

China's Experience of Poverty Alleviation in Typical Rural Areas

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Abstract

2020 is the decisive victory year in our my country's poverty alleviation and the poverty alleviation office of the State Council and the National Publicity and Education Center have proposed that a national poverty alleviation village experience survey should be needed. Having been entrusted by the General Research Group of China Agricultural University, Jiangtian village, Xiuning County, Anhui Province, conducted a survey of poverty alleviation experience. This article will introduce the basic situation of Jiangtian village and the causes of poverty through field visits to explore a series of work and results achieved in the village since the start of poverty alleviation in 2013, including three aspects of industry, culture, and spirit. At last, discussing several issues derived from the work of the village to dig out characteristic policy enlightenment. This article will focus on the ways and means of Jiangtian villages' successful poverty alleviation, and try to summarize the replicable and popularizable models of poverty alleviation in China.

Keywords

Poverty Alleviation, Jiangtian Village, Case

1. Introduction

Jiangtian Village is located in the northwest of Longtian Township, Xiuning County, Anhui Province, where 205 National Highway passes through it and is 60 kilometers away from Xiuning County. It was located at the southern foot of Chaziling, and is known as "the first village at the source of the Qianjiang River". The village governs 6 villager groups with 144 households and 564 people, with a total land area of 10.41 square kilometers, including 113 mu of arable land, 11,025 mu of woodland (including 1300 mu of tea gardens and 980 mu of bamboo gardens), and a water area of 8 mu. The traditional sources of income of the

village are mainly forest, bamboo, tea, rue leaves, and migrant workers (Summary report, 2019). Jiangtian Village was rated as a poor village in 2014. At the end of 2016, all the poor people were lifted out of poverty in Jiangtian Village, with a poverty incidence rate of zero. In the same year, it successfully achieved the goal of listing as a poor village. The income was 7286.029 yuan, and the collective economic income of the village was 127,500 yuan. The basic conditions were comprehensively improved and the “butterfly transformation” of poor villages was completed.

Jiangtian village is a typical mountainous village, dominated by agricultural industry. The low added value of agricultural products makes villagers’ income lower. In recent years, the village has lost its labor force, the hollowing out and aging of villages are serious. However, after a series of poverty alleviation work, the village achieved a steady increase in income within 2 years. It has reached the poverty alleviation standard, and even became a beautiful provincial-level village, which is an excellent poverty alleviation case.

2. Types and Causes of Poverty

In 2014, Jiangtian Village was identified as a poor village with registered cards. According to statistics, there were 29 poor households with 100 people in the village with registered files (due to birth, old age, sickness, death, marriage, etc., the population and number of households have changed). Among them, 9 households were impoverished due to illness or disability, accounting for 31.04%; 9 households were lacking labor, accounting for 31.04%; the remaining 11 households lacked skills and funds, accounting for 37.93% (Summary report, 2019). In addition, there are villagers with “old troubles” who are depressed and unwilling to participate in labor. Therefore, the causes of poverty in Jiangtian Village can be divided into five aspects: disease, disability, lack of labor, lack of technology, and lack of motivation for self-development.

The poverty in Jiangtian Village has historical reasons that cannot be ignored. First of all, the village is seriously lacking in talents, technology, capital and other industrial development foundations. Secondly, due to the opening of the Huangta expressway, the flow of traffic and people passing through the village has dropped sharply, the village has become marginalized, the export channels of agricultural and sideline products are not smooth, and the income of the villagers is reduced. Thirdly, the phenomenon of empty nest village is serious. Jiangtian village has a labor force of 450 people, of which about 300 are migrant workers. The left-behind elderly, women, and children are unable to engage in the development of the agricultural industry. Fourthly, the villagers are conservative in their thinking and have a weak ability to accept new things. Most of them develop agricultural production according to the traditional methods. The industrial structure is single, so that the rich agricultural product resources only remain in the sale of raw materials. It is difficult to increase the added value and farmers’ income.

3. Ways and Cases of Poverty Alleviation

In the investigation of Jiangtian village, the author visited the natural environment of the village on the spot, we held several seminars with village leaders, interviewing villagers with typical poverty alleviation stories and special poverty situations, and issued questionnaires, due to the confidentiality agreement with contents cannot be released directly. We gained a lot of valuable village poverty alleviation experience, and summarized the poverty alleviation methods of Jiangtian village into three aspects: industrial poverty alleviation, spiritual poverty alleviation, and cultural poverty alleviation.

