

Research on the Development of Tea Industry in Yibin City under Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: Implementing the rural revitalization strategy is an inevitable choice to increase farmers' income and establish a moderately prosperous society. Yibin is one of the main tea producing areas in Sichuan Province, and promoting the healthy development of the tea industry is an effective way to achieve rural revitalization and farmers' prosperity. However, for a long time, the tea industry in Yibin has faced problems such as extensive management, low production level, weak brand effect, and small scale, which have seriously affected the three-industry linkage with tea as the main body. By analyzing the current development status of the tea industry in Yibin City, analyzing the constraints and proposing feasible solutions, we aim to explore a unique development path suitable for the tea industry in Yibin City.

Keywords: rural revitalization Industrial prosperity, Tea industry, Integration of three industries.

1. Introduction

The issue of agriculture, rural areas, and farmers is a fundamental issue related to the national economy and people's livelihood. Since the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, promoting the rural revitalization strategy has become an important means to reduce the income gap between urban and rural areas and promote common prosperity, which is conducive to alleviating major contradictions and building a well-off society. In 2019, the rural resident population of Yibin was 2.232 million, accounting for 48.8% of the total population. The per capita disposable income was lower than 50% of the urban population[1], with a difference of nearly 20000 yuan, indicating a significant wealth gap. The number of people employed in the primary industry reached 42.3%, but the regional GDP only accounted for 10.7%, indicating a low level of production. The rural areas of Yibin City are characterized by a large number of people, low income, and low efficiency. In the context of rural revitalization, how to use advantageous products to establish a healthy industrial ecosystem has become an urgent problem that the local government needs to solve.

Yibin is one of the main tea producing areas in Sichuan Province. In 2019, the tea production in Sichuan Province was 325400 tons, with Yibin accounting for 22.4% [2], which has a clear geographical advantage in the Sichuan tea industry. In order to better promote the development of the tea industry in Yibin City, Yibin City has successively issued the "Ten Year Overall Plan for the Development of the Tea Industry in Yibin City (2016-2025)" and the "High quality Development Plan for the Modern Characteristic Tea Industry in Yibin City", and established development platforms such as Sichuan Liquor Tea Group. In 2018, Yibin City was recognized as the first provincial-level export tea quality and safety demonstration city in China; In 2019, Yibin morning tea was selected as the "third batch of Chinese characteristic agricultural product advantage zones public list".

As of 2019, the tea production in Yibin has increased by 2.7 times compared to 2010 and 5.4 times compared to 2000, showing a clear linear growth trend. At the same time as the

production scale expands, shortcomings in industrial development such as low modernization of the foundation, single product structure, insufficient brand influence, low technology conversion rate, and imbalanced talent team in the tea industry have gradually emerged[3]. How to achieve high-quality development of the tea industry while increasing production and effectively promote rural revitalization is an important issue worth considering. Based on this, this article combines the current situation of the tea industry development in Yibin City to identify the root causes that restrict the further development of Yibin tea industry, and provide suggestions for the healthy growth of Yibin tea industry and the promotion of rural revitalization strategy.

2. Overview of the Research Area and Development of The Tea Industry

2.1. Overview of the research area

Yibin City is located in the southern part of Sichuan Province, bordered by the Yangtze River to the east, Liangshan Mountains to the west, Yunnan to the south, and the hinterland of central Sichuan to the north. It is known as the "first city on the Yangtze River for thousands of miles". From a geographical perspective, it is located between 27 ° 50 ' -29 ° 16 ' N north latitude and 103 ° 36'-105 ° 20 ' E east longitude, with an altitude range of 200-2000 m. The average annual sunshine duration is 1000-1130 hours, which is very suitable for the growth of tea trees. Yibin belongs to a subtropical humid monsoon climate, and the low hills and river valleys have the climate attributes of South Asia tropics. It has the characteristics of mild climate, abundant heat, abundant rainfall, suitable lighting, long frost free period, warm winter and early spring, and distinct four seasons. The annual average temperature is around 18 ° C, the annual average precipitation is 1050-1618mm, and the annual average sunshine is 1000-1130 hours, which is very beneficial for the growth of tea trees.

