

Cases of Whole Village Advancement in Poverty Alleviation and Development

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1 Summary

The history of the development of human society is the history of fighting against poverty.

Due to natural and historical reasons, the issue of poverty and the reality of poverty exist in China for a long time. Alleviating and eliminating poverty and finally achieving common prosperity has always been the objective for which the Chinese Government is striving for. Since the rural economic reform in 1978, benefited from the rapid development of national economy and poverty alleviation operation, the poverty in rural areas has been greatly alleviated. The number of poverty-stricken people in rural areas with problems obtaining sufficient food and clothing decreased from 250 million in 1978 to 30 million in 2000; and the impoverishment rate decreased from 30.7 percent to about 3 percent. The strategic objective set by the Chinese Government of fixing the problem of food and clothing of poverty-stricken people in rural areas by the end of the 20th century has basically been realized. This achievement has greatly contributed to the world's battle against poverty and has attracted worldwide attention.

Poverty targeting is an important prerequisite to the work of poverty alleviation and development. As we entered the new century, the distribution of poverty-stricken population in rural areas shows new characteristics. Poverty-stricken population is now concentrated in units such as villages instead of regions or counties. To cope with this, the focus of poverty alleviation and development should also be diverted to lower levels. Work shall reach villages and target individual households. “At the present situation when poverty-stricken population is relatively concentrated , it is even more important to pay special attention to having poverty alleviation and development services available to individual villages and households. Only by doing so can all measures of poverty alleviation and development be implemented and the quick solution of food and clothing problem be realized”¹. To cope with the new changes and new requirements, the approach of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation has been worked out from practice.

Whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development is a work approach that takes poor village as basic unit, poverty-stricken population as object, village poverty alleviation planning as basis, the coordinate economic, social and cultural development of the village as objective, the improvement of basic conditions, the promotion of industry development, the strengthening of capability construction, the standardizing of democratic management, the promoting of new civilization, village face-lifting, the stable solution of food and clothing problem as main contents.

¹Speech delivered by Wen Jiabao on 24 May, 2001 at the Central Working Conference on Poverty Relief and Development.

According to the requirements set by the Outline, by 2010, poverty alleviation and development planning for 148,000 poor villages shall be completed in China's poor rural areas. 74,300 of them are from West China, takes up 50 percent of the total figure; 58,600 of them are from Central China, takes up 40 percent of the total figure and 15,200 of them are from East China, takes up 10 percent of the total figure. The minority inhabited poor villages take up 34 percent of the total figure. These poor villages cover over 80% of the country's total poverty-stricken population. Up to the end of 2006, implementation of whole village advancement planning has been completed in 54,000 poor (administrative) villages and 10,000 natural villages and has achieved good economic and social results. After the implementation of whole village advancement planning, the villages have seen great improvement in basic conditions, the villagers' income has increased, there are visible changes to the appearance and environmental sanitation of the villages, the villagers' self-government has been strengthened and there is great improvement in social harmony. Practice has approved that **whole village advancement is the reflection of the wisdom of the cadres and the people of poverty-stricken areas. It is an important move to promote poverty alleviation and development in present situation, an important form, holding point and platform of the construction of new villages in poverty-stricken areas. It is an important innovation in poverty alleviation and development in the new period.**

2. Background and History

2.1 Theoretical Grounds

Whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development is the product of adopting community development theory in China's poverty alleviation practice. Community refers to the body of people living in same locality. Poor village is a relatively independent community. After the Second World War, some international organizations headed by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations have gained some experiences on promoting social development through community development in the process of providing aid to underdeveloped countries and regions. And the experiences are: depend on the participation of the local residents, in coordination with the government, explore and utilize local resources, integrate external assistance, make best use of the creativity and the local advantages in solving local issues and promote the local development.

According to community development theory, its objective including the following 4 aspects: (1) Economic development, that is to promote the economic development of communities and increase their income; (2) Social development, that is to establish good interpersonal relationship within the community and rational social structure; (3) Political development, that is to develop community groups and organizations among residents and to cultivate the residents' democratic awareness and the capacity of self-government and mutual aid ;(4) Cultural development, that is to promote ethics and moral principles that is good for community's progress; to promote the development of science, education and culture. To achieve the above objectives, following principles should be followed: democracy and self-government,

public participation, community cooperation, comprehensive planning, paying special attention to the order of community development, giving emphasis to education and community mobilization, self-reliance, equal attention to material and spiritual development, coordinated social and economic growth. At the same time, there should be scientific planning for community development. The following procedures are usually followed while making planning :

- Assessment. Make research and learn about the community through history and present information on geography, natural resources, population, society and economy.
- Setting up objectives. In general, the objective is to create the best economic, social and material environment. However, the objectives vary from community to community, even the same community has different objectives at different stages of development and each individual planning has its own objective.
- Data analysis. On the basis of data collected, work out community planning on local resources, problems and solutions and specific sub-objectives.
- Work out draft plan.
- Finalize the plan. The finalization of the plan shall go through some steps: selecting plan from several draft plans, listening to the views of the community, amending the draft plan, examining and adopting the plan and make announcement of the plan.

The model of community development is basically a concept of participatory approach of development. Its most distinctive characteristic is mobilizing community residents and fully respecting their principle status, wishes and wisdom.

With regard to development objective, principle and planning, the whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development has reflected the fundamental spirits of community development theory. At the same time, in the process of

implementation, special attention is paid to respecting the local culture, tradition and custom; taking the local conditions into consideration and giving emphasis to the principle status of poor peasants and their participation. The participation of poor peasants as principle is reflected in: peasants' voluntary participation; intervening in the process of construction such as decision-making, implementation, profit sharing; revising whole village advancement plan and supervising over relevant staff working for whole village advancement implementation. The effectiveness of peasants' participation not only strengthened poverty-affected people's capability of self-development, but also greatly improved the performance of poverty alleviation and development which is dominated by Chinese government.

