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From "Stress Coping" to "Resilience Growth": A Study on the Evolutionary Pathways of Grassroots Government Governance Capacity in Ecological Governance

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Abstract

Grassroots governments are key implementing agents in ecological civilization construction. However, in practical governance, significant issues persist in grassroots ecological governance, including fragmented policy implementation, short-term governance behaviors, and ambiguous accountability. The reasons for this are twofold. Institutionally, there are shortcomings such as an overreliance on explicit indicators in performance evaluations, poor inter-departmental coordination, and the scattered allocation of resources. On the other hand, facing dual pressures of high-pressure accountability and limited resources, grassroots officials often resort to evasive, formalistic, or expedient governance strategies. This paper argues that to address these governance challenges, it is essential, first, to shift the performance evaluation mechanism from pressure-driven to capacity-oriented, avoiding rigid, one-size-fits-all approaches. Second, it is crucial to accelerate the integration of digital technologies to bridge capacity gaps. Third, a collaborative governance framework between the government and society should be fostered to achieve the long-term enhancement of grassroots governance and the profound advancement of ecological civilization.

Keywords

Ecological Governance; Grassroots Government; Governance Capacity; Resilience Growth.

1. Introduction and Literature Review

Ecological civilization construction constitutes a crucial component of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics, bearing directly on the well-being of the people and the future of the nation. Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China incorporated ecological civilization construction into the overall layout of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics, China has sounded the clarion call for building a modernization characterized by harmony between humanity and nature. Consequently, ecological governance has generally entered a transitional stage pursuing high-quality and sustainable development. For grassroots governments, ecological civilization construction is no longer a matter confined to policy documents but has been concretely translated into specific work plans, integrated into daily operations, and become a focal point of governmental work. As the endpoint of policy implementation, the effectiveness of environmental policies hinges largely on the governance capacity of these grassroots governments. Therefore, focusing on the intrinsic composition, practical challenges, and pathways for enhancing the governance capacity of grassroots governments is key to ensuring the success of ecological civilization construction in its final phase.

To achieve long-term, effective outcomes in China's ecological governance, academia has conducted extensive research in this field, yielding a substantial body of findings.

ISSN: 2688-8653

First is research on government functions. This area of study aims to integrate ecological governance into the performance of government functions. An insightful achievement is linking the construction of ecological civilization with the transformation of China's government functions. [1] Xiao Jianhua first approached this from an economic perspective, viewing the environment as a public good that should be fundamentally maintained by the government, arguing that with economic development and the continuous deterioration of the ecological environment, the environment, as a public good, should be maintained by the government. [2] Wang Hong believes that for ecological civilization construction to be effective, it first requires that the ecological function receives sufficient attention within the government's administrative system, accurately recognizing the strategic position of ecological governance in China's national governance from an ideological standpoint, and adopting multi-pronged and systematic responses in institutional functions. Relying solely on the government cannot achieve the effectiveness of ecological governance; multi-stakeholder action must be combined. [3] Fang Weihao, starting from the relationship between the government and the market, advocates optimizing the government's economic functions, highlighting the decisive role of the market in resource allocation, and emphasizing the use of market forces to help solve ecological problems. [4] Tang Linxia focuses her perspective at the local government level, advocating for the transformation of government functions from a budgetary perspective, establishing a fiscal transfer payment system that respects regional economic differences and environmental carrying capacity, and achieving a tilt of balanced transfer payments towards the ecological environment.

