

Relocation as a Mode of Poverty Alleviation: A Case Study of Jinggu County, Yunnan Province

Putian Pu*

To cite this article: Putian Pu (2022). Relocation as a Mode of Poverty Alleviation: A Case Study of Jinggu County, Yunnan Province. *Malaysian Journal of Chinese Studies* 11(1): 71–88. [http://doi.org/10.6993/MJCS.202206_11\(1\).0005](http://doi.org/10.6993/MJCS.202206_11(1).0005)

To link to this article: [http://doi.org/10.6993/MJCS.202206_11\(1\).0005](http://doi.org/10.6993/MJCS.202206_11(1).0005)

Abstract

The year 2020 was a decisive year when China won a nationwide battle against poverty to build a moderately well-to-do society. The key to combat poverty was placed on practical measures to identify poverty-stricken areas. One of the measures to relieve large numbers of people from poverty was relocation. Yunnan province is predominantly mountainous or hilly with many poor counties that often suffer from natural disasters. Taking the case of a typically poor, mountainous, and highly inaccessible Jinggu County for a special study, this paper evaluates the process of relocating 3,721 households during the years between 2016 and 2018, and the resolution of a series of subsequent problems after relocation. By means of a questionnaire survey, the investigation focuses on the manner by which relocation was carried out and the management of problems that followed. By means of a series of response measures and suggestions, the study will attempt to provide a useful reference on poverty alleviation through a relocation model.

Keywords: Mountains, relocation, Jinggu County, poverty, survey, response measures

“Since China implemented fully its precise poverty alleviation measures, an annual average of over 10 million people have been freed from poverty, which has created a miracle in the history of poverty reduction in the world” (Zou & Li, 2020: 54).

Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party headed by the General Secretary Xi Jinping, has made it clear that eradicating absolute poverty is one of the most urgent tasks in China. Xi claimed that it is critical to meet the basic requirements of the poor in food, clothing, education, medical care and housing security by 2020. For him, lifting the poor out of poverty is the core indicator directly related to the quality of his political mission (Ju, 2015). Xi (2017) also urged that poverty alleviation efforts must be carried out in five ways in response to the specific needs of each poor area and its people. These include improvements in the production system, education facilities, social security measures, resettlement of the poor, and compensation to those who have been resettled.

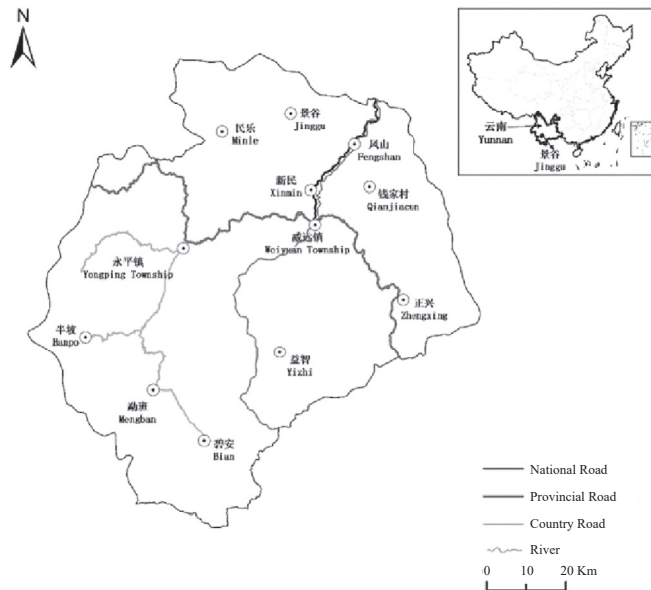
In the context of Yunnan's rugged topographic terrains and other unfavourable factors, the province's extremely serious poverty levels are among the most difficult to manage in the country. It has a total of 88 counties classified as poor with 94% found in mountainous and rugged areas characterised by karst formation and even subjected to earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, floods and other natural disasters. Of these counties, 27 contain 3,539 abject poverty villages that were most in need for resettlement (Liu & Yu, 2020).

Jinggu County is typical of counties in the struggle against poverty and abject living conditions. Preliminary studies indicate that the relocation of villagers is perceived to be the only means to improve the economic destiny of these inhabitants as an effective strategy of poverty control. Relocation is the process of shifting existing settlements in physically hilly and relative remote areas to new resettlement villages located in easily accessible sites and served by modern facilities.

Relocation Measures

Jinggu County, also known as Jinggu Yi Autonomous County, is located in the southwest of Yunnan province and situated to the west of Pu'er City with Ning'er County to the east and Simao District to the south (Figure 1). It is home to 10 towns and townships and 136 administrative villages. Its population in 2018 was 316,600, of whom 270,000 or 83% were classified as farmers. The ethnic Han people made up slightly half the population while the Dai and Yi minorities made up the balance of 152,900 or 48.3%.

