

Research on the Risk and Countermeasures of Returning to Poverty in Areas out of Poverty under the Impact of Epidemic -- Based on the Investigation of L County in Northern Anhui

Mengqing Liu^{1,*}, Jiayi Wang², Jing Zhao³, Tongmeng Zhu⁴

¹*School of Finance and Public Administration, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu, Anhui, 233000, China*

²*School of Finance and Public Administration, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu, Anhui, 233000, China*

³*School of Business Administration, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu, Anhui, 233000, China*

⁴*School of Economics, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu, Anhui, 233000, China*

*Corresponding author

Abstract: *The return to poverty due to the epidemic has become an important factor hindering the common prosperity of farmers and rural areas. The extremely destructive and fluctuating nature of the epidemic has increased the chances of the returning to poverty in areas out of poverty. How to do a good job of blocking the return of poverty in areas out of poverty under the impact of the epidemic has been an important task in the stage of comprehensive promotion of rural revitalization. Based on the field investigation of L County in northern Anhui, this paper analyzed the possible risk points of poverty return in the county under the background of the epidemic, and on this basis, explored the feasible ways to break through the impact of the epidemic and achieve the prevention of poverty return in areas out of poverty.*

Keywords: *impact of COVID-19; block return to poverty; common prosperity*

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has exposed some rural areas out of poverty in China to the risk of returning to poverty, affecting the effective connection between out of poverty achievements and rural revitalization. Therefore, under the strong impact of the epidemic, exploring the possible risk points of returning to poverty in L County, formerly a national-level poverty-stricken county, and exploring corresponding countermeasures and suggestions have a certain theoretical reference for consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation and steadily promoting the common prosperity of farmers and rural areas.

2. Overview of L County in Northern Anhui and the history of poverty eradication

2.1 Overview of L County in Northern Anhui

L County is located in the north of Anhui Province, the total population 1.7 million about, the poverty registration data show that in 2014, the county's poor households accumulated more than 200,000 people, the incidence of poverty 13.08%. L County was lifted out of poverty by the end of 2019. Before it was lifted out of poverty, L County was one of the top ten impoverished counties in China, belonging to the national-level poverty-stricken counties, key areas of contiguous poverty-stricken areas in Dabie Mountains and resource-poor areas in the Huanghuai Plain. The county traditional agriculture developed, the main crops for wheat, corn, some areas planted a small amount of cash crops. Limited by the low economic level, lack of natural resources, infrastructure and other practical factors, the county is difficult to attract investment, economic development is lack of large-scale industrial enterprises support.^[1] From 2015 to 2019, the per capita disposable income of rural residents in L County rose from 9,091 yuan to 12,950 yuan. In the same year, the per capita

disposable income in rural China was 16,000 yuan. In contrast, the per capita disposable income in rural areas of L County was much lower than the national average.^[2] It can be seen that after out of poverty, the county's economic problems are still relatively prominent.

2.2 The history of out of poverty in L County

Responding to the national call to implement precise poverty eradication. Since 2017, L County has paid close attention to poverty reduction and placed poverty reduction in an important position in the county's work. Focusing on accurate identification, solidly carry out special project verification activities for poor households, establish poverty reduction ledgers from household to household in accordance with the existing standards for poor households, and verify the list of poor persons. Focusing on precision poverty reduction, carry out counterpart assistance activities, allocate the corresponding person responsible for poverty reduction assistance to each poor household according to the degree and type of poverty, and fully implement 9 categories and 36 poverty reduction assistance measures, regularly Carry out feedback on the situation of poor households, dynamically revise existing measures, adhere to precise assistance, and implement efficient policies.

Pay attention to poverty due to illness and implement healthy poverty reduction. According to data released by the National Health Commission, by the end of 2015, diseases caused poverty in China accounted for more than 40 percent of all poor people, and were the biggest and most influential cause of poverty in China. In order to reduce the impact of diseases on the poor, the L County government has launched a health poverty alleviation strategy. On the one hand, it uses financial funds to pay 4.5 million yuan for the contracted rural doctor service for the poor, so as to realize that each poor household has a contracted doctor; on the other hand, it raises funds 35.06 million yuan, which is used to compensate for the serious illness insurance of the poor and hospitalization expenses, so as to minimize the impact of major diseases on poor households.