Second is research on enhancing ecological governance capacity. Ecological governance is not an empty slogan but a systematic project that requires the unity of knowledge and action. In the field of ecological governance, campaign-style governance is the most frequently used method by local governments at the implementation level. [5] Campaign-style governance can break the constraints of conventional bureaucracy, providing local governments with more human and material resources for environmental governance, and has broad application space in China's local government governance. [6] However, campaign-style governance is often seen as an unsustainable governance model corresponding to routine governance. To achieve more practical governance significance, it is necessary to integrate campaign-style governance with routine governance, utilizing their different characteristics to form complementarity, especially when the government handles non-routine affairs, campaign-style governance can serve as a progressive supplement to routine governance. [7] At the specific policy implementation level, for grassroots governments to maintain resilience in the complex ecological governance, they must first reasonably classify governance affairs. Based on differences in the nature of affairs and governance contexts, grassroots ecological environment governance can be divided into four main types of affairs based on regulatory attributes versus service attributes, and routine contexts versus emergency contexts. [8] Furthermore, environmental governance often requires cross-regional and cross-sectoral cooperation, emphasizing complementary advantages among different actors. Collaborative governance can ensure the coordination of governance actions, promote the overall orderliness of governance activities, and thus enhance governance effectiveness.

Third is research on the modernization of ecological governance. The modernization of ecological governance echoes the modernization of China's government governance capacity and governance system. It is both a part of the modernization of the government governance system and provides support for the modernization of government governance capacity. [9] Some scholars believe that achieving the modernization of ecological governance means avoiding the emergence of problems as much as possible, especially the long-standing "one-size-fits-all" problem in ecological protection. This is essentially a reflection of local governments' inaction during normal times and chaotic action before inspections, which not

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only damages the economic interests of enterprises within their jurisdiction but also severely undermines government credibility. [10] Essentially, the "one-size-fits-all" policy implementation stems from the imbalance in China's administrative power structure. In the implementation of environmental policies, grassroots governments are at the end of the administrative chain, facing numerous tasks and great pressure, and the benefits of ecological governance cannot be realized in the short term. Therefore, grassroots governments tend to choose implementation measures based on execution pressure, governance difficulty, resource endowment, and interest preferences, leading to deviations in policy implementation.

It is evident that current academic research on ecological governance has yielded substantial achievements. Studies spanning from the construction of government functions to the reshaping of power structures and calls for public participation undoubtedly represent crucial considerations for advancing the modernization of ecological governance. As a novel governance concept and systematic analytical framework, resilience governance can provide new perspectives and implementation pathways for addressing ecological and environmental risks and promoting sustainable development. It should rightly be considered an inherent component of the grand practice of advancing the modernization of ecological governance. Therefore, this paper focuses on the capacity building for resilience in ecological governance at the grassroots government level, exploring how grassroots governments can achieve the modernization of ecological governance by enhancing their governance resilience.

2. Stress Coping: Initial State Characteristics of Grassroots Ecological Governance

2.1. Tendency for Blame Avoidance

As a systematic strategic undertaking in China, ecological governance ought to be thoroughly implemented. However, in practice, the tendency for blame avoidance has consistently influenced the choice of government models in grassroots-level ecological governance work.

In grassroots ecological governance practices, this tendency for blame avoidance primarily manifests as the proactive blurring and shifting of governance responsibilities. Faced with pressure from higher-level evaluations, resource constraints, and the inherent complexity, long-term nature, and outcome uncertainty of ecological and environmental issues, grassroots governments tend to prioritize action paths that minimize risks rather than maximize governance effectiveness. Specifically, blame avoidance behaviors typically appear as: selective implementation, formalistic avoidance, and responsibility transfer. Selective implementation means prioritizing tasks that are explicitly required by superiors, carry high evaluation weight, yield quick short-term results, or are less likely to cause controversy. Conversely, for "tough challenges" that require large investments, have long cycles, involve numerous conflicts, or have effects that are difficult to quantify, grassroots governments often procrastinate or shift responsibility whenever possible. Second is formalistic avoidance. In their daily work, grassroots governments overemphasize formal compliance and procedural completeness, investing significant effort into activities like meeting communications and document preparation that leave a paper trail, ensuring they can procedurally respond to higher-level governments. However, they relatively neglect actual problem-solving, attempting to use process compliance to hedge against the risk of outcome accountability. Responsibility transfer is evident when grassroots governments, faced with heavy governance tasks, shift matters within their own purview to parallel departments, market entities, or communities, creating a structure that appears to share responsibility but actually dilutes it, thereby reducing the likelihood of being held solely accountable.

