

# Should tourism prioritize development in impoverished areas for poverty alleviation? Evidence from Guizhou, China (2015-2024)

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**Abstract.** For the whole world, poverty problem has persisted for a long time. To study the impact of tourism policies on poverty alleviation, this dissertation employs a literature review and case analysis approach. On the basis of reviewing relevant research literature, choosing Guizhou province in China as a case study, conducting in-depth study. The result revealed that national tourism poverty alleviation policy for Guizhou province effectively reduced the gap between urban and rural disposable income in Guizhou province. For urban residents, tourism policies have significant improvement in net income from individual operations and net property income growth. For rural residents, tourism policies have improvement in per capita disposable income of permanent rural residents, wage income, net business income, net property income and net transfer income. Baiyun District has the smallest rural-urban gap. However, because poverty alleviation is the result of multidimensional and multifaceted collaborative efforts, the promulgation of tourism policies may be just one of the factors. In addition to this, factors such as relevant economic policies and technological advancements also exert an influence. As a result, poverty alleviation efforts should be tailored to local conditions and areas with different geographical conditions should employ different approaches.

**Keywords:** poverty alleviation, poverty governance, impoverished areas

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## 1. Introduction

Poverty areas means capital formation scarcity, the low capital formation rate, and areas not participating in economic growth, referred to as depressed areas. In China, this term generally refers to counties (cities, districts) within provinces (autonomous regions, municipalities) with relatively large impoverished regions, where the poorest regions with contiguous problems of food and clothing for the masses remain unresolved. And these regions are mainly in the central and western regions, ethnic minority areas, and frontier regions. Now, the impoverished areas in China exhibit the new characteristics of points, lines, and surface distributions. From the purely perspectives to see the development of impoverished areas, generally, it will experience five stages: absolute poverty, relative poverty, prosperity, moderate prosperity, and affluence. From the broad perspective, it requires aligning the comprehensive development with the society, and it needs to escape poverty both materially and spiritually [1].

Generally, poverty is a global challenge that persists throughout human development. Even though in the developed countries with abundance resources, the poverty problems also never completely disappeared. Globally, there still exists the phenomenon that the poverty population have massive scale, concentration distribution and poverty alleviation stagnate. According to the World Bank's 2024 Poverty [2], Prosperity, and Planet Report, calculated based on 2017 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), almost 700 million people live in extreme poverty in the world. This figure has been largely at a halt since 2020, 67% of the global people living in extreme poverty is concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the poverty rates of conflict zones and fragile states are significantly higher than in other regions. Measured by the poverty standard of upper-middle-income countries at \$6.85 per day, 3.5 billion people worldwide live below the poverty line. Globally, 3.5 billion people live below the poverty line, and because of population growth, this absolute quantity hasn't decreased significantly over the past 30 years. Moreover, according to the 2024 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 110 million people are facing deprivation in at least three dimension: healthy, education, living facilities among the 112 countries evaluated. Among this, the proportion of children exceeds 50 percent and the poverty rate of rural areas is more than 4 times that of cities [3]. In China, although the country had announced all the people secede from poverty. However, it should be clear that China has eliminated absolute poverty, but not poverty itself. Guizhou as an underdeveloped regions in multi-ethnic settlement in the south-west regions in China, it not only has rich ecosystem and ethnic cultural tourism resources, but also is as a key area in the progress of poverty alleviation. The collaborative practice of tourism development and poverty governance is the typical sample of observing the residual relative poverty issues in China's era of targeted poverty alleviation. As a result, focus on the cases in Guizhou in 2015 to 2024, researching should tourism prioritize development in impoverished areas for poverty alleviation can not only optimize the Guizhou poverty alleviation pathways, but also provide practical reference for addressing relative poverty. Moreover, it can provide theoretical support for exploring sustainable poverty alleviation pattern in China and similar areas in the world.

On this basis, the chapters of arrangement in this dissertation are as follows:

The first part is introduction and the section mainly defines the core key word of impoverished areas and indicates the importance of researching the importance of this question; the second part is literature review and it primarily combs the related literature of poverty governance; the third part is discussion and the section mainly through discussing the specific case of developing the tourism in Guizhou and analyzing the contribution of tourism development in impoverished areas to poverty alleviation; the fourth part is conclusion and this section conducting a subsection of the whole dissertation; the fifth part is self-review, and I will review the whole progress of this research and find the solution in the future.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Domestic relevant research literature

#### 2.1.1. *Research related to poverty governance in China*

The poverty governance system in China has experienced profound transformation. Shi et al. [4] through quantitative textual analysis of poverty policies, clearly outlines the transition path from flood irrigation to precision drip irrigation which means governance targets from regional to individual, the pattern from transfusion to hematopoiesis and the approach has shifted from single-fund investment to comprehensive management through multiple measures. This change offers macroeconomic policy context for tourism poverty alleviation and emphasizes the importance of precision and sustainability.

In this governance model [5], reveal the government through adjusting control and sequential games to achieve organizational mechanisms for policy objectives. This indicates impoverished areas like Guizhou implement tourism poverty alleviation, the role of government, tiao kuai relationship (the vertical functional departments and horizontal local governments in China's administrative system) the choice of governance model is very important and it determines whether policies can be effectively implemented.

The problem about the Sustainability issues after poverty alleviation [6], provides crucial insights based on the sustainable livelihoods framework. They proposed that the linkage between industrial poverty alleviation and industrial prosperity, synergy between social security and risk early warning and organizational revitalization and the modernization of rural governance serve as core strategies for preventing relapse into poverty and achieving endogenous development. This points directly tourism poverty alleviation should not only focus on short term income growth, but should aim to cultivate the sustainable livelihood capacity.

