

Research article

Creating Jobs Near the Home: A New Mode for China's Future Urbanization

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Abstract

In the past several decades, millions of “migrant workers” traveled thousands of miles to big cities, hoping to own a higher salary to support their families and have a better life. However, working afar from their families has caused several social problems. It should create more jobs near the workers’ home and help the workers to enjoy their family life. Chinese government puts forwards lots of policies to improve rural economy and reduce the burden of farmers. Creating jobs near the home is the new mode for China’s Future Urbanization. This is beneficial for the persons, for the families and the whole country.

Keywords: big cities; China’s future urbanization; new mode of urbanization; creating jobs near homes

Introduction

Urbanization is increasing in both the developed and developing countries. One need only look at what is happening in India, China and now Africa as these countries are experiencing a significant shift of their vast populations from the rural setting to the urban centers. Cities like Delhi and Mumbai are becoming so big that it is increasingly more difficult to move around the city and their population densities are one of the highest in the world^[1]. According to UN estimates, Lagos in Nigeria is on pace to be the third largest megacity by 2015 after Tokyo and Mumbai^[2]. China, on the other hand, boasts the most megacities in the world (four)^[3].

China has experienced a form of urbanization that is probably unparalleled in human history. In the past several decades, millions of “migrant workers” traveled thousands of miles to big cities like Guangzhou and Shanghai, hoping to own a higher salary to support their families and have a better life^[4,5]. However, due to the relative low salary and the high fees of long distance travel, it was impractical for many migrant workers to

meet with their family members very often. For many of them, the Spring Festival is the only chance to get together with their beloved ones.

Urbanization definition and Background

With the urbanization of the country, many cities expand and government expropriates the land. Thus many farmers lose their survival means of production, land. They have no other ways to earn money, so they have to travel to big cities. We also find that some farmers do not want to engage in agricultural production and contract out their land to live a better life in the city because the high cost of agricultural production and low income. In China, cities are expanding rapidly. For the majority of urban dwellers, especially the poor, finding potable water supply, affordable shelter, accessible and secure urban land for agriculture to ensure food security, securing gainful employment and improvement in health facilities would continue to remain a priority. Comprehensive land use planning and revision of planning standards and administrative procedures would, go a long way to, reduce many of the problems that face urban populations in the developing areas. There is also a need to re-evaluate the basic principles of urbanization and the relationship between the rural/agrarian parts of the developing world and the urban areas. We know that urbanization is largely driven by the shift to urban centers, which stems from the need to find jobs. Today, the poor from the rural areas leave everything-their families, land and meager livelihood-in search of a job in the big city.

Major problems of urbanization in China

However, working afar from their families has caused several social problems. First of all, it has created a large population of the so-called “left-behind children” and the elderly living in an “empty nest”. They are left alone because most factories and companies only recruit young adults and the cost of living in a big city is too high to support an entire family. On some occasions, there is no serious problem for these people. If the child in a family is old enough and the elderly is in good health, they could take care of each other. But on other occasions, serious problems or even tragedies could happen. Generally speaking, left-behind children live with their grandparents or even parents’ friends. With the growth of the increasing number of rural migrant workers and time, the situation becomes more and more severe. It is reported that most of left-behind children have the conflict with their guardians. In the past several years, it has been reported that many left-behind teenage girls in the countryside were raped. Were their parents living together with them, many of these tragedies could be avoided. For the elderly, the life will become worse without the care. When they are ill, no person can take care of them and take them to hospital. Sometimes, they cannot get the timely treat and lastly the condition becomes worse. They have to take the heavy family load and rare their grandsons.

Second, working afar also significantly decreases the well development of the young adults. Life in the big cities may be more inciting than living in a small country or a town, but it also brings material and psychological problems. There is no one who could help cooking or do the laundry for the people who work outside. When they are not doing well in their work, they cannot get any advice or help from their parents. Above all, they cannot enjoy the fun and happiness of living together with their family members, especially their children. Lack of such familial support, it is not surprising that many migrant workers consider themselves as strangers in the big city. Arduous tasks, single boring jobs, and serious deficiencies in the spiritual life, super-strength labor and poor living conditions have brought about the physical and mental fatigue. Low social status in the city and the individual’s contempt eyes make the situation worse and all will lead to workers who frequently occurring

mental health problems. In addition, migrant workers leave their homes, according to the results showing that 75% of workers are more than six months or a year back home once, so they have no person who can understand and support them when meeting difficulties, so that they become sensitive to fear. The leaders underestimate those workers and force them to work longer time. In the situation, it is natural that psychological problems of workers occur. In recent years, it is frequently reported that migrant workers commit suicide in the working places because of the labor-intensive, poor entertainment and vacant unions.

Third, the large number of migrant workers has no stable work in cities, so they have to change the work place from time to time. The situation makes local governments manage the workers harder. Besides, high mobility led to a lack of enthusiasm of insurance units and workers and also brought difficulties to the labor and social security department. Due to the high fee of lodging in big cities and in the interest of employers, these migrant workers' working and living condition is unsatisfied. They have only a small area of residence, poor ventilation and lighting, tightness, serious environmental pollution, greater security risks and other issues. Some even less than a dozen people crowd into the old houses only eighty square meters. Living in this poor condition for a long time, it is a great risk for their health. Once they are sick, most of them don't see doctors because of the expensive medicine. However, this is an unexpected way both for the health condition of workers and for society.

