

A Study on the Resettlement of Retired Fishermen to Employment in the Context of Rural Revitalization—Based on Field Research in Duchang County, Jiangxi Province

Tingting Zhang, Xiaojuan Zhou, Hui Tang, Zhuotong Duan, Jingwen Lv

Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, Jiangxi, Nanchang, China

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Abstract: Since 2020, fishermen in the Yangtze River basin have been banned from fishing for ten years. In order to understand the problem of fishermen's transfer to other industries and employment after retiring from fishing, research was conducted in some fishing villages in Duchang County, Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province, to find out the basic situation of local retiring fishermen at this stage, the current situation of production and life, sort out the problems of fishermen's transfer to other industries and employment, and build a “2+2+X” , a long-term model, to ensure the transfer of production and employment of retired fishermen.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the “Great Protection of the Yangtze River” has gradually become a national strategy. In the face of the problems of re-settlement and social security for the retired fishermen, the “Document No.1” of the Central Government in 2021 also points out that it is necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the 10-year fishing ban, and to do a good job of rehousing and guaranteeing the retired fishermen.

From January 1, 2021, the ban on fishing in Jiangxi River and Poyang Lake is temporarily set at 10 years. Since the fishing ban on Yangtze River, fishermen in Duchang County, one of the traditional fishing counties in Jiangxi, have gradually withdrawn from production and fishing operations. However, as the problems of fishermen's re-employment and social security have not been well solved, especially the fishermen, a special socially disadvantaged group, have difficulties in re-employment, unstable income and far lower welfare benefits than other urban residents. Therefore, how to effectively address the re-employment of retired fishermen, switch to other industries and improve their income level and quality of life is a major issue that needs to be studied and solved urgently at present[1].

2. Research Findings

2.1 Current Situation of Resettlement and Employment of Retired Fishermen in Duchang County

2.1.1 Resettlement of Retired Fishermen

In terms of resettlement subsidies, 7,790 of the 9,611 fishermen in Duchang County who have established a record card are eligible for insurance, including 1,528 who are covered by employee social insurance and 6,262 who are covered by urban and rural residential insurance, all of whom are now covered by the basic pension insurance system, with a 100% participation rate[2].

Among the poor households with cards on file, there are 5,514 fishermen who enjoy government subsidies, including 1,523 who participate in employee social insurance and 635 who receive subsistence allowances. The county government subsidised fishermen were divided into 1,086 professional fishermen, 3,674 part-time fishermen, 754 unlicensed fishermen, 1,086 professional fishermen and 754 part-time fishermen. in 2020, the county completed a total of 17,109,800 yuan in financial subsidies, basically realising the state's old-age security[3].

2.1.2 Conversion of Retired Fishermen to Employment

On the one hand, Duchang County actively guides fishermen and carries out training to change jobs. Guiding fishermen to change jobs, organising enterprises in the park to absorb retired fishermen for employment, and organising pre-job training and skills training, with a total of 232 training sessions so far, and 492 training sessions organised by townships on related practices. On the other hand, the townships have explored special industries to provide support for fishermen to switch to employment again. For example, Hehe Township is developing aquaculture, Xiyuan Township is building a sweet potato plantation base, and Zhouxi Township is developing the pearl industry[4].

Up to now, 7,128 people have been employed in Duchang County (224 in industry, 817 in agriculture, 2,193 in enterprises, 3,530 in self-employment and flexible employment, 107 in part-time public service jobs and 222 in others).

2.2 Problems in the Implementation Process of Re-Settlement of Retired Fishermen for Employment

2.2.1 Problems At the Level of Fishermen

2.2.1.1. Restricted Re-Employment Opportunities

Retired fishermen are a special group, most of them have been fishing for a living for generations, without land and other means of production, and their main source of income is fishing income. The overall age of the group is relatively high and the proportion of people suffering from chronic diseases such as schistosomiasis and rheumatism due to long-term fishing operations is relatively high, making it difficult for fishermen who have changed jobs to engage in positions with high physical requirements[5].