2.2. Tea Production in Yibin City

Tea production refers to the total tea production during the current year. The tea collected in this article is mainly from

the tea trees in the tea plantation, and the tea production is calculated based on the weight of the preliminarily processed dry Mao tea. As of 2019, Yibin City's dry tea production reached 73000 tons, an increase of 8000 tons or 2.31% compared to 2018. The comprehensive output value of the tea industry reached 21.8 billion yuan, an increase of 5.3 billion yuan or 31.96% compared to 2018.

From 2013 to 2019, the tea production in Yibin City showed a linear trend of increasing year by year. Compared to 2013, the total tea production in 2019 increased by 70%. The tea planted in Yibin City mainly consists of green tea, green tea, black tea, black tea, and white tea, with a variety of varieties. Among them, the production of green tea and black tea has exceeded 80% of the total tea production for 7 consecutive years. It is worth noting that although the proportion of black tea production is relatively low, compared to 2013, the production of black tea has increased by nearly four times, and the market prospects are good. In 2019, the production of black tea also increased by about twice compared to 2013, and the proportion of black tea in the entire tea composition gradually increased.

2.3. Changes in Tea Garden Area

The area of tea gardens mainly includes the actual area of tea gardens at the end of the year, which includes two parts: the picked area of the year and the unpicked area of the year. The area harvested in that year is closely related to the tea yield, and the proportion of unpicked area in that year reflects the market prospects and saturation of tea cultivation. From 2013 to 2019, the area of tea gardens in Yibin City increased year by year, reaching 87781 hectares (hm²) in 2019. Compared to 2013, the area increased by about 47.2%, indicating the expansion of the tea market in China and the popularity of tea and tea products among consumers.

Correspondingly to the actual tea plantation area at the end of the year, the annual picking area also showed a trend of increasing year by year from 2013 to 2019. Compared to 2013, the annual tea plantation picking area in 2019 increased by 76.1%. After calculation, from 2013 to 2019, the yield of tea per unit of picking area remained basically balanced. This clue suggests that there was almost no innovation in tea planting technology in Yibin City in increasing the yield per unit area during these 7 years. The increase in tea production mainly relied on the expansion of planting area, and the level of scientific research investment was low.

After comparison, it was found that from 2013 to 2019, the proportion of picked and unpicked areas in Yibin City increased year by year within 7 years, and by 2019, it had exceeded 80%. This indicates that with the expansion of tea plantation scale, the proportion of newly added tea plantation areas has gradually decreased, indicating that the market size has gradually approached saturation, and the tea plantation area has increased to its maximum in the following years. The picking area will continue indefinitely to the actual tea garden area in recent years, marking the end of the extensive development process of tea gardens.

2.4. Changes in the comprehensive output value of the tea industry

By comparing the comprehensive output value of the tea industry in Yibin City from 2013 to 2019, the data shows that with the increase of tea production, the comprehensive output value of the tea industry has a faster growth rate. Compared to 2013, the comprehensive output value of the Yibin tea

industry in 2019 achieved a growth rate of 160%. The comprehensive output value created by the average kilogram of tea production has also rapidly increased since 2016. The development of Yibin tea industry is breaking away from the role of a simple raw material supplier and moving towards giving more added value to tea products.

From 2013 to 2019, the annual growth rate of disposable income of rural residents in Yibin was about 10%. Before 2016, the comprehensive output value of Yibin's tea industry grew slowly. However, since 2017, the comprehensive output value of Yibin's tea industry has rapidly increased at a rate of about 25% per year, far higher than the annual growth rate of disposable income of rural residents. This indicates that vigorously developing the tea industry can quickly expand the economic base in the future and effectively drive farmers to increase income and become rich. It has played a positive role in rural revitalization, and the high rate of comprehensive output value of the tea industry also indicates the good prospects of this industry.

3. Factors Restricting the Development of Tea Industry in Yibin City

3.1. Extensive production management and lack of overall planning

According to the "Ten Year Overall Plan for the Development of the Tea Industry in Yibin City (2016-2025)", by 2025, the actual production area of tea will remain stable at around 1 million mu, with an annual dry tea output of around 100000 tons, and an annual comprehensive tea industry output value of around 40 billion yuan. At present, the rural tea industry in Yibin is developing extensively and relying solely on expanding the planting area to increase production. Once the maximum agreed area is reached, it is difficult to achieve a balance of income and expenditure at the current technological level. At present, the main tea producing areas are facing two problems that need to be solved. Firstly, land planning is a problem, and centralized cultivation and management of tea cannot be achieved. The low efficiency of land transfer prevents the tea producing areas from being connected, increasing the overall operating costs[4]. The second problem is that the public expenditure has been increased. The decentralization of tea producing areas has led to the lack of funds for transportation construction. The road transport infrastructure at the junction of tea gardens and villages is insufficient, which cannot promote the comprehensive carrying capacity of the countryside, improve the rural operation efficiency, and steadily promote the rural transformation. It is not conducive to the logistics and transportation of tea, and restricts the construction of high-quality tea gardens.