2.2 Practical Basis

The South-West China, Qinba mountain area poverty alleviation loan project financed by World Bank that was implemented in the 90s of last century adopted a cross-industry, comprehensive and integrated development model of poverty alleviation. The project first started from analysis on the causes of poverty and worked out a cross-industry, comprehensive poverty alleviation development model that had multiple measures to address the various factors that contributed to the poverty: such as the harsh natural environment, low productivity, limited access to social and technical service for poor peasants and labour shortage. The implementation of project was quite successful. Practice has proven, South-West China, Qinba mountain area poverty alleviation project has successfully tested the effectiveness of this cross-industry, comprehensive and integrated poverty alleviation

and development model. Through practice, it has created a new concept of poverty alleviation and development in new situation.

The practice of South-West China, Qinba mountain areas comprehensive development project has positive influence over the development concept and approach of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development. It is reflected in : (1) Comprehensive poverty alleviation involving multiple departments. The effective concept and approach in poverty alleviation is fully reflected in the strategy and polices of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation; (2) Participatory Village Planning. The international institutions of World Bank adopted the concept and approach of participatory planning in poverty alleviation projects in China in which they participated. In the poverty alleviation development in the new period which started from 2001, it was adopted as compulsory method and system and was widely applied to all villages nationwide in their implementation of whole village advancement planning; (3) One planning, phased implementation. The project planning and implementation method of “one planning, phased implementation” of South-West China poverty alleviation project was adopted by whole village advancement and was extended nationwide.

2.3 History of Development

After the planned, organized, large scale poverty alleviation and development since the 1980's of last century and the implementation of “National 8-7 Poverty Reduction Plan” in particular, the country’s distribution of rural poverty-stricken population has

greatly changed, regional poverty in contiguous stretches and vast areas has been greatly alleviated while the characteristic of concentration of poverty within communities has been highlighted. The poverty-stricken population covered by 592 key counties has dropped to 55%, leaving nearly half of the poverty-stricken population outside the key poor counties listed by government. Even for key poverty counties, the poverty-stricken population is also mainly concentrated in remote poor villages with harsh natural conditions. The new pattern of poverty-stricken population distribution calls for adjustments in poverty alleviation approach. Poverty alleviation and development services must reach down to villages and the supports accessible by households. Therefore, at the new stage, poverty alleviation and development should focus on poor villages with concentrated poverty-stricken population. Taking village as basic unit to work out and implement poverty alleviation and development planning. Making one single planning, whole village advances.

The model of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation featured by “unified planning, annual phased implementation, integrate resources and advance as a whole”, **realized the shifting of work focus to lower levels, subdivided working units and correctly set up working objectives.** Looking back, whole village advancement in poverty alleviation had undergone three stages:

Experimental and Exploratory Stage (1998 – 2000) In 1998, based on the project management experiences of South-West China, Qinba Mountain Area Poverty Alleviation Loan Project financed by World Bank, Gansu Province put forward the concept of combining project management with villages and households and launched

pilot projects in ten poverty-stricken villages in the same year. In 2000 , after summarizing the experiences gained from the pilot projects, Gansu Province put forward the concept and model of “whole village advancement” in poverty alleviation and development for the first time. The basic practices of this poverty alleviation model are: involve the villagers to participate extensively in the process of development plan making; adopt the concept and method of participatory approach to organize the public to participate in the implementation and management (including organization management, planning management, training management, procurement management, supervision management, funds management, project check and acceptance management, follow-up management, monitoring and evaluation and etc.) ; intensify capacity construction (including households and management organs, personal ability construction); establish effective mechanism and etc. As it is very effective in poverty alleviation, the model is included in the Outline for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China's Rural Areas (2001-2010).

Large Scale Promoting Stage (2001-2002). Gansu’s practice and experience are promoted nationwide. The distinctive characteristics of this stage include: intensify capacity construction through large scale training; emphasize on applying participatory approach to the implementation of whole village advancement planning in poverty alleviation and development. That is to say emphasize on giving full respect to the rights of the subject of poverty alleviation and development in regard to whole village advancement. The rights include the right of access to information, the right to choose, the right to participate, the right of decision making, the right to supervise and the right to manage.

The Stage of Overall Improvement (Since 2003). There are three distinctive characteristics about this stage: firstly, the Leading Group of the State Council for Development-oriented Poverty Relief has put in more efforts in whole village advancement and further strengthened policy guide by issuing supporting policies such as “Opinions on Strengthening the Building of Rural Grass Roots Organizations in Poverty-Stricken Areas and Improving Whole Village Advancement in Poverty Alleviation and Development”, “Opinions on Strengthening Whole Village Advancement in Poverty Alleviation and Development”, “Opinions on Making Joint Efforts in Whole Village Advancement in Poverty Alleviation and Development and Build Harmonious Civilized New Villages” which helped to regulate and improve whole village advancement. Secondly, our Office has put forward six areas of construction in whole village advancement based on practice : infrastructure construction to improve basic production and living conditions ; the construction of social undertakings to improve the quality of population; industry construction to increase income; the construction of spiritual civilization to set up new code of civilized conducts; standardized and orderly construction of democracy; the building of organizations at village level centered by the building of village party branch. Thirdly, put emphasis on the integration of resources in implementing whole village advancement.

3 . Main Contents

3.1 Working Objective

The working objective of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation is: to solve the problem of food and clothing of poverty-stricken population and consolidating the results; to promote the comprehensive economic and social development of poor villages; to consolidate the foundation for the coordinated growth of poor villages; to establish and improve the long term mechanism of sustainable development of poor villages; to strengthen the capacity of self-development of poor villages; to work hard to achieve the objectives and tasks set by “Outline for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China’s Rural Areas (2001-2010)”; to lay sound foundation of the construction of new villages and harmonious society.

