

The Practical Logic, Multi-dimensional Effects and Optimization Path of the "Thousand Villages Project" in Promoting Rural Revitalization

Feifei Yu

Institute of Finance and Public Management, Anhui University of Finance & Economics, Bengbu Anhui 233030, China

Abstract: The "Thousand Demonstration Villages, Ten Thousand Village Renovation" project (abbreviated as the "10 million village project") is a major rural development initiative launched in Zhejiang Province in 2003. It has been of great significance to rural revitalization for over two decades. This paper aims to deeply explore the practical logic, multi-dimensional effectiveness, and optimization paths of the "10 million village project" in promoting rural revitalization, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas nationwide. The study analyzes the evolution of policy, practice, and subject matter from three perspectives. In terms of policy evolution, the "10 million village project" has gradually transitioned from a government-led demonstration and guidance phase to an upgraded development phase with collaborative governance by multiple subjects, with a continuous upgrade in rural development goals and priorities. In terms of practical evolution, from the perspectives of village types and human settlements, the "10 million village project" has promoted the iteration of rural needs and the transformation of rural forms, achieving multi-dimensional improvements in human settlements. In terms of subject matter evolution, a collaborative mechanism of "government embedding + rural absorption" has been formed, with different participating subjects and roles at different stages. The "Ten Million Project" has achieved remarkable results in multiple areas: ecology, capital, talent, and technology. Ecologically, it promotes restoration, innovates governance mechanisms, and adheres to green development. Capital-wise, it builds a diversified investment mechanism, innovates transfer payment mechanisms, and deepens reforms to strengthen the collective economy. Talent-wise, it attracts talent and cultivates a workforce through various initiatives and systems. Technologically, it promotes the application of digital technologies, implements "e-commerce to revitalize agriculture," promotes digital governance, and explores technological innovation in agriculture. Finally, based on the research, it proposes optimization paths, including upholding Party leadership, a people-oriented approach, urban-rural integration, and the new development philosophy.

Keywords: Thousand Villages Demonstration Project; Rural revitalization; Practical logic; Multi-dimensional results.

1. Introduction

The "Thousand Demonstration Villages, Ten Thousand Villages Renovation Project" (abbreviated as the "10 million village project") is a major rural development initiative personally planned, deployed, and promoted by Comrade Xi Jinping in 2003, when he was Secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee [1]. Over the past two decades, the "10 million village project" has continued to enrich and deepen its scope, not only creating numerous beautiful villages in Zhejiang but also benefiting countless farmers. The project encompasses all aspects of the rural living environment and is closely linked to rural industrial development, the cultivation of rural civilization, and village governance [2]. It has achieved remarkable results in practice, pioneering explorations for comprehensive rural revitalization and providing a successful model [3].

The Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee further emphasized the need to leverage the experience of the "Ten Million Project" to establish a long-term mechanism for promoting comprehensive rural revitalization. The goal is to establish and improve long-term mechanisms for rural revitalization and achieve its goals. The Central Document No. 1 of 2025 emphasizes the need to thoroughly learn from the experience of the "Ten Million Project," consolidate the foundations of agriculture, rural areas, and farmers, improve rural industries, construction, and governance, and build beautiful villages that are livable,

suitable for business, and suitable for employment. Currently, leveraging the experience of the "Ten Million Project" to guide rural agricultural modernization is an inevitable requirement for promoting rural revitalization in the new era.

2. Literature Review

In the academic field, scholars have conducted in-depth research on the measures implemented at the industrial level of the "Ten Million Project", the results achieved, and its key value to industrial prosperity in the process of rural revitalization. Among them, Hu Bao et al. (2023) systematically sorted out the six development stages of Zhejiang Province's "Ten Million Project" over the past 20 years, analyzed its evolutionary and iterative patterns, and extracted construction experiences in many aspects, such as people-oriented development concepts, green value orientation, systematic governance thinking, village management strategies, and government guidance and guarantees. Other scholars focused on industrial development models and explored the path to achieving rural industrial prosperity. Wu Qifu (2022) summarized the ten typical models formed in Zhejiang Province's rural revitalization practice, emphasizing the need to fully tap into local advantageous development factors and explore new rural development paths that meet the requirements of the new era from multiple dimensions such as ecological protection, industrial cultivation, talent attraction and cultivation, cultural heritage, and organizational construction [4].

