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GRADIENT ESTIMATES FOR A NONLINEAR ELLIPTIC EQUATION ON A SMOOTH METRIC MEASURE SPACE

XIAOSHAN WANG A , LINFEN CAO B

ABSTRACT. Let $(M, g, e^{-f} dv)$ be a smooth metric measure space. We consider local gradient estimates for positive solutions to the following elliptic equation

$$\Delta_f u + au \log u + bu = 0$$

where a,b are two real constants and f be a smooth function defined on M. As an application, we obtain a Liouville type result for such equation in the case a<0 under the m-dimensions Bakry-Émery Ricci curvature.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we study the local gradient estimate for the positive solution to the following weighted nonlinear elliptic equation

$$\Delta_f u + au \log u + bu = 0 \tag{1.1}$$

on a smooth metric measure space $(M, g, e^{-f}dv)$, where a, b are two real constants and f be a smooth function defined on M. The motivation to study (1.1) comes from understanding the Ricci flow. Moreover, the (1.1) is closely related to the famous Gross Logarithmic Sobolev inequality, see [2]. It is well known that Yau has proved in [14] that every positive or bounded harmonic function is constant if M has nonnegative Ricci curvature by establishing gradient estimates for the solutions to Laplacian equation, see also [6,8,11].

It is natural to consider similar Liouville type results for positive solutions to the nonlinear elliptic equation (1.1). In [10], Qian considered positive solutions to

$$\Delta u + au \log u = 0 \tag{1.2}$$

and proved the following

Theorem 1.1. (B. Qian) Let (M,g) be an n-dimensional complete Riemannian manifold with the Ricci curvature $Ric(B(x,R)) \geq -K$, where

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 $K \geq 0$ is a constant. Let u be a positive solution to (1.2) on B(x,R), then for any $\alpha > 0$,

$$\sup_{y \in B(x, \frac{R}{2})} \frac{|\nabla u|}{u} \le C(n) \sqrt{(1+\alpha)((a+K) + \frac{(1+\alpha)}{R^2}) + \sqrt{\frac{1+\alpha}{\alpha}} |a| L(x, R)},$$
(1.3)

where $L(x,R) = \sup_{y \in B(x,R)} |\log u| < \infty$ and C(n) is a constant depending only on the dimension n.

In particular, by letting $R \to \infty$ in (1.3), we obtain the following gradient estimates on complete noncompact Riemannian manifolds:

$$\frac{|\nabla u|}{u} \le C(n)\sqrt{(1+\alpha)(a+K) + \sqrt{\frac{1+\alpha}{\alpha}}|a|L},\tag{1.4}$$

where $L = \sup_{M} |\log u|$.

Remark 1.1. Clearly, from 1.4, it is easy to see that if a + K < 0 and a < 0, then any bounded positive solution to (1.2) must be a constant $u \equiv 1$. On the other hand, in [5], Huang and Ma also obtained the similar Liouville type result by a different method.

Let (M, g) be an n-dimensional complete Riemannian manifold and f be a smooth function defined on M. In general, the triple $(M, g, e^{-f}dv)$ is called a smooth metric measure space. The f-Laplacian operator is defined by

$$\Delta_f = e^f div(e^{-f}\nabla) = \Delta - \nabla f \nabla,$$

which is symmetric in $L^2(M, g, e^{-f}dv)$.

It is well-known that the m-dimensions Bakry-Émery Ricci curvature associated with the f-Laplacian is defined by (see [3,4,13])

$$Ric_f^m = Ric + \nabla^2 f - \frac{df \otimes df}{m - n},$$

where $m \ge n$ is a constant and m = n if and only if f is a constant. Define

$$Ric_f = Ric + \nabla^2 f.$$

Then Ric_f can be seen as ∞ -dimensions Bakry-Émery Ricci curvature. Recently, the ∞ -dimensions Bakry-Émery Ricci curvature has become an important object of study in Riemannian geometry. The equation $Ric_f = \rho \langle , \rangle$ for some constant ρ is just the gradient Ricci soliton equation, which plays an important role in the study of Ricci flow (see [1]).

The aim of this paper is to generalize the results of Qian in [10] to the weighted nonlinear elliptic equation (1.1) under the assumption that the m-dimensions Bakry-Émery Ricci curvature is bounded from blow. Our main results are as follows:

Theorem 1.2. Let $(M, g, e^{-f}dv)$ be an n-dimensional complete smooth metric measure space with m-dimensions Bakry-Émery Ricci curvature

 $Ric_f^m(B(x,R)) \ge -K$, where $K \ge 0$ is a constant. Let u be a positive solution to the nonlinear equation (1.1) on B(x,R), then there exists a constant C = C(m), such that

$$\sup_{y \in B(x, \frac{R}{2})} \frac{|\nabla u|}{u} \le C\sqrt{a + K + \frac{1}{R^2} + |b| + |a|L}.$$
 (1.5)

where $L(x,R) := \sup_{y \in B(x,R)} |\log u| < \infty$.

