

The study on effects of poverty alleviation relocation project (PARP) on women's economic activities

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Abstract: Poverty alleviation relocation project (PARP), a key policy of poverty alleviation work in China, aims to enhance people's living conditions and reduce regional disparities, especially for women who have a low status in underdeveloped areas. This paper introduces the impact of PARP on women's economic activities in terms of employment, education and leisure time, analyzes the feasibility of PARP in many cases to improve women's well-being, and puts forward suggestions for improving PARP policies. The study helps to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and provide theoretical supports for perfection and development of poverty alleviation work in China. In addition, it will help society achieve gender equality and accelerate the progress of global poverty alleviation by providing more opportunities for women, enriching educational resources, improving women's lives.

1. Introduction

The introduction of your article is organized as a funnel that begins with a definition of why the experiment is being performed and ends with a specific statement of your research approach. And it highlights controversial and diverging hypotheses when necessary. [1] Eliminating poverty, improving people's livelihoods, and achieving common prosperity for all is a long-term goal for a country. In China, the government has imposed a series of targeted policies to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects. One of the most important policies is the poverty alleviation relocation project (PARP). Under the principle of following people's personal willingness, local government unifies people who fall into poverty to move to a relatively good area with well-developed production conditions compared with the past. This is a planned development migration. Further, gender inequality often occurs in underdeveloped regions. Women always encounter many challenges when they carry out economic activities. Poor women are often trapped in a mutually reinforcing equilibrium of poverty and low power. [1] According to Indian scholar Amartya Sen, the fundamental goal of anti-poverty is to improve the abilities of the poor. The economic activity is an indication of women's ability to make a living. To sum up, PARP is a policy to improve poor people's well-being, which exert a far-reaching impact on women's activities.

PAPR aims to enhance people's living conditions, increase regional economic growth, and alleviate disparity between regions' developments by helping people move out of places that cannot support residents' lives. As an integral part of poverty alleviation, the main objects of PARP are

inhabitants who live in inhospitable ecological environments, poor natural conditions, or areas with a high natural incidence rate. The government launched the "87 Poverty Alleviation Plan" in 1993, after which the PARP program was gradually expanded to other provinces. Official statistics show that from 2001 to 2015, the central government invested 36.3 billion yuan to relocate 6.8 million poor people. Generally, the specific actions always involve location planning, housing construction, living security, employment placement, social security, culture and education, and so on. However, when implementing the policy, the governments still face many rigid challenges, which requires joint efforts from both residents, the government, and the society so as to ensure the long-term effect and sustainable development of the policy.

As PARP has been implemented across the country, many regions have been developed, and women have obtained more opportunities and resources. Nevertheless, systematic research on its impact on women's economic activities is still relatively insufficient. Hence, this paper has introduced the effects of PARP on women's economic activities in terms of employment, education, and leisure time, analyzed the feasibility of PARP in many cases in order to improve women's well-being, and given suggestions for a perfect PARP policy. The research is helpful to assess the effectiveness of the policy from the perspectives of gender equality and national economic growth and to provide theoretical references for policymaking. Additionally, when it comes to practical meaning, the research helps society achieve gender equality by providing more opportunities for women, enriching education resources, and promoting women's lives and speeds up the progress of the worldwide poverty alleviation work.