ISSN: 2688-8653

2.2. Fragmented Implementation

The complexity of environmental governance requires policy implementation to be holistic and coordinated, capable of integrating efforts across different departments and regions. However, in grassroots practice, the execution of environmental policies often falls into the predicament of fragmentation. This fragmentation first manifests as an imbalance in governance objectives during the policy decomposition process. Policy decomposition is a preliminary step in policy implementation, requiring various functional departments to clarify their respective governance tasks based on documents to advance policy goals. In reality, however, policy decomposition often becomes disordered for various reasons, leading to isolated or even conflicting departmental objectives at the implementation level. For instance, in river management, the water resources department is typically responsible for dredging and flood control, the environmental protection department for monitoring water quality, and the housing and urban-rural development department for constructing pipeline networks. The differing policy objectives of these departments, coupled with a lack of specific collaboration protocols, often result in disconnects during implementation or redundant resource investments.

Secondly, fragmented implementation is also reflected in the dispersion and division of implementing entities. Departments such as environmental protection, water resources, and agriculture operate independently based on their respective mandates. Differences in governance objectives create information barriers between departments, preventing complete data interoperability and sharing. This makes it difficult to effectively address cross-departmental or cross-regional ecological governance issues, leading to buck-passing and evasion of responsibility in transboundary pollution management.

Lastly, fragmented implementation in governance practice also manifests as decentralized and short-sighted resource allocation. Such decentralized allocation often leads to redundant investments and wastage of resources. For example, in the remediation of transboundary rivers, departments lack the motivation for comprehensive basin-wide management. Instead, they focus on their current departmental interests, prioritizing their own immediate tasks. The limited resources and heavy workload make it difficult for departments to subsequently concentrate resources on comprehensive river segment remediation.

While all departments are taking action, it is challenging to form a synergistic effort to address complex, transboundary ecological and environmental issues. This not only causes significant wastage of public resources but also seriously delays the improvement of overall environmental quality, undermines the credibility of the governance system, and substantially diminishes the effectiveness of policy objectives at the grassroots level.

2.3. Short-term Responses

In the concrete practice of advancing ecological civilization construction, grassroots governments often exhibit a tendency toward short-term responses when implementing environmental policies. Among these, campaign-style governance stands out as one of the most direct manifestations. This governance model largely emerges as a distinctive coping mechanism at the grassroots level in response to pressure from dynamic inspections by higher-level inspection teams. Campaign-style governance temporarily transcends the procedural and efficiency constraints of conventional bureaucracy by rapidly and intensively mobilizing and concentrating human, material, and financial resources within their jurisdiction. The aim is to achieve specific governance targets—those heavily emphasized in inspections—within an extremely short timeframe, thereby meeting the immediate demands of the inspection. While this approach may demonstrate "remarkable" results in the short term, quickly addressing superficial issues to pass inspections, it is inherently a stopgap strategy that addresses symptoms rather than root causes. Often lacking systematic planning, it fails to establish long-

ISSN: 2688-8653

term mechanisms. Once the inspection pressure subsides, the intensity and effectiveness of governance rapidly diminish, making sustainable outcomes difficult to achieve.

Indicator-focused responses represent another prominent form of short-term behavior in the implementation of grassroots ecological and environmental policies. Confronted with complex governance challenges, grassroots governments tend to mechanically and rigidly fulfill quantifiable, easily assessable targets assigned by higher authorities. During policy implementation, there is often a lack of in-depth investigation and concrete analysis of actual conditions, nor is there context-specific refinement and decomposition based on the policy's intent. Rather, the focus is on delivering a "qualified" performance report during inspections, adopting selective implementation strategies that sideline foundational, long-term work characterized by extended timelines, slow results, and difficult assessment. For instance, one locality in Jiangxi Province, responding to air pollution monitoring, concentrated high-density, high-frequency road sprinkling only around the monitoring stations to achieve short-term dust reduction targets, while neglecting systematic control of pollution sources across the entire region. This unilateral pursuit of visible indicators and neglect of long-term governance goals not only consumes resources but also renders ecological governance efforts superficial, deviating from the policy's original intent of achieving genuine environmental quality improvement and running counter to the direction of sustainable development.

