

How to Evaluate the Sustainability of Rural Tourism? A Case of Xiaozhuang Tu Ethnic Village in Qinghai Province

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ABSTRACT

Rural tourism is one of the most direct, realistic, and effective green industries and it can increase residents' income in ethnic areas. Based on the theory of sustainable development, this paper takes Xiaozhuang Tu Nationality Folk Culture Villages as an example, which is a typical ethnic village in Qinghai Province, the paper evaluates the sustainable development performance of rural tourism from four aspects of economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits through questionnaire survey and household interview, using the methods of mean value analysis. The results show that the overall sustainable development effect of rural tourism in Xiaozhuang village is not significant. In terms of effectiveness, the ecological environment is the first to achieve the sustainable development effect. The economic, social and cultural achievements have not yet reached the standard and need to be further improved. Therefore, Xiaozhuang ethnic village should promote the high-quality development of rural tourism, realize the industrial rejuvenation of the village, and promote the sustainable development of rural tourism in Qinghai ethnic areas.

Keywords: *ethnic areas, rural tourism, tourism sustainable development performance, Tu nationality, Xiaozhuang Tu ethnic village*

1. INTRODUCTION

As a new growth point of rural economic development under the new normal, rural tourism is an important way to solve the problems of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers"[1]. It has also become an effective way to enrich the people and bring prosperity to the villages in economically underdeveloped ethnic areas[2]. In remote ethnic areas, developing rural tourism is an effective supplement to existing livelihood[3]. Rural tourism not only promotes the optimization of rural industrial structure, the increase of farmers' income, the improvement and upgrading of rural living environment[4], but also protects the environment, resources and cultural heritage[5-7]. Since the 19th CPC National Congress, the Central Government has issued a series of documents to promote the development of rural tourism, including the Opinions on The Implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022), the Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism, and the Action Plan for Improving the Quality and Upgrading of Rural Tourism development (2018-2020). The development of rural tourism is moving from scale expansion to quality improvement and sustainable development.

The sustainable development of rural tourism has always been the focus of scholars at home and abroad. Sustainable rural tourism development can improve local resilience and

sustainable prosperity. Although many scholars believe that rural tourism is a sustainable tourism activity which is ecologically reasonable, economically feasible and socially appropriate. Liu Yijun[8] points out that excessive emphasis on the economic benefits of rural tourism is one of the reasons for the environmental degradation of rural communities. In the real development, rural tourism is confronted with such problems as backward infrastructure, single tourism products, insufficient investment and financing, lacking of rural culture and excessive commercialization, which seriously restrict the sustainability and quality improvement of rural tourism[9-10].

Hwan Suk Chris Choia[11] and Shen[12] have successively proposed 125 indicators and tourism sustainable analysis framework for sustainable development of rural tourism, which involve many aspects such as economy, politics, culture, ecology and technology. Gonsalves [13] pointed out that the sustainable development of rural tourism should be studied from the perspectives of rural culture, rural environmental protection or rural sex protection. Brohman [14] believes that the key to sustainable development of rural tourism is to maintain the rurality, that is, small-scale operation, local ownership, community participation, cultural and environmental sustainability. Sharpley[15] put forward that the essence of sustainable development of rural tourism is localization. Local supply chain should be built to encourage local arts and crafts production, so as

to ensure that profits are retained locally to the maximum extent and development efforts are within the environmental and social carrying capacity. Zhao Xueyan [16] proposed that dynamic and process studies on sustainable development should be strengthened. The above research shows that scholars pay more attention to the sustainable development of rural tourism, but the case studies on the sustainable development of rural tourism in special regions, especially in ethnic highland areas are relatively insufficient.

Based on this, this article with small farmhouse minority folk custom villages in Qinghai province as an example. Based on the theory of sustainable development, the construction of rural tourism sustainable development evaluation system, exploring rural tourism sustainable development in national regions of Qinghai, revealing Xiaozhuang Village development of sustainable tourism factors, in order to provide theoretical support and policy Suggestions for the sustainable development of rural tourism in ethnic areas.