Forth, the migrant workers, especially the young adults, can not make good use of their leisure time. For some reasons, big cities have less entertainment place for migrant workers. When they have a short time to relax, many young adults could not resist the temptation and may be addicted to internet, gambling and other bad habits. It is a possible way to water their time that they gamble, wander, smoke and drink because many public resources and social services don't open for them. All these activities that young adults take part in are not good for the harmonious development of society. This kind of tedious amateur life can not adjust migrant workers' mind and results in further series of problems. According to the statistics, in recent years, the rate of migrant workers' crime rises obviously. These dangers discord with the rapid development of economy and culture.

It should also mention that working afar from home is not conducive to the healthy development of personal feelings. It is a very common situation husband and wife separate in different places to live and they can not communicate with each other frequently. As time goes, there are some misunderstandings between them that are not dealt in time. On the occasion, the relationship between them would dangerous for maintain the marriage. The distance is also a challenge for the unmarried ones. The young people have few chances to make friends in their work place. Therefore, parent would arrange a blind date for them. However, because of the remote distance and heavy work load, they have little time to know about each other. It is not difficult to image the result.

Current urban challenges

Of course, it would be an ideal solution if the society could provide migrant workers and their family members jobs and social securities that could help them settle down in the big city. But considering China's economic development and the large population, it is simply unrealistic to achieve this goal in the foreseeable future. China's old people who are over 60 have grown to 200 million in 2014 and will continue to grow in the near future. In 2050, the number would reach to an unprecedented 430 million, accounting for 30% of the total population. The big cities would be overwhelmed if China's future urbanization tries to migrate most of the

elderly into the big cities. It is also true of the children. All of these will bring an immeasurable burden for cities from each aspect, namely transportation, housing, education and social security.

China should thus adopt a new mode of urbanization to deal with these challenges. The future urbanization should try to create more jobs in the small town and encourage more people to work near their home. This new mode of urbanization, in my opinion, would avoid the problems mentioned above. In addition, it can also reduce polarization and promote overall economic development.

Creating more jobs in the small town and encouraging more people to work near their home is a good mode to realize urbanization both for local people and for our country. From the aspect of local people, they can earn more money and meanwhile, take care of their family more conveniently.

Creating Jobs near the Home

In recent years, Chinese government puts forwards lots of policies to improve rural economy and reduce the burden of farmers. There are various agricultural policies to encourage farmers to engage in the agriculture. Besides, in recent years, government performs the rural health care reform. The government rationalizes rural health management system and implements the integrated management of rural health. At the same time, the government increases investment in rural health efforts to support rural health infrastructure. The present social facilities in rural areas become more and more consummate. There is no doubt that large number of migrant workers prefers to find jobs near home.

On the one hand, the family could become a shelter for all if workers can get jobs not far away from their home. If the workplace is within an hour's drive from the workers' home, they could go home every day after work. If the workplace is within two or three hours' drive from their home, they could meet their family members every week or every month. The elderly and the children could be better taken care of and the worker could also find more support from their family. The workers do not worry about the recent situation of the family any more. Each time they feel tired or stressful, family members can console them in time. The children can also live with their parents happily and experience the love from them. The tragedies mentioned above may not happen forever. In this way can they save the transportation and communication fees.

On the other hand, the new mode of urbanization would also greatly reduce the burden of the social cost. The modern welfare economics tend to view the children and the elderly as people who needed to be taken care of. But in fact, the elderly could handle most of the problems by their own if they are familiar with the environment. Most old people in the rural village grow vegetables for their own and they are happy to do some kind of manual labor. But if they settle down in the big city, they would have difficulties to buy vegetables at the super market. Besides, since they have no familiar neighbors or intimated friends to communicate, they would feel lonely and need the relatives to accompany or look after. Thus, it is not always a good idea to encourage all people to migrate to the big cities.

This is also beneficial for the whole country. Firstly, working near home can narrow differences between regions. In order to encourage coordinated regional economic development, the state has introduced a number of policies to promote the Midwest in recent years. With the gradually development, the Midwest business requires a lot of labor. Compared with the southeast coast of the business, these companies are more able to attract local labor resources. Secondly, nearby employment is in favor of industrial upgrading in developed areas. It not only solves the problem of the southeast coast of the transfer of labor-intensive enterprises, and promotes the

upgrading of enterprises of these areas, meanwhile strengthening the foundation for industrial development in the central and western regions. Thirdly, it is also conducive to the development of food production. Left behind in rural areas are mainly the elderly, women and children. They are powerless to engage in agricultural production. The migrant workers are unable to cultivate the fields if they work at home. It is convenient to work both in workplaces and in the fields. Lastly, this new mode can help to alleviate many social contradictions. The countryside is a great complex community. As a cell of this community, each migrant worker's family faces so many problems. Migrant workers' employment nearby can make a lot of social problems to be resolved.

Chinese government has already drawn up a series of policies to prompt rural economic development in order to create more jobs near the home. Urban-rural integration is a new stage of modernization and the development of China's urbanization. Urban-rural integration is to bring industry and agriculture, urban and rural, urban and rural residents as a whole, through institutional reforms and policy changes to promote the integration of urban and rural planning and construction, industrial development, market information, policy measures, environmental protection, social development with overall planning. So that both farmers and urban residents enjoy the same benefits of civilization and the entire urban and rural economic and social can achieve comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development. With establishing the principle of giving priority to employment, to revolutionize the employment concept and related policies of heavy urban but rural light, the interior of agriculture, rural area and farmers working in cities are brought together in national employment plans and implemented respectively.

Conclusion

It emphasized that China's future urbanization must be "human-centered". It is exactly what this article proposes. It should create more jobs near the workers' home and help the workers to enjoy their family life. Creating jobs near homes is the new mode for China's future urbanization. It's time to begin a significant world focus on the rural economies, time to sustain the rural economy with the same zeal that seems to be driving urbanization.

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