enslaved for a long time, centering on the development of agricultural economy with agricultural productivity lagging behind and the national economy underdeveloped. For the sake of revitalizing the economy and changing the long-term poverty and backwardness, Korean government had adopted the strategy to give priority to the development of industry and neglected the recovery and development of agriculture and rural economy after liberation. Apart from that rural economy had impeded the development of the overall economy, people in the rural areas had still been suffering from the tough living environment and the facilities on the aspects of education, health and cultural life had lagged behind. Moreover, the income of peasant was low, rural young labor had been flowing into the city, farmers were discontent to the

government and there were increasing criticism on the government's current policy. Under the circumstance, the South Korean government had set about adjusting the policy of economic development so as to adapt to the changes of economic and social development, stabilize rural economy and accumulate the energy for prosperity.

Since 70s, the urbanization population in Korea has increased to 90% from 41% at a high rate of speed, with low starting point of urban development and urbanization in the initial stage. In spite of the heavy burden of the government at this stage, it had started to focus on rural development to improve agricultural production and farmers living environment and enhance their enthusiasm. With the improvement of urbanization level, the government had gotten increasing pressure and failed to afford the huge expenditure. So, it had commenced to change the form and launched the vigorous new village movement.

From 1970 to 1980, Korean new village movement was the government-oriented rural development model. And the major turning point emerged in December of 1980 that the movement was transformed to be community-driven from government-oriented model, and this transformation had achieved completely after 1990s. And the optimization strategy of promoting the rural human settlements is mainly applied for by the countryside after 2005, and the government will screen before giving support.

The main features of the new village movement in Korea: first of all, the government led has maximized the enthusiasm of the villagers; secondly, the material civilization construction has promoted the construction of ethical spirit; thirdly, the government-oriented top-down movement with mass participation has come into being; fourthly, it has made an obvious influence on the process of the rural modernization; finally, the roles of varied agricultural cooperative organizations are prominent.

South Korea's new village movement has picked up a number of successful cases. The first case is about the improvement of rural income, namely planning green rice for crust of cooked rice. The second and third case are separately about water sightseeing tour by making use of the village resources and the development of celebration and sightseeing activities. The fourth is to mobilize all the people involved in, and the village plants the wild herbs with good sales, which can be strengthened. Next one is about case of artistic creation and leading, in which artists live in the village, so that it can play the leading role of the artists in the local development. The sixth is to make use of the abandoned school to reform, change the abandoned school into the ecological experience school as an educational base where the students in the cities can regularly come to experience the rural living environment, and work together with the education sector. The last case is about the cultural exchange case, establishing the club like dance and musical instruments. Although these cases have been invested a lot, the achievements made are not very exciting.

Something in common of optimization strategies of the human settlement environment of rural settlement between Korea and China is about the governments' strong desire to revitalize the countryside, with great differences existing in the operation of both sides. South Korea pays more attention to mobilize the enthusiasm of the village including the guidance of rural competition to apply for project support, and then the government screen and provide the support. In other words, the model village is engaged in, and the government provides the training and support. If it is made well, the government will provide additional funding and the project will be tracked and maintained after achieving success, instead of implementing what is thought up. There are not only a sound system and mechanism as well as considerable capital investment for rural support, and it also pays attention to the concept of rural development and operation of technology.

South Korea's rural reconstruction has achieved some success, but it is difficult to see the possibility of reversing the loss of population and recession in spite of the more successful cases. It may continue, but it appears difficult to prosper the past and turn back to flourishing population and the sound social structure, which is maybe the cost of modernization. We shall see if we can find our way to avoid this situation.

