

Empirical Study on the System of Rural Legal Practitioners—Taking Shaanxi Province as an Example

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Abstract: Legal literacy system in rural areas has become increasingly complete, and the rule of law construction has been continuously advanced. However, through practical investigations, the legal literacy system in rural areas of the new era has failed to achieve the expected effects, with practical obstacles such as structural imbalances in grassroots teams and the need to improve the quality of cadres. This study will primarily take 15 villages in Shaanxi Province as typical cases to examine the causes of the legal literacy system's predicament. Through methods such as questionnaire surveys, field interviews, comparative analysis, and field observations, the study will investigate three different groups: legal literacy personnel, villagers, and judicial bureau staff. Based on this, the study explores solutions from multiple perspectives to optimize the structure of grassroots teams and enhance the quality of cadres, aiming to enrich the theoretical framework of how the legal literacy system empowers rural governance and contribute to rural revitalization and the construction of a law-based China.

1. Research background and significance

1.1 Research background

With the phased implementation of China's "Eighth Five-Year" legal education plan and the deepening of the comprehensive rule of law strategy in rural areas, remarkable progress has been made in legal system development. "Legal Literates" are villagers or residents with strong legal awareness and knowledge who actively participate in legal practices and serve as role models. Their primary responsibilities include legal education and dispute mediation, making them a vital force in grassroots legal development. In 2024, the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Justice announced the first list of "Sanqin's Most Beautiful Legal Literates," marking the growing maturity of the local legal literacy system.

However, in practice, the system still faces prominent issues: the uneven quality of legal literacy personnel, structural imbalance in the team, and insufficient work enthusiasm, all of which constrain the system's effectiveness. Therefore, in-depth research and improvement of the rural legal literacy system have become crucial tasks for advancing rural rule of law construction.

1.2 Definition of the concept

According to the "Implementation Rules for the Rural (Community) 'Legal Literacy' Training Project" issued by the Shaanxi Provincial Department of Justice in 2024, a 'Legal Literacy' refers to a villager (or community resident) certified by judicial authorities as possessing basic legal knowledge and legal thinking. Such individuals can provide foundational legal services including legal education, consultation, and dispute mediation, while also serving as role models in grassroots legal practice.

1.3 Literature review

From the perspective of their role and positioning, legal literacy advocates are described as versatile contributors to grassroots social governance and pioneers in rural revitalization, playing a pivotal role in advancing law-based rural governance [1]. They are not only disseminators and practitioners of the rule of law but also active participants and promoters of self-governance and moral governance. These studies have clarified the multifaceted roles of legal literacy advocates in rural governance, providing a theoretical foundation for understanding their significance.

From the perspective of the theoretical foundation of the Legal Literacy System, its theoretical basis encompasses multiple dimensions, including the popularization and deepening of the rule of law concept, optimization of rural governance structures, and enhancement of governance efficiency [2]. By educating and guiding villagers to acquire legal knowledge, Legal Literacy System practitioners have fostered the development of rural legal culture, thereby improving the scientific rigor, standardization, and effectiveness of rural governance. These studies provide a solid theoretical foundation for the implementation of the Legal Literacy System.

From the perspective of the implementation effects of the Legal Literacy Officer system, existing research generally indicates that this system has achieved remarkable outcomes in enhancing rural governance, addressing legal challenges faced by grassroots communities, and promoting legal literacy. For instance, by providing professional legal consultation and services, Legal Literacy Officers have effectively advanced the rule of law in rural areas. Additionally, through organizing legal lectures and distributing educational materials, they have raised villagers' legal awareness, thereby fostering social stability and harmony in rural communities [3].

From the perspective of challenges and issues, while the Legal Literacy Volunteers (LLVs) system has played a significant role in rural governance, it still faces several challenges. Firstly, the outreach and depth of awareness campaigns need improvement, as some remote or information-scarce rural areas lack sufficient understanding of LLVs. Secondly, the work enthusiasm and sustained motivation of LLVs themselves require attention, with some volunteers showing declining engagement due to heavy workloads and inadequate incentive mechanisms [4]. Additionally, there are shortcomings in resource integration, diversified incentives, and quantitative measurement.

However, previous literature on the legal literacy system in rural areas has been limited in scope, focusing narrowly on individual subjects while overlooking specific groups. Most studies have concentrated on the insufficient capabilities and low literacy levels of legal literacy practitioners, neglecting the crucial role of villagers as service recipients and the pivotal role of judicial bureaus as financial supporters. To address this, the empirical research conducted by the project team helps overcome the current limitations of insufficient research coverage.