2.2.1.2 Generally Low Educational Attainment and Lack of Entrepreneurial and Employment Skills

The phenomenon of inter-generational transmission of low educational attainment among fishermen is relatively obvious. In the past, fishermen did not settle on shore, and fishermen's children had difficulties and low willingness to go to school, and those offspring who were willing to go to school had also left the fishing industry. As a result, the overall education level of fishermen who need to retire from fishing and resettlement is low, and fishing has become the only skill for most fishermen[6].

2.2.1.3 Fishermen Have a Psychological Gap and Find It Difficult to Accept a Change of Occupation

The difference between the fishermen's annual income before and after they retire from fishing is about 80,000 to 100,000 yuan, resulting in a big gap in their minds and a tendency to resist, believing that their livelihood will not be guaranteed because their jobs are taken away by the government.

2.2.2 External Problems

2.2.2.1 There is a Shortage of Production Factors That Should Be Available for Self-Employment

Whether fishermen start their own business or start a cooperative business, they need to address the needs of the corresponding factors of production such as capital, premises and skills. It is more common for fishermen and even fishing villages as a whole to have a shortage of certain types of factors or even multiple factors, i.e. fishermen do not have enough conditions and motivation to start their own businesses.

2.2.2.2 Lack of Government Funding, Talent and Technology to Promote

The government needs a lot of money to help fishermen switch to other industries and

compensation, but the funds available to each level of government are not enough to support the huge demand. The rapid development of the urban economy has led to a serious loss of talent in the townships, but new industries need to be led and driven by talented people, so how to retain and introduce talent and technology has become another major problem for the government.

2.2.2.3 The Development of Local Special Industries is Limited

On the one hand, the development trend of the regional characteristic industries that have been supported is unstable. The township governments are interested in supporting special industries to help retired fishermen switch to re-employment, but the pace of industrial development is constrained by market downturn, lack of distinctive features and lack of funds. On the other hand, the number of jobs available in the specialised industries only meets the needs of a small number of fishermen. There are problems with the development of special industries: the jobs offered still have high technical requirements, they do not match the employability of fishermen, and the foreign enterprises that control the development of the industries are very restrictive, so only a small proportion of fishermen are actually re-employed in the local special industries.

3. Countermeasures and Suggestions for Improving the Transfer of Retired Fishermen to Employment and Their Implementation

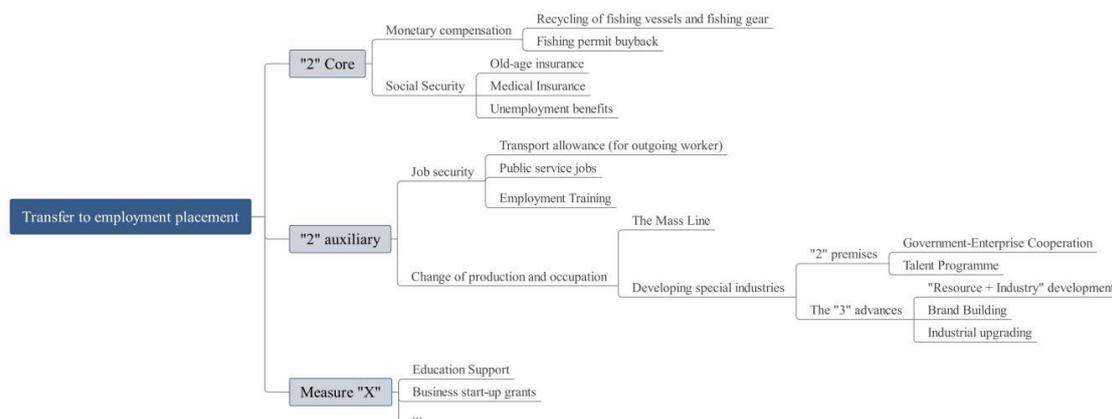


Fig 1. Countermeasures and Suggestions for Improving the Transfer of Retired Fishermen to Employment and Their Implementation

