

Research on Restrictive Factors and Countermeasures of Poverty Alleviation in Western Ethnic Areas against the Background of Rural Revitalization Strategy

ChuanYu Yang

Institute of Southwest Minority Research
Southwest Minzu University
Chengdu, China

Ting Gong

Institute of Southwest Minority Research
Southwest Minzu University
Chengdu, China

Abstract—The western ethnic areas tend to be the relatively poverty-stricken regions in China. In recent years, the current situation has been improved and some key achievements have been made by taking various state measures on policies and working, but the situation is still not optimistic. Poverty alleviation is the key to building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We must implement work closely around the important idea of “targeted poverty alleviation”. We need to recognize the constraints of the fight against poverty in ethnic areas under the background of rural revitalization strategy. And on this basis, we should seize the opportunity of the times and actively respond to the challenges to realize the prosperity of “really get rid of poverty, get rid of real poverty, and never return to poverty” in the western ethnic areas as soon as possible.

Keywords—Rural Revitalization Strategy; ethnic areas; poverty alleviation

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM

Ethnic minority areas are the important places to fight against poverty in China, which is crucial to the timely completion of the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. At the same time, poverty in ethnic minority areas also hinders social development and is not conducive to meeting people’s growing aspirations for a better life. When presiding over the eighth collective study of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that “fighting poverty alleviation is the priority task of implementing the rural revitalization strategy” and “taking the rural revitalization strategy as the work of “agriculture, rural areas and farmers” in the new era to promote the comprehensive upgrading of agriculture, overall progress in rural areas and the all-round development of farmers” [1]. Poverty alleviation is not only one of the three major tasks of the 19th National Congress of the CPC, but also related to the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy [2].

Therefore, rural revitalization and poverty alleviation are closely related. Only by linking up and promoting each other can they achieve their strategic goals.

Targeted poverty alleviation was proposed by Comrade Xi Jinping in November 2013. “Seeking truth from facts, adjusting measures to local conditions, giving different guidance to different categories of enterprises, and targeted poverty alleviation” [3] are Xi Jinping’s important thoughts on developing rural economy. The concept of targeted poverty alleviation is put forward in contrast to the concept of “extensive poverty alleviation”. Its important connotation is to stick to the principle of seeking truth from facts and respecting laws in poverty alleviation work. Getting rid of poverty scientifically is the proper meaning of “targeted poverty alleviation”. Rural revitalization strategy plays an important role in targeted poverty alleviation and is a key opportunity available to poor areas.

Ethnic areas tend to be the poverty-stricken areas in China, especially in the West of China, as the region where most ethnic minorities live in, poverty has always been a major problem that restricts local economic and social development. In western ethnic areas, due to the large number and density of poor people, imperfect infrastructure, relatively backward supporting facilities, and obviously lagging industrial and commercial development, all these factors have brought great difficulties and obstacles to the western ethnic areas. Over the years, the government has done a lot of important work for the economic development of the western region, provided more supportive policies and achieved great achievements, but the situation of poverty alleviation is still not optimistic. During the visit to Yunnan province in January 2015, Comrade Xi Jinping emphasized that “we must resolutely fight against poverty and develop the rural areas, accelerate economic and social development in ethnic minority areas” [4]; In June 2015, he further emphasized the application of the concept of “targeted poverty alleviation” and its intrinsic value in Guizhou [5], which shows his attention and concern for the fight against poverty in the western minority areas. What are the main constraints to poverty alleviation in western ethnic areas? What

Fund Project: Innovative research projects for postgraduates in Southwest Minzu University: “Enhancing the Consciousness of the Chinese Nation Community - From the Perspective of the Improvement of the System of Regional Ethnic Autonomy”(Project No. CX2018BS04); The project of the National Ethnic Minority Philosophy and Cultural Inheritance and Innovation Research Base, “Study on Strengthening the Consciousness of the Chinese Community from the Perspective of Social Governance” (Project No. 2019SZJD08).

measures should be taken under the background of rural revitalization strategy to change the current poverty situation? Clarifying these problems is of great theoretical and practical value to the western poverty alleviation work in China.

II. RESTRICTIVE FACTORS OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN WESTERN ETHNIC AREAS

A. Current Situation in Western Ethnic Areas

The vast territory of the western minority areas refers to the minority areas distributed in the western part of China, mainly in Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Tibet Autonomous Region, Chongqing, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Ningxia Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The total area is about 686 square kilometers, accounting for about 72 percent of the country's total area [6]. The minority nationalities in the western region are widely distributed, with about 44 ethnic minorities and a large population of ethnic minorities. Compared with the whole country, the development of the whole western region is lagging behind, and the western minority areas tend to lag behind other regions in the west. Some ethnic minority areas are still in a relatively severe state of poverty, which has its own historical and geographical factors, as well as its thinking and realistic factors. There are various reasons for poverty. However, the ecological environment in the western ethnic areas is better, cultural diversity is well protected, resources are abundant, and the tourism and agriculture can be developed are of great potential. On the other hand, due to the long-term development lag, it is more likely to take a sustainable development path that is different from other places by opening up innovative development ideas. With the strengthening policy support by the state and the implementation of poverty alleviation projects, it showed a slim chance of survival and made tremendous achievements in the western ethnic region. Of course, there are still some realistic constraints that need to be solved and dealt with urgently.

