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Development Path for Small Towns in Underdeveloped Areas—A Case of Ganzhou City in Jiangxi Province

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Abstract With the increase of per capita GDP, the urbanization level of Ganzhou City has increased significantly. However, urbanization in central region was obviously higher than western and eastern regions. In order to gradually narrow the gap of urbanization between them and to enhance the overall level of urbanization, the author tries to set up a development mechanism for small towns in Ganzhou City from seven different paths. They are ① establish a strict and normative land management system, ② constitute a unified household registration system in urban and rural areas, ③ construct a unified and fair employment system, ④ build a multi-layered social security system, ⑤ establish a multilateral financial system and the investment and financing system in small towns for long-term development, ⑥ set up a high efficient administrative system in small towns, ⑦ construct a scientific docking mechanism for industrial gradient transfer. These seven different paths can not only promote the development of rural reform in Ganzhou City, but also has demonstration significance to the development of small towns in underdeveloped areas of China.

Key words Small town; Development path; Ganzhou City of China

As a transitional community being changed from a rural community to a modern city with a varieties of industries^[1], small town directly reflects the rural appearance, the state of ecological environment, the rural economic and social culture, the life of peasants and even the overall level of rural civilization. Small towns are of great significance to promoting the development of rural reform under the new situation. Ganzhou City, Jiangxi Province is a big agricultural city located in underdeveloped area. This city has large population with serious problem of the "Three Agriculture" and arduous and onerous task of urbanization. Therefore, further research on development path of small towns not only can promote the rural reform and development of Ganzhou City, but also has demonstration significance to the development of small town in similar areas of China.

1 Development status of small towns in Ganzhou City

1.1 Urbanization of Ganzhou City

Ganzhou City has 1 district,

2 cities and 15 counties with the total area of 39 thousand square kilometers. Ganzhou City has a total of 8 770.4 thousand population at the end of 2007. Among them, the agricultural population is 6 960.3 thousand, accounting for 79.36% of the total population; and the urban population is 1 810.1 thousand, occupying 20.64%. There are in all 138 towns and 145 villages in the whole city, accounting for 21 percent of the total townships throughout the province. Urbanization rate of counties (cities, districts) in Ganzhou City is generally low (mostly below 20%); and urbanization rate of the overall Ganzhou City is only 20.64%, which is far lower than the national average (44.90%). Table 1 shows that the average number of urban population is below 6 000 in Ganzhou City, which has relatively great differences with its neighboring cities.

Fig. 1 indicates that with the rapid development of per capita GDP, development of urbanization in Ganzhou City shows a zigzag trend from 1949 to 2007, and the urbanization rate has increased greatly.

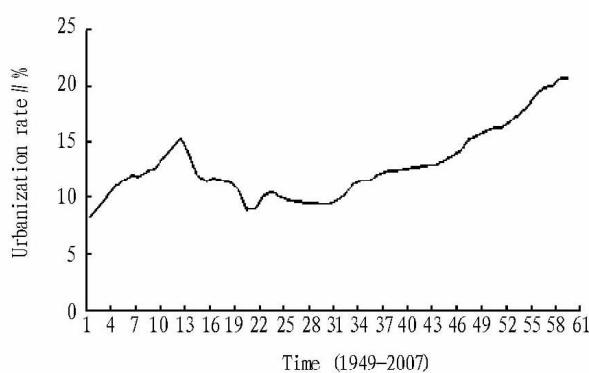
Table 1 Comparison of the urbanization rates of Ganzhou, Shaoguan and Chenzhou in 2007

Area	Urbanization rate // %	GDP // $\times 10^8$ yuan	Per capita GDP // yuan	Area of central city km^2	Population in central city // $\times 10^4$
Ganzhou	20.64	701.68	8 000	50.0	52.10
Shaoguan	39.19	482.54	16 418	78.2	91.00
Chenzhou	40.02	642.20	14 671	40.7	41.52

Note: Urbanization rate means the proportion of urban population in total county (city, district) population; data are from the 2008 Statistical Yearbook of Ganzhou, Shaoguan and Chenzhou.