3.2 Principles for Implementation

(1) The Principle of Target Aiming. The objects of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development are aimed at poverty-stricken households that are recorded on file. (2) The Principle of Public Participation. The public participate in the whole project process of poverty alleviation including the choosing of projects, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation. This has reflected the subject status of poor households and guaranteed poor households’ right of access to information, the right to choose, the right to participate, the right of decision making, the right to supervise and the right to manage so that poor households shall receive benefits. (3) The Principle of Adjust Measures According to Local Conditions. To set

up the objective, contents, procedures, model and standards of development in light of the situation of poor village and with consideration of market demand and comparative advantages.(4) The Principle of Comprehensive Management. Make comprehensive development in economy and social undertakings and have coordinated development. (5)The Principle of Resources Integration. Taking poverty alleviation funds as “binding agent”, integrate resource and tackle tough issues through joint efforts. (6) The Principle of Sustainable Development. Develop human resources, strengthen scientific and technical support. Improve poor village’s capacity of self-development. Improve follow-up management, consolidate the results of poverty alleviation and make sure that the good results of poverty alleviation could last for a long time.

3.3 Development Models

●**The Model of Comprehensive Development** Take administrative village as basic units, improving the basic conditions of the villages, develop leading industry, strengthen capacity construction and make improvement in the appearance and environmental sanitation of villages.

●**The Model of Whole River Basin Advancement** Take natural river valley that has similar topographic and production features as basic unit, integrate all resources, make unified planning for the whole area, organize and implement poverty alleviation projects, focus on improving the production and living conditions of the poor in the area.

●**The Model of Joint Development of Contiguous Areas** According to the general planning of regional industrialization, base on the advantages of geography and long term objective of development, make unified regional arrangements on whole village advancement projects in villages that have similar regional features and industrial distribution. To establish common industrial development zone on contiguous stretches of land.

●**The Model of Resettlement** For poor villages with harsh ecological environment and extremely difficult living conditions, make arrangement for resettlement on the voluntary basis and in a positive and sound manner.

3.4 Areas of Construction

- ① Infrastructure construction to improve production and living conditions. Mainly includes road, irrigation, potable water facilities for people and livestock, construction of basic farmland, rural power grids upgrade and the construction of methane-generating pits.
- ② Social construction to improve the quality of population. Mainly includes the development of elementary education in rural areas, medical health, culture and technical training.
- ③ Industry construction to increase the income of peasant. Mainly includes structural adjustment in agricultural production, set up production bases, develop crop cultivation, aquiculture and poultry raising farming, forestry and fruit cultivation, agricultural products processing industry.
- ④ The construction of spiritual civilization to set up new code of conducts. Mainly includes environmental sanitation, social morality, professional ethics, family virtue, transforming old and backwards habits and custom, family planning and

the fight against superstitions.

- ⑤ Standardized and orderly construction of democracy and legal system. Mainly includes: social construction and management, transparency of village affairs, openness of government affairs and administration by law.

Special Column 1 The “Four Powers” System of Sichuan Yilong in Democratic Administration of Village Affairs

Yilong County of Sichuan Province has established “Four Powers” (power of leading, decision-making, implementation and supervision) system in the administration of village affairs. That is : village party branch strengthens the power of democratic administration of village through raising issues, organizing the making of proposals and having public hearing; village plenary (representatives) meeting is responsible for making decisions on important village affairs and standardizing the democratic decision making in village management; village committee takes responsibilities for carrying out decisions, implementing the execution power of democratic management of village; establish village supervision committee, invite “peasant inspector” to participate and monitor the administration of village affairs throughout the whole process, so as to guarantee the supervision power of peasants.

- ⑥ The building of organizations at village level cantered by the building of village party branch. Mainly includes: the construction of village cultural fronts, the capacity building of teams and etc.

3.5 Organising the Implementation

(1) The Selection of Poor Village

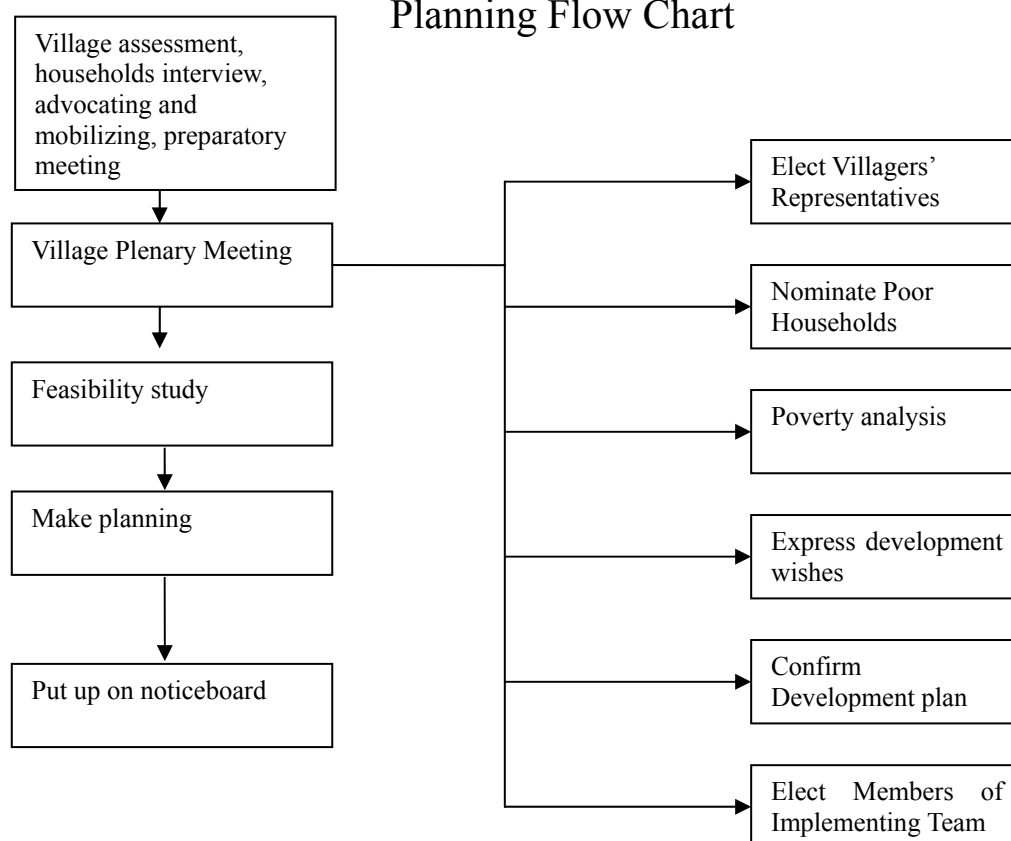
In principle, the selection of poor village is conducted according to the weighted poverty index (WPI)² suggested by expert panel of the Asian Development Bank.