The county has a land area of 7,777 sq km, of which 97.5% are mountainous and hilly, with 78.3% under forest cover. Basic infrastructure is generally poor which makes access and external links extremely difficult. The county is rated as one of the 27 poorest in the province.

Figure 1*Jinggu Yi Autonomous County, Yunnan Province*

A first visit was made on June 10, 2017, together with the Secretary for Poverty Alleviation stationed at Weiyuan Township and other village heads, to the villages of Qianjia and Wenhui to call on households that were required to move out and be resettled elsewhere. The purpose of the visit was to be familiar with the difficulties and problems of the villagers concerning transport, water supply, electricity, telecommunications, education and related infrastructure issues.

In a second visit a year later, again with the help of local officials, we approached a few resettlement villages around Weiyuan Township, namely Qianjia Village from which 172 households and 713 persons have been relocated to the vicinity of the township of Weiyuan, together with other similarly relocated villages of Mangnai, Baoshan, and Daping. A questionnaire was distributed to 50 heads of resettled households based on a random sampling method. The results were processed and analysed to provide a proper understanding of the effectiveness of relocation, job training and problems of adaptability.

The survey confirmed that poor living conditions were found to be the principal reason for moving out among 35% of the sample (Table 1). In the original location, transport cost had made up 40% of all household expenses. Before resettlement, surveyed households on average received almost half of their income from farming and petty trade, and another 40% from government assistance and other aids to maintain a subsistence level of living.

Table 1*Survey Results from Resettlement Villages Around Weiyuan Township, 2018*

Key reasons for moving out	Poor soil fertility 20%	Poor living conditions 35%	Water scarcity 5%	Poor infrastructure 15%	Inconvenient education & medicare 20%	Local specific problems 3%	Others 2%	Total 100%
Expenditure pattern before the move	School fees 25%	Medicare 15%	Daily expenses 5%	Transport 40%	Entertainment 2%	Farm tools 10%	3%	100%
Income source before the move	Farming 25%	Off farm or petty trade 20%	Incidental wages 10%	Subsidies from collective 5%	Securities fund from government 25%	Poverty aids 10%	5%	100%
Landuse change after the move	Return to collectivity 10%	Hand-over to relatives 5%	Conversion to other uses 5%	Return to forest 5%	Left idle 5%	Return to farm 70%	0%	100%
Income after the move	Farming 5%	Off farm or petty trade 20%	Wage income 60 %	Subsidies from collective 5%	Securities fund from government 3%	Poverty aids 2%	5%	100%
Improvement after the move	Housing Yes	Employment Yes	Medicare Yes	Schooling Yes	Farming income Yes	Easy transport Yes	Nil	Yes
Difficulties faced after the move	Little land and far away 50%	Higher living expenses 10%	Unable to find job 20%	Adaptation to new life 5%	Limited water supply to farming and livestock 5%	Poor Infra-structure 1%	9%	100%
Follow-up improvement needed after the move	Transport 5%	Farm Facilities 5%	Skill training 50%	Employment creation 30%	Medicare 5%	Services for elderly 10%	5%	100%
Expenditure after the move	School fees 10%	Medicare 10%	Living Expenses 40%	Transport 10%	Entertainment 20%	Farming 5%	5%	100%

Note: The survey was conducted by the author and local assistants in September 2018. A total of 50 questionnaires was distributed to resettlement villages around Weiyuan Township.

Resettlement brought substantial improvements in living conditions. While 70% of the agricultural households continued to farm their land, 60% of the households were able to receive a wage income in the new settlement. This shows traditional subsistence farming was rather inefficient and many had to resort to wage-earning employment in the new settlement. Hence 50% of the households claimed that they needed training to seek non-farm employment. Nevertheless, resettlement had resulted in half the interviewees complaining of being allocated with farm plots that were much smaller than their lost farmland in the old villages. Resettlement had also increased expenditure among 40% of the households as they could no longer enjoy relative self-sufficiency in basic needs in grains, vegetables and livestock from their original farms.

In 2013, an official preliminary study identified 100 of the 136 administrative villages as poverty villages, comprising 14,247 poor households or 52,383 people. A target was then set by the provincial government to relocate 3,721 poor households or 14,292 people in two years in 2017 and 2018. According to official instructions, the selection criteria, objective and relocation method were determined as follows (Song, 2021):

Five selection criteria were used in the decision to relocate poor villages. These were as follows:

- Villages sited in deep and rocky mountainous areas suffering seriously from severe cold, desertification and soil erosion. These areas were suffering from poor soil fertility, water supply, and sunlight to meet the production needs of local inhabitants.
- Farming areas situated within the prohibited or restricted development zones identified by China's "Major Function-oriented Zone Planning" under the jurisdiction of the State Council.
- Areas lacking in transport and communications, water and electricity supplies, education, and medical facilities, and where the provision of such infrastructure was extremely costly and difficult.
- Environmentally fragile areas that were prone to the occurrence of serious and frequent natural disasters.
- Areas prone to earthquake disasters or affected by reservoir construction.

