

# Practical Pathways for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in the Context of Rural Revitalization —Take Dalu Island as a Case Study

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**Abstract:** *The sustainable development of rural tourism is an important way to achieve the strategic goal of rural revitalization. It is the driving force for rural governance and transformation, embodies the development concept of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and is the foundation for the inheritance of local culture. Taking "Dalu Island" where is the village in Dandong City as an example, this paper discusses the practice path of achieving sustainable development of rural tourism under the background of rural revitalization. It emphasizes the importance of creating a rural area with cultural connotation, suitable for living and business, green and beautiful, protecting ecological resources, and emphasizing the participation of residents. We should rely on rural ecological and natural resources and cultural landscapes, vigorously carry out rural ecological tourism construction, and promote the sustainable development of rural tourism.*

**Keywords:** *Rural revitalization, Rural tourism, Sustainable development*

## 1. Introduction

China proposed the rural revitalization strategy during the 19th National Congress, emphasizing that the key to solving the livelihoods of the people still lies in "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers". The General Secretary proposed "comprehensively promoting rural revitalization" in the report of the 20th Congress, emphasizing the "construction of livable and productive beautiful rural areas". "To achieve rural revitalization, it is necessary to revitalize rural industries. Among them, rural tourism is an industry with potential and development, which can reshape the relationship between urban and rural areas, promote the concept of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and comply with the basic principles of rural revitalization and sustainable development. 70% of China's tourism resources are concentrated in rural areas, so on the surface, rural areas have inherent advantages in developing tourism industry. However, due to economic and technological constraints, the actual development of rural tourism is not ideal. Therefore, the practical path for sustainable development of rural tourism under the background of rural revitalization discussed in this article is of great practical significance.

## 2. Analysis of the Tourism Development Status of Dalu Island under the Background of Rural Revitalization

### 2.1 Advantages of Sustainable Tourism development in Dalu Island

Dalu Island consists of 11 village groups with a permanent population of 920 households and a total of 3,680 people. Dalu Island implements a village-level party committee system, with a current membership of 172 party members. In 2019, it was selected as one of the second batch of national forest villages, and in 2020, it was recognized as one of the second batch of key villages for rural tourism in the country, a national 4A-level scenic area. Dalu Island has favorable conditions for developing tourism. It now receives an average annual number of around 60,000 visitors.

#### 2.1.1 Excellent Geographical Location

Dalu Island Situated in Dagushan Town, Dandong City, Liaoning Province of China. It covers a total area of 6.6 square kilometers with a coastline stretching 115 kilometers, faces Dagushan Town to the

north across the sea and is closely connected to Zhang Island to the east. It is surrounded by the sea on all sides and adjacent to South Korea and North Korea, the island resembles a deer lying in the Yellow Sea. The highest point on the island is 187 meters, making it the largest island at the northern end of China's coastline. It enjoys a temperate maritime climate, with mild winters and cool summers.

### ***2.1.2 Abundant Natural Resources***

Dalu Island has abundant marine resources, with a sea area of 190,000 mu (or 12,666.67 hectares) in front of the island, including over 110,000 mu (or 7,333.33 hectares) of shallow waters suitable for aquaculture. The island is renowned for its variety of fresh seafood, including prawns, crabs, sea snails, colored clams, yellow clams, and various fish species. In addition, the island is rich in flora and fauna. It has a current green area of 365 hectares and a green coverage rate of 75%. There are nearly one hundred wild sika deer. The high vegetation coverage prevents soil erosion. It makes the island an ideal summer resort because of improving the water purification rate in nearby waters and enhancing the ecological environment. The development of tourism not only boosts the industry but also revitalizes the aquaculture sector.

### ***2.1.3 Unique Historical and Cultural Heritage***

The special geographical location of the Island has made it a contested site throughout history. During the reign of Emperor Chongzhen in the Ming Dynasty, Wenlong Mao who is the overall commander of Liaodong, stationed on the island to resist the invasion of the Jin army. The famous Battle of Yalu River also took place in the Yellow Sea in front of the island. There are historical sites on the island, such as the flag signaling platform on the main peak, the Ming Dynasty fortifications on the West Mountain, and a stone-paved horse road between the mountaintop and the seaside, the excavated artifacts such as swords, helmets, and cannonballs all bear witness to the fires of the past. The British-style lighthouse on the east mountain and the Danish villa add an exotic charm to the island. The "Gaba Jujube Ancient Tree" carries a long history and blessings for peace and safety. "Golden turtle Garden" and the "East mouth Observation Deck" are perfect spots to listen to the sound of waves under the starry night, watch tides come and go, witness breathtaking sunrises and sunsets, creating an unforgettable experience.