² The index weighted 8 indexes at village level, they are living conditions (average annual grain yield per capita, average annual cash income and proportion of households living in adobe houses) , production and living conditions (proportion of households having problems of drinking water, proportion of households with power supply, proportion of natural villages accessible to motor vehicles) , health and education conditions (incidence of chronic disease among women,

The advantage of the method is that the selection takes the factor of income as well as infrastructure and social development indexes into consideration. These composite indexes could reflect the overall poverty situation of a village, therefore are helpful in target aiming.

(2) The Making of Planning

Whole Village Advancement Planning Flow Chart



□ Assessment, households interview, advocating and mobilizing, preparatory meeting.

drop-out rate among primary and secondary students) . Then use weighted WPI to sort out village order, the higher the index, the poorer the village.

Understand basic situation, grasp basic information, advocate poverty alleviation policies, deliver science and technical knowledge and market information, inspire and guide the enthusiasm and initiative in poverty alleviation and development, get ready for village plenary meeting. At the same time, conduct poverty analysis through villagers' group meeting and villager representatives meeting, classify households groups according to income and funds feasibility, work out the tentative number of priority households to be supported, recommend candidate projects.

□ Village plenary meeting. Mobilization speech; briefing on preparatory work; elect villager representatives; elect poverty-stricken households ; poverty analysis ; work out the outline of development perspective; summarize development projects; select development projects; elect members of village implementation team.

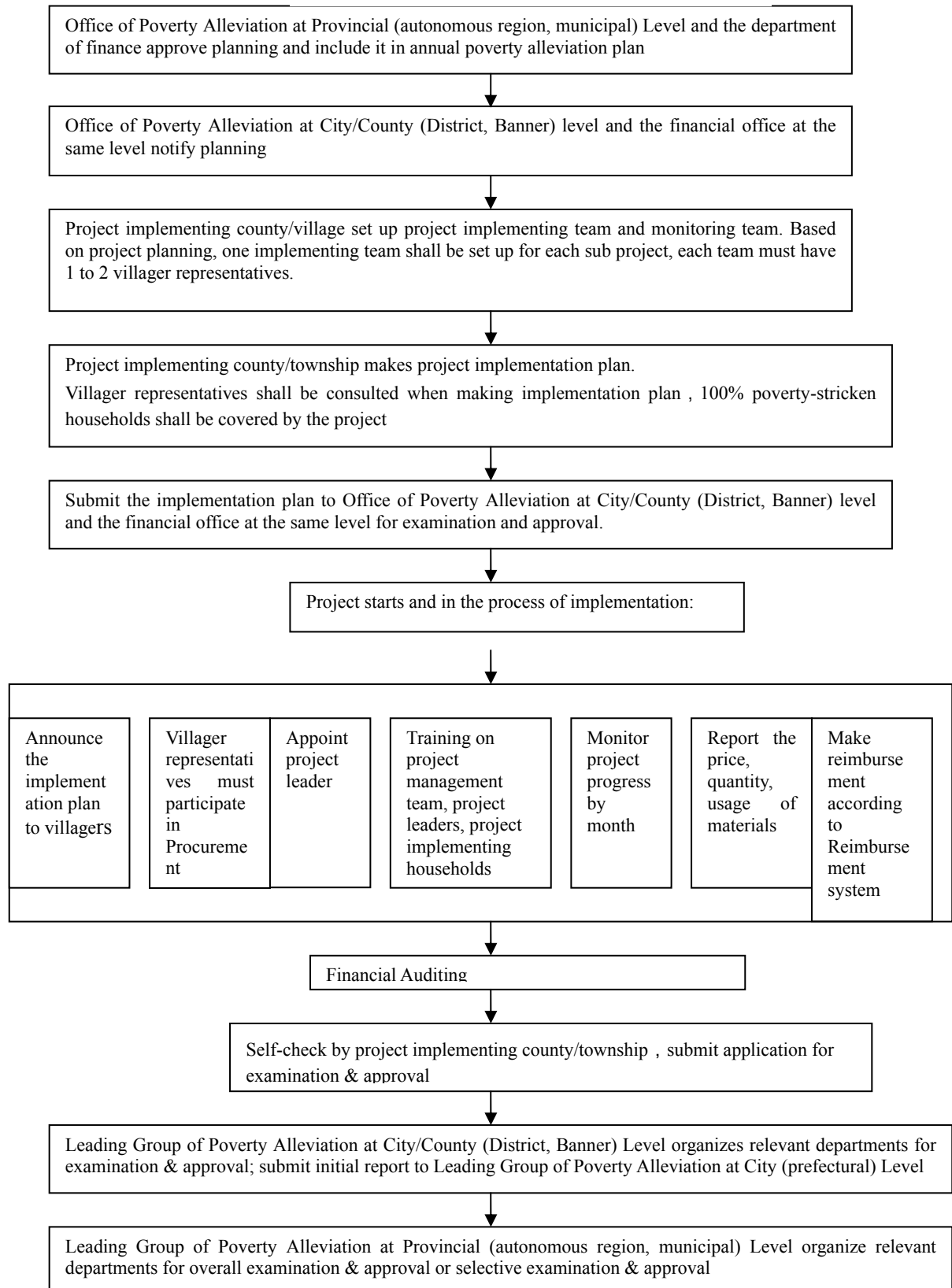
□ Feasibility study. Resource research, survey and design, technical appraisal; market forecast, benefit analysis, selecting implementing locations and range, make report on project feasibility study.