According to the relocation procedure, households were to sign a "relocation agreement" with the township government on the demolition of old houses and the payment of compensation. Upon the agreement on dismantling the old houses, poverty relief and the compensation package would be paid out.

Depending on the specific needs of affected households in different areas, resettlement could take place in centralised or dispersed villages. Households in centralised villagers would move in groups to settle along important traffic routes based on rural township development planning.

The villages would be located near an industrial park or holiday resort with the potential for rural tourism. Where the villages were dispersed, the households could shift into urban-like settlements along traffic lines with easy access and where those who found jobs in nearby urban areas could be settled in local rental housing blocks.

Every resettled household received a subsidy of 20,000 yuan for building its new house in addition to 6,000 yuan as compensation for the self-demolition of the old house. The subsidy for land for housing varied from place to place. Households relocated about 3 km of Jinggu County Town was entitled to 12,000 yuan each, while those located within 3 km of a township and in a centralised village along key traffic lines received 10,000 yuan. Those who resettled on their own were not entitled to any subsidy payment (Jingbanfa, 2016).

In 2016, Jinggu County identified 1,151 poor households or 4,319 people within its jurisdiction for resettlement in 41 centralised sites, comprising of 846 households or 3,167 people, and 305 households or 1,152 people in decentralised sites. In 2017, the local resettlement planning agency was to relocate 2,570 households with 9,973 people (Jingbanfa, 2016). By the end of December 2018, the construction of all 3,721 relocation housing units in Jinggu County were completed and approved. Some basic infrastructure projects and subsequent work were also put in place.

The impact of the relocation plan is conspicuous and the sharp contrast between housing conditions between the old sites and the new resettlement sites is unmistakable (see Figures 2 to 5).

Figure 2

Examples of Housing Conditions before Relocation in Qian Jia Village , Zhenyuan Town, Jinggu County, Yunnan Province

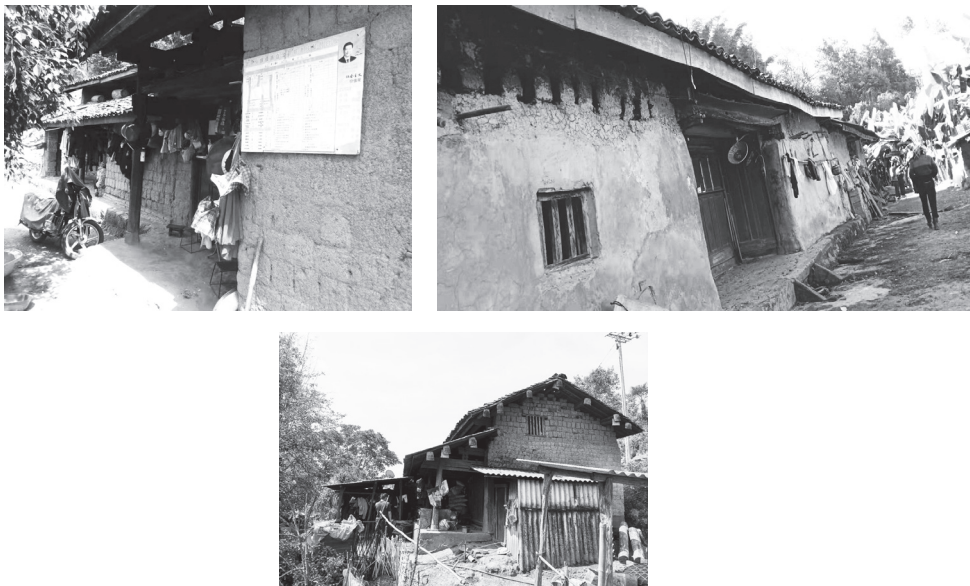


Figure 3

A New House of a Three-Member Family, Zhenyuan Town Xinmin Village Mangnai Centralised Settlement

**Figure 4**

A New House of a Two-Member Family, Zhenyuan Town Xinmin Village Mangnai Centralised Settlement

**Figure 5**

Panoramic View of a Resettlement Village



Note. Photos taken by the author, September 2017

Relocation Practices and Outcome

The relocation efforts in Jinggu County were executed in an orderly manner to achieve desired results. The execution included operations that involved housing construction, funding and various other related issues. The success of the relocation exercise would be determined by the extent of positive results in upgrading the quality of life of the resettled villages.