3. Dual Constraints: The Dual Restraints of Pressure-Driven Systems and Insufficient Capacity

3.1. Institutional Rigidity Constraints

Institutional rigidity is a core reason for the emergence of blame avoidance, fragmentation, and perfunctory responses in the implementation of ecological governance policies at the grassroots level. This rigidity primarily manifests as the boundless generalization of responsibilities under a pressure-driven system, the severe compression of necessary flexibility in policy implementation, and the "one-size-fits-all" approach in enforcing remediation standards. As the final executors of policies at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy, grassroots governments are often the most vulnerable to the intense pressure exerted from the top down. Ecological governance goals, targets, and tasks are repeatedly amplified and delegated layer by layer to the grassroots, ultimately transforming into an unbearable burden at the end of the power chain.

Under the current strengthening of territorial management and the principle of joint accountability between the Party and the government, the boundaries of responsibility for ecological governance have become blurred, showing a trend of infinite downward transmission. Higher-level departments, through measures such as signing target responsibility agreements, incorporating ecological performance into veto-based evaluations, and strengthening oversight and accountability, have solidified layer by layer the responsibility for ecological and environmental governance to the grassroots. This has resulted in grassroots governments essentially bearing responsibilities beyond their actual authority and capacity, making them the ultimate backstop for environmental risks. Faced with such long-term potential accountability risks, the primary logic of action for grassroots officials naturally shifts from improving ecological quality to risk avoidance, thereby giving rise to widespread formalism. This institutional pressure distorts incentive structures and fosters buck-passing among departments.

During the policy formulation stage, ecological and environmental policies of local governments in China often lack necessary flexibility due to the pursuit of uniformity and standardization. Policies tend to be overly rigid and specific, failing to fully account for local realities. For example, in the management of livestock and poultry farming pollution in a certain area of

ISSN: 2688-8653

Jiangxi Province, policies uniformly required the designation of large no-farming zones and the closure or relocation of farms within a deadline. However, they did not distinguish between large-scale farms and small household free-range operations, nor did they provide practical phased transition plans for small-scale farmers. Such inflexible policy design often leaves grassroots governments in a dilemma during implementation: either enforce policies mechanically, leading to "governance-induced disruption," or adopt passive or falsified coping strategies to avoid conflicts, thereby preventing policies from taking root effectively.

Furthermore, as a key mechanism for promoting ecological governance, environmental protection inspections exert strong short-term accountability pressure on grassroots governments. To meet standards within a short period, grassroots governments resort to unconventional campaign-style governance, mobilizing resources and expanding authority beyond normal limits for concentrated remediation. While such high-pressure measures may yield short-term results, they are essentially overreactions under special circumstances and are inherently unsustainable. However, their superficial "success" is easily misinterpreted by higher-level decision-makers as evidence of the grassroots' routine governance capacity or their potential upper limit. Based on this cognitive bias, higher-level governments tend to maintain or even reinforce the original one-size-fits-all approach in subsequent policy formulation and standard setting.

3.2. Capacity Supply Shortcomings

In grassroots ecological governance, insufficient capacity supply constitutes a significant bottleneck that hinders policy implementation and the achievement of desired outcomes, primarily manifested as a lack of technical conditions and professional resources. Under dual constraints of funding and staffing, many townships and sub-district offices struggle to equip themselves with essential environmental monitoring devices, data collection systems, and pollution source tracing tools. This results in a lack of scientific foundation for decision-making throughout the governance process. Even in areas where monitoring equipment is available, the absence of specialized personnel for operation and data analysis prevents its full utilization, compromising data accuracy and timeliness. Furthermore, the technical training and career development systems for grassroots environmental protection personnel remain underdeveloped, leading to slow technological capacity updates and a mismatch between governance methods and the complexity of environmental challenges. Confronted with diverse tasks such as sudden water quality changes, air pollution, and solid waste management, grassroots units often rely solely on external institutions for testing and analysis. Such dependence not only increases costs but also causes delays in emergency responses. For instance, a riverside county town lacking real-time water quality monitoring devices could only depend on third-party institutions for quarterly sampling. As a result, a chemical wastewater leakage incident went undetected for over two months until it was discovered by responsible personnel, severely threatening downstream drinking water sources and significantly escalating restoration costs and negative social impact. These dual shortcomings in technology and resources create inherent deficiencies in critical aspects of grassroots ecological governance, including information acquisition, problem diagnosis, and solution formulation.