1.4 Research significance

1.4.1 Exploring more effective practical approaches to enhance villagers' legal literacy

Through field research, project participants identified practical challenges in implementing the Legal Literacy Volunteers system, particularly the low engagement of rural residents. Leveraging the volunteers' local roots, they adopted a localized approach during legal education campaigns and policy interpretation. By using vivid case studies and vernacular language, these volunteers explained complex legal statutes and agricultural policies in accessible terms, creating a more relatable experience. This innovative method moved beyond traditional task-oriented approaches like distributing brochures, focusing instead on addressing grassroots legal needs. It helped villagers genuinely recognize the importance of the law, effectively clarifying legal principles. This enhanced farmers' understanding and accurate implementation of national policies, significantly improving the effectiveness of rural legal education initiatives [5].

1.4.2 Exploring more promoting practical approaches to resolve rural disputes

Project teams conducted field research in rural communities to summarize replicable and scalable practices of the Legal Literacy Officer system, providing insights for its implementation in other regions. These officers, originating from local villages, live alongside villagers, possess comprehensive knowledge of community affairs and residents' backgrounds, and understand the core issues at hand. Leveraging their dual expertise as both community representatives and legal professionals, they utilize their familiarity with local dynamics, geographical contexts, and practical matters to build trust with villagers. By bridging psychological gaps through accessible legal knowledge, they resolve disputes in an intuitive manner, making legal advice more understandable and acceptable to villagers [6]. This approach effectively resolves conflicts, achieving the goal of "turning major issues into minor ones and minor ones into nothing." Such efforts significantly contribute to mitigating rural disputes and maintaining harmonious social stability in rural areas.

1.4.3 Exploring more effective practical approaches to promote grassroots rule of law construction

Project members recognized the practical challenges in implementing and promoting the Legal Literacy System, including insufficient legal literacy among participants and weak service awareness. They identified operational bottlenecks in the system's implementation and proposed improvement strategies. Through legal training, the system enhanced participants' legal competence, strengthened village-level organizations' capabilities, and consolidated the organizational foundation for rural social governance. This initiative also laid the groundwork for establishing a "Three-Governance Integration" rural governance framework. By shifting the focus of social governance and public services—along with related human and material resources—to grassroots implementation, the system established a comprehensive work mechanism with extensive connections and public-oriented services. This approach prioritizes resolving conflicts at the grassroots level, where governance effectiveness is most evident [7]. Such efforts strengthen grassroots legal capacity, elevate local rule-of-law standards, and drive continuous progress in rural legal development.

1.4.4 Provide robust theoretical support for policy formulation

Project members systematically synthesize advanced practical experiences from field research into theoretical frameworks, identifying optimization pathways for addressing shortcomings in the

implementation of the Legal Literacy Officer system. This initiative provides theoretical insights and actionable strategies to enhance the application of this system in rural governance, thereby enriching the theoretical landscape of how Legal Literacy Officers empower rural governance. Through empirical studies on the rural Legal Literacy Officer system, researchers gain deeper understanding of its operational status, practical bottlenecks, and improvement approaches. The policy research reports generated from these surveys offer theoretical support and practical foundations for government policymakers to formulate and refine relevant policies. Additionally, field investigations reveal common challenges and regular patterns, enabling the identification of universal principles that can serve as references for promoting the Legal Literacy Officer system in other rural areas [8].

2. Theoretical foundations and analytical framework

2.1 Theoretical basis

2.1.1 Theory of rural governance structure optimization

The introduction of the Legal Literacy Officer system contributes to optimizing rural governance structures [9]. By engaging Legal Literacy Officers, it strengthens the connection between governance entities (such as village committees and villager representatives) and villagers, enhancing transparency and participation in governance. Additionally, Legal Literacy Officers serve as a bridge between villagers and government or judicial authorities, facilitating two-way information exchange and prompt resolution of issues.

2.1.2 Theoretical Framework for Enhancing Governance Efficiency

The implementation of the Legal Literacy Volunteers system can significantly enhance rural governance efficiency [10]. By participating in the formulation of village regulations, mediation of disputes, and provision of legal services, these volunteers directly improve governance effectiveness. Furthermore, they can promote the standardization and institutionalization of governance processes through supervision and evaluation of rural governance activities.

