

On the Construction of Ecology-type Government

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Abstract: Along with the economic development and the progress of the times, the ecological and environmental problems are increasingly standing out. One of the most important responsibilities for the present government is to construct the ecological government, to establish the concept of the ecological civilization, to strengthen the function of ecological management and to promote the ecological development of economy and society. Also, the government, under the guidance of the scientific development concept and ecological value, should change its function to realize the harmonious development between man and nature based on strengthening the concept of ecological civilization, enhancing the system construction and developing ecological economy and education.

Keywords: Government function, Ecology-type government, Ecological economy, Ecological education

1. Introduction

According to the *Proposals on the 11th Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development Made by CCCP* which was carried on the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the CPC, energy resources saving should be China's basic national policy, meanwhile, we should develop circular economy, protect the ecological environment, accelerate to build a resource-effective and environment-friendly society to improve the coordinative development among economic development and population and resources and environment. Further, based on *the Report to 17th National Congress of the CPC*, we must adopt an enlightened approach to development that results in expanded production, a better life and sound ecological and environmental conditions, and build a resource-conserving and environment-friendly society that coordinates growth rate with the economic structure, quality and efficiency, and harmonizes economic growth with the population, resources and the environment, so that our people will live and work under sound ecological and environmental conditions and our economy and society will develop in a sustainable way. Thus, the government must relocate its function under the background of the implemented scientific view of development in an all-round way to promote the harmony between man and nature, i.e. besides the political, legal and moral responsibility, the government should bear its ecological responsibility and so build an ecological government. So-called ecological government is that the government should stand on the side of human-oriented and protecting ecological environment, establish the civilization concept of ecological value priority, guarantee ecological system supply and develop ecological economy to seek the harmonious development between economy and resources and between man and nature. We should also know, the ecological government, based on ecologicalization, strengthens and changes government function and is the concrete reflection of political ecologicalization about government management. Then what is political ecologicalization? It is essentially improving ecological and environmental problems into the political issue, and then realizes dialectical unity of politics and ecological environment, which will ultimately advance the development of global politics and ecological environment in sustainable, healthy and stable way.^[1] In the course of transformation from industrial civilization to ecological civilization in the world today, political ecologicalization will become the turning point in the development of traditional politics and will push forward the government to remold its functions in order to form the new type view of political ecology adapted to the ecological civilization era and advance the coordinated development between world economy, culture, politics and ecological environment.

2. The Necessity of Constructing the Ecology-type Government

2.1 Solving increasingly serious ecological and environmental problems

The problem of ecological environment is the major crisis of man nowadays, in essence, it is also the crisis of human survival and development because it is related to the sustainable development of human society. Since the reform and opening up, the economic development has achieved great success and the environmental protection has also yielded positive results in my country, especially during the period of the 10th five-year plan, environmental protection consciousness in the whole society has been obviously improved, the environmental quality has been generally stable, the amount of main air pollutant emission has been controlled initially, the pollutants emission intensity of the main industrial products has obviously been cut down and the environmental governance of important watersheds and areas has also achieved notable results continuously.

But we must be clearly aware that China is faced with the pressure of population, resources and environment more severely than any other country as the largest developing countries in the world. The ecological situation in our country is not optimistic, for example, the total emissions of the main pollutants are far beyond the environmental capacity, the city section of the river has been polluted heavily, 75 percent of the lakes in the whole country are in the different level nutrient-enriched condition and great waterlog alternates with heavy drought frequently; the polluted air in a great many cities is poisonous to health, one third of our territory is being influenced by acid rain and noise pollution is also heavy; deserts and desertified land with a total land area of 1.743 million square kilometers account for land area of 18%, the natural grassland above 90 percent is being degraded, the severe sandstorm is hitting us, and ever sailed across the seas, which sparked strong protest from foreign governments; the biological diversity is declining sharply, there are about 4000—5000 endangered (or approaching endangered)higher plants, accounting for almost 20% of the total number of higher plants across the whole country, meanwhile, exotic species are invading increasingly, which has resulted in the decline of the original biological community; all kinds of environmental disputes have increased steadily, the complaints about environmental problems have been increased at an average annual growth rate of 30 percent; the energy waste is serious, the energy and material consumption per unit of GDP and the amount of the pollutant emissions are not only higher than America, Japan and Germany but also even higher than India, for instance, GDP was 5.5 percent of the world total in 2006, and yet, our country consumed 15 percent of the energy. Also, the resource circular utilization is not high, for example, the circular utilization of water resources is over 50 percent lower than that of developed countries. In a word, the environmental problems at different stages that occurred in developed countries in the course of industrialization over a century have been concentrated in our country within more than twenty years with the characteristic of structure, complex and condensation. The environmental pollution and ecological damage have generated huge economic losses, endangered people's health and public security, affected social stability and even hurt China's international image.