## ***2.2 Tourism Sustainable Development Experience of Dalu Island***

### ***2.2.1 Optimize the Industrial Structure***

Before the development of Dalu Island, it was a small fishing village surrounded by the sea on all sides. The residents relied on aquaculture and fishing for their livelihoods, with the younger generation seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. The income of the villagers was relatively low. With the introduction of the rural revitalization strategy, the Chinese government implemented policies to vigorously support rural economies. Seizing the opportunity, Dalu Island gradually transformed its traditional industrial model into a tourism-oriented industry, with fishing and aquaculture as supplementary sectors.

With Leisure tourism of island attracting increasing attention in the market, Dalu Island begin to development new commercial structures such as guesthouses, handicrafts, and local cuisine to meet market demand. By integrating traditional industries of the coastal fishing village and natural ecological resources, a new industry chain has been formed that combines leisure, culture, and entertainment. To this day, Dalu Island continues to pursue the path of collective economic development and is directly affiliated with the Dandong Big deer Island Haixing Group Co, Ltd. The development of tourism has increased the profitability of the village collective enterprise, providing more job opportunities for island residents and improving their income, thereby promoting people's livelihood development. By tapping into the advantages of rural industries and leveraging them to stimulate other sectors, a tailored industry chain has been formed to support the development of the local village. Continuous adjustments and optimizations are made to drive the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

### ***2.2.2 Improve infrastructure development***

In recent years, Dalu Island has become a prosperous village in the Liaodong region. With the promotion of rural revitalization, Dalu Island began to strengthen infrastructure construction, improve the appearance of villages, and optimize the living environment of residents. As shown in Table 1, by the end of 2022, 12 hardened roads have been laid across the island, with a coverage rate of 75%, 45% higher than that in 2016, and the road planning can basically meet the needs of the tourist season. Increase public lighting facilities, as of 2022 coverage of about 85%, 2016 only 2022 lighting facilities construction has been in a precarious progress, and the use of solar energy to improve energy efficiency and environmental

protection. In addition, an underwater pipeline has been built in 2018 to ensure that every family has access to clean drinking water, benefiting not only the villagers but also the needs of tourists. In order to maintain the ecological environment, centralized collection of garbage on the island began in 2018, and then transported to off-island facilities for centralized treatment. In addition, according to statistics, 91% of households in 2022 have installed flush toilets, and sewage and garbage are treated in accordance with environmental requirements. Statistics show that the basic infrastructure requirements for livability and commerce in every village on the island have been largely met. With the increasing number of tourists, the infrastructure construction on the island has been continuously improved and strengthened to maximize the needs of the tourism market.

*Table 1: Infrastructure Construction Statistics of Dalu Island from 2016 to 2022*

Year	Hardened Roads (Coverage Rate)	Public Lighting Facilities (Coverage Rate)	Underwater Pipeline for Clean Drinking Water	Waste Disposal	Water-Flushing Toilets
2016	4(30%)	55%	Not available	Local disposal	35%
2017	6(45%)	65%	Not available	Local disposal	42%
2018	8(60%)	75%	available	Centralized disposal	66%
2019	9(65%)	80%	available	Centralized disposal	72%
2020	10(70%)	82%	available	Centralized disposal	83%
2021	11(75%)	83%	available	Centralized disposal	90%
2022	12(75%)	85%	available	Centralized disposal	91%

Moreover, there are two passenger terminals on the island and the mainland, each accommodating around 700 people, with large parking lots to meet the parking needs of self-driving tourists during the peak tourism season. The island is equipped with 15 luxury buses that provide free transportation services for passengers to the tourist areas. The number of sea passenger ships has increased to 22, capable of transporting more than 1,500 passengers at a time, ensuring that passengers' travel itineraries are not delayed due to transportation issues. There are small buses available between various scenic spots on the island, facilitating independent travel for tourists. Tourists can also rent motorcycles or bicycles to enjoy the island's scenery, but there may be some traffic congestion during the peak tourism season. As shown in Table 2, with the gradual popularity of leisure island travel, the public transportation on the island has gradually matured and can fully meet the needs of tourists. The Dalu Island is fully prepared for a post-pandemic market rebound.

*Table 2: Public Transport Statistics of Dalu Island from 2016 to 2022*

year	passenger ship	passenger bus	heliogyro
2016	5	2	0
2017	6	6	0
2018	12	13	0
2019	20	13	1
2020	21	15	1
2021	22	15	1
2022	22	15	1

### **2.2.3 Increase residents' income**

Rural tourism can effectively promote the achievement of rural revitalization strategic goals, with the ultimate aim of helping villagers achieve a prosperous life and improve their living environment. However, the progress and effectiveness of the strategic implementation depend on the real changes in villagers' lives. Only when they deeply feel the improvement in their quality of life will they identify with related policies and systems, actively participate in rural revitalization construction, accelerate the pace of rural revitalization, achieve targeted poverty alleviation, and effectively protect the environment and resources.



