

# Challenges and Countermeasures of Eco-sports Tourism in Ganzi Prefecture in the Post-epidemic Period

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**Abstract:** *In the post-epidemic period, people's lifestyle and travel concept have undergone great changes. Ordinary travel methods can no longer meet people's diversified travel needs, and people begin to seek healthy and high-quality travel experience. As a new industry, ecological sports tourism is facing great challenges. This paper analyzes the challenges of eco-sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture through literature and field investigation. The research shows that there are challenges of policy and funding, environmental protection and sustainability, fierce competition in the market, accessibility of sports events and participation in sports activities, and security issues in Ganzi. The authors propose corresponding coping strategies to provide theoretical and practical support for the development of eco-sport tourism in Ganzi.*

**Keywords:** *post-epidemic period, ecological sports tourism, challenges, countermeasures*

## 1. Introduction

In the post-epidemic period, people gradually stepped out of the haze of the epidemic and could not wait to get out of the metropolitan area and enjoy the beautiful natural scenery. During the Mid Autumn Festival and National Day holidays in 2023, Ganzi Prefecture received a total of 2,964,200 tourists, and achieved a tourism income of 3,261 billion yuan, an increase of 410.70% over last year and 26.18% over 2019, setting a record high for National Day tourism reception. [1] It can be seen that the tourism market in Ganzi Prefecture is extremely hot. At present, the tourism of Ganzi prefecture mainly focuses on natural scenery, red culture and folk culture. The tourism projects combined with sports mainly include hiking, rock climbing, horse racing and cycling, etc. The sports tourism projects are relatively rare. Compared with the central and eastern regions, the development of eco-sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture is relatively backward. The development of eco-sports tourism is faced with a series of challenges, which involve many aspects of sports, tourism and sports tourism industry. This paper will discuss these challenges and provide theoretical and practical support for the development of eco-sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture.

## 2. Challenges faced by eco-sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture

### 2.1 Policy and funding challenges

On September 27, 2023, The General Office of the State Council issued the notice on Releasing the potential of tourism consumption and promoting the high-quality development of tourism, pointing out that it is necessary to increase the supply of high-quality tourism products and services, implement high-quality demonstration projects of sports tourism, promote the integration of sports events and tourism activities, and integrate major and characteristic events. The government has fostered the "Traveling with Events" brand project, creating a number of influential sports tourism boutique routes, events and bases. [2] However, there is a great contrast between macro policy support and micro policy implementation. There are few eco-sports tourism development policies in various regions, and special policies are scarce. Policy tools are more environment-oriented than supply-oriented [3]. There are still great uncertainties in policy formulation and implementation, and long-term exploration and experience need to be summarized. In the post-epidemic period, local governments and tourism departments have placed the development of tourism and service industries in an important position. However, the impact of the epidemic on the economy has intensified the uncertainty of people's economic income, and there is a prominent contradiction between government fiscal revenue and expenditure. The development of

ecological sports tourism is a systematic project, which is not achieved overnight, and requires a large amount of funds to be continuously invested, which poses a huge challenge to the tight financial expenditure of the government.

### ***2.2 Environmental protection and sustainability challenges***

Environmental protection has always been an important issue on the road of economic development. In history, China's economic development has also been achieved at the expense of the environment. With the advancement of reform and opening up, China's economic development has changed from extensive to intensive [4], and gradually developed in the direction of ecological and environmental protection. However, as a new industry, the development of sports tourism is not smooth sailing. While developing sports tourism in many regions, it has had too much impact on the natural environment, such as land erosion, wildlife disturbance, pollution, etc. The rapid growth of sports tourism industry has exerted pressure on environmental and social sustainability. In some places, large-scale sports events consume a lot of energy and produce a lot of waste, which has a greater impact on the local ecological environment. These issues raise environmental protection and sustainable development challenges and require measures to reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

### ***2.3 Challenges of fierce market competition***

The fierce competition in the tourism market has attracted a large number of travel agencies and online platforms to participate in the promotion of tourism products. As an emerging industry, the development of eco-sports tourism is not mature enough, and the tourism products are relatively simple [5]. Especially in Ganzi Prefecture, the sports tourism products are mainly hiking and rock climbing, and their competitiveness is relatively weak in the face of other tourism products rich in the tourism market. Due to the competition of different kinds of tourism products, the price of sports tourism faces great pressure, which makes travel service providers have to provide more added value to attract customers. In order to meet the needs of different types of sports tourism customers, through market innovation and diversified competition, ecological sports tourism needs more marketing strategies to build characteristic brands. With the promotion of sports tourism brand construction, it is particularly important to find a way to meet the challenges of market competition.