1.2 Characteristics of the development of small towns in Ganzhou City There are relatively great development differences among the central, western and eastern regions of Ganzhou City. Urbanization level of central region is significantly higher than those of eastern and western regions. Small towns

develop rapidly with intensive distribution; and most of them have formed certain scale. However, small towns in western and eastern regions are rare, and most of them develop spontaneously. Urbanization of counties (cities, districts) has positive correlation with the development level of economy. Table 2 reports that Zhanggong District and its surrounding small towns with relatively developed economy has developed rapidly. Development situations of small towns along Beijing Kowloon Line

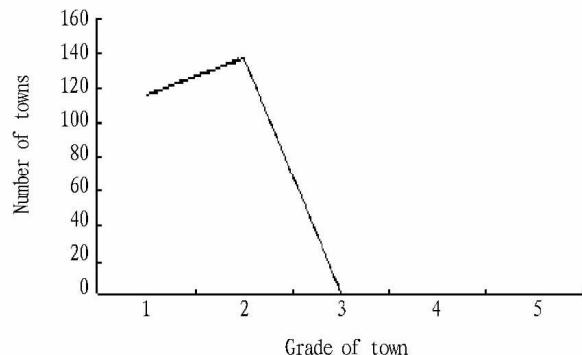


Note: Data are from the 2008 *Statistical Yearbook of Ganzhou City*.

Fig.1 Trend of the urbanization rate of Ganzhou City from 1949 to 2007

and State Highway No.105 are relatively good, such as Zhanggong, Nankang, Longnan, Xinfeng, Dayu and other counties (cities); while other underdeveloped and remote small towns

are in slow development.



Note: Data are from the 2008 *Statistical Yearbook of Ganzhou City*. 1 means market town with 1 thousand-10 thousand population; 2 means designated town with 4 thousand-0.1 million population; 3 is small city with population between 0.1 million to 0.2 million; 4 is medium-sized city with population between 0.2 million to 0.5 million; 5 means metropolis with population above 0.5 million.

Fig.2 Urban grade division of Ganzhou City

Table 2 Per capita GDP and urbanization rates of counties (cities, districts) in Ganzhou City in the year 2007

County (city and area)	Per capital GDP//yuan	Urbanization rate // %	County (city and area)	Per capital GDP//yuan	Urbanization rate // %
Zhanggong Area	20 988	73.95	Longnan County	11 979	17.04
Dayu County	13 602	30.18	Nankang City	6 397	16.61
Quannan County	9 769	29.82	Anyuan County	5 398	16.34
Xinfeng County	7 091	23.80	Shicheng County	4 752	16.20
Dingnan County	8 938	19.06	Xingguo County	5 682	15.51
Chongyi County	12 469	18.79	Huichang County	5 463	15.20
Ruijin City	6 610	18.63	Gan County	7 104	15.10
Yudu County	5 295	18.47	Xunwu County	6 863	15.04
Ningdu County	6 581	18.10	Shangyou County	6 391	14.66

Note: Data are from the 2008 *Statistical Yearbook of Ganzhou City* and the *Statistic Bulletin for National Economic and Social Development* in counties (cities, districts) of Ganzhou City.

Meanwhile, Fig.2 shows that the extremely unreasonable urban system of Ganzhou City mainly reflects in the lack of medium-sized cities and the serious shortage of the construction of small cities. Supply of material and culture consumer goods have few types and poor quality and environment with low infrastructure level and relatively small urban scale. Both the imbalance of development of industrial and agricultural production and the differences in resource endowments are important factors directly affecting the level of urban development, such as location, traffic conditions, resources, original basis, development time, and the concept of policy. The *Eleventh Five Year Plan for the Construction Cause of Ganzhou City* clearly points out that urbanization level will be above 40% in the year 2010, an annual average increase of 1.788%; there should be a megapolis with more than 500 thousand population, 2 medium-sized cities with population between 200 thousand and 500 thousand; and proportion of urban population living in towns with more than 50 thousand people in the total urban population of Ganzhou City will be above 68.15%. Urban built-up area above county level will reach 310 square kilometers, among which the urban built-up area will be 120 square kilometers^[2]. Promoting rural reform and development has brought about a

new historical turning point for small towns. In order to achieve these development goals, it is necessary for Ganzhou City to choose a scientific, rational and effective path for the development of small towns.

