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The International Impact and Global Significance of China's Poverty Alleviation Strategy

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Abstract:
At the National Poverty Alleviation Summary and Commendation Conference, President Xi Jinping solemnly proclaimed that through the united endeavors of the entire Party and people of all ethnic groups across the country, China has achieved a decisive triumph in its poverty eradication campaign. China has achieved a decisive victory in its poverty eradication campaign, resolving systemic regional poverty, eliminating absolute deprivation, and pioneering a unique path of poverty reduction. This approach has made a significant contribution to global poverty alleviation, garnering widespread international recognition. In its poverty alleviation efforts, China has developed a comprehensive set of programs, including targeted and precise poverty reduction strategies, a people-centric development philosophy, and mass participation mechanisms. These offer innovative alternatives for developing countries to eradicate poverty. By promoting South-South cooperation and establishing a new international partnership model predicated on mutual benefit, China has supported and assisted developing countries in poverty eradication, thereby contributed Chinese wisdom and strength to the international poverty alleviation.

Keywords:
Poverty Alleviation; China approach; International Impact; Global Significance

Poverty persists as a pernicious global challenge and an enduring scourge confronting human civilization, rendering poverty eradication a common mission for all mankind. China has consistently served as both an active advocate and a strong propeller of the global poverty alleviation. Over the 72 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China and 43 years of the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, China has successfully pioneered a unique path of poverty reduction, showcasing the wisdom of China in the global endeavor to alleviate poverty. Remarkably, since the reform and opening up, over 700 million citizens has been liberated from poverty, accounting for more than 70% of worldwide poverty reduction. China's successful practice has important enlightening significance for promoting the global poverty reduction and is considered to be of great value to emerging economies and developing countries.

In his report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), President Xi Jinping unequivocally articulated that the socialist system with Chinese characteristics—encompassing developmental pathways, theoretical frameworks, institutional architectures, and cultural dimensions — has been continuously developing, expanding the way for developing countries to modernize. This evolution presents

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innovative alternatives for countries seeking accelerated development while safeguarding sovereignty, thereby contributing Chinese wisdom and China Approach to humanity's shared challenges. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee under Xi Jinping's leadership has proposed a series of "China approaches" addressing global issues including poverty governance, climate action, and human rights protection. Particularly, Xi Jinping's seminal theoretical constructs on poverty alleviation and eradication have furnished replicable and scalable China approach for global poverty governance.

1. Global Recognition of China's Poverty Alleviation Achievements

China's reform and opening-up policy initiated a remarkable poverty alleviation process. As the first developing nation to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ahead of schedule and the foremost contributor to global poverty reduction, China reduced its extreme poverty rate from 61% in 1990 to under 30% by 2002 — pioneering the MDG target of halving poverty and contributing over 70% to global poverty reduction, as documented in the UN's 2015 MDG Report. Notably, since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, China has surpassed annual poverty reduction benchmarks by more than 10 million people for six consecutive years. By the end of 2018, the rural poverty-stricken population nationwide had decreased dramatically from 98.99 million (at the end of 2012) to 16.6 million, with the poverty incidence rate declining from 10.2% in 2012 to 1.7%—a significant milestone in global anti-poverty history.

1.1 A Historic Breakthrough in Global Anti-Poverty Governance

China's anti-poverty accomplishments have been unanimously praised by global leaders, media institutions, and scholars. For example, Andrey Ostrovsky, Deputy Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, emphasized, "China has always been an active advocate and a strong propeller in global poverty reduction, achieving unparalleled success in human history."[1] The report of China Systematic Country Diagnostic" released by the World Bank in 2018 stated that China has achieved "unprecedented achievements" in rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. In addition, the book China's Poverty Alleviation in the Eyes of Foreigners (to be published in 2019) con-authored by China.org.cn and the China International Poverty Reduction Center details commendations from foreign dignitaries and scholars regarding China's four-decade transformation. Since the global financial crisis in 2008, the economic growth of countries around the world has been in trouble, leading to the increasing expansion of the global wealth gap. It is not only the gap between developed and developing countries but also the further impoverishment of the middle class within developed countries, making the poverty reduction work very difficult. At the same time, China's poverty alleviation model, which harmonizes economic expansion with social equity, stands as a historic paradigm. Its methodology offers critical lessons for nations grappling with the poverty-growth paradox.

