

Changes of Women's Roles in the Context of Rural Tourism Development: Case of "Beautiful South" in Nanning, China

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Tourism, as an important part of modern industry, has had a great impact on the changes of women's roles in rural tourism destinations, but it has not been paid enough attention by researchers in previous studies. Taking the "Beautiful South" rural tourism project as an example, the author explores the reasons and circumstances of women's participation in rural tourism from the perspective of gender, and the impact of rural tourism on the changes in the role of local women. This study found that women's participation in rural tourism production activities is more active than men, and the reasons for their participation are diverse. The economic growth brought about by the development of rural tourism is one of the important driving forces for the changes in the role of rural women. The strict gender division in production and labor no longer exists, and the initiative and independence of local women in the economy have been improved. And there has been a trend of women transforming from passive recipients of the original life model to active pursuit of ideal life, from being a victim of the right to self-education under the pressure of family conditions and local traditions to being the leader of the right to self-education. However, it has not completely deviated from the traditional division of labor of "male leading the outside and female leading the inside". There is still a long way to go before true equality between men and women and women's complete autonomy in all aspects.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Female, Role Changes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism is based on the rural natural ecological environment, unique agricultural production patterns, social lifestyles, traditional rural culture, beautiful pastoral scenery and rural settlement landscapes, etc. as the main tourist attractions for sightseeing, entertainment, dining, shopping, learning, Leisure and other forms of tourism activities [1]. Rurality is the core and unique selling point of rural tourism.

Rural tourism in the true sense emerged late in China, starting around the 1990s. At present, China's research on rural tourism mainly focuses on the definition of the concept, the analysis of the role and impact of rural tourism, the development of rural tourism resources, development planning and design, and the operation and management of rural tourism [2-4]. Due to the relatively short development time, relevant research on Chinese cases still needs to be refined and deepened.

In recent years, with the stimulation and support of new rural construction, tourism poverty

alleviation and rural revitalization strategies, rural tourism has developed very rapidly in China, both in terms of geographic scope and scale of operation. In the development of rural tourism, it can be clearly observed that women have a higher degree of participation. Most of the people who manage and participate in rural tourism activities are rural women, while women participate in more family reproduction activities and part of production activities in the traditional gender division of labor [5]. Then, how do rural women participate in rural tourism, and what changes have taken place in their reproduction and production activities and other related aspects due to their participation? In the existing research, Deroi based on a survey in Austria believes that women play a dual or even triple role in production and reproduction: participating in tourism, participating in farm labor, and doing housework [6]; Evansh *et al.*, proposed in the research that rural tourism has changed the distribution range of the ability of farmer husbands and wives potentially [7]; Nilsson believes that wives are at the center of the development of rural tourism [8]. However, China has few research on the impact of rural tourism on rural women, and it is limited to economic

aspects such as employment and income increase, and lacks a more comprehensive attention to women from a gender perspective. This research selects Zhongliang Village and Yong'an Village, which are the central villages of the "Beautiful South" project in Nanning, where the development of rural tourism is relatively mature, and conducts survey to reveal the changes of women's roles in the context of rural tourism development.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research object "Beautiful South" is located in the Shibu Peninsula on the north bank of the Yongjiang River in Nanning, covering an area of 13,000 acres and 10 kilometers away from the urban area of Nanning. It is the background location of the novel "The Beautiful South" by the famous writer Lu. It has rich resources, suitable climate and convenient transportation. With aquatic products, vegetables, fruits and flowers as the four representative industries, it is a rural tourism demonstration area integrating leisure tourism, rural scenery, experience folk customs, farming culture, and characteristic agriculture. The specific research sites are Zhongliang Village and Yong'an Village, the central villages of the "Beautiful South".

A total of 81 questionnaires were issued to local women. Among them, 50 people participated in rural tourism activities and 31 people did not participate in rural tourism activities. The recovery rate and effective rate were both 100%. The questionnaire adopts the chance encounter method and the snowball method in random sampling. In addition, the investigators completed more than 20 case interviews.

3. Overview of rural women's participation in rural tourism

3.1 Reasons for participation

Due to the lag in the transfer of non-agriculturalization, rural women are at a disadvantage in the occupational structure. In rural areas, there has been a trend of feminization, that is, a very large proportion of women in the permanent population of the village [5], "left-behind wives" in rural areas regions have become a common phenomenon [9]. In many rural areas, most of the male laborers in the family go out to work, while women are hindered by various social factors such as their low quality and the traditional thinking of "men dominate the outside and women dominate the inside". Insufficient, they are more responsible for farming and running family life at home [10, 11]. On the other hand, except for housework and farm work, women have more leisure time, so participating in rural tourism has become a choice for their income-generating activities.

