

# Research on High Quality Development Strategy of Tourism Characteristic Towns in Shandong Province\*

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## ABSTRACT

China is now vigorously promoting the construction of characteristic towns to promote the process of new urbanization and drive the development of the overall economy. In response to the call of the state, local governments have invested in the upsurge of building characteristic towns. Since 2016, Shandong Province has started the construction of characteristic towns, focused on the development of leading industries with tourism characteristics, improved the planning and layout, and made every effort to build a tourism characteristic town with distinctive characteristics and beautiful and pleasant environment. Aiming at the problems existing in the development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province, this study puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province from the aspects of industrial layout, institutional system, sustainable development, the transformation of old and new kinetic energy and people-oriented, so as to provide support for Rural Revitalization and new urbanization strategy in Shandong Province.

**Keywords:** Shandong Province, Tourism characteristic town, High-quality development, Countermeasures.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since entering the 21st century, relying on national policies and provincial tourism resources, Shandong Province has strengthened the construction of tourism characteristic towns. However, at present, the quantity and quality of the construction of characteristic tourism towns are still insufficient, and the effect of the transformation of old and new kinetic energy is still insufficient, which requires Shandong Province to continue to strengthen the construction of tourism characteristic towns from a more comprehensive perspective. Since 2016, Shandong Province has successively published the construction list of four batches of characteristic towns to cultivate and build characteristic towns, drive the urbanization construction and the development of rural areas, become one of the effective ways to deeply practice the Rural Revitalization Strategy, and play an

important role in the high-quality improvement of the industrial ecological chain of the whole region of Shandong. Tourism characteristic town is one of the main types of characteristic towns. It takes tourism as its main function. By providing a tourism industry completely different from urban and rural areas, it can produce good environmental, social and economic benefits. Accurately grasp the development orientation of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province, reasonably plan the spatial layout of tourism characteristic towns, refine and strengthen the leading industries of tourism characteristic towns, highlight the characteristic quality, continuously innovate and improve, strictly supervise and assess, and effectively promote the standardized and healthy development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. The construction of tourism characteristic towns helps to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, the gap between the rich and the poor and the regional gap in Shandong Province, especially for solving the problem of urban-rural gap.

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## **2. CONNOTATION OF TOURISM CHARACTERISTIC TOWN**

Tourism characteristic towns are different from traditional administrative small towns. They refer to comprehensive development projects with clear industrial positioning, cultural connotation, tourism characteristics and certain community functions based on a characteristic industry, characteristic resources or characteristic environment. It is not a single tourism area or industrial park, but an innovative development model integrating tourism, culture, community and other functions and urban-rural integration. Due to the lack of resources and lagging development in many areas of Shandong Province, tourism has become one of the strong driving forces driving local economic development. Therefore, these places choose to build tourism characteristic towns with local characteristics and low environmental pollution, which makes the types of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province rich and diverse. Tourism characteristic town refers to a town with its own characteristics based on characteristic tourism resources and integrating tourism, culture, ecology, life and other elements.

## **3. DEVELOPMENT SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURISM CHARACTERISTIC TOWNS**

### ***3.1 Promoting the Construction of New Urbanization***

New urbanization refers to the urbanization with the basic characteristics of urban-rural overall planning, economy and intensification, urban-rural integration, industry city interaction, ecological livability and harmonious development. It is the urbanization of coordinated development and mutual promotion among cities, towns and rural areas. It has important strategic significance for expanding domestic demand, promoting economic growth and benefiting the people. Tourism characteristic towns are dominated by tourism industry, which makes people, towns, villages, tourism and other elements integrate with each other, which is in line with the basic characteristics of new urbanization in Shandong Province. Therefore, vigorously developing tourism characteristic towns is conducive to promoting the construction of new urbanization in Shandong Province and realizing the goal of new urbanization as soon as possible.

### ***3.2 Promoting Economic Development***

Tourism industry has always been a sunrise industry in China and plays an indispensable role in China's economic growth. The tourism characteristic town formed by the combination of tourism and characteristic town further develops the tourism industry. In addition, the tourism characteristic town is the product of the combination of multiple fields, including culture, tourism, real estate and other fields, which makes the resource structure of various fields be integrated and adjusted accordingly, and realizes the optimal allocation of various elements, which is conducive to the supply side structural reform of Shandong Province and improves the quality and quantity of tourism economy in Shandong Province.

### ***3.3 Improving the Popularity of Shandong Province***

Shandong Province has a vast territory, with various and distinctive tourism resources. Although many places have unique tourism resources, the tourism industry is still depressed in the local area and is rarely known in the country. The reason is that the public is tired of the stereotyped traditional tourism development model, and the characteristic tourism resources do not give full play to their unique advantages, which leads to the weak willingness of tourists to visit, and ultimately leads to the low overall popularity of the local tourism industry. As a new tourism mode, the development of small town is the key. Tourism characteristic towns are planned and constructed on the premise of low pollution and low damage with their own characteristic tourism resources as the core. Tourism characteristic town will be a unique business card of Shandong Province, so as to enhance the popularity of Shandong Province and attract tourists.

## **4. DEVELOPMENT ADVANTAGES OF TOURISM CHARACTERISTIC TOWNS IN SHANDONG PROVINCE**

### ***4.1 Diversification of Industrial types***

In the process of developing to high-quality tourism towns in Shandong Province, the diversified characteristics of their industrial development types continue to highlight, which provides assistance for their high-quality development. From the list of characteristic towns

published by Shandong Province, Shandong Province makes full use of its unique advantages of tourism resources to cultivate tourism characteristic industries, form new economic growth points and promote the development of county economy. In the development process of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province, the industrial types show diversified characteristics, which provides industrial kinetic energy for the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province.

#### ***4.2 Continuous Improvement of Tourism Service Capacity***

With the sustainable and stable development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province, their tourism service capacity has been improved accordingly, which has played an important role in accelerating the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. This helps to accelerate the development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province and plays a positive role in promoting the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. Therefore, from this perspective, the continuous improvement of tourism service capacity is an important manifestation of the development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province.

#### ***4.3 Continuous Improvement of Cultural Connotation***

Culture is the soul of the development of tourism characteristic towns, and the improvement of cultural connotation is the top priority of the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns. With the advancement of the high-quality development process of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province, the cultural connotation of tourism characteristic towns will be further improved, which provides strong support for shaping high-quality tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province and accelerating the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. The cultural connotation of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province is constantly improving, which plays a positive role in promoting the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province at a certain level, and it is also an important manifestation of the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province.

#### ***4.4 Increasing Efforts To Protect the Ecological Environment***

Increasing efforts to protect the ecological environment is an important