

The Research on the Path to Eradicate Poverty for NGOs in a New Period

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Abstract

This paper starts with advantages of participating in poverty alleviation of the NGOs, indicate the advantages the NGOs possess are the supplements to the government-led poverty alleviation so as to illustrate that it is necessary to participate in poverty alleviation for the NGOs. On the basis of discussing the main actions that NGOs take, the paper examines the obstacle of the participation and analyses the reasons, lastly designs a path to promote the NGOs to participate in the pro-poor activities, aiming to popularize the pattern to lift the poverty-alleviation efficiency, promote the impoverished to shake off poverty and become better off, and achieve the goal of building a well-off society in an all-round way lastly.

Key words: Government; NGOS; Participate in; Poverty alleviation; Path

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Poverty is a big challenge faced by countries around the world and the international communities. To get rid of poverty, promote the development and achieve the

common prosperity are the long-cherished dreams of mankind in China. Poor alleviation is the main task to build a well-off society in an all-round way. Since the reform and opening-up, the poor relief work has gained great achievements which attract worldwide attention. In 2011, the Communist Party of China(CPC) central committee held the poverty alleviation meeting, and suggested to regard 2,300 Yuanper capita as a new poverty eradication standard. It signified that the poverty relief work in China has transferred from food and clothing problem solving to a new period. In the new period, the government focuses on food and clothing achievements consolidation, the ecological circumstances improvement and the development gaps reduction. By the end of 2012, there were still 98.99 million poor people in rural regions. Because of the enormous poor people and soaring rates of poverty-returning, the poverty relief work faces severe situations and tasks. The government, as the director in the poverty alleviation work, exposes some problems, such as the low level of targeting, low efficient of the funds usage. These problems increase the pressure and difficulty of the poverty alleviation work in the new period. Therefore, it is necessary to call for the social sectors of community to participate in the pro-poor work.

NGO is the shorthand form of Non-Governmental Organization. There is not a commonly accepted definition about it, and authority in China often calls it civil organization. Since 1980s, in the context of global associational revolution, the NGOs all over the world have attained rapid development. Since 1999s, the NGOs in China have gained unexpected development (Huang, 2004). It is estimated that in 2012, the number of NGOs reached 499,268, which surged by 8.1% than last year, with 271,131 Social Organizations, 225,108 Private Non-Enterprise Units and 3,029 Foundations (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2013). NGOs, as an important strength in civil society, have the advantages of the flexibility and voluntary. They could offer

complementation for government if they participate in the poverty relief work. In this sense, this paper tries to explore a route for the NGOs to take party in pro-poor work.

1. THE ADVANTAGE FOR THE NGOS TO PARTICIPATE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORK

The Asia development bank treats the governance structure improvement as a strategy for the pro-poor work, and one of the critical points is to build a cooperative partnership with NGOs (Asia Development Bank, 2004). The reason why NGOs possess such a high evaluation is mainly because they have many advantages.

1.1 Close to the Poor People and Target the Objects

The choice and confirmation of the poor group is the first step to implement the poor relief work, and whether they target the objects has a significant effect on the ultimate results. Affected by the mandatory plans issued from the superior departments, the government exposes many problems, such as helping the rich rather than the poor and fake poverty alleviation. NGOs are spontaneously founded by civil, and the majority of their members come from grassroots. Therefore, they have a natural connection with the poverty people. Before they participate in poverty relief work, they could listen to the voices of poor people, understand their various needs by investigations and interviews, carry out the specific projects and make those poor people get the pro-poor funds. The statistics shows that once the poverty relief projects were invested by NGOs, more than 90% of the funds were made better use. Undoubtedly, their participation guarantees the limited pro-poor resources were employed to good purpose, then improves the poverty alleviation efficiency and accelerate the speed to get rid of poverty.

1.2 Flexible Organization and Efficient Operation

Organization structure is the important support for the operation of the whole team, and the key factor to affect the organizational efficiency. The government in China is in hierarchy and bureaucracy system. Although it ensures the decree is unified from top to bottom, there are also some drawbacks such as inflated departments, rigid structure, low efficiency and insensitive to social needs. In contrast, the NGOs usually take the council structure, which has high elasticity and flexibility. During poverty relief work, it can make related adjustments according to different locations and spheres. Comparing with government, their cost is lower and efficiency is higher.

