

# RESEARCH ON THE LEGAL GUARANTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF RURAL REVITALIZATION - FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LAND DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL ADVANCEMENT

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**Abstract:** Achieving a balance between rural ecological environment protection and rural economic development poses a formidable challenge. Neither sacrificing rural ecological integrity solely for economic growth nor prioritizing environmental conservation at the expense of rural residents' economic aspirations represents a viable solution. Building upon the eradication of absolute poverty in 2020, China has introduced the Rural Revitalization Strategy, leveraging legal instruments to pursue harmonious development between rural economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. This strategic approach offers valuable insights and experiences for other nations grappling with the dual challenges of rural economic development and environmental conservation.

**Keywords:** Rural revitalization strategy; Rural ecological environment protection; Rural economic development

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the wake of rapid urbanization and industrialization, China's rural areas have faced numerous challenges, including ecological degradation and economic stagnation. The implementation of rural revitalization strategies aims to address these issues by fostering sustainable development that harmoniously integrates economic growth with environmental conservation. The research on the legal framework that safeguards both environmental protection and economic advancement in rural China is crucial, not only for domestic purposes but also for its international significance. As China, with its vast rural population and diverse agro-ecological systems, offers a unique case study, its experiences and lessons can serve as valuable references for other countries, particularly those in developing economies, striving to balance rural development with ecological preservation. Understanding the legal mechanisms that facilitate this balance is imperative for global efforts towards sustainable rural transformation.

This paper endeavors to delve into the current state of legal safeguards governing rural ecological environment protection and economic development in China amidst the backdrop of rural revitalization. Furthermore, the paper endeavors to formulate practical recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of these legal guarantees, thereby contributing to the holistic and sustainable revitalization of China's rural areas. By doing so, it hopes to offer insights that can be adapted or inspired by other nations embarking on similar rural development trajectories.

## 2 OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AND RURAL ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

### 2.1 Origin of China's Rural Revitalization Strategy

China's Rural Revitalization Strategy emerged as a pivotal component of the country's overall development blueprint, building upon the profound achievements of the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Strategy. Initiated in 2013, the Targeted Poverty Alleviation Strategy revolutionized poverty eradication efforts by adopting a precision approach, ensuring that resources and policies were tailored to the unique needs of impoverished households and regions. This strategy not only lifted millions out of absolute poverty but also laid a solid foundation for further rural development.

The Rural Revitalization Strategy, as a logical extension of the poverty alleviation efforts, aims to address the lingering issues of imbalanced and insufficient rural development, striving for a holistic and sustainable rural transformation. It integrates and expands upon the precision principles of targeted poverty alleviation, focusing on long-term strategies for economic growth, social progress, and ecological conservation. By doing so, the strategy seeks to bridge the urban-rural divide and foster a more equitable and inclusive development path.

### 2.2 Core Essentials of China's Rural Revitalization Strategy

The core essentials of China's Rural Revitalization Strategy encompass multifaceted aspects aimed at revitalizing rural areas comprehensively. These include:

**Industrial Prosperity:** Fostering diversified and innovative rural industries to boost agricultural productivity and create new economic opportunities.

**Ecological Livability:** Enhancing rural ecological environments through sustainable agricultural practices and eco-friendly infrastructure, ensuring a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

**Cultural Vitality:** Preserving and promoting rural cultural heritage, fostering a vibrant rural culture that enriches the spiritual lives of residents.

**Effective Governance:** Strengthening rural governance systems to ensure efficient and democratic decision-making processes, promoting social stability and harmony.

**Prosperous Living Standards:** Increasing rural incomes and improving living conditions, ensuring that all rural residents share in the fruits of development.

### 2.3 Concept of China's Rural Ecological Environment

The rural ecological environment in China refers to the intricate system encompassing both natural and human-made elements that support rural life and economic activities. It comprises fertile farmland, lush forests, clean water bodies, as well as the infrastructure and lifestyles that characterize rural communities. This environment serves as the bedrock for agricultural production and rural residents' wellbeing, underpinning the sustainability of rural economies and societies.

### 2.4 Current State and Challenges of China's Rural Ecological Environment

Despite significant improvements, China's rural ecological environment continues to face numerous challenges. The current state and challenges can be summarized as follows:

**Pollution Intensification:** Agricultural intensification, characterized by heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides, has led to soil and water pollution. Additionally, inadequate waste management systems result in untreated sewage and solid waste disposal, exacerbating environmental degradation.