2 Construction of development mechanism for small towns of Ganzhou City

In recent years, a variety of system reform and innovation are carried out during the development of small towns of Ganzhou City, which has promoted the development of small towns to a certain extent. However, construction of small towns in Ganzhou City is at the stage of testing each step before taking it. Development mechanism for small towns of Ganzhou City is discussed from the aspects of land management system, household registration, social security and administrative system. Therefore, gradually narrowing the gap between the central area and the east and west areas, and comprehensively improving the overall level of urbanization will become an important topic for Ganzhou City in future.

2.1 Strictly regulating and improving the rural land management system Under the existing land system, ownership of collective land can not be transferred except the land requisi-

tion for state construction. Household subcontracting and collective adjustment are needed in the transfer of land contracting management right. This land system is not conducive to cut off the contact between peasants and land. According to statistics, total area of rural land transfer in Ganzhou City has reached 29 266.67 hectares involving 155.6 thousand households^[3]. But the agricultural population in small towns has reached more than 2 million^[4], indicating that the speed of rural land circulation lags behind the process of urbanization. Therefore, we should allow peasants to transfer the land contract management right in the forms of subcontract, lease, exchange, transfer, and joint-stock cooperative based on the principle of voluntary. Strengthen the circulation management and service of land contract management right; develop various forms of management with moderate scale^[5]. Meanwhile, we should adhere to the principle of "clarification of property rights, control of land use, efficient use of land resources, strict management", allow the land circulation of contractual right in accordance with the law, use market allocation as the main mode of land resources allocation, and protect the long-term land rights of peasants and collectivity. This institutional innovation can not only achieve an appropriate concentration of land and the appropriate scale of operation, but also can promote the development of rural urbanization. At the same time, circulation of land contracting management right in rural areas will help to promote the transfer of urban economic growth mode, and to force the economic sectors to obtain maximum economic growth with the minimum land resources, to change the extensive use of land to intensive use, and to promote the overall transformation of economic growth pattern.

Land for construction in small towns should be paid except that allocated for use by the state according to law. Firstly, based on adhering to the most stringent farmland protection system, construction land of small towns should be collected and managed by the government, and adopt the mode of paid use. We should strictly define the public and operating construction lands, gradually narrow the scope of land requisition, improve the land requisition compensation mechanism, collect rural collective land under the law, pay the rural collective organizations and peasants a reasonable compensation in full and on time^[5]. Secondly, construction land of small towns should be included in the provincial, municipal and county land use planning and the annual plan for land use. And the index for construction land in key small towns, urban development zone, and industrial park should be arranged ahead of time. Thirdly, rationally use the differential rent of land; adopt different land-price policies for industrial, commercial, residential and other lands. Fourthly, gradually establish a unified urban and rural construction land market. Rural collective construction land for commercial use ought to be transferred through a visible and unified land market in a public and standard mode, which can enjoy equal rights with state-owned land in accord with the planning.

2.2 Establishing a unified household registration system in rural and urban areas Due to historical and other reasons, China's household registration system has been given to a series of additional features, such as education, family plan-

ning, health care, employment, social security and compensation. But agricultural population is excluded from these additional features. Government has advanced the drafting of a general scheme for the reform of household registration system in June, 1993. Reform objectives are put forward including the abolition of binary features of agricultural and nonagricultural registered resident, the unified household registration system in urban and rural areas, the principle of registration in place of residence, adjusting migration policy of registration with legal permanent residence, stable jobs or source of livelihood as the basic registration condition.