1.3 Social Charitable Donation Collecting

Enough funds are the material assurance to implement poverty relief work. It is estimated that the cost to make

the poor people get rid of poverty is 10,000 per person (Lu, 2012). In fact, the inputs of our government only reach the one tenth of that amount. It shows that the government financial capabilities could not meet the needs of poverty funds. The NGOs have the ability to mobilize the social resources. By carrying out fund-raising activities, they could raise a large number of fragmented capitals, and make up the deficiency government resources. It is reported that by the end of 2009, the money that China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) raised more than 2.39 billion Yuan, China Society for Promotion of the Guangcai Program (CSPGP) 5.67 billion Yuan, the Chunlei plan carried out by China Children and Teenagers' Fund (CCTF) 800 million Yuan and Happiness project carried by China Population Welfare Foundation (CPWF) 580 million Yuan (Kuang, 2010). Those social charitable donations, not only relieve the government financial burden, but also play a positive role in perfecting the production and living conditions in poor area, and improving the self-blood functions of poor people.

2. THE MAIN ACTIONS OF NGOS TO PARTICIPATE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORK

2.1 Implementation of the Poverty Alleviation Work

The pro-poor project implementation is the main form to alleviate the poverty. To solve the living problem faced by poor people and provide them with basic production and living conditions, the NGOs implement a series of projects which take water drinking, land relocation and house ameliorate as the cores. Take CFPA as an example, it carried out water drinking project in northwest arid area, subsidized poor people to build residential water storage facilities to collect rainwater and solve the water shortage problem. In karst areas of southwestern China, by engineering, it solved the land shortage and aided the peasants to build their own farmland and solve the problem of feeding. In the poor Yi nationality which is located in Daliangshan Mountain in Sichuan province, it carried out the house ameliorate project and changed the local mixed living conditions between human and livestock (Wang, 2011).

2.2 Provision of Aid Directly

Providing the poor with help directly to break the vicious cycle of the poor area with mandatory investment and transforming the living condition of poor people from quantity and quality aspects are one of the most effective ways to cope with poverty. For instance, affected by Wenchuan Earthquake, the Liupanpan area in Gansu Province became the severely afflicted area. To tackle with this, the China Charity Federation (CCF) adopted the

direct financing way to help victims in this area start over and rebuilt their schools. The NGOs aided 900,000 Yuan respectively to Xujiage primary school, Fengling primary school located in Longnan, Duba primary school and Jiuzai primary school located in southern area of Gansu. In addition, it donated 200,000 books which worth 5.57 billion to primary and secondary schools and libraries which played significant roles in improving the local living conditions.

2.3 Capability Building

The reason why the poor people is poor mainly lies in their lack of abilities. Carrying out capability building project, especially reinforcing the education to poor children is particularly important to get rid of the vicious circle of inter-generational transmission of poverty. In this aspect, the NGOs also carried out a series of effective activities. The hope project led by China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF), raised more than 5.3 billion Yuan in total, helped more than 3.38 million poor student go back to school, built 15,444 hope primary school and 14,000 hope project libraries, equipped with 2500 sets of hope project gym gardens and 200 sets of hope movie broadcast equipment, trained over 52,000 rural primary school teachers since it was founded (Kinmark, 2014).

3. THE MAIN OBSTACLES AND REASONS FOR THE NGOS TO PARTICIPATE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORK

Although it is a necessity for the NGOs to take party in poverty alleviation, the confirmation of the goal doesn't mean the path to achieve it is smooth. There is always a long distance to fulfil it. As the obstacles form system, society, management and the NGOs itself, the path for them to participate in poverty alleviation has many difficulties.