1.2 Full Confidence in China's Victory in the Poverty Alleviation Campaign

In 2015, the Central Committee of CPC resolved to secure a decisive victory in the poverty alleviation campaign. In 2017, the report to the 19th CPC National Congress prioritized poverty eradication as the most critical task among the "Three Critical Battles", aiming to eliminate rural poverty under current standards and delist all impoverished counties by 2020, thereby achieving the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Devel-

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opment Goals ahead of schedule. As the campaign enters its final phase, China is mobilizing the entire Party and society to consolidate this historic achievement, while the international community expresses strong confidence in China's success. Ashwani Muthoo, Director of Global Engagement, Knowledge, and Strategy at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), stated, "China's poverty reduction model is renowned for its efficacy and efficiency globally, The theory and practice of China's targeted poverty alleviation demonstrates that holistic poverty eradication is achievable through strong political will, scientifically grounded strategies, and context-appropriate policies." [2]

1.3 High Acclaim for Xi Jinping's Strategic Thought on Targeted Poverty Alleviation

In 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping first proposed the concept of "targeted poverty alleviation" initiating China's phased implementation of the strategy, which has yielded remarkable outcomes and attracted global attention. UN Secretary-General António Guterres remarked, "Targeted poverty reduction is the only way to assist the most impoverished populations and realize the ambitious goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. China's success in lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty offers valuable lessons for other developing nations."[3] Xu Haoliang, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, emphasized that targeted poverty alleviation reflects the Chinese government's strategic decision-making and practice tailored to national conditions. The proposal and implementation of this approach align with the demands of contemporary development, underscoring Chinese leaders' profound commitment to poverty eradication. [4]

On December 20, 2018, the 73rd United Nations General Assembly adopted the draft resolution Eradicating Rural Poverty to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, jointly submitted by the Group of 77 and China. Key concepts advocated by China, including "targeted poverty alleviation", "win-win cooperation", and "building a community with a shared future for mankind", were explicitly incorporated into the resolution, signifying the international community's high recognition of Xi Jinping's strategic thought on poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, international biographies and commentaries have explored the evolution of Xi Jinping's poverty alleviation philosophy. For instance, an article in The Guardian highlighted the formative influence of Xi Jinping's experiences as an educated youth in Yan'an on his anti-poverty ideology, based on field investigations of relocation projects in Yunnan Province. [5]

2. Providing a Replicable China Approach for Global Poverty Reduction

China has not only made substantive contributions to global poverty reduction but also offered replicable and scalable Chinese experience and solutions for developing countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Current international poverty alleviation models fall into three categories: the "growth pole" model represented by Brazil in developing countries, the "basic needs" model exemplified by India, and the "social security" model adopted by developed countries in Europe and North America. However, amid prolonged global financial crises, stagnant economic growth, and widening wealth gaps, these models have revealed inherent limitations. In contrast, China's poverty reduction strategy, rigorously tested through large-scale practice, provides critical insights for global poverty governance.

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China's poverty reduction strategy operates on two key dimensions. Firstly, rapid economic growth since the reform and opening-up has enabled natural poverty alleviation for the majority, particularly through agricultural and labor-intensive industrial development, leveraging the "trickle-down effect" of economic expansion. Secondly, government-led, systematic poverty alleviation initiatives—especially the targeted poverty eradication strategies implemented since the 18th CPC National Congress—have effectively eliminated absolute and extreme poverty. In the first three decades of reform and opening-up, poverty reduction relied primarily on the "invisible hand" of market-driven growth. Since the late 1980s, however, the "visible hand" of government policy has played a central role. President Xi Jinping, while upholding economic development through reform and opening-up, has institutionalized government leadership and targeted poverty alleviation and precise poverty reduction strategies, successfully forging a poverty eradication path with Chinese characteristics.

