



**AgEcon** SEARCH  
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

*The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library*

**This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.**

**Help ensure our sustainability.**

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search  
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>  
[aesearch@umn.edu](mailto:aesearch@umn.edu)

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

# Current Situation and Reasonable Construction of Consumption Value of Rural Residents in Kongpo

Shuang QI<sup>1</sup>, Xuelin YAO<sup>1</sup>, Lianjiu SONG<sup>2\*</sup>

1. Propaganda Department, Agricultural and Animal Husbandry College of Tibet University, Nyingchi 860000, China; 2. School of Plant Science, Agricultural and Animal Husbandry College of Tibet University, Nyingchi 860000, China

**Abstract** On the basis of analyzing the consumption status of rural residents in Kongpo, it can be seen that the concept of consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo tends to be cautious in daily consumption. There also exist premature consumption and excessive consumption that are centralized, seasonal and religious. This paper aims to put forward countermeasures and suggestions for guiding the rural residents in Kongpo to develop a scientific concept of consumption value in the light of the factors that restrict the formation of scientific consumption value among rural residents.

**Key words** Kongpo, Rural residents, Consumption value

"Rural residents in Kongpo" is a general designation for the residents who dwell together in Kongpo area (a general term of Jomda County, Nyingchi County and Mainling County in Kongpo) and are mainly engaged in agricultural production. With the development of rural economy in Tibet, the consumption of rural residents in Kongpo will be an important driving force for rural economic development in Tibet. However, the consumption value of the rural residents there has been affected by various factors including economic development and religious belief in Kongpo area for a long time, which restricts the consumption of them. At present, the research on the consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo is still a blank field. This paper attempts to find out the key factors affecting the consumption value of them and put forward countermeasures and suggestions for guiding the rural residents in Kongpo to form a scientific concept of consumption value on the basis of analyzing the consumption as well as the consumption value of them.

## 1 Current situation of the consumption and consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo

The consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo refers to the overall view and fundamental opinion of the rural residents in Kongpo of Tibet towards consumption. It is the value judgment and selection reflected by specific consuming behaviors of rural residents in Kongpo and used for guiding their consuming behaviors. Through questionnaire analysis, the current situation of the consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo can be concluded as follows:

(i) The rural residents in Kongpo have a low willingness of daily consumption and tend to be cautious in consumption. For the

daily consumption like food, clothes and residence, most of the rural residents in Kongpo who have a belief in Tibetan Buddhism take life-sustaining as the only purpose. Therefore, they have a low consuming willingness and tend to be cautious in consumption.

(ii) The consumption patterns of rural residents in Kongpo are mainly dominated by "Barter Exchange" and "Buying after sellings". This is mainly determined by the life style of rural residents in Kongpo, which is mainly agricultural production or that associated with agricultural production. Generally, the rural residents in this area can get cash income only after autumn harvest. As a result, they prefer the consumption patterns of "Barter Exchange" and "Buying after sellings".

(iii) The emphasis of the consumption of rural residents in Kongpo lies in "housing" and "purchase of production goods" etc. The most important consumption of them is particularly reflected in house building for marriage, child support and retirement pension. They also have certain consumption peaks in different periods of life, mainly the weddings and funerals.

(iv) The major consumption activities of rural residents in Kongpo are mainly concentrated on the nodes of religious holidays. Regular consumption of them is mainly dominated by daily consumer goods, but very few big-ticket durable consumer goods. And the major consumption activities mainly occur in Tibetan New Year, Kongpo Festival, Saga Dawa, Ongkor Festival and other festival activities.