As the elimination of absolute poverty after 2020, relative poverty governance has become the new focus. The research of Sun & Xia and Lin offers the direction of tourism development in the post poverty alleviation era [6, 7]. They advocate establishing a differentiated relative poverty line, and build the basic public service as a foundation, focus on production and employment assistance, and companionship service as its characteristic governance system. This means that prioritizing development of tourism should evaluate its long term contributions to improving income distribution, offering development chances and enhancing public service rather than merely focusing on the absolute income growth.

#### *2.1.2. Research on the impact of domestic tourism development on poverty in China*

Domestic scholars carry out extensive and in-deep discussions in the effect, mechanism, and Heterogeneity of tourism poverty alleviation.

At first, at the level of macroeconomics effects, the research confirms generally the effect of tourism poverty alleviation. But its effect is not linearly constant. Liu et al. and Xu & Huang both indicate that there exists a U-shaped or threshold variables nonlinear relationship between tourism development and poverty alleviation [8, 9]. This means after the specific stage of development, if it can not achieve industrial upgrading or inclusive growth, the marginal poverty reduction effect of tourism development may diminish, and even aggravate inequality. Mao & Shi and Tian & Liu indicates the importance of spatial heterogeneity, found that tourism poverty reduction effect exists significant regional differences, and it has positive space spillover effects [10, 11]. This offers theoretical basis for promoting regional tourism cooperation in contiguous impoverished areas such as Guizhou.

Then, under the framework of poverty reduction mechanisms and the multidimensional perspective on poverty, the research extends beyond the single dimension of economic income. Wang et al. based on multidimensional poverty perspective, and they finds that tourism development has a noticeable poverty alleviation effect to economics, livelihood and environment dimension, and it exists space spillover effects [12]. But its direct impact on education and healthcare remains limited. This discovery warns us that prioritizing tourism development must be complemented by other social policies to achieve comprehensive poverty alleviation. Yang et al. studies conducted in Guizhou and other regions have found that tourism development and regional poverty exhibit an inverse relationship, and socioeconomic conditions are the key variables to optimize the relationship between the them [13]. This highlights how external macroeconomic conditions constrain the effectiveness of tourism in poverty alleviation.

Moreover, in terms of inclusiveness and benefit distribution, the research indicates the challenges exist in the tourism poverty alleviation practices. Zhang et al. [14] confirm the absolute poverty alleviation effect in ethnic regions, but they also found the significant ethnic difference which indicates profit distribution may be uneven. This finding resonates with the micro level case studies conducted by Jiang & Huang [15] and Zhang

& Zhang [16] Their research in Guizhou and other regions indicate that although impoverished residents are willing to participate in tourism, they are often constrained by factors such as financial capacity and cultural literacy and the actual participation is insufficient and this results in the effects of poverty alleviation is not significant. Li from an efficiency perspective, it points out that although rural tourism poverty alleviation effectiveness is generally high, but it also exists years of diminishing returns [17]. This needs to improve efficiency through precision and supply-side reform.

In summary, the domestic research has formed a basic consensus. Tourism is an effective tool to reduce poverty, but its complex effects are affected by multiple factors, including the stage of development, the structure of industry, the environment of regional areas, the model of governance and the mechanism of profit allocation. Simply emphasizing the development of tourism without paying attention to the quality of development and inclusiveness, may not achieve sustainable poverty alleviation. This provides multidimensional critical perspectives for evaluating Guizhou cases.

## 2.2. Foreign relevant research literature

### 2.2.1. *Research on foreign poverty governance*

International poverty governance research offers us a broader perspective. It is different from domestic emphasis on government leadership and targeted measure, international research pays more attention to the multidimensional nature and internal dynamics of poverty. The research of Dean et al. and Luca emphasized the complex functions of subjective expectations, social role models, group discipline, and other psychological and social capital to reduce poverty [18, 19]. These indicates us during tourism poverty alleviation this process, In addition to material input, paying more attention to the capacity building of poverty population and subjectivity stimulation.

On the relationship between environment and development, the discovery of Benedikt et al. [20] had warning significant which means global poverty alleviation may lead to an increase in carbon emissions, this requires ecologically fragile and impoverished regions like Guizhou to adhere to a green and sustainable path when developing tourism. On the other hand, Justice et al. through the case of Rwanda demonstrates the direct impact of agricultural technology interventions on poverty reduction [21]. This indirectly reminds us that tourism is not the only path out of poverty, we should objectively assess its comparative advantages relative to other industries.

### 2.2.2. *Research on the impact of foreign tourism development on poverty*

International research on tourism and poverty equally filled with dialectical thinking and it forms interesting dialogues and additions with domestic research findings.

On the one hand, numerous studies have confirmed the potentiality of tourism poverty alleviation. Konstantinos & Yuan use cross-country panel data to demonstrate tourism has a significant negative impact on poverty and inequality, and it can alleviate the constraints that slow economic growth imposes on poverty reduction [22]. Eric Tchouamou & Neelu also found through simulation studies that tourism expansion can significantly reduce poverty, particularly in urban areas [23]. L.C. et al. further found in their study in Vietnam that low income groups and women have a stronger preference for the benefits of ecosystem services such as tourism, this shows that nature-based tourism (such as ecotourism) can serve as a tool for poverty alleviation [24].

On the other hand, the research deeply reveal tourism development may bring risks and exclusion. The research of Julia & Mark [25] and Ruchi [26] pointed out sharply that large scale tourism projects may lead low income population to lose their land, livelihood and marginalized by capital. These are highly consistent with insufficient participation and issues of benefit distribution in the domestic research. David & Stuart [27]

conducted research based on empowerment theory that proved more enlightening. He found that community-based tourism while empowering local residents a certain agency, may enhance new dominant structure which means the process of empowerment itself may be full of contradictions.