In Zhongliang Village and Yong'an Village, where "Beautiful South" is located, due to the strong support of the government, the process of applying for

rural tourism is relatively simple: families who are willing and qualified to renovate and rebuild their houses in accordance with the standards set by the relevant departments, the relevant departments carry out basic knowledge or skills training for operators such as etiquette. After the operating facilities are renovated and the personnel trained are qualified, they can formally participate in rural tourism activities.

The questionnaire shows that the reasons why the surveyed women choose to participate in rural tourism business activities are more diverse: 51.9% of the interviewed women believe that participating in rural tourism activities is close to home and can take care of their families; 34.6% of the interviewed women believe that participating in rural tourism activities is relatively easy than other jobs; 24.7% think that the income from participating in tourism activities is relatively stable; 16% of the interviewed women are based on economic considerations, think that compared to other activities, they can make more money by doing tourism. 11.1% think that there are good prospects and development opportunities. In addition, three women interviewed chose "other reasons", and mentioned that the leadership of relatives and friends was one of the reasons for their participation in rural tourism business activity.

3.2 Participation Condition

According to interviews, some of the men in the survey area went to work in other places, while the male farmers who stayed in the local area generally worked in towns or counties except for farming activities when the farming activities were relatively leisure. The reception work in the operation of rural tourism is mainly undertaken by the wife. Regardless of whether it is farm catering or accommodation or stalls, women's participation in various tourism-related activities in the surveyed areas is significantly higher.

"My husband came to follow up the renovation of the house. We women don't understand this aspect"; "Some electrical appliances like air conditioners and refrigerators were bought by my husband and I. He knew more than me about this"; "Although I used my identity information to apply for a business license, he took me to these places"... However, from the conversation with the interviewed women, we can learn that there are also a few activities in the business activities of rural tourism, such as "applying to relevant departments", "renovating houses", "purchasing furniture, electrical appliances", the participation of men is not lower than that of women.

The interviewed women not only undertake low-physical and technically demanding activities in the traditional gender division of labor, such as cooking, cleaning, and decorating house decorations, but also undertake a large number of rural tourism business activities with a certain technical content including

participating in training, going out to buy food and financial management. Especially in related important decisions and activities, such as the decision to operate farm catering, accommodation and financial management, the interviewed women all play a central role. In addition, for rural tourism, there are also differences in the depth of participation of local men and women. Men mostly regard rural tourism reception as their main auxiliary activities after work, while women use tourism reception as an important source of income, that is, their main economic activities. Sometimes the importance of tourism activities even exceeds care for the family. Therefore, local women are the main participants in rural tourism business activities in rural areas, and they undertake most of the activities in rural tourism operations. In this case, the development of rural tourism has also changed the lives of local women and affected the changes in their roles.

4. Analysis of the impact of rural tourism development on the change of women's roles

The division of labor and their role positioning in society are not entirely determined by their biological characteristics, their gender roles are still constructed by society and social culture [12]. The change of social culture is a long process, so the change of gender roles constructed by culture is also a gradual process. The development and changes of social culture are not changes at the same frequency and pace. Generally speaking, it is the material culture that is closely related to people's life that is most likely to change, while the slowest change is the non-material spiritual culture. Changes in gender roles are also suitable for this changing law.

The traditional gender division of labor puts women's position in the "internal family field". Taking care of children, weaving and sewing, washing and cooking seems to be a natural responsibility of women. In the development of rural tourism, women in Zhongliang and Yong'an villages are engaged in tourism work to obtain economic income while still taking the labor affairs within the family into account. This is not in conflict with the traditional division of labor that requires women to play the role of "inner master". With the development of the "Beautiful South" rural tourism project, the types of local industries and livelihoods have also shown a diversified development trend. Women have also developed from only participating in reproduction and part of production activities to being active in economic production, which makes strict gender The division no longer exists.

"I used to ask my man to buy what I wanted to buy and the living expenses at home. If I took too much, I was afraid that he would not be happy. If I took less, I was afraid that it would not be enough. Now I am fine. I have the money to buy the clothes I like or what I want to eat. I can make the decision by myself instead

of asking him for money. Sometimes I buy clothes and shoes for him. Both of us are happier. "

"When I'm free now, I will ask my friends to go to the city to play and go shopping. I used to go shopping less often. I couldn't bear to buy things I wanted a little bit more expensive. Now I'm willing to buy things I like when I go shopping. Because I have my own income."

"In the past, I always obey him when there are conflicts. After all, he was working outside to support the life of the family, giving our daughters tuition and books. It was also hard work, so I didn't have the confidence to tell him my idea. However, I can say anything I care about now. I can express my thoughts and feel more comfortable, because I am not only taking care of my family but also going out to cook for other people's restaurants and get my own income now, I don't pay less than his (husband)."

From what the interviewed women told the author, it can be seen that the rural catering, accommodation that have emerged under the development of rural tourism have enabled local women to grasp more economic initiative than before and strengthened her economic independence, thereby reducing the difference in economic status between the sexes, and to a certain extent gives women more voice in the family.