□ Planning making. Basic situation, the state of poverty and problems, guidelines and specific objectives of planning, proposed projects, funds and its scale, the implementation and management of project, monitoring and appraisal, project benefit analysis.

□ Put up on notice board. Report on main contents of planning, including projects and funds, benefiting households, implementing location and timetable.

(3) Implementationn Flow

Whole Village Advancement Implementation Flow Chart



Special Column II The “Eight Working Steps” in Implementing the Planning at Village Level by Malou County of Chongqing Municipality

Step One: survey on public opinions to find out what do they want.

Step Two: call for meeting of party members, cadres and villager representatives. Make initial plan through discussion.

Step Three: advocate plan to reach consensus and have villagers’ options on the initial plan. Try to win the understanding and support of the most majority.

Step Four: finalize the plan through democratic discuss, have many meetings of party members, cadres and villagers representatives, revise and improve the plan according to villagers’ opinions, nominate candidates of the leading group of project construction, the number of ordinary villagers must take up at least 50% of the candidates. All money and materials shall be managed by villager representatives. Cadres manage other businesses except for money.

Step Five: have every household’s signature for approval. Implementation shall only go ahead with over 85% of approval.

Step Six: divide the project and assign to households.

Step Seven: villagers group organize the implementation.

Step Eight: put the project completion settlement on notice board. After the completion of project, villagers’ financial management committee clear the account, return the surplus and make up for the shortfall, put the result on notice board. All villagers can check the accounts any time they like.

(4) Follow-up Management

Villages that have already completed the planning implementation shall set up follow-up management team/association through plenary village (or villager

representatives) meeting to serve the project management, to explore agricultural product market, to strengthen project management, to improve project quality and to make the project more sustainable.

3.6 Typical Cases — The Practice of Whole Village Advancement in Chongqing (2002 to 2006)

3.6.1 Village Selection

In selecting and nominate poor villages, Chongqing mainly adopted the approach of “Taking control over the total quantity, adopting scientific measurement and calculation, balancing various factors, having combination between the higher and lower levels”, to be specific:

Taking control over the total quantity: Taking the feasibility of aid funds to poor villages into consideration and the number of poor villages from agricultural economic statistics that have average annual income per capita of less than 1,000 Yuan as basis, Chongqing selected 3,270 poor villages. That is 16.2% of the administrative villages.

Scientific measurement and calculation: the calculation was mainly based on five indexes: peasants’ average net income per capita of the previous 3 years, peasants’ average consumption expenditure per capita in 1999, peasants’ disposable income in 2000, the average financial position per capita of each district/county in 2000 and the

state of poverty of each district/county. Then make overall analysis and calculation on impoverishment rate of each district/county, next use impoverishment rate as the basis to reach the number of poor villages in each district/county.

Balancing various factors: the municipality compared and balanced the basic value with many factors; invited experts to have discussions and assess, conduct analysis, tests and verifications; took all efforts to make sure that the poor villages are tally with the actual situation, the impoverishment rate of poor villages synchronize with the impoverishment rate of poverty-stricken population and keeping the balance among counties.

Having combination between the higher and lower levels: The municipal notifies districts/counties of the number of poor villages. Then districts/counties carry out the implementation to villages through the approach of having combination between the higher and lower levels. To be specific: For districts/counties that have integral and accurate basic data, indexes shall be set based on data collected through research. Score shall be marked according to weight. The total score shall be calculated. Then all villages will be sorted according to their score. A preliminary plan shall be worked out according to the number of poor villages notified by the municipality. At the same time, all counties/townships are required to sort villages under their jurisdiction according to the degree of poverty. District/county shall have comprehensive analysis on the calculated poor villages and the sorting plan and make it more balanced. After this, the preliminary plan will be sent to townships for comments. Adjustments shall be made for disputed issues after individual investigation. At last, the county party

committee and county government shall discuss and finalize the plan. As for districts/counties that do not have integral and accurate basic data, calculation shall also be carried out through the method of multi-factor analysis and the number of poverty-stricken population and poor villages will be divided between townships. Each township will organize carders to sort villages under their jurisdiction according to the degree of poverty and report to the county. The county shall calculate the number of poor villages in each township and make list of the poorest villages according to the sorting conducted by townships. The preliminary plan shall be sent to townships for comments. After this, the county party committee and the county government shall give their approval.