### **3. The present situation and optimization strategies of the human settlement environment of rural settlement in Japan**

Japan is a country with a shortage of natural resources. In 1930s, a large number of young labors in the rural areas had flowed into the city so that the countryside was on the verge of collapse. In order to improve the crisis in rural areas, Japan had adopted legislation to protect the development of agriculture and farmers in rural economy, and gradually carried out the rural construction plan step by step. After the continuing policy funding of the government from 50s to 70s, rural infrastructure had been improved, the modernization of agriculture and the adjustment of industrial structure had been realized, and the production enthusiasm of farmers had been improved with their living standards and income lifting so as to reduce the external flow of the rural population. In the decades of experience, Japan attaches great importance to the combination of traditional cultural resources and rural development. By the end of 70s, it had focused on the characteristics and advantages of rural areas and put forward the idea of “one village, one style” which had promoted the development of rural local economy based on the comprehensive development of its own resources so as to obtain the vitality for development. For example, Mishima Revitalization Plan had advocated the villagers’ participation in the process of ‘life craft movement’ which was to promote the villagers to learn the traditional culture with a series of cultural activities and cohere to the relationship of villagers in the activities. Thought the rural culture carrier, it had promoted the uniqueness and continuity of rural development in rural areas to establish agricultural technology research and promotion institutions, like agricultural selection and the private training institutions to promote farmers’ education and modern skills. After construction, Japan’s rural life has undergone tremendous changes, and the differences of income, infrastructure and living conditions between the city and the rural areas have basically eliminated. Japan has formed the standard procedure and the method for the historical block protection and the investigation, and these historical blocks are mostly rural communities, reflecting the historical development and evolution of the rural construction in Japan. Wu yun and others have made a research on the methods of investigating and studying the landscape features of Japanese historical and cultural blocks, and brought up that block protection is the main way to learn. During the process of building investigation, it has paid attention to the qualitative and quantitative combination first of all. Through extensive collection of block building color, material, volume, entrance and other features and with the help of the quantitative data like color comparison, material and volume statistics, the visual pictures can be integrated with the quantitative analysis data, and then the overall architectural characteristics of the block are summarized and reflected by the larger sample number statistics and induction.

### **4. The present situation and optimization strategies of the human settlement environment of rural settlement in India**

The situation of India is very similar to that of China, with a large proportion of agriculture, a large population, the traditional agriculture having a long history, relatively backward rural economy and duality of urban and rural development. Therefore, the experience of rural construction in India has more practical significance for China. The concept of social stratification and social differentiation in India are very serious and it is difficult for the poor to obtain the necessary educational resources and learning plans. So during the process of strengthening the synchronous development of agriculture, science and technology and education, India attaches great importance to the construction of rural culture. It spares extra efforts on constructing the public cultural facilities such as libraries where seminars, technical training courses and local cultural activities can be held, promotes the “public scientific movement”, breaks the hierarchy discrimination in education, enhances the universal participation and lifts the cohesion of rural areas, so as to boost the rural economy. When dealing with the slums in Mumbai, the government’s strong eradication and expelling did not get results, and they just hastily wined up the matter by transferring them to the place which was poorer. This lesson had changed the attitude of strong intervention of the government, to study and solve the problem of the poor from a more relaxed level.

## 5. Summary

The way in which China's rural construction attached the importance to the development of farmers in the early stage and the synchronous development between rural agriculture and people's cultivation can be used for reference. In the early period of reform and opening up, the progress had stepped into the one-sided situation owing to its development attitude towards seeking celerity and goodness. Meanwhile, it has also neglected the differences of the rural development in the process of modernization. After reflection and exploration, the participatory endogenous development model which centers on the villagers to accelerate the development of internal power has been gradually explored, and the single pattern will be avoided to apply in the construction by making an adjustment in accordance with specific projects and the actual situation in rural areas.

The status quo of Japan, South Korea and India is closer to that of China with fewer lands for more people as well as resource shortage. In the process of developing the rural areas in these countries, their importance of historical culture, the cultivation and mobilization of villagers' autonomy, the experience of promoting the rural development with low investment, and the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods can be referred in the construction of rural areas in China.

From the perspective of international human development, the development of a country or region should be based on its own initiative, the positive interaction between endogenous power and foreign aid is necessary, and the enhanced ability of residents shall be paid attention to obtain the fundamental and sustainable motivation for development. The process shall be participated by the public after empowerment, and internal and external forces shall realize communication in the implementation of the actual project and the positive role of local knowledge shall be played. In the pursuit of economic and social development, we should pay attention to the all-round development of human beings, the sustainability of natural ecology and the potential power of culture. Only when the construction of the project is based on the demand from the inside, can the development be actually effective.

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