

Analysis on the Path of Local Universities' Intervention in the Sustainable Development of Poor Rural Areas in the Era of Post-Poverty Alleviation: Taking Sichuan University of Science and Engineering as an Example

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Abstract: China has entered the era of post-poverty alleviation, which effectively links poverty alleviation achievements with rural revitalization strategies. In the era of post-poverty alleviation, in order to effectively promote the sustainable development of poor rural areas, local colleges and universities should actively nurture the self-development skills of the needy. Local colleges and universities should guide the transformation of ideas and concepts, scientifically optimize the allocation of poverty alleviation resources, improve the interest linkage mechanism between colleges and universities, strengthen the investigation and analysis of poverty alleviation projects, improve the convergence of assistance and practice, actively create a good spiritual and cultural environment, uphold the mission of helping cadres, attach importance to the support for the development of characteristic industries, and lastly, promote the convergence of rural revitalization strategies.

Keywords: Local colleges and universities; Rural revitalization; Alleviate poverty by education

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I. Introduction

In 2013, national leaders have put forward the “precision poverty alleviation” concept, emphasizing that poverty alleviation work should seek truth from facts and adapt to local conditions ^[1]. In the following year, the party and the state successively issued a document titled “Opinions on Innovating Mechanism to Solidly Promote Rural Poverty Alleviation and Development,” where a top-level design for precision poverty alleviation was established. On February 25, 2021, an announcement was made at the National Poverty Alleviation Summary and Commendation Conference: “Under China’s current standards, poverty-stricken counties, poverty-stricken villages, and rural poor people have all been lifted out of poverty, where regional overall poverty has been solved, while absolute poverty has been successfully eliminated ^[2],” indicating that China has officially entered the post-poverty alleviation era. Additionally, China’s focus and strategies for combating poverty has also changed based on the situation.

In the process of poverty control, local colleges and universities play an important role in precision poverty alleviation and tackling poverty by using their own platforms, intelligence, science and technology, teaching, and other resources. In view of new poverty characteristics and types, how local colleges and universities can use their own advantages to promote the sustainable development of poor rural areas will

become the new proposition handed over to colleges and universities in the new era. Additionally, to promote local universities to play a greater role in the post-poverty alleviation era, it is essential to clarify the realistic logic and the practical content of local universities' intervention in poverty governance. Other than that, it is important to explore the optimal strategy of local universities in promoting the sustainable development of poor rural areas ^[3].

2. Realistic logic of local higher education institutions intervening in poverty governance

2.1. In accordance with the development of the times and people's desire for a better life

In poverty management, the party and the state attach great importance to the function and role of education in poverty alleviation. Therefore, under their guidance, local colleges and universities have committed themselves to be fully involved in the poverty alleviation process ^[4]. Local colleges and universities use subject platform, talent cultivation, industrial development, and scientific research to build a training exchange platform and a science award system. Additionally, they provide training, exchanges, and awards for different groups of people in poverty-stricken areas as well as technical training to improve the employability of the poor; they also open communication channels, reform the ideology of poverty-stricken people, build an employment path, and broaden the opportunities for poverty-stricken people; furthermore, they improve the security materially and eliminate the worries of the poor. In short, local universities help poverty-stricken people to improve their capabilities, broaden their employment opportunities, and create an environment in accordance with people's desire to have a better life ^[5].

2.2. In accordance with local colleges and universities own resources and the poverty control demand

The effectiveness of poverty alleviation depends on whether there are sufficient resources or not and whether the resources are useful for poor villages and people. Local colleges and universities have abundant human, social, and educational resources, which are in line with the actual needs of poverty governance. These will not only effectively aid poverty governance, but also contribute to economic and social development ^[6]. In terms of human resources, local colleges and universities have professional teachers and scientific research talents, therefore they can contribute to the local economic development by cultivating specialized talents and provide sustainable talent support. Meanwhile, in terms of social resources, local colleges and universities have abundant alumni resources, thus they can provide strong social resource support and effectively relieve the dilemma of poverty alleviation resources. Lastly, in terms of educational resources, local colleges and universities have rich clusters of professional disciplines and abundant educational resources, where they can build training and communication platforms for the poor as well as provide support in terms of knowledge and skills ^[7].