2.2.1 Unified household registration system in urban and rural areas. Gradually realize dividing urban and rural population according to their residences, and classifying agricultural and nonagricultural population by professions, so that registry of citizens can truly reflect the state of residence and identity.

2.2.2 Divesting additional functions from household registration management system. The existing household registration system has too many additional functions, which causes identity discrimination based on the dual management system. Therefore, the registered residence should return to its function of objective registration of resident status, so that to construct a institutional arrangements for a unified urban and rural areas, and to realize the real urban-rural integration.

2.3 Establishing a unified system of fair employment With the improvement of agricultural labor productivity, a large number of rural surplus labor forces have gradually appeared. But they are hard to obtain formal jobs in cities and towns due to the discrimination of various systems. There are 1 637.3 thousand migrant peasants in Ganzhou City in the year 2007. Plus 548.3 thousand employees in rural enterprises, there are in all more than 2 million rural surplus labor forces in Ganzhou City. Fig.3 indicates that the number of new labor forces has increased to 86 thousand in Ganzhou City in the year 2007. Some small towns in Ganzhou City regard rural labor forces as a "blind flow" influencing the social security, and increasing employment conflicts. Therefore, rural labor forces are hard to be employed in these towns. It has become the inevitable choices to cancel the unreasonable restrictions in rural labor employment in cities and towns, and to guide the orderly flow of surplus labor force in urban areas^[6].

2.3.1 Change the concepts; and eliminate employment discrimination against migrant workers. According to incomplete statistics, industries or fields restricting peasants to enter in towns can be as high as 60 types, those in medium-sized cities are about 40 types. Peasants can only be employed in the second class labor market with low income, poor environment, low benefits, and no welfare. They mainly engaged in dirty, dangerous, and heavy works. Moreover, many peasants are facing the fate of dismissal at all times^[7]. Ganzhou City should restrictive employment policies for rural residents; and governments at all levels should abolish the administrative examination and approval towards the migrant workers in enterprises, simplify the procedures for peasants to work in cities, cancel the employment registration card specifically for the employment of migrant workers, and clean up the unreasonable fees and charges for migrant workers, so that peasants can access to non-

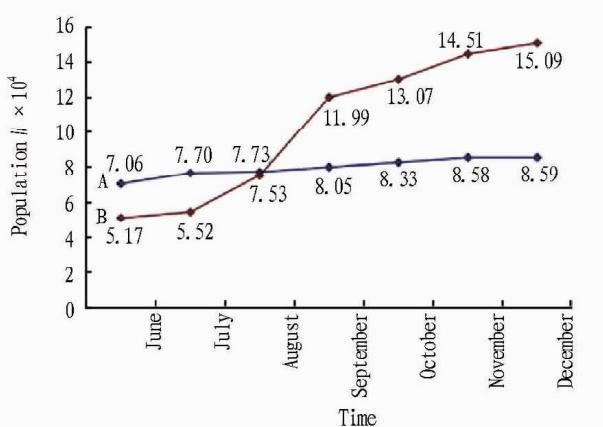


Fig.3 Work schedule of the rural labor force transfer in Ganzhou City in the year 2007

agricultural industries without any barrier.

2.3.2 Strengthen skills training and education of laws and regulations; improve the quality of the rural labor force. Low quality of workers is a key factor restricting labor forces to start a career and to adapt to the market. There are 3 404.7 thousand labor forces in rural areas in Ganzhou City. Among them, 1 200 thousand population work outside all the year round, education level of 53. 28% rural adults are below primary school^[8]. Most of the rural labor force has not received systemic practical agricultural technology and work skills training. A large number of peasants have been tied in the limited land, and are difficult to find new opportunities. This directly restricts the effective transfer of labor force and the process of urbanization. Fig. 3 illustrates that the training number of rural labor force in 2007 reaches 150.9 thousand in Ganzhou City. Rural labor forces in cities should enhance their living knowledge in towns and the education laws and regulations, find technical training and employment opportunities, and gradually enhance their abilities in business operation and working performance, so that they can become law-abiding workers, operators and urban residents as soon as possible.