2.1.3 Theory of Rural Social Stability

The role of legal literacy advocates in rural governance is further demonstrated in fostering social stability and harmony [11]. By disseminating legal knowledge, they help villagers recognize the importance of law-abiding, thereby reducing conflicts stemming from legal ignorance. Additionally, these advocates can mediate disputes and provide legal consultations to promptly resolve social tensions, ensuring rural stability.

2.2 Analysis Framework

The supply side (legal professionals): The core lies in team structure and capabilities. Factors like an aging workforce and low educational attainment may compromise service quality, necessitating optimized selection and training to enhance efficiency. The demand side (villagers): The key lies in participation willingness and legal literacy. Villagers' "free-rider" mentality and misconceptions about the law may hinder system implementation, requiring innovative legal education methods to boost engagement. The safeguard side (Judicial Bureau): The focus is on fiscal support and management mechanisms. Lack of financial subsidies and uneven distribution of training resources may constrain system sustainability, requiring improved safeguard mechanisms

to provide support.

The research team conducted a comprehensive study of three key groups—legal literacy advocates, villagers, and judicial bureau staff—through multiple methodologies including questionnaires, field interviews, comparative analysis, and on-site observations. They developed an operational framework based on "collaborative collaboration, resource integration, diversified incentives, and quantitative measurement," while identifying four major bottlenecks: "imbalanced team structure, inadequate cadre competence, weak villager participation in governance, and insufficient financial support." The study ultimately proposed targeted recommendations such as "optimizing grassroots team structures, establishing scientific training mechanisms, enhancing villagers' legal literacy, and increasing fiscal support," forming a complete research chain of "research-analysis-recommendation." This work aims to enrich the theoretical framework for leveraging the legal literacy advocate system in rural governance.

3. Operation logic of the rural "legal literate" system

3.1 Subject collaboration: constructing a collaborative mechanism to guide coordinated governance

The research team's investigation revealed that the effective implementation of the Legal Literacy Program relies on a collaborative mechanism involving multiple stakeholders. Systematic optimization is required in selection mechanisms, training models, and evaluation supervision [1]. Taking Wangshang Village and Tangjia Village as examples, Legal Literacy Program participants have established an effective model through close cooperation with village committees, the Justice Bureau, and social organizations. First, the Justice Bureau oversees the selection, training, and evaluation of Legal Literacy Program participants. It issues official documents defining the scope of participants, primarily local community leaders. The Bureau invites university law professors to conduct training sessions. Evaluation methods include distributing questionnaires, with certification and certificates awarded upon passing assessments. Second, village committees provide operational support by coordinating office spaces and organizing villagers to participate in legal education activities. Training is conducted through legal lectures and video production. Finally, Legal Literacy Program participants carry out specific tasks such as legal awareness campaigns, dispute mediation, and feedback to the Justice Bureau and village committees. This collaborative mechanism lays a solid foundation for the effective operation of the Legal Literacy Program.

3.2 Resource Integration: Optimize resource allocation and enhance service efficiency

Resource integration is pivotal to the effective operation of the Legal Literacy Program. The strategy of leveraging archives to empower rural legal development underscores the role of archival information in resource consolidation. Through field research, team members discovered that the Judicial Bureau's internet-based information-sharing platform facilitates resource integration, enabling Legal Literacy Program participants to access more comprehensive and efficient support. The platform hosts explanatory videos on the Civil Code and a dispute mediation case repository, allowing participants to study at their convenience. It also provides illustrated guides on "Common Legal Issues in Rural Areas," enabling villagers to consult Legal Literacy Program members online, transcending geographical and temporal barriers. For instance, the "Legal Literacy Program Service Platform" established by Shangluo Municipal Judicial Bureau has accumulated over 500 learning resources for participants and provided more than 2,000 legal consultations to villagers.

3.3 Diversified Incentives: Innovating Incentive Mechanisms to Stimulate Governance Participation

Incentive mechanisms are crucial for motivating legal literacy volunteers' enthusiasm and creativity. Multiple factors including service performance and behavioral attitudes influence farmers' satisfaction with the implementation effects of legal literacy volunteers [12], providing important references for designing diversified incentive mechanisms. Project members found that by comprehensively considering material rewards, spiritual encouragement, career development, and social recognition, the needs and expectations of different legal literacy volunteers can be met, promoting their active participation in rural governance. In terms of material incentives, some regions provide monthly subsidies of 200-500 yuan or reimburse work expenses. For spiritual incentives, village committees select "Outstanding Legal Literacy Volunteers" by issuing certificates and publicizing them in villages, with priority recommendations for township-level or higher commendation evaluations. Taking Jintai District in Baoji City as an example, the city's policy of prioritizing children's school enrollment recommendations has effectively enhanced work enthusiasm.