In particular, by letting $R \to \infty$ in (1.5), we obtain the following gradient estimates on complete noncompact Riemannian manifolds:

$$\frac{|\nabla u|}{u} \le C\sqrt{a+K+|b|+|a|L},\tag{1.6}$$

where $L = \sup_{M} |\log u|$.

From (1.6), it is easy to obtain the following results:

Corollary 1.3. Let $(M, g, e^{-f}dv)$ be an n-dimensional complete smooth metric measure space with $Ric_f^m \geq -K$. If u is a bounded positive solution to (1.1) with a + K < 0 and a < 0, then $u \equiv 1$. Furthermore, if $Ric_f^m \geq 0$ and $a \leq 0$, then any bounded positive solution to (1.1) must be $u \equiv 1$.

Remark 1.2. When m = n in Theorem 1.2, we have $Ric_f^m = Ric$ and $\Delta_f = \Delta$. Hence, in this case, our Theorem 1.2 becomes Theorem 1.1 of Qian. That is, our results of this paper generalize those of Qian in [10].

2. Proof of Theorem 1.2

Lemma 2.1. Let u be a bounded positive solution to the nonlinear equation (1.1), then we have,

$$|\nabla u|\Delta_f|\nabla u| \ge \frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2}{m} - (au\log u + bu)^2 + Ric_f^m(\nabla u, \nabla u) - (a + a\log u + b)|\nabla u|^2.$$
(2.1)

Proof. Since we have the Bochner-weitzenböck formula with respect to f-Laplacian, for any $u \in C^2(M)$, we have

$$\frac{1}{2}\Delta_f |\nabla u|^2 = |\nabla^2 u|^2 + Ric_f(\nabla u, \nabla u) + (\nabla u, \nabla \Delta_f u).$$

On the other hand,

$$\Delta_f |\nabla u|^2 = 2|\nabla u|\Delta_f |\nabla u| + 2|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2,$$

hence

$$|\nabla u|\Delta_f|\nabla u| = |\nabla^2 u|^2 + Ric_f(\nabla u, \nabla u) + (\nabla u, \nabla \Delta_f u) - |\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2.$$

Since u is a solution to (1.1), we obtain

$$|\nabla u|\Delta_f|\nabla u| = |\nabla^2 u|^2 + Ric_f(\nabla u, \nabla u) - (a + a\log u + b)|\nabla u|^2 - |\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2.$$

If we consider a local normal chart at x in which $u_1(x) = |\nabla u|(x)$ and $u_j(x) = 0$ for $j \geq 2$, then $\nabla_i(|\nabla u|) = u_{1i}$, hence $|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2 = \sum_i u_{1i}^2$. Since u is a solution to (1.1), in the above local chart we have at x

$$\sum_{i\geq 2} u_{ii} = -u_{11} - au \log u - bu + \nabla f \cdot \nabla u.$$

Therefore,

$$\begin{split} |\nabla^2 u|^2 - |\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2 &= \sum_{i \geq 1, j \geq 1} u_{ij}^2 - \sum_{j \geq 1} u_{1j}^2 = \sum_{i \geq 2, j \geq 1} u_{ij}^2 \geq \sum_{i \geq 2} u_{i1}^2 + \sum_{i \geq 2} u_{ii}^2 \\ &\geq \sum_{i \geq 2} u_{i1}^2 + \frac{1}{n-1} (\sum_{i \geq 2} u_{ii})^2 \\ &= \sum_{i \geq 2} u_{i1}^2 + \frac{1}{n-1} (-u_{11} - au \log u - bu + \nabla f \cdot \nabla u)^2 \\ &\geq \frac{1}{(n-1)(1+\alpha)} \sum_{i \geq 1} u_{i1}^2 - \frac{1}{(n-1)\alpha} (au \log u + bu - \nabla f \cdot \nabla u)^2 \\ &\geq -\frac{1}{(n-1)\alpha} [(1+\frac{1}{\epsilon})(au \log u + bu)^2 + (1+\epsilon)(\nabla f \cdot \nabla u)^2] \\ &+ \frac{1}{(n-1)(1+\alpha)} \sum_{i \geq 1} u_{i1}^2 \\ &= \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i \geq 1} u_{i1}^2 - (au \log u + bu)^2 - \frac{(\nabla f \cdot \nabla u)^2}{m-n}, \end{split}$$

where we use the elementary inequality (see [12]) $(a+b)^2 \ge \frac{1}{1+\alpha}a^2 - \frac{1}{\alpha}b^2$ and $(a+b)^2 \le (1+\epsilon)a^2 + (1+\frac{1}{\epsilon})b^2$ which holds for any $\alpha > 0$, $\epsilon > 0$. The last equality we choose $\alpha = \frac{m-n+1}{n-1}$ and $\epsilon = \frac{1}{m-n}$.