2.4 Establishing multi-layered social security system At present, social security of Ganzhou City mainly covers the urban workers. Most residents in small towns and rural areas can only rely on the protection of traditional family, which is very detrimental to the stable development small towns. Establishing a multi-layered social security system has resolved actual difficulties of peasants living in towns, and promoted the development of small town in Ganzhou City.

Establishment of unemployment insurance and medical insurance for all the non-agricultural employees is a basic protection must be offered to peasants settled in the town. We should implement unemployment insurance in accordance with the relevant provisions of province and state, actively explore medical insurance with multi-layered medical and health security system when adhering to the cooperative medical system, establish the community endowment or social endowment insurance for all the nonagricultural employees. To be specific, community endowment should take mutual aid as the major form, supplemented with paid endowment service in community. While charge standards in social endowment can be selected freely by

individuals; and insurance fund management system should be established, as well as a minimum subsistence guarantee system for all the nonagricultural employees. The minimum subsistence guarantee system should be established as soon as possible in all the designated towns, and the majority of urban residents will be included in this scope. Peasants who settle in towns and have transferred land use rights all at once should also have the rights to apply for minimum living guarantee, so as to promote the large scale and industrialization of agriculture. We should also build a payment mechanism of social security funds with individuals as the main body supplemented with unit (employer), and proper support of the state. The funds for maintaining the minimum living standards required in small towns should be listed in the financial budget of local government, and included in the expenditure item of special funds. Central finance or upper finance should offer help to local government and grass-roots finance when they are in difficulty.

2.5 Establishing a diversified small town finance and investment and financing system As a result of the general financial strain of town governments, financial funds for small towns are very weak. Together with the backward investment and financing systems of small towns, it has resulted in the insufficient capital investment in construction of small towns. In order to change this situation, the financial and the investment and financing system suitable for market economic system should be established according to the rules of market.

Construct a financial system conducive to the long-term development of small towns. Perfect the county-level finance, bring the budgetary revenue, non-budgetary revenue, and various fees and charges of all sectors into the financial management of town, in order to reinforce the economic strength of county level, and increase the construction and maintenance costs of small towns construction. Establish the normal channels to raise funds for construction, give priority to some taxation policies, all taxes for the maintenance of the buildings in small towns should be used for the construction of infrastructure and public facilities. 50 percent of the business tax of real estate development enterprises should be restored to the infrastructure construction of small towns. Besides, the direction of the reform of investment and financing system is to establish a new investment and financing system with autonomous decision of investment subject, various financing methods, standard intermediary services, and powerful government macro-control according to the principle of "the one who invests will make decisions, obtain benefit, and bear the risk"^[9]. Allocate funds from society, and eventually construct a diversified investment mechanism mainly by self-financing and supplemented with the state, along with the active participation of enterprises, commercial banks, individuals, and the investment of foreign capital. Attract township enterprises into industrial parks, and attract peasants with funds to set up factories or shops in towns, and optimize the environment of individual and private economy. At the same time, enlarge the bank's investment proportion of construction funds for infrastructure of small towns; the banks and financial sectors at city and county levels should arrange the middle and long-term special loans for the construction of small towns.