2. Analysis of the economic impact

2.1. The effect on women's employment

PARP changes women's job structure. Before moving out place they originally live in, women rely on nature. Self-contained agriculture and forestry activities are the main means of livelihood for them. Additionally, under the influence of biological and social gender characteristics, the work division model, "male workers and female plowing", has been formed since ancient times in rural areas of China even around the world. This makes women face many barriers under the pressure of market competition and participate less in rural social regulation [2]. However, in the cities, available job positions are more diverse. This is because cities are home to a variety of industries and service sectors, which means that demand of labor in cities is much greater than underdeveloped areas. Women will more actively participate in family economic activities to improve their family status. PARP aims to provide more opportunities to participate in local economics by economic empowerment. Specifically, local governments help women abandon traditional agricultural means of making a living and new job opportunities in resettlement places. The government builds infrastructure services near the new homes after relocation. These programs provide jobs in service industries and labor-intensive industries suitable for women. Also, in general, working in labor concentrated industries ensure women to have a reliable income source and their salary will be higher than the past. Many communities have already imposed relative policies to help women obtain employment. Women usually assume the role of taking care of the household. Relocated women not only have to take care of their families, but also hope to improve their family's economic situation through employment. The community factory has flexible working hours, reasonable workload and pressure, and certain room for career development. This is good for helping women move out of the home and out of traditional agricultural production. Taking Ankang City as an example, as of the end of 2019, the city has built 587 new community factories of all kinds, directly driving 21,307 people to employment, and the monthly salary of on-the-job employees reaches more than 2,000 yuan, which has become one of the most important income

channels for relocated women. According to the experience of 32-year-old Ms. Yu, who participated in one of the projects, she used to raise her children and farm at home. After the relocation, under the recommendation of the community poverty alleviation station, she worked in an electronics factory in the community, engaged in finished product quality inspection work, and the average monthly salary could get more than 2000 yuan. She is satisfied with her present job because that job close to home can balance the family and can reduce the financial burden for the family [1].

It is true that PARP bring positive impacts on women's career. However, there are some unsolvable problems for women to obtain employment in cities. Women who come from underdeveloped area always have weak educational background and low professional skills; their job opportunities are limited. They only take part in low-skilled job position with a low salary. Also, after relocation, the daily expenses of women, both personal and family, increased significantly. [3] Whether women can maintain a family life in the city through work is something the government needs to further consider.

2.2. The effect on women's education

PARP provides women with better educational opportunities and development space, which helps to enhance women's social status and economic independence. At first, young girls may access more educational resources. Urban areas always possess richer educational resources, involving quality of schools and teachers, teaching facilities, and education funds, which results from combined actions of many factors in urban areas, such as developed economy, developed information, and talent gathering. On the contrary, since economic and geographic limitations in rural places, it is hard to be equipped with better education resource in general. That is why many better-off families in rural places move to cities so as to give next generation better education. For example, Wang Zhiyong analyzed the differences in educational achievement between urban and rural people in different educational environments from the perspective of individual schooling experience by using the survey data of family dynamics in Shanghai, Zhejiang and Fujian[4]. It is found that in the urban education environment, people's educational achievement will be significantly improved compared with rural areas. Second, after relocation, women have more opportunities for education, both professional skills and further education. Many relocation programs include specialized skills training tailored to the local job market. This training helps women acquire new skills or improve existing ones, enhancing their employability and career prospects in new environments. Some relocation policies include provisions to support women's access to higher education, such as scholarships, grants or tuition assistance. Such support is designed to empower women and improve their academic and career opportunities. Last, PARP reduces education inequality between urban and rural areas to enhance women's educational level. According to Li Chunling's research on the inequality of educational opportunities between urban and rural areas in China from 1940 to 2010, it is found that the probability of children from urban families entering primary school is 4.9 times that of children from rural families, the probability of entering junior middle school is 3.6 times, and the probability of entering senior secondary education is 1.9 times [5]. When women move out of backward areas, they can escape the gap caused by educational inequality. At the same time, by gaining a more equal distribution of education, women can improve their educational attainment.

Nevertheless, poverty alleviation relocation families still face many education problems. On the one hand, parents in rural families have a low level of education, and their education concepts are often backward and constrained by traditional customs. Under such circumstances, their education has some common problems such as simple methods, insufficient daily discipline, and neglect of

mental health. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between urban and rural education before and after relocation. Before relocation, the children of relocation families have been living in relatively isolated villages for a long time, and there are problems such as low adaptation of school teaching resources and insufficient quality teacher resources. As a result, these students have a weak learning foundation and need to re-develop their learning habits [6].