**Ecological Degradation:** Overexploitation of natural resources, such as deforestation, overgrazing, and unsustainable farming practices, has caused severe ecological degradation, threatening biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Rural areas often lag behind in terms of environmental infrastructure, including wastewater treatment facilities and solid waste management systems. This infrastructure gap hinders effective pollution control and environmental management.

**Legal and Regulatory Gaps:** While progress has been made in environmental legislation, enforcement in rural areas remains weak, with gaps in the legal framework and inadequate regulatory oversight.

**Limited Public Awareness:** A lack of environmental awareness among rural residents, coupled with inadequate education and outreach programs, hampers their ability to contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

## 3 ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN CHINA

### 3.1 The Mutual Promotion Relationship between Rural Economic Development and Rural Ecological Environmental Protection in China

The intricate interplay between rural economic development and rural ecological environmental protection in China presents a dynamic balance that underscores their inherent synergy. In the Chinese context, the concept of "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" encapsulates the essence of this mutual promotion. It emphasizes that a healthy environment is not only essential for human well-being but also a source of economic prosperity. This philosophy guides policymaking, encouraging a shift towards green and low-carbon development paths that prioritize both economic growth and environmental sustainability. In China, this Mutual Promotion Relationship is manifested as follows:

Firstly, rural economic development provides the necessary financial resources and technological advancements that enable more effective ecological environmental protection measures. As rural economies prosper, governments and communities have greater capacity to invest in environmental infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment facilities, solid waste management systems, and renewable energy projects. These investments mitigate pollution, conserve natural resources, and enhance the overall resilience of ecosystems. For instance, the adoption of modern agricultural techniques reduces the reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, thereby diminishing soil and water contamination. Secondly, a healthy rural ecosystem offers a myriad of ecological services that directly contribute to rural economic development. Clean water, fertile soil, and diverse biodiversity are essential resources for agriculture, tourism, and other sectors. The preservation of these resources attracts eco-tourism, which in turn generates employment opportunities, boosts local economies, and increases incomes for rural households. Additionally, the provision of ecosystem services, such as pollination, pest control, and climate regulation, enhances agricultural productivity and reduces the need for external inputs, further fueling economic growth.

Furthermore, innovation and technological advancements play a pivotal role in fostering this mutual promotion relationship. For example, precision agriculture techniques utilize data analytics and sensor technology to optimize resource use, minimizing waste and environmental degradation. Similarly, renewable energy sources like solar and

wind power reduce dependence on fossil fuels, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting clean energy development.

### **3.2 The Potential Conflict Relationship between Rural Economic Development and Rural Ecological Environmental Protection in China**

While the mutual promotion relationship between rural economic development and rural ecological environmental protection is paramount, there also exists the potential for conflicts and trade-offs.

Firstly, one of the primary sources of conflict arises from resource scarcity and the tendency towards overexploitation. As rural economies grow, there is an increased demand for land, water, and other natural resources. This often leads to intensive farming practices, unsustainable land use, and excessive extraction of natural resources, causing soil degradation, water pollution, and biodiversity loss. The competition between economic development and environmental conservation becomes more pronounced, forcing difficult decisions and compromises.

Secondly, the push for rural industrialization and urbanization also contributes to potential conflicts. Industrial activities, particularly those without proper environmental safeguards, can generate significant pollution, including air and water contamination, as well as solid waste. This not only degrades the environment but also threatens public health and reduces the quality of life for rural residents. Balancing industrial growth with environmental protection becomes a significant challenge.

Thirdly, another dimension of conflict lies in the tension between short-term economic gains and long-term environmental sustainability. In many cases, immediate economic benefits from resource exploitation or industrial expansion may seem attractive, but they often come at the cost of long-term ecological damage. This creates a dilemma for policymakers and communities, who must weigh the short-term benefits against the potential long-term consequences.

Fourthly, the effectiveness of environmental protection measures is often hindered by inadequate policy implementation and enforcement. Despite the existence of environmental laws and regulations, gaps in enforcement and a lack of sufficient resources can undermine their effectiveness. Weak institutions and inadequate monitoring can also contribute to environmental degradation.