2.1 Increasingly Targeted Identification of Poverty Groups: Resolving the Global Challenge of Poverty Targeting

According to the general consensus in the academic community, poverty alleviation efforts since the founding of the People's Republic of China can be roughly divided into five phases: relief-based assistance (1949–1978), institutional reform-driven poverty reduction (1978–1985), large-scale development-oriented campaigns (1986–2000), coordinated economic growth and social participation (2001–2012), and targeted poverty alleviation (2013–present). As the distribution and characteristics of poverty evolved, governance mechanisms transitioned from a "flood irrigation" approach to "precision drip irrigation".

"Identifying whom to support", that is, precise targeting, forms the foundation of targeted poverty alleviation. China established a unified national poverty alleviation information system via household registration and village-level profiling, achieving unprecedented precision in data collection down to individuals. The accuracy rate of poverty identification exceeds 98%, ensuring policy benefits reach intended beneficiaries. "The precise identification mechanism gradually formed in China's practice and tested through large-scale practices, which combines top-down, hierarchical responsibility, step-by-step decomposition with bottom-up and villagers' democratic evaluation, provides a scientific methodology to resolve the global challenge of poverty targeting." [6]

2.2 A Synergistic Poverty Alleviation Framework Involving Government, Market, and Society: Harmonizing Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction

Western media once alleged a contradiction between economic growth and poverty alleviation, claiming that China's aggressive anti-poverty measures would trigger economic stagnation and the "middle-income trap". Yet China's success demonstrates that rapid growth and comprehensive poverty reduction are mutually achievable. This stems from a synergistic framework involving government, market, and society to address the question of "who participates in poverty alleviation". As President Xi Jinping stated in his keynote speech at the 2015 High-Level Forum on Poverty Reduction and Development in Beijing, "We insist on mobilizing society-wide participation and leveraging institutional strengths of China, constructing a grand poverty alleviation architecture with the coordinated promotion of the government, society, and the market, and forming a pluralistic social poverty alleviation system, in which different regions, departments, units, and the whole

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society participate together." [7]

2.2.1 Adherence to Government-Led Strategies

Since the mid-1980s, the Chinese government has spearheaded organized, planned, and large-scale poverty alleviation initiatives. In 1986, the State Council Leading Group for Economic Development in Poor Areas (later renamed the State Council Leading Group for Poverty Alleviation and Development) was established, specialized poverty alleviation agencies and mechanisms were established for poverty alleviation, which is a critical guarantee for the success of poverty alleviation and responds to the global trend of diminishing poverty reduction efficacy driven by economic growth. "Poverty is the main manifestation of income inequality. Numerous facts at all times and in all countries have proven that the market cannot solve the problem of inequality, so government intervention is necessary." [8] Wan Guanghua, the chief economist of the Asian Development Bank, said that China's achievements in poverty reduction and alleviation are world-renowned, which is largely attributed to the comprehensive and active participation of governments at all levels.

2.2.2 Leveraging Economic Development as the Material Foundation for Poverty Reduction

Adhering to reform and opening up, maintaining sustained economic growth, and giving play to the role of the market in poverty reduction are the prerequisite conditions for China's success in poverty reduction. Since the 1980s, China has adhered to the poverty alleviation policy of development-oriented poverty alleviation, regarding development as the fundamental way to solve poverty, and always insisting on giving priority to infrastructure construction and agricultural development. The "trickle-down effect" of economic growth has significantly reduced the population of poor people. Recent models—such as e-commerce, tourism, photovoltaic projects, and asset-based poverty alleviation promoted by the Chinese government — all aim to transform limited resources of impoverished households into marketable assets, integrating them into the market economy.