Hence

$$|\nabla u|\Delta_f|\nabla u| \ge \frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2}{m} - (au\log u + bu)^2 - \frac{(\nabla f \cdot \nabla u)^2}{m - n} + Ric_f(\nabla u, \nabla u) - (a + a\log u + b)|\nabla u|^2$$

$$= \frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2}{m} - (au\log u + bu)^2 + (Ric_f - \frac{df \otimes df}{m - n})u_i u_j$$

$$- (a + a\log u + b)|\nabla u|^2$$

$$= \frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2}{m} - (au\log u + bu)^2 + Ric_f^m(\nabla u, \nabla u)$$

$$- (a + a\log u + b)|\nabla u|^2.$$
(2.2)

This completes the prove of Lemma 2.1.

Proof of Theorem 1.2.

Proof. Denote $\psi = |\nabla \log u| = \frac{|\nabla u|}{u}$, i.e.,

$$|\nabla u| = \psi u.$$

Direct computation gives

$$\nabla \psi = \frac{\nabla(|\nabla u|)}{u} - \frac{|\nabla u|\nabla u}{u^2}.$$
 (2.3)

At the point where $\nabla u \neq 0$, we have

$$\Delta_f |\nabla u| = \Delta_f(\psi u) = u\Delta_f \psi + \psi \Delta_f u + 2\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u$$
$$= u\Delta_f \psi - \psi(au \log u + bu) + 2\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u.$$

This yields

$$\Delta_f \psi = \frac{\Delta_f |\nabla u|}{u} + \psi(a \log u + b) - 2 \frac{\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u}{u}$$
$$= \frac{|\nabla u| \Delta_f |\nabla u|}{|\nabla u| u} + \psi(a \log u + b) - 2 \frac{\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u}{u}.$$

By Lemma 2.1, we can derive,

$$\Delta_{f}\psi \geq \frac{\frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^{2}}{m} - (au\log u + bu)^{2} + Ric_{f}^{m}(\nabla u, \nabla u) - (a + a\log u + b)|\nabla u|^{2}}{|\nabla u|u} + \psi(a\log u + b) - 2\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u}$$

$$\geq \frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^{2}}{m|\nabla u|u} - \frac{(a\log u + b)^{2}}{\psi} - (a + K)\psi - 2\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u}.$$
(2.4)

For any $\delta > 0$, by (2.3)

$$\begin{split} 2\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} &= (2-\delta)\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} + \delta\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} \\ &= (2-\delta)\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} + \delta\frac{\nabla u}{u}(\frac{\nabla(|\nabla u|)}{u} - \frac{|\nabla u|\nabla u}{u^2}) \\ &= (2-\delta)\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} + \delta\frac{\nabla(|\nabla u|)\cdot\nabla u}{u^2} - \delta\psi^3 \\ &\leq (2-\delta)\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} + \delta\frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|\cdot|\nabla u|}{u^2} - \delta\psi^3 \\ &\leq (2-\delta)\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} + \frac{\delta}{2}(\frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2}{|\nabla u|u} + \frac{|\nabla u|^3}{u^3}) - \delta\psi^3 \\ &= (2-\delta)\frac{\nabla\psi\cdot\nabla u}{u} + \frac{\delta}{2}\frac{|\nabla(|\nabla u|)|^2}{|\nabla u|u} - \frac{\delta}{2}\psi^3. \end{split}$$

Choosing $\delta = \frac{2}{m}$ and substituting into (2.4), we obtain

$$\Delta_f \psi \ge -(a+K)\psi - (2-\frac{2}{m})\frac{\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u}{u} + \frac{\psi^3}{m} - \frac{(a\log u + b)^2}{\psi}.$$
(2.5)