At last, the quality of governance is seen as a key variable in regulating the tourism poverty alleviation effects. The research of Toyo Amegnonna Marcel et al. [28] in Latin America has reached a key conclusion: the governance quality itself helps poverty alleviation, but pure tourism development may exacerbate poverty; Only when tourism development is combined with sound governance can it yield positive poverty reduction effects. Jorge et al. [29] emphasized the particularity of the situation, thinking the relationship between tourism and poverty was "specificity", and it could not lump everything together. The research of Marie-Eve [30] in Nepal also indicated that the relationship between tourism and residents welfare was affected by the impact of institutional factors such as restrictions on natural resource use.

In general, foreign literature enhances a key point: whether the tourism can effectively reduce poverty, highly dependent on its specific development model, institutional environment and governance quality. It can be either a catalyst for inclusive growth, it may also be a source of social polarization and environmental costs. Prioritizing tourism development is not an absolute solution in itself, the key lies in how to develop it.

### 2.3. Research review and research entry points

A review of domestic and international literature reveals that the academic community widely recognizes that tourism can play a significant role in poverty alleviation. However, understanding of its mechanisms, boundary conditions, and potential risks is becoming increasingly deep and complex. Existing research has laid a solid foundation for this project, but it also exist space for expansion. At first, most macroeconomic studies focus on empirical tests using national or provincial panel data. However, for a specific province (such as Guizhou) during a critical period, such as poverty alleviation and consolidation period 2015-2024, research involving systematic case tracking and in-depth analysis remains insufficient. Guizhou, as China's main Battlefield of poverty alleviation and a major tourism province, its tourism and poverty alleviation practice as a natural laboratory for testing the aforementioned theoretical ideals. Next, although existing research has touched upon micro-level mechanisms such as benefit distribution and community participation, evolving macroeconomic policy and combining midstream industry practice with micro-level changes in residents' livelihoods, and systematic exposition why still should enhance prioritizing development in impoverished areas for poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study takes Guizhou Province (2015–2024) as its empirical case study. Integrating multidimensional analytical perspectives provided by domestic and international research, discuss deeply in impoverished areas with ecologically fragile, predominantly inhabited by ethnic minorities, the necessity, effectiveness, and inherent logic of prioritizing tourism as a development strategy for poverty alleviation and then providing evidence and insights from China's western regions for sustainable development in similar areas worldwide.

## 3. Discussion

### 3.1. China's policies aimed at alleviating poverty

Figure 1 shows government departments issuing poverty alleviation policies in China and its number of documents. It can be seen that the finance sector has shown a high level of attention to poverty alleviation policies, ranking first in the number of policy documents issued. Agriculture and rural affairs departments ranked second in the number of documents issued.

In specific policies, because China adopts a series of policies like developing economics, revitalizing traditional crafts in impoverished areas to support targeted poverty alleviation, organization-recommended financial support for tourism alleviation, alleviating the existence of relative poverty in a countryside.

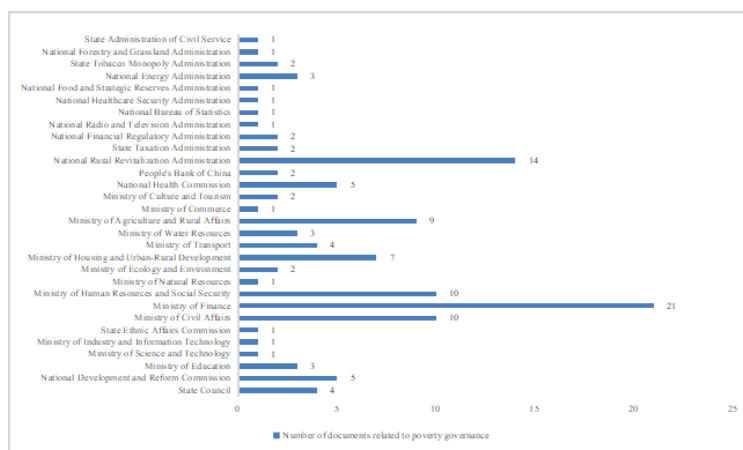
By 2020, China government have announced the comprehensive poverty alleviation. By the end of 2020, 98.99 million rural poor population completely eliminated the poverty under China's current standard and all 832 impoverished countries have been lifted from the poverty list, 128,000 impoverished villages have been removed from the list of poor villages. From 1978 to 2017, China had lifted more than 70% of the world's total population out of poverty, and this achieved a miracle in poverty reduction.

From a national perspective, although achieving the governance of relative poverty, the absolute poverty still exists. So, to prevent those who have already escaped poverty in rural areas from falling back into poverty while alleviating the living conditions of people living in absolute poverty, after 2020, the Chinese government has shifted its policy focus to addressing poverty through rural revitalization. Therefore, policy documents prior to 2020 primarily focused on poverty alleviation-related matters, policy documents issued after 2020 have primarily focused on rural revitalization.

January 2025, the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council issued "*Comprehensive Rural Revitalization Plan (2024–2027)*", which encouraged to cultivate modern rural industries, made the most of local specialty products, developed rural farming and animal husbandry, processing and distribution industry, leisure tourism industry, rural service industry.

Focusing on major agricultural production areas and specialty agricultural product advantage zone, developing modern rural industry corridors, implementing the premium agricultural brand cultivation program to prevent the widespread occurrence of poverty issues.

November 2025, "*Recommendations of the Communist Party of China Central Committee for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development*" continued to propose that over the next five years, we need to establish and coordinate a regular mechanism for preventing return to poverty and new poverty, adhere to targeted assistance, enhance a safety net, strengthen development-oriented assistance, enhance endogenous momentum, tiered and categorized assistance helps underdeveloped areas, improve support policies for key counties targeted for rural revitalization assistance and ensure that large-scale relapses into poverty do not occur.