Moreover, capacity supply shortcomings in grassroots ecological governance are also reflected in the limited ability to integrate diverse forces. Grassroots governments often need to consolidate resources from various actors, such as social organizations, research institutions, and enterprises, to compensate for shortages in manpower, technology, and funding. However, in practice, participation from these diverse forces is generally low, and the socialization of public governance remains limited. Consequently, a substantial amount of work that could be shared by societal forces remains concentrated within the constrained capacity circle of grassroots governments, preventing the full realization of governance efficacy. Additionally,

ISSN: 2688-8653

due to the lack of mature cooperation models and communication channels, even when external forces are willing to participate, grassroots units often struggle to incorporate them promptly into overall governance plans, thereby missing opportunities for synergistic effects. The inadequacy of external support prevents the effective distribution of governance task pressures, forcing grassroots units to simultaneously address multiple complex issues with limited resources. This leads to widespread insufficient investment and shallow execution depth in governance tasks, ultimately causing a widening gap between actual governance outcomes and expected objectives.

4. Three-Dimensional Institutional Restructuring for Resilience Governance

4.1. Transformation of Assessment Mechanisms: From Pressure Transmission to Resilience Cultivation

Under the current pressure-driven system, the assessment mechanism for grassroots ecological governance excessively relies on top-down target decomposition and responsibility transmission. While this model can generate strong execution momentum in the short term, it also fosters evident blame avoidance tendencies and defensive governance logic. Confronted with one-vote veto systems, layered amplification of targets, and high-frequency inspections and accountability, grassroots officials tend to adopt risk-averse strategies rather than performance-enhancing approaches, forming an assessment-oriented perfunctory implementation model. The direct consequence is the distortion of policy objectives at the grassroots level into a mechanical pursuit of explicit indicators, while long-cycle, complex, and cross-sectoral ecological issues receive insufficient attention and investment. This assessment pressure not only exacerbates short-term and superficial governance but also constrains the space for grassroots initiatives and institutional innovation.

Therefore, the reform of resilience-oriented assessment mechanisms should prioritize incentivizing grassroots units to solve practical problems and enhance long-term governance capacity. It should gradually shift from singular, static outcome-based indicators to a dynamic, multi-dimensional comprehensive evaluation system, ensuring that assessments genuinely serve capacity building and long-term governance. First, introduce differentiated assessments. Develop categorized evaluation indicator systems tailored to regional variations in ecological environmental carrying capacity, economic development levels, and resource endowments. For instance, ecologically sensitive areas should focus on evaluating ecological protection effectiveness and risk prevention, while industrial clusters should emphasize pollution reduction and green transition progress. Differentiated assessments prevent resource waste and governance-induced damage caused by one-size-fits-all approaches. Second, strengthen positive incentives. Incorporate effective practices in problem identification, mechanism innovation, social mobilization, and cross-departmental collaboration into performance evaluations, linking them to cadre promotions, fiscal transfers, and special fund allocations. This encourages grassroots governments to take initiative and responsibility in ecological governance. Third, extend assessment cycles. Implement multi-year rolling evaluations for tasks requiring long-term results, such as ecosystem restoration, watershed management, and land remediation. Introduce mid-term reviews and annual process assessments to reduce the impulse for short-term "showcase" indicators and encourage investment in long-term mechanisms. Fourth, promote transparency and feedback in assessment outcomes. Leverage digital platforms to publicly disclose assessment results, identified issues, and corrective measures for ecological governance across regions, subject to public and media supervision. This enhances the transparency and credibility of assessments. Simultaneously, establish

ISSN: 2688-8653

robust feedback mechanisms to promptly translate identified shortcomings and recommendations into actionable task lists within grassroots work plans and annual objectives.