Relocation Procedure

The “Jinggu Yi Autonomous County’s Poverty Reduction and Relocation Implementation Program”, specified in Jinggu Office Issue (2016 No. 36) and 2017 Notice No. 49), entitled all poor households scattered in mountainous and hilly areas that lacked modern facilities such as proper roads or living under constant risks of environmental hazards to government guidance and aids in the relocation exercise (Jingtuo Zhifa, 2017). The task of implementing the relocation efforts was placed under the overall supervision and management of Jinggu County’s party Secretary General and his deputy secretaries. All those to be relocated were allocated their housing units according to the household size and their preferred location. Legal documentation regarding compensation and compliance to specific duties were duly signed and agreed upon by the parties involved.

To provide funding for relocation, Jinggu County Xingjing Investment Co. Ltd. was established in 2015 in association with the Pu’er branch of the Agricultural Development Bank of China as the main body to make available construction loans to the resettled villagers. In the period from 2015 to 2018, funds to the amount of 695.30 million yuan were secured to underwrite the costs of relocation activities, and split largely between providing subsidies for private housing construction amounting to 374.73 million yuan, and the balance of 320.57 million yuan for infrastructure construction.¹

A mandatory “double monitoring system” was put in place under which a key representative from the county government and the Director of the major developer company would form a joint management team to check on the progress of the relocation work. Their role was to oversee and supervise all 72 relocation settlements to ensure that construction of housing, infrastructure and public services were executed according to plan. They would have to make clear to their 740 cadres that organisation in terms of policy publicity, housing construction, relocation measures, demolition of old houses, and the subsequent non-farm employment and other assistance work were to be properly conducted for the benefit of the villages and to meet required standards.²

Outcome of Implementation

By the end of December 2018, the construction of 3,721 relocation housing units for 14,292 people had been completed and successfully passed the quality check. Our survey shows that a Li family, originally living in hilly Qianjia village, had to send their children to a primary school

10 km away from home after their village school was demolished as it had too few pupils. To make it easier for their children's education, a few village households opted to lease small plots of land near Weiyuan Township and lived in simple houses built with hollow bricks and asbestos tiles. Consequently, relocation had improved the quality of housing and accommodation and better access to modern services.

Improved living conditions are an immediate result of resettlement. The move from the old villages that lacked infrastructure especially transportation and educational facilities to centralised settlements providing easy access and services such as piped water, electricity, access roads, broadband Wifi, cultural rooms, recreational venues and public toilets is a fundamental change in the living conditions of the average villager. The random questionnaire survey indicates that 98.3% of the respondents believed that the new living environment and conditions were significantly better than the old ones. For example, the 58 households from Liu'an Village under the jurisdiction of Yongping Township were relocated to sites close to a Yongping Township's primary school and medicare centre, and the two high schools of the Jinggu County Town to provide access to hitherto unavailable public services.

The survey results confirm that the income levels of resettled households have improved. As the relocation programme was aimed at employment protection, industrial training was organised to train resettled residents to adapt to the needs of new employment opportunities. More specifically, assistance was provided to enable residents to engage in new avenues of employment (Zhang & Duan, 2020).

Population exodus from the old villages has led to the abandonment of farmland. Efforts were made to encourage the leasing of idle farm plots for commercial farming and aquaculture. Commercial crops such as sugarcane, fruits and vegetables were considered viable crops that would yield relatively good cash income. The County's organising committees would train potential farmers to take up commercial farming. In the Mangnai resettlement area, the survey revealed that 112 households had leased a total of 530 mu^3 of farmland to grow sugarcane, vegetables and fruit trees. In 2018, each household was able to earn a net income of 12,000 yuan.

Another form of assistance was job training in tailor-made activities and occupations to support the new life of resettled residents with dependable means of livelihood. Through skills training, the displaced population can master one or two skills, especially in labour-intensive employment to help job-seekers without proper qualifications. The more readily available jobs would be in local community services, handicrafts and other local activities.

To be meaningful and sustainable, it was essential that the relocation process would enable resettled residents to have access to adequate and stable levels of income to meet a living standard comparable to the low- and middle-income earners of the normal urban sector (Zhang & Duan,

2020). In the Fuxingzhai settlement in Weiyuan Township employment was available in construction, catering services, the cultivation of vegetables, sugarcane and watermelon, in fish breeding and vehicle repair. In 2018, the town generated more than 450 jobs for resettled residents, creating an aggregate income of about 3 million yuan. At the same time, more than 80 physically disabled and elderly persons were trained and assigned simple public welfare postings for which they received a monthly income of 300 yuan.