Adjust the industrial structure and implement industrial poverty reduction. In order to promote the adjustment of industrial structure and increase the employment opportunities of the resident population in the county, L County seized the opportunity of Anhui Province to undertake the industrial transfer of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai,^[3] accelerated the construction of industrial parks, and attracted enterprises from both inside and outside the province to settle in through preferential policies such as tax reduction and fee reduction. At the same time, vigorously develop advantageous industries such as local food and clothing, promote local industries to become bigger and stronger, and attract more poor people to employment. Taking advantage of the characteristics of sufficient light in the plains, L County vigorously develops the photovoltaic industry and builds photovoltaic power stations in more than 300 villages in the county, achieving an annual increase of more than 3,000 yuan per household. Through "leading enterprises + employment" and "poverty alleviation industries + poor households", poverty reduction of the poor will be promoted.

Pay attention to housing safety and implement relocation to alleviate poverty. Poor infrastructure is another important reason for the long-term poverty in L County. Since 2016, the county government has raised funds from various parties to start the relocation project for poverty alleviation and relocation to help poor households improve their living conditions. Data shows that from 2016 to 2017, L County achieved a total of 2,042 households and 5,755 people living in new houses. The relocation site is hygienic and tidy, with complete infrastructure such as water, electricity, roads, clinics, and schools. Through the relocation of poverty alleviation and relocation, we will create good production and living conditions for poor households, help poor families get out of the shadow of poverty, and gradually achieve poverty reduction and wealth.

After the long-term continuous efforts of the L County government and the people, the county's poverty reduction has achieved certain results, and finally achieved comprehensive poverty reduction in 2019, taking off the hat of a national poverty county, but poverty reduction is not the goal, and can hold the poverty reduction results. Achieving long-term sustainable development is the ultimate essence.

The author visited L County in the first half of 2022 and found that although the county has achieved successful poverty reduction, under the influence of the epidemic, there may be risk points such as unstable income, poor industrial development, and insufficient endogenous power for poverty reduction.

3. The main manifestations of returning to poverty due to the epidemic in L County

3.1 Income instability due to the epidemic

First, the source of wage income is difficult to guarantee. During the epidemic, many areas have taken measures to block roads and restrict travel to prevent the epidemic. Some companies have also chosen to reduce recruitment and lay off staff to deal with the impact of the epidemic, and the normal flow of people has been hindered. The annual floating population in L County accounts for about 40% of the total population, and almost every household has migrant workers. Due to the low level of education and the lack of single labor skills, migrant workers in this county are mostly concentrated in labor-intensive small and medium-sized enterprises, and their work is temporary, substitution and highly unstable. In 2020, the L County government released data showing that the growth rate of wage income of the rural population in the county fell by 6% year over year, and the numerical growth rate slowed down relatively. It is not uncommon for migrant workers to face restrictions on returning to work or lose their jobs due to the epidemic.

Second, the income from production and operation has shrunk. Not going out or leaving the village under unnecessary circumstances, restricting the transportation of agricultural materials, will hinder farmers from spring ploughing and sowing to a certain extent, and delay agricultural production. Epidemic prevention and control, traffic control, fresh vegetables, poultry, eggs, meat and milk products are difficult to transport, resulting in backlogs and slow sales. In addition, during the severe epidemic period, restrictions on population mobility and the opening of markets affected the sales of agricultural products by small and medium-sized farmers in the county, making it difficult to recover agricultural costs, and breaking the closed loop of production and sales. According to the analysis of the interview results, after the outbreak of the epidemic, the production and operation income of farmers in the county has dropped significantly, and due to the lack of fixed acquirers and consumers, for larger and medium-sized farmers, the ability of small farmers to deal with slow sales is weak, The decline in production and operation income is even greater, and the proportion of the population in poverty reduction is larger, and it is easier to return to poverty due to the reduction in sales income of agricultural and sideline products during the epidemic.

Third, transfer income is weak. In 2021, the county's regional GDP has increased by 3.2% compared with the previous year; fiscal revenue has increased by 4.9%; and the added value of large-scale industries has increased by 1%. Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, some economic indicators such as the gross regional production, fiscal revenue, and added value of large-scale industries in L County did not achieve the annual expected goals. The government's financial funds are insufficient, and the transfer expenditures such as unemployment benefits and hardship subsidies for the poor have also been reduced. Difficult groups that are highly dependent on government assistance and policy subsidies are difficult to adapt to for a while, and it is easy to cause the problem of returning to poverty.