Now we define

$$F(y) := (R^2 - d^2(x, y)) \frac{|\nabla u|(y)}{u(y)} = (R^2 - d^2)\psi(y),$$

and

$$\psi(y) = \frac{|\nabla u|(y)}{u(y)}, \ y \in B(x, R).$$

Since $F|_{\partial B(x,R)} = 0$, if $\nabla u = 0$, then F can only achieve its maximum at some point $x_0 \in B(x,R)$, if $|\nabla u|(x_0) = 0$, the desired result holds. Then, without loss of generality, we can suppose $|\nabla u|(x_0) \neq 0$. Assume $x_0 \notin cut(x)$, by the maximum principle we have $\Delta_f F(x_0) \leq 0$ and $\nabla F(x_0) = 0$. It yields, at x_0 ,

$$\nabla F = -\psi \nabla d^2 + (R^2 - d^2) \nabla \psi = 0.$$

It holds,

$$\frac{\nabla \psi}{\psi} = \frac{\nabla d^2}{R^2 - d^2} = \frac{2d\nabla d}{R^2 - d^2}$$
 (2.6)

and

$$\Delta_f F = \Delta_f ((R^2 - d^2)\psi) = (R^2 - d^2)\Delta_f \psi - \psi \Delta_f d^2 - 2\nabla d^2 \nabla \psi \le 0. \quad (2.7)$$

Hence, dividing by $(R^2 - d^2)\psi$ to both sides of (2.7) and combining (2.6), we have at x_0 ,

$$0 \ge \frac{\Delta_f \psi}{\psi} - \frac{\Delta_f d^2}{R^2 - d^2} - \frac{8d^2}{(R^2 - d^2)^2}$$

By the f-Laplacian comparison theorem in [12] (see also [7] or [9]), we have

$$\Delta_f d^2 \le C\sqrt{K}d \coth(\sqrt{K}d) \le C\sqrt{K}d,$$

where C only depends on m. Together with (2.5), we have at x_0 ,

$$0 \ge -(a+K) - (2 - \frac{2}{m}) \frac{\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u}{\psi u} + \frac{\psi^2}{m} - \frac{(a \log u + b)^2}{\psi^2} - \frac{C\sqrt{K}d}{R^2 - d^2} - \frac{8d^2}{(R^2 - d^2)^2}.$$
 (2.8)

By (2.6),

$$\frac{\nabla \psi \cdot \nabla u}{\psi u} = \frac{2d}{R^2 - d^2} \frac{\nabla d \cdot \nabla u}{u} \leq \frac{2d\psi}{R^2 - d^2},$$

then multiplying both sides of (2.8) by $\psi^2(R^2-d^2)^4$, combining with $\psi=\frac{F}{R^2-d^2}$, we can derive

$$0 \ge \frac{1}{m}F^4 - \frac{4(m-1)}{m}dF^3 - (R^2 - d^2)^4(a\log u + b)^2$$
$$- ((a+K)(R^2 - d^2)^2 + 8d^2 + C\sqrt{K}d(R^2 - d^2))F^2$$
$$\ge \frac{1}{m}F^4 - 4RF^3 - ((a+K)R^2 + C\sqrt{K}R + 8)R^2F^2$$
$$- R^8(a\log u + b)^2.$$

Since
$$\frac{1}{2m}F^4 - 4RF^3 \ge -8mR^2F^2$$
, it holds

$$\frac{1}{2m}F^4 - ((a+K)R^2 + C\sqrt{K}R + C)R^2F^2 - R^8(a\log u + b)^2 \le 0.$$

It follows

$$\sup_{y \in B(x,R)} (R^2 - d^2(x,y)) |\nabla \log u| \le F(x_0)$$

$$\le \sqrt{2m((a+K)R^2 + C\sqrt{K}R + C)R^2 + \sqrt{2m}(|b| + |a|L)R^4}.$$

Restricting on the ball $B(x, \frac{R}{2})$, we have

$$\sup_{y \in B(x, \frac{R}{2})} \frac{3R^2}{4} |\nabla \log u| \le \sup_{y \in B(x, \frac{R}{2})} (R^2 - d^2(x, y)) |\nabla \log u| \le F(x_0)$$

$$\le \sqrt{2m((a+K)R^2 + C\sqrt{K}R + C)R^2 + \sqrt{2m}(|b| + |a|L)R^4}.$$

Therefor, we can derive

$$\sup_{y \in B(x, \frac{R}{2})} \frac{|\nabla u|}{u} \le \sqrt{4m(a + K + C\frac{\sqrt{K}}{R} + \frac{C}{R^2}) + \sqrt{8m}(|b| + |a|L)}.$$

Then use the Cauchy-Schwarz inequality, we obtain

$$\sup_{y\in B(x,\frac{R}{2})}\frac{|\nabla u|}{u}\leq C\sqrt{a+K+\frac{1}{R^2}+|b|+|a|L}.$$

Now let $R \to \infty$, this yields, for any $x \in M$,

$$\psi(x) \le \psi(x_0) \le C\sqrt{a + K + |b| + |a|L}.$$

This completes the prove of theorem 1.2.

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