(v) In religious consumption, there exist premature consumption and excessive consumption among rural residents in Kongpo. Most of the rural residents in Kongpo have a belief in a religion. And most of the believers among the rural residents in Kongpo believe that "the amount of income in future life has a positive correlation with the investment in religious activities in this life"<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, they attach great importance to religious consumption. It is discovered through investigation that most of religious families have religious consumptions. In the religious con-

sumption, there exist premature consumptions and excessive consumptions. In order to complete religious rites, rural residents would rather chip in with precious cash even if they have no money. Furthermore, the marginal benefit of religious consumption in Tibet does not decrease progressively. Instead, they believe in the concept that the more the better.

Through the above analysis on the consumption status of rural residents in Kongpo, it can be seen that their daily consumption tends to be cautious, but there are also premature consumption and excessive consumption that are centralized, seasonal and religious.

## 2 Cause analysis on the consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo

Consumption value falls under the category of ideological superstructure. According to the historical materialism and dialectical materialism of Marxism, it is formed under the resultant action of the level of economic and social development in a region as well as some other factors including ideological superstructure.

**2.1 Rural production mode in Kongpo is the fundamental factor affecting the consumption view** Some scholars think that the difficulty in rural system innovation and modernization of agricultural production mode is one of the causes for insufficient effective demand. That also explains why the rural residents in Kongpo have a lower consuming willingness. The development of market economy in rural area of Kongpo is far from adequate, and the autarkical small-scale farming still exists extensively in the rural area of Kongpo. According to Marxism, the pattern of consumption depends on the production mode. And the production mode determines the consumption pattern directly. Such a production mode on the basis of small-scaled peasant economy helps to form a self-sufficient household consumption pattern in Kongpo area, that is, "rural households are not only the basic production units, but also the basic consumption units"<sup>[1]</sup>. Rural households in Kongpo "can almost produce anything they need, and only the consumption goods that can not be provided through self-sufficiency will be exchanged in the market"<sup>[2]</sup>.

**2.2 The income level of rural residents in Kongpo is the critical factor that affects their consumption value** With the development of the west regions and the vigorous support for Tibet from various provinces and cities nationwide, the per capita income of farmers and herdsmen in Tibet, especially that of the rural residents in Kongpo has been increased rapidly. But as compared with the national income average and the income of urban residents in Tibet, the per capita net income of rural residents in Kongpo is still at a relatively low level. In addition, the public services in rural area have a poor foundation, which results in a low capability for social security. Therefore, the rural residents in Kongpo have a pessimistic judgment toward the expectation of income and expenditure, which in turn reduces their consuming willingness in daily consumption. In this way, their daily consumption tends to be cautious.

**2.3 The less optimistic consumption environment in the rural area of Kongpo reduces the consuming willingness of rural residents** The investment in consumption infrastructure in the rural area of Kongpo is not enough, which creates a less optimistic consumption environment and reduces the consuming willingness of rural residents. On the other side, the protection system for consumer rights of rural residents as consumers is not sound and the channel is obstructed due to imperfect market economy development, chaotic market order and inadequate market supervision in the rural area of Kongpo. This also reduces the consuming willingness of rural residents.

**2.4 The impact of religious belief and traditional consumption customs on the consumption value should not be underestimated** Investigations reveal that about 77% of the rural residents in Kongpo have a belief in a religion, and most of them embrace Tibetan Buddhism. "Religion may change people's attitude towards economy"<sup>[3]</sup>. Religious doctrine advocates self-torture and emphasizes spirit and future life consumption instead of materials and temporal consumption. "Buddhists strive to get rid of this life to get happiness in the afterlife"<sup>[4]</sup>. Some religious believers "do not advocate consumption and circulation"<sup>[5]</sup> and hold a despising attitude toward practical consumption, which results in a low consuming willingness in the real world among rural residents in Kongpo. But in striking contrast, they have shown a very strong willingness in religious consumption.

