

Qinba Mt. Area

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ABSTRACT

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1 Introduction

The Qinba Mountain Area, a region with a rich and dynamic history, has undergone significant economic transformations over the centuries. This introduction on poverty alleviation in the Qinba Mountain Area will outline its historical evolution and current development strategies.

1.1 Historical Development

The economic development of the Qinba area saw new growth following the Song Dynasty. The region between Jing and Xiang, known for its fertile lands, was the most economically advanced area, as recorded in “History of the Song Dynasty”. Places like Xiangzhou were celebrated for their beautiful scenery and fertile soil, abundant in mulberry and hemp fields, and known as a land of fish and rice. Similarly, Junzhou (now Shiyan) and Yingzhou (around Jingmen and Zhongxiang) were important agricultural bases. The Northern Song government implemented policies to encourage cultivation in Tang and Deng (now Nanyang, Henan), leading to prosperous agriculture.

However, during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, as China’s ancient economic center shifted south, the Qinba region’s economic growth slowed, though not completely halted. For instance, during the Yuan Dynasty, the Jing-Xiang area, which had long suffered from wars, saw rapid economic recovery under policies encouraging cultivation. Despite losing its status as a primary administrative region, Xiangyang maintained its strategic importance throughout history. Nanyang, during the Qing Dynasty, emerged as an economic center in southwestern Henan, bustling with business and trade.

Since the late Qing Dynasty and into modern times, the Qinba Mountain Area has experienced slower economic development compared to other regions in China. This lag in progress has increasingly widened the gap between Qinba and the rest of the country. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the region has faced several challenges that have contributed to its status as one of the most impoverished areas in the nation. These challenges include inconvenient transportation, outdated and insufficient infrastructure, a deteriorating natural ecological environment, as well as a lag in modernizing local concepts and a prevailing sense of isolation.

These historical and ongoing challenges have significantly influenced the region’s economic and social landscape, setting the backdrop for the current poverty alleviation efforts. Understanding these factors is crucial for framing the current strategies and actions being implemented to improve the living conditions and economic prospects of the Qinba Mountain Area.

1.2 Development Strategy

In response to the region's historical economic challenges, the State Council's "Qinba Area Regional Development and Poverty Alleviation Plan 2011-2020" outlines a rational development strategy. This plan emphasizes building Shiyuan, Hanzhong, and Bazhong as key central cities, expanding urban spaces, optimizing urban forms, and enhancing urban functions. The goal is to promote population and industrial agglomeration, strengthen characteristic industries, and improve radiating and driving functions. The plan envisions an economic development pattern known as "One Belt, Three Centers, Five Corridors", aiming to create a spatial structure where development elements are concentrated, industrial features are prominent, regional connections are tight, and urban systems are well-developed.

This comprehensive approach, blending historical understanding with contemporary strategy, sets the stage for discussing poverty alleviation in the Qinba Mountain Area.

2 Situation Analysis

2.1 Causes of Poverty in the Qinba Mountain Area

1. **Harsh Natural Environment:** The Qinba Mountain Area, spanning across Shaanxi, Gansu, Sichuan, Hubei, and Henan provinces, is characterized by its rugged terrain and harsh climate. Frequent natural disasters, including floods and landslides, exacerbate the living conditions, leading to crop failures and destruction of homes. For instance, Ding Xiang'e, a villager, saw her home and crops destroyed by floods, highlighting the vulnerability of the region's agriculture to natural calamities.
2. **Inconvenient Transportation:** The area's geographic isolation is compounded by inadequate transportation infrastructure, making access to markets, healthcare, and educational facilities challenging. The lack of connectivity not only hinders economic development but also affects the ability of residents to seek better employment opportunities and access essential services.
3. **Weak Industrial Support:** The region's economy is primarily agrarian, with limited industrial development. This lack of diverse income sources limits the residents' ability to break the cycle of poverty. The economic stagnation is vividly illustrated by the plight of families who, despite possessing the will, lack the means to improve their living standards due to the absence of stable and lucrative employment opportunities.