Finally, the level of public awareness and participation in environmental protection efforts plays a crucial role in mitigating conflicts. The public's overemphasis on economic development and insufficient awareness of the importance of environmental protection can exacerbate tensions between economic development and environmental protection.

## **4 THE ROLE OF RURAL LAND DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL INDUSTRIES IN RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The role of land development and industry in rural economic development is complex and multifaceted. While these forces have driven economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction in rural areas, they have also posed significant challenges to environmental protection and sustainability.

### **4.1 Historical Context and Current Trends of Rural Land Development and Township Enterprises in China**

The narrative of rural land development and the rise of township and village enterprises (TVEs) in China is intertwined with the country's broader economic reforms and modernization drive. Since the late 1970s, when the rural household responsibility system was introduced, Chinese farmers gained greater autonomy over their land and labor, spurring a wave of entrepreneurship and industrialization in rural areas. This period marked a significant shift from collective farming to a more decentralized and market-oriented economy.

Village enterprises, initially established as collective enterprises, gradually transformed into diverse forms of private, joint-stock, and cooperative enterprises. These enterprises capitalized on the country's abundant rural resources, including land, labor, and raw materials, to engage in a wide range of activities, from light manufacturing to agro-processing and services. Their emergence not only diversified the rural economy but also created job opportunities, increased incomes, and fostered regional development.

Today, the landscape of rural land development and industrialization in China is marked by both progress and challenges. On one hand, technological advancements, improved infrastructure, and policy support have facilitated the growth of more sophisticated and environmentally conscious industries. On the other hand, rapid industrialization and unchecked development have led to environmental degradation, resource depletion, and social disparities.

### **4.2 Positive Impacts of Land Development and Rural Industry on Rural Economies**

**Economic Diversification and Job Creation:** By promoting non-farm activities, land development and rural industrialization have helped diversify rural economies, reducing dependence on agriculture and mitigating the risks associated with climate change and market fluctuations. This diversification has led to the creation of numerous job opportunities, particularly for women and youth, who often face limited employment prospects in traditional agriculture.

**Income Generation and Poverty Reduction:** As rural industries thrive, they contribute significantly to household incomes and poverty reduction. Increased income levels not only improve living standards but also empower rural residents to invest in education, healthcare, and other essential services.

**Infrastructure Development:** The growth of rural industries often necessitates investments in infrastructure, such as roads, power grids, and communication networks. These investments not only facilitate industrial activities but also enhance the overall quality of life in rural areas.

**Skill Development and Human Capital Accumulation:** Rural industries, particularly those in the manufacturing and service sectors, provide platforms for skill development and professional training. This, in turn, contributes to the accumulation of human capital, which is crucial for long-term economic growth and social development.

### **4.3 Negative Impacts of Land Development and Rural Industry on Rural Ecological and Environmental Protection**

While the economic benefits of land development and rural industrialization are undeniable, their negative impacts on the environment are equally concerning.

**Land Degradation and Loss of Agricultural Land:** The conversion of agricultural land for industrial or urban uses leads to a decline in the availability of fertile land for food production. This, in turn, threatens food security and exacerbates rural poverty. Moreover, industrial activities can lead to soil degradation through contamination and erosion, further reducing the productivity of agricultural land.

**Water Pollution:** Industrial waste, including chemicals, heavy metals, and other pollutants, often ends up in rivers, lakes, and groundwater, contaminating water resources and posing health risks to rural communities. Water pollution can also disrupt ecosystems and harm aquatic life.

**Air Pollution:** Industrial activities, particularly those involving combustion processes, emit harmful gases and particulates into the atmosphere. These emissions contribute to air pollution, affecting air quality and respiratory health in rural areas.

**Biodiversity Loss:** Unplanned development and industrialization can lead to the destruction of natural habitats, threatening the survival of countless species and reducing biodiversity. Biodiversity loss undermines the resilience of ecosystems and their ability to provide essential services, such as pollination and climate regulation.

**Environmental Health Disparities:** Rural communities, particularly those located near industrial facilities, often bear the brunt of environmental pollution. These communities may lack access to clean water, safe air, and adequate healthcare, leading to increased rates of illness and mortality.

## **5 OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY**

### **5.1 Overview of Relevant Laws and Policies for Ecological Environment Protection**

Before the implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, China had established a comprehensive legal system aimed at safeguarding its ecological environment. This system encompassed a wide range of laws, regulations, and policies, not limited solely to the Environmental Protection Law. Rather, it spanned across various legal domains, each contributing to the overall goal of preserving and enhancing the country's natural resources and ecosystems.

