



The Impact of Relocation Policy on the Quality of Life of Residents in the Yellow River Beach Area

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The Relocation Plan for Residents of the Yellow River Beach Area in Shandong Province has yielded positive outcomes, but the relocation process also entails significant changes in agricultural production methods, adjustments in family economic structures, reconstruction of rural political power relations, conflicts, and integration of cultural values, as well as disintegration and reconstruction of social relations. These issues can potentially impact the quality of life of the residents.

Materials and Methods: This qualitative research investigates the issues arising from the relocation policy, assesses the effects of the policy, and provides recommendations on enhancing the living standards of residents in the Yellow River beach area. This research involved conducting on-site interviews with 10 villagers and 5 members of a village committee from a village in Caiyuanji Township and a relevant literature review.

Results: It was found that the relocation policy for the Yellow River beach area is a positive livelihood policy, as villagers have relocated from dilapidated cottages to modern new communities. However, there remain some challenges, including the high cost of living for farmers, issues related to the division of rights among rural village committees, and conflicts in farmers' values.

Conclusion: Thus, this paper offers personal recommendations for the Yellow River Mudflat Relocation Project, including increasing investment in supporting industries for agriculture, promoting correct values among villagers, targeting poverty alleviation efforts, and adjusting the power structure of village committees.

Keywords: Yellow River Beach Area; Relocation and Construction Policy; Residents' lives

Introduction

The beach area of the lower reaches of the Yellow River in China is a place prone to flood. Nearly 1.8 million people live in the beach area of the Yellow River in China, suffering more than 30 floods of varying degrees, affected more than 9 million people, and flooded 13,300 square kilometers of arable land (Zhang, 2021). Immigration is a long-term strategy to solve the flooding and stagnation of the Yellow River beach area so that the residents will be able to get out of poverty (Yang, 2021). In recent years, China has been making consistent advancements, particularly in assisting in the countryside. One specific issue being addressed is the problem of flooding in the Yellow River region. The government is taking steps to relocate people living near the Yellow River to minimize the natural risks they face. This relocation not only reduces harm to the residents but also manages poverty in the Yellow River beach area. Ensuring the safety of residents' lives and property, this initiative aims to enhance the living standards of the people in the Yellow River Beach region. Ultimately, these efforts contribute significantly to the economic development of the area, making a meaningful difference in the lives of the residents.

Proximity urbanization refers to the transfer of peasants to live in towns or cities close to their hometowns, rather than relocating over long distances. Because they belong to the same geographical unit, they have similar cultures, customs, and sense of identity in life, social integration is easier, and the short commuting distance is also conducive to urban-rural mobility and integrated development. Neighborhood urbanization has more obvious advantages as a migration method that both solves the poor living environment of farmers and allows them to be resettled nearby. Nearby urbanization is different from out-migration across provinces and prefectures, which is beneficial to rural revitalization and coordinated development of urban and rural areas and promotes sustainable development (Tang & Tan, 2021). The population of nearby villages psychologically regards the township as a place of belonging and does not go against the grain after moving in, subtly completing urbanization, so an important direction for promoting new human-centered urbanization is proximity urbanization (Zheng, 2021). Urbanization is one of the important driving forces that has contributed to China's rapid



economic growth for 30 years. Accelerating the pace of rural urbanization is of great significance in activating the rural market, absorbing excess labor, promoting rural industrial and agricultural development, and changing production and living styles (Koo, 2013).

Now the beaches in Shandong province vigorously promote the relocation of the Yellow River beach area, and have achieved good results. At present, all the residents of the beach area have moved into the new buildings. However, relocation not only brings changes to the residence of residents, but also involves the change of agricultural production mode, the adjustment of family economic structure, and the reconstruction of rural political power relations. All of these unknown changes either directly or indirectly affect the residents' quality of life (Bi, 2019).

To solve these problems, the researcher plans to focus on a village in D county, Shandong province, as the research platform. The study will involve analyzing data related to the residents of the village platform. By conducting this analysis, the aim is to understand the impact of the Yellow River beach construction on the quality of life for the residents in the beach area. The research will involve identifying issues within the beach construction project and proposing potential solutions. The findings will serve as a valuable reference for the relocation project in the lower Yellow River beach area.