In brief, the ecological crisis in our country is very severe. But “ecological crisis with the overall, comprehensive, historical and long-term features has made this problem become the major public problem common to all human beings, if it is solved, the government must come forward to integrate various resources, to design public policies, to perform public functions and strengthen public management.”^[2] That is to say, the government, facing serious ecological crisis, must take measures to build an ecology-type government with the ecological value view as guidance.

2.2 Strengthening the government function

The government function means that the duties and functions that the government should take in national and social management in light of national and social demands. Generally speaking, the

government function can be divided into political function, economic function and social function. In the practice of social and economic development, the mutual relationship, respective contents and methods of performance about the above three functions for a government are always changing and can keep pace with the times, thus, its connotations and changes should be in accordance with the specific national conditions at the different stages of development. Based on the practice in our country, the government function has been changed from taking class struggle as the political function to concentrating on economic construction as the economic function, and then to establishing harmonious society with human-oriented view as the social function, which has embodied the fixed characteristics of ecological administration for China's government. In the overall direction, China's governmental function transformation has achieved success and is marching along the direction in a scientific and reasonable way, but from the concrete reality, it still has many problems, for example, the alienation of the government function; the government values departmental interests, personal interests and ignores social interests when it establishes and performs its functions; especially in the ecological environment governance, the government failure is obvious.

The ecological environment is typical public interest, the ecological environment management is typical public affairs and is also the basic government responsibility, but because of the diversity of the governmental behavior objectives, the governmental discretion, the organizational failure of the bureaucratic system of governmental organization, the information asymmetry between managers and employees and limited reason of the government etc, the ecological management (or ecological regulation) of the government also results in its malfunction,^[3] and even in the management of ecological environment, some governments have rent-hunt behaviors. Based on *State Council's Advice About Further Improving the Policy of the Converting Farmland into Forest*, the state should gratuitously offer grain, cash subsidy and young plants assistance to farmers after grain for green project, and yet, according to National Audit Office, some local governments breached the relative regulations of the state, practised fraud, encroached, misappropriated, held back and understated the relative aid funds, which were purchased cars or abused power for personal gains in the course of the converting farmland into forest. Thus, the enormous funds of the state put in the environmental governance have resulted in corruption. Therefore, it is the needs of the times to establish new type view of ecological politics, to strengthen the governmental function on ecological management and to construct ecological government, and is also the needs of transforming government function from the traditional industrialized society in which resources were extracted from the nature to the modern society in which harmonious coexistence is between man and nature and the development is sustainable.

2.3 Carrying out the scientific outlook on development and realizing the ecological development for the economic society

Hu Jintao stressed in the *Report to the 17 National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, we should promote the ecological civilization, improve energy and resources saving and ecological and environmental conservation, and enhance the capacity for sustainable development. If we carry out the scientific outlook on development and persist in sustainable development, we must advance the harmonious development between man and nature, coordinate the relationship between economic development, population growth, and resource utilization and ecological and environmental conservation, achieve the good circulation of social development and propel the whole society to move towards the development road to civilization with the characteristics of production development, rich life and sound ecological environment. Nonetheless, with the intensification of the ecological crisis, the market and consumers are increasing their consciousness and requirements about the ecological security and ecological equality with each passing day. Nowadays, ecological economy (or circular economy), low-carbon economy, ecological industry, green commodities and clean energy have been daily words in this era, the ecological products have been the economic carrier with the capacity of international