3.1 Difficulty to Get the Preferential Treatment

Good system and mechanism are the important insurances for the development of NGOs. Lack of the necessary system support, NGOs would lack the channels to take party in poverty relief, and the poor people also would lack the platforms to become rich. Kang Xiaoguang, who is the professor in public management school and the director in the Non-Profit Organization institution of Renmin University of China, said the government thinks they should treat NGOs both approvingly and restrictedly. It is because, although the NGOs could offer social service effectively, they have the strong organizational capacity and flexibility, which threat the governmental authority directly. The government is afraid that the NGOs would organize and guide the poor people to confront with them. What is more, the poverty alleviation model

the NGOs adopts is easy to create conflicts with the targeted poverty reduction and special poverty alleviation led by government, and disturbs the orderly poor-relief work. As a result, the double-sided policy makes the NGOs facing the difficulties to registration. Nowadays, China takes the double management system for them. The prerequisite for NGOs to register with civil administration department is that the NGOs have their own business management departments, and the departments are intended to provide corresponding guarantee. However, as the business management department has no interests with NGOs, the ordinary institutions reluctant to provide guarantee as the business management department. As a result, some NGOs are forced to choose industrial and commercial registration forms. Even some of them do not register and become the grassroots organizations. The Finance magazines reported before that the number of the NGOs which does not register in China is more than those register. Without registration, it is difficult for the NGOs to get reasonable treatment in tax reducing or remitting, and their development trend is restricted and the poor people lack the chance to become rich.

3.2 Social Trust Crisis

Since the reform and opening-up, the economic construction in China has got great achievements, and people's living standard has improved a lot. However, at the same time, as the government focuses on economic construction and pursues the increase of gross domestic product (GDP), the cultural construction is ignored and the national cultural quality could not match their social status. This buries a time bomb for the social trust crisis. As entering the new century, with the social rapid transformation, the human touch among people is dispelled, and the trust crisis starts to influence the whole society. Especially after the "Guo Meimei" event happened in 2011, the charitable scandals emerge one after the other. As a result, the charitable organizations are facing the severe trust crisis, and the NGOs that undertake the poverty relief work are not immune. In the donation conference held by CFPA in 2011, Liu Wenkui, the deputy-secretary-general of the CFPA said, affected by "Guo Meimei" event, by the middle of October, the their foundation only raised 150 million Yuan, much less than the 300 million Yuan which was designed to raise in 2011 (Yin, 2011). As a result, these funds could not finish the scheduled finance for beneficiaries.

3.3 Misplaced Management and Fuzzy Position

In a legal-ruled society it requires that the actions and activities of all the organizations have law on their sides. The existence and development of NGOs also need the strict institutional constrains. However, in China, the management displacement of the government leads to the dilemma of development of NGOs. According to the law, the NGOs are the independent corporate. While in

practice, they become the subordinate of the government departments or official systems. For example, the actions of NGOs are always included in the government work scope and forced to comply with arrangements. If things go on like this, it will have bad effects on their development.

3.4 Short Term Development History and Limited Scale

The development history of NGOs is not long, the scale is small, strength is weak and influence is limited. They still belong to an emergent novelty and their social recognition level is low. For example, the CYDF, as the executor of the hope project has big influences in China comparing with others. However, the hope project performance evaluation research group of the National Research Center for Science and Technology for Development (NRCSTD) found that the social sectors do not know much about the nature and name of organizer and executor of hope project. 58.6% of them thought the project was held by governmental department. Even those contributors of the hope project, 50% of them held the same thoughts. 51.0% of The parents who was getting financial support did not know their nature, and 36.8% thought it was organized by government education department, only 12.1% of the parents knew it was organized by civil organizations (Hope Project Performance Evaluation Research Group of the National Research Center for Science & Technology for Development, 1999).

The shortage of the funds is the common problem faced by NGOs. Their channel to raise money is single, mainly by social donations. While as the low social cognition to them, it affects the amount of money they could raise. Moreover, they raise money separately, therefore they could get little social funds. The storage of funds directly leads to the lack of material and makes it hard to operate.

To carry out activities effectively, the NGOs need the support of highly trained talents. Restricted by the funds, it is difficult for them to attract highly standard expertise, and burden their salaries, which contribute to the irregular quality of staff, high mobility and unstable infrastructure and influence their entire operational level.