2. RESEARCH AREA AND INDEX SYSTEM

2.1 Research Area

Xiaozhuang Tu ethnic village (hereinafter referred to as Xiaozhuang village) is located in Weiyuan Town, Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Haidong City, northeast of Qinghai Province. Located at the junction of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and The Loess Plateau. It is about 31km away from Xining which is the capital of Qinghai Province. It is a typical Inhabited village of The Tu nationality and one of the five core scenic spots of the National 5A Scenic spot, the Native land Park of the Tu nationality. As of 2018, there are 161 households and 610 people in Xiaozhuang village of which 98.2 percent are from the Tu ethnic group. In 2016, Xiaozhuang village was lifted out of poverty.

Xiaozhuang village is one of the earliest ethnic villages to develop rural tourism in Qinghai Province, more than 30 years ago. In terms of rural tourism development, it has won the first batch of honorary titles such as "National Agricultural Tourism Demonstration Site", "Top ten Most Beautiful Villages in Huzhu County", the first batch of "Chinese Rural Tourism Maker Demonstration Base", "Safe Village" at the county level and "Ten-Star Safe Village" at the municipal level. At present, 95% of the village's labor force is engaged in tourism reception and related services, and there are 90 folk tourism reception households, accounting for 56% of the total number of households. In 2017, the village's tourism revenue accounted for more than 80 percent of the total income.

2.2 Construction of Rural Tourism Sustainable Evaluation Index System

By referring to the relevant research and indicators of rural tourism and sustainable tourism, and taking into account the

localization and ethnic cultural factors of rural tourism in ethnic areas, 36 evaluation indicators including four criteria of economic, social, ecological environment and cultural sustainability were constructed.

2.3 Data Sources

The data are mainly derived from questionnaires, and the evaluation indicators of the sustainable development of rural tourism are transformed into questionnaire questions for investigation. From May 11, 2019 to May 13, 2019, the project team conducted a random sampling field survey in Xiaozhuang Village. A total of 100 questionnaires were issued in this survey, and 83 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective rate of 83%.

3. EVALUATION OF RURAL TOURISM IN XIAOZHUANG VILLAGE

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Villagers Interviewed

The respondents were mainly local villagers, accounting for 61.45%. Males accounted for 55.42% and females 44.58% respectively. In terms of poverty level, the majority of households were non-poor, accounting for 71.08%. The majority were aged 21-35 and 36-50, accounting for 49% in total. In terms of education level, primary school and junior high school account for 61.45% in total. In terms of residence time, villagers with less than 10 years' residence time were the majority, accounting for 42.17%. In terms of ethnic groups, the majority are Tu villagers, accounting for 59.04%; In terms of income, villagers with incomes below 10,000 yuan and 10,000 to 20,000 yuan are the majority, accounting for 54% in total. In terms of tourism, 49.4% of villagers participated in tourism; In terms of occupation, local specialties, handicraft shops, restaurants, hotels, chess, CARDS, singing and dancing halls and other areas are mainly employed, accounting for 20.48%, 20.10% and 49.40% respectively.

3.2 Evaluation of Xiaozhuang Village Tourism

The likert scale was used to evaluate the sustainable development effect indicators of rural tourism on a score of 1-5 (completely disapproving =1, disapproving =2, uncertain =3, approving =4, completely approving =5).

The results show that the average score of sustainable development of Xiaozhuang Village is 3.95, which does not reach the level of sustainable development. In

terms of economic, social, ecological environment and cultural sustainable performance, the average value of sustainable performance evaluation at each level is ecological performance (4.066) & GT; Cultural Performance (3.992) & GT; Social Performance (3.949) & GT; As can be seen from the economic performance (3.799), the ecological sustainable effect of Xiaozhuang village is the most significant, and the cultural, social and economic sustainable effect needs to be further improved. Although The folk custom tourism is the leading industry in Xiaozhuang Village, it has the lowest sustainable economic effect, which is related to the product homogeneity and low-level operation mode among the five core scenic spots of The Tu Nationality hometown Park.