However, although women in Zhongliang Village and Yong'an Village have improved their economic and social status in the development of rural tourism compared with the past, they still retain some fixed gender concepts under the inertia of traditional culture, concepts such as "cleaning the room should be done by women" and "replacement and cleaning of bed sheets and quilts are women's tasks" are still deeply ingrained in production labor. The development of rural tourism has brought new means of livelihood to local women, and has greatly strengthened women's economic independence. It has also given women more voice in family power, especially the power between husband and wife. There is still a long way to go for equal rights.

Similarly, based on the objective requirements of participating in rural tourism activities that need to communicate with tourists, the personalities and concepts of local women have also been subtly affected by tourists in this process, from a relatively introverted and conservative attitude in the past to a more outgoing and open attitude towards different ideas and concepts now. Tourists, as a kind of communication medium, their own image or behavior in front of local women is an intuitive and vivid display of external information. This form of information dissemination stimulates local women more directly and shockingly. This has also become one of the driving forces for local women as

passive recipients of the original life model to become active pursuers of ideal life.

"Not only young girls, but also some women who are even older than ours. They dress and make up beautifully. Some people in our village who didn't make up before are now starting to learn to make up."

"A lot of tourists speak well. Many people here are not standard. It's better to read more books. The temperament will be different. I want our children to study hard, and they don't have to worry about money."

In the past, women in the village lived in a small circle and had a narrow range of interpersonal communication. In such an environment, they were often passive recipients of the local traditional life model, and felt that women's life was like this. After the development of local rural tourism, they broadened their horizons and yearned for different life patterns in the process of contact and communication with various tourists. They began to dress themselves more carefully, actively pursuing the ideal state of life. The demonstration effect brought by tourists themselves has also made them more deeply aware of the importance of education, and the increase in income brought by rural tourism gives them the autonomy of choice in education. In Zhongliang and Yong'an villages, many families have more than one child. Before tourism has developed, local farmers have low incomes, due to the pressure of living and living burdens, and the restrictions of traditional concepts such as "patriarchy", Many women drop out of school in middle, high school and even elementary school. Some go out to work to subsidize their families, while others marry as women early. Those girls who go out to work will also be forced by family pressure and local traditional concepts to go home and marry when they are older. Many women lack the right to choose their own education and become victims of the right to self-education under the pressure of family conditions and local traditions, while the development of rural tourism has brought more abundant income to the local area, it has also brought about a renewal of ideas, making them more deeply aware of the importance of education, which has promoted women's autonomy in self-education.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION: THOUGHTS ON THE CHANGES OF WOMEN'S ROLES

In the context of the development of rural tourism, the economic growth brought about by tourism development is one of the important driving forces for the change of the role of rural women. Due to the promotion of the "Beautiful South" rural tourism project in Zhongliang Village and Yong'an Village, women have also developed from only participating in reproduction and part of production activities to being active in economic production, which makes strict

gender division in terms of production and labor no longer exist. It is precisely because of participating in the production of rural tourism that local women's economic initiative and independence have been improved, thereby reducing the difference in the economic status of the sexes, and giving women more right to speak to a certain extent. Not only that, but local women have broadened their horizons and improved their professional and social skills by participating in rural tourism. And there is a tendency for women to transform from the passive recipient of the original life model to the active pursuer of the ideal life, from the victim of the right to self-education under the pressure of family conditions and local traditions to the leader of the right to self-education.

However, despite the development of rural tourism in the "Beautiful South" in Zhongliang Village and Yong'an Village, female roles have undergone the above-mentioned changes and trends, but they have not completely deviated from the traditional division of the roles of "male leading outside and female leading inside". There is still a long way to go before the realization of true equality between men and women and women's complete autonomy in all aspects. This is also in line with the changing trend of social culture. Material culture that is closely related to people's lives is the easiest to change, while non-material spiritual culture changes the slowest. At present, while women are participating in rural tourism "mainly outside", they have not escaped from the shackles of their traditional role "mainly inside". A lot of housework, such as washing and cooking, cleaning, supporting the elderly, raising children, and other trivial family activities that are not included in the calculation of economic income, are still mainly undertaken by women. These women also undertake a lot of housework after the busy rural tourism reception activities are over. The housework that is difficult to complete in their limited time is mostly done by their mother or mother-in-law. But this arrangement is only an adjustment made within women, not a re-division of labor between genders. However, there are also cases where men are more or less involved in some housework activities, but in the eyes of local men and women, this situation is just an act of "helping" rather than a male obligation.

These gender divisions, which can reflect social values and customs, reflect a set of solidified models of gender roles and gender culture in society. Under the impact and penetration of the rural tourism economy, these deep-rooted spiritual cultures formed in history are loosening and changing. Although the speed of change is not as fast as that of material culture, the future is still very long.

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