#### **5.1.1 Key environmental protection laws**

The cornerstone of China's environmental protection efforts is the Environmental Protection Law, which sets forth basic principles, obligations, and responsibilities for environmental protection. This law emphasizes prevention-oriented principles, requiring polluters to bear the responsibility for their actions and promoting public participation in environmental protection. In addition, it outlines measures for environmental impact assessment, pollution control, and environmental monitoring, among others.

#### **5.1.2 Specialized laws for rural areas**

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by rural areas, China has also enacted specialized laws to address environmental issues specific to these regions. For instance, some local governments have also formulated rural environmental protection regulations. These rural environmental protection regulations aim to prevent and control rural pollution, promote ecological restoration, and raise the environmental awareness of rural residents. These regulations focus on issues such as agricultural waste management, rural water pollution, and soil contamination, among others.

#### **5.1.3 Cross-sectoral laws with rural environmental implications**

Several other laws, though not primarily focused on environmental protection, contain provisions that have significant implications for rural ecological environments. For example, the Forest Law protects and manages China's forests, which play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity in rural areas. Similarly, the Water Law regulates the development, utilization, conservation, and management of water resources, ensuring sustainable water supplies for rural communities and agriculture.

#### **5.1.4 Policies and initiatives**

In addition to legal instruments, China has implemented numerous policies and initiatives to promote ecological environment protection in rural areas. These include national-level strategies such as the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution, which aims to reduce soil contamination and improve soil quality. Furthermore, programs like

the "Beautiful China" initiative emphasize ecological restoration and green development, encouraging sustainable practices in rural economies.

## **5.2 Overview of Relevant Laws and Policies for Promoting Rural Economic Development (From the Perspective of Land Development and Industrial Advancement)**

China's pursuit of rural economic development has long been a strategic priority, with land development and industrial expansion serving as key drivers. A robust legal framework supports these efforts, ensuring that economic growth is pursued in a sustainable and equitable manner.

### **5.2.1 Land development laws and policies**

China's land laws, including the Land Administration Law and the Rural Land Contracting Law, provide the legal foundation for land development and utilization in rural areas. These laws regulate land ownership, use rights, and contracting arrangements, ensuring that land resources are allocated efficiently and equitably. Additionally, policies promoting land consolidation, reclamation, and intensive use encourage the optimization of land resources and support agricultural modernization.

### **5.2.2 Industrial development policies**

To spur rural economic growth, China has implemented a series of policies aimed at fostering industrial development in rural areas. These policies encourage the diversification of rural economies, promoting the integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries. For instance, the "Made in China 2025" strategy, while primarily focused on industrial upgrading nationwide, also emphasizes the development of rural industries, particularly those related to agriculture and agro-processing.

Moreover, policies aimed at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in rural areas, including tax incentives, financing support, and technical assistance, have contributed to the growth of rural industries. These measures have facilitated the establishment of rural industrial parks, agro-processing clusters, and tourism-based enterprises, diversifying rural economies and creating job opportunities.

## **5.3 Issues with the Aforementioned Legal Framework**

Prior to the introduction of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, the legal framework for ecological environment protection and rural economic development, though comprehensive, faced challenges in achieving a harmonious balance between the two.

### **5.3.1 Lack of integration**

One significant issue was the lack of integration between laws and policies focused on ecological environment protection and those aimed at promoting rural economic development. Especially in rural areas, the environmental protection legal system has not yet formed a complete system, with relatively outdated content and low feasibility [1]. The former tended to prioritize environmental conservation, while the latter emphasized economic growth. This dichotomy often led to conflicts, with economic development activities sometimes compromising environmental protection efforts.

### **5.3.2 Inadequate coordination**

The lack of coordination between different government departments responsible for environmental protection and rural economic development further exacerbated the issue. Each department operated within its own mandate, with limited communication and collaboration, resulting in policy gaps and inconsistencies.

### **5.3.3 Insufficient incentives for sustainable development**

Another challenge was the insufficiency of incentives for sustainable development practices in rural areas. While policies encouraged economic growth, they often did not adequately incentivize environmentally friendly practices or penalize environmentally harmful activities. This led to a "growth-at-all-costs" mentality, with negative implications for both the environment and the long-term sustainability of rural economies.