Special projects were also undertaken to create employment opportunities. One was the development of poverty-relief workshops to help the poor to engage in home-based activities to boost their income. By the end of 2018, 15 poverty-relief workshops had been set up in Jinggu County to provide work for 228 persons. The subsidy of 5,000 yuan for each household had allowed 50 relocated households from Minle Town to invest 70,000 yuan to improve and expand a tea plantation to increase its production. Members of the participating households could work in the plantation or to engage in management or sales in contract negotiation or in the design of development plans. In another innovative attempt, villagers were encouraged to undertake photovoltaic power generation projects. The new source of electricity would meet domestic needs as well as to supply power in the cultivation of crops, aquaculture and the processing of agricultural products.

Additional Measures to Promote Employment

Concerted attempts were made to promote employment among relocated settlers. These included compiling information on their employability; encouraging relevant enterprises and social organisations to provide job opportunities; the matching of their job skills with new employment services; and the posting of fresh college or university graduates to assist them in setting up new business ventures.

In the compilation of information, a logbook system was created to record details of the age, education, skills, and job preference of resettled residents. This data bank might be shared among different levels of local government departments, public and private enterprises and various co-operatives to facilitate appropriate arrangements in the deployment of jobs. The data bank was constantly updated and stored in a digital format.

Enterprises and social organisations that offer employment to the new residents were provided with social insurance subsidies or one-off job subsidies upon acting as sources of stable employment. A subsidy of 200 yuan of social security benefits was granted to an employer who made available a stable job to a resident for 3 to 6 months, and 250 yuan for up to 12 months thereafter for each per employed person.

For fresh college or university graduates, rural areas offer prospects for new business ventures. Over 90% of these graduates might wait up to a year for job offers. Graduates from rural areas would

be encouraged to explore possibilities of starting their own businesses as an alternative way to lift them out of poverty and at the same time to create employment opportunities. Guidance would be given to the fresh graduates and the eligible candidate might obtain a loan of up to 100,000 yuan to initiate a business venture.

Relocation also helped the young to match their job skills to new employment services. In the towns of Yongping, Yiban, and Bi'an, an employment transfer service centre was established to facilitate job transfers for villagers. During special events such as the "Employment Assistance Month" or "Private Enterprise Recruitment Week," work fairs were organised as a platform between enterprises and interested villagers in a recruitment drive for the benefit of both parties.

Monitoring and Supplementary Work

Follow-up actions are seen as imperative to enhance effectiveness of resettlement. The role of the village cadres is crucial to monitor progress and checking on those who encountered difficulties. From September 2018, cadres paid weekly visits to resettled farmers to monitor their progress, to understand their problems and to seek solutions. The frequent meetings enabled the cadres to learn of the farmers' work plan, their problems and to act together to seek practical solutions on the basis of mutual trust.

Educational forums were organised to foster ways to build up "cultured villages" in which family matters would be managed rationally, village sanitary services would be upgraded, and harmonious inter-personal relations would be promoted to raise the quality of life. At village meetings, participants were encouraged to express their views and share their experiences on ways to improve production and income. Prior to resettlement, certain villagers might refrain from social interaction, addicted to drinking, or generally disinterested or lacked confidence in life. Resettlement and its new social environment and new way of life brought hope to even the lethargic and disinterested. The exposure to a different environment and a new home, and fresh economic possibilities was largely positive and beneficial.

Relocation and Its Problems

The influence of the relocation scheme will be felt over a relatively long period of time. The immediate impact was the assurance of security of housing while the longer-term one would only become apparent from the subsequent adaptation of the resettled villagers to the fundamentally changed situation. The lack of education could hinder the villagers' willingness or ability to adjust accordingly to ensure survival and livelihood. The physical separation from their familiar living environment and their farms might create new problems including those of a psychological nature.

The purpose of relocation was ultimately one of “moving out, be steady and then getting better off” (Xinhuashe, 2020). This can only be fulfilled if the villagers could overcome obstacles that hinder efforts to settle down and to improve their income.

Relocation is only the beginning of in the fight against poverty. The follow-up work of tackling different problems and difficulties would be a test of the efficiency of the cadres and the trust of the villagers. At times, administrative procedures and work were more complicated than envisaged, notably in the area of compensation and dispute resolution. The process of adaptation also proved to be difficult for some resettled residents. From the questionnaire survey, several problems may be identified.

The first concerns re-employment of the resettled villagers. The rural-urban dichotomy in social and economic life poses problems to settlers after they move into the urban-like living environment (Zou & Xiang, 2017). It was essential that settlers were able to engage in economically sustainable activities. This would entail training on new skills to meet the demands of re-employment. In this connection, the Jinggu County’s human resources and security bureau provided training in pig and cattle raising, tea cultivation, and skills in welding, mud-brick making, among others. The training lasted between 15 and 30 days in welding and mud-brick design, or took place during busy farming periods to conduct on-site practical demonstrations on livestock raising and cultivation techniques.