The negative impact of a certain viewpoint on people, especially the backward idea and custom can hardly be eliminated with the establishment of new systems in a short span of time. Instead, it will exist in people's mind stubbornly in various ways and leave a profound impact on their behaviors. The same as most rural residents nationwide, rural residents in Kongpo have also been affected by traditional consumption concepts like "rest content with being well-to-do" and "pay no attention to food or clothes". For most rural residents in Kongpo, they attach more importance to the "reaction of individual consumption among members of social relations". Therefore, they are concerned about face-saving in weddings and funerals, thus resulting in widespread phenomena like blind comparison and ostentation pursuing.

## 3 Recommendations for guiding rural residents in Kongpo to establish a scientific concept of consumption value

Through the above analysis, it can be seen that the consumption value of rural residents in Kongpo is not compatible with the economic and social development at present due to the restriction of the above factors. Therefore, the following measures shall be taken to guide them to establish a scientific and reasonable concept of consumption value.

### 3.1 Improving the level of economic and social development in the rural area of Kongpo and enhance the consumption capacity of rural residents

**3.1.1 Increasing the income of rural residents in Kongpo and**

enhancing their consumption capacity. Consumption level improves with the income level. In other words, the income level determines the consumption capacity. In recent years, the income of rural residents in Kongpo has increased rapidly. But there is still a certain gap with the income of urban residents. Therefore, the self-development ability and income increasing ability of rural residents in Kongpo should be improved, thus to raise the income of them. The main measures include: (i) striving to develop modern agriculture in the rural area of Kongpo, improve agriculture industrialization and scale benefits, encourage rural residents in Kongpo to join rural cooperative economic organizations, improve the organization extent and specialization degree of rural residents, and enhance the market competition ability of rural residents in Kongpo; (ii) developing modern service industry inclusive of tourism, commerce and catering vigorously, encourage rural residents to obtain employment and transfer to non-agricultural industries, and increase the wage income of rural residents in Kongpo; (iii) ensuring the contractual right of land, right to the use of cartilage and the right of collective income distribution of rural residents of Kongpo. Increase the allocation proportion of farmers in the land value-added revenue. Increase the property income of them and improve their consumption capacity.

**3.1.2 Enhancing the capability of public services in the rural area of Kongpo,** raising the level of social security and improving consumption capacity of rural residents in Kongpo. Promote the integration process of rural-urban public services, improve the basic capacity of public services in rural area of Kongpo, and narrow the gap with urban public services. Improve the rural education quality in Kongpo, as education is the priority of people's livelihood. The good news is that Tibet Autonomous Region has taken the lead in providing free education from preschool to high school stage. Therefore, the quality of education, especially at the stage of compulsory education, should be improved on this basis so as to reduce the ratio of young and middle-age illiterates and semi-literates to the total population of Kongpo. Incorporate the rural residents in Kongpo into the "safety net" of social security and social assistance system established by the government. Accelerate the development of medical and health services and improve the health conditions of rural residents in Kongpo. Raise the development level of rural social undertakings substantially, strive to solve the problems that are most realistic, immediate and of greatest concern for rural residents in Kongpo, reduce their burdens and improve their consumption capacity.

**3.2 Improving the consumption environment and enhancing the willingness of rural residents in Kongpo** The Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China suggested that the emphasis of national infrastructure construction and the development of social undertakings should be laid on the rural area so as to improve the production and living conditions comprehensively. Taking the opportunity of small-town construction for building a new socialist countryside, invest more funds into the rural area of Kongpo in the field of public services. Further strengthen the

infrastructure construction on water, electricity, road, communication, broadcast and market *etc.*, improve the modernization level of circulation continuously, and promote the extension of modern distribution methods to the rural area of Kongpo. Develop modern circulation industry actively, promote new circulation methods including chain operation, electronic commerce and logistics distribution, update the consumption patterns of rural residents in Kongpo by means of internet, solve the bottleneck problems in the consumption of rural residents, and lay a sound foundation for the future growth of consumption.