2.3. The effect on women's leisure time

PARP can increase women's leisure time from different aspects. PARP improves living condition of women families. After moving out underdeveloped area, the resettlement community typically provide a better healthcare, education, and infrastructure. For instance, in Qinghai, more than 113,000 people from Haibei, Huangnan, Guoluo, Yushu and Haixi prefectures have been relocated to urban and developed areas, with improved infrastructure, such as power, telecommunications and transportation, and public facilities built, such as schools and village-level clinics and elderly care [7]. Thus, relocated women can free up time previously spend on these fundamental survival efforts, and then their leisure time will expand. Furthermore, PRAP facilitates the shift from agricultural to non-agricultural industries. The large-scale relocation of poverty alleviation in inhospitable areas has changed the agricultural production mode of the relocated masses for a hundred years. In Qinghai, 40% of relocated poor people now focus on non-agricultural sectors, supported by public welfare jobs, tourism development, and encouragement of self-employment, ensuring employment and diversified income sources for every household [7]. Due to the characteristics of the traditional agricultural industry, seasonal and cyclical, dependent on natural conditions, labor-intensive, and so on, their work intensity is high, their working hours are not stable, and their income is not stable. Especially, Women in poor areas work for longer hours than men both in farming and in family work [8]. When they move to the resettlement areas to participate in non-agricultural industries, their working hours were stable at about 8 hours stipulated by the country, which greatly increases their leisure time.

Despite the benefits mentioned above, PARP also presents challenges that can impact women's leisure time. First, women need to dedicate much time to blending into a new social and economic environment, including seeking a new job and interacting with neighbors. In this adjustment period, women may consume leisure time as women navigate new roles and relationships within their community. Balance leisure time with training time. Second, it is necessary for them to balance their study time and leisure time. As mentioned previously, women need to improve themselves so as to have a stronger capability to shoulder jobs with high requirements in the city. It will cost them their leisure time to participate in training and further education. Therefore, PARA will change the way women allocate their time and bring challenges to adjusting to a new lifestyle.

3. The Feasibility of poverty alleviation relocation

3.1. Implemented Cases

Due to geographical and economic factors, PARP is widely implemented in Shanxi Province. Jincheng City in Shanxi Province is a typical example of getting successful in implementing PARP. Jincheng relocated a total of 5,577 households and 16,384 people during the "13th Five-Year Plan" period. Among them, 4,457 households with a total of 12,648 people have adopted the method of centralized resettlement [9]. At the same time, the Jincheng government also attaches great importance to follow-up support work. They check the employment needs of resettlement families and provide job training centralizing in service and manufacture industries. At present, the city has a labor force of 3,765 households, a total of 8,560 people, of which 7076 people have achieved

employment, the employment rate reached 82.7%. Independent employment was the main employment channel, accounting for 61.9%; Labor export employment accounted for 24.6%; Employment through other channels accounted for 13.5% [10].

The resettlement community on the Jincun town around the city center is one of the PARP resettlement places. This paper interviewed most families in the resettlement community. Taking two typical examples is to showcase how PARP changes their daily lives. The Cheng family, from Liuquan Village, Jincheng City, Shanxi Province, has a daughter and a son. They were relocated to resettlement communities. In the past, parents are farmers and only earn about two thousand yuan every month to raise this family. Two youngsters finish their primary school and high school education in village. Now, the daughter works in a public welfare position arranged by the government to have stable income source. The son participated in one of student aid programs, "rain and dew program" to take university in Beijing now. The Wang family, there are four people in the family, parents, a son and a daughter. They are moving from a rural area (Jinmiaopu Village) to cities and towns with better infrastructure and economic opportunities. The local government helps them find public welfare work in community service and encourages them to participate in local handicraft production. In addition, both parents at home are disabled, and the local government provides them with good medical security.