4.2. Policy Tool Upgrading: Unleashing Grassroots Innovation Space

Confronted with the widespread issue of insufficient capacity supply in grassroots ecological governance, upgrading policy tools can unleash the innovative potential of local governments. This upgrading first manifests in the coordination between flexible and rigid instruments. Traditional governance models overemphasize rigid constraints, relying excessively on administrative orders and layered decomposition of indicator systems. This forces grassroots governments into mechanical implementation amid resource limitations, consequently breeding formalism and passive compliance. To resolve this dilemma, flexible designs must be incorporated into policy tools, granting grassroots units greater discretionary autonomy to select diverse governance pathways aligned with local economic conditions, ecological endowments, and social needs.

Building on this, grassroots governments should strengthen social collaboration mechanisms, facilitating deep engagement with research institutions, enterprises, and social organizations through institutionalized channels. This would establish a multi-stakeholder synergy system characterized by government leadership, societal coordination, and citizen participation. For instance, creating special ecological funds, implementing third-party governance evaluations, and expanding channels for social capital participation can effectively alleviate pressure on grassroots governments regarding human resources, funding, and specialized expertise. This model of social collaboration-a balanced integration of rigidity and flexibility-not only compensates for capacity gaps but also enhances governance efficacy through multi-stakeholder interaction, thereby avoiding fragmentation in ecological governance.

Simultaneously, policy tool upgrading should focus on digital and intelligent empowerment to overcome bottlenecks in information asymmetry and resource fragmentation both within internal government departments and between the government and external actors. Currently, grassroots governments generally lack systematic data collection and analysis capabilities in ecological governance, making it difficult to diagnose problems comprehensively and often leading to solution formulation devoid of scientific basis. To address this, comprehensive application of digital policy tools should be vigorously promoted in grassroots ecological governance, including the construction of cross-departmental data sharing platforms to eliminate data barriers.

Leveraging new technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things, grassroots governments can monitor environmental dynamics in real time, enhance capabilities in prediction, early warning, and emergency response, and achieve precise allocation of governance resources through visualized monitoring and intelligent analysis. Particularly in transboundary watershed governance, digital platforms can enable real-time monitoring of water quality indicators and automatic distribution of early warning information, thereby overcoming the drawbacks of delayed detection and sluggish response inherent in traditional approaches. Promoting the digitalization of ecological governance not only provides scientific support for the governance process but also facilitates a shift from experience-based to evidence-based governance through data-driven approaches, ultimately maximizing the efficiency of limited grassroots resources.

4.3. Capacity Building Project: Constructing an Enduring Empowerment System

The establishment of an enduring empowerment system requires the formation of stable guarantee mechanisms at the institutional level. The fundamental reasons for the persistent issues of short-term responses and fragmented implementation in grassroots ecological

ISSN: 2688-8653

governance lie in insufficient institutional supply and a lack of continuity in policy implementation. To address this, institutional development should be advanced jointly at both the national and local levels. On one hand, a multi-level fiscal support and dedicated fund investment system should be established to provide grassroots units with continuous and stable governance funding, preventing the disruption of governance tasks due to funding shortfalls. On the other hand, by improving professional skills training and talent promotion systems, exchanges between grassroots cadres and technical personnel can be promoted. Through on-the-job learning and cross-sectoral training, a professional team proficient in technology, governance, and collaboration can be formed. Simultaneously, institutional design should emphasize the capacity for cross-departmental coordination. A feasible approach is to issue institutional documents that clearly define the responsibility boundaries of different departments and administrative jurisdictions, avoiding the loss of governance efficacy caused by unclear powers and responsibilities and dispersed resources. Institutionalized safeguards can not only alleviate the resource pressure on grassroots units but also promote the shift of governance actions from temporary emergency mobilization to routine implementation.