2.6 Establishing a highly efficient administrative system in small towns

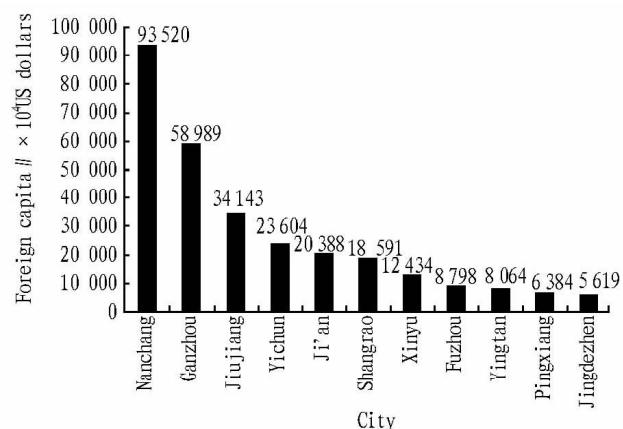
2.6.1 Create a new government management system, transform the functions of government. According to the requirement of "Small Government, Large Society" and "Small Institution and Big Service", a government management system should be established with clear function, rational structure, and uncorrupted and efficient government. The main functions of town government should be making plans, implementing planning and management, carrying out infrastructure construction, co-ordinating public affairs, maintaining security of society, and so on.

2.6.2 Reform administrative management system; carry out village-repeal and town-combination, and reduction of administrative. Township, the most basic administrative region of China, separates the large-scale development of economic region. Town-combination can make better use of the natural and social resources of the whole region, strengthen the regional power, and promote the sustainable development of small towns. Since the year 2000, Ganzhou City has implemented the village-repeal and town-combination. As a result, the number of townships reduced from 358 to 283, which solved many problems, such as the large number, small scale, overstaffed government, and heavy financial burden.

2.6.3 Establish training mechanism for officials; improve the lawful ruling ability. With the gathering of population and enterprises in small towns, economy in small towns has developed gradually, and the scale has enlarged greatly. This raises higher requirements for the management level in small towns. Therefore, small towns should strengthen the training of staff, plan to provide training for township officials, improve the qualities of leadership and other managers, and their management level and professional ability.

2.7 Constructing scientific docking mechanism for industrial gradient transfer With the rise of the costs of land, water, electricity and gas, labor-intensive industries in "Chang-Zhu-Ming" and other developed coastal areas are gradually transferring. Ganzhou City is the transportation hub of the four provinces of Hunan, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong with large hinterland of economic development, broad market, extremely abundant land, labor and mineral resources. Ganzhou City is most likely to be the low-lying depression absorbing the industrial gradient transfer in southeast coast. Fig.4 shows that foreign investment of Ganzhou City ranks the second in Jiangxi Province in the year 2006.

2.7.1 Improve the investment environment of Ganzhou City; achieve mechanism and system docking. Since the year 2003, the party committee and government of Ganzhou City have advanced the strategic decision of "Connecting the Chang-Zhu-Ming Economic Deltas, Constructing New Ganzhou City", as well as the concrete ideas of "Ten Systems" linking the policies and regulations, financial services, information network, human resources, logistics services, trade services, property transactions, port services, technical standards, social security with the system of coastal developed areas, especially the Pearl River Delta. Ganzhou City becomes the first one to respond to the strategic concept of "Pan-Pearl River Delta Eco-



Note: Data are from the 2006 *Statistical Communique of National Economy and Social Development*.

Fig.4 Foreign capital in different cities of Jiangxi Province

nomic Zone", which will have a tremendous, positive and direct impact on the urbanization development of Ganzhou City.

2.7.2 Build characteristic industries of Ganzhou City; carry out misplaced docking mechanism. Characteristic industry can help to avoid the isomorphism of industry in surrounding areas, and to gain advantage in competition of industry docking. Ganzhou City is known as "township of navel orange in China", and navel orange industry in south Ganzhou is the most potential, promising, advantageous and competitive leading industry of agriculture, which has accelerated the development of township. During the "Tenth Five-Year" period, area of navel orange in Ganzhou City has reached 67 thousand hectares with total output of 500 thousand tons. It is predicted that area of navel orange will reach 200 thousand hectares in the year 2015 with the total output above 2 million tons, which is equivalent to the yield of California, the world's largest navel orange production. The Ministry of Agriculture has put navel orange in south Ganzhou into the dominant regional development planning in the nine national industries. The state has put 577 million yuan to promote the industry development of navel orange in south Ganzhou from the six aspects including demonstration base, seed breeding system, processing after harvest, market and information system, quality and standards system, technological innovation and the promotion system^[10]. Besides, docking mechanism for industrial gradient transfer must follow the path of differentiation; and the misplaced development ought to be carried out in the industrial choose and the industrial structure layout.