As show in fig.1, In terms of improving the resettlement of returnee fishermen and their implementation, this study innovatively designed the “2+2+X” model. The “2+2+X” refers to monetary compensation and social security as the core (i.e. the first “2” in “2+2+X”), supported by employment security and conversion to employment (i.e. the second “2” in “2+2+X”). The second “2” in “2+2+X” is supplemented by employment guarantees and employment switching (i.e. the second “2” in “2+2+X”), supplemented by local education and the provision of business start-up subsidies or free choice (i.e. “X”).

3.1 Monetary Compensation Scheme and Social Security Measures as “2” Core

Monetary compensation and social security are the core of the programme because they meet the basic need to safeguard the immediate interests and long-term livelihoods of fishermen who have retired from fishing.

3.1.1 Monetary Compensation Scheme

Monetary compensation is intuitive and flexible, and its effects are easily recognised by landed fishermen. With the implementation of the no-take policy, direct compensation to landed fishermen should include the following two aspects: compensation for the recovery of fishing vessels and fishing gear, and buy-back fees for fishing permits. In terms of compensation standards, the grassroots government in each of the current fishing bans should publicise the various

compensation standards and the status of compensation that has been completed.

According to the research data of this study, only 40% of fishermen are satisfied with the subsistence allowance, most of them still want to improve the standard and speed of payment, many of them say that the amount of the allowance is low and the payment time is slow, which is not enough to maintain their living. 50.62% of fishermen think that the government should strengthen the financial support for fishermen. Therefore, the government should also investigate the actual needs of fishermen and make appropriate adjustments in the process of policy implementation, such as increasing the monthly subsistence allowance; paying attention to helping fishermen who are unable to apply for fishing permits due to half-fishing and half-working and lack of awareness; broadening access to funds, guiding the participation of various social parties in the compensation and resettlement work, and increasing the speed of subsidy payment, etc.

3.1.2 Social Security Programme

Social security is an effective supplement to monetary compensation and an effective means of maintaining the long-term livelihood of retired fishermen. The main components include pension insurance, medical insurance and unemployment benefits. The two age groups with the largest number of fishermen retiring from fishing are: older fishermen over 60 years of age and middle-aged fishermen between 40 and 60 years of age, which are also the groups that are more difficult to re-employ after landing. These two age groups are the most concerned about their pensions, so it is important to address and improve pension insurance to stabilise the fishermen.

3.2 Support Measures for Employment Security and Job Transition

3.2.1 Employment Protection Level

The government should provide strong support and protection for ex-fishermen in terms of landing jobs, taking into account the characteristics of different employment methods, different cultural levels and age stages. This can be done mainly through the provision of transport subsidies to help young fishermen go out to work; the creation of public service jobs for fishermen who are willing to stay in the local employment; and the provision of long-term public service free employment training in response to the needs of decommissioned fishermen and market demand, in order to provide assistance and protection for the re-employment of decommissioned fishermen.

3.2.2 Switching Production and Employment

Guiding and helping landed fishermen to rejoin the workforce by switching to other industries.

3.2.2.1 Practice the Mass Line

One is to play the role of grass-roots party organisations and village committees, which can cooperate with university students practising social practice, visit fishing households and communicate in depth through case studies and face-to-face policy interpretation, so as to improve the understanding and cooperation of landed fishermen with the policy on conversion to employment; the other is to build a path of conversion to employment with the participation of government departments, industry organisations and social enterprises, and promote it in a concerted manner. The second is to build a pathway for switching to employment that involves government departments, industry organizations and social enterprises and promotes them in a coordinated manner, so that enterprises and social forces can be more and better integrated into the work of switching to employment and achieve a positive interaction between the government and society, enterprises and fishermen.