2.3. Local universities play the role of educators in poverty alleviation and carry social responsibility

The problem of poverty is complicated because of its causes, and poverty governance is complex and systematic. Based on the dual characteristics of poverty governance, multi-subject participation should be focused on in poverty governance. As participants, local colleges and universities are responsible for the economic development, poverty alleviation, and social services ^[8]. Firstly, they provide talent support for local economic development, encourage talents to participate in local economic development, and improve the quality and efficiency of local economic development. Secondly, they play the role as "supporting intelligence" in poverty alleviation and economic development and further enhance the skills of poor people by means of technical training, thus providing a strong guarantee for the employment of poor people. Lastly, they demonstrate the effectiveness of "supporting ambition" in social services by relying on practical activities to guide the reform of poor people's ideas and promote the innovation of poverty alleviation ^[9].

3. The practice of local universities' intervention in poor rural areas under the background of precision poverty alleviation: A case study of Sichuan University of Science and Engineering

Sichuan University of Science and Engineering has made a great effort in poverty alleviation through education, industry, culture, talents, and other aspects based on the situations of the two counties and the advantages of disciplines, talents, and platforms. It helped poor counties fight poverty, promoted the development of regional economy and society, realized the dream of poverty-stricken people to become rich and well-off, thus providing a steppingstone for local universities to participate in poverty governance.

3.1. Grasp the advantages of disciplines and specialties, and implement education to help the poor

Local colleges and universities intervene in poverty-stricken areas through education, where they rely on education to help the poor. Local colleges and universities improve the quality of education in poverty-stricken areas through the assistance of educational materials and the training of teaching skills. Additionally, they provide educational assistance to poor students, help to improve the quality of education and teaching in poverty-stricken areas, and ensure that students from poor families have opportunities to receive education. In accordance with the academic and professional advantages of the school, the educational assistance provided will not only help improve the quality and efficiency of education and teaching in the county, but also provide an environment for poor students to study at ease.

3.2. Use the “intellectual” resources of colleges and universities to carry out poverty alleviation through science and technology and industrial development

Developing industries is the key to poverty alleviation and the sustainable development for poor villages and poor people. Sichuan University of Science and Engineering has made full use of its scientific research platform and intellectual resources in consideration of the specific conditions of the assisted areas, including location conditions, resource advantages, and the development of characteristic industries, in order to formulate industrial development plans and development strategies for poverty-stricken areas in Pingshan County and Yajiang County. The power of science and technology has been used to explore the market value of the deep cultivation of characteristic agricultural products, the industrial chain of characteristic agricultural products has also been expanded, poverty alleviation has been carried out by purchasing instead of donating, and the sales channels of agricultural products in poverty-stricken areas have been broadened. Using science and technology and through industrial poverty alleviation actions, the university has aided in the economic and social development of poverty-stricken counties.

3.3. Actively provide cultural assistance, and create a cultural environment for poverty alleviation

If poor villages and poor people desire to be lifted out of poverty, they need not only material and economic assistance, but also spiritual and cultural assistance. Sichuan University of Science and Engineering has attached great importance to cultural and spiritual assistance since it started assisting Pingshan County and Yajiang County as well as actively carried out theoretical and policy propaganda, regional cultural excavation and protection, and regional cultural activities, so as to enrich rural spiritual and cultural activities. This creates a cultural environment for precision poverty alleviation and poverty alleviation.

3.4. Constantly increase the assistance of talents, and improve the skills and quality of cadres and the masses

Since the precise poverty alleviation campaign, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering has attached great importance to the role of human resources in poverty alleviation and development when assisting Pingshan County and Yajiang County. According to the situation of poverty-stricken areas and based on its own advantages in human intelligence, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering has successively

formulated and conducted a series of measures, including capacity improvement training for grassroots cadres in poverty-stricken areas, strengthening the cultivation of local technical talents, stationing outstanding cadres in villages, introducing think tanks from universities, continuously increasing the talent support in the poverty-stricken areas, and promoting the continuous growth of talents in Pingshan County and Yajiang County.