3.2 Poor industrial poverty alleviation due to the epidemic

First, the original industry is in trouble. L County's industry has long been dominated by small light industries represented by garment factories, textile factories and food processing factories. There are obvious defects such as small industrial scale, low profits, and insufficient employment capacity. Although the development of "food processing factories + farmers" of Poverty alleviation methods has been explored, but compared with the number of monitoring households returning to poverty, poverty alleviation enterprises are far from meeting the needs. The low level of development of the "leading enterprises + poor households" model restricts the advancement of industrial poverty alleviation in this county. Epidemic impact, the county's poverty alleviation projects, poverty alleviation leading enterprises and poverty alleviation workshops are difficult to resume work and production in a short period of time, and poverty alleviation enterprises have weakened their support for poor households, and agriculture-related enterprises have been unable to pay dividends to farmers due to closure or closure.

Second, the absence of large industrial enterprises. Chinese scholars have found that when poor areas and poor households are supported by large enterprises, the probability of returning to poverty is reduced by 22% and 41%, respectively. The geographical location of L County is poor, the economic level is not high, and the historical debt of infrastructure buildings and public services is large, making it difficult to attract large industrial enterprises to settle down. The economic characteristics of a single

main body of poverty reduction assistance, lack of participation and support of leading enterprises, congenital deficiencies, acquired arrested development have led to a high risk of poverty in L County due to the epidemic and great pressure on the government.

3.3 The epidemic affects education for poverty alleviation

The direct impact of the epidemic on rural education in L County is manifested in three aspects: first, reducing the fluency of teaching and increasing the pressure of teaching. During the epidemic, schools generally use online teaching, and there are many middle-aged and elderly teachers in rural areas of L County, making it difficult to use various teaching apps for online teaching operations. Second, reduce learning efficiency and performance, and increase the addiction rate of electronic devices. On the one hand, the lack of face-to-face help and supervision from teachers greatly reduces students' learning and acceptance of knowledge, and their learning efficiency and performance are affected. On the other hand, rural parents are too busy working and pay insufficient attention to their children's education. When online learning, primary and secondary school students often find it difficult to resist the temptation, resulting in addiction to electronic devices. Mobile broadband has not yet been popularized and installed in some rural areas, and left-behind children whose parents are migrant workers lack electronic equipment for learning and other special circumstances, which will prevent students from participating in online teaching during the epidemic and reduce the quality of teaching.

4. Countermeasures and suggestions for blocking the return to poverty due to the epidemic in areas out of poverty

Strengthen the implementation of the work to prevent the return to poverty, prevent and resolve major epidemic crises, maintain the stability of economic development in poverty reduction areas, take multiple measures and make multiple efforts, improve the ability of poverty reduction areas and difficult populations to cope with the impact of the epidemic in an all-round and three-dimensional manner, through Scientific mechanisms and measures to block the return to poverty and consolidate the achievements of poverty reduction in my country.

4.1 Establish a risk investigation mechanism for returning to poverty due to the epidemic

Determine the monitoring objects and speed up the construction of a risk identification mechanism for returning to poverty due to the epidemic. Standardized identity verification and identification of monitoring households returning to poverty by combining residents' independent application, cadres entering households, and departmental monitoring and early warning. To implement the task of surveying and feedback on the development of monitored households returning to poverty during the epidemic, with grass-roots leading cadres such as village committees and rural revitalization specialists as the main force, it is necessary to carry out comprehensive and thorough investigations in a timely manner for the masses who are at risk of returning to poverty due to the epidemic, and realize early detection and early assistance. A monitoring and early warning system for the risk of returning to poverty is established based on income, expenditure and risk factors, and the risk of returning to poverty is simulated in real time. Pay close attention to major problems of returning to poverty such as slow-selling agricultural products, blocked labor migration, and declining industrial benefits for poverty alleviation that may be caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, strengthen data sharing and docking with industry and commerce, taxation, public security and other departments, and strengthen the investigation of major risks and hidden dangers of returning to poverty due to the epidemic.

Pay attention to changes in the livelihood of poverty reduction households, and establish a dynamic monitoring and adjustment mechanism for the risk of returning to poverty due to the epidemic. Strengthen the ability to perceive changes in the livelihoods of poverty reduction households during the epidemic, adopt multi-channel and multi-dimensional information collection methods to obtain more accurate and comprehensive information on the livelihoods of poverty reduction households, improve the adaptability of return poverty risk early warning system and poverty reduction household data, and achieve Advanced prediction and timely assistance. Strengthen cooperation with education, medical insurance, housing construction, civil affairs and other departments, use the poverty reduction risk monitoring and early warning system to conduct data mining on all the information obtained from poverty reduction households, and finally make an accurate "portrait" of the livelihood ability of

poverty reduction households, and efficiently predict the risk of poverty reduction, quickly adjust the warning level of return to poverty.

