

# Poor Floating Population in Cities of Tibet: Characteristics, Poverty Features and Poverty Reduction

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**Abstract:** The number of floating population in Tibet has been increasing continuously in the past decade. In the current dual poverty alleviation systems for urban and rural areas, the poverty alleviation for floating population is in its infancy. Due to the influence of its special political, geographical, economic, cultural and social environment and other comprehensive and complex systematic factors, the poverty of urban floating population in Tibet is a special issue. In essence, the poverty of urban floating population directly affects the sustainable, long-term and stable development of Tibet. Therefore, it is very urgent to accurately identify the poor floating population in cities, build a coordinated poverty alleviation system with the participation of the government, enterprises, the society and individuals, improve the social security system and mechanism, safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of poor urban floating population, and improve the sense of access, happiness and satisfaction of these people.

## 1. Introduction

Tibet, located in the southwest border of China, is the region with the highest ethnic unity in national autonomous areas of China. The proportion of Tibetan nationality and other ethnic minorities is 91.83%, among which the population of Tibetan is 2.7164 million, accounting for 90.48% of the total population. [1] With the strengthening of the central government's support for Tibet, the development of Tibet's modernization and the construction of the Qinghai Tibet railway, a large number of people have flowed into Tibet from other provinces, which has promoted the rapid economic and social development of Tibet. But it is undeniable that the floating population also brings some pressure to social security, employment, environment, grass-roots governance and other aspects.

Researches on the floating population in Tibet have long been the focus of debate in the Tibetan academic circle. Through literature review, it is found that most researches start from the perspective of ethnic relations, and focus on the competition between the Han and Muslim labourers flowing into Tibet from other provinces with local Tibetan floating immigrants in cities and towns. Some scholars explore the floating population in Tibet and the modernization development of Tibet from the perspective of economics. At present, no scholars have explored the poverty of floating population in Tibet from the perspective of poverty governance.

Floating population is a special group appears in the process of urbanization and the result of antagonism between town and country. With the development of urbanization in China, this group will continue to exist for a long time. This group has the characteristics of relative deprivation, social exclusion, vulnerability, relative poverty and multi-dimensional poverty. The poverty of urban floating population is a kind of "three-dimensional poverty deprivation" with features of "less income, long working time and lack of social insurance". [2] At present, our country mainly focuses on poverty control in countryside. A series of policies in China are designed on the premise of "two regions of urban and rural areas and two groups of urban and rural residents". The anti-poverty policies that China adopts are also designed based on this idea of urban-rural division. It is difficult for these policies to cope with the impact of population mobility [3]. Generally speaking, the floating population in Tibet includes migrant workers who come from areas outside the region, migrant workers inside the region, pilgrims inside and outside the region, tourists and policy

recruiters. This paper focuses on migrant workers who come from areas inside and outside Tibet and migrant workers in cities who come inside the Tibet Autonomous Region. The paper pays attention to the poverty of this group.

## **2. Characteristics of the Floating Population in Tibet**

According to the concept of the sixth census, the floating population refers to any person who lives in one area at present, but their permanent registered residence does not belong to the area; the person has left the registered permanent residence for more than half a year.[4] The floating population in Tibet and their poverty have following characteristics.

### **2.1 Most Immigrants Came from Provinces and Regions Outside Tibet**

According to data of the sixth census, in 2010, there were 262,000 floating population in Tibet, with 97,000 floating population in the region and 165,000 floating population outside the region [5]. By 2017, there were 389,000 floating population in Tibet, accounting for 11.75% of the permanent population.[6] According to data analysis, the floating population in Tibet has a high and rapid growth rate. It is expected that the scale of floating population in Tibet will continue to grow. Generally speaking, floating population outside Tibet mainly comes from neighbouring areas such as Sichuan Province, Gansu Province and Qinghai Province.

### **2.2 Low Education Level of the Floating Population**

According to the geographical location, natural environment and economic development of Tibet, floating population in Tibet mainly concentrates in labour-intensive industries such as commerce, tourism and catering services. Most people did not receive higher education. Tibetan farmers and herdsmen also go out to work, and they usually engage in construction, part-time job, animal husbandry and manufacturing industries.[7] In 2017, the average years of education for the labour force in China was 9.02 years. According to data of the sixth census, the average years of education for labour forces in Tibet Autonomous Region was about 7 years in 2010. According to the 2015 population sampling survey, in Tibet, the illiterate rate was about 37.33% among people over 15 years old, which was more than 6 times of the national average level. The education level of floating population who comes from other regions is lower than the national average level, but higher than that of the floating population within the Tibet Autonomous Region.

### **2.3 Complex Ethnic Composition**

Tibetan floating population, Hui population, other ethnic minorities population and Han population outside the region constitute the main body of floating population in Tibet. They promote the ethnic integration through communication and exchange. However, due to different religious beliefs and living habits among different ethnic groups, people from different ethnic groups usually live in different communities. In their production and life, competition is inevitable.

## **3. Features of the Poverty of Floating Population in Tibet**

Relative poverty is the focus and basis of social management and social policy. Relative poverty exists in any region and any group, but the floating population struggling in the city has always been in the “survival” poverty. In Tibet, the features of urban floating population's poverty are reflected in many aspects, such as residence, medical treatment, employment, education and training.