### ***2.4 Accessibility of sports events and the challenge of participation in sports activities***

A key challenge for sports tourism is the accessibility of sports events and the participation of sports activities. Tickets to some sporting events are expensive and often difficult to obtain. As a result, it is difficult for most people to access sports events, and only a few people are able to watch the games in person. For example, China holds the Olympic Games, Asian Games and other large-scale sports events, which most people can only watch through TV or the Internet [6]. For local sports events, limited by traffic, service quality, event publicity and other factors, the number of visitors to the scene is also very small. On the other hand, one of the most fundamental reasons people choose sports tourism programs is to be able to participate in them and experience the fun of sports, not just to watch them. At present, the number of sports tourism projects in Ganzi Prefecture is limited, and the ones that satisfy customer participation are even rarer. It can be seen that in order to overcome these challenges, sports tourism projects need to organize and develop tourism products that can meet the needs of customers, so as to improve the accessibility of sports events and the participation of sports activities.

### ***2.5 Security Challenges***

Out of the urban area, people begin to pursue challenging sports projects, such as flying, climbing, rafting, hiking, etc., which have great safety challenges in the development and management process [7]. As a result, many places give up risky sports, such as wingsuit flying and paragliding, due to difficult management, which greatly reduces the appeal of sports tourism to people. In the increasingly competitive market, it has become a trend of future development to develop sports tourism projects with advantages. For example, Ganzi Prefecture's steep mountains and plateau virgin forests, as well as its unique climate characteristics, are all valuable resources for sports tourism development. How to properly handle project development and security risk management has become a major challenge for the development of ecological sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture. In addition, sports tourism can also be affected by weather events, natural disasters and health crises, and contingency plans are needed to address these challenges. For example, Ganzi Prefecture is located in the earthquake zone of Eurasia,

and large and small earthquakes occur frequently, which poses a threat to the life safety of tourists.

### **3. The countermeasures of developing eco-sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture**

#### ***3.1 Policy and financial countermeasures:***

First, the government departments should be combined with the characteristics of the region, formulate a clear ecological sports tourism strategic plan, clearly support the development of sports tourism goals and vision. This can include improving sports facilities, attracting international sports events, developing special sports tourism activities, cultivating local ethnic sports culture and other goals. Second, the government should determine the brand positioning of ecological sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture, create a brand of ecological sports tourism in Ganzi Prefecture, and improve and amend the policies and systems in a timely manner during the development process. Third, the government builds ecological sports tourism industry standards, institutionalizes and standardizes successful experiences and operational rules in the development process, regulates the sports tourism industry, sets up industry benchmarks and creates a good atmosphere for development.

Multi-party financing to ensure the sustainable development of ecological sports tourism. First, the government provides the necessary financial support, including the establishment of funds, grants, subsidies, loans and tax exemptions to encourage the development of ecological sports tourism projects. Second, the government encourages state-owned and private capital investment and attracts private investment and venture capital to jointly raise funds. Third, the government should innovate financing models and explore innovative financing models. For example, the government can initiate crowdfunding, bonds and other financing methods to attract funds and improve the sustainability of projects. Fourth, the government formulates incentive policies to protect the rights and interests of investors, and gives tax breaks, subsidies and preferential policies to stimulate the enthusiasm of capital to participate in the construction of eco-tourism.