2.2.3 Mobilizing Broad Societal Participation

Poverty eradication constitutes a systemic project. Social poverty alleviation efforts include fixed-point assistance, corporate participation, east-west collaboration, and international cooperation,effectively mobilizing and integrating diverse stakeholders to form a powerful joint force. In the process of government-led poverty alleviation and development, the market and social organizations have played a significant role in integrating and expanding resources, enriching and innovating models, and enhancing efficiency, ultimately culminating a governance framework of poverty alleviation and development with the participation of multiple stakeholders.

2.3 Multidimensional Poverty Governance: Innovating and Advancing International "Multidimensional Poverty Theory"

The prevailing international framework for understanding poverty is the "Multidimensional Poverty Theory", that is, "Western scholarship has expanded poverty definitions from purely economic metrics (income/consumption) to encompass cultural, capability, rights-based, institutional, and social exclusion dimensions.

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Poverty is increasingly recognized as a composite of economic, social, and cultural backwardness, and conceptualized through terms such as income poverty, capability poverty, rights poverty, cultural poverty, institutional poverty, and multidimensional poverty, with explanatory frameworks spanning economics, political science, demography, and sociology." [9]

China has also started to implement a multi-dimensional poverty alleviation policy in its exploration of poverty alleviation, further developing and innovating the multidimensional poverty theory. Firstly, the central government defines poverty multidimensionally, extending beyond income to include compulsory education, basic healthcare, and housing security. Secondly, the poverty eradication criteria — "Two Assurances and Three Guarantees" (assured food and clothing, guaranteed compulsory education, basic medical care, and safe housing) — are inherently multidimensional. Concurrently, per capita disposable income growth in impoverished areas must exceed the national average, integrating economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological dimensions. Finally, the central government adheres to the basic idea of comprehensive development, and localities and departments at all levels implement precise policies according to the assistance idea of "Five Batches".

The international community has lauded China's multidimensional poverty approach. Wan Guang, the chief economist of the Asian Development Bank, emphasized that truly getting rid of poverty and achieving real poverty alleviation entail two aspects: permanently escaping poverty without relapse, and ensuring holistic improvements in quality of life—education, healthcare, and environment, etc.— beyond mere income growth, so as to truly lead a good life. [10] Thus, President Xi Jinping's relevant discourse represents a creative advancement of international poverty theory, carrying profound historical and practical significance for global poverty reduction and the realization of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2.4 People-Centered Development Philosophy: Overcoming the Marginal Utility Decline in Western Poverty Alleviation

Global poverty reduction practices exhibit a phenomenon of diminishing marginal efficacy. "As poverty alleviation progresses and the impoverished population shrinks, the remaining smaller cohorts—often concentrated in ecologically fragile, economically underdeveloped regions with demographic vulnerabilities such as disability, chronic illness, aging, and low educational attainment—face exponentially greater challenges in escaping poverty" [11]. Consequently, the "last mile" of poverty eradication remains unconquered in most developing countries and even many developed economies.

Despite China's economic transition to a "new normal" phase with moderated growth rates, it has sustained an annual poverty reduction scale exceeding 10 million, defying the global trend of diminishing marginal returns. This achievement stems from the CPC's political leadership and the institutional strengths of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Eliminating poverty, improving livelihoods, and achieving common prosperity constitute the inherent demands of socialism. President Xi Jinping adheres to the people-centered development philosophy and solemnly promises that "no one shall be left behind on the path to common prosperity." To this end, China has always driven sustained investments in poverty alleviation and development, generated a large number of employment opportunities for marginalized groups, and paid attention to the balance between equity and efficiency.

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2.5 Mass Participation as Foundation: Breaking the Drawbacks of the Western Welfare System

Many developing nations relying on Western aid remain trapped in passive "blood transfusion" models, lacking endogenous capacity to escape poverty and prone to relapse. Furthermore, due to the humanitarian nature of poverty alleviation and development, relief-based poverty alleviation often induce welfare dependency syndromes, that is, the emergence of a group of "lazy people", which is not conducive to the poor people truly achieving poverty reduction and escaping poverty.