3.2.1 Sustainable economic performance

The mean value of the evaluation of economic sustainability is 3.799, which is the lowest score in the index layer. The evaluation value of each index of economic effect is lower than 4, indicating that improving economic condition is still the core problem of developing rural tourism. From the perspective of individual and rural aspects, it is found that the individual economic effect (3.728) is lower than the rural economic effect (3.889), which is closely related to the fact that Xiaozhuang Village, as one of the core attractions of 5A scenic spots, has its popularity improved and the rate of tourists' visits has also increased significantly. But at the same time, the rural tourism products of Xiaozhuang Village are single, and compared with the catering and home stay of Naton Manor, there is a lack of norms and standards. The low level competition of similar products among rural operators in the village has resulted in the lack of significant improvement in the economic performance of rural households in the small village.

3.2.2 Sustainable social outcomes

The mean value of social performance evaluation is 3.949, which is close to 4, indicating that developing rural tourism solves some social problems. Such as maintaining the good village (4.08) for public security, enhance the enthusiasm of the villagers to participate in the tourism industry (4.07) and increased the women's social status (4.05), raise public awareness of the village (4.04), and improve the relationship between neighborhood (4.00), and other six evaluation indexes, reflect the rural tourism sustainable results comprehensive optimization of the social environment of the villagers.

In terms of communication with outsiders (4.08), the villagers said that the folk tourism development of Xiaozhuang Village for more than 30 years has greatly increased the opportunities of communication with

outsiders, and the villagers are willing to participate in tourism service activities to increase their income.

In terms of local social security (4.07), in order to ensure the stability of social security and smooth security work in Xiaozhuang Village, a night patrol team led by local police officers and dominated by village police and the masses was established in Xiaozhuang Village, and a household joint prevention team was set up to strengthen the management registration and check system of floating population. At the same time, Xiaozhuang village invested 500,000 yuan to install the Monitoring system of Internet of things, realizing the informatization of the construction work of Pingan Scenic spot. In recent years, no social problems caused by floating population have occurred. According to the field visit, the villagers said that the increase in income made the local social security more stable, and the theft and fighting in the village basically stopped, but at the same time, the villagers said that the incidence of theft in Xiaozhuang village increased due to the arrival of more outsiders.

The social status of the rural women (4.05), from the early folk reception to organic and production of folk culture products such as rural tourism service activities, Xiaozhuang Village women gradually liberated from the household chores and farming activities, is engaged in tourism services in the process of increasing the family economic income, and family status is achieved. Aiming at the social security problem, the index of improving the security level of the old-age medical insurance (3.58) has not been recognized by the villagers as a whole. Officials of the local village committee said that there are certain problems in the guarantee of medical facilities and the environment, and "difficult management, difficult management and who will take charge" are the main causes of the problems.

3.2.3 Ecological sustainability

The average value of the evaluation of ecological sustainability was 4.07, which was the highest score in the evaluation system of ecological sustainability. As an ecologically fragile region, Qinghai province emphasizes ecological civilization construction while developing rural tourism under the development strategy of "one advantage, two high levels". In the development of rural tourism, Xiaozhuang Village has made great efforts to control the ecological environment. From 2013 to 2015, Xiaozhuang Village implemented the Pilot project of New Rural Communities in Qinghai Province, with an initial capital of 36.1 million yuan. Effectively improve the dumpster drainage facilities such as toilets condition (4.25), and beautify the village CunMao (4.18), the increase of the ecological environmental protection

consciousness of the villagers (4.16), the ecological environment and the surrounding ecological environment optimization (4.10), and improve the construction of the infrastructure (4.04), reduce the pollution of the environment to improve the living environment quality (4.02), and other six indicators, field interview, that traffic still needs to be improved. Since 2010, Huzhu Village has improved its water grid and sewage pipeline. In the pilot project of new Rural communities in Qinghai Province in 2013, the main lanes of small farms, new street lamps and parking lots were expanded, and the Benkang of the Tu religion was built. However, after the upgrading of the scenic spot in 2017, the villagers in Xiaozhuang village generally reported that the entire village was densely built, with insufficient internal traffic and external access, which affected some villagers' tourism service activities.