3.6.2 Clarify Objectives

Objectives : after setting the targets, the Leading Group of Poverty Alleviation at Municipal Level made 8 standards that should be met in the construction of poor villages and they are: (1)Accessible by village road, 60% of villager's groups shall be accessible by simple road; (2) Build over 0.5 mu per capita of basic farmland where conditions permit ; (3) Make potable water facilities for people and livestock available to over 80% of the households, among which 30% of household shall drink tap-water ;(4) Peasant's average net income per capita shall pass 1,300 Yuan; (5) Over 90% of households have one pillar industry(including having an annual average of over 3 pigs sold or have stable income from working away from home) apart from grain; (6) Eliminate households living in caves, shacks and houseless households; (7) Have permanent village clinic and certified health workers, 100% of attendance rate

of primary-school-age children; (8)100% of groups have electricity; over 80% have radio and television coverage.

3.6.3 Making Village Planning Scientifically

After the number of poor villages and the total amount of investment are confirmed, the municipality then will make overall arrangements for village planning. Details of planning and procedures are:

1. Make research to find out facts, classify in groups. Conduct comprehensive research on poor villages about their natural conditions, infrastructure and etc. Have poverty assessment to find out main issues and problems that need to be addressed. According to the research on the situation of poverty in 100 poor villages in 2001, classify 3,270 poor villages of the municipality in four groups: □ **Class I Group** : the average net income per capital of 1,000 to 1,200 Yuan. There were about 1,000 such villages, takes up about 30% of the total poor villages in the municipality. □ **Class II Group** : the average net income per capital of 800 to 1,000 Yuan. There were about 1,200 such villages, takes up about 40% of the total poor villages in the municipality. □ **Class III Group** : the average net income per capital of 600 to 800 Yuan. There were about 750 such villages, takes up about 20% of the total poor villages in the municipality. □ **Class IV Group** : the average net income per capital of less than 600 Yuan. There were about 370 such villages, takes up about 10% of the total poor villages in the municipality. The rate of households that had difficulties in maintaining simple reproduction was over 60%; the number of absolute poverty-stricken

households also takes up over 60% of the total. Only part of the villages in this group can be lifted from poverty locally. As for the rest of villages, the only solution is resettlement.

2. Selecting Development Projects. Make breakthroughs in three key areas of construction which is centered by steadily solving the problem of food and clothing and consolidating the achievements in accordance with the key requirements of poverty alleviation and development at the new period. These three areas are: the construction of infrastructure (road, water, land, electricity); basic industry (crop cultivation and aquiculture and poultry raising); basic quality of population (education and health).

3. Make Village Planning and Create Report on Planning The municipality made overall arrangements and required that all village planning shall have two tables, one chart and one report. They are the table of basic conditions, project planning table, the chart on deployments of project planning and the report of village planning. After the planning is completed, it shall first be checked by townships and submit to county level for check. The county planning will be made on this basis. After each county has finished planning, the municipal level shall have check on every district/county and made the overall municipal poverty alleviation and development planning.

3.6.4 Organize Project Implementation Meticulously

After the approval of village planning, each district/county shall make arrangements

on the construction of projects in poor villages by stages and in groups. Each township shall make implementation plans for sub-projects that have been approved on the same year: i.e. choosing the project location, survey line, engineering design, nominating leaders of the construction, the organization of labour, the procurement and management of materials, budget, the integration and management of funds, the solution of land occupation and green corps on the land, quality supervision and etc. Plenary village meeting shall be called to discuss all these issues one by one and work out the planning. Comparisons shall be made to decide on better plans for some of the projects. In the process of project implementation, the township will send special carders to give on-the-spot guidance, to coordinate and to solve the problems arising from the construction.◦

3.6.5 Check & Acceptance Management and Follow-up Management

After the completion of the implementation of whole village advancement projects in poverty alleviation , each district/county shall send people from relevant departments to conduct check and acceptance on villages that have completed the planning. The certificates of check and acceptance will be filed away. The person in charge shall sign the certificate and shall be responsible for the check and acceptance. County/district will then report to the municipal level after self check for selective or comprehensive check and acceptance.

The work of management and maintenance after poverty alleviation projects have completed is particularly important. Chongqing requires that each project must have

personnel or association in charge of the democratic management in place. This has been included in the project check and acceptance as one of the check items. Every village road has road maintenance association. Potable water facilities for people and livestock have water association. Management measures have been worked out in a democratic way; maintenance staff is democratically elected and their rewards are also worked out democratically. Long term mechanism of poverty alleviation project management has been established to address the problem with public utilities in rural areas of paying more attention to construction rather than management and ensure lasting benefits of the projects.

4 . Results and Significance

4.1 Results Evaluation

Up to the end of 2006, implementation of whole village advancement planning has been completed in 54,000 poor (administrative) villages and 10,000 natural villages and has achieved good economic and social results. The intermediate stage evaluation³ of “Outline for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China’s Rural Areas (2001-2010)” shows **that the progress of whole village advancement is very smooth. The peasants’ average annual net income per capita in poor villages that had larger inputs could increase by over 50% within 1 to 2 years.**

1 . Peasants’ income has been greatly increased. The average net income per capita

³ Quantitative estimation analysis on the effects of whole village advancement from the intermediate stage evaluation of “Outline for Poverty Alleviation and Development of China’s Rural Areas (2001-2010)”.

in villages that have implemented planning is 1,593 Yuan; the figure of villages that have not implemented the planning is only 1,133 Yuan, 460 Yuan less.

2. Basic conditions have been greatly improved. According to survey, 76.5% of the villages that have implemented the planning are now accessible by bus, 94.3% have electricity, 70% could be reached by telephone, 69.2% have postal service, 76.4% have television coverage.

3. Sense of Self-management Strengthened. The whole village advancement projects follow the principle of “electing by people, managing by people, benefiting people and supervising by people” and have fully aroused the villagers’ initiative in participating project construction. It also strengthened their sense of being masters of their own affairs. The villager’s sense of actively participating, sharing decision making and democratic management has been activated. It has truly reflected the concept of poor households being the subject of poverty alleviation and development.

