

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 These challenges include inconvenient transportation, outdated and insufficient infrastructure, a deteriorating natural ecological environment, as well as a lag in modernizing local concepts and a prevailing sense of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 Shiyan, 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.