3.4 Quantitative measurement: scientific evaluation of outcomes and continuous system optimization

Quantitative assessment serves as a scientific methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the Legal Literacy Program. The Judicial Bureau has established a quantitative evaluation system to objectively assess the program's performance, including villagers' satisfaction and improvements in the legal environment. During field research, project members identified key evaluation metrics such as the frequency of legal education sessions, dispute resolution success rates, and community satisfaction levels. The Bureau regularly reviews work archives to monitor the program's progress and conducts on-site surveys in villages to gauge villagers' satisfaction and recognition. Performance evaluations are based on feedback from local residents. Outstanding performers receive rewards, while those who fail are suspended with a deadline for improvement. Those who fail to meet standards will lose their "Legal Literacy" certification. For instance, in Weinan City, the Judicial Bureau provided a one-month specialized training program for 15 underperforming Legal Literacy volunteers. Despite corrective measures, five individuals were ultimately dismissed.

This comprehensive multi-dimensional operational logic, integrating entity collaboration, resource integration, diversified incentives, and quantitative measurement, has facilitated the establishment of the Legal Literacy Program in rural areas. However, field research reveals that the program still encounters four types of practical obstacles in its implementation, stemming from issues such as poor coordination across various stages, insufficient efficiency in entity collaboration, and uneven resource allocation.

4. The realistic obstruction of the rural "legal literate" system

4.1 Imbalance in the structure of grassroots teams

4.1.1 Manifestations of imbalance

Survey data (see Table 1 and Table 2) reveals that the legal literacy workforce faces challenges of aging demographics and gender imbalance. In terms of age distribution: Among the 50 legal literacy volunteers, none are under 30, 34% are aged 31-40, 46% are 41-60, and 20% are over 61, with over 60% being 40+—indicating a severe shortage of young talent. Regarding gender composition: Men

account for 66% (33 individuals), while women make up 34% (17 individuals). Notably, women predominantly handle auxiliary tasks like record-keeping, and their participation in dispute mediation and key legal education initiatives is less than 20%.

Table 1 Age Distribution of the Legal Literacy Team

age	number of people	Percentage
Under 30 years old	0	0%
31-40 years old	17	34%
41-50 years old	13	26%
51-60 years old	10	20%
61 years and above	10	20%

Table 2 Gender Distribution of the Legal Literacy Team

sex	number of people	Percentage
man	33	66%
woman	17	34%

4.1.2 Impact of Imbalance

Compared to younger generations, legal literate individuals aged 40 and above exhibit conservative ideologies and face greater challenges in adapting to new situations and issues. For instance, they may lack proficiency in utilizing short videos or online platforms for legal education, thereby limiting their ability to reach younger rural populations. Additionally, some members aged 60 and above, due to declining physical fitness, are unable to conduct frequent door-to-door mediation of disputes.

Men tend to adopt a more rational approach, such as explaining legal provisions, while women lean toward emotional engagement, focusing on emotional comfort. The dominance of a single gender leads to suboptimal mediation outcomes. To resolve legal disputes among villagers, it is essential to combine rational persuasion with emotional appeal, as only through this dual approach can better results be achieved. Therefore, the proportion of young and female organization members in village branch committees should be increased, and their role in legal literacy initiatives should be expanded. For instance, in Cuijiahe Village, Xianyang City, a male legal literacy officer failed to mediate a marital dispute three times due to "lack of understanding of women's concerns." The mediation was only successfully concluded after female members joined the process.

4.1.3 Causes of Imbalance

Most rural youth migrate for work and perceive that 'legal literacy volunteers lack stable income and limited career prospects,' thus showing reluctance to participate; only 3% of the surveyed youth expressed willingness to return to their hometowns as legal literacy volunteers.

In some villages, there exists a traditional notion that 'women should not be exposed in public,' leading to low participation willingness among women. Moreover, during the selection process of village committees, male members of the village leadership are prioritized for recommendation, resulting in fewer opportunities for women to be elected.

4.2 The quality of cadres needs to be improved

4.2.1 Manifestations of literacy deficiencies

The survey (see Table 3) reveals that among 50 legal literacy volunteers, 46% (23 individuals)

hold secondary vocational or high school diplomas, another 46% (23 individuals) have junior college diplomas, while only 6% (3 individuals) possess university degrees. Notably, 85% have no formal legal education, with their understanding of core laws like the Civil Code and Land Management Law limited to superficial knowledge of provisions rather than practical application. For instance, when mediating land disputes in Duzhai Village, Yangling District, these volunteers could only recite that "land contracts are valid for 30 years," yet lacked the ability to resolve disputes over the transfer of contractual rights.