President Xi Jinping emphasizes that the main body of poverty alleviation is the people and impoverished populations must be empowered as active agents of change. Through ideological mobilization, role model cultivation, and skill-building initiatives, China combats the "dependency mentality" (passive reliance on welfare) and fully mobilize the enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity of the impoverished populations, and educate and guide them to achieve poverty alleviation and prosperity through their own hard work. People are active participants rather than passive recipients. In this regard, as Professor Kamakia of India's Shyam University observes, "While many nations implement poverty interventions, but the results are not satisfactory. China's dual focus on eradicating material and cognitive poverty—activating the agency of the poor—represents a transformative breakthrough" [12]. China's integrated approach of "supporting aspirations, enhancing capabilities, and fostering self-reliance" transforms external assistance into endogenous growth drivers, enabling the poor to become architects of their own prosperity.

It is critical to note that China's poverty governance framework is rooted in its unique socio-political context. The "China approach" is neither a universal "China Model" nor an imposition of "Chinese values", but rather China's stance, attitude, and solutions to the global developmental challenges. Lawrence Brahm, Senior Fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, clarifies, "President Xi Jinping put forward the term 'China approach', setting the tone of diversified localization rather than single globalization. It is not equal to a solution from China but refers to a solution that advocates context-sensitive adaptations aligned with each nation's cultural, economic, and psychological realities" [13]. Thus, Other countries need to tailor China's experiences to their unique socio-political landscape.

3. Establishing Innovative Frameworks for Global Poverty Reduction Cooperation

While eradicating domestic poverty, China has also actively advanced South-South cooperation, established a new type of international poverty reduction partnership with win - win cooperation at its core, supported and assisted developing countries in poverty alleviation, and contributed Chinese strength to the international poverty reduction.

3.1 Constructing a Poverty-Free Global Community with a Shared Future

Adhering to the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, China has actively engaged in international poverty reduction cooperation, introduced more poverty reduction perspectives in the construction of projects such as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects, establishing sustainable cooperation mech-

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anisms with poverty - stricken regions like Africa, contributed Chinese strength to global poverty reduction, and demonstrated the international responsibility of a major country. In October 2015, the High - level Forum on Poverty Reduction and Development was held in Beijing. At the forum, Xi Jinping proposed the initiative of “co-building a community with a shared future for mankind free from poverty and with common development”, outlining four strategic imperatives: Accelerating global poverty reduction processes, Strengthening multilateral poverty alleviation cooperation, Achieving diversified, self-driven sustainable development and Optimizing the international development ecosystem.

In Africa, China’s South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund continues to increase investment in the least developed countries, exempts interest - free intergovernmental loan debts, provides support in terms of knowledge, funds, technology and talents, and promotes Africa's economic growth and modernization. For example, Ethiopia is currently in the second stage of its “Agriculture-Oriented Industrialization Development Plan”, focusing on the development of industry and infrastructure construction. It has established more than a dozen industrial parks, providing employment for a large number of young people, thus helping their families get out of poverty. In Asia, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan has institutionalized China-inspired poverty alleviation frameworks, including welfare ecosystems guaranteeing housing, healthcare, and education access. In Asia, the current Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has clearly stated that he will learn from China’s poverty alleviation experience. He plans to set up a poverty alleviation team led by a special assistant under the Prime Minister's Office and implement new poverty alleviation policies modeled on China, including the government's efforts to build a welfare network for the poor to guaranteeing housing, healthcare, and education access, etc.

