Leisure Agriculture in the Era of Targeted Poverty Alleviation

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Author’s contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

China is the second economy of the world while the poverty is a still troubled problem. Fighting poverty within three years was officially issued by the communist party of China in China. The objective of this study is to clarify the relationship between relevant policies and theories. Based on literature review, the problems of targeted poverty alleviation, the benefits of developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas, and the challenge of developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas will be displayed. Findings show that the low utilization rate of funds, the mechanism for supporting cadres in villages needs to be improved, and farmers have low enthusiasm to participate in targeted poverty alleviation are the problems for targeted poverty alleviation. Moreover, the improvement of road and traffic, the improvement of villagers’ houses, the improvement of public facilities, the opportunities for training and learning, the preservation of local culture, and the increase revenue streams are the benefits of developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas. Finally, the diversified needs of leisure agriculture, the homogeneous supply of leisure agriculture, and the impacts of the environment and ecology, social and culture are some challenges for developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas.
Keywords: Leisure agriculture; targeted poverty alleviation; rural area.

1. INTRODUCTION

After the third plenary session of the 11th central committee to communist party of China (CPC), the CPC central committee which organized and leader by President Xi Jinping had proposed the goal of "Completely the construction of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020" on the 19th CPC national congress [1]. In August 2018, the action guidance of fighting poverty within three years was officially issued by the CPC central committee of the state council. The improvement of engineering for feature industry had been clearly put at poor area. In order to speed up the development of poor households' income, all of the planting farming, forest and grass industry, agricultural product processing industry, characteristic, leisure agriculture, handicraft industry and rural tourism were considered to be the key industries and the stimulations to those industries have been obviously made. The purpose of these actions were to benefit the poor farmers to establish their brands, to promote their products, as well as to satisfy the market needs. On the other hand, the central government hoped to promote local economic development and to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation by developing the local feature industries. Then, those of agriculture, forestry, fishing, animal husbandry, processing industry, and leisure agriculture were considered first for the actions. Consequently, the key point of this study is to clarify the relationship between leisure agriculture and targeted poverty alleviation. The objective of this study is to clarify the relationship between relevant policies and theories. The current situation of targeted poverty alleviation will be discussed in the second section. The definition and problems of targeted poverty alleviation are performed in the third part. Then, the benefits of developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas and the challenges of developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas will be displayed in the fourth and fifth section. Finally, the conclusion will be made.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF TARGETED POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Both the state council and the central committee of the communist party of China had raised poverty alleviation to a new strategic height and paid great attentions to the work of poverty alleviation. Regarding to the general public and people at the grassroots level, China had made decisive progress in its fight against poverty. In 2019, for example, the incidence of poverty in rural areas dropped from 10.2 percent to 1.7 percent. The average annual GDP growth rate of poverty-stricken counties was 2 percentage points higher than the national average, and their development capacity was significantly enhanced [2]. In 2018, the per capita of disposable income of rural residents in poor areas was 10,371 RMB and its equivalent to 71 percent of the national average [3]. About 95 percent of the country's poor under current standards would have been lifted out of poverty, and more than 90 percent of poor counties would have been lifted out of poverty were estimated by the end of 2019. The old problem of absolute poverty at centuries in the China could be resolved in a historic way after one more efforts have been taken in 2020 [4].

3. THE DEFINITION AND PROBLEMS OF TARGETED POVERTY ALLEVIATION

3.1 The Definition of Targeted Poverty Alleviation

Due to China's vast territory, some ethnic minority areas and poor areas, as well as geographical location, altitude, climate and other factors, there were still some defects in the local infrastructure construction. Many poverty alleviation projects were still difficult to implement, and it was often difficult for these projects to bring into full play their real benefits. Accordingly, the state council had put forward the concept of targeted poverty alleviation, which uses scientific and effective procedures to carry out accurate identification, assistance and management of poverty alleviation targets in accordance with the circumstances of different poverty-stricken areas and farmers [5,6,7]. For example, poverty alleviation and related matters was widely hard based on the status of the adjust measures to local conditions, and both provincial and local governments in precise poverty alleviation work deployment. Specifically, such as road maintenance, dangerous house renovation and resident relocation, improvement of the medical and health security system, improvement of the level of education, strengthening the prosperous industry, etc., were urgent issues in poor rural area. Consequently, of both the integration of all resources and to
carry out the responsibility were needed in the process of implementation in order to achieve accurate effect of poverty alleviation.

3.2 The Problems for Targeted Poverty Alleviation

However, targeted poverty alleviation still faces many problems, even though assistance had been given according to the actual situation of poor villagers. In terms of specific problems of targeted poverty alleviation, such as low utilization rate of funds, imperfect assistance mechanism for cadres in villages, and low enthusiasm of farmers to participate in targeted poverty alleviation [5,8,9,10], are described as follows.