### **5.3.4 Limited public participation and awareness**

Finally, limited public participation and awareness of environmental and economic issues in rural areas hindered the effectiveness of the legal framework. Rural residents, often lacking access to information and resources, were less engaged in decision-making processes related to environmental protection and economic development. This, in turn, limited their ability to contribute to sustainable practices and hold government agencies accountable for their actions.

In conclusion, prior to the introduction of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, China's legal framework for ecological environment protection and promotion of rural economic development, though comprehensive, faced challenges in achieving a harmonious balance between the two. The lack of integration and coordination between laws and policies, insufficient incentives for sustainable development, and limited public participation and awareness all contributed to this imbalance.

## **6 THE CRUCIAL BALANCE BETWEEN RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ECOLOGICAL PROTECTION POST THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY: A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **6.1 The Pivotal Role of the Rule of Law in Harmonizing Rural Economic Development and Ecological Protection**

The introduction of the Rural Revitalization Strategy in China marks a significant milestone in the country's pursuit of sustainable development. At the heart of this strategy lies the delicate balance between fostering economic growth in rural areas and safeguarding their ecological integrity. The rule of law, as the cornerstone of social order and progress, plays a pivotal role in striking this balance. From the perspective of modernizing national governance, the importance of the rule of law is self-evident, and its realization requires a solid foundation of a sound legal system. In implementing the rural revitalization strategy, it is necessary to institutionalize effective policies [2]. By providing a clear framework of rights, obligations, and consequences, the legal system ensures that economic activities in rural regions are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner, while also protecting the rights of rural communities to enjoy a healthy and prosperous environment.

The legal framework surrounding rural revitalization recognizes that economic development and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary goals. It acknowledges that sustainable rural economies are built upon a foundation of healthy ecosystems and that the preservation of natural resources is essential for long-term prosperity. Consequently, the rule of law serves as a guiding principle, directing policies, regulations, and practices towards achieving this dual objective.

## **6.2 Integrating Ecological Protection and Rural Economic Development into the Legal Framework of Rural Revitalization**

Following the roll out of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, China has made a concerted effort to integrate the protection of the ecological environment with the promotion of rural economic development into a cohesive legal framework. This is evident in various national documents and guidance opinions, which underscore the importance of striking a harmonious balance between the two.

For instance, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Rural Revitalization, enacted in 2021, explicitly recognizes the need to balance economic development with environmental protection. The law outlines measures to improve agricultural productivity, foster rural industries, and support entrepreneurship while simultaneously emphasizing the conservation of agricultural genetic resources, the promotion of green technologies, and the prevention of agricultural pollution. It underscores the government's commitment to ensuring that rural development is undertaken in a manner that respects and preserves the natural environment.

Furthermore, the Chinese government has issued numerous policy documents and guidelines that reinforce this integration. For example, the "Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of Ecological Civilization" emphasizes the need to promote green and low-carbon development in rural areas, while the "The Master Plan for Major Projects of Protecting and Restoring National Important Ecosystems(2021-2035)" outlines specific targets and measures for ecological restoration and conservation in rural regions.

## **6.3 Specific Legal Provisions Promoting Rural Economic Development with Environmental Protection Requirements**

Post the introduction of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, China's legal system has been fortified with provisions that not only encourage rural economic development but also mandate environmental protection. These laws and regulations reflect a comprehensive approach to sustainable rural development.

One notable example is "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Black Soil", which imposes strict environmental standards on all economic activities, including those in rural areas. The law requires enterprises and individuals engaged in agricultural production to adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as reducing the use of harmful pesticides and fertilizers, and to comply with waste management regulations.

Additionally, the Law on the Prevention and Control of Soil Pollution specifically addresses the issue of soil contamination in rural areas, mandating measures to prevent, control, and remediate soil pollution caused by agricultural activities. This law emphasizes the importance of promoting sustainable agricultural practices and protecting agricultural land from degradation.

## **6.4 Local Governments' Implementation of Rural Ecological Protection Measures with Consideration for Economic Development Needs**

At the local level, governments have been tasked with implementing rural ecological protection measures while also taking into account the economic development needs of rural communities. This dual mandate has led to the emergence of innovative approaches that seek to reconcile the two objectives.