3.2.4 Cultural sustainability

The overall effect of cultural sustainability is close to 4, which reveals that tourism promotes the awakening and inheritance of national cultural consciousness to a certain extent. Local villagers to retain the traditional national diet (4.24), promote the inheritance and development of traditional crafts (4.10), promote the national language of retention and popularize (4.06), keep the original ecological (4.05), the national performing arts promote the villagers' understanding of national culture (4.05), and other five indicators, indicates that the rural tourism development has a good effect on Xiaozhuang Village folk culture, promote the inheritance and development of folk culture, more and more villagers begin to attach importance to traditional culture.

However, to a certain extent, the authenticity of folk culture is gradually lost in the production and life of villagers, and the atmosphere of villagers wearing national costumes (3.60) in daily life is relatively weak. Villagers have complained that the management committee of the scenic spot requires villagers to wear uniform, which makes them rebellious. At the same time, the modernization of villagers' daily life and the difficulty in cleaning traditional clothes also weaken the villagers' awareness of wearing national clothes.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusion

On the whole, the sustainable development of rural tourism in Xiaozhuang village has not yet reached. In addition to the remarkable effect of ecological environment, the sustainability of economy, society and culture still needs to be improved. In particular, there is still a long way to go for the economic sustainable effect. The prosperity of rural

Xiaozhuang Village villagers is generally believed that the rural tourism to improve the local ecological environment, and maintain a positive attitude to it. However, in terms of traffic, the index evaluation of internal traffic (3.88) and external traffic (3.90) shows

tourism industry also needs to take the road of quality improvement to avoid low-level and low-level rural tourism development.

4.2 Suggestions on Sustainable Development of Rural tourism in Xiaozhuang Village

4.2.1 Adhere to ecological construction and optimize rural livable environment

Under the strategy of "high-quality ecological protection, high-quality ecological protection" is the priority of "high-quality and high-quality ecological development in Qinghai Province". Through upgrading infrastructure and creating ecological landscape, Xiaozhuang village not only completes the task of ecological livability, but also broadens the prospect of tourism development. Therefore, on the basis of adhering to the principle of protection priority and ecological construction, it is necessary to improve the internal traffic of the village, broaden the road, combine the development of Xiaozhuang folk village and Gucheng mountain landscape, so as to maximize the ecological benefits of tourism poverty alleviation and development.

4.2.2 Take the villagers as the foundation, increase the government support and guidance

The core of poverty alleviation through tourism is to get rid of poverty and get development. Local governments should take villagers as the foundation and participate in the process of poverty alleviation through tourism. In order to meet the needs of poor villagers and broaden their employment channels, the local government should give support measures to promote the development of agricultural products, catering, entertainment, accommodation and other industries; establish a management system of interest linkage among tourism enterprises, government and villagers, so that the local government can play a supervisory role, and relevant enterprises should play a main role, so that the local villagers can obtain the truth Positive interests.

4.2.3 Increase the popularization and publicity of social insurance

The purpose of tourism poverty alleviation and development is to improve the living standard of poor

villagers and provide material and spiritual protection. Social insurance is an important social policy in China. It is also an important basic guarantee for the old, the weak, the sick, the disabled, the pregnant and the disabled. The local government should strengthen the publicity of social popularization, improve the villagers' awareness of insurance and awareness of social security.

4.2.4 Improve villagers' participation and stimulate local feelings

As an important ethnic area of Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Xiaozhuang village has rich cultural resources. On the basis of protecting the authenticity of folk culture, it is necessary to improve the influence and publicity of intangible culture inheritors, make villagers actively participate in the construction of cultural and creative industries, and introduce external support, such as cultivating and encouraging villagers to become the main body of local culture innovation through the intervention and guidance of Qinghai University and secondary school groups, so as to stimulate villagers to develop cultural and creative industries and stimulate villagers to develop local culture Love of love.

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