**Figure 1.** Government agencies issuing poverty alleviation policies in China and number of documents

Data source: State Council Policy Document Repository

### 3.2. Why was Guizhou chosen as a case study

Guizhou is in the southwest China, the area of mountains and hills within the country account for 92.5% of the total area. The long-term inconvenient transportation restricts the economic development. However, because of the specific karst landscape, Picturesque landscape, and the rich and diverse ethnic cultures of Miao, Dong, Buyi, and other ethnic groups constitute the foundations of Guizhou's tourism development.

On this basis, November 2025, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism [31] and the National Cultural Heritage Administration issued "*Implementation Plan for Supporting the High-Quality Development of Guizhou's Culture and Tourism*". The plan proposed a series of measures to develop Guizhou's cultural and tourism industry, aiming to alleviate the poverty problems in Guizhou.

It mainly includes promoting the integration of business models to empower rural areas, supporting red tourism and rural tourism, integrating ecotourism. Like developing an integrated red tourism project in the revolutionary old base area of Eastern Guizhou, developing summer resort tourism, rural leisure, study tours and so on, these can all help rural industrial income growth.

Driving employment through intangible cultural heritage, building intangible cultural heritage workshop and intangible cultural heritage experience base, carrying out intangible cultural heritage boosts rural revitalization, managing China Danzhai intangible cultural heritage week well, through productive safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage to drive the employment rate of local residents, enhancing rural tourism quality, advancing rural tourism premium program, creating national key villages and towns for rural tourism and international rural tourism destination, promoting "creative outreach to rural areas", cultivating grade-based tourism home stay brand.

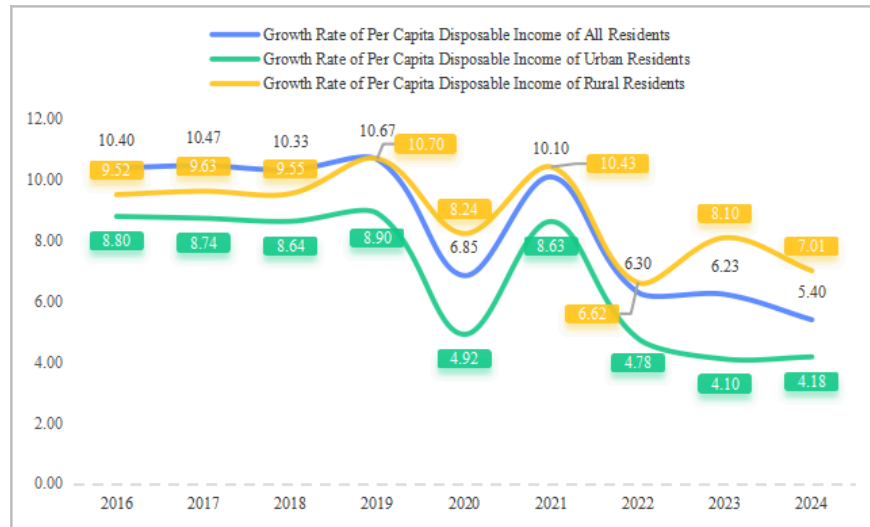
Improving social welfare infrastructure, enhancing public cultural facilities at relocation sites for poverty alleviation through resettlement, building culture service system demonstration project, guaranteeing resettled residents cultural tourism service benefits; improving supporting capacity, supporting the developing of rural culture and travel company, focusing on cultural and tourism needs to cultivate talent, endorsing Guizhou organizing national cultural, tourism talent training program and vocational skill competitions, consolidating the foundation for rural culture and tourism development.

With the support of national policies, Guizhou takes tourism as an important poverty alleviation industry to cultivate. For example, in the deep mountains of Qiandongnan Prefecture, the China's No. 1 Rural Tourism Highway was built, connecting traditional villages across multiple counties and cities and turning once impoverished villages travel into travel hotline, driving improvements in the appearance of villages and hamlets and increased income for residents. Therefore, choosing Guizhou as a case study primarily due to its solid research foundation, case maturity and it was supported by detailed data and reports.

### 3.3. The impact of tourism policies on alleviating poverty in Guizhou

Figure 2 shows Changes in the Growth Rate of Per Capita Disposable Income in Urban and Rural Areas of Guizhou Province from 2016 to 2024, it showed that in terms of per capita disposable income of all residents, its growth rate maintained a level above 10% between 2016 and 2020. It plummeted from 2020 and briefly returned to the 10% level in 2021, but then it still dropped sharply. By the end of 2024, the growth rate of per capita disposable income in Guizhou Province was 5.4%. In terms of per capita disposable income of urban residents, the growth rate remained within the range of 4.10% to 8.90%. It declined significantly to 4.92% in 2020 and after a slight rebound to 8.63% in 2021, it once again entered a downward trend. By the end of 2024, it decreased to 4.18%. In terms of per capita disposable income of rural residents, the growth rate started at 9.52% from 2016 and overall showed a downward trend with fluctuations. In 2020, it decreased to 8.24%, rebounded to 10.43% and also continued to decline in 2021. By the end of 2024, it was only 7.01% which was