4. The realistic dilemma faced by local colleges and universities intervening in poor rural areas

4.1. Poor people in certain areas are lacking endogenous motivation and have a weak sense of active development

At present, there is a lack of endogenous motivation and a weak sense of active development for local universities to intervene in poor rural areas. It is mainly embodied in two aspects. First, the idea is solidified. Poor people live in relatively closed areas for a long period of time; therefore, their social relations are relatively solidified and influenced by traditional customs and backward concepts, which may contribute to the negative cultural environment of being stagnant and content with the status quo; furthermore, their acceptance toward new ideas is relatively low. Secondly, vocational education poverty alleviation measures are lacking. Poor people are poorly educated, their cultural literacy is uneven, the development of vocational education lags behind, and it is difficult for them to realize their own human capital accumulation, leading to the inability to effectively eliminate poverty.

4.2. The advantages of local colleges and universities have not been fully exerted, and the relationship between them needs to be strengthened

Local colleges and universities have abundant intelligence, talent, platform, and social resources, which play an important role in counterpart assistance. In counterpart assistance, the advantages of local colleges and universities are not fully exerted, and the relationship between colleges and universities is relatively weak. First, the degree of counterpart assistance in terms of resources is low, and the development of primary and tertiary industries is the main focus in these counterpart assistance areas. It is difficult for local colleges and universities to integrate the resources that are involved in poverty alleviation and development, resulting in the mismatch between assistance resources and demand resources in poverty-stricken areas. Secondly, the idea of counterpart assistance is still vague, especially in regard to the selection of candidates, where the selection criteria are vague, the level of business ability is uneven, and their enthusiasm is relatively low. On the institutional system, social resources are mostly used to help poor people through consumption, however, no effective assistance system has been established. Third, the counterpart assistance work is disorganized, where poverty alleviation in schools is dominated by school-level departments, supplemented by colleges and functional departments. However, the communication among them is weak, their cooperation is poor, and the work relationship is unruly, which may seriously affect the effectiveness of poverty alleviation actions.

4.3. The matching degree of college assistance measures is low, requiring continuous improvement

When local colleges and universities are involved in poor villages, their assistance measures are accurate and targeted, thus preventing “flooding” and “homogenization.” In the counterpart assistance of local universities, there are many difficulties, such as low precision matching and weak pertinence. Firstly, the matching degree of supporting resources is low, where in poverty alleviation work, local colleges and universities mostly carry out poverty alleviation in the form of supporting intelligence and ambition. This poverty alleviation method is slow in effect, thus requiring longer time for implementation. In that case, it is difficult to solve the urgent problems faced by poor areas and poor people in a short duration. Secondly, the accuracy of poverty alleviation measures is low. In counterpart assistance, poor villagers face poverty

due to different reasons, therefore their demands for industrial development and individual vocational skills are also different. Additionally, due to the uneven cultural quality, it is difficult for schools to formulate targeted assistance measures. Thirdly, the sustainability of poverty alleviation is low. The term in which cadres provide assistance is short; they will return to their original units at the end of their term. It is difficult to achieve effective connection in the assistance and strategies between previous cadres and the following cadres; therefore, sustainability is questionable in the implementation process.

4.4. Weak foundation is consistent with spiritual and cultural poverty, thereby requiring mission responsibility to be strengthened

In regard to the assistance work of local colleges and universities, the foundation and the spiritual culture of the assistance areas play an important role in helping the poor. In the counterpart assistance of local colleges and universities, there is weak foundation and insufficient cultural development. Firstly, the foundation is weak in counterpart areas, where the development of domestic characteristic industries lags behind, the scale and intensification are relatively low, the competitive advantages of products are lacking, the overall development of tourism is weak, and the attraction of the tourism industry is facing a decline. Secondly, the lack of cultural development. There are abundant cultural resources in counterpart areas, in which all kinds of cultural resources are unique; however, due to poor traffic conditions, the lack of talents for cultural inheritance, protection, and innovation, as well as the neglect and indifference of many cultures, there is a lack in cultural development.