Another issue concerned the need for farm tools brought along from the old settlement could hardly be used and it was impractical to return to cultivate the old farms to supplement the land allocated in the new settlement. Some settlers had wanted to grow vegetables or raise pigs or fish near the new settlement to earn additional income or for self-consumption. That this was not possible had led to a sense of disorientation among some of the settlers.

Although the formation of farming co-operatives was encouraged, the results were unsatisfactory. Some villagers were not even aware that co-operatives had been established in some villages or in the County. The allowance of 1,000 yuan as an incentive to participate in co-operative farming was considered inadequate and ineffective (Jingtuo Zhifa, 2017).

The process of shifting families to new settlements had often encountered resistance from some especially if they had to move 50 km or farther away. Distance and cost of travel had prevented some villagers to demolish their old homes or to handle livestock and other production materials in the abandoned villages. Certain elderly people also found it too emotionally detached from their old homes where they had lived for a long time. Unsurprisingly, some opted to remain behind to tend their farms and livestock, and to keep a lifestyle of their choice (Zhang, 2018).

Abandoning a home in a traditional village to live in a planned and modern township was more than a physical movement but also a process of social adaptation. There was an urban and

rural cultural gap that would emerge in the new environment and complicated by the psychological pressure and impact that require drastic adaptation. The villagers had to give up the leisurely pace of life in the countryside to live in an environment that was competitive and fast-paced. The interactions with neighbours and friends in the old village would be replaced by less personal contacts. Instead of the simple mode of production in the village, they would have to contend with complicated and diverse modes of exchange among disinterested individuals.

Clearly adjusting to the new environment would require adaptation in production and consumption patterns. In the old village, farmers were free to farm on plots allocated which on average was 5 mu or more. Besides growing rice and other cereals, they could raise livestock and have fruit trees and vegetables as they liked. Though cash income was generally low, they were able to make ends meet, and elderly people above 60 usually were satisfied with the old way of life. Away from the village, the growing of vegetables or raising of chickens for self-consumption might not be practical. Instead, the daily budget for food and essential items was likely to increase, what with the need to pay for water, electricity, garbage removal, among others (Liu, 2018).

Problems had continued to surface after relocation. Settlers were assigned new houses according to their household size. The size varied from 25 square metres for a single person to 150 square metres for a household with six or more members. Despite the permission for bigger units with the arrival of newly born babies or other special reasons, there was the tendency for some households to make extensions without formal approval. Among families that were unfamiliar with the use of electric utensils such as rice cooker, it was likely that they might extend the kitchen to practise the traditional way of cooking. These infringements on building plans and designs were clearly prohibited, yet they were tolerated temporarily rather than by the unpopular means of forceful demolition.

Ensuring the smooth functioning of a new settlement called for special management and co-ordination to accommodate the needs of different families to form a new community. During the first year of resettlement, a management committee was formed consisting of members from villages involved in the relocation process. As they were selected by public officials rather than elected by the villagers, instructions handed down were sometimes overlooked. The committee members received no allowance and lacked adequate funds and had few were motivated to perform well. Consequently, bill collections were slow and maintenance jobs were sub-standard.

The success of relocation as a means of poverty alleviation in minority areas depended on the villagers' willingness to live in the new settlements and not to return to the old ones (Gao & Wang, 2021). It was essential to fully occupy the resettled residents in gainful activities to enable them to earn extra income. The local government paid out a poverty alleviation fund of 5,000 yuan and made available a 50,000-yuan micro-credit loan to encourage them to join the agricultural co-

operative or to invest in livestock raising or other productive activities. The settlers were required to sign an agreement with the co-operative that purchased their products at market prices. The co-operative also organised regular industrial training and to advise on the services related to equipment acquisition, farm tools maintenance and repairs.

Some Response Measures

Relocation has been identified as an effective approach to the poverty alleviation efforts throughout China. This is a massive operation involving many parties for the purpose of tackling rural poverty. Various problems both obvious and unforeseen have cropped up that would need to be resolved to sustain the relocation process.

Immediately upon relocation, the most urgent matters to attend to was to follow up with appropriate policies and actions to adapt to the new environment. Imparting new skills was crucial to match job specifications and to enhance the competitiveness of the workers. Through market research, training may be tailored to match supply and demand of the day. Subsequently, periodic training on an intensive or on-the-job basis may be conducted to improve and upgrade the skills of workers.