Table 3: Educational Background of the Legal Literacy Team

record of formal schooling	number of people	Percentage
special school	10	20%
senior middle school	13	26%
junior college	23	46%
university	3	6%

4.2.2 Impact of Insufficient Literacy

Insufficient professional competence leads to "off-topic" legal consultations. For instance, when villagers inquire about "seeking compensation for unpaid wages from employers," legal experts merely advise "negotiating with the employer" without informing them of statutory avenues such as labor arbitration or litigation, thereby delaying the opportunity to protect their rights. Some villagers report feeling "still uncertain about how to resolve the issue after consultation."

The "muddling through" approach to mediation and passive service have eroded villagers' trust in the system. During the survey, some villagers stated, "We would not seek legal experts to resolve issues," believing that "seeking the village chief or directly filing a lawsuit is preferable," which has hindered the implementation of the system at the grassroots level.

4.2.3 Causes of Insufficient Competence

The issues are threefold: First, the training frequency is alarmingly low. Among the 15 surveyed villages, Malou Village receives zero annual training sessions, while Cuijiahe and Luopo Villages only get one, far below the required minimum of "at least four times per year." Second, the training content fails to address practical needs—uniformly mandated "corporate legal knowledge" training is irrelevant to villagers' actual concerns like land disputes and marriage matters. Third, the teaching staff is inadequate, with 60% of training sessions conducted by township judicial office personnel rather than legal professionals.

Only a few villages, such as Jiangnan Village in Yangling District, have their village secretaries proactively engaged with the Judicial Bureau, conducting an average of 12 training sessions annually. Most village committees exhibit "lack of attention and support," as evidenced by the failure to notify villagers when lawyers are stationed in the village, resulting in a "disconnection between the service provider and the demand side."

4.3 Insufficient effectiveness of villagers' participation in governance

4.3.1 Manifestations of insufficient therapeutic efficacy

The survey (see Table 4) reveals that among 200 villagers, only 17% (34 individuals) are "very familiar" with the system, while 47.5% (95 individuals) have "heard of it but lack details," and 35.5% (71 individuals) have "never heard of it." Furthermore, 60% of the villagers are unaware that "legal

experts can provide services such as legal consultation and dispute mediation," mistakenly equating them with "village propagandists."

Table 4 Three-line Chart of Villagers' Understanding of the Rural Legal Literacy System

Level of understanding	number of people	Percentage
Very familiar with	34	17%
I know a bit, but not the details	95	47.5%
do not understand	71	35.5%

Only 25% of villagers were willing to participate in legal education activities, while 75% declined citing reasons such as "lack of time," "inability to comprehend," or "irrelevance to their own situation." In dispute resolution, 50% prioritized "seeking assistance from the village chief" or "private negotiation," with only 15% consulting legal experts and 10% directly opting for "legal litigation."

4.3.2 Impacts of Insufficient Therapeutic Outcomes

The low participation willingness of villagers has led to the "formalization" of legal education activities. For instance, in Mafang Village, Weilin Town, Dali County, Weinan City, a "legal education lecture" was held, but only 10 attendees were present, most of whom were elderly individuals, with no young villagers participating. As a result, legal knowledge failed to effectively reach the target population.

4.3.3 Reasons for Insufficient Therapeutic Outcomes

The primary challenges are threefold: First, low educational attainment—40% of villagers hold only primary school education or less, rendering them incapable of comprehending complex legal terms like "guarantee liability" or "statute of limitations." Second, a pronounced interest bias: Younger villagers focus solely on "working rights protection," showing little interest in legal education topics such as "land disputes" or "village affairs transparency," often dismissing them as "irrelevant to their interests" [13]. Third, a "free-rider" mentality: 35% of villagers believe that "government intervention suffices for legal issues, eliminating the need for self-education," relying on authorities to resolve problems rather than taking proactive steps.

4.4 Lack of financial support from higher authorities

4.4.1 Manifestations of support deficiency

The survey results (see Table 5) indicate that among 50 legal literacy participants, only 14% (7 individuals) received salary subsidies (100-300 yuan per month), while 86% (43 individuals) received no subsidies and were provided with completely free services. Among those who received subsidies, 60% reported "subsidies were disbursed untimely," with delays of 2-3 months, and even cases of "subsidies promised but not fulfilled."