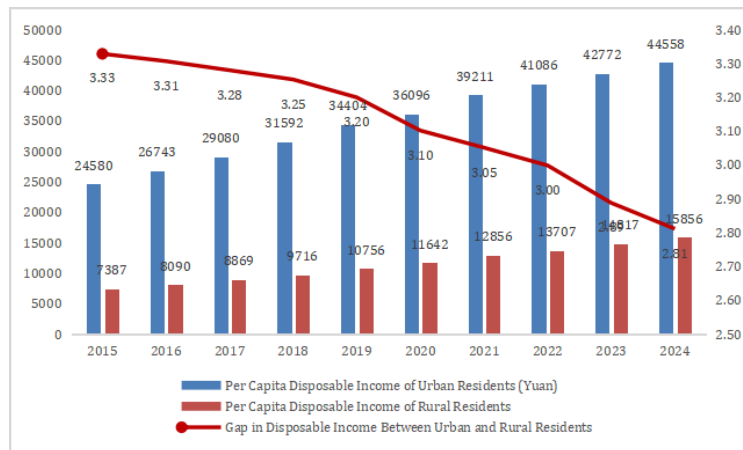
the lowest level among three categories of residents. A possible reason for causing these changes is the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and it has had a profound impact on people's lives. To address this situation, Guizhou province makes a series of effort in promoting the development of the tourism. Like promoting the integrated development of rural tourism with culture, agriculture, traditional villages, and ethnic-characteristic villages.



**Figure 2.** Changes in the growth rate of per capita disposable income in urban and rural areas of Guizhou Province from 2016 to 2024

Source of information: National Bureau of Statistics

Figure 3 shows Changes in the Urban-Rural Disposable Income Gap in Guizhou Province from 2015 to 2024. It showed that from 2015 to 2024, changes in the urban-rural disposable income gap in Guizhou province was gradually decreased. From 3.33 times in 2015 to 2.81 times in 2024, this process is driven by the effect of tourism-rural revitalization policies for Guizhou Province issued by the state and Guizhou government in 2022. Because it only decreased from 3.33 times to 3 times between 2015 and 2022, and it only reduced 0.3 times in about 7 years. But after the provincial government issued Guizhou Province's Three-Year Action Plan for Promoting Residents' Income Increase (2022—2024), urban-rural income gap ratio from 3 times in 2020, decreased significantly to 2.81 times in 2024. In about 3 years, it declined 0.11 times which decreased at a quicker rate than before. Among these, in this three-year action, the government required the construction of high-standard farmland and rural infrastructure such as transportation, water conservancy, rural tourism, and forestry. Vigorous promotion of workfare programs in areas such as the construction of basic public service facilities would improve the proportion of labor remuneration for rural workers in project investment.



**Figure 3.** Changes in the urban-rural disposable income gap in Guizhou Province from 2015 to 2024

Source of information: National Bureau of Statistics

Table 1 shows the Urban and Rural Income Growth in Guizhou Province from 2021 to 2024. In terms of per capita disposable income of permanent urban residents, the growth rate which was 8.6% in 2021, declined annually to 4.1% in 2023 and then rose slightly to 4.2% in 2024. From the perspective of income composition, the wage income continued to decline from 9.9% to 2.8% in 2023, and rebounded to 4.1% in 2024; The growth rate of net operating income plummeted from 16.3% in 2021 to 7.1% in 2022 and decreased to 4.7% in 2024; Net property income showed a negative growth rate of -2.8% and it declined to 1.4% in 2024; Net transfer income from zero growth in 2021 to a surge of 8.2% in 2022. Then dropped slowly to 4.5% and edged up to 5.1% in 2024.

In terms of per capita disposable income of permanent rural residents, the growth rate decreased from 10.4% in 2021 to 6.6% in 2022. In 2023, it rebounded to 8.1% and declined to 7% in 2024. From the perspective of income composition, the growth rate of wage income decreased from 10.5% to 4.8% in 2022, and then gradually rebounded to 6.6%. Net operating income fell from 13.6% to 6.1% in 2024 and net property income in 2024 returned to positive growth of 6.1%. Net transfer income maintain a level above 8.5% at all times and it was 8.6% in 2024.

Overall, urban and rural income growth was generally slow down starting at 2021, the declined in urban income growth was more pronounced and rural income growth had a slight pullback but the magnitude is relatively moderate. In terms of income structure, the wage income grew feebly, operating revenue fluctuated significantly and transfer income became a relatively stable source of growth. After rural property income experienced significant fluctuations, it was gradually returning to positive growth. A possible reason was Guizhou Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism strengthen the development of talent teams for intangible cultural heritage to boost rural revitalization, according to the employment needs and skill needs of local population, and supporting qualified Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshop carried out traditional handicraft vocational skills training. Combining the development needs of Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshop with demands of people lifted out of poverty and monitoring the characteristics of beneficiaries, carrying out training activities with various forms. Supporting local people master a traditional handicraft skill which can effectively improve skill level and employment skills.

**Table 1.** Urban and rural income growth in Guizhou Province, 2021–2024

|  | Growth rate in<br>2021 | Growth rate in<br>2022 | Growth rate in<br>2023 | Growth rate in<br>2024 |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Per Capita Disposable Income of Permanent<br>Urban Residents | 8.6                    | 4.8                    | 4.1                    | 4.2                    |
| Among these: Wage income                                     | 9.9                    | 4.3                    | 2.8                    | 4.1                    |
| Net Operating Income   | 16.3                   | 7.1                    | 8                      | 4.7                    |
| Net property income  | 4.7                    | -2.8                   | 3.9                    | 1.4                    |
| Net Transfer Income  | 0                      | 8.2                    | 4.5                    | 5.1                    |
| Per Capita Disposable Income of Permanent<br>Rural residents | 10.4                   | 6.6                    | 8.1                    | 7                      |
| Among these: Wage income                                     | 10.5                   | 4.8                    | 6.1                    | 6.6                    |
| Net Operating Income   | 13.6                   | 7.8                    | 9.9                    | 6.1                    |
| Net property income  | -33.9                  | -6.4                   | 4.6                    | 6.1                    |
| Net Transfer Income  | 9.5                    | 8.5                    | 9.2                    | 8.6                    |