2.2 Illustrative Cases from the Qinba Mountain Area

- The economic hardships faced by disabled individuals and elderly patients underscore the region's lack of support systems. For example, the story of Peng Xuezhong, who struggles to afford medication for chronic diseases, reflects the broader issue of healthcare accessibility and affordability.
- The impact of education costs on impoverished families is another critical aspect. The case of Zhou Zhijun, who had to incur significant debt to finance his children's education, highlights the financial strain placed on families by the pursuit of higher education, exacerbated by the region's economic constraints.
- Elderly individuals, such as Li Mingfu and Li Jumei, face the dual burden of managing chronic illnesses on a meager income, illustrating the compounded challenges of healthcare costs and limited financial resources.

2.3 Conclusion

The challenges faced by the Qinba Mountain Area are indicative of the complex interplay between natural adversities, infrastructural deficiencies, and economic underdevelopment. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that not only focuses on immediate relief but also on long-term strategies to improve infrastructure, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. The personal stories from the region serve as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for targeted interventions to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life for its residents.

3 Solutions

The strategy to alleviate poverty in the Qinba Mountain Area involves a comprehensive and multifaceted approach, addressing the root causes of poverty through the development of characteristic industries, enhancement of village infrastructure, economic development at the county level, improvement of social security capacity, and adherence to ecological protection. These strategies offer a roadmap for sustainable poverty alleviation.

3.1 Strategies

3.1.1 Development of Local Advantage Industries to Increase Income

Improve Local Specialty Industries. Develop and expand orchard bases, with poor households owning an average of 0.59 acres each, leading in absolute numbers and per capita in the region. This approach ensures income generation through the utilization of local agricultural strengths.

Utilize Existing Labor Resources. With a high percentage of the poor population engaged in local employment and a significant proportion being of working age, there's a labor force ready to support the development of these industries.

Engage Active Market Participants. Foster growth through a "leading enterprise + base + farmer" model, developing brands and cooperatives that enhance the value of agricultural products, thereby increasing income for poor households.

Special Poverty Alleviation Programs. Implement small loan programs and vocational training for the unemployed poor, aiming to improve their income-generating capabilities and prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty.

3.1.2 Strengthen Infrastructure Construction to Break Development Bottlenecks

Comprehensive Village Development: Focus on improving roads, water supply, electricity, housing, and income-generating industries, employing a precise poverty alleviation approach that gathers resources from government, society, and the market to address these issues systematically.

3.1.3 Promote Regional Economic Development to Enhance Self-Sufficiency

Emphasize the integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, focusing on ecological agriculture, strengthening manufacturing industries, and developing eco-tourism to create a sustainable economic model that benefits the local population.

3.1.4 Improve Social Security Capacity to Ensure Equal Access to Public Services

Address healthcare, education, and elderly care to reduce the urban-rural divide. Enhance medical assistance, expand educational support programs, and facilitate the orderly transfer of rural labor to improve living standards and economic conditions.

3.1.5 Prioritize Ecological Protection to Balance Development and Sustainability

Focus on ecological conservation, governance, and environmental protection to ensure the sustainable development of the region. This includes leveraging national policies for ecological compensation and developing industries that are compatible with environmental conservation.

3.2 Implementation Examples

- In Dazhou City, infrastructure improvements, such as road expansions, have facilitated access to markets and services, enabling villagers to engage in more profitable agricultural activities.
- In Bazhong City, the development of eco-tourism has provided an alternative income source for poor households, leveraging the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage.
- In Guangyuan City, the adoption of a cooperative model for poultry farming has provided direct income to poor households and offered employment opportunities within the community.

These examples underscore the importance of a coordinated and comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation that addresses both immediate needs and long-term sustainability. By focusing on these five strategic areas, the Qinba Mountain Area can make significant strides toward reducing poverty and enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

4 Effects



Figure 1: 111



Figure 2: 222



Figure 3: 333



Figure 4: 444