Table 5: Three-line Table of Legal Literacy with or Without Wage Subsidy

Whether there is a salary subsidy	number of people	Percentage
have	7	14%
not have	43	86%

Legal literacy professionals predominantly work in the corners of village committees' "small

meeting rooms" without dedicated office equipment. Thirty-two percent of members must "bring their own paper and pens to record mediation situations," while 15% lack computers to access online legal resources. Five respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the working environment, citing "poor conditions that affect work motivation" (see Figure 1).

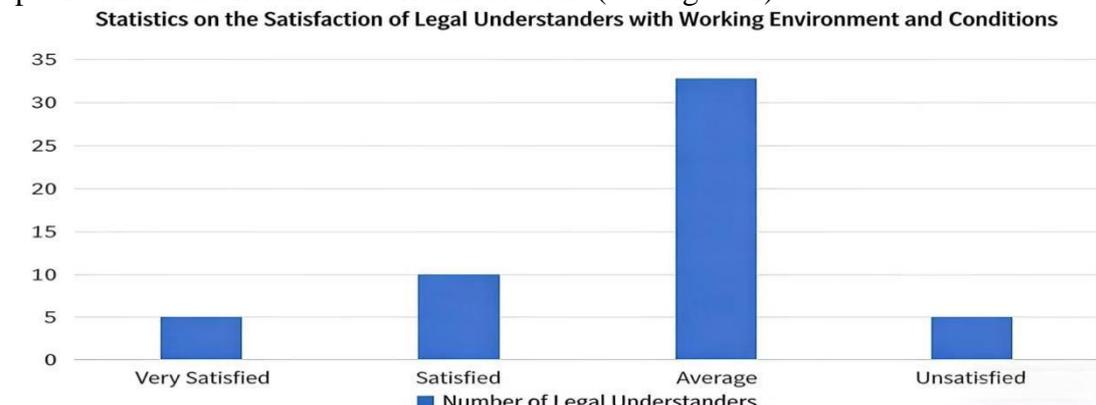


Figure 1 Statistical chart of legal literacy individuals' satisfaction with work environment and working conditions

The costs incurred from legal education campaigns and dispute mediation (including document printing fees, transportation expenses, and venue rental fees) are primarily borne by legal literacy volunteers, with only 20% of villages providing reimbursement. Due to insufficient funding, five villages canceled activities such as "Legal Education Market Fairs" and "Legal-themed Cultural Performances," opting instead for low-cost poster campaigns as the sole promotional measure.

4.4.2 Impact of Support Deficiency

The lack of subsidies or insufficient subsidies has led to an "imbalance between investment and returns" among legal literacy volunteers. In the survey, 70% of the participants expressed "unwillingness to invest additional time in work," such as reducing the frequency of legal education sessions or avoiding complex disputes. Two legal literacy volunteers chose to withdraw due to "long-term unpaid service and lack of family support."

Without financial support, legal literacy volunteers struggle to conduct services such as "door-to-door legal education" and "cross-village mediation," with services limited to "villagers around the village committee," leaving residents in remote villages without access. For instance, in Shaba Village, Foping County, Hanzhong City, only 30% of villagers have received services from legal literacy volunteers, while 70% have not due to "long distances and lack of transportation subsidies."

4.4.3 Reasons for Lack of Support

The public goods nature of rural legal services constitutes their essential attribute, requiring government provision as a foundational legal support for agricultural production and villagers' livelihoods [14]. The government must provide financial support covering personnel compensation, institutional support measures, and reasonable operational costs for village legal service providers. Notably, 80% of townships fail to include subsidies for legal literacy programs or activity funds in their annual budgets. Even in those with budget allocations, underfunded areas like Zengjia Town in Zhenping County, Ankang City—due to local fiscal constraints—cannot fully disburse funds, resulting in "empty checks" that only cover "basic training material costs" [15].

5. Suggestions for Improving the System of "Legal Literates" in Rural Areas

5.1 Optimize the structure of grassroots teams and guide diverse forces to participate

5.1.1 Expand selection channels to replenish youthful talent

The implementation of the Legal Literacy Officer program requires personnel selection as a prerequisite. To further optimize the selection process, a proportional participation mechanism should be adopted, with flexible adjustments to the allocation ratios of different personnel types based on local conditions [16]. For instance, Northwest A&F University has established a "Rural Legal Talent Orientation Program," recruiting young rural students who, upon graduation, are assigned to serve as legal literacy officers in their villages, with tuition fee reductions and employment subsidies provided.