Table 2 describes the Disposable Income of Urban and Rural Residents in All Cities and Districts of Guizhou Province in 2024. Among these, Huaxi District, Wudang District and Baiyun District had the smallest income disparity ratio between urban and rural areas. The possible reason was at the beginning of 2022, the State Council issued Document No. 2 which offered programmatic support to field development like Guizhou province's future economics, society and so on. The entire province was filled with renewed vigor and full of energy. A new chapter began in the new era, Huaxi District would seize major development opportunities, leveraging its geographical advantages, resources advantages, industrial infrastructure and other practical factors. Enhancing the courage to take on responsibility, promoting a pragmatic work ethic, keeping fast-paced rhythm and improving the ability of work. Focusing on the implementation of the "Four New Initiatives" and the "Four Modernizations", supporting qualified development of "Strong Provincial Capital". Vigorously implement the industrial strengthening strategy, innovation drives regional development, ecology helps to build regions, cultural tourism revitalization regions and these are "Four Major Strategies". Marching forward toward the overarching goal of "two hundred billion". At the start of 2022, 67 "Four Modernizations" projects concentrated start of construction to deal with industrial base on the surface of Huaxi District in Yanlou Industrial Park. Launching boom in whole district continues to focus on projects and focusing on major project. First batch of various equipment for Huaxi District Davos Optoelectronics Industrial Base Project smoothly enter the site and preparations for trial production are now fully underway. From commencement to equipment arrival only use 4 months which refresh the new speed of building Huaxi Industrial Park Project. These policies make income growth of Permanent rural residents in Huaxi District, especially net property income. So the income disparity in Huaxi District is minimal.

For Wudang District, from 2021, under the combined influence of faster speed of developing infrastructure and diverse tourism offerings. Featuring hot spring hotels and water parks as supporting facilities, a batch of hot spring wellness center, hot spring village, hot spring city and so on sprouted like mushrooms after rain. Among these, Wudang District in Guiyang City, which pioneered the development and operation of hot springs as a tourism product, has formed and owned Baoli hot spring, Guiyu hot spring, Zhenhua Wanxiang Hot Springs, Lewan hot spring, Fenggu hot spring and numerous other projects form an industrial cluster.

To implement Implementation Plan of deep integration of rural tourism with traditional villages and ethnic minority villages with distinctive characteristics in Guizhou province, based on county-level applications and recommendations from cities (prefectures), following expert review and public notice, Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, Provincial Development and Reform Commission, Provincial Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission and Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development decided to include Pianpo Village, Pianpo Bouyei Ethnic Township, Wudang District, Guiyang City in demonstration sites for deep integration of rural tourism with traditional villages and ethnic minority villages with distinctive characteristics in Guizhou province, 2022.

For Baiyun District, it has the smallest urban-rural income gap ratio. For urban areas in Baiyun District, Guizhou Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism issued a tourism policy: in recent years, Baiyun District with its special resources advantages, highlighted the government's leading role and the guiding role of planning. Fully tap into cultural resources, promoting integration of culture and tourism, strive to promote flourishing development of cultural undertakings, improving quality and efficiency of culture industry, describing a beautiful picture of the integrated development of the cultural and tourism industries. According to the general requirements of *Guiyang City Tourism Development Special Plan for the 13th Five-Year Plan Period*, Baiyun District surrounding the construction of "Nine Chapters in the Clouds" and "Seven Scrolls in the Clouds", continuously enrich the supply of tourism products and promoting tourism investment and consumption. Enhancing the building of tourism project, improving public services facilities, developing tourism market and promoting the reform and development of the tourism industry across the region with multiple measures. Completing the improvement of Penglai Scenic Area and Quanhu Scenic Area, and successfully developing Penglai Fairyland, Quanhu Park, Rainbow Lake Park, Scenic Area 302 and so on into tourism attraction. By the end of November 2021, the number of tourists received reached 6,114,200 visits and tourism revenue reached 5.917 billion yuan.

For the rural areas of Baiyun District, like Jianpo Village focuses on Strawberry Picking Industry, emphasizing integrated developing, adopting a hybrid ownership model of "village collective + village cadres + villagers". Establishing Tongxin Yongyue Agricultural Technology Development Co., Ltd., combing building Strawberry Picking Experience Industrial Belt in Jianpo, Duxi, Lengshui and Shangshui Village, cumulatively generated employment opportunities for over 200 individuals; Dianshan village with its superior forest resources, developing Mountain Extreme Off-Road Projects and driving income growth for farmhouses in the village..... Baiyun District will continue its efforts, promoting the increasingly evident establishment effectiveness of Model Corridors, and improving sense of happiness and fulfillment of rural residents.

**Table 2.** Disposable income of urban and rural residents in all cities and districts of Guizhou Province in 2024

| Name of Prefecture-level Administrative Region  | Per Capita Disposable Income of Urban Residents (yuan) | Per Capita Disposable Income of Rural Residents | Multiple of Urban-Rural Income Gap |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Guiyang City                                    | 48,364   | 23,640  | 2.05                               |
| Zunyi City                                      | 44,573   | 18,748  | 2.38                               |
| Liupanshui City                                 | 41,251   | 15,397  | 2.68                               |
| Anshun City                                     | 40,155   | 14,920  | 2.69                               |
| Bijie City                                      | 40,688   | 14,341  | 2.84                               |
| Tongren City                                    | 40,043   | 14,225  | 2.81                               |
| Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture | 40,867   | 14,239  | 2.87                               |