Objectives

1. To study the problems caused by the relocation and construction policy of the Yellow River beach area.
2. To analyze the impact of the relocation policy on the Yellow River beach area.
3. To propose a guideline for residents' lives towards a better quality of life.

Literature review

In the process of relocation, the main role of the masses is to play, to make the relocation work "no trouble". To play the main role of the masses, firstly, we should strengthen the publicity and guidance to provide a public opinion atmosphere for relocation; secondly, we should adhere to the people as the companions and respect the public opinion; and thirdly, we should be open and transparent sunshine operation (Ding, 2013). To attention to the relocation, the identification of the relocated population, to accurately identify the relocated population, it is possible to use scientific and technological means, the use of big data, and networking with banks, human resources social security bureaus, etc., to view and dynamically manage the deposits, cars, houses, etc. under the name of the relocated households, to ensure that the poor households are "really poor" (Zhu, 2017). It is important to pay attention to the integration of relocation targets, and in the process of relocation abroad, there have been cultural conflicts that have triggered ethnic conflicts. For example, the indigenous people of Indonesia believe in Islam, and the Madurese who migrated over believe in Christianity, which triggered a conflict, killing and injuring a hundred people. The target of relocation has left the original familiar living environment and transferred to a new environment, facing problems such as different cultural practices, production and living styles changes in identity and psychological status, and social integration (Deng, 2017). During the relocation, there should be supporting hukou transfer to ensure that after the relocation of the people, family planning, military conscription, children's schooling, etc. can be carried out normally without being affected. (Liao, 2015)

The implementation of the relocation of residents in the beach area is of great significance to the promotion of comprehensive and coordinated economic and social development and flood mitigation. First of all, it is conducive to the implementation of the ecological protection and high-quality development strategy of the Yellow River Basin. Secondly, it is conducive to the complete realization of long-term peace and security in the beach area. Thirdly, it is conducive to consolidating the results of the beach area people out of poverty and wealth. Fourthly, it is conducive to promoting the urbanization process of cities and counties along the Yellow River. Finally, it is conducive to building an ecological security barrier in the Yellow River Basin (Shen, 2022).

The relocation of the Yellow River mudflat area has achieved decisive results and brought great changes to the production and life of the people. To summarize, it is mainly reflected in five aspects: 1) The living conditions of the people have been completely changed; 270,000 people have moved out of the waterholes and into new communities. 2) The people have been protected from the threat of flooding, and





more than 30,000 mu of land in old villages have been reclaimed, effectively enhancing ecological functions. 3) Comprehensively improving supporting public services and infrastructure. Each village platform community and outlying communities support the construction of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, homes for the elderly, community service centers, and other public service facilities. 4) It is strongly promoting industrial development, aiming to boost the income of the general population by endorsing industrial parks or initiatives, the goal is to elevate the per capita annual income to over 30,000 yuan, ensuring that people can both reside and work in a secure environment (Tao, 2021).

There are 26 village platform communities in the Yellow River beach area of Dongming, simulating and projecting the safety hazards faced by the village platforms in the Yellow River beach area of Dongming under extreme conditions to propose scientific countermeasures, downstream of the Yellow River will form a super-standard flooding process (the level of flooding needs to be demonstrated by scientific research institutions on a special topic), which will create great pressure on the downstream flood control. It was found that it should be improved as soon as possible to improve the safety measures of the village platform in the beach area and making up the short board of the protection project so that a better plan to cope with the super-standard flood becomes more urgent. With the rapid development of macroeconomic development and urbanization, the development of the Yellow River beach area in Shandong is lagging, and the beach area residents are relatively poor. Shandong Yellow River beach area covers a wide range, involving many cities and counties, the beach area is large and relatively concentrated (Zhao, Zuo, & Zhao, 2022).