Young entrepreneurs returning to their hometowns and university graduate village officials shall be prioritized for selection as legal literacy advocates, with "career development channels" provided, such as priority recommendation as candidates for village committees. The "Youth Legal Literacy Advocates Training Camp" will be conducted, training over 1,000 participants annually.

5.1.2 Balance gender ratio and leverage female advantages

Town governments should establish a 'Special Program for the Development of Women Legal Literates', with at least 2 female members selected from each village, to provide preferential training resources for women, such as priority access to provincial-level training, work support and assigning female assistants and so on.

Villages should promote "Outstanding Cases of Women as Legal Literates" through village broadcasts and WeChat groups, such as "A female mediator achieving 100% success rate in resolving marital disputes". Village Women's Federation should conduct "Women Legal Education Volunteers" activities, stimulating women's enthusiasm for participation.

5.1.3 Introduce multiple stakeholders to strengthen team capabilities

Town governments are supposed to invite retired judges, prosecutors, and corporate legal professionals to serve as "Legal Literacy Mentors," providing monthly case guidance. They select wealth-creation leaders and local virtuous figures as "Honorary Legal Literacy Volunteers" to leverage their prestige in promoting legal education and mediation.

Town governments should establish a "Legal Literacy Practitioner and Lawyer" pairing mechanism, with one legal advisor assigned to each township, who regularly collaborates with legal literacy practitioners in joint office work, such as providing village-based services twice monthly to resolve complex legal issues.

5.2 Establish a scientific training mechanism to enhance the comprehensive quality of cadres

5.2.1 Optimize the training system to enhance professional competence

For key legal literacy personnel, advanced training shall be conducted, such as in-depth interpretation of the Civil Code and mediation techniques for complex disputes, with no fewer than 6 sessions per year; for general legal literacy personnel, basic training shall be provided, including commonly used legal provisions and simplified mediation methods, with no fewer than 4 sessions per year.

Town governments ought to adopt a "case-based teaching and simulated mediation" approach,

such as pairing legal literacy experts to simulate "homestead dispute mediation". They can utilize online platforms like the "Shaanxi Rule of Law Cloud Classroom" to provide fragmented learning resources for convenient on-demand study.

5.2.2 Strengthening the Rule of Law Thinking and Changing the Work Concept

County Bureau of Justice can invite law professors to explain the "difference between rule by man and rule of law", and strengthen the awareness of handling affairs according to law by combining "cases of disputes escalating due to lack of legal knowledge". County Bureau of Justice should organize an annual "legal knowledge competition", and suspend the working qualifications of those who fail the assessment.

County Bureau of Justice can arrange legal professionals to intern at township judicial offices for one month to participate in case handling. It can conduct the 'Model Case Selection for Law-Based Mediation' and promote the work model of 'First Legal Explanation, Then Mediation'.

5.2.3 Enhance Assessment Management to Promote Competency Development

The evaluation criteria shall include "frequency of legal education, mediation success rate, and villager satisfaction." Outstanding performers will be rewarded with bonuses, certificates of honor, etc., while those failing to meet the standards will be required to rectify within a specified period. Individuals who fail to meet the requirements for two consecutive years will be dismissed [17].

Village committees ought to establish a 'Legal Literacy Database' to update work progress in real time. They should conduct a quarterly villager satisfaction survey to identify issues and ensure corrective actions, such as 'villagers reported poor service attitude, requiring enhanced communication and training.'

5.3 Enhancing Villagers' Legal Literacy and Stimulating Their Participation in Governance

5.3.1 Innovate Legal Education Methods to Enhance Attractiveness

Village committees can integrate legal knowledge into cultural programs such as legal awareness skits and fast-paced rhymes, and conduct "Legal Cultural Performances" no fewer than 4 times annually. They can also make "Legal Literacy Sheets" (e.g., "10 Questions and Answers on Land Disputes") and distribute them to every household.

During key events such as "big market fairs" and "autumn harvest," legal education activities like "field legal awareness campaigns" and "market legal awareness campaigns" are conducted. For young villagers, short videos such as "Tips for Protecting Workers' Rights" are produced and disseminated through TikTok and Kuaishou, aiming to reach 500,000 villagers. These efforts guide villagers to establish correct legal concepts and recognize that the law is an important tool for safeguarding their rights and promoting social harmony [18].

