

Chapter 18

Green Economic Development Is the Strategic Choice to Eliminate the Green Poverty

Qi Zhang

The green economy is a globally concerned topic, the eternal theme of China's sustainable development, and the real challenge facing China in the new era to promote the transformation of the development ways and realize the harmonious natural, economic and social development. In particular, the green economic development in the concentrated and contiguous areas with special difficulties, compared to other places, will meet more severe problems, contradictions and challenges in the green economic development. It is very urgent and necessary to strengthen studies on the green economy, green poverty and alleviation of green poverty.

18.1 Green Poverty: The Important Question Facing the Tough Task of Poverty Alleviation in the New Era

Green Poverty seems to be a new term. Literally it seems to mean that the protection of environment and the development of green economy lead to the poverty and the increase of poverty, but actually it is not completely true. We think that green poverty can be analyzed and understood in two aspects: one refers to the poverty for the lack of green and ecological protection system, such as the human survival difficulties caused by lack of water, lean soil or other abominable natural and ecological environment; the other refers to the poverty caused by inconvenient transportation, unfavorable geographic areas, and backward resource and industrial development though with rich green resources and natural ecosystem. It can be seen that the green poverty is a “two-way” poverty, which can be understood

Q. Zhang (✉)

School of Economics and Resource Management, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China
e-mail: sxzhangqi@163.com

as the positive and reverse green poverty. A careful analysis on 14 concentrated contiguous areas with special difficulties in the main battlefield of China's poverty alleviation during the new decade from 2011 to 2020 shows there are positive, reverse and mixed types of green poverty. For example, Liupanshan Area, Yanshan and Taihang Mountains, Luliang Mountains, Dabie Mountains, and Three Regions in Southern Xinjiang, etc. belong to positive green poverty which is caused by lack of resources; Qinba Mountainous Areas, Wuling Mountains, Wumeng Mountains, the rocky desertification areas in Yunnan, Guangxi and Guizhou, Marginal Mountainous Areas of West Yunnan, Mountainous Areas of Southern Great Xing'an Mountain Peak and Luo Xiao Mountains belong to the reverse green poverty. The Tibetan areas of Sichuan Provinces and the Tibetan Region have both, so they are the mixed green poverty.

18.2 Green Economy Is the Strategic Choice to Eliminate Green Poverty

Either positive or reverse green poverty is fundamentally caused by lack of green development. The positive green poverty is the poverty resulting from the abominable ecological environment for the lack of green, thus making it impossible to carry out the development of green economy. The reverse green poverty is the poverty caused by the impossible development of the green resources as well as the lack of green industries. Despite of the differences, they are the same in the lacking or inefficient green economic development. Therefore, enhancing the green economic development is the strategic choice to solve the green poverty.

First, the green economy is macroscopically a new mode of inclusive economic growth and development conducting to the poor people. The past practice has proved it is hard to meet the strategic requirements for eliminating poverty, balancing areas and groups, and achieving harmonious development in the new era simply through the high-speed and high-consumption industrial development, the non-balanced regional development strategies and the excessive economic growth. On the contrary, such strategies more seriously unbalance regional development, deteriorate poverty, prolong the poverty alleviation, and make the poverty alleviation more difficult and the society more unstable. Implementation of the new inclusive economic growth and development conducive to the poor people is China's strategic choice for the current and future development; it is the urgent task for China's prolonged stability to accelerate the implementation of policies and systems conducive to the poor people and the restructuring of the green economic system to improve their ability.

Second, the green economic development is a sustainable poverty alleviation strategy, which achieves long-term stability and harmony between poverty alleviation and the economic, social and ecological environment rather than the short-term and temporary harmony. This is the fundamental difference with the economic growth

oriented poverty alleviation strategy, directly manifesting the basic properties of green economic development, i.e. the harmony between man and nature, and among the people.

18.3 The Green Poverty Alleviation Is the Key for the Tough Task of the Poverty Alleviation in the New Era

The promotion of the green economic development is not only the strategic choice to eliminate the green poverty, but the key for the tough task of the poverty alleviation in the new era. The strategic planning system of green development in poverty-stricken areas, i.e. the green poverty alleviation system should be established. The key of the green poverty alleviation at least includes the following two points.

First, the ecological compensation is the prerequisite for the development of green economy in the poverty-stricken areas. As mentioned above, both the positive green poverty caused by lack of green resources and the reverse green poverty caused by non-development of green resources result from the difficult implementation of the green economy. Meanwhile, the poverty-stricken areas to develop the green economy are often the main functional areas, the development of which is banned or limited by the state. In such a case, the economic development in the poverty-stricken areas will be strictly constrained by the national policies and institutions. These areas take the responsibility for protecting resources, and thus have to be faced with the consequences of fall in economy, reduction in income and deterioration of poverty. We appeal here that the government must work on developing and implementing the ecological compensation system and regulations so as to compensate for the falling income and living standards on the one hand, and protect their equal right for development on the other. A long delay will cause the growing losses for the poverty-stricken areas.

Second, industrial ecologicalization and ecological industrialization are the most effective way for the poverty alleviation in poverty-stricken areas. To alleviate poverty and achieve prosperity in the poverty-stricken areas will eventually need to be supported by building a sustainable industrial system. Only in this way can poverty alleviation and reduction be sustainable. However, the industrial development in poverty-stricken areas should not copy industrial model in the developed regions. They have to make full use of their own characteristics in order to obtain specific advantages, thus determining the implementation of industrial ecologicalization and ecological industrialization. In other words, the sustainable development of industries is to be achieved and the advantages are to be maintained through ecologicalization of industrial development, and the sustainable ecological protection is to be realized through the ecological industrialization. Otherwise, the traditional industrial development at the cost of the environment, resources

and energy brings greater risk to the poor and low-income populations. Therefore, industrial ecologicalization and ecological industrialization are the best choices for the green economic development in the poverty-stricken areas. With non-developed industries and unprotected ecological environment, the poverty will be further deteriorated.

Obviously, poverty is an unavoidable theme in the studies on the green economic development. The researches on characteristics and laws of change of the green poverty, and on the mechanism and policies for the green poverty alleviation are not only indispensable, but more necessary and important.

Professor Zhang Qi, School of Economics and Resource Management, Beijing Normal University