4. THE PATH TO PARTICIPATE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORK FOR THE NGOS

4.1 Create Good Laws to Reinforce the Policy Support

The laws are the fundamental guarantee to carry out works. The perfection of the laws and regulations is the necessary condition for the healthy development of NGOs. As for the lack of laws for NGOs, the government should set up the related laws to reinforce the management. Firstly the government should enact the professional laws

timely, confirm the functions, status and structure so as to provide them with standard foundation, and safeguard their legal rights and interests. Secondly the government should simplify the organizational procedures and lower the barrier to found the NGOs. Try their best to break their registration limits. Thirdly support them by reducing or remitting their taxes. Only in these ways, could those organizations participating in poverty relief enjoy preferential taxation policies.

4.2 Establish the Positive Social Atmosphere and Transparent Management Pattern

Public opinion is the important factor to influence the national life, social thought and feeling of the masses. It is an important method to carry out the charitable poverty relief work to guide the public opinion effectively. To create a positive atmosphere and environment is an indispensable social foundation to promote the development of NGOs and poverty alleviation work for government. As the society is entering the rapid transforming period, the morale declines and the sense of honesty is weak. It influences the development of the NGOs, which represent the charity, love and commonweal. It needs the government to reinforce the charitable propaganda, especially to strengthen the efforts to publicize those positive typical events. By popularizing the sense of the charity and setting good examples to create the atmosphere which is benefit to the development of NGOs. What is more, the NGOs themselves should create better images, and practice the open and transparent management patten to disclose the financial information to public and ensure every income and expenses could be traced.

4.3 Break Dependency to Promote them to Transform

NGOs as the bridge to connect the government and public, not only facilitate solving the problem of government failure, but also offer the public better, effective and cheap social goods, which promotes the social combination. However, the official background of NGOs makes them rely on the government in structure and finance, which inhibit the exertion of their functions. To make them participate in the poverty alleviation better, it is necessary to break their official background, promote them to transform to professional, open and transparent organizations. In addition, completely eradicate the officials to serve as the leader of NGOs. Restore their status of independent civil organizations and retain their characteristics and advantages.

4.4 Strengthen the Training for Professional Staffs to Improve Their Capabilities

As the NGOs are immature and less development in China, it is hard for them to play a pivotal role in poverty alleviation work. To build a cooperative relationship with government, they should make efforts to improve their

capabilities. Firstly, they need to solve the shortage of the human resources. On the one hand, they should design better plans to attract the highly trained volunteers, on the other hand, they should strengthen the training for volunteers to improve their professional levels. Secondly, encourage the technical communication with NGOs in abroad to learn their advanced experience. Thirdly, the NGOs should reinforce the information communication with social sectors, foster communication skills, build norm of reciprocity, so as to expand the influence, improve social identity, advance the ability to mobilize the social resources and raise more fragmentary funds.

CONCLUSIONS

Marked by the publication of Chinese Rural Poverty Relief Outlines (2011-2020), the poverty alleviation work is entering a new period. The poverty alleviation work in the new period is facing severe situation. The number of poor people is large, the poor area is wide, conflicts are intertwined together, usual poverty alleviation approach work slowly, the cycle length of poverty relief is long. The poverty alleviation pattern from top to bottom led by government is inadequate and could not adapt to the needs of the times.

NGOs, as the important force of the civil society, have the characteristics of private, voluntary, organization, public, non-profit and autonomy. For a long time, they implement the poverty alleviation activities by the means of carrying out projects, offering aids and improving capability. Comparing with government, they are more precise of the objects selection, more effective of the funds using, and more flexible of the method choice. Restricted by the system, society, management, they still have some problems to participate in poverty alleviation. Create good

laws, establish positive social atmosphere, promote the transforming, reinforce the train to break the barriers, and better to participate in poverty alleviation work, share the burdens with government and achievement the goal of poverty relief, win preferable conditions for the poor people and society. In light of this, it is the moment to examine the path to participate in poverty relief work of NGOs.

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