Table 2. Continued

|   |        |        |      |
|---|--------|--------|------|
| Qiannan Bouyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture   | 42,031 | 16,477 | 2.55 |
| Qianxinan Bouyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture | 41,551 | 14,479 | 2.87 |
| Qingzhen City                                   | 47,092 | 23,113 | 2.04 |
| Chishui City                                    | 43,311 | 19,058 | 2.27 |
| Renhuai City                                    | 48,134 | 19,017 | 2.53 |
| Panzhou City                                    | 39,974 | 16,053 | 2.49 |
| Qianxi City                                     | 40,143 | 14,773 | 2.72 |
| Kaili City                                      | 43,324 | 18,123 | 2.39 |
| Duyun City                                      | 45,420 | 18,492 | 2.46 |
| Fuquan City                                     | 44,192 | 16,991 | 2.60 |
| Xingyi City                                     | 43,975 | 18,370 | 2.39 |
| Xingren City                                    | 40,215 | 14,236 | 2.82 |
| Huaxi District                                  | 47,526 | 24,429 | 1.95 |
| Wudang District                                 | 47,193 | 25,595 | 1.84 |
| Baiyun District                                 | 47,249 | 26,908 | 1.76 |
| Guanshanhu District                             | 47,931 | 25,851 | 1.85 |
| Huichuan District                               | 48,100 | 22,196 | 2.17 |
| Honghuagang District                            | 47,975 | 22,137 | 2.17 |
| Bozhou District                                 | 47,099 | 21,630 | 2.18 |
| Zhongshan District                              | 43,621 | 19,935 | 2.19 |
| Xixiu District                                  | 42,601 | 17,988 | 2.37 |
| Pingba District                                 | 39,773 | 15,552 | 2.56 |
| Qixingguan District                             | 42,945 | 14,578 | 2.95 |
| Bijiang District                                | 43,736 | 19,605 | 2.23 |
| Wanshan District                                | 41,020 | 14,302 | 2.87 |
| Liuzhi Special District                         | 38,645 | 14,880 | 2.60 |

Data Sources: Guizhou Statistical Yearbook, National Bureau of Statistics

### 3.4. Should tourism prioritize development in impoverished areas for poverty alleviation

In addition to tourism policies, Guizhou Province has seen a decline in per capita income, which has helped alleviate income disparities in recent years. There are other reasons for this. Like in 2025, in Tongren City, there is the *Tongren Entrepreneurial Guaranteed Loan Policy*. During the *14th Five-Year Plan* period, the city has cumulatively issued 1.265 billion yuan in entrepreneurial guarantee loans and supporting 5,801 entrepreneurs, creating 17,394 jobs. This action not only stimulates the vitality of market entities, but also make more employees achieve their "Entrepreneurial Dream", and offers endless momentum to high quality development of local economies and societies. This is an economic policy that helps to alleviate the wealth gap. In addition, in 2025, Wengan Country will thoroughly implement *Provincial and State Decision on the 2025 Comprehensive Utilization and Feed Conversion Subsidy Program for Crop Residues*, steadily advance

the subsidy program for straw utilization as animal feed, improving local conversion and self-sufficiency capacity of straw resources. County Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in conjunction with township reporting personnel continue to carry out in deep for verification of subsidies for straw utilization as feed, ensuring that the subsidy process is open, fair, and impartial. Promoting green and circular agricultural development to help reduce costs and increase efficiency in the livestock industry. And the next step, they will continue to make effort on publicity and guidance, encouraging more entities to participate in the resource utilization of crop residues. Promoting to form market oriented operation model of "farmers plus breeding entities" and to make the straw feed industry achieved sustainable and healthy development, injecting new vitality into rural industrial revitalization. This is an ecological policy that helps alleviate the wealth gap, in addition to tourism policies.

In addition to Guizhou Province's own development, China also offers policy support to Guizhou, like Eastern Data and Western Computing economic policy. This refers to China's national level computing resource allocation initiative, which was fully launched in 2022. This program through directing eastern computing power demand to the west in an orderly manner, improving national data center deployment and promoting coordinated regional development. In Guizhou, represented by digital economy and green manufacturing is accelerating its rise in Gui'an New Area and it drives the simultaneous improvement of regional electricity consumption and economic quality. And Guizhou relies on its forward-looking planning and special resource advantages, achieving a critical leap forward in the national "Eastern Data and Western Computing" strategic blueprint, transforming from a former data storage "rear base" into a "frontline hub" and "innovation highland" for computing power supply. It is understood that, in 2025, Guizhou province further consolidates the computing power advantage and will promote the construction of projects worth over 7.5 billion yuan, including Huawei Cloud's Global Intelligent Computing Center. Carrying out Pilot Program for China's Integrated Computing Power Network, promoting Computing-power coordination, computing-network coordination. Making effective use of the computing power voucher policy and driving the scale of Computing Power Industry reaches 12 billion yuan. These are all economic development data for Guizhou Province, excluding tourism policies which can alleviate wealth gap.

Finally, should tourism prioritize development in impoverished areas for poverty alleviation and why? In which conditions should prioritize developing tourism to alleviate poverty? Actually, I do not have a certain answer to it, tourism can be an effective tool for poverty alleviation, but its height of success relies on a series of strict prerequisites. Only when these conditions are satisfied, prioritizing developing tourism is a reasonable and sustainable strategy. Tourism has unique advantages for poverty alleviation under specific circumstances. On the one hand, sustainable tourism can boost economic growth and poverty alleviation by creating jobs, encouraging entrepreneurship, and other means. These are very important for developing countries. Huawu Village in Qianxi, Guizhou, China has developed its tourism and Miao embroidery industries and this village is a rural revitalization model which from a deeply impoverished village to per capita disposable income exceeding 30,000 yuan. The report of World Tourism Alliance also systematically summarized China's diverse models for poverty alleviation through tourism. However, not all impoverished areas are suitable for tourism poverty alleviation. Tourism usually in the following resource endowed regions has more advantages. First, regions possessing unique natural or cultural heritage, such as the Miao terraced fields in Guizhou and the Hani terraced fields in Yunnan. Secondly, areas adjacent to major source markets or transportation hubs. Thirdly, regions with well-preserved ecological environments and traditional cultures but foundations for other industries are weak.