Furthermore, the construction of an enduring empowerment system necessitates incorporating broad citizen participation into the institutionalization process, promoting a collaborative governance landscape involving the government, society, and the public. As a typical public affair, the sustainability of ecological and environmental governance depends not only on the government's policy execution capacity but also on the awareness and participation level of the public, especially those residing near ecological improvement sites. These citizens often have the most direct perception of the outcomes of ecological governance, possess the deepest understanding of the current situation at the improvement sites, and have unique demands regarding the direction of improvements. Their broad participation in ecological governance is not only an embodiment of serving the people but also a mission to accept public oversight. Therefore, grassroots governments should effectively implement information disclosure, advance environmental education, and establish institutionalized channels for participation to enhance citizens' sense of agency in ecological governance. For example, mechanisms such as establishing in-person environmental councils and involving resident representatives in public hearings can provide the public with institutionalized channels for voicing opinions in policy formulation, implementation, and oversight. Developing online supervision channels through digital platforms to form a closed-loop system of supervision, feedback, and rectification enables the public to report environmental issues in real time and participate in monitoring and evaluating governance outcomes. This helps grassroots governments promptly identify opportunities for ecological governance. Active citizen participation can not only compensate for the shortcomings of grassroots governments in supervision and resources but also enhance the transparency and credibility of policy implementation, promoting a shift from government-led to multi-stakeholder collaborative governance at the grassroots level.

5. Conclusion

The deepening advancement of ecological civilization construction is not only an imperative requirement at the national strategic level but also a practical test of whether grassroots governments can achieve an effective transformation in their governance capacity. By analyzing issues such as stress coping, fragmented implementation, and short-sighted governance in grassroots ecological governance practices, this paper has revealed how the dual constraints of a pressure-driven system and insufficient capacity impact policy implementation and governance outcomes. These challenges not only reflect the institutional tensions inherent in the process of implementing ecological policies at the grassroots level but also highlight the

ISSN: 2688-8653

constraints posed by governance capacity shortfalls when dealing with complex ecological affairs. However, ecological governance is not a one-dimensional issue; it is a systematic project involving interactions among multiple stakeholders and across multiple levels. Confronted with these governance difficulties, grassroots governments need to find flexible space within the constraints of the top-level system while simultaneously enhancing their capacities and innovating mechanisms to achieve long-term responses to complex ecological problems. It is against this backdrop that the concept of resilience governance provides us with a new analytical framework and practical approach. It emphasizes not only the flexibility and adaptability of institutional design but also focuses on integrating diverse forces and the precise allocation of resources, thereby offering a feasible path for grassroots governments to break through difficulties and advance toward modernized governance.

Therefore, from a long-term perspective, advancing the modernization of grassroots ecological governance requires a concerted effort across three dimensions: institutional restructuring, policy tool upgrading, and capacity building. By establishing an assessment mechanism oriented toward fostering resilience, the tendency towards "indicator-centric" evaluation can be corrected, encouraging grassroots levels to focus on the long-term development of ecological governance. Promoting the flexibility and digital transformation of policy tools can unleash space for policy innovation under conditions of limited resources, facilitating effective collaboration in cross-departmental and cross-regional policy implementation for ecological governance. Improving enduring empowerment systems and citizen participation mechanisms can form stable institutional support, fostering positive interaction between the government, society, and the public, thereby enhancing the transparency and credibility of governance. Only by seeking a balance between institutional constraints and autonomous innovation, and finding the tension point between short-term pressures and long-term goals, can grassroots governments truly achieve the transition from stress coping to resilience growth. As a strategic project vital to the well-being of the people and the future of the nation, the success of ecological civilization construction ultimately depends on the execution capability and innovative capacity of grassroots governance. Promoting the continuous enhancement of grassroots government capacities under a resilience-oriented approach is, therefore, the essential path to achieving the modernization of ecological governance and building a modern powerhouse characterized by harmony between humanity and nature.

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