B. The Constraints of Poverty Alleviation in Western Ethnic Areas

Combining with the reality, the main constraints of poverty alleviation in western ethnic areas can be discussed from the following aspects: rule of law, the construction of basic facilities, thinking concepts, educational conditions and geographical conditions, as follows:

Firstly, the imperfect rule of law in ethnic areas will restrict the economic and social development of ethnic areas, which is not conducive to poverty alleviation. Due to the relatively backward of social development and the lack of pertinence in legislative work in the western minority areas, the construction of the rule of law in some areas is relatively backward and can not keep up with the changes of the times. The process of poverty alleviation inevitably involves some issues of benefit distribution. The shortcomings of the rule of law inevitably lead to a variety of problems, which ultimately restrict the process of poverty alleviation.

Secondly, infrastructure construction in ethnic areas needs to be strengthened. Traffic blocking and underdeveloped transportation, and the dangerous geographical environment in western ethnic areas not only limits the logistics conditions, but also makes it difficult for the people of all nationalities in the blocked state to develop their own industrial economy. Especially agricultural products, poor transport conditions will form a variety of obstacles in marketing channels. In addition, other infrastructures in ethnic areas are not ideal, and supporting facilities are important measures to increase local income of local social development, introduction of enterprises, and revitalization of the economy. And the poor construction of supporting facilities will inevitably lead to reluctance of all kinds of foreign investors to invest more resources in economic development and to spend costs on infrastructure construction. For example, if the local business environment for economic development is not improved, the western minority areas will continue to be on the edge of economic development.

Thirdly, the awareness of poverty alleviation is not enough, and the endogenous capacity of poverty alleviation needs to be strengthened. The cultural theory of poverty holds that poverty is subject to the reproduction of local corresponding poverty culture, and culture is an important factor that restricts people from improving the current situation. Due to factors such as traffic blocking, educational level, and relatively unitary culture, the western ethnic regions are often in a state of social exclusion. In this case, poverty often affects people from the perspective of concepts to improve their state and becomes another important factor that restricts their own development.

Fourthly, vocational and technical education lags behind and high-quality talents are scarce. Due to the geographical environment, the current situation of economic and social development and the inland marginal region, the western minority areas are relatively backward in education. They are lacking corresponding resources not only in basic education, but also in vocational skills training. Especially the high-quality talents who "go out" from the local area would rather stay outside than return to their native places to work, which makes it difficult for the development of various fields in the western minority areas to be improved in terms of human resources. The lack of talents is a realistic factor that restricts poverty alleviation.

Fifthly, the population is large and the geographical environment is relatively poor. In the western minority areas, on one hand, due to the differences in national culture, and on the other hand, due to the permission of national policy and the deep-rooted farming culture, people often increase the amount of labor force by giving birth to more children, so as to improve the harvest of agricultural products. In the past, it was an indispensable means to increase production and achieve material prosperity. However, according to the current situation, the economic pressure result from poverty and the high fertility rate have fundamentally increased poverty and family burden. Faced with the current situation of large population and relative poverty in western minority areas, the difficulty of poverty alleviation has increased greatly and the base number of poverty alleviation population is relatively large.

III. COUNTERMEASURES OF STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AND PROMOTE THE TARGETED POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN WESTERN ETHNIC AREAS

Firstly, improve the rule of law in ethnic areas and protect the healthy development of the local economy and society. Economic and social development cannot be achieved without the guarantee of the rule of law. The concept of law-based governance requires us to attach importance to the rule of law. Especially in the western minority areas, the construction of the rule of law is imperfect and it is still at a low level, which often hinders the local economic development. As far as the work of rural revitalization and poverty alleviation is concerned, the rule of law is well established, the work can be carried out in accordance with the law, the rule of law is running smoothly, and the work of poverty alleviation will be successfully completed on the basis of healthy development of the economy and society. Comprehensively implement the rule of law is related to the happiness and health of the people in the western minority areas. The stability and prosperity of the ethnic areas are related to the boom and prosperity of the country, and the construction of the rule of law for the governance of ethnic affairs is related to the stability and prosperity of minority areas and the construction of China governed by the rule of law. By improving the level and ability of rule of law for the governance of ethnic affairs, and promoting the economic development of western ethnic areas to realize people's desire to get rid of poverty and achieve a well-off society in an all-round way [7]. In the new era, we must attach importance to the rule of law in ethnic areas, ensure the improvement of economic and social conditions in ethnic areas, guarantee the laws must be observed and strictly enforced. Especially the corruption at the lower levels in individual districts must be prevented by the rule of law, so as not to affect the smooth progress of the "fight against poverty".