4.2 Improve the policy system to prevent returning to poverty due to the epidemic

In view of the possible phenomenon of returning to poverty due to the epidemic, it is necessary to do well in advance prevention from the policy. Accelerate the construction of a whole-process policy assistance system to block returning to poverty due to the epidemic, rely on the risk investigation mechanism of returning to poverty, grasp the information of monitoring households returning to poverty in real time, refine the reasons for returning to poverty according to the situation, and make good preparation beforehand.

Do a good job in adjusting and optimizing the policy to prevent returning to poverty during the epidemic. In the special period when the country has achieved poverty reduction and there is the possibility of returning to poverty due to the epidemic, it is necessary to promote the assistance policy to keep pace with the times and connect in a timely manner to ensure the adaptability and timeliness of the policy. Do a good job of evaluating and adjusting existing poverty reduction policies in combination with the actual situation, and continue to implement policies that have proved effective in poverty reduction in the early stage. At the same time, on the basis of comprehensively considering the impact and destruction of the epidemic, strengthen policy support at a tiered level; long-term and universal policies should be gradually transformed into a social security system, laws should be formed as soon as possible, and the implementation of the rural social security system should be ensured through mandatory means; a few policies with poor practical effects should be exited by setting a buffer exit period. During the adjustment period, it is necessary to maintain the stability and continuity of the policy, try to avoid the phenomenon of returning to poverty due to policy changes, and keep the bottom line that there will be no large-scale return to poverty due to the epidemic.

4.3 Promote industrial revitalization and deal with repeated COVID-19 epidemics

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "Developing industries is the fundamental strategy to achieve out of poverty." Accelerating the revitalization of industries in poverty reduction areas is the fundamental way to deal with the raging epidemic, curb the return to poverty, and hold on to the achievements of out of poverty.

Multi-angle efforts to steadily restore the primary industry. The first is to ensure the smooth transportation of agricultural and sideline products under the epidemic, contact transportation companies, cold chain companies to cooperate with agricultural production bases in poverty reduction areas, farmers' cooperatives, and poverty alleviation leading enterprises to strengthen cooperation, improve the transportation efficiency of agricultural products, and optimize the transportation of fresh and live agricultural products "green channel" policy to ensure the rapid passage of vehicles. Relying on the national anti-epidemic one-game chess idea, effectively expand the sales channel, use agricultural products in poverty reduction areas as an important source of effective supply of "vegetable basket" products during the epidemic, flexibly coordinate the demand of production areas and sales areas, and promote the precise docking of production and sales. In view of the Product unsalable of small merchants during the epidemic, government agencies and institutions can be appropriately used to purchase products to alleviate the problem of slow sales caused by the ups and downs of the epidemic and increase the income of farmers.

Take multiple measures to strengthen the landing assistance of large enterprises. Relying on local resources and characteristics, vigorously develop poverty alleviation leading enterprises, pay attention to the improvement of the number and quality of enterprises, in-depth development of agricultural and sideline product processing industries and related derivative industries, extend the industrial chain, promote the formation of characteristic poverty alleviation industrial clusters, give play to the agglomeration effect, and enhance industrial resistance, competitiveness and cohesion to resolve the impact of the epidemic. Improve the construction of infrastructure and public services in areas out of poverty, give full play to the "spatial spillover effect" of infrastructure, improve the attractiveness of location, attract large industrial enterprises to settle down, optimize the industrial structure of poverty reduction areas, and enhance the vitality and support of economic development. Formulate guiding policies, mobilize enterprises with certain economic strength to actively participate in helping poor households, reduce government pressure, and maintain economic stability under the epidemic.

4.4 Enhance the ability of poor households to get rich themselves

Ignoring the endogenous motivation of poor households, poverty reduction assistance and return to poverty blocking policies and measures can only treat the symptoms rather than the root causes, and cannot fundamentally solve the problem of return to poverty. To effectively fight against returning to poverty, we must focus on poor households, take ideological change and ability improvement as the main goal, and promote poor households to poverty reduction and prosperity.