2.7.3 Construct and optimize of industrial park; build docking platform for industry. Industrial park is the aggregation of various factors of production. It is the optimum platform for the overall carrying of the industrial transfer in developed areas. At present, 16 counties and cities in Ganzhou City have set up industrial parks. And some sub-centers with better development condition have also built industrial areas, such as Yinkeng Town. These small towns accounts for about 15% of the total towns in Ganzhou City. Tangjiang Town is one of the best in the industrial-based small towns^[10]. However, construction of industrial park in Ganzhou City is still in its initial stages with weak foundation, insufficient funds, and few investment ob-

jects. Therefore, Ganzhou City should further widen the investment objects and investment channels, increase investment strength, allow and encourage private capital and foreign investments in the construction of parks.

3 Conclusion

Development of small towns is a long-term socio-economic problem. Studies on it should be expanded from microscopic to macroscopic view with omni-directional and multi-dimensional exploration on its strategy design and institutional arrangements, so as to search for a better, more reasonable, and more suitable direction for the development of small towns in underdeveloped areas, and to provide theoretical support for the development of small towns in Ganzhou City and underdeveloped areas.

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欠发达地区小城镇发展路径建构研究——以江西省赣州市为例

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摘要 随着人均GDP的增长,赣州市城镇化水平有明显的提高,但中部地区城镇化水平明显高于东、西部地区,主要表现在:缺少中等城市,小城市建设严重不足,城镇规模偏小,基础设施水平偏低,物质文化消费品供给种类少,质量和内外环境较差,工农业生产发展不均衡和资源禀赋差异等问题。因此,笔者就逐步缩小中部和东、西部城镇化差距,全面提高城镇化整体水平提出了建构赣州市小城镇发展机制,主要从7个路径来推进小城镇发展:①健全严格规范的农村土地管理制度;②建立城乡一元的户籍管理制度,取消二元户口性质,剥离户籍管理制度的附加功能;③建立统一公平的劳动就业制度,转变观念,加强技术培训和法规教育,提高农村劳动力素质;④建立多层次的社会保障体系,包括所有非农就业人员的失业保险、医疗保险、社区养老和社会养老保险、最低生活保障制度;⑤建立多元化的长远发展的小城镇财政和投融资体制;⑥建立高效的小城镇行政管理体制,大力转变政府职能,精简机制,提高依法执政能力;⑦建立科学的产业梯度转移对接机制,改善投资环境,打造特色产业,建设优化工业园区,这不仅可以推进赣州市农村改革发展,而且对全国欠发达地区的小城镇发展也具有示范意义。

关键词 小城镇;发展路径;赣州市

(From page 9)

问题：一是政府管理部门存在认识偏差，财政投入不足，广西财政支出中用于农业支出的比重不断降低，用于人才资源开发的支出很少；二是客观环境条件较差，人才外流现象比较突出，政府基层组织工作还不到位；三是人才资源存量大，整体素质偏低，与新农村建设的需要不相适应；四是产业结构不合理，从业人员主要集中在第一产业，许多农村人口由于文化程度较低无法顺利转移至二、三产业。提出了开发广西北部湾经济区农村人才资源的相关对策：①领会政策，统一思想，为实现广西北部湾经济区农村人才资源开发提供思想政治保证；②创新人才服务和管理机制，为农村吸引各类人才创造条件；③加大政府投入，为农村人才资源开发奠定坚实的物质基础，营造适宜人才成长的良好环境；④大力开展农村基础和职业教育，加大对农村义务教育的投入力度；⑤加快发展劳动密集型产业、优化产业结构、加强农业信息化建设，加快农村剩余劳动力的转移。

关键词 广西北部湾经济区;农村;人才资源开发;对策