The industrial base is weak, and industrial development is severely limited; infrastructure conditions are poor; the poverty population is large and the incidence of poverty is high. The research indicates that the willingness of beach area residents to relocate is influenced by several factors. These include the push factors from the current location, the pull factors of the new destination, and the obstacles encountered between the two places. Additionally, the marital and family status of beach area residents, as well as their economic and social resources, also play a role in shaping their willingness to relocate (Bi, 2019).

Population relocation refers to the change of population in geographic location, or population movement, and population mechanical change. The population leaves its original place of residence for a certain purpose or motive, for a longer or shorter period, for a nearer or farther distance, or returns or does not return to its original place of settlement for the rest of its life, all of which are called population relocation. It was also found that population migration is an important social phenomenon (Zang & Xu, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

The research framework of this study is divided into two aspects: the surface and internal effects of policies on the quality of life of villagers.

The surface impacts include the impact of policies on agricultural production of villagers, the impact of policies on housing and transportation for villagers, the impact of policies on village committee reform on villagers, the impact of policies on villagers' income, and the impact of policies on medical education for villagers. These impacts are the direct impact of policy implementation on residents' lives, which is predictable and macroscopic. The internal impact can be divided into the impact of policies on farmers' customs and culture, as well as the impact of policies on farmers' living habits. These impacts, due to different living habits and economic development levels in different regions, will have different impacts, with randomness and differences. By working together from these two perspectives, we can gain a more accurate understanding of the impact of relocation policies in the Yellow River floodplain on residents, thus making the research content authentic.

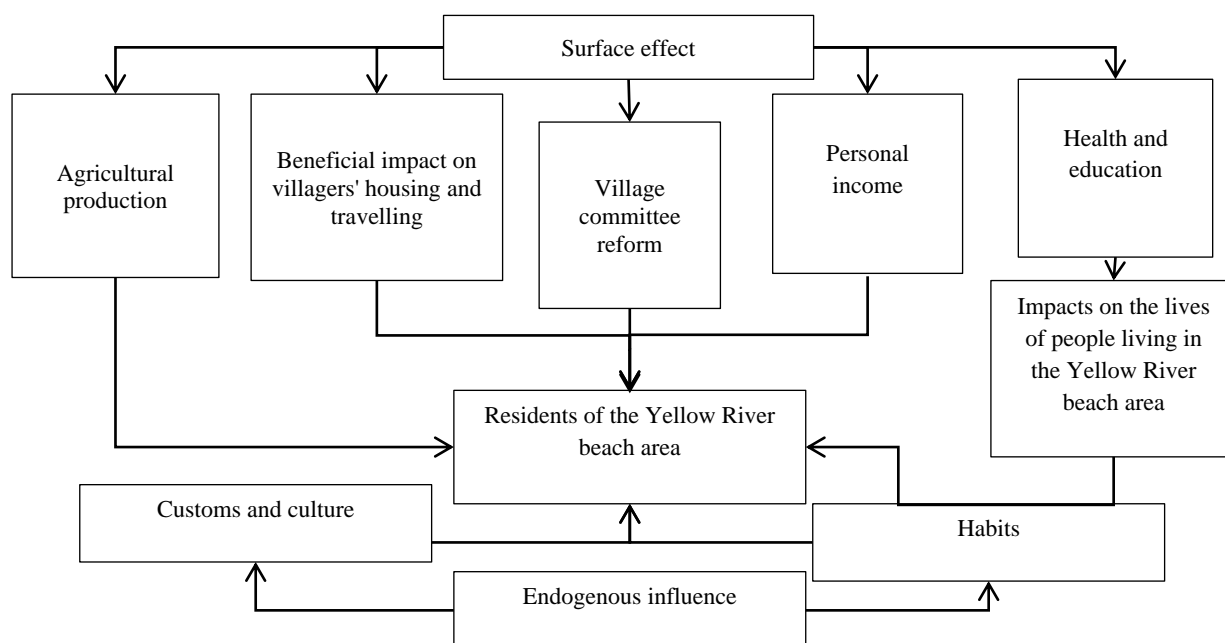


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

In this study, sampling interviews were conducted with a total of 15 people, including 5 members of the village committee and 10 villagers. The main contents of the sampling interviews included the impacts on the residents after relocation regarding agricultural production, housing, income, education, medical care, cultural conflicts, and living habits. References are used to organize research results and papers about the relocation policy of the Yellow River beach area.