Another group of scholars, from the perspective of industrial integration, have conducted research on issues such as the integration model of industry and village, the role of the government, the functions and influencing factors of various participating entities in the context of industrial prosperity. Xian Jun (2019) believes that industrial-village integration is the main path to achieving rural revitalization and recommends promoting the sustainable development of rural characteristic industries by guiding participating entities to change their behavior. Chen Zanzhang (2019) pointed out that the government plays a leading role in the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy [5]. Niu Meng and Li Fuqiang (2023) proposed that the core goal of rural revitalization is to promote the process of rural modernization, and the key to achieving this goal lies in promoting the integrated development of urban and rural areas. In promoting rural revitalization, it is necessary to fully respect the wishes of farmers, carry out scientific research and planning, and create exemplary highlight projects. At the same time, they emphasize the people-centered development concept and the importance of in-depth research and scientific planning for rural revitalization.

In summary, academics have reached a basic consensus on the role, value, and practical significance of the "Ten Million Project." Research on the project's connotations, significance, and lessons learned continues to expand. However, existing research still has room for improvement. First, the depth of academic research needs to be enhanced. Existing research findings are primarily summary, opinion, or commentary articles, lacking significant theoretical translation and sublimation. Regarding the "Ten Million Project," an innovative practice with Chinese characteristics, the underlying concepts, implementation methods, and operational mechanisms still lack in-depth exploration and systematic summary from an endogenous perspective. Furthermore, when analyzing practical cases, they have not been fully integrated with theoretical frameworks, resulting in weak theoretical support for the research. Second, the level of systematic integration is insufficient. While existing research has distilled the lessons learned from the "Ten Million Project" from multiple dimensions, the practical logical connections and hierarchical structure of these lessons have yet to be thoroughly explored. In particular, in the context of comprehensive rural revitalization and the construction of "harmonious and beautiful villages," how can the endogenous lessons learned from the "Ten Million Project" provide strong support for comprehensive rural revitalization? Third, there is a lack of dynamic tracking research. The focus of rural development in many regions has shifted, from initially focusing on improving the human settlement environment to gradually expanding towards "equal emphasis on construction and governance," "integrating construction with industry," and "combining construction with cultural heritage." Against this backdrop, further research is needed to understand the scientific implications of the "Ten Million Project" from a dynamic development perspective, reveal its practical logic and inherent mechanisms in relation to comprehensive rural revitalization, and translate research findings into scalable policy recommendations.

Based on the above analysis, it is necessary to approach the issue from an evolutionary perspective, systematically sort out the development stages and connotation-deepening process of the "Ten Million Project", and deeply analyze the

practical logic and inherent connection between the project and rural revitalization. At the same time, it is necessary to comprehensively summarize the practical experience of Zhejiang Province in promoting rural revitalization with the help of the "Ten Million Project", deeply explore and scientifically apply the endogenous experience contained in the project, and extract its universal laws, so as to provide solid theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas across the country [6].

3. The Practical Logic of the "Ten Million Project" in Promoting Rural Revitalization

After more than two decades of continuous advancement, the "Ten Million Project" has continuously enriched and deepened its connotations, becoming a systematic and comprehensive program. It not only encompasses improvements to rural living environments and the construction of ecologically livable villages, but also deeply connects rural industrial development, the shaping of rural culture and civilization, and the optimization of rural governance. It has achieved remarkable results, providing pioneering experience and successful practice examples for the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas in my country. To gain a deeper understanding of the development stages and evolution of the "Ten Million Project," we can analyze it from three dimensions: policy evolution, practical evolution, and subject evolution.

3.1. The Development Stages and Core Characteristics of the "100 million Yuan Project" In the Context of Policy Evolution

For over two decades, the "Ten Million Yuan Project" has consistently pursued clear objectives, focusing on key priorities and continuously advancing them. This process has been accompanied by the release of a series of key policy documents. These policies have established a three-pronged model of "effective policy supply, robust policy implementation, and a solid foundation of policy guarantees," solidifying the institutional foundation for the steady progress of the "Ten Million Yuan Project." Under the strong support and impetus of government policies, the "Ten Million Yuan Project" has achieved phased deepening and advancement: from its initial government-led demonstration and guidance phase, it has gradually transitioned to a quality-enhancing phase integrating government guidance with the participation of multiple stakeholders, and ultimately entered a new stage of upgraded development with collaborative governance among multiple stakeholders.

