



Research on the Promoting Effect of Ecotourism on Economic Development in Underdeveloped Areas

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Abstract: This paper aims to study how ecotourism can promote the economic development in less developed areas. As a form of tourism based on natural resources, ecotourism is in line with the concept of sustainable development. Through the rational development and utilization of natural resources, a win-win situation between economic development and environmental protection is achieved. This paper first introduces the theory of sustainable development and analyzes the role of ecotourism in it. Subsequently, the direct and indirect effects of ecotourism on the economy of less developed areas, as well as the long-term benefits, including increased employment opportunities, improved infrastructure, improved social services, and balanced development of ecological protection and economy, are explored.

Keywords: eco-tourism; less developed areas; economic development

1. Introduction

Ecotourism not only emphasizes the rational development and utilization of natural resources, but also pays attention to environmental protection and regional participation, realizing the coordinated development of economy, society and environment. For the less developed areas, ecotourism provides a unique development path. Since these areas usually have rich natural resources and unique cultural landscapes, the development of ecotourism can effectively promote the local economic development, while improving the quality of life and environmental awareness of the regional residents, so as to achieve a win-win situation between economy and environment. On the basis of analyzing the relationship between ecotourism and sustainable development, this paper will discuss the direct, indirect and long-term benefits of ecotourism to the economy of underdeveloped areas, and put forward corresponding development strategies to provide reference for research and practice in related fields.

2. The theoretical basis of ecotourism for economic development

2.1 The relationship between ecological tourism and sustainable development

2.1.1 Sustainable development theory

Sustainable development theory emphasizes that meeting the needs of contemporary people does not harm the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The core of this theory is to coordinate the relationship between economic growth, social progress and environmental protection, and to pursue the harmonious coexistence of economy, society and environment. Since the 1980s, the theory of sustainable development has gradually become a global consensus, and it has been widely used in various fields. As a form of tourism based on natural resources, ecotourism naturally fits with the concept of sustainable development. Its core idea is to promote economic development, protect the ecological environment and improve the regional well-being through rational development and utilization of natural resources.

2.1.2 The role of ecotourism in sustainable development

Ecotourism plays an important role in the sustainable development. First of all, ecotourism emphasizes the protection of natural resources, and reduces the damage to the environment by limiting the number of tourists and setting strict environmental protection standards. This can not only help to preserve biodiversity, but also to maintain the original state of the natural landscape. Secondly, ecotourism focuses on regional participation, and makes local residents become one of the stakeholders by promoting their efforts to participate in tourism development. This approach can not only increase regional income, but also enhance the environmental awareness of local residents and promote social harmony[1]. Finally, ecotourism advocates education and interpretation, spreads ecological protection knowledge to tourists, improves the public's environmental awareness and sense of responsibility, and promotes the recognition and support of the whole society for sustainable development.

2.2 The influence mechanism of ecotourism on the economy of underdeveloped areas

2.2.1 Direct economic benefits: increased employment opportunities and income

Ecotourism can bring significant direct economic benefits to the underdeveloped areas. First of all, the development of ecotourism requires a large amount of labor force, thus providing numerous employment opportunities for local residents, including tour guides, hotel services, catering, transportation and other aspects. These employment opportunities can not only directly increase the income of local residents, but also improve their quality of life. Secondly, ecotourism can also drive the development of related industries, such as handicraft production, sales of agricultural and sideline products, etc., and further increase economic benefits by enriching tourism products and services. In addition, most of the income from ecotourism directly enters the local economic system, which helps to improve the local economic structure and enhance the regional economic vitality.

2.2.2 Indirect economic benefits: infrastructure improvement and social service improvement

The development of ecotourism will also bring a series of indirect economic benefits. First, in order to meet the needs of tourists, the underdeveloped areas usually need to improve the infrastructure construction, including roads, communications, water and electricity supply, etc. These infrastructure improvements will not only serve the tourism industry, but also improve the living conditions of local residents and improve the comprehensive development level of the region. Secondly, the development of ecotourism is often accompanied by the improvement of social services, such as the improvement of public services such as medical care, education and public security. These improvements will not only attract more tourists, but also improve the happiness and life satisfaction of local residents, thus promoting social harmony and stability.

2.2.3 Long-term benefits: ecological protection and balanced economic development

The long-term benefits brought by ecotourism also cannot be ignored. First of all, through the development of ecotourism, the natural resources in the underdeveloped areas have been effectively protected, and the environmental damage caused by excessive exploitation or unreasonable use has been avoided. This resource protection can not only help to maintain the stability of the ecosystem, but also provide sustainable resource guarantee for the subsequent tourism development. Secondly, ecotourism has promoted the balanced development of economy and environment. The traditional development model often comes at the expense of the environment, while ecotourism realizes economic growth on the premise of protecting the environment. This balanced development model provides a sustainable economic development path for the less developed areas and helps to achieve long-term economic prosperity[2].

3. The strategy of ecotourism to promote the economic development in the underdeveloped areas

3.1 Infrastructure construction and service improvement

3.1.1 Improve transportation and communication facilities

Less developed areas usually face the problem of weak transportation and communication infrastructure, which limits the development of ecotourism. The government and enterprises should increase investment in infrastructure, improve transportation facilities such as roads, airports and ports, and enhance regional accessibility. In addition, the construction of communication network should be strengthened to ensure that tourists can easily obtain information and services during the process of tourism, and improve the tourism experience.

3.1.2 Improve public service facilities

In order to attract more tourists, less developed areas need to improve the level of public service facilities, including accommodation, catering, medical care and public security. The government should encourage and support local enterprises and communities to build and operate high standards of service facilities and provide quality tourism services. At the same time, we should strengthen the training of tourism service personnel, improve their professional quality and service level, and ensure the safety and satisfaction of tourists in the process of tourism.

3.2 Brand building and market promotion

3.2.1 Create characteristic brands

Less developed areas should fully explore and utilize their own unique natural and cultural resources to create distinctive ecological tourism brands. Through the in-depth development and careful packaging of resources, the formation of unique and attractive tourism products and routes, to enhance the brand awareness and market competitiveness. At the same time, we should pay attention to the shaping of the brand image to ensure the high quality and high reputation of the tourism brand.

3.2.2 Strengthen market promotion

In order to attract more tourists, the underdeveloped areas should strengthen the market promotion of ecotourism. The

government and enterprises can carry out multi-level and multi-channel marketing activities by holding tourism festivals, attending domestic and foreign tourism exhibitions, and using new media and online platforms, so as to expand the influence and attraction of ecotourism. In addition, we should establish good cooperative relations with travel agencies and media, and improve the market exposure and customer source conversion rate with the help of ecotourism through its platforms and resources.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, ecotourism provides a sustainable economic development path for less developed areas. By strengthening infrastructure construction, improving the level of public services, protecting the ecological environment, promoting environmental protection technologies and concepts, creating characteristic brands and strengthening market promotion, the development of ecotourism can be effectively promoted and the harmonious coexistence of economy, society and environment can be realized.

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