Strengthen government supervision and the self-management of industry associations, create a soft environment for rural consumption in Kongpo, and construct a convenient, safe and reliable consumption environment. In view of the scattered consumption points in the rural area of Kongpo, an honest, fair and orderly market consumption environment for rural residents should also be created in addition to strengthening infrastructure construction. According to the actual situation that rural markets in Kongpo are large in quantity but small in amount of goods, regulatory authorities of township level can be authorized to manage the markets in agricultural and pastoral areas and restrain the market conducts in violation of the legal interests of consumers. In the meantime, establish various industry associations in the rural area of Kongpo to purify the consumption environment for rural residents by giving a full play to the self-discipline and self-management functions of these industry associations. In this way, further improve the consuming willingness of rural residents in Kongpo.

**3.3 Strengthening market guidance and cultivation, and improving the consumption structure of rural residents in Kongpo** At present, the consumption structure of rural residents in Kongpo is in the upgrading stage. On this basis, explore and develop new consumption hotspots according to the market features and the actual demand of rural residents in Kongpo. Accelerate the development of consumer markets for education, tourism, medical care, fitness & entertainment and information consultant *etc.*, boost the demand of service consumption, expand consumption channels, and accelerate consumption upgrade. Carry on the trade-ins of household appliances, automobiles and motorcycles to the countryside, and promote the sales of varieties of industrial products of high quality in the countryside; integrate the cultural resources in Kongpo, assist with the publication of excellent books and audio-visual products of Tibetan languages, provide more excellent culture works and cultural products that conform to the core socialist values and meet different needs of rural residents in Kongpo, strive to enrich the consumption structure for rural residents, and improve the consumption level of them.

**3.4 Strengthening publicity and education, giving full play to the role of models, and guiding rural residents in Kongpo to develop a scientific concept of consumption value gradually**

Strengthen the education of Marxist materialism, atheism and religious view in the rural area of Kongpo, improve the scientific