3.2. Existing Limitations

At first, many people in poverty prefer to live in their hometown, underdeveloped areas although they know that they can get more benefits in resettlement communities [9]. Specifically, older people generally believe returning to one's homeland at the old age, like fallen leaves return to the roots of their trees. Since considering many aspects, emotional bonds and cultural identity, social relationships and support systems, the challenges of adapting to a new environment, security and comfort, and habits and lifestyles, they do not want to have a big change in their lives. Therefore, if their children choose to move to resettlement areas, these old people highly likely become left-behind seniors. Additionally, the phenomenon of "people in the resettlement area, their hearts are tied to their hometown" will also appear among young people. It is a social adaptation barrier resulted from a lack of means of livelihood. Eventually, this problem will manifest itself in them as a yearning for "old home" and a yearning for harmonious relations between relatives and neighbors.

Second, PARP will bring a huge financial pressure on the government. The cost of PARP is relatively high. It requires construction of new residential areas, infrastructure and public services, as well as the relocation and rearrangement of residents. Furthermore, with consideration of social costs, PARP will also involve solving residents' problems of social adaptation and cultural shock. This requires long-term social follow-up and support to ensure the quality of life and social integration of relocated residents. Finally, an abundance of government fund for PARP will crowd out government investment in other areas, such as education, public transportation system, healthcare, and so on.

Last, PARP is only appropriate for special regions. Normally, it was implemented in some areas with a bad natural environment and the high risk of natural disasters, such as Shanxi province and Qinghai province in China [11]. These factors determine that the government need to use PARP, a relative costly and time-consuming project, to precisely help residents in these limited areas. However, in areas without features mentioned above, implementing general policies is much more proper for the government, such as improving local facilities, giving subsidy for people, and support local industries. It can prevent from wasting natural resources and reduce costs.

4. Suggestions for PARP's development

4.1. Improving women's competitiveness

To address the issue of gender disparity, the government can take several strategic actions to enhance women's competitiveness. Primarily, it should provide skills training and career development courses specifically tailored for women, which can help improve their professional competence and market competitiveness. Besides, promoting flexible working hours and telecommuting options can enable women to better balance work and family responsibilities [12]. Lastly, offering quality childcare services can alleviate the time pressure women face due to family obligations. These services motivate them to go out of home and participate in work. Together, these measures can significantly contribute to reducing gender disparity and supporting women's career advancement.

4.2. Offering resource services

To support residents' development in resettlement areas, the government can offer a range of resource services. First, providing language training, vocational skills training, and life skills training will help residents adapt to their new cultural environment and the labor market. Additionally, ensuring access to reliable medical services, including pre-migration health check-ups and post-relocation medical insurance, is essential for their well-being, particularly for the elders because they require much more medical resources with age but do not have strong financial ability. Finally, establishing scholarships or grants can facilitate further education, allowing residents to enhance their academic and professional abilities. These measures collectively contribute to a smoother transition and improved opportunities for resettled individuals.

4.3. Ensuring residents' mental health

Aiming to ensure residents' mental health in a new environment, the government should give their psychological supports [13]. Firstly, the government should first provide psychological counseling and emotional support services to help residents cope with the challenges and stresses of their new lives. Next, it should organize a variety of community activities designed to foster strong community relations and their sense of belonging, such as social events, group workshops, and recreational programs. Also, it should have regular follow-up visits with relocated residents to appraise their psychological status and adaption ability and then to provide necessary support and resources so as to help them blend into new community in a shorter time.

5. Conclusion

PARP is one of the most important policies in China to precisely alleviate poverty in underdeveloped areas, which brings immense change for relocated residents, especially for women. This paper found that PARP helps women move from traditional agriculture to service and labor-intensive industries in cities and gain more reliable sources of income. In terms of education, PARP helps reduce educational inequality between urban and rural areas by providing women with more quality educational resources and greater educational opportunities. Besides, PARP has increased leisure time for women by improving living conditions and facilitating industrial transformation. In order to show the achievement of PARP, the paper uses JinCheng city, ShanXi province, as a case study to specifically illustrate how two families' lives change after moving to resettlement areas. However, PARP still has certain limitations and faces social challenges and financial pressures. The

government should continue to solve several problems, such as gender disparity, residents' further development, and residents' psychological health.

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