competition, the ecological environment has been the main contents of comprehensive national power for a state and the traditional market economy is heading toward the ecological market economy. The development model to sacrifice the ecological environment is hard to continue because of the high degree of correlation between the political and ecological civilization today. We can say, any country must cherish the ecological and environmental conservation to get a favorable position from the fierce domestic and international competitiveness. As a result, the government should its function advancing with the times to further carry out the scientific outlook on development and realize the ecological development of economy and society. Meantime, to realize the ecological politics and government, the government, utilizing vigorously the measure of policy, administration and model, should bring the ecological and environmental problems into line with the government decision, international behavior and publicity and education, guide the enterprises to develop green economy and change the whole national economy into ecological market economy and green economy step by step.

3. The Path Research on Constructing the Ecology-type Government

3.1 Following the scientific outlook on development and enhancing ecological consciousness

The scientific development, which is an important part of the spirits of the modern society, should comply with the requirements of foresightness and strategy of social development and stress the sustainability of human development. More importantly, to realize the scientific development, people must change the traditional development model to show no regard for the environment, strengthen the ecological consciousness and realize coordinate symbiosis between man and nature. Then what is ecological consciousness? It is the social consciousness in the light of the scientific view of ecological value and concentrates on advocating the harmonious development between man and nature. Also, the ecological value is the value of ecological civilization, centers on the ecological rationality and attaches importance to the relationship of harmony and unity between man and nature. According to the value, the nature has not only the value for itself, but also the instrument value to human beings, we, therefore, cannot talk about the realization of self-value without the nature value. “The nature is human’s inorganic body,”^[4] human beings, as a kind of natural existence, can survive with many kinds of material conditions offered by the biosphere, but, as a kind of special species, can not only acquire directly the survival conditions from the nature but also remake the nature and create the value by labor to meet the demand of man’s survival, and so human’s self-survival value has also been improved. Certainly, these man-made substances that are still related to the natural resources are of artificial and humanistic shapes from the natural resources, as a result, man cannot survival without the nature. As a great creator, the nature has produced the fabulous resources and wealth during the long process of self-organizational evolution and realized self value-added, by which man can survive and develop. Man’s wealth creation and the material production and re-production in the human society are based on the nature, therefore, to protect the nature is to protect human beings themselves and their economic interests, while to undermine the nature is to undermine human beings and their economic existence in the future.^[5] So the value of ecological environment should tally with the intergeneration interests, overall interests, long-term interests and sustainable interests. Only if it gives priority to the value of ecological environment, the government can be of a broad vision and high-degree humanistic care spirit. To maintain the overall, coordinative and sustainable development of economy and society and enhance gradually the capacity of sustainable development, the government must correctly understand and establish the view of ecological value by which the government will perform its functions.

The government must strengthen the ecological consciousness and make clear the responsibility of ecological management to establish and maintain the correct view of ecological value. First of all, the government should make clear the responsibility for the nature, fully consider the value of ecological environment, keep to the road of uniting with benefits increasing and resource-saving utilization, hold

the scientific development, reasonably using the natural resources and try our best to maintain the ecological balance of the nature. Second, the government should make clear the ecological responsibility for the market. The market is a key link in the ecological chain, in which the government will have a broad space for development. So the government should make full use of the tax and price system of ecological resources and government green purchase to advocate and encourage the enterprise to yield green products, lay stress on the development and utilization of renewable resources and constantly help the enterprise to promote green economy. Finally, the government should make clear the ecological responsibility for the public. The government, taking the nature as its medium, should establish the idea of within-generation fair and realize the fair development between the same generation; meanwhile, the government should also establish the idea of intergeneration fair, think about future generations, plan things for the good of our grandchildren to realize the fair development between contemporary people and future generations.