3.1. Industry Poverty Alleviation

The main purpose of poverty alleviation work is to make the life of the villagers get better as soon as possible and their wallets to bulge up as soon as possible. Jiangtian Village has successfully lifted the village out of poverty by building industries such as mountain spring water fish farming, tea drying plants, and processing plants.

1) Fish farming in mountain spring water: Spring water fish farming is the advantageous characteristic industry of Xiuning County, showing in **Figure 1**. Jiangtian Village has the natural geographical advantage of spring water fish farming. In 2015, Jiangtian Village developed a mountain spring water fish cooperative, which produced a typical practice of “building fish ponds and returning population”, which is “hematopoiesis” way to get rid of poverty. Spring water fish contains selenium and is a healthy food material, which is very popular in the market. The village produces 20,000 catties of fish a year, with a gross profit of 400,000 to 500,000 yuan, which has driven poor households out of poverty and become rich. In addition to fish farming, the cooperative also leases villagers’ land to grow grass fodder, hires poor households in the village to mow fish and grass fodder during the season, and provide technical training to villagers involved in fish farming, which not only provides stable income for villagers, but also solves some employment issues. In addition, it also prepares a spring water fish experience hall and builds the Qianjiang source first village ecological fish farm project to promote the development of spring water fish-led rural tourism and leisure agriculture, integrate the secondary and tertiary industries, strengthen the overall development of agriculture, forestry and fish tourism, and improve the industry added value.

2) Tea drying equipment factory: In addition to the characteristic industries of spring water fish farming, relying on the village’s existing tea garden advantages, they developed the tea industry and implemented the drying equipment factory project, showing in **Figure 2**. In 2015, the village invested 100,000 yuan to repair the plant and purchase drying equipment to build a standardized tea factory. Later, 450,000 yuan was invested to purchase a set of modern tea production line equipment, which was completed by the end of 2018.

3) Reedpicking: Jiangtian Village has abundant reed leaves resources and good



Figure 1. Jiangtian Village spring water fish breedingbase.



Figure 2. Wu Qiujiu, a villager in Jiangtian Village.

market conditions. Villagers can earn 400 - 500 yuan in exchange for picking a day. reed leaves picking is a big industry in Jiangtian Village. As long as the body can move, one can earn income through labors. The villagers are very motivated. A poor household in their 70s can earn more than 10,000 yuan a year by picking reed leaves. It is suitable for older villagers and women with insufficient physical strength. It partially solves the income problem of villagers.

4) Incoming materials processing workshop: Since most of the labor force in Jiangtian Village works outside, most of the villagers are left-behind women and the elderly. In response to this phenomenon, Jiangtian Village has actively carried out the “poverty alleviation at the fingertips” project and established a clothing processing workshop to mobilize poor households and surplus labors. Processing with supplied materials alone can increase income by 10 - 40 yuan per day for poor households. Compared with migrant workers, the villagers’ incoming processing factories have higher wages, and the project is very flexible. As long as they have free time, poor households with weak working ability, left-behind women and the elderly can participate. Farmers can choose according to their family situation work in the workshop, or bring the sewing equipment home to operate, work at home, work more, get more, which is in line with the reality of rural life.

3.2. Mental Poverty Alleviation

1) Stimulating impoverished households: Through the development of indus-

tries, the material life of the villagers has improved, but there are still some villagers who have the idea of “waiting and relying” and are unwilling to actively participate in labors, which needs to stimulate the endogenous motivation of the farmers, helps the poor first, helps the aspirations, and elevates the minds. Dropping the “poor roots” means getting them out of poverty spiritually. Zhang Sijie used to be a well-known poor household in Jiangtian Village. At the age of 19, Zhang Sijie went out to work with his peers in the village. Because he was too young to leave home and was too obsessed with the outside world, he did not have a practical job at the beginning. At the age of 23, Zhang Sijie was unfortunately disabled due to an accident and could only walk on crutches. When return to the village, Zhang Sijie became depressed. He often quarreled and drank and made troubles, which became the “old hardship” problem in the village. However, through the communication and help of the village party branch, in 2016, he set up a small headdress processing factory, and opened a branch in the urban area. He claimed: “If there were no good policies for poverty alleviation in the village, and without the help of the village, I would not be where I am today”. Through external forces, the endogenous motivation of poor households has been stimulated, and their thinking has changed.