3.2. Deepening the Connotation of the "Ten Million Project" From the Perspective of Practical Evolution

The "Ten Million Project" is not only a core vehicle for improving rural living environments, but also a project that benefits the people, builds public confidence, and fosters shared prosperity, directly impacting their livelihoods. It also serves as a rural governance initiative, characterized by its small focus but profound implications and wide coverage. The project has not only transformed the rural living

environment but has also profoundly impacted rural development concepts, the business environment, industrial structures, public service systems, governance models, and urban-rural relations. As the core mission of the "Ten Million Project," improving the living environment is the most direct and tangible change it brings to rural areas. The evolution of the "Ten Million Project"'s human settlement environment development, from "basic improvement" to "improvement" and finally to "comprehensive governance," embodies the project's development logic of "moving from point to surface, from low-level to high-level, from easy to difficult, from village to region, and from clean to beautiful ." We should pay close attention to the implementation, improve the construction site conditions, improve the environment, strengthen the construction site construction supervision, and strengthen the construction site construction supervision, so as to avoid being behind the construction. The first is to upgrade the concept to "fashionable beauty"; the fourth is to build on rural characteristics and promote ecological, nostalgic, pastoral, and folk custom brands. Relying on the beautiful environment to build scenic villages, leveraging development opportunities to cultivate new rural business formats, relying on external forces to strengthen the village-level collective economy, and promoting the transformation of rural living environments from "environmental beauty" to "development beauty"; the fifth is to focus on the needs of farmers for a better life, upgrade rural infrastructure construction standards, and improve the quality of public service provision, so that the rural living environment can be transformed from "construction beauty" to "life beauty."

3.3. Deepening the Connotation of the "Ten Million Project" From the Perspective of Subject Evolution

During the implementation of the "Ten Million Project," a synergistic mechanism of "government embeddedness + rural inclusion" was formed: the government provided top-down structural guidance through institutional, organizational, project, and talent integration; while rural areas, through bottom-up process inclusion, promoted the organic renewal of their own development mechanisms, operational cycles, and the continuous expansion of participating entities. This mechanism exhibited different characteristics at different stages of development. During the government-led demonstration and guidance phase, the "Ten Million Project" centered on "strengthening the foundation," focusing on foundational and gap-filling construction, and prioritizing the development of public infrastructure, centered around improving the rural living environment. During this phase, the government was the primary investor, while village collectives and farmers participated as beneficiaries. Entering the upgrading phase, combining government guidance with participant participation, rural development goals expanded from "livable" to "business-friendly" and "tourism-friendly." Development, operation, and maintenance functions were gradually incorporated into the "Ten Million Project," and the project's public good nature began to shift toward market goods or quasi-public goods. During this period, a framework emerged characterized by government guidance, active farmer participation, and a prominent role for village collectives. Especially after the government launched the "Two Ins and Two Returns" policy (encouraging the influx of technology and capital into rural areas, and guiding the return of young people and talented individuals to rural areas), more

market players and social forces began to enter rural areas, participating in investment and operations. Entering the upgraded phase of multi-stakeholder collaborative participation, the "Ten Million Project" explored and constructed a model for rural revitalization communities led by Party building: the government sets the rules, village collectives provide resources, the market oversees operations, social services provide services, talented individuals contribute their wisdom, and villagers invest their energy. Through the collaborative operation of multiple stakeholders, the optimized integration and integrated innovation of rural resources such as land, labor, ecology, culture, technology, talent, and organizations were achieved. This not only promoted the iterative upgrades of the "Ten Million Project" itself, but also provided strong support for the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas.

4. The Multi-Dimensional Effectiveness of the "Ten Million Project" in Promoting Rural Revitalization

4.1. Ecological Aspects: The 10 million Yuan Project Takes Environmental Improvement as The Starting Point to Drive the Overall Transformation of The Countryside

4.1.1. Innovate governance measures and build a new ecological governance mechanism

The "10 Million Yuan Project" takes rural governance as its starting point and actively explores diversified governance measures, including "Five Water Co-governance," the "River Chief System," "Three Renovations and One Demolition," and "Four Boundaries and Three Transformations." This has gradually expanded the focus of efforts from pollution control to include the demolition of illegal buildings and the development of beautiful villages. These measures have been well implemented and have achieved remarkable results. The "River Chief System" is being used to strengthen institutional innovation and enhance the effectiveness of water environment governance . Zhejiang Province, through this innovative practice, has established a grid-based water environment management system, effectively strengthening the long-term management mechanism for rivers. Since the launch of the "Five Water Co-governance" initiative, the province has established a "River Chief System" led by Party and government officials at all five levels to ensure the effectiveness of water resource management measures. This system clearly defines the three responsibilities of river chiefs at all levels: "management, governance, and protection." This has resulted in a comprehensive elimination of all types of water pollution, significantly improving the rural living environment. By raising environmental standards and strengthening environmental oversight, the province is accelerating the elimination of outdated, highly polluting, and energy-intensive production capacity, gradually eliminating excess capacity, and promoting the optimization and upgrading of the industrial structure .