3.2.1 Low utilization rate of funds

First of all, the lack of capital implementation rules and capital integration there is a big risk; Secondly, project funds come from a variety of sources and have different requirements in the procedures of examination and approval, allocation, management and acceptance, but there is no unified implementation rules and clear definition of rights and responsibilities. There are also problems of overlapping projects and inefficient allocation of poverty alleviation resources [9,10].

3.2.2 The mechanism for supporting cadres in villages needs to be improved

For example, in the process of passive, identity restriction, administrative assigned in cadres lack of practical work experience, their job skills and the poverty alleviation work requirements, regional send pressure is very outstanding, the cadre quantity proportion far below the actual number of funding, residency support personnel will send a regional supply and demand imbalance problems [5].

3.2.3 Farmers have low enthusiasm to participate in targeted poverty alleviation

Poor farmers did not fill in the true personal information, and farmers lack confidence in the work of poverty alleviation. In other words, some farmers do not want to be supported or not supported on the basis of face or relationship. Others covet government subsidies and get resources through connections [8,10].

4. THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING LEISURE AGRICULTURE IN POOR RURAL AREAS

Under the background of targeted poverty alleviation, leisure agriculture is a new mode of poverty alleviation and prosperity in rural areas. In developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas, poor villagers can gain the following economic and non-economic benefits [11].

4.1 The Improvement of Road and Traffic

To be rich, go first. The primary task of developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas is the improvement of external communication roads and transportation. Due to the wide involvement, it is not only for villagers and companies to deal with, but also for government departments to coordinate and invest funds to improve external communication. For poor rural areas, no matter how successful the operation is, at least the roads and traffic have been improved, making it safer and more convenient to get in and out of the county seat, thus making positive contributions to the daily life of the village, such as purchase, study, medical treatment and employment.

4.2 The Improvement of Villagers' Houses

Secondly, the main source of income for developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas is still focused on food and housing, and the proportion of tourists' travel budget in tourism, entertainment and shopping is relatively low. Therefore, in order to welcome tourists to visit for dinner and accommodation, the improvement of the house has become a necessary investment project. Similar to road traffic improvements, even if no tourists visit, the quality of life of residents in poor rural areas can be improved, especially in terms of sanitation and home living conditions.

4.3 The Improvement of Public Facilities

In addition, in order to develop leisure agriculture and rural tourism, poor rural areas must improve the public service system, such as the construction of visitor centers, parking lots, parks, public toilets and communication base platforms. These public facilities can be used by villagers whether they are visited by tourists on weekdays or holidays. The improvement of public facilities can also improve the quality of villagers' lives.
4.4 The Opportunities for Training and Learning

Fourthly, in order to develop leisure agriculture and rural tourism, poor rural areas must have basic requirements in terms of professional knowledge and skills. However, residents in poor rural areas are limited by education level and geography, and lack of knowledge and skills in leisure agriculture operation and management, so they must be trained. These trainings not only give residents more opportunities to get along with each other, but also bring villagers together and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to operate leisure agriculture. In other words, the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism in poor rural areas will provide more training and learning opportunities for villagers. Even with fewer tourists, villagers can make a living out of their knowledge and skills.

4.5 The Preservation of Local Culture

For some poor rural areas, as the economy is less developed and it is not easy to make a living, it is basically a case of population outflow. It is normal that only the elderly, women and children are left in the village. In this case, the language, customs, food, clothing, housing, transportation and other cultural heritage and preservation of the village may be limited. However, through the development of leisure agriculture, in order to shape the characteristics of the village, to find attractive cultural activities can make the villagers and government departments move, which has positive benefits for the inheritance and preservation of culture. In addition, when village economic activities become more and more hot, there will be more work opportunities in leisure agriculture, will also attract villagers who work and study in other places to return home. When young people in villages are willing to stay in their hometowns and young people in other places are willing to return to their hometowns, the preservation of local culture will form a positive cycle. Therefore, the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism in poor rural areas will contribute to the inheritance and preservation of local culture.

4.6 The Increase Entrepreneurship and Employment Opportunities

The development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism in poor rural areas requires not only catering and accommodation services, but also tour guides who know more about the local ecological environment. Generally speaking, government departments can help local residents to start their own businesses. They can set up local restaurant, restaurant or local specialty processing and selling, etc., and invest in catering, accommodation services and specialty processing and selling industries. Residents can get rid of poverty through entrepreneurial opportunities. If the local government manages leisure agriculture and rural tourism by attracting investment, local residents with a certain degree of education can also get job opportunities, such as chefs, kitchen assistants, caterers, hotel front desk attendants, room attendants, security and cleaning personnel, etc. Therefore, the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism in poor rural areas can increase the entrepreneurial and employment opportunities of local residents.