3.2 Strengthening system construction and offering guarantee for the ecology-type government

When it engages in the sustainable development and utilization of ecology, environmental protection and resources, the government should strengthen system construction to make its management of ecology and environment be developed from supervision to routine, system and normalization. Without the system construction, the construction of ecological government will make empty, because ecological environment benefits will be more important than economic benefits in the long run. But in fact, the government still centers on economic benefits because of the inertia thought of GDP worship when it formulates policies, seeks blindly GDP numbers but ignores the ecological environment. For example, some local governments broke the rules to build all kinds of so-called gardens and introduced polluted enterprises etc.

Because the change from traditional economic model to sustainable development model is not a spontaneous process, must improve government decision support system, macroscopic policies and regulatory function by means of political power based on following the general law of market economy.^[6]

3.2.1 Making concrete system arrangements

The government must make concrete system arrangements for the function of ecological management and performance evaluation, including policy-making system, evaluation system, reporting system of sustainable utilization and development, drafting overall level program for development of ecological environment system, supervision of ecological environment system, especially evaluation announcement of ecological environment and hearing system about major project, and relative responsibility of ecological management and punishment system etc. In particular, the government should improve the accounting system of Green GDP and performance evaluation system of environment protection of government officials, put environment protection in the evaluation system of government officials' performance, thus, performance evaluation will truly become the booster of ecological government construction.

3.2.2 Establishing relevant self-discipline mechanisms

Now, the government has both the function of resources management and the task of operation and development, is both the owner and decision maker and user of resources. More importantly, the government should strengthen self-discipline, strictly observe the laws and regulations related to environment and ecology and must not break them for immediate interests and partial and local interests. Besides, the government should conscientiously be restrained by laws and regulations, and seek the harmonious development between man and nature while developing economy.^[7]The ecological environment is not only a kind of resource, but belongs to public resource, as the most authoritative representative of public interests, the government, therefore, should gradually establish the paid use system for the operation and consumption of ecological environment resources, including imposing

consumption tax, ecological tax, windfall tax and income tax etc.

3.2.3 Improving decision-making mechanism

The key to ecological construction is to formulate the objective and reasonable system, while the good system is based on the good decision-making. So the government's decision-making will play an important role in the ecological and environmental problems. If it cuts down or stops mistakes and corruptions, the government must carry on decision-making with democratization and scientification, perfect decision-making consultation system, citizen's decision-making participation system and democratic decision-making supervision system. Especially the government, while formulating decision-making, should seek advice from specialists, if specialists' consultant system of government decision-making may be systematic only to make decision-making more scientific, the major decision-making mistakes which break objective economic, social and natural law will not reappear. Meanwhile, the government should improve citizen's decision-making participation system including auditing system and letter and visit system etc, create the good opportunities to make citizens have ample speeches and participate in decision-making, and stop all kinds of short-term and opportunistic behavior while formulating decision-making. Only in this way can the ecological and environmental problems be solved and social and political turbulences be avoided.

3.2.4 Fully guaranteeing system supply

The government should fully guarantee system supply, or system absence will result in more serious issues. The system consists of a series of laws and regulations, so China's government should formulate other legal systems that are beneficial to the ecological environment, besides Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China, for instance, promulgating green tax law, imposing environmental tax and ecological tax, which can not only regulate people's economic behavior, cut down on pollution, accumulate funds for public finance, but help to settle interests conflict related to environmental resources, remedy the defect of administrative control means and promote the coordinative development among society, economy and ecology.

3.3 Strengthening the guide and management function of ecological economy

So-called ecological economy, in a certain area, centers on ecological environment construction and social and economic development, observes ecological principles and economic law, combines organically reasonable utilization and ecological restoration related to ecological construction, environmental protection and natural resources in this area with social and economic development and urban and rural construction, cultivates the blue sky, clear water, green space, beautiful ecological landscape through unified planning and integrative construction, advocates integrative, harmonious, opening, civilized ecological culture, cultivates high-efficiency and low-loss ecological industries, establishes the ecological community of harmonious coexistence between man and nature and so realizes high degree of unity and sustainable development of economic, social and ecological benefits. In essence, ecological economy is to develop economy under the base of the bearing capacity of the ecological environment and to enlarge economic reproduction under the conditions of natural reproduction, thereby will realize win-win of economic development and ecological protection and establish the complex ecological system of the virtuous circle of economy, society and nature.