4.1.2. Adhere to ecological priority and promote green development

In promoting ecological economic development, Zhejiang Province not only focuses on addressing heavily polluting and energy-intensive industries, but also prioritizes a comprehensive approach to ecological and development

considerations, effectively transforming rural areas' ecological advantages into public welfare benefits. Take Yu Village in Huzhou City, for example. Previously, Yu Village relied heavily on stone mining, which severely damaged the environment. Since the implementation of the "10 Million Yuan Project," villagers have responded positively, shutting down highly polluting industries and shifting to green initiatives like rural tourism. Today, rural tourism in Yu Village is thriving, and villagers' incomes are also increasing through initiatives like bamboo forest carbon sequestration. This practice in Zhejiang demonstrates that, through sound planning and a scientific development model, rural ecological resources can become a vital force driving economic development and improving people's well-being, achieving a virtuous interaction and coordinated development between ecology and the economy.

4.2. Capital: During the Implementation of the "Thousand Villages Demonstration Project", Zhejiang Province Not Only Effectively Guided the Proactive Investment of Rural Collectives and Farmers but Also Successfully Attracted Private Capital, Significantly Expanding the Scale and Profitability of Village-Level Collective Economies. This Fully Leveraged the Core Value of Capital, Improving the Efficiency and Speed of Capital Investment

4.2.1. Build a diversified funding mechanism to address the challenge of public goods supply

Zhejiang Province has established a clearly defined financial support mechanism, with provincial finances establishing dedicated support funds, municipal finances providing matching subsidies, and county finances incorporating relevant inputs into their annual budgets. On this basis, Zhejiang Province has actively encouraged social capital to participate in rural development, with over 15,000 companies already participating. This has established a new model for the operation of rural public goods, featuring collaborative supply from multiple entities and a coordinated and integrated system. This model has effectively addressed the long-standing challenges of insufficient supply and unsustainable operation and maintenance of rural public goods, providing stable financial support for rural development.

4.2.2. Innovate the ecological and environmental protection financial transfer payment mechanism to stimulate ecological protection

To fully mobilize the enthusiasm of local governments and rural residents for ecological protection, Zhejiang Province launched the first national ecological and environmental protection financial transfer payment system in 2005, creating an incentive-based system of "whoever protects, benefits" and "whoever improves, benefits." In 2017, Zhejiang Province further upgraded and optimized this system, innovatively establishing a green development fiscal reward and subsidy mechanism to address the lack of internal motivation for ecological and environmental protection and restoration efforts. Data shows that this reward and subsidy mechanism fully reflects the policy's preferential support for ecologically important areas, providing financial support for the

coordinated advancement of ecological protection and economic development.

4.3. Technology: Zhejiang Province Has Always Insisted on Deeply Integrating the Construction of "Digital Zhejiang" With The "Ten Million Project", Focusing on The Construction Task of China's Only Digital Rural Leading Area, And Actively Exploring Distinctive Paths for Digital Technology to Empower Agricultural and Rural Modernization

4.3.1. Promote the implementation of digital technologies and expand diverse application scenarios

To promote the digital transformation of agriculture, Zhejiang Province has innovatively developed the "Zhejiang Agricultural Code" service. Through a "one-code integration" model, it integrates core functions such as agricultural product identification, full-process traceability, and risk warning. At the same time, it is actively exploring new agricultural development paths such as creative agriculture and cloud farms, injecting new impetus into agricultural modernization. According to public information from the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the province has accelerated the construction of the "Zhejiang Rural Brain" since 2021. The core system architecture has been completed and a "1+16" Zhejiang agricultural scenario application matrix has been formed. In the practice of digital reform, this matrix has achieved remarkable results: multiple application scenarios such as "Zhejiang Animal Husbandry Industry Brain", "Zhejiang Agricultural Prosperity", and "Zhejiang Agricultural Products" have been rated as the best cases of digital reform in the province. As of now, Zhejiang Province has built the first batch of 210 digital agricultural factories, providing a solid foundation for the intelligent and intensive development of agricultural production. "An" has become the only pilot project in the country for the construction of precise intelligent control for fishing vessels and fishing ports. The province has built the first batch of 210 digital agricultural factories.

4.3.2. Explore innovative agricultural technologies and develop future farm models

Zhejiang Province has long promoted the in-depth implementation of the science and technology commissioner system, prioritizing the popularization and application of agricultural technology and the iterative improvement of production efficiency. Leveraging the "Ten Million Project," rural Zhejiang is actively seizing the opportunities presented by the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, continuously expanding the application scenarios of new agricultural technologies, and promoting the deep integration of emerging technologies with strong penetration and enabling properties, such as digital technology and biotechnology, with key areas such as rural industry development, ecological and environmental protection, and grassroots social governance. This has injected strong innovative vitality into the modernization of agriculture and rural areas.