In order to encourage private enterprises to set up industries would require that certain conditions were met. These called for the need to focus on industries that the local people were familiar with; that the private enterprises be granted incentives such as tax exemption in the initial period of operation; and that the local government would sponsor job training provided by the enterprises. In the case of the development of photovoltaic power plants in Mangnai resettlement of Weiyuan Township, the company was granted a suitable site that was exposed to a rich supply of sunlight. The project involved 199 households each earning and an average income of over 2,000 yuan. If the operation continued to bring in financial benefits, further expansion of the project would look bright.

Relocated villages would benefit from a management mechanism that would promote a greater degree of autonomy. Villagers should be recruited into the management committee or to participate at the sub-committee level under the co-ordination of the chairman to contribute to administrative management and solution of problems on a daily basis. Their involvement might be extended beyond the term of appointment and they could receive certain incentives as a means to motivate them to perform well and to bear responsibilities. Those who performed well could be rewarded in cash or kind or to serve as a role model to others. The management must be seen to be transparent and dedicated, and that the rationale as well as rules and regulations on the collection of fees were made known, with the financial accounts duly verified and audited by a qualified

auditor. The meaningful involvement of the villagers would foster create a sense of identity and participation in their own affairs.

In this manner, the people would learn to be self-reliant, work hard and maintain their interests in response to poverty relief policies rather than to co-operate passively in the implementation of policies (Zhai et al., 2019). In the management of health, basic medical insurance and cover for specific illnesses were being implemented. Poor households with a passive or dependent mentality would require extra care and guidance so that they do not lag behind in the poverty alleviation campaign.

Of the three main objectives of relocation, the key focus is to enable those who have moved out to accept the new way of life. This implies success in adapting to fundamental changes in living from an old to a new environment, including the forging of new interpersonal relationships (Long & Liu, 2019). This transformation will bring about a different lifestyle based on patterns of new consumption, work or mode of production. The role of the management committee is to establish communication links among the villages and the local population. The holding of elections at the village level would heighten the sense of identity. In addition, involvement in cultural activities would foster personal interactions and mutual trust as well as neighbourhood relations (Long & Liu, 2019). In Jinggu County with its large Yi and Dai minorities, traditional performances would play a significant role in promoting cultural exchanges with the Han settlers. These inter-ethnic activities would consolidate partnership and identity building and to enhance mutual understanding and creating harmonious and good neighbourly relations.

Conclusions

Concerted efforts in combatting poverty under the leadership of President Xi since 2012 have witnessed the transformation of the life of nearly 100 million people throughout China (*People's Daily*, 2021; Ravion, 2013). This is a remarkable record of the fundamental improvements in the social and economic situation of millions of people. Among the approaches to achieving change is that of relocation which, in the context of the rugged terrain of Yunnan province, is seen as a practical means in poverty alleviation.

This study in Jinggu County shows relocation is not an easy task. Apart from the provision of public services and subsidies, training and retraining of resettled residents, it is necessary to assist the villages to adapt to a new life through constant follow-up actions. On hindsight, proper government planning should have been included in the feasibility study of potential crops and industries that can help the resettled to raise incomes. The nature of the local conditions, market potential and other practical issues are key factors that can be critical to the success or failure of

selected economic activities. Naturally, the resettled inhabitants are the decisive factor in changing their own destiny by improving their income and creating a better future for their children. The role of the public authorities is to provide guidance and act as facilitators.

In the midst of overcoming the initial problems of adaptation, the lack of skills and many more, Jinggu County succeeded in building 3,721 resettlement housing units for 14,292 people by the end of 2018. There is housing security, and the living conditions among the resettled residents have been improved and their income has increased. Although poverty reduction has been effectively accomplished in the county, subsequent actions on emerging issues remain an urgent task. Understandably, promoting industrial development, improving the management mechanism, and advocating greater village autonomy as well as keeping the villagers motivated are a long-term process that will serve as a basis for achieving a brighter rural revitalisation and urbanisation era. The study is a case study to assess relocation is an effective development path in poverty alleviation in mountainous and rugged areas. With the help of the national and local governments, relocation is shown to serve not only as a viable programme in rural revitalisation, but also may be implemented to contribute to the objective of poverty alleviation to create a better off future for the rural poor.