Results

This section summarizes the interviews conducted with beachgoers and village council staff. This chapter consists of two main parts. In the first part are the positive impacts of the Yellow River beach relocation policy.

In the second part are the negative impacts of the Yellow River beach relocation policy.

Positive Impacts:

Impacts on agricultural production: the interview results show that in the past, the inundation of the mudflats also led to barren land, a large amount of land could not be planted with crops, and the villagers were plunged into deep poverty. After the implementation of the mudflat relocation policy, the former barren land has been turned back into arable land, improving the efficiency of farming.



"In the past, a lot of land in our village could not grow crops. Through the government's consolidation and re-cultivation of land, our per capita arable land area has become larger, farmers have land in their hands, and their hearts are solid with it." (Interviewee: Villager A, 2023)

Impact on villagers' housing and travel: the new Village Terrace is designed by the new rural community planning, and every resident lives in a villa, with public facilities such as primary schools, kindergartens, community service centers, etc., and infrastructure facilities such as rubbish transfer stations, sewage treatment stations, fire stations, and bus stops, as well as distinctive features of greening, lightening, and landscaping, and the new community is also a model of beautiful countryside.

"I have never lived in such a good house in my life. In the early days, the place where we lived was often flooded, now we live in a new village where we are no longer afraid of floods and traveling has become more convenient." (Interviewee: Villager B, 2023)

The impact of village committee reform on villagers: Caiyuan Jizhen has set up a new village platform party committee, and the village platform party committee grid management has constructed a grid governance system with common participation, realizing the seamless and fine governance of "a small grid to solve the problems and the whole network to link up". The Establishment of the digital village people's service platform in the beach area ensures a seamless process, providing the masses with better quality services.



"In the past, if villagers wanted to get a business license, they had to go dozens of kilometers away to do so. Now, with the Digital Village Convenience Service Platform, all government services can be done in the village committee, which is very convenient." (Interviewee: Government Service Worker A, 2023)

"In the past, problems were difficult to deal with due to the limited capacity of the village councils. Now, with the reform of the village councils, problems can be solved through the co-operation of many parties, which reduces the difficulty of many tasks." (Interviewee: Government Service Worker B, 2023)



Impact on farmers' income: "Innovating the "village-enterprise association + agricultural park" model to promote farmers' income, insisting on the reclamation of old villages in the Yellow River beach area as a key link, actively attracting social capital and leading enterprises, and establishing a mechanism for linking interests: the village Party branch gives full play to the leading role of Party building, guides the masses to strengthen the adjustment of the industrial structure, transforms the mode of production, and encourages the villagers to develop their enterprises and increase their incomes.

"In the past, flooding prevented us from growing crops on most of the village's land, and life was so difficult that young people had to go out to work or move away from their home villages. Now, with the support of the national policy, there are more rural projects, which increase income and make more money." (Interviewee: Villager A, 2023)



Impact on education and medical care: the school can meet the educational needs of children from kindergarten to primary school; the community has a health center, which can meet the basic needs of villagers for medication and medical treatment; the three-story orphanage provides convenient pension services and can meet the pension needs of the elderly; the overall supporting facilities make

"education for the young, education for the young, medical treatment for the sick, and old age care for the elderly" become a reality in the Yellow River Mudflat area.