Secondly, actively carry out infrastructure construction and improve relevant supporting facilities. The importance of infrastructure has been discussed above. The western ethnic minority areas should especially actively respond to national policies, make good use of the dividends of the rural revitalization strategy, and strengthen their own infrastructure. Construction can be carried out step by step in batches and at different levels to improve the people's living standards and to carry out infrastructure construction work from the minimum standards for poverty alleviation. Certainly, it is the key to introduce all kinds of western support plans, coordinate all aspects of support and subsidies, and make good use of the opportunity of the current economic development strategy of rural revitalization.

Thirdly, strengthen the propaganda and education of the new concept of economic development, and help people eliminate poverty on thought. Poverty alleviation in ethnic minority areas requires constant efforts to create culture atmosphere and promote their inner motive to get rid of poverty. We should actively carry out publicity and education of the new concept and new thinking for poverty alleviation. Strengthening educational work is an important part of improving the situation and getting rid of poverty, which can guarantee the young generation the better education to the

greatest extent, especially vocational and technical education. So-called realizing "poverty alleviation should be combined with fostering ambition and wisdom", refers to a measure to promote the internal impetus of poverty alleviation in concept. It organically combines poverty alleviation in the sense of economy and people's livelihood with poverty alleviation in the spiritual level, and combines poverty alleviation in the purely material level with poverty alleviation in the ideological field.[8]

Fourthly, vigorously develop vocational and technical education, and actively introduce high-quality talents to make a good reserve of human resources for poverty alleviation. Education plays a central role in all factors of poverty alleviation in the western minority areas. Education can export talents to the local areas, especially professional and technical personnel, legal talents, poverty alleviation workers, etc. All of them need education. However, it is the imperative to introduce talents because the shortage of talents and backward education in western minority areas. Therefore, it is necessary to respond to vocational and technical education and improve the introduction of high-quality talents, especially those who are interested in making achievements in the western minority areas should be retained, rooted, stabilized, and give them a sense of acquisition and values.

Finally, innovate the concept of poverty alleviation, actively use the local natural advantages, and break through the convention to turn disadvantages into advantages. Some disadvantages can be converted into advantages under certain circumstances. In the western ethnic areas, due to the rich resources and good ecology, some special affairs can be transformed into business opportunities in some cases. The spirit of the 19th National Congress of the CPC pointed out that "we should improve public services, build infrastructure, and develop industries with distinctive advantages." [9] "Developing characteristic and superior industries" requires us to find the advantages of poverty alleviation development from the objective reality of the western minority areas, transform the disadvantages into advantages, innovate the concept of poverty alleviation, and open up a sustainable road to poverty alleviation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Xi Jinping presides over the eighth collective study of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and stressed that fighting poverty alleviation is the priority task of implementing the rural revitalization strategy [EB/OL]. http://www.sohu.com/a/256277868_224813, 2018-09-26. (In Chinese).
- [2] Interpretation of Central Document No.1: Priority should be given to fighting against poverty in Rural Revitalization. (In Chinese). <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1591893401490591813&wfr=spider&for=pc>, 2018-02-09.
- [3] Zhang, Yuan.; Li, Quan.; Shen, Ke. On the Empirical Basis of Targeted Poverty Alleviation[J]. Issues in Agricultural Economy, 2019(04):60-70. (In Chinese).
- [4] According to Xinhua News Agency. Xi Jinping emphasized resolutely fighting for poverty alleviation and development and accelerating economic and social development in ethnic areas during his investigation in Yunnan [J]. Yunling Pioneer, 2015 (2): 4-5. (In Chinese).

- [5] Zhang, Shaoguo. Targeted Poverty Alleviation to Implement Social Services[J]. Forum for Advancement, 2016(1):25-26. (In Chinese).
- [6] Tong, Yufen.; Wang, Haixia. The Causes of Poverty of Ethnic Population in Western-China and Its Policy Implication[J]. Population & Economics, 2006(1): 7-12. (In Chinese).
- [7] Han, Yang. The Study on the Rule of Law for the Governance of Ethnic Affairs[D]. Dali University, 2018.(In Chinese).
- [8] Ling, Chong. Realizing the Combination of Poverty Alleviation with Fostering Ambition and Wisdom[J]. Dangdai Guangxi, 2018,No.348(12):33. (In Chinese).
- [9] The compilation group of this book. Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics [M]. Higher Education Press, 2018:248. (In Chinese).