If the government decides to prioritize developing tourism, they must design the pattern that make local communities and residents can deeply engage and share the profits. To prevent external companies from

mastering the bulk of profits while local residents can only gain low wage. Simultaneously promote the deep integration of tourism with local distinctive industries such as agriculture, handicrafts, sports, and cultural and creative industries, transform residents from passive recipients of assistance into active participants, operators, and even innovators in the tourism industry. Prioritize improvements to basic infrastructure such as transportation, communications, sanitation, and sewage treatment, and digital infrastructure is equally important. Even under the aforementioned conditions launching tourism industry, we still need to be vigilant simply imitate viral projects. Over relying on tourism will make community economies exceptionally vulnerable to external shocks such as pandemics and natural disasters. If mechanism is designed inappropriate, it may lead to internal conflicts within the community and cause new social problems.

#### 4. Evaluation

Firstly, in the whole research progress, the author has achieved pre-set research objectives. The first objective in my PPF was to analyze whether prioritizing tourism development in impoverished areas is an effective path for poverty alleviation. My PPF's second objective was to master multiple methods of acquiring secondary data: learn to select and organize data from government statistical yearbooks, and academic databases. The author achieved these goals through reading foreign and domestic literature, and the author sorted out the relevant conclusions and compare different regions' data on the office websites to confirm them. The author realized that poverty is really a serious problem, citizens must learn a specialized skill to make a living and the government also need to visit undeveloped areas frequently.

In this progress, the author also met some difficulties. For example, in terms of personal qualities, the author has a fear of difficulty, because the author knows very little knowledge about poverty governance. The author is not sure if the author can write an article that fits the theme and the author has never written an article this long before; In terms of personality skills, literature search, data search and analysis also caused me some difficulty. Finding a single article relevant to the dissertation topic from a large volume of literature is time consuming, data from discovery to analysis is also a very difficult process, and the author always does not know how to classify and process when meeting a large number of data.

Next, there are some limitations of my dissertation. Like data limitation, the author uses lots of data from 2023 and 2024, but it is now the year 2025. However, there is a reason for this. Because some data is monopolized by the government and it will not be disclosed in real time. So the author cannot research the latest data. Additionally, there are limitations in other aspects. Many paragraphs detail what Guizhou or its districts have done without analyzing how these developments prove or disprove the effectiveness of tourism. And there is data that has been shown but not deeply interpreted, such as analyzing how tourism revenue trends correspond to income trends. The discussion has shown income growth, but there is no attempt to calculate correlations, compare pre-policy and post-policy periods, or distinguish tourism-intensive counties from others. As a result, the causal argument remains suggestive rather than demonstrated. For these aspects, the author will in-depth study the methods of empirical research, using differential models to delve into deeper the correlation and causation between both of them to make up for shortcomings.

Then, if the author was to redo this project, to alleviate data limitations, the author intends to conduct in-depth field research. Like in the discussion part, the author found that the urban-rural gap is the smallest in Baiyun District, Guiyang City, Guizhou Province. Therefore, the author wants to interview people who actually live there, especially the rural residents, to learn about their genuine feelings, including the feelings towards tourism policies, other policies, the ideas for the future and so on. And whether they have made any recommendations to the local government, has the government taken any action to address the issue.

In the whole process, the author also learned a lot. For example, in terms of personal qualities, the author learns how to overcome the fear of difficulty; in terms of personal skills, through this study, my literature search skills, data retrieval abilities, and data analysis capabilities have all been enhanced. The author also learned some economic concepts the author had never encountered before. Moreover, the author knows about the paradigm of the dissertation, especially that of economics dissertations. At last, the author also realizes poverty is truly a major problem and it was not as simple as the author had initially imagined, and it takes numerous attempts and adjustments to achieve satisfactory results. the author knows this dissertation has many shortcomings, but in this process the author has done my very best to finish it. For this, the author feels deeply satisfied.

## 5. Conclusion

For the whole world, poverty problem has persisted for a long time. To study the impact of tourism polices on poverty alleviation, this dissertation employs a literature review and case analysis approach. On the basis of reviewing relevant research literature, choosing Guizhou province in China as a case study, conducting in-depth study. The result revealed that national tourism poverty alleviation policy for Guizhou province effectively reduced the gap between urban and rural disposable income in Guizhou province. For urban residents, tourism policies have significant improvement in net income from individual operations and net property income growth. For rural residents, tourism policies have improvement in per capita disposable income of permanent rural residents, wage income, net business income, net property income and net transfer income. However, because poverty alleviation is the result of multidimensional and multifaceted collaborative efforts, the promulgation of tourism policies may be just one of the factors. As a result, it is hard to completely separate the casual effects of tourism policies on poverty alleviation. Future research can compare Guizhou Province with other similar provinces that have not received equivalent tourism support to examine whether similar outcomes can be observed. Moreover, this research mainly uses macro or provincial data, and future research can use more micro data to inspect whether the benefits generated by tourism development are distributed evenly across different income groups. Additionally, extending the analysis to other regions and paying attention to long-term sustainability of tourism poverty, this will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness. In addition to this, factors such as relevant economic policies and technological advancements also exert an influence. As a result, poverty alleviation efforts should be tailored to local conditions and areas with different geographical conditions should employ different approaches. If the government decide to prioritize developing tourism, they must design the pattern that make local communities and residents can deeply engage and share the profits. Future research can explore long-term sustainability of driven poverty reduction, especially monitoring in environment stress and income stability.

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