Figure 1: Economic Indicators of Dalu Island, 2016-2022 (unit: 10,000)

Figure 1 shows the economic indicators of Dalu Island since the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy (2016-2022), including collective income, local residents' income, tourism output value, and tax expenditure. As can be seen from Figure 1, with the rise of rural tourism in Dalu Island, the production value of village collective tourism, tax expenditure and residents' income all increased significantly from 2016 to 2019, which enhanced residents' enthusiasm to participate in rural tourism development. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a decrease in tourists and has had a certain impact on the tourism economy from 2020 to 2022, with tourism economic indicators significantly declining. But this road to self-sustaining rural prosperity is still feasible, and in 2022 tourism productivity and household income are gradually recovering, villagers have regained employment opportunities, and many young people who previously worked outside the village have been attracted to return home.

### 3. Problems Existing in Sustainable Tourism Development of Dalu Island under the Background of Rural Revitalization

#### 3.1 Overall Planning on the Island is Lacking

The tourism development on Dalu Island has not taken into account the actual situation of the rural area and has focused solely on immediate economic benefits. The lack of precise guidance from village organizations and groups has led to villagers blindly renovating their houses, pursuing a hotel-style urban aesthetic, and altering the original rural landscape, thereby erasing the authentic coastal fishing village atmosphere. When tourists visit, they encounter self-built houses, exquisite cafes, diverse styles of guesthouses, and rural homestays, resulting in constantly changing scenery along the way. This has led to a semi-urbanized development of the island, which is inconsistent with the environment and overall planning.

Furthermore, in order to meet the spatial requirements for tourism projects, extensive land reclamation has taken place, destroying the original water resources and disrupting the surrounding ecological balance. This macro-level impact has hindered the sustainable development of rural tourism.

#### 3.2 Island Tourism Products are Single

Dalu Island possesses favorable geographical advantages and abundant natural and cultural resources. However, the development of tourism projects on the island has mainly focused on traditional offerings

such as beach sightseeing, seafood cuisine, and homestays. There has been a lack of sufficient exploration of the unique features of the island's tourism products, unclear product positioning, and inadequate quality. The island's tourism products resemble those of other island destinations, lacking differentiation and failing to stand out in terms of quality, thus unable to effectively attract tourists. The development of cultural resources has been superficial, lacking substance, and characterized by a strong commercial atmosphere, making it difficult for urban dwellers to experience the daily life of the villagers.

The historical and cultural significance of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 has not been adequately explored, and the development of red tourism projects has been incomplete, failing to achieve the goal of patriotic education. The focus has been on the simple accumulation of elements such as the tomb and statue of Deng Shichang, giving the impression of having many cultural elements but failing to evoke emotional resonance among tourists. The tourism souvenirs mainly consist of packaged seafood in plastic bags, lacking any distinctive cultural elements or symbolic representations. The products suffer from severe homogeneity, lack innovation and representativeness.

### ***3.3 Public Participation is Low***

Currently, the villagers on Dalu Island can be mainly categorized into three groups. The first group consists of villagers living near Moon Bay, who mostly invest in and operate "farmhouse inns" to generate income. They can directly experience the benefits brought by rural tourism. The second group primarily engages in selling seafood, beach supplies, and renting transportation vehicles. Their customer flow is not significant, resulting in lower profits derived from island tourism. The third group of villagers, located outside the core scenic areas, still relies on fishing and aquaculture for a living and does not benefit from island tourism. In addition, apart from village committee members, ordinary villagers rarely hold positions within tourism-related organizations, which limits their deep involvement in various aspects of tourism development. As a result, villagers may not have a strong sense of the sustainability of island tourism. Furthermore, some natural resources, particularly land, are under the control of local villagers, leading to conflicts between them and the collaborating entities involved in tourism projects. This can negatively impact the sustainable development of island tourism.

### ***3.4 Propaganda Intensity is Inadequate***

Although Dalu Island places great importance on talent education, various factors have led to young people choosing to work off the island. The island's industries are primarily managed by the older generation, resulting in a lack of relevant professional talents on the island. The older generation often has outdated ideologies and lacks knowledge in developing marketing strategies or employing marketing techniques, which has contributed to the relatively low recognition of Dalu Island tourism in society. The majority of the annual tourist influx comes from within the province, limiting the number of visitors and hindering the breakthrough needed for the sustainable development of the tourism industry on Dalu Island.