One such example is the implementation of eco-tourism projects in rural areas. Many localities have leveraged their unique natural resources and cultural heritage to develop eco-tourism, which not only generates economic revenue for local communities but also promotes environmental conservation. By promoting sustainable tourism practices, such as eco-lodges, hiking trails, and wildlife viewing, these projects encourage visitors to respect and appreciate the natural environment.

Another example is the promotion of green agriculture. Local governments have incentivized farmers to adopt environmentally friendly farming practices, such as organic farming, integrated pest management, and precision agriculture. These practices not only reduce the use of harmful chemicals but also improve soil health and crop yields, leading to increased economic returns for farmers.

Moreover, local governments have also implemented programs aimed at improving rural infrastructure while minimizing environmental impacts. For instance, they have invested in renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to meet the energy needs of rural communities while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. They have also prioritized the construction of eco-friendly public facilities, such as waste treatment plants and green spaces, to enhance the quality of life for rural residents.

In conclusion, the introduction of the Rural Revitalization Strategy in China has underscored the importance of striking a balance between rural economic development and ecological protection. The rule of law has played a crucial role in this endeavor, providing a clear framework for policies, regulations, and practices that promote sustainable rural development. By integrating ecological protection into the legal framework of rural revitalization, China has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring that rural economies thrive without compromising the health and integrity of the natural environment.

## **7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVING CHINA'S RURAL REVITALIZATION LEGAL SYSTEM**

### **7.1 Further Improvement of the Legal and Regulatory Framework**

To address the unique challenges posed by land development and industrial expansion in rural areas, it is crucial to formulate or amend relevant environmental protection clauses. These clauses should specifically address issues such as soil contamination, water resource management, and air pollution, ensuring that economic development does not come at the cost of ecological degradation. The legislation should also mandate sustainable practices and set clear guidelines for mitigating negative environmental impacts.

**Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment and Approval Systems:** The existing environmental impact assessment (EIA) and approval processes must be strengthened to ensure rigorous scrutiny of all proposed rural development projects. This includes implementing more stringent criteria for evaluating potential environmental risks, increasing transparency in the approval process, and ensuring timely and effective public consultation. The system should also facilitate prompt corrective measures in case of non-compliance or unforeseen environmental impacts.

### **7.2 Enhancing Environmental Law Enforcement and Supervision**

To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental law enforcement, a robust inter-departmental collaboration mechanism should be established. This involves coordinating efforts among agencies responsible for agriculture, environment, land use planning, and industry to ensure seamless information sharing, joint inspections, and coordinated enforcement actions. Such collaboration can help identify and address environmental violations promptly.

We should seriously deal with enterprises that violate the red line of environmental protection and governance, reduce the environmental pollution caused by enterprises, restrict the behavior of enterprises themselves, thereby promoting the rural process of rural revitalization, improve the utilization rate of environmental protection resources, and stimulate the ecological vitality of the countryside [3]. To create a deterrent effect, penalties for environmental violations must be significantly increased and strictly enforced. This includes fines, criminal prosecutions where appropriate, and the imposition of corrective measures. Publicizing successful prosecutions and the consequences of non-compliance can further amplify the deterrent effect, fostering a culture of compliance among businesses and individuals involved in rural development.

### **7.3 Promoting Public Participation and Oversight**

Raising public awareness of the importance of environmental protection is the key to reducing rural environmental pollution [4]. To enhance public engagement in rural environmental protection, diverse participation channels should be created or expanded. This can include organizing public hearings, workshops, and community consultations to gather feedback on proposed development projects. Additionally, establishing online platforms where citizens can report environmental issues and track progress of remediation efforts can further democratize environmental governance.

**Establishing Environmental Information Disclosure Systems:** Ensuring public access to environmental information is fundamental to fostering transparency and accountability. An environmental information disclosure system should be established, mandating the timely release of key environmental data, including pollution levels, project EIA reports, and enforcement actions. This will empower citizens to make informed decisions, exercise their right to know, and actively participate in monitoring and overseeing environmental management efforts.

### **7.4 Innovating Ecological Compensation and Incentive Mechanisms**

**Exploring Ecological Compensation Mechanisms:** To balance economic development with ecological conservation, innovative ecological compensation mechanisms should be explored. Additionally, establishing market-based mechanisms like carbon trading or ecosystem service payments can incentivize environmental stewardship and provide financial incentives for sustainable development [5].