* Putian Pu [濮蒲天] is a doctoral candidate of Yunnan University, Kunming, and a lecturer in the Tourism and Culture College, Lijiang, Yunnan. Email 784647017@qq.com

References

- Gao, D.-S. [高大帅] & Wang, R. [王睿] (2021). 边疆民族地区易地扶贫搬迁成效评价研究——以贡山独龙族怒族自治县为例 [Study on effectiveness evaluation of poverty alleviation relocation in the frontier minority areas: A case of Gongshan Dulong Nu Autonomous County]. *Journal of Yunnan Normal University*, 5: 70–78.
- Gu, Z.-Y. [顾仲阳] People's Daily [人民日报] (2021 January 2). 在人类反贫困史上书写中国奇迹 [Writing the Chinese miracle in the human history of anti-poverty] http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2021-01/02/content_5576179.htm
- Huang, Y. [黄玥] (2020 June 11). 这番话，习近平20年前就讲过 [Xi Jinping mentioned about this more than 20 years ago], *Xinhua* (Xinhua). http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2020-06/11/c_1126098936.htm
- Jinggubanfa [景谷办发] (2016). 景谷自治县搬迁实施方案 [Relocation implementation plan of the Jinggu Autonomous County]. No. 36. Unpublished report. Jinggu, Yunnan .
- Jingtuo Zhifa [景脱志发] (2017). 关于景谷自治县搬迁实施方案的通知 [Notice for relocation implementation plan of the Jinggu Autonomous County]. No. 49. Unpublished report. Jinggu, Yunnan.

- Liu, J.-J. [刘金接] (2018). 加大社会救助保障力度, 助力脱贫攻坚 [We will increase social assistance and social security to help alleviate poverty]. *Contemporary Jiangxi*, 2: 42–43.
- Liu, Y.-Q. [刘宇琼] & Yu, S.-X. [余绍详] (2020). 国外扶贫立法模式评析与中国的路径选择 [An analysis of foreign legislation mode of poverty alleviation and the Chinese path choice]. *Social Sciences Abroad*, 6: 93–104.
- Long, Y.-Y. [龙彦亦] & Liu, X.-M. [刘小珉] (2019). 易地扶贫搬迁政策的“生计空间”视角解读 [Interpretation of ‘living space’—from the perspective of relocation policy of poverty alleviation from inhospitable areas]. *Seeker*, 1: 114–121.
- Office of the Central Education Leading Group [中央领导小组办公室] (2015). 不忘初心, 牢记使命 [Staying true to our original aspiration and keeping our mission firmly in mind]. Beijing.
- Ravion, M. (2013). How Long will it take to lift one billion people out of poverty? *The World Bank Researcher Observer*, 28(2): 139–158.
- Song, L.-D. [宋丽丹] (2021). 精准脱贫攻坚助力构建新发展格局——从中西对比看我国精准脱贫攻坚的局势及世界意义 [Targeted poverty alleviation helps build a new development pattern: Advantages and world significance of China’s targeted poverty alleviation from the perspective of comparison between China and the West]. *Studies on World Socialism*, 1: 48–60.
- Xi, J.-P. [习近平] (2015 November 29). 脱贫攻坚战冲锋号已经吹响 全党全国咬定目标苦干实干 [The trumpet of the battle against poverty has sounded, the whole Party and the whole country have set their goals and worked hard]. *People’s Daily*, November 29 [in Chinese]. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2015/1129/c64094-27867800.html>.
- Xi, J.-P. [习近平] (2017). 习近平谈治国理政 [The Governance of China], Vol.2. Beijing, Foreign Languages Press.
- Xi, J.-P. [习近平] (2020). 习近平谈治国理政 [The Governance of China], Vol.3. Beijing, Foreign Languages Press.
- Zhai, S.-G. [翟绍果], Zhang, X. [张星] & Zhou, Q.-X. [周清旭] (2019). 易地扶贫搬迁的政策演进与创新路径 [Policy evolution and innovation of relocation for poverty alleviation]. *Journal of Northwest University (Social Science Edition)*, 1: 15–22.
- Zhang, J. [张建] (2018). 运动型治理视野下易地扶贫搬迁问题研究——基于西部地区X市的调研 [Relocation of poverty alleviation under the vision of campaign-style governance]. *China Agricultural University Journal of Social Sciences*, 5: 70–80.
- Zhang, Y. [章元] & Duan, W. [段文] (2020). 相对贫困研究与治理面临的挑战及其对中国的启示 [Challenges faced by relative poverty research and governance and its enlightenment to China]. *Social Sciences Abroad*, 6: 57–65.
- Zou, G.-W. [邹光文] & Li, Kun [李坤] (2020). 习近平扶贫论述的全球价值 [The Global Value of Xi Jinping’s poverty alleviation]. *Studies on Marxism*, 9: 54–61.

Zou, Y. [邹颖] & Xiang, Deping [向德平] (2017). 易地扶贫搬迁贫困户市民化困境及其路径选择 [Difficulties in giving status of city-dwellers to impoverished households in relocation poverty-alleviation program and its path choice]. *Journal of Jiangsu Administration Institute*, 2: 75–80.

Notes

- 1 Data provided by the local village officials.
- 2 Data obtained from the statistical figure provided by the 740 local officials collated from different villages.
- 3 One hectare (10,000 m²) is equivalent to 15 Chinese *mu*.