3.3.1 Carrying out the strategic guiding thoughts of ecological protection

In the strategy of economic development, the government must carry out the strategic guiding thoughts of ecological protection, make the economic and ecological purpose become of equal importance and take into account both ecological and economic benefits. While market economy is rule of law economy, so the government should strengthen and improve the law legislation and enforcement of ecological economy and persist in complete ecology from the source to the result according to economic flow. Also, using the economic means such as revenues, subsidies and penalties etc, the government may also formulate a set of economic systems, including direct investment of the government and building

ecological protection engineering system, ecological resources tax system and price system and government green purchase system etc.

3.3.2 Researching and understanding the particularity of ecological economy construction

The government should intensively research and understand the particularity of ecological economy construction, formulate the 48~49 development strategy of ecological economy according to local ecological resources, establish and manage the main ecological industries with delicacy, develop ecological agriculture in an all-round way, ecological industries in a positive way and tourism industries in an energetic way. As a matter of fact, to develop ecological agriculture is to develop green agriculture, organic agriculture and ecological agriculture tourism, to bring agriculture and animal husbandry industries such as animal husbandry, vegetables, fruits and aquatic products etc into the ecological orbit. While to develop ecological industries is, using modern science and technology, to establish a kind of multi-level, multi-structure, and multi-function comprehensive industrial system in which industrial wastes can be raw materials, circular production and intensive management can be realized and energies can be reasonably utilized. Besides, to develop ecological tourism industries is to correctly handle the relationship between man and nature while developing tourism industries, especially to strengthen the construction of ecological demonstration areas and to focus on protecting some special areas, such as forests, water sources, wet lands etc and species in them.

3.3.3 Enhancing the creation of green technology

The government, to develop ecological economy, should enhance the creation of green technology and make it become the support system of ecological economy development. The green technology is the technology through which resources utilization ratio can be improved, ecological environment can be protected, environmental pollution can be prevented, controlled and governed, the coordinative development among economy, society and environment can be promoted. If the equality of ecological environment is improved to a higher degree, the green technologies must be developed, as a result, the government should gradually deepen the reform of system for science and technology, establish clear property rights of science and technology and their assignment system, increase the intellectual property protection, earnestly safeguard the rights and interests of inventors, founders and creators of science and technology and enhance their independent development and creative ability in scientific research, thus, the international cooperation and exchanges of environmental protection technology will be broadly developed. Therefore, the government should encourage institutes of scientific research and institutions of higher learning to cooperate with the enterprises to organize the service system of environmental protection technology integrating the research, service, intermediary with risk investment, vigorously support and advance key enterprises or groups to possess their own characteristic technology, hence, green technologies behind the times in our country will be soon changed.

3.4 Propelling the ecologicalization of education

Along with the approach of the times of ecological civilization, protecting environment has been closely linked to the public, so the government must propel the ecologicalization of education. So-called ecologicalization of education is to infiltrate the knowledge, theories and principles about ecological environment in all forms of education and so to improve ecological consciousness of the educated. First of all, the government should launch the education of environmental protection in all forms of education at all levels and will infiltrate it in all the disciplines to increase students' consciousness and responsibilities of environmental protection. Second, the government, taking studying and applying the scientific outlook on development as the opportunity, should lay stress on intensive education about sustainable development to government officials to strengthen the capability of sustainable development. Finally, the government should enhance the ecological education to rural peasants with a clear aim, publicize the environmental pollution and its harm to health because of pesticide, chemical fertilizer, mulch film, and all kinds of pollutants discharged by township enterprises, and publicize the laws and

regulations related to environmental protection. Besides, the government, to the enterprises in the city, should also carry on publicity and education about the application of modern environmental protection technology and energy saving and emission reduction.

4. Conclusion

In brief, the ecological government will be the inexorable trend of transforming government function. It is the most important for the construction of modern government and ecological civilization to adapt to the challenge from economic globalization and development of the times, to promote the all-round development of economy and society, to propel the common progress and man and nature, to earnestly establish the green and ecological brand of the government and to construct ecological service government.

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