3.2. Low level of mechanization and outdated marketing concepts

The entire agricultural industrialization development in Yibin is still in its early stages. In terms of tea production, tea plantations in Yibin area are currently generally in the form of workshops, with low mechanization, low production efficiency, and low resource utilization. Due to a lack of technical guidance, modern tea garden construction techniques such as picking, pruning, and irrigation have not been widely promoted in tea areas. Tea garden management and harvesting costs are high, reducing the efficiency of tea gardens. In terms of scientific research investment, Yibin will

face a choice. The current planting level is difficult to achieve a breakthrough in yield after 2025, and once the demand for the tea industry market is opened up, it may not be able to quickly occupy the market. In terms of market construction, there is a lack of strategies to promote deep processing of tea and increase the comprehensive utilization of tea, which cannot effectively extend the industrial chain to fields such as tea food and tea health preservation, resulting in low commercial added value. In addition, it failed to carry out brand promotion through multiple platforms and the "Internet plus" way, to form an industrial chain built in the "tea+" way, to create a rural tea brand, and to achieve resource integration and linkage between the primary, secondary and tertiary industries [5].

3.3. Multiple and diverse brands, lacking market recognition

At present, there are over 340 tea processing enterprises in Yibin City, including 2 national tea leading enterprises, 9 provincial-level enterprises, and 23 municipal level enterprises, including Yibin Chuanha Group, Chuanhong Group, Tianfu Longya Company, Shenyouchen Company, Pingshan Chaoqing Company, Zaobaijian Company, Yuncha Company, etc. Tea brands exhibit a diverse and diverse characteristics, with more famous tea brands including Yibin morning tea, Chuanhong Gongfu (black tea), Pingshan fried green tea, Zaobaijian, Luming, Changjiang red tea, Hongguiren, Xingshi Golden Bailu, Wumengyun, and other derivative products such as flower and fruit tea, black tea, and tea. The dry tea production of 100000 tons in Yibin City has become the raw material for various well-known tea brands both domestically and internationally, but the raw material producing areas lack regional large brands that can represent the characteristics of Yibin. The shortage of added value for tea brands in Yibin City has posed great obstacles to the aggregation and development capabilities, transformation and upgrading of enterprises within the region, and seriously restricted the competitiveness of the tea industry in Sichuan and even in the domestic and international markets[5].

3.4. Leading enterprises have weak driving power and lack industry competitiveness

Sichuan Tea Industry Group Co., Ltd. and Yibin Chuanhong Tea Industry Group Co., Ltd. are listed as the "Top Ten Tea Enterprises in Sichuan". Sichuan Tea Industry Group Co., Ltd. and Sichuan Zaobaijian Tea Industry Co., Ltd. have been listed as national agricultural leading enterprises. The branches of these three enterprises are basically located in Sichuan, with only one subsidiary of Sichuan Red Tea Group established in Chongqing. However, due to its own operational difficulties, Sichuan Red Tea Group was acquired by Wuliangye in 2018. In contrast, Sichuan Emeishan Bamboo Leaf Green Tea Industry Co., Ltd. has a total of 12 branches, widely distributed in Leshan, Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan and other places, showing a nationwide flowering business status. These three leading tea enterprises in Yibin have not yet ventured out of this city, and still lack competitiveness in the domestic market, even in the Sichuan market. Their assistance in increasing income and wealth for tea farmers in this city is limited. Therefore, if Yibin, with its advantageous tea location, wants to abandon its role as a mere raw material provider, it must decisively integrate tea resources within the region, create truly powerful leading enterprises or alliances, and truly leverage the driving role of

leading enterprises to enhance industry competitiveness.