5.3.2 Establish a participation platform to boost engagement

The monthly meetings, chaired by legal literacy advocates, address "village governance legal issues" such as "standardizing public disclosure of village affairs" and involve villager representatives to ensure "villagers' right to speak." By combining online and offline approaches, the initiative ensures villagers can conveniently access legal assistance, resolve legal queries, enhance legal literacy, strengthen trust in the law, and motivate participation in rural governance. This fosters a culture where everyone learns, understands, observes, and applies the law.

5.4 Increase financial support and improve wage security

5.4.1 Implement the fiscal budget to ensure stable funding

From 2025 to 2027, provincial governments will annually allocate an additional 50 million yuan in special funds for legal literacy programs, prioritizing underdeveloped regions and remote villages. A funding growth mechanism will be established to progressively increase investment ratios in line with economic development. This initiative aims to alleviate the workload of grassroots legal professionals, retain more specialized legal talent at the local level, and ensure sustained growth in grassroots legal services [19].

5.4.2 Increase subsidy standards to safeguard basic rights

Fair compensation is a key factor in attracting and retaining skilled legal professionals. It not only meets their basic living needs but also recognizes their professional value, thereby boosting their motivation and enthusiasm. For full-time legal professionals, the monthly subsidy should be at least equivalent to the local minimum wage, such as 1,950 yuan per month in Shaanxi Province in 2024. For part-time legal professionals, subsidies are provided based on workload, for example, 100 yuan for each legal education session and 200 yuan for each dispute mediation case.

6. Conclusion and outlook

6.1 Conclusion

6.1.1 Significant institutional value, but underutilized efficiency

The Legal Literacy Officer (LLO) system serves as a key mechanism for advancing rural rule of law, effectively enhancing villagers' legal awareness and resolving grassroots conflicts. In Qiaozicun Village of Yan'an City, for instance, the system reduced litigation rates by 35%. However, due to constraints such as team composition, professional competence, and financial support, the system fell short of expectations. Only 17% of villagers reported being 'very familiar' with the system, and 86% of LLOs received no salary subsidies.

6.1.2 The etiology of obstruction is complex and requires multidimensional resolution

The systemic issues are not caused by a single factor, but rather result from the combined effects of three interconnected aspects: the supply side (imbalanced team structure and insufficient professional competence), the demand side (weak villager participation in governance), and the support side (lack of financial backing). For instance, the absence of young talent leads to outdated legal education methods, which in turn reduces villagers' willingness to participate. Meanwhile, inadequate financial support dampens the enthusiasm of legal literacy advocates, further compromising service quality.

6.1.3 The Shaanxi Experience is Replicable and Promotable

The research has identified three effective models: Baoji City's "Legal Literacy Practitioners and Legal Advisors" collaborative model, Yangling District's "Tiered Training" model, and Hanzhong City's "Life-Integrated Legal Education" model. These models have demonstrated significant practical efficacy and can serve as references for other regions. For instance, promoting the "Special Program for Female Legal Literacy Practitioners" could effectively balance gender ratios and enhance the success rate of marital dispute mediation.

6.2 Outlook

6.2.1 Promote urban-rural interaction and resource sharing

Explore the "cross-village collaboration" model. In geographically adjacent villages with similar industries, establish a "Legal Literacy Alliance" to jointly conduct legal education activities such as "regional legal awareness fairs" and mediate cross-village disputes, such as "land boundary disputes between two villages," thereby enhancing governance efficiency [20].

6.2.2 Deepening the linkage of rural elites and expanding the influence of the system

A "Rural Elite Think Tank" will be established, recruiting retired officials, entrepreneurs, and experts as "institutional advisors." An annual "Legal Literacy System Symposium" will be held to provide suggestions for institutional improvements. Elite members will be invited to participate in the "Legal Literacy Assessment" to ensure fairness and impartiality. Leveraging the leadership of rural elites, a "Model Village for Rule of Law" initiative will be launched, with each county creating at least five model villages. Through their social resources, corporate donations and public welfare funds will be introduced to supplement the operational costs of the system [21].

6.2.3 Strengthening Institutional Safeguards to Promote Sustainable Development

To advance the legislation of the "Implementation Regulations of the Rural Legal Literacy System in Shaanxi Province," it is essential to emphasize local characteristics and promote the localization of legal mechanisms during rural legislation, thereby avoiding the phenomenon of cultural incompatibility caused by rigid application [22]. Clearly defining the responsibilities, rights, and benefits of legal literacy personnel, as well as the financial obligations of governments at all levels, will provide a legal foundation for the effective operation of the system.

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