Impact on education and medical care: interviews with ordinary villagers

"In the past, our children had to go to school in a town more than ten kilometers away, and picking up and dropping off our children every day was a big problem. Now, there is a primary school in the community. It's especially convenient to go to school just a few minutes out of the house." (Interviewee: Villager C, 2023)

"In the past, it was difficult to check our health due to the distance and the cost of checking a lot of money. Now, the government is too good to us, not only helping us to check for free but also giving us a variety of activities to give us a sense of security and enjoyment in our old age." (Interviewee: Elderly A, 2023)



Negative Impacts

Impact on farmers' economic income: Villagers were not allowed to raise livestock. In the past, raising a batch of livestock each year for sale on the market was an additional income. The meat, eggs, and milk produced could also be supplied to the family. Now, not only have these incomes disappeared, but they must also spend additional expenditures on meat, eggs, and milk, which indirectly leads to a decline in the farmers' standard of living. Whereas wood-burning stoves used to be free in the countryside, now one has to pay for natural gas, bringing new financial expenses to farmers.

"Initially, our family raised two pigs a year and sold them in the New Year, not only to fulfill our family's need for meat but now we have to buy more meat in the New Year. In the past, we used firewood for cooking but now we use gas and we have to pay again." (Interviewee: Elderly D, 2023)

Impacts of village council reform: all three village councils have their political tasks, resulting in an inability to co-manage and a lack of a common sense of development, leading to an irrational distribution of work.

"Previously, we had fewer members in our village councils. After moving to a new village, the number of management positions increased. However, work was also difficult due to manpower shortage. Many comrades are under pressure as they are engaged in multiple jobs." (Interviewee: Government Service Worker C, 2023)

Clash of living habits: As the village construction plan was based on the urbanization plan, the planning did not include a parking area for agricultural machines, which resulted in damage to agricultural machines. Rural elderly people are used to growing their vegetables and raising poultry as a hobby, which is not allowed in Village Terrace, and this has caused a lot of dissatisfaction among the rural elderly. The yards of the houses in Village Terrace are relatively small, which is not very satisfactory for the rural people who like big yards. The houses in Village Terrace are all two-story or

three-story villas, while the rural elderly people used to live in squares, and they are not used to going up and down the stairs in their daily lives.



"Initially I lived in a yard and grew my vegetables and chickens and ducks to save money. After I moved to a new village, I was not allowed to keep poultry and livestock. I'm looking at living in a villa but the area is smaller than the house I used to live in. I'm an elderly person who is uncomfortable with going up and down stairs every day." (Respondent: Elderly B, 2023)

"I think this policy is also flawed. Here, I have no place to park my tractor when it rains, so it has to get wet and has to be repaired several times. How much money do I make from farming? Maintenance from one year to the next is not enough and there is no place to borrow someone else's machine if it breaks down during the busy farming season." (Interview with villager C, 2023)

Cultural conflict brought about by the new social ethos: After the villagers were freed from poverty and the threat of flooding, a new social ethos arose, with excessive pursuit of material benefits and spiritual enjoyment, and increasingly utilitarian interpersonal relationships in the villages, which led to a certain degree to the disorder of the village society. Ugly phenomena such as blind comparison of red and white wedding ceremonies in the countryside, vulgar cultural performances, and "pornography, gambling, and drugs" have spread.

"Having relocated to a new village, life has become more comfortable, and the basic needs of the community are met, alleviating worries. However, certain negative aspects of the city, such as deceptive influences and corrupting behaviors, have seeped into the village through various channels. Some villagers have abandoned their simple way of life, succumbing to the pursuit of pleasure and materialism. There is a trend of excessive competition, where people focus on displaying their wealth, elaborate wedding ceremonies, and luxury purchases, shaping a new rural culture driven by vanity and materialistic desires." (Interviewee: Village Council Staff B, 2023)

Table 1: Positive impacts and negative impacts from relocation and construction policy.

Impacts	Characteristics
Positive Impacts	Impacts on agricultural production
	Impact on villagers' housing and traveling
	Impacts of village committee reform on rural villagers
	Impact on farmers' income
	Impact of education and healthcare
Negative Impacts	Impact on farmers' economic income
	Impacts of Village Committee Reforms
	Clash of old and new cultures
	Conflict of living habits