5. Optimizing Paths for Promoting Rural Revitalization through the “Ten Million Project”

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping, from the strategic perspective of guiding the high-quality development of China's "Three Rural Issues" (agriculture, rural areas, and farmers), has repeatedly issued important instructions and directives on Zhejiang's "Ten Million Project," charting the course for its further advancement and shared success. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has further clarified its deployment, mandating the nationwide promotion of the successful experience of the "Ten Million Project." Using this as a key initiative, it has launched a nationwide campaign to improve the rural living environment, promoting the sustained improvement of rural living conditions and enhancing the overall appearance of rural areas.

5.1. Adhere to the Leadership of Party Building and Place The "Three Rural Issues" Work at The Core of Party and Government Work

The key to the "Ten Million Project" 's scientific top-level design and robust implementation lies in the personal planning and deployment by then-Secretary of the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee, Xi Jinping, and its subsequent continued advancement by the Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee and Provincial Government. Drawing upon the practical experience of Zhejiang's "Ten Million Project," local governments should prioritize the guiding role of Party building, strengthen the dominant position of the Party and government, clearly define the responsibilities of all parties, and effectively place the "three rural issues" at the core of Party and government work. On this basis, a working mechanism should be established in which Party secretaries at the provincial, municipal, county, township, and village levels jointly address the "three rural issues." Comprehensive coordination should be provided for the promotion paths and implementation models in key areas such as improving the rural living environment, improving public infrastructure, and the coordinated development of urban and rural industries, ensuring the orderly implementation of all efforts and achieving significant results.

At the same time, we must fully activate the effectiveness of rural grassroots party organizations as a bastion of battle, rely on the political and organizational advantages of party organizations, closely connect with the masses and rely on the masses, further stimulate the masses' initiative and enthusiasm for participation, and lead the masses to actively participate in various practices to comprehensively promote rural revitalization, and build a good working pattern with strong party and government leadership and extensive participation of the masses.

5.2. Adhere to Urban-Rural Integration and Build a New Type of Relationship Between Workers, Farmers, Cities and Rural Areas as The Development Goal

Since its launch, the "10 Million Yuan Project" has consistently employed systematic planning and a holistic perspective to promote its implementation. It has prioritized

coordinated urban and rural development throughout its implementation process, making it one of its core priorities. In drawing on this experience, local governments must first break away from the one-sided development mindset of prioritizing cities over rural areas, prioritizing the economy over governance, and prioritizing revenue over ecology, and instead adopt a more balanced and comprehensive perspective for urban and rural development. On this basis, key initiatives should be to promote the deep integration of the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries and narrow the gap in the quantity, scale, and quality of urban and rural public infrastructure and public services, thereby facilitating the free flow and efficient allocation of various resource elements between urban and rural areas.

At the same time, efforts must be made to reform and innovate urban and rural planning systems and infrastructure investment and construction management mechanisms, further improving the institutional framework for integrated urban and rural development. Through a collaborative model of "industry promoting agriculture, and cities promoting rural development," we will promote a mutually reinforcing development pattern between urban and rural areas, gradually equip rural areas with conditions compatible with modern life, promote the integration and homogenization of urban and rural public infrastructure and public services, continuously narrow the gap in disposable income between urban and rural residents, and achieve common development and prosperity for both urban and rural areas.

5.3. Adhere to the New Development Concept and Use Technology to Promote the Modernization of Chinese Agriculture

The in-depth promotion of the "Ten Million Project" is inseparable from the popularization and deepening of thematic education on Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, such as the concept of "Green water and green mountains are gold and silver mountains" and the people-centered development concept. These ideas have become important ideological guidelines for promoting the implementation of the project.

At the same time, the remarkable achievements of the "Ten Million Project" are also inseparable from the long-term adherence to the science and technology special envoy system and the widespread dissemination of agricultural science and technology knowledge. All regions must rely on science and technology to promote the transformation and upgrading of the agricultural industry. Digital technology can be used to empower the cultivation of the rural digital economy and establish an efficient rural digital governance system. At the same time, we must continue to deepen the implementation of the "Digital Commerce to Revitalize Agriculture" initiative, focusing on technological application and model innovation to continuously promote production efficiency and economic growth in various rural industries, providing digital support for the high-quality development of rural industries.

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