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# How to Develop Chinese Rural Tourism in the Context of New Urbanization?

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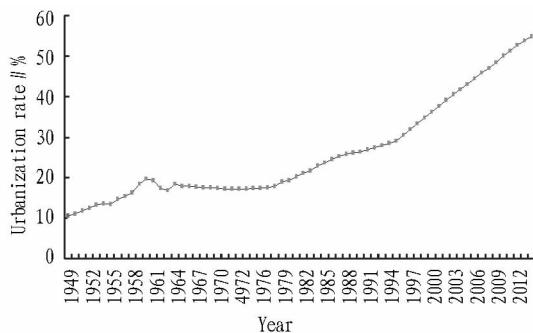
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**Abstract** With economic development, the type and form of tourism products are constantly innovated, and rural tourism has become one of the main travel choices of contemporary Chinese people. In 2014, China formulated National New Urbanization Plan, providing a new opportunity for development of rural tourism. In this paper, we first summarize the development situation and connotation of new urbanization and rural tourism, then discuss the mutually reinforcing interaction between the two, analyze the main problems in Chinese rural tourism under new urbanization, and finally put forth the recommendations, in order to better meet the needs of new urbanization, and strive to create a new model of tourism urbanization.

**Key words** New urbanization, Rural tourism, Interaction, Tourism urbanization

## 1 Development situation and connotation of new urbanization and rural tourism

**1.1 New urbanization** China's urbanization rate was only 10.64% in 1949, and it increased to 17.92% in 1978. Since the reform and opening up, China's urbanization rate has increased rapidly. It was more than 30% in 1996, and more than 50% in 2011, and reached 56.1% in 2014, as shown in Fig. 1. Compared with Western developed countries, the urbanization in China started late but is developed rapidly, and excessively pursuing speed but ignoring the quality has triggered a series of urban problems. Thus, in 2014, China officially started construction of new urbanization to emphasize integration, coordination and harmony of urban and rural areas, and promote coordinated development of large, medium and small cities, small towns, and new rural communities. This indicates that the process of urbanization in China has entered into the stage of laying equal stress on quality and speed.



**Fig. 1** The change in China's urbanization rate after 1949

## 1.2 Rural tourism

With rural areas for activities, rural

tourism uses unique rural resources of agricultural production, rural life and rural ecological environment, to provide various forms of tourism for urban residents such as sight-seeing, leisure, education, health building, entertainment, shopping and vacation. Since the reform and opening up, the government has implemented the strategic plan of building a new socialist countryside, which opens the prelude to rural tourism. With the government's increasing attention and shift in people's ideas of rural tourism, rural tourism gradually booms, and becomes an important form of domestic leisure tourism. The development of Chinese rural tourism industry for nearly 30 years is shown in Table 1.

## 2 Interaction between new urbanization and rural tourism

### 2.1 Role of new urbanization in promoting rural tourism

**2.1.1** Providing a huge market demand. With the rapid increase in socio-economic level, people have the higher demand for tourism and the like after meeting the most basic physiological needs and security needs, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. People living in cities and towns prefer pastoral life and rural experience in order to alleviate the quick pace and stress produced by large-scale mechanized production. Thus, the new urbanization construction provides a broad market demand for the development of rural tourism.

**2.1.2** Offering superior policy support. In the implementation of new urbanization strategy, local governments include rural tourism in township development plan, enact laws and regulations to regulate rural tourism activities, offer support in land management, financing, employment, household registration reform and social security, and regulate market access, information management, organization construction and marketing. Government's policy support and institutional norms provide a solid guarantee for rural tourism.

**2.1.3** Providing good economic support. New urbanization construction increases the investment in rural tourism, constantly pro-

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motes various kinds of infrastructure construction, makes transportation more convenient and services more perfect, brings a great

convenience to urban residents' travel in rural areas, and provides a solid protection of traffic and logistics.

**Table 1 Chinese rural tourism industry development for nearly 30 years**

Year	Development
1990s	Rural tourism, as an important part of eco-tourism, was vigorously promoted by the World Tourism Organization and other international organizations, and gradually developed.
1998	China National Tourism Administration determined "1998: China Urban and Rural Tour" as tourism theme year.
2003	Shanghai promulgated China's first local standard of rural tourism: <i>Farmhouse Service Quality Level Classification</i> .
2006	National Tourism Administration identified 2006 as "China Urban and Rural Tour" theme year, and the slogan was "new countryside, new tourism, new experience, new trend".
2007	Central Document No. 1 attached great importance to the development of rural tourism, and National Tourism Administration proposed and actively promoted "China Urban and Rural Tour" theme year event, and launched Rural Tourism Project of 100 Characteristic Counties, 1000 Characteristic Townships and 10000 Characteristic Villages.
2008	The Third Plenary Session of the 17th CPC Central Committee proposed taking the road of agricultural modernization with Chinese characteristics, and accelerating the formation of a new pattern of urban and rural economic and social integration.
2010	More than twenty provinces, autonomous regions (municipalities) developed the relevant norms and standards concerning rural tourism or farmhouse.

## 2.2 Role of rural tourism in promoting new urbanization

**2.2.1** Meeting urban demand and increasing residents' income. There will be increasingly high work and life pressure for the urban residents in modern society, and rural tourism just plays a role in relieving the pressure on urban residents. Rural tranquil and comfortable living environment and abundant resources often become good carriers for urban residents to release the pressure. At the same time, the development of rural tourism can effectively absorb surplus rural labor force, and improve the income level of residents in tourist destinations; government intervention is also beneficial to the development and protection of local culture with characteristics.