5. The path of local colleges and universities in promoting the sustainable development of poor rural areas in the post-poverty alleviation era

5.1. Cultivate self-development skills among poor people, and guide the reform of ideas and concepts

In view of the lack of endogenous motivation among poor people, weak subjective awareness of poverty alleviation, and other issues, local colleges and universities should consider several aspects when they are involved in the development of poor rural areas. First, it is necessary to improve the quality and professional skills of poor people, as well as enhance their self-development skills. Local colleges and universities should actively use their intellectual resources and actively conduct skills training required for production and employment, in order to cultivate self-development skills among poor people and further enhance their ability to eliminate poverty. Second, it is important to strengthen the practice of supporting ambition. Local colleges and universities should actively communicate with each other, introduce policies, facilitate the risks brought about by new industries, dispel the fear of taking risks and losses, actively carry out activities to stimulate the enthusiasm and initiative of the villagers, guide the reform of poverty alleviation ideas, as well as enable poor people to understand, feel, and improve, thus escaping poverty.

5.2. Optimize the allocation of poverty alleviation resources in colleges and universities, and improve the interest linkage mechanism between colleges and universities

The key is to maximize the advantages of local colleges and universities. Improving the assistance effect lies in the scientific optimization of the allocation of assistance resources in colleges and universities and improving their assistance mechanism. First, it is necessary to scientifically optimize counterpart assistance resources. According to the actual situation of counterpart assistance areas and the actual professional settings of schools, it is important to strengthen the integration of various factors, such as rural revitalization and rural development, with existing resources to achieve the refinement and matching of counterpart poverty alleviation resources. Second, it is crucial to analyze the design of assistance ideas by attaching importance to the establishment of assistance leading groups, emphasizing the formulation of assistance programs and assistance lists, as well as focusing on supervision and accountability. Additionally, the

selection criteria and task list of helping cadres should be visualized; the sense of mission and responsibility of helping cadres should also be strengthened. All these will ensure a concrete assistance work and help cadres in implementing it. Third, it is necessary to strengthen the convergence of counterpart assistance. In view of the three main bodies (school-level departments, colleges at all levels, and functional departments), dialogue channels should be established, dialogue mechanisms and channels should be eased, exchanges and interactions should be realized, and administration, production, research, and learning should be integrated with counterpart assistance areas to build a community of school interests ^[10].

5.3. Strengthen the connection between the preliminary investigation and analysis of poverty alleviation projects and the process of assistance

In poverty alleviation and development, it is essential for local colleges and universities to set up targeted assistance programs and formulate assistance measures. Therefore, when local colleges and universities conduct poverty alleviation and development, they should consider several aspects. First, professional teams should be sent for investigations. By sending these teams to poverty-stricken areas, it is possible to better understand poverty-stricken people, the restrictive factors in the development of poverty-stricken areas, and the actual needs of poverty-stricken people, so as to provide reference for follow-up poverty alleviation measures. Secondly, the accuracy of poverty alleviation measures should be emphasized. One should learn from other universities in terms of their modes, experiences, and practices in assistance work, as well as adjust and take measures based on the local conditions and people. Additionally, special assistance measures should be formulated for special people to achieve holistic and targeted assistance. Third, the sustainability of poverty alleviation should be emphasized. Before the end of the term, cadres should be retained for a period of time, and the succeeding cadres should be present in advance, so that they will be able to understand the poverty alleviation programs, the actual situation of poverty alleviation, and achieve an effective connection and smooth transition between the former and latter poverty alleviation programs.

5.4. Actively create a good spiritual, cultural environment, and enhance the mission of helping cadres

Local colleges and universities need to focus on the construction of ideological culture and spiritual civilization to help poor areas. They should create a good spiritual, cultural environment as well as attach importance to cadres to take on their mission, so as to inject a steady stream of vitality and motivation into the development of poor rural areas ^[11]. Firstly, it is important to strengthen the ideology and cultural education and policy propaganda, publicize stories of self-reliance and hard work to eliminate poverty, create a positive and hard-working environment, and establish correct values. Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the ideological education of poor people through lectures, household visits, and other forms, as well as publicize poverty alleviation policies and industrial development policies, in order to enhance rural residents' awareness and understanding of policies, and further improve the ideological understanding of the poor. Thirdly, it is essential to strengthen the construction of cultural facilities in villages, explore local traditional culture, train local cultural heritage talents, and enrich the daily life of local villagers. Finally, it is necessary to enhance the sense of mission and value recognition of cadres. Through the propaganda of poverty alleviation, giving certain assistance rewards, enhancing the sense of honor of cadres in their active assistance in poor areas, the endogenous motivation of cadres in local colleges and universities to actively intervene in rural development will be stimulated.

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