drop after the beginning of autumn and corn yield decline arising

from too much rain. After seedling planting, the rainfall decline

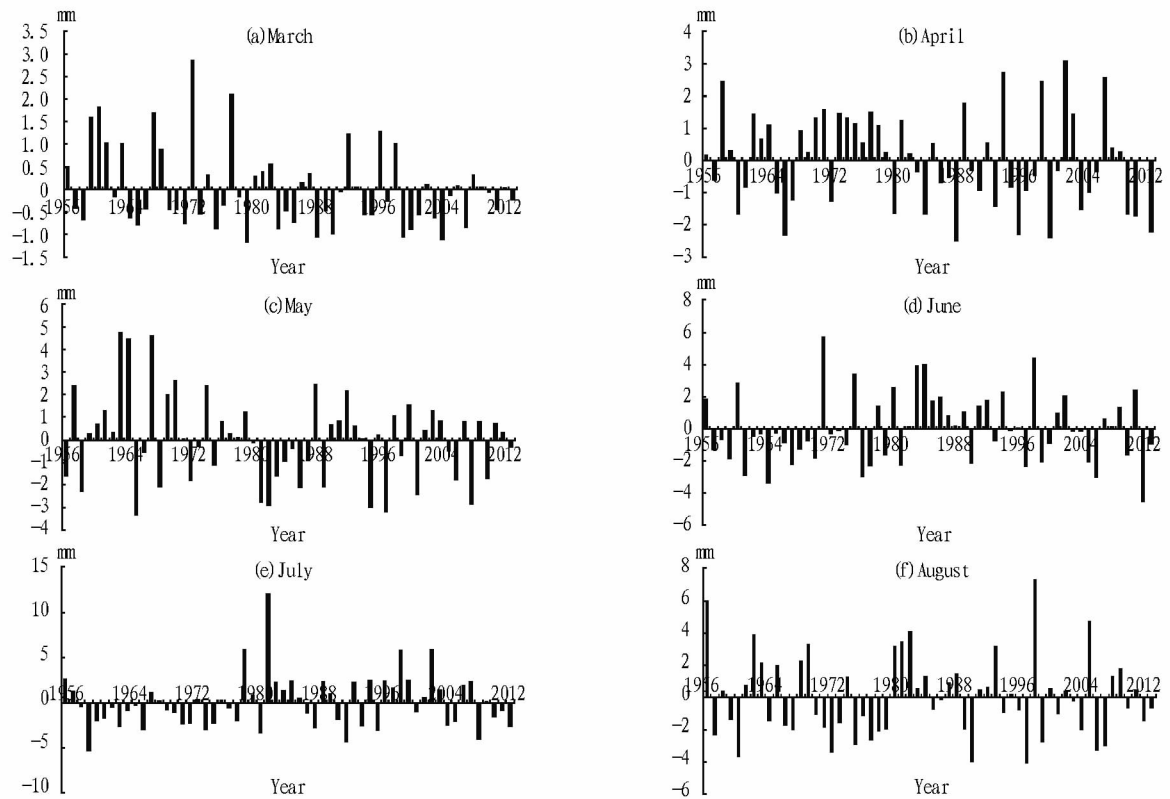


Fig.2 The anomaly of daily average precipitation each month for corn growth period in Fengjie County

may increase the pressure on corn growth. Therefore, in the future, the changes in climatic factors influencing corn growth period in Fengjie County must be fully considered to improve response measures to increase corn production.

Table 2 Daily average monthly precipitation, climate trend rate and correlation coefficients in Fengjie County

	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Average daily precipitation(mm)	1.63	3.19	5.20	5.28	5.70	4.11
Climate trend rate (mm/10a)	-0.13	-0.12	-0.21	0.04	0.22	-0.07
The correlation coefficient	-0.26	-0.14	-0.19	0.04	0.13	-0.05

(From page 81)

and cultural literacy of rural residents, advocate scientific, healthy, and civilized mainstream consumption value in the whole society, call for scientific and rational consumption, reduce religious consumption and rival consumption, and increase other kinds of rational daily consumptions. Give full play to the demonstration effect of the League members, communists and resident team members of higher level of education and political consciousness in the promotion of healthy and civilized lifestyle. Guide the rural residents in Kongpo to develop a scientific concept of consumption value, increase their income through honest work, improve the daily consumption level and consumption

References

[1] MIN XT, HUANG JP. White Fengjie County history and grassland resources and ecological monitoring results analysis [J]. Grass and Livestock, 2010(5): 34-36.  
[2] WANG . Fengjie corn production status and development strategy [J]. Southern Agriculture, 2008(7): 86-88.  
[3] LI SS, LI YH. Other southwestern corn field planted manual Beijing [M]. China Agriculture Press, 2011.  
[4] LIU Y, WANG L, NI GG. Such as China's major crops spatial distribution of irrigation water requirement [J]. Agricultural Engineering, 2009,25 (12): 6-12.  
[5] IPCC, 2013: Summary for policymakers in climate change 2013: The physical science basis contribution of working group I to the fifth assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change [Stocker, TF, D. Qin, G. - K. Plattner, M. Tignor, SK Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex and PM Midgley (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.

structure, and change the value concept of being cautious in daily consumption but excessive in religious consumption.

References

[1] ZHAO JL. Study on consumer culture change in China[D]. Chengdu: Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, 2009(4): 53-54, 170-171. (in Chinese).  
[2] ZHANG QJ. Economics analysis of religious beliefs[J]. The Religious Cultures in the World, 2010(2): 8-13. (in Chinese).  
[3] BANBAN DJ. On the value approach of Tibetan Buddhism and the modern transformation of Tibetans' idea[J]. Studies in World Religions, 2001(2): 27-39. (in Chinese).  
[4] SONG LJ, SUN ZB, SUN QL. Exploration on the influence of religions and beliefs in Gongpo areas on rural residents' life quality[J]. Industrial & Science Tribune, 2013, 12(4): 125-127. (in Chinese).