4.7 The Increase Revenue Streams

In poor rural areas, villagers who invest in leisure agriculture and rural tourism can obtain relatively stable income by starting businesses and employment opportunities. For the villagers who are unwilling to invest in leisure agriculture and rural tourism, they can continue to maintain their original living mode and engage in agricultural production, herb collection, animal feeding and other work. They have more opportunities to take part-time jobs or get more remuneration due to the improvement of external transportation, infrastructure and the development of related tourist sites. For example, as a result of the large number of tourists entering the restaurant, the demand for fruits and vegetables increases. For residents who previously engaged in agricultural activities, seasonal fruits and vegetables needed by the restaurant can be grown to increase the income. Therefore, the development of leisure agriculture and rural tourism in poor rural areas can indeed increase the income channels of residents.

In sum, the development of leisure agriculture can not only bring positive economic contributions to poor rural areas, such as increasing job opportunities, increasing income channels and increasing business opportunities, but also bring non-economic contributions to poor rural areas, such as improving roads and external transportation, promoting interpersonal communication between urban and rural areas, and improving public facilities. Therefore, the development of leisure agriculture is closely
related to targeted poverty alleviation, and it is necessary to actively develop leisure agriculture in poor rural areas.

5. THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPING LEISURE AGRICULTURE IN POOR RURAL AREAS

Many policies have two sides of the same coin, with pros and cons. Developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas has its benefits and will face relative challenges.

5.1 The Diversified Needs of Leisure Agriculture

In recent years, the development of leisure agriculture has begun to take shape. With the development of urban economy, the increase of residents' economic income, the continuous improvement of living standard, and the continuous increase of material living standard, leisure travel has become more and more the demand of residents' spiritual life. Therefore, when developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas, it needs to be further clarified how many urban residents' needs are still met and what types of needs are met. If we want to develop leisure agriculture as a tool for targeted poverty alleviation, we still need to accurately grasp the trend of market demand [12].

5.2 The Homogeneous Supply of Leisure Agriculture

Leisure agriculture has gradually shown a trend of diversified development, which not only increases the number of tourist attractions, expands the scale of operation, but also expands the layout and functions. Leisure agriculture has gradually promoted the construction of new rural areas in China, formed the development trend of agricultural productivity, rural scenic area, farmers' multi industry and resource production. However, the products of leisure agriculture in each region are still high in the same configuration, forming a phenomenon of high competition among the industry in the region. Therefore, when developing leisure agriculture in poor rural areas, all need to be further clarified. If government departments want to develop leisure agriculture as a tool for targeted poverty alleviation, they still need to formulate relevant industry management norms, so as to coordinate the industry and achieve the goal of poverty alleviation through sharing and common prosperity [9].

5.3 The Impacts of the Environment and Ecology

To develop leisure agriculture, it is necessary to make way for relevant infrastructure construction, which may cause permanent damage to the original environment and ecology, such as the removal or improper transplantation of thousand-year-old trees and the change of original ecological landscape. After the visit of a large number of tourists, residents, management units and tourists damage the environment and ecology, or improper use of facilities and equipment, such as improper trampling of forest trails, tourists exceeding the load, garbage and pollution sources brought by tourists, etc. Therefore, the development of leisure agriculture is indeed a good tool for targeted poverty alleviation, but its impact on the environment and ecology still needs to be evaluated.

5.4 The Impacts of Social and Cultural Dimensions

The development of leisure agriculture in poor rural areas will attract a large number of tourists, which may bring security problems to local residents. For example, tourists may break into people's homes at will, disturb their lunch break and interfere with their daily life. Secondly, too many tourists or unruly tourists, parking at will, loud noise will also cause inconvenience to residents. In addition, urban tourists bring their economic advantages with them, and dressing up with gold and silver jewelry may bring improper demonstration to the children of residents in poor rural areas. Their views on money and values may also influence the values of residents in poor rural areas. Therefore, the development of leisure agriculture is indeed a good tool for targeted poverty alleviation, however, it is still necessary to evaluate its impact on social culture and prepare supporting measures.

6. CONCLUSION

To complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, we must address the issue of poverty, that is, take targeted measures to alleviate poverty in poor rural areas. Targeted poverty alleviation has its own problems, such as insufficient funds and low willingness of farmers. To solve the poverty problem through the development of leisure agriculture will also face these problems. The development of leisure agriculture is indeed a
good tool for targeted poverty alleviation, enabling residents in poor rural areas to gain economic and non-economic benefits, such as improved roads and transportation, improved houses, improved public facilities, training and learning opportunities, more business opportunities and employment opportunities, as well as income increasing channels, so as to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation. However, through the development of leisure agriculture, there are still some challenges in the way of poverty alleviation, including diversified demands, homogeneous supply, environmental and ecological impacts, as well as social and cultural impacts, which need to be solved by the concerted efforts of all sectors.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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