4. Exploring the Path to Promote the Development of Tea Industry in Yibin City

4.1. Unified planning and refined management

The unified construction plan for tea producing areas is responsible for the future. According to the 2019 tea plantation area data, the tea producing areas in Yibin are mainly concentrated in the southwest area of Yibin. Cuiping District, Xuzhou District, Gaoxian County, Gongxian County, Junlian County, and Pingshan County account for 93.4% of the actual tea plantation area, forming a truly economic belt for tea producing areas from Pingshan County to Junlian County. The expansion of tea plantation area in the future needs to be planned in this area, with tea plantation expansion between different tea areas, striving to connect all tea areas into one area. On this basis, only a few tea transportation channels need to be deployed or rebuilt, which can effectively reduce public expenditure. Each tea section can form a tea plantation planting management committee, which can unify the deployment from the tea planting and harvesting stages, breaking the drawbacks of fragmented governance. For areas with small tea plantation areas such as Nanxi District, Jiang'an County, Changning County, and Xingwen County, the scale should be gradually reduced until withdrawal, and key investments should be made in other agricultural products. In addition, during the construction of tea areas, attention should also be paid to strengthening land transfer and ensuring the unified resettlement of rural residents.

4.2. Technological and conceptual innovation

The traditional tea planting and harvesting techniques have low efficiency and high pollution, and innovating traditional technologies is in line with the concept of building green villages and developing green production. In terms of planting techniques, pollution-free planting techniques and organic tea planting techniques can be promoted; In terms of tea tree irrigation, the integrated irrigation technology of water and fertilizer can be adopted; In terms of picking, artificial vision recognition glasses or picking robots can be promoted to pick tea buds that require delicate, moderate, and mature picking. This can unify standards, improve the quality rate of fresh tea, and reduce human error. At present, the cultivation and picking level of tea in the main tea producing areas in China still remains at the traditional stage. As an emerging tea producing area in China and the province, Yibin will undoubtedly become a distinctive selling point for the production of healthy tea using new technologies.

4.3. Make the brand bigger and products stronger

Yibin tea products are numerous and diverse, but the market recognition is still insufficient, and it does not have much competitiveness compared to other traditional teas in terms of brand and quality. To break away from the role of producing tea raw materials in Yibin, it is necessary to carry out product innovation, explore new paths, and make new achievements in "tea+", "tea product+", and "tea raw materials+". In terms of "tea+", we can focus on rural tourism and tea producing area tourism, mainly promoting the concept of pollution-free health; In terms of "tea product+", it is necessary to increase scientific research investment, form

fruit tea products such as "seasoned tea", "liquor tea", or "Ganzi apple tea", "orange tea", "fragrant grapefruit tea", and make new products that meet the taste of contemporary and future young people; In terms of "tea raw materials+", there is still a need to increase research investment and shift tea raw materials from the food industry to other fields, such as the supply of pharmaceutical raw materials and chemical raw materials. The Yibin tea industry can walk on two legs: one is a supplier of raw materials in multiple fields, and the other is a cultural leader in the new tea food industry. However, the first thing to achieve is the creation of flagship products. Therefore, the Yibin Municipal Government needs to increase scientific research support in the tea industry, focusing on products, breaking through regional restrictions, conducting research and development breakthroughs domestically and even globally, spreading the net, fishing for big fish, focusing on cooking, and finally expanding the brand and strengthening products through advertising marketing, new media promotion, and cultural atmosphere creation.

4.4. Resource integration and collective action

There are over 340 tea processing enterprises in Yibin City, covering almost all aspects of tea cultivation and sales, except for research and development. The current situation is that there are many homogeneous enterprises with severe internal competition losses, which cannot form an effective synergy in the Yibin tea industry. On the other hand, the development concept of the enterprise is outdated and the awareness is confused. Even if there is a development direction, there is a competitive relationship with other traditional domestic tea enterprises, and the disadvantages are obvious. To change the above situation, it is necessary to focus on supporting high efficiency, creative, and revolutionary unicorn tea enterprises, and eliminate or eliminate old enterprises with low efficiency and poor innovation. Establish a tea garden alliance at the source of planting to be responsible for unified planning and management; At the level of product research and development, achieve a hundred flowers blooming, with a

focus on creating distinctive and competitive products; Form aggressive local oligopolistic enterprises at the marketing level; In terms of tax distribution for the entire tea industry, Cuiping District, Xuzhou District, Gaoxian County, Gongxian County, Junlian County, and Pingshan County should be coordinated in a unified manner.

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