**2.2.2** Achieving the *in-situ* urbanization of tourism. Rural tourism is not simply to use scenic spot to attract tourists, and in fact it is an experience-based travel in rural areas. This form of tourism has strong linkage effects, and can create service-oriented industry clusters similar to industrial layout. Through this innovative model of urbanization, it can effectively solve many urban problems caused by the transfer of a large rural population into cities.

## 3 Main problems in China's rural tourism development

Through many years of development, Chinese rural tourism has made great strides, showing good development prospects. However, it is still in its infancy, and there are still many problems to be solved in the development process. Rural tourism is not included in the urbanization construction, and the development of rural tourism products is not well combined with new urbanization construction. It tends to focus only on the immediate economic interests, leading to serious homogeneous rural tourism competition, without highlighting rural "personality". And rural tourist destinations are mostly in rural areas with insufficient investment in infrastructure, so it can not meet the basic needs of tourists, and the tourists in many places show dissatisfaction. All these are incon-

sistent with the huge rural tourism demand generated in the rapid development of China's urbanization.

## 4 Recommendations

**4.1 Making good plans based on local conditions to highlight the rural characteristics** Rural characteristics are the key element to attract the urban population, so the development of rural tourism should be based on the rural "personality" different from the urban landscape. On the basis of learning from other outstanding rural tourism demonstration sites, it is necessary to seek the best combination among various factors such as geographic location, resource characteristics, customs and economic development. Based on other development models, there is a need to focus on local characteristics to create rural tourism brands with characteristics. Therefore, in the development process, it is necessary to improve economic and social benefits, and avoid excessive invasion of external culture threatening the dominant position of local culture, to maintain the development of rural tourism. The real look is the key to success.

**4.2 Improving infrastructure and achieving *in-situ* urbanization of rural tourism** Sound public service infrastructure is the basis for enhancing rural tourism development, and also the necessary conditions for promoting *in-situ* urbanization. Urban residents, as the main source of rural tourism, enjoy sound infrastructure and services in urban areas, so they place a higher demand on infrastructure and services in rural areas. Therefore, in terms of public tourism facility construction, it is necessary to effectively solve the traffic problem, and open up travel lanes in co-operation with the transport departments; in terms of food and accommodation construction, it is necessary to pay attention to the health standards of tourism environment and reception facilities, and carry out regular disinfection. At the same time, it is necessary to increase investment in rural roads, parking lot lighting, sanitation facilities, medical care facilities, post and telecommunications facilities, educational facilities, and cultural facilities.

quired to minimize the proportion of village collective in benefit allocation of circulation of rural collectively owned profit-oriented construction land. Certainly, above-ground structures or facilities should not be included into benefit of circulation, instead, these should be separated from rural collectively owned profit-oriented construction land, and be owned by builders. If they are built by the collective, it can be considered as collective property.

Benefit adjustment should care about and consider income adjustment of collectively owned profit-oriented construction land, and should also consider income allocation relationship in the land requisition, to realize general balance of benefit of the state, collective and farmer individuals. Main party receiving benefit from rural collectively owned profit-oriented construction land entering into the market is collective land owner, and its members obtain the benefit according to their shares. The state collects certain amount of land appreciation income in the first time, and collects appreciation income in the form of tax after land circulation. The first income can be monetary or public facility service land with equivalent value, which realizes effective connection with sector requisition of land requisition reform.

**4.6 Improving participation mechanism** Rural collectively owned profit-oriented construction land entering into the market is a very sensitive subject in rural society. In specific decision-making process of collectively owned profit-oriented construction land, how to implement equitable, just and open principle and take overall consideration of benefits of all parties is a practical problem urgently to be solved. Well established public participation mechanism is of particular importance. It is recommended to widely absorb opinions of interested parties to form publically recognized scheme. In recent years, rural council formed in the construction of new socialist countryside gradually plays an increasingly important role in multi-party benefit coordination of rural social and economic activities. Rural council generally consists of five to nine elderly people (elderly party member, elderly cadre, family clan elder, elderly teacher, and elderly model). They are not village cadres currently in office, but are generally acknowledged responsible, competent and reputable talents. They stick to principles, handle affairs in fair and just manner. They are trusted by villagers. In addition, they show powerful vitality in organizing rural in-

rastructure, managing funds, supervising construction quality, and mediating disputes, organizing to formulate rules and regulations for the village and villagers, and realizing autonomous management, independent implementation, self-education, autonomous service, and self-supervision of villagers. Therefore, it is recommended to fully absorb participation of rural council, bring into play its advantages in coordinating benefits of interested parties. This is an effective approach for establishing equitable, just, open, and transparent circulation mechanism for rural collectively owned profit-oriented construction land. In conclusion, for building urban and rural integrated land use market and safeguarding rights and interests of farmers, the core is to properly treat the relation between government and market; regulation of rural collectively owned profit-oriented construction land entering into the market needs strengthening of macro-control; it is recommended to establish and improve systems, to create favorable external environment for bringing into play decisive role of market mechanism in land resource allocation.

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**4.3 Keeping pace with the times and using technology to create urban-rural integration** New urbanization promotes the development of wisdom cities, enhances the integration of urban and rural plan and public services, and strengthens rural service network construction. For the development of rural tourism, it is necessary to make good use of network technology and "smart travel" to create new tourism style. It is necessary to strengthen rural infrastructure construction and network coverage, use Wechat, microblog and other media channels for rural tourism publicity, and perfect DIY tourism APP to make rural tourism more convenient. Keeping pace with the times and mak-

ing good use of technology is the key to long-term development of rural tourism.

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