3.2.2.2 Cultivating and Developing Special Industries

The development of industries is needed to support the re-employment of fishermen. It is not only necessary to strengthen the local industries already developed, but also to actively promote the integrated development of primary, secondary and tertiary industries and scientifically promote the rural revitalisation strategy, so as to increase the types and numbers of jobs available to fishermen who have retired from fishing.

At the level of promoting the development of special industries, this study simultaneously proposes a “2+3” mechanism for the long-term development of special industries (i.e. 2 premises: “resources + industry” development and government-enterprise cooperation; 3 promotions: talent programme, brand building and industrial upgrading).

The first is the “2” premise.

The organic combination of resources and industry is adapted to local conditions. Explore the advantages of local industrial resources, tourism resources and other resources, and guide the integrated development of one, two and three industries. For example, Tang Yin Island in Zhouxi Town can make use of its environmental advantage of being a “water village” to develop special industries such as holiday fishing village and sightseeing tourism; at the same time, the surrounding villages of Tang Yin Island can develop special industries such as leisure lodging and fishermen's music around “fisheries +” and sightseeing tourism. The government and enterprises will cooperate.

Cooperation between government and enterprises. The county government and grassroots government should not only take the lead in introducing enterprises that can integrate and drive the development of the industry, but also reach cooperation with the introduced enterprises, arrange for members of the relevant inspection team to participate in the management of the enterprise to a certain extent, and regularly publicize the results of the inspection to ensure that the interests of fishermen employed in the industry are not infringed upon.

The second is “3” promotions.

In order to promote industrial development to drive the type and number of jobs available for conversion, the following 3 measures can be taken to promote.

First: optimise the environment for the development of special industries, promote the gathering of industrial talents, and form a good pattern of talents leading industries, industries gathering talents, and the integration of production and talent development. Governments at all levels can introduce policies to retain and attract talents. In terms of “talent retention”, appropriate “education policy preferences” can be given to retired fishermen and their offspring, and education subsidies can be given to tilt resources to retain talent; in terms of “talent attraction”. In the area of “attracting talents”, foreign talents can be attracted with benefits such as settlement fees, house purchase subsidies and technical incentives. In terms of the contribution of foreign talents to the development of local special industries, we can set up a mechanism to train and evaluate talents and give them different levels of rewards to motivate them.

Secondly: the development of branding of special industries. Branding is an effective way to improve product awareness and market competitiveness. According to the characteristics of the region, focus on creating a brand of fine features, which will help to achieve sustainable development of special industries.

Third: timely industrial upgrading. There is no one field that can be done on an unchanging basis for an eternity to achieve the sustainable requirements of the industry market, therefore, the important link in promoting the development of special industries must be to continuously develop the industry field and core content.

From a practical point of view, Duchang County and Hehe Township lobster aquaculture aquatic base can apply the above-mentioned countermeasures: absorb and train fishermen ashore who have the will to be employed to carry out skills training in lobster farming technology, Internet + e-commerce sales, and the simultaneous introduction of advanced equipment and talent, mastering the upgrading of farming technology, prioritizing the improvement of lobster supply. In the lobster supply to enhance the assurance of efforts to build “brand + base + e-commerce + fishermen” model, promote a combination of online and offline sales model, innovative “Internet + crayfish” business model, improve the sales benefits of lobster products to “Special” to promote production, “production” to help the people.

3.3 Other “X” Resettlement Channels as a Supplement

Compensation and resettlement should also include a variety of alternative measures, such as support for children's education and the provision of business start-up subsidies, which, although of

reference value for the compensation and resettlement of retired fishermen, are strongly influenced by the level of regional economic development and geographical conditions. These measures may be more successful under certain conditions, but they are also risky and uncertain, and are therefore only supplementary measures that governments in areas where fishing bans are in force may choose to implement after taking into account a variety of factors.

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