Diverging from Western conditional aid frameworks, China’s no-strings-attached assistance ensures recipient countries’ full participation in the management of poverty reduction cooperation projects. The white paper China’s Foreign Aid (2014) codifies this principle, “China provides foreign aid without any political conditions, helps recipient countries enhance their independent development capabilities, reduces poverty and improves people’s livelihoods”. As the largest and most influential public welfare organization in China’s poverty alleviation public welfare field, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) has implemented humanitarian programs in more than a dozen countries and regions, winning the praise and respect of the beneficiary countries and regions. “Over the past few years, China has helped Africa build a large number of infrastructure and industrial development projects, and Africa has benefited from China's prosperity. Western countries only want our raw materials, while China helps us achieve industrialization and modernization”, said Nkolo Foh, Vice Chairman of the Research and Development Council of the African Academy of Social Sciences. [14]

However, due to ideological confrontations, numerous foreign politicians and scholars continue to misinterpret or distort China’s efforts. For instance, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been slandered as “predatory economics”, particularly accused of exploiting African resources under the label of “neocolonialism”, and likened to China’s so-called “Marshall Plan” aimed at expanding Beijing’s global influence. In the context of international order, China is falsely portrayed as a "revisionist power" seeking to overturn the existing international order. Certain media outlets and academics have cast doubt on or even denied China’s poverty eradication achievements. For example, an article in New York Times questioned whether China could suc-

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cessfully achieve its the goal of eliminating absolute poverty by 2020. To counter these narratives, proactive responses grounded in theoretical clarity and persuasive empirical evidence are imperative to dispel external skepticism. Confronting profound and intricate ideological struggles, along with pervasive misinformation, we are required to stand up bravely, be bold in expressing our positions, and firmly fight against all kinds of erroneous viewpoints. Fundamentally, China currently faces the challenge of insufficient international discursive influence, with its narrative construction and external communication capabilities lagging behind global expectations.

3.2 Narrating China's Targeted Poverty Alleviation Story to the World

Articulating Xi Jinping's poverty alleviation philosophy and effectively communicating China's anti-poverty narrative to project a responsible major power image is the imperative mission. The international community widely anticipates to enhance knowledge sharing with China in the field of poverty reduction, enabling global adoption of China's poverty reduction solutions to accelerate the early realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To effectively introduce China's poverty alleviation experience to the global community, it is imperative to first amplify the interpretation and dissemination of General Secretary Xi Jinping's strategic thinking on poverty alleviation and development. By establishing an internationally aligned discourse framework, we can lay a robust ideological and cognitive foundation for the globalization of China's poverty reduction expertise. Recent efforts by the Chinese government and media include the English version of Xi Jinping's Up and Out of Poverty published in 2016, and the English version of Targeted Poverty Alleviation: Theoretical Approaches and Hotan Reflections by Wang Linggui and Hou Bo released in 2018, which analyzed the "Hotan Practice" of targeted poverty alleviation by drawing on relevant targeted poverty alleviation experience.

Secondly, constructing a multi-dimensional network for internationalizing China's poverty reduction experience involves two key pathways. First, share China's experience in global poverty reduction cooperation. Government-led portals like China Development Gateway and China Poverty Alleviation Online, alongside specialized institutions such as the China International Poverty Reduction Center, systematically disseminate China's experience. By holding relevant training courses, forums, field trips and other means domestically, it helps to facilitate the contextual adaptation of China's poverty reduction experience. In addition, the Chinese government has established a database of Chinese and foreign poverty reduction cases and drawn a structural diagram of China's poverty alleviation framework, providing a convenient platform for poverty alleviation staff at home and abroad to exchange and share poverty reduction knowledge and experience. Second, cooperate with institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank to explore and promote China's rural micro-credit model, the e-commerce poverty alleviation model of "Taobao Villages", etc., to promote the development and implementation of poverty alleviation projects and help achieve the United Nations' sustainable development goals.

Finally, China has now entered a crucial stage of poverty alleviation, facing many new problems and challenges. We should be good at integrating international philosophical and social science resources, constructively engage with external scholarly and media critiques and enhance the domestic poverty alleviation work. For example, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General T. Gettu once noted that accelerated urbanization

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is shifting the focus from rural poverty alleviation to addressing relative urban poverty. In the next step, we need to continue to conduct in-depth research on Xi Jinping's poverty governance discourse, extract, explain and globalize China's poverty reduction solution, innovate the theory of global poverty governance, and strive to enhance the international influence of China's poverty alleviation theory and practice.

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