#### ***3.2 Response to environmental protection and sustainability challenges:***

Ecological environment protection is the basis of developing ecological sports tourism. With the protection of ecological environment, the sustainable development of ecological sports tourism can be maintained. In order to protect the ecological environment, the specific countermeasures are as follows:

First, the government formulates strict environmental protection regulations and policies, pays close attention to their implementation and supervision, and ensures that any enterprises and individuals involved in the development of eco-sports tourism strictly comply with them, including travel agencies, merchants, tourists, and so on. Second, the tourism sector carries out environmental protection publicity and education, strengthens the knowledge of environmental protection among developers, practitioners, and tourists, reinforces warning education, and raises awareness of environmental protection. Third, the environmental protection department assesses the carrying capacity of the environment, dynamically regulates the number of tourists received, and promotes the sustainable development of eco-sports tourism in an orderly manner.

#### ***3.3 Market competition countermeasures***

First, the tourism sector creates differentiated competitive products and tourism experiences, highlights the characteristics and features of ecological sports tourism, and provides tourists with differentiated tourism experiences. Such as ecological sports tourism adventure, national sports and cultural interaction, immersive sports tourism activities, etc., these projects are more popular sports tourism activities for tourists. Secondly, the tourism sector develops segmented markets and provides customized sports tourism products and services to meet tourists' individual needs. Third, the tourism sector establishes a feedback mechanism, using tools such as mobile Internet programs and social media to promptly survey tourists' satisfaction and needs, etc., to understand customers' subjective feelings and tourism experience, and to provide assistance in optimizing ecological sports tourism products and services. Fourth, the tourism sector uses digital marketing techniques to improve the visibility of sports tourism products and attract tourists to experience them through social media, search engine optimization and online advertising. For example, the current WeChat, Jittery Voice, Little Red Book and other short video platforms, release tourism product experience, attracting countless tourists to emulate the experience.

### **3.4 Accessibility of sports events and strategies for participation in sports activities**

First, the government hosts special sports events to increase the fun of event sports activities. According to the regional characteristics of Ganzi Prefecture, it can host cycling, rock-climbing, skiing, flying and other kinds of sports events and activities, and develop experiential activities according to all kinds of sports activities so that tourists can also participate in them. Organizers set up lucky draws and popularity punch cards to attract tourists to participate in sports event activities on site. Second, the government develops reasonable pricing strategies and offers package discounts, seasonal promotions, and consumption subsidies to tourists to inspire them to participate in ecological sports tourism. Third, the government provides convenient transportation services to help tourists reach the event venues conveniently and quickly by improving transportation facilities, public transportation routes, and special buses. Fourth, the government develops participatory and experiential sports tourism programs to help tourists relax and have a good experience while exercising their bodies in sports activities. For example, a scenic spot in the mountains and forest area to establish artificial rock climbing project, attracting a large number of tourists to participate in the experience. At the same time, rock climbing is also a low-carbon environmental protection project, and the natural ecology of the scenic area into one, complement each other, and bring people a different tourism experience.

### **3.5 Security Countermeasures:**

First, organizers strengthen safety training and provide practitioners with appropriate safety training, including first aid, emergency management and wilderness survival skills, to ensure that staff are able to cope with possible emergencies. Second, organizers develop and implement safety standards and guidelines for eco-sport tourism, such as equipment inspection, activity protocols, and emergency plans. Third, organizers perform regular equipment maintenance. Regularly inspect and maintain the sports equipment, remove potential equipment safety hazards, and ensure the safety of the equipment. Fourth, organizers develop detailed emergency plans, including measures to deal with situations such as natural disasters, accidents, injuries and illnesses, and ensure that practitioners and tourists are aware of these plans before starting sports tourism activities. Fifth, organizers should improve the risk assessment system, conduct risk assessments of sports activities for tourists, evaluate their ability reserves to participate in the program, and allow those who meet the standards to participate in risky sports tourism programs.

## **4. Conclusion**

In summary, the current challenges facing ecological sports tourism are both important factors limiting the development of ecological sports tourism and opportunities for the development of ecological sports tourism. Solving these challenges can bring new opportunities for tourism development in Ganzi Prefecture. Therefore, the sustainable development of eco-sports tourism requires extensive cooperation and sustained efforts, and all forces need to participate together, including the government, tourism operators, sports authorities, environmental protection agencies and tourists, to promote the sustainable development of eco-sports tourism and provide new impetus for the economic growth of Ganzi Prefecture.

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