Change negative thoughts and build a solid foundation for getting rich. Poverty is mostly accompanied by backward thinking, negative actions, lack of endogenous motivation for out of poverty, and do not pay attention to people's subjective initiative. During the epidemic, still maintain a habitual acceptance mentality, and returning to poverty will naturally come to the door. To promote the transformation of the thinking of poor households, it is necessary to pay attention to the decisive role of internal factors, strengthen the ideological and cultural education of poor households, use rural radio stations, loudspeakers and other media to publicize poverty reduction policies, poverty reduction deeds of advanced figures, etc., pay attention to various forms, Humor is easy to understand, so that the masses are willing to accept, and the concept of getting rich is implanted in a way that moistens things and is silent. Give full play to the role of grass-roots leadership, the village two committees, the specialized cadres of rural revitalization, and the major residency secretary go deep into the front line of poverty reduction, pay attention to the poverty reduction status of poor households, listen to the voices of poor households, encourage the poor to view poverty correctly, establish self-poverty reduction awareness, Integrate Fuzhi into the long-term poverty reduction mechanism, adhere to the dominant position of poor households, and actively respond to the impact of the epidemic.

Improve employment and entrepreneurship ability and stimulate the potential to become rich. To achieve out of poverty and become rich, the key is to ensure that poor households have a stable source of income, from "two-nothing" poor households who have no jobs to rely on and cannot afford poverty reduction, to "three-have" rich leaders with skills, ability and funds. Starting from the local situation and the needs of poor households, carry out practical agricultural skills training, hold long and short-term training courses nearby, and use expert lectures, on-site consultation and other methods to popularize professional and technical knowledge. Encourage farmers to go out to learn agricultural breeding and e-commerce sales techniques, organize large-scale farmers in the seed breeding industry to share their personal experiences using modern distance education methods, improve farmers' agricultural science and technology level, and stimulate their passion for getting rich. Develop and improve the microfinance system, integrate poverty alleviation microfinance with the popularization of financial knowledge, sunshine credit operation, filing credit rating of poverty registration and credit system construction, and ensure that farmers dare to lend, can lend, and can lend, and provide financial support for poor households to start their own businesses. Promote the transformation of the assistance method from "blood transfusion" to "hematopoietic", enhance the ability of poor households to become rich in an all-round way, and smoothly connect with rural revitalization.

4.5 Improve the effectiveness of education in blocking return to poverty

Education is the foundation of poverty reduction and the most important step to realize rural revitalization. Comprehensively strengthen the investment and construction of infrastructure and hardware for rural education, while accelerating the equalization of basic public education services, improve the supply level of software for rural education resources, increase support for rural primary and secondary schools in terms of educational concepts, teachers, information-based teaching, curriculum resources, and teachers and students' grasp of modern educational resources. Increase support for rural primary and secondary schools, and promote rural education to catch up. During the transition period of out of poverty reduction and the connection stage of rural revitalization, achieving stable out of poverty in the form of assistance is not a long-term solution, but to promote self-reliance and self-improvement of the poor, in education, which is more reflected by changing the "feeding" policy assistance to Incentive policy. For example, moderately reduce the intensity of ordinary education subsidies, increase the proportion of funds that reward excellence, encourage advancement on the basis of basic assistance, optimize policies and measures, and play a positive incentive role. Establish an employment information collection system for college students from poor families, introduce preferential policies for college students' return to their hometowns for employment subsidies, and establish a targeted employment assistance mechanism for graduates from poor families, so as to achieve a smooth connection between "education-employment" and "investment-return", and gradually improve the livelihood of poor families.

In October 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Promoting the High-Quality Development of Modern Vocational Education",^[4] highlighting: "Consolidate the positioning of vocational education types, and promote the coordinated development of vocational education and general education according to local conditions." Poverty-stricken areas should actively develop vocational education, do a solid job in vocational education publicity, publicize the advantages of vocational education through village-level radio, TV channels, home-to-home publicity, etc., popularize my country's vocational education policies and measures to benefit the people, gradually eliminate the prejudice of vocational education, and shape the rural vocational education identity. To further strengthen the pertinence and inclusiveness of vocational education, it is necessary to strengthen guidance, encourage school-age adolescents, especially children of poor households, households out of poverty, and monitoring households, to enter vocational colleges to study, and promote the acquisition of practical skills and improve survival skills. Focus on expanding the enrollment of rural vocational education. Through policy publicity, mass mobilization, and structural improvement, let more people understand vocational education, attract interesting people to participate in vocational education, set up a flexible academic system for the public, set up majors based on local development needs, and focus on cultivating "new farmers" and "new able people" to cultivate reserve forces for rural revitalization.

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