## **4. The Practice Path of Sustainable Tourism Development in Dalu Island under the Background of Rural Revitalization**

General Secretary has outlined five specific approaches to rural revitalization strategy. Based on the research on the issues in the development of rural tourism in Dalu Island, we explore the paths to achieve sustainable development of rural tourism from three aspects: economy, ecology, and social culture.

### ***4.1 Economy Sustainable Development***

First of all, it is necessary to integrate the tourism resources on the island, unify the planning and development, and deeply optimize the industrial structure. The convergence of the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries should be strengthened, establishing an industry cluster that encompasses food, accommodation, transportation, shopping, and entertainment, continuously adjusting and upgrading the industries. Village committees and groups should always adopt a market-oriented perspective, develop effective marketing plans to attract tourists, and enhance the promotion on the Internet. By generating initial interest in the island's culture and landscapes through online platforms, tourists can be attracted to visit the island, thereby driving the development of the island's economy. Therefore, the sustainable development of tourism economy on Dalu Island primarily relies on leveraging social media, television, internet platforms, and others to increase tourism popularity. The island should establish a "one-stop

travel" mobile app to maximize the satisfaction of independent travelers. Furthermore, in the distribution of tourism project revenues, priority should be given to the interests of the villagers. According to stakeholder theory, villagers are the main beneficiaries, and the distribution ratio should be increased to ensure the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

It is worth mentioning that tourist satisfaction is a key factor in determining the sustainable development of tourism on the island [1]. As the pillar industry of the island's economy, the tourist arrival rate and expenditure directly influence the tourism gross domestic product. Therefore, regular training should be provided to villagers to enhance their skills and service capabilities, thus increasing the loyalty of tourists through high-quality service. Encouraging young people who work outside the island to return and start businesses or find employment on the island, as well as encouraging villagers to innovate traditional industries, can increase the interactivity and experiential value of tourism projects. The government and groups need to take the lead in formulating talent introduction programs and policies to attract more professional and managerial talents to the island, providing a reserve of talents for the sustainable development of tourism on the island.

#### ***4.2 Sustainable Development of Ecological Environment***

Ecological environment is the core of island tourism products. In order to develop ecotourism, targeted consumption behavior norms can be established to guide tourists' tourism consumption behavior. Various forms of promotion can be carried out to enhance tourists' awareness of environmental protection. Strict environmental standards should be followed for waste disposal on the island, and leisure fishing zones and marine aquaculture zones should be scientifically planned, with a prohibition on fishing protected marine organisms. The government and groups should strictly supervise individual and collective businesses on the island, prohibiting water pollution, land pollution, environmental destruction, and other phenomena. At the same time, villagers should be involved in the protection and management of rural environment and ecological resources, actively participating in the construction and preservation of beautiful villages, and creating green, ecological, and beautiful rural areas to develop ecotourism on the island [2].

#### ***4.3 Social and Cultural Sustainable Development***

How can one stand out in the fierce competition of the tourism market? This is a question that many tourist destinations are contemplating. Island tourism products are often single-focused and mainstream, with many people choosing to visit a particular island primarily for sunbathing. However, if we imbue these leisure and entertainment destinations with a cultural soul, offering tourists a dual choice, in other words, allowing them to relax and be entertained while also experiencing the influence of historical and cultural heritage, then the island becomes a unique entity that can attract more attention from tourists. [3]. For example, in the case of Dalu Island, where sunbathing is a popular activity, we can leverage its historical significance by salvaging and preserving warships from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. We can establish a 4D experiential museum with this theme, allowing visitors to relive the cruelty and intensity of the war, evoking a sense of patriotism and resonance among tourists. Additionally, interactive experiences with visitors, such as carving or graffiti on seashells, can be incorporated to further enhance the interactive experience. This approach will enhance tourists' overall experience, increase satisfaction, boost return rates, and promote the sustainable development of island tourism.

### **5. Conclusion**

In the context of rural revitalization, tourism has become a driving force in building beautiful new rural areas and creating new rural industries. As a form of rural area, islands need to capitalize on their unique advantages in tourism development and utilization. They should adhere to the development philosophy of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, properly plan resources, continuously improve infrastructure, adhere to green and environmental protection principles, and avoid sacrificing ecological balance for short-term economic benefits [4]. Deeply exploring the unique characteristics of folk culture, integrating the natural landscapes of rural areas with other tourism resources, fully utilizing the Internet and modern information technology, and breaking through various constraints are crucial.

In summary, the sustainable development of island tourism is a long-term and complex endeavor that requires continuous exploration within different social forms and economic requirements. True

knowledge is gained through practice, and the path to sustainable development can only be found through practical experience.

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