2) Creating “Ecological Beauty” Supermarket: In rural life, some villagers have the habit of littering, which has a negative impact on the village environment. In order to protect the water source of the Xin’an River, Jiangtian Village collectively invested about 20,000 yuan a year to establish an ecological beauty supermarket, showing in **Figure 3**. The ecological beauty supermarket is a “bartering” transaction method. Villagers collect plastic bottles and other garbage to exchange for “points”, and “points” can be exchanged for production and daily necessities with “zero deposit and lump-sum withdrawal”. Through the exchange of garbage and other forms, the enthusiasm of the villagers has been increased, the awareness of environmental protection and the spiritual awareness of green development have been strengthened, and the endogenous motivation has been reflected. The sanitation situation of the village has improved significantly, and the household expenditure of the masses, especially the poor household has also been reduced.



Figure 3. Jiangtian villagers in eco-beauty supermarket Eexchange.

3.3. Cultural Poverty Alleviation

Because the rural areas are relatively closed to the outside world, there are usually few living and entertainment activities, and bad habits such as card gambling and gossip are obvious.

Villagers have a low ideological level, and there are even examples of competing for the number of poor households. In order to change this situation, we must start from cultural poverty, improve the spiritual outlook of the villagers, and enhance the quality of their thinking.

1) Civilization council: The predecessor of the Jiangtian Village civilization council was *the Red and White council*. The Red and White council only managed the red and white affairs in the village. The current civilization council undertakes cultural activities such as the Chongyang Festival for the elderly and the Mid-Autumn Festival. In July, 2016, Jiangtian Village established the village civilization council, inviting prestigious, influential, and responsible party members and villagers in the village to serve as members of the council. At the same time, a series of rules and regulations were formulated to change the past when the masses organized the celebrations and celebrations. The phenomenon of extravagance, extravagance and waste has unified the standards for celebrations and celebrations in the whole village, effectively eliminating outdated rules and bad habits, promoting changes in customs, reducing the burden of peasants' favors, and conserving a new style of civilization.

2) Farmers' Spring Festival gala stage: The Spring Festival is the biggest festival in the countryside. Young people who are migrant workers in Jiangtian Village come back to celebrate the festival, but the lack of cultural activities in the countryside cannot satisfy the masses' demand for art and culture. In response to this phenomenon, higher authorities began to attach importance to rural grassroots cultural life and proposed to build a mass rural Spring Festival gala stage. Secretary Zhang, a poverty alleviation cadre in Jiangtian Village, began to organize women in the village as a dance team and organized stage performances by returning students. The masses were highly motivated and performed voluntarily, which changed the trend of drinking and playing cards.

4. Derivation Issues

4.1. The Bottleneck of Collective Economic Development

As a poverty-stricken village, Jiangtian Village receives funding from the superior to develop industries and increase village income. However, the village planting and breeding industry has a relatively long cycle, and the return of capital investment is slow. However, the requirement of fund distribution is to improve the economic status of the village as soon as possible. As a result, the village has funds but nowhere to use it. The development of the collective economy encounters a bottleneck. At present, village-level income only comes from rents from tea factories, fish ponds, and public welfare forests, and the village collective annual expenditures are overrun. Village economic development is insuffi-

cient and lacks new kinetic energy. If there is no continuous increase in income in the later periods, it will not be able to meet the needs of the masses and village expenditures. It is necessary to explore new ways for the development of village collective economy.

4.2. Grey Area of Medical Policy

Villagers of Jiangtian Village enjoy the 351 hospitalization policy and the 180 chronic disease policy. The 351 hospitalization policy means that when villagers are hospitalized for serious illnesses, the capped amount of their own expenditure within a year is 3000 yuan for county-level hospitals, 5000 yuan for municipal hospitals, and 10,000 yuan for provincial hospitals. The remaining costs are borne by critical illness insurance, civil assistance, and the government. The 180 chronic disease policy refers to the outpatient medical expenses of chronic disease patients of the poor population within one year. After compensation by the “351” comprehensive medical insurance, the remaining compliance expenses will be reimbursed by supplementary medical insurance for 80% (“351” and “180” policies, 2019). Due to the reality of rural life, some villagers are not patients with chronic diseases, but because their children are unattended when they work outside, and the crops at home and the livestock and poultry at home need to be taken care of, they cannot be hospitalized and can only buy drugs by themselves. Such villagers have a large medical expenditure, and the government’s full guarantee, except for medical expenses, is very likely to return to poverty. In response to this phenomenon, the village can only provide temporary relief, but it is by no means a long-term solution. Therefore, in response to this common phenomenon in rural areas, it is necessary to expand the scope of medical reimbursement or introduce other policies to better enable poor households to enjoy medical insurance.