### **3.1 Social Stratification**

At the beginning of this century, scholars divided the stratum and stratification of Tibet into seven basic levels, namely, peasants and herdsmen, enterprise workers, poor people in urban and rural areas, monks and nuns in temples, private enterprise owners and self-employed people, intellectuals, and managers of party and government organs as well as enterprises, so as to analyze

the stratum structure and stratification of Tibet. [8] The paper has emphasized the research object of this study. The open recruitment of managers of party and government organs and institutions is a new employment mode came into being in recent years, which reflects that the Tibetan society does not have sufficient ability to attract talents. Tibet has a huge privileged stratum and a single ascending channel, resulting in obvious social stratification. Due to the lack of social capitals and their low cultural levels, in Tibet, it is difficult for the poor floating population to move upward.

### **3.2 Strong Sense of Social Deprivation**

Because of their family status, personal abilities and education levels, as well as the different religious belief and living habits, it is difficult for poor floating population to integrate into local residents' life quickly. Therefore, most of them live in the urban fringe, forming a certain geographical group. At present, the system of floating population management in Tibet still belongs to the authoritative management mode in policy instrument. In essence, the management system of floating population still belongs to the authoritative management mode. As the object of management, the floating people are basically excluded from the subject of management and decision-making; their interest demands cannot be fully reflected and guaranteed. Therefore, they have a strong sense of social deprivation in the aspects of social integration, public services and specific legitimate rights and interests, and they are lacking of social belonging senses [9].

### **3.3 Lack of Social Security**

“The social security situation of the floating population in China can be described as scarce, disorder and loss”[10]. Equitable access to public services reflects social security status. The most prominent problems for poor floating population include the education security of floating children, the medical security of poor floating people, the employment security of poor floating people, the vocational skills training security of poor floating people, as well as the policy system security of social security policies. Migrant children's right to receive education is excluded and has random mobility; poor migrant people lack the vocational skills training and the employment promotion security mechanism; they often do informal jobs. Poor migrant people's work-related injuries, occupational diseases and infectious diseases are not effectively prevented and treated. Poor migrant people cannot be protected by social security policies; the rates of joining basic endowment insurance, medical insurance, industrial injury insurance and maternity insurance are low.

## **4. Poverty Reduction Countermeasures for Poor Urban Floating Population in Tibet**

Some scholars have found that for poor floating population, the main influencing factors of relative poverty include institutional factors, social factors and self factors. [11] How to promote the “development type” transformation of the poor floating population needs the coordination of the government, the society and individuals. Innovate governance with the concept of collaborative governance and holistic governance can promote the government, the society and individuals to actively participate in poverty alleviation and development, form a systematic and integrated social mechanism, alleviate the problem of excluding poor floating population, and create a “hemopoiesis” poverty alleviation environment. [12]

First, we need to establish and improve the poverty identification standards, methods and mechanisms for the poor floating population. Fundamentally speaking, poverty is a complex social phenomenon. The scope of poverty groups, the recognition standards and ways of expression are constantly changing with the times.[13] The problem of floating population poverty in China is the combination of three complex social problems: poverty, floating population and social security. At present, most of the measurement of multi-dimensional poverty lacks the consideration of the particularity of China's poverty, so the measurement of the relative poverty and multi-dimensional poverty of the poor floating population needs new poverty standards, recognition methods and recognition mechanisms.

Second, we need to improve the system and mechanism guarantee. The dual social structure of the separation of urban and rural areas is the root cause of the poverty of floating population. We

should improve and innovate the household registration system reform, create new social security contents, and increase the supply of public services and welfare systems, so as to provide public services based on the demand of poor urban floating population and empower them from the system. Although the government of the autonomous region has promulgated the third edition of *Regulations on the Management and Service of Floating Population In Tibet Autonomous Region* for the floating population, it has not yet established a comprehensive and perfect management and service system for floating population. We should improved the public service platform of big data information, store, update and monitor data with the help of Internet, blockchain and other data terminals, and improved the social security, medical and other big data information. We should improve the welfare level of the family of poor floating population. The family welfare level of these people is the basis for them to realize the full urbanization. We need to improve the social integration level of vulnerable population in the inflow area, pay attention to the legitimate rights and interests of the elderly, women and children in the families of poor floating population, and improve the welfare level.

Third, we need to improve the employment and entrepreneurship security mechanism. The employment poverty of poor floating population is included in the overall poverty alleviation strategy; improving the quality of employment is the key to solving the poverty of floating population. With the help of Rural Revitalization Strategy, the rural economy is developing; these people are encouraged to be employed or start their own business in their hometowns. The premise of improving employment security is to carry out training. Vocational skills training and night school training courses should be provided according to the characteristics and needs of the poor floating population, so as to improve their skills and improve the quality of human capital. We should focus on the development of human resources, and block the intergenerational transmission of poverty and the transmission of poverty culture from the source.

## 5. Conclusion

The flowing of population from other areas to the Tibet Autonomous Region and the migration of population inside the region are general trends of future development. We cannot deny that the social structure of population is the key to the development of Tibet. However, how to promote the poor floating population in Tibet to turn to the “development type” on the basis of realizing the “survival type” is a topic that needs deep thinking and exploration. We must closely integrate the floating population in Tibet with the long-term stability of Tibet, the modernization of Tibet's development and the urbanization of this region.

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