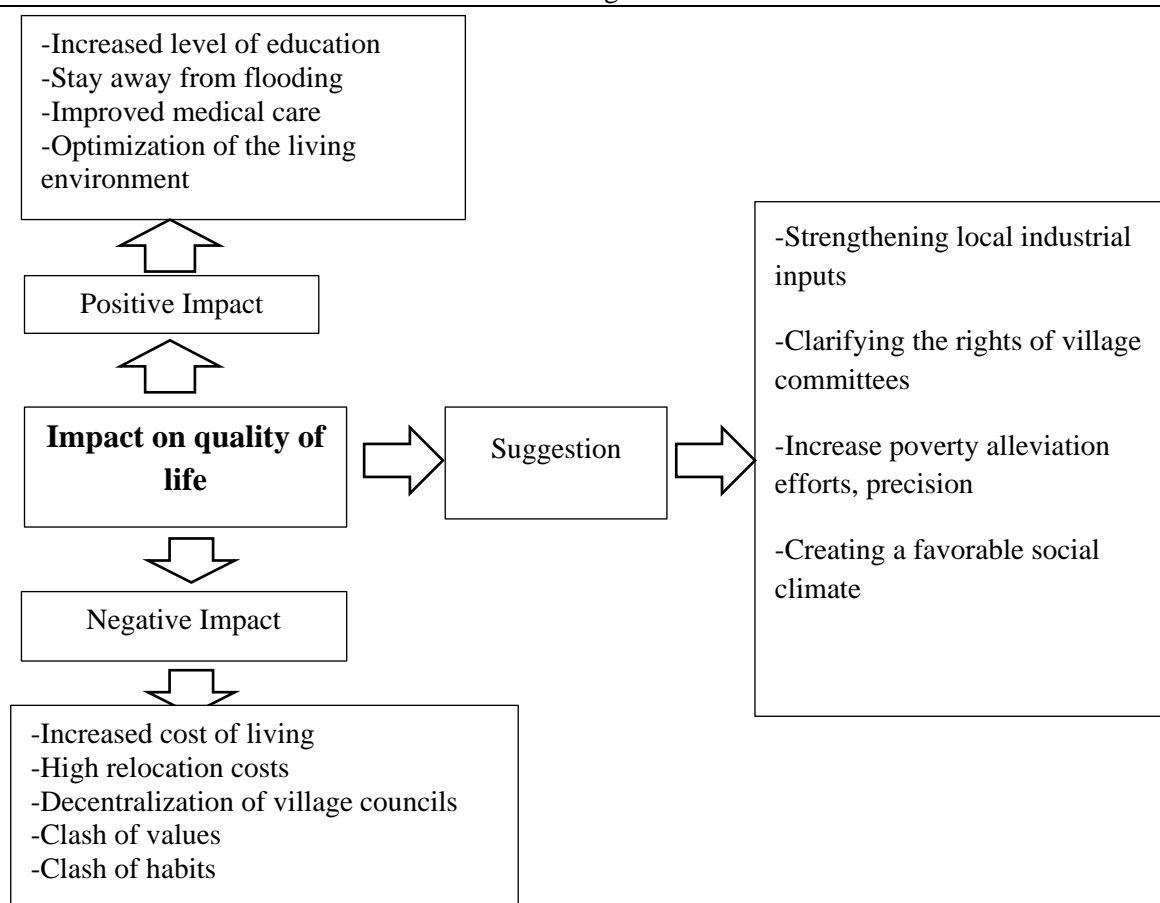


Figure 2: Model of the influence of relocation policy on villagers' quality of life

Discussion

Based on the interview data and references, the following issues will be discussed concerning the three research objectives of this paper.

1) What are the problems caused by the relocation and construction policy of the Yellow River beach area?

The relocation of the beach area in the lower Yellow River is special, complex, and arduous, and requires the active cooperation of many departments and the general public in the beach area. The relocation of the Yellow River beach area is not a quick fix, not moved into the resettlement area, and the relocation work is completed. The relocation of the Yellow River beach area is a long-term work (Chen, 2018). In the process of implementing the policy in the Yellow River Bund Area in Dongming, there are the following problems, including the high cost of living for farmers, the high cost of



relocation, the reduced implementation of the village committee, and the creation of a new conflict of cultural values among farmers.