4.3. Villagers Grateful Education Is Insufficient

In the work of poverty alleviation, for various reasons, some people expressed dissatisfaction during the assessment by their superiors. Some people have reached the poverty alleviation standard, but they do not meet the status quo, have high expectations, or complain that the industrial system in the village cannot be put in place quickly. These transformations are transformed into dissatisfaction with village-level work and are reflected in the superiors. In the assessment, the common difficulties encountered by managers. In addition, some villagers lied about their income, which caused some trouble to village-level work. The root of these problems comes from the insufficient gratitude education of the villagers, who enjoy policy care but not the heart of gratitude. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the gratitude education of villagers.

4.4. Consistency of Assistance Policies

After the poverty alleviation in 2020 is completed, the funds and guarantee poli-

cies enjoyed by Jiangtian Village will usher in great changes. However, this will put a lot of pressure on the grassroots and increase the difficulty of work. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust policies slowly and on the spot, paying attention to consistency.

5. Experience Summary

5.1. Attaching Importance to Basic Macro Work

In the 10 years from 2002 to 2012, Xiuning County carried out “emergency-type poverty alleviation”, carried out major improvements to the county level infrastructure, and carried out relocation of villagers with geological disasters and inconvenient transportation. These “large projects” were in 2013 and the follow-up implementation of targeted poverty alleviation laid the foundation. The “vascular” of the road is connected, and the accurate “blood delivery” can only be accurately delivered to the household. This is a macro prerequisite for the development of poverty alleviation.

5.2. Accurately Identifying the Target of Assistance

In the poverty alleviation work of Jiangtian Village, according to the specific conditions of poor households, “one household, one plan, one person, one measure” was formulated, all classified and registered, and targeted policies and targeted assistance were carried out accordingly to ensure real and true poverty alleviation, and regular organization, identify “missing households”, clarify “wrongly rated households”, insist on “whole household identification”, carry out “look back” on the poverty-stricken population at an appropriate time, pay attention to the later success of poverty-stricken villagers, and prevent them from returning to poverty.

5.3. Stimulating the Endogenous Motivation of the Masses

Due to the different geographical conditions and resources of each village, the successful industry of village A cannot be copied. Once the industry cannot be sustained, if the villagers continue to think of “waiting and relying”, there is a high probability that they will return to poverty. If the people’s thinking and concepts can be changed, a lasting endogenous power can be generated, which is an experience that can be replicated and promoted.

5.4. Focusing on Spiritual and Cultural Poverty Alleviation

A long time ago, Jiangtian villagers were aggressive, young people had nothing to do, and the bad behavior of robbing trucks passing by. The villagers had a serious ethos of drinking, playing cards, gambling, gossiping, and comparisons. Through the village Spring Festival gala stage and other forms, a colorful cultural life is brought to the village, the villagers have a good entertainment environment, and the bad atmosphere has gradually faded. It can also turn the annual farmer Spring Festival gala into a rural cultural feast, receive tourist teams, and

drive village tourism.

5.5. Transition from GDP to GEP

Gross ecosystem product value (GEP) can be defined as the sum of the value of products and services provided by the ecosystem for human well-being and sustainable economic and social development, including the value of production system products, the value of ecological regulation services, and the value of ecological and cultural services (Ouyang et al., 2013). The value realization mechanism of ecological products is an important part of the construction of ecological civilization and a way to implement “green water and green mountains are golden mountains and silver mountains”. The Jiangtian Village eco-beauty supermarket embodies the transition from GDP to GEP, which is an innovative development of ecological economy. The transformation of waste into ecological benefits has enabled the villagers to obtain economic benefits and raise their green awareness. The importance of GEP in government performance should be increased.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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