4. Great Improvement in the Appearance and Environmental Sanitation of the Villages. The implementation of whole village advancement has improved the social and economic development of poor villages. It has also brought new changes to the appearance and environmental sanitation of the villages and promoted progress of civilization. The new code of conducts has been set up: the villagers learn new knowledge, uphold science and transform social traditions. They enjoy an equal and friendly relationship among themselves. They are more united and

help each other to make progress.

5. Construction of Basic Organizations in Rural Areas Strengthened. Whole village advancement has changed the passive situation of basic organizations in poor villages caused by the lack of working funds and measures. It has also increased the fighting capacity and strengthened the centripetal force.

6. Comprehensive Development of Social Undertakings. Almost all villages that have implemented whole village advancement planning have village clinics and recreation rooms. There is obvious decline of the drop-out rate of school-aged children. The difficulty in seeking medical service for poor peasants has also been effectively alleviated.

4.2 Important Significance

4.2.1 Innovation of Poverty Alleviation Methods. Whole village advancement has realized the shift of the focus of poverty alleviation and development to lower levels. It has brought the relief services to villages and households and had solved the problem of poverty targeting in a relatively satisfactory way. At the same time, it has also provided an opportunity for poor villagers to express their wishes, increased the awareness of democracy among grass roots cadres and the villagers in poor villages and inspired the peasants' initiative in self-development. All of these are innovations of poverty alleviation methods.

4.2.2 Platform of Resources Allocation. Both the theory and the practice of poverty alleviation worldwide are heading towards the direction of covering broader area and in further depth. For countries, poverty alleviation is no longer the business only for government and single department, not just simply a matter of money and material. It needs a good platform of social and economic development to realize the effective integration of all sorts of resources and to tackle the problem in joint efforts. The working pattern of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development which is characterized by “government taking the leading role, all departments moving in coordination and with the whole society participation” has provided a platform to mobilize and muster all social forces to participate in poverty alleviation.

4.2.3 Carriers of the Construction of New Villages in Poverty-affected Areas. Building new socialist countryside is an important historic task in the modernization course of our country. It is also the core issue of the work of “agriculture, country and peasant” in new period. Poverty-stricken areas are the focus of building new countryside. It is also the most difficult part of the course. The six contents of construction of whole village advancement are consistent with the objective of building new countryside. In poverty-stricken areas, whole village advancement has become an important component, form and carrier of the building of new countryside.

4.2.4 The Foundation of Harmonious Society. Social harmony is based on the

elimination of poverty. The existence of poverty and the growing gap of development are all disharmonious factors of society. Whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development can help to increase the peasants' income, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, the gap between residents, the gap between the rich and the poor. It also helps to promote the harmonious economic and social development in poverty-stricken areas and helps to achieve the harmoniousness among human beings, the harmonious co-existence of human and society and of human and nature.

5 . Basic Experience

5.1 Government Taking the Leading Role

The government has great advantages in the fight against poverty and plays a role that is irreplaceable. This is the Chinese characteristic in poverty alleviation and development. The smooth implement of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development is mainly thanks to the high attention paid by Chinese government to people's livelihood. It has also benefited from the unremitting efforts made by Chinese government in seeking of effective poverty alleviation system, policies and measures. Government has played dominant role in policy guidance, scientific planning, mobilizing the society and resources disposition so that the work of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation could go ahead in a planned,

organized way.

5.2 Public Participation

The key of participatory approach in poverty alleviation is to give powers to poor households and make sure different social groups in different gender and from different cultures can equally participate in the discussion, decision making, management and supervision. It is an effective approach for the democratic management of villages, self-management and self-development. Practice has proved that participatory approach in poverty alleviation is fruitful. Its positive significance is reflected in: respect the subject status of poor households; respect their wishes and wisdom; inspired the self confidence of poor households and their sense of being masters of their own affairs; brought forth poor households' creativity. All these have helped to generate more benefits from poverty alleviation project. (The villagers participate in the whole process of village poverty alleviation development planning from planning, implementation to management. It not only helped to have a more accurate understanding of the peasants needs which resulted in better choice of project, but also reduced the resistance in the process of project implementation and villagers could really benefits from the project.)

5.3 Resources Integration

Integrating resource to form combined force is an important guarantee to the realization of comprehensive development and treatment. Each area uses poverty

alleviation funds as the “binding agent”, follows the principle of “ensuring orderly channels, keeping the proposed purposes, acting in accordance with the division of functions and duties and making awards according to performances” and has effectively guided all kinds of resources to poor villages. This has effectively alleviated the difficulty of insufficient investment of fiscal poverty alleviation funds. There are mainly three channels for resources integration: one is to integrate all kinds of government agriculture-related funds, including the investment to agriculture from departments in areas of agriculture, transportation, water, education, health, forestry and civil affairs and give first priority to use the funds to cover poor villages. Secondly, to integrate resourced from whole society, work hard to win the support from international organizations, domestic enterprises, social organizations and individuals. Thirdly, to integrate peasants’ own resources and invest labor to poverty alleviation and development.

5.4 Assistance from the Society

Carry on and further develop the Chinese nation’s good tradition of helping the poor and mobilize the whole society in helping people from poor villages to get rid of poverty and become rich. It is an important drive for whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development. Assistance from the society to whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development has strengthened the external support to the social and economic development of poor villages. This important external force, combined with the force of government and the force of poor households, has created huge productivity. It has helped with the shifting of work

focus to lower levels and had brought direct benefits to poor households.