**Encouraging Green Technology Innovation and Industrial Transformation:** To achieve sustainable rural development, it is imperative to encourage green technology innovation and promote industrial transformation. Policies should support research and development of environmentally friendly technologies, provide incentives for businesses to adopt clean

production methods, and facilitate the transition to low-carbon, circular economies. To promote green rural development, green agricultural development initiatives should be carried out to reduce the input of agricultural production, ensure clean production, recycle waste, and establish an ecological industrial model [6]. By fostering a green economy, rural areas can not only protect their natural resources but also harness the opportunities presented by the global transition to sustainable development.

## **8 SIGNIFICANCE OF ESTABLISHING A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RURAL REVITALIZATION IN CHINA**

The establishment of a comprehensive legal system for rural revitalization in China holds profound significance, not only for the nation's rural areas but also for the global community. This framework addresses critical issues related to economic development, environmental protection, and social welfare, thereby fostering sustainable and inclusive growth.

### **8.1 Facilitating Coordinated Development of China's Rural Economy and Environment**

Ancient Chinese traditional culture believed that human beings and the natural environment share a relationship of "when one falls, the other falls; when one prospers, the other prospers", and opposed the overexploitation of the environment [7]. The legal framework for rural revitalization in China plays a pivotal role in ensuring the harmonious coexistence of economic growth and environmental preservation in rural regions. By outlining clear guidelines and regulations, it encourages sustainable agricultural practices that minimize the use of harmful chemicals, promote eco-friendly farming techniques, and conserve natural resources. This not only enhances agricultural productivity and rural economies but also safeguards the quality of air, water, and soil, thereby preserving the ecological balance essential for long-term prosperity. Furthermore, it fosters a culture of environmental responsibility among rural communities, encouraging them to actively participate in conservation efforts and adopt green lifestyles.

### **8.2 Contributing to Pollution Reduction and Global Carbon Emission Mitigation**

The rural revitalization legal system contributes significantly to reducing pollution and mitigating global carbon emissions. By promoting renewable energy sources, energy-efficient technologies, and circular economy models in rural areas, it helps decrease reliance on fossil fuels and minimize greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, regulations aimed at preventing industrial pollution from migrating to rural areas and promoting waste management and recycling practices further contribute to environmental protection. As China, being a major emitter, takes these steps, it sets an example for other nations, demonstrating that economic growth and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand. This, in turn, accelerates global efforts towards achieving climate change targets and fostering a greener planet.

### **8.3 Providing Lessons for Other Developing Countries Worldwide**

Firstly, China's rural revitalization legal framework offers valuable insights to other developing countries seeking to boost their rural economies. It emphasizes the importance of diversifying rural economies beyond traditional agriculture, promoting value-added agriculture, and fostering rural entrepreneurship. By investing in infrastructure, education, and healthcare, China has created an enabling environment for rural businesses to thrive, thereby increasing income opportunities for farmers and reducing rural-urban disparities. Other nations can learn from these strategies to stimulate their own rural economies and reduce poverty.

Secondly, the legal framework also underscores the need to protect and enhance rural human settlements, ensuring that rural residents enjoy safe, healthy, and livable environments. This includes promoting sustainable land use planning, improving access to clean water and sanitation, and preserving cultural heritage and traditional lifestyles. By implementing these measures, China has demonstrated that rural revitalization can be achieved without compromising the quality of life for rural residents. Other developing countries can adopt similar policies to safeguard their rural landscapes and communities.

Lastly, China's rural revitalization efforts are centered on improving the living standards of farmers. The legal framework supports policies that increase farmers' access to education, healthcare, and social security, thereby enhancing their overall well-being. It also promotes fair trade practices, ensuring that farmers receive a fair share of the value chain, and encourages the adoption of modern farming techniques to increase productivity and income. These initiatives serve as a model for other developing countries, illustrating how comprehensive policies can empower rural communities and lift millions out of poverty.

## **9 CONCLUSION**

The state of human civilization is closely related to that of ecological civilization, and we must improve the legal system for ecological and environmental protection from the perspective of pursuing harmonious coexistence between human and nature [8]. The establishment of a robust legal framework for rural revitalization in China is of paramount importance, not only for the nation's own development but also for the global community. It fosters sustainable



economic growth and environmental protection, contributes to global climate action, and provides valuable lessons for other developing countries striving to achieve rural prosperity.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

The author has no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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