2) What are the impacts caused by the relocation policy in the Yellow River beach area?

The impact factors of the relocation policy on residents are mainly divided into personal factors, family economic factors, existing housing factors, policy perception factors, and interpersonal factors. (Sun, 2019). These influencing factors are closely related to the quality of life of villagers. Through interviews and references, the impacts caused by the Yellow River beach area relocation policy are classified into positive and negative impacts. Positive impacts include improved housing conditions for villagers, higher levels of education and medical care, diversification of farmers' income methods, more efficient government departments, and expansion of agricultural cultivation areas. Negative impacts include an increased burden on farmers' lives, power division of village committees, and distortion of some farmers' values.

3) Suggestions for the policy of relocating the Yellow River beach area.

The study emphasizes the importance of considering both the role of local governments and communities, as well as the subjective experiences of migrants, in the citizenship process of relocated individuals. This approach is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the importance of understanding the experiences and perspectives of migrants in the process of integration and citizenship (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008; Scholten & Penninx, 2016).

The five suggestions put forward by the researcher are also consistent with previous research on strategies for promoting integration and reducing poverty among migrants. For example, strengthening supporting industries in agriculture can provide economic opportunities for migrants and improve their livelihoods (Lu & Xu, 2019). Creating a good social atmosphere can help to reduce discrimination and promote social inclusion (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). Targeted poverty alleviation programs can help to address the specific needs of migrant communities (Lu & Xu, 2019). Reforming village committees can improve local governance and increase the participation of migrants in decision-making processes (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008). Finally, providing support to help migrants adapt to their new lives can improve their well-being and increase their chances of success (Scholten & Penninx, 2016).

Conclusion

The information obtained from the study indicates that the relocation policy in the Yellow River beach area is generally a good livelihood policy. Villagers can move from dilapidated bungalows to new communities with superior living environments and complete supporting facilities, laying a solid foundation for the common prosperity of mudflat residents. However, in the process of policy implementation, there are still some micro issues, such as the cost of living for farmers, the differentiation of rights in rural village committees, and the conflict and integration of cultural values among farmers. These issues have indeed affected the normal lives of some villagers, reducing their quality of life in various aspects such as agricultural production, income and expenditure, cultural life, policy implementation, and precision. Based on the data and field interviews with migrants from the mudflat of the Yellow River, this paper puts forward some personal suggestions for the relocation project of the mudflat of the Yellow River given the researcher's limited knowledge and ability, such as strengthening investment in agricultural supporting industries, establishing a correct social atmosphere, targeted poverty alleviation, rural committee reform, etc. However, due to the limited knowledge and abilities of the researcher, the suggestions provided are inevitably limited. I believe that more scholars will improve such research and further contribute to the national economy and people's livelihood.



Recommendation

This article combines information and on-site interviews with residents to propose some personal suggestions for the relocation project of the Yellow River mudflats. 1) Strengthening the input of supporting agricultural industries. According to local conditions, establish projects such as pastures, canneries, and vegetable processing plants to increase the added value of agriculture. Recruit local villagers to participate in the project and directly purchase local agricultural products. 2) Create a good social atmosphere. Actively carry out cultural activities through village committees, promote traditional virtues, establish good and correct values for villagers, and help villagers in difficulty. 3) Targeted poverty alleviation. The government should accurately implement policies in favor of people in difficulty, such as reducing or waiving resettlement fees for poor households, setting up workshops for poverty alleviation, and increasing incomes, to ensure the effectiveness of the policy objectives of relocating and constructing the riverbank area. 4) Reform of village committees. The original three village committees can be integrated into one according to the actual situation, to improve the organizational strength, integrate the resources of the three village committees, give full play to the advantages of population synergy, achieve precise control over the implementation of the policy, and improve the implementation of the policy. 5) Helping the public to adapt to the new life. Regular courses are conducted through the village committees, including guidelines on the use of smartphone apps, smart home appliances, and intelligent government services. Provide free activities for the elderly over 60 years old in the village to carry heavy loads up the stairs to help the beach area residents adapt to the new life as soon as possible.

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