5.5 Sustainable Development

The comprehensive treatment of poor villages must give great importance to sustainable development from the beginning : to strengthen the construction of capacity, to improve the poor households' ability of self-development ; to take more efforts to explore the mechanism of rolling utilization of funds and realize the renewable utilization of fiscal poverty alleviation funds; strengthen the project follow-up management to make sure the project continues to generate benefits. These practices reflect the concept of sustainable development of poor villages.

6 . Challenges

6.1 Tough Objective and Task. 148,000 poor villages were selected to implement whole village advancement nationwide, but so far there are still 92,000 poor (administrative) villages and 30,000 poor natural villages that have not completed the implementation or have not even started the planning. Furthermore, most of these villages lay in remote mountain areas with harsh natural conditions and weak economic foundations. To implement poverty alleviation and development planning in rest of the poor (administrative) villages and poor natural villages by 2010, the task is very tough and time is pressing.

6.2 Low Level of Construction. According to the statistics of the middle stage

evaluation of the Outline on 70,000 poor villages in 16 provinces (municipalities, autonomous regions), the average planned poverty alleviation funds for each poor village is 2.28 million Yuan, while the actual average investment of poverty alleviation in each village is 340,000 Yuan, only 15% of the total demand. Since it is difficult to invest more funds in the near future, the construction of poor villages at present is still at relatively low level. It only laid the foundations for future development.

6.3 Big Difficulty in Resources Integration. Restricted by administrative management system, the integration of department resources is hard to achieve. At one hand, poverty alleviation funds are managed by many departments and it is not unified. Therefore it is very difficult to be integrated internally. On the other hand, the management requirements of agriculture related departments and departments supporting agriculture easily contradict that of local governments'. As the result, it is also difficult for external resources to be integrated with poverty alleviation funds.

6.4 Deviation of Target Aiming. Whole village advancement has targeted poor villages, but more difficult and painstaking work has to be done in order to target the poverty-stricken population in poor villages. Not all that live in poor village are poverty-stricken population so the poor are recorded on file. In the process of village planning implementation, the project implementation does not always target at the poverty-stricken population recorded on file. Due to some interfering factors, project construction and filing could become two different issues. It is obviously unfair for the poor in the village.

6.5 Long Term Mechanism of Steady Increase of Peasants' Income Yet to be Solved. According to the follow-up study of Chongqing on the income growth of peasants in 42 poor villages from 2001 to 2005, the peasant's income increase in poor villages is mainly due to the following factors: One is the factor of price rise, 58 Yuan per capita, takes up 6.4% of the total 893 Yuan increase of average net income per capita in 42 villages; The second is the returning of farm land to forestry. The total returned area of 42 villages is 34,969 mu, annual subsidies from the state is 7.34 million Yuan. The average increase of income per capita is 129 Yuan, 14.4% of the total figure. The third is the income from working away from home, average increase of income per capita is 554 Yuan, 62% of the total figure. Income from these three factors takes up 83% of the total income increase of peasants. Income increase from the primary industry takes up only 17% of the total figure. The villagers are concerned that there is no safe guarantee of the income from working away from home. After the returning farm land to forestry policy stops, there will be no policy-related income. This will have negative influence over the continuous increase of peasants' income.

7 Future Actions

7.1 Strengthen Capital Integration. Working from all prospective, gradually set up diversified poverty alleviation inputs mechanism that has multiple channels and covers broad areas. Establish a mechanism of steady growth of fiscal poverty alleviation, increase the proportion of annual fiscal poverty alleviation funds in

financial funds for agriculture and give full scope to the role of main channel. Use fiscal poverty alleviation funds as “binding agent”, guide institutions to take poor villages as priority in their investment ; use fiscal poverty alleviation funds as “lever” to push forward the expansion of poverty alleviation credit funds scale; use fiscal poverty alleviation funds as “incentive and subsidies” to encourage counties/villages to invest in corresponding supportive funds. To improve the system of social donation, mobilize and encourage the whole society to participate in whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development.

7.2 Innovate New Poverty Alleviation Models. Innovate and improve the model of whole village advancement in poverty alleviation and development in light of the local conditions. Firstly, have joint development of contiguous stretches on the basis of whole village advancement where it is appropriate. Manage in a comprehensive way, adjust objectives according to regional economic development and industrial structure. Work hard to cultivate industries with local advantages, promote scale economy, increase income if poverty-stricken population. Secondly, for poor villages that lack of basic living conditions, resettlement should be carried out actively and steadily. The resettle should be voluntary and in accordance with the local realities and capacity.

7.3 Attain Accuracy of Target Aiming. Targeting the poor is the intrinsic requirement of poverty alleviation. Reduce poverty-stricken population is the final objective of poverty alleviation and development. In the process of whole village advancement, special attention should be given to avoid and do away with the

phenomenon of equalitarianism. Project implementation shall persistently aim at recorded poverty-stricken households on file. Adhere to the system of giving first priority to poverty-stricken households, take best efforts to make sure that poverty-stricken households receive the benefits. With regard to working approach, when choosing and implementing projects, respects shall be paid to the opinions of the poor instead of the opinion of the whole village even though the poor are the minority in poor villages.

7.4 Strengthen Sustainable Development. There should be studies on follow-up management of whole village advancement projects. Follow-up management shall be strengthened in poor villages that have completed planning implementation to consolidate the success in poverty alleviation. Efforts shall be made to improve the management and supervision of rolling capital for poverty alleviation as well as goods and materials. Follow-up audit shall be conducted when necessary to ensure the safe operation of project rolling capital, goods and materials. Consolidate and expand poverty alleviation results in real earnest. Work hard to cultivate special cooperation organizations in poor villages and improve the capacity of self-management and self-service. For example, introduce pilot project of “village mutual aid fund”. Establish a steady and lasting training mechanism to help poverty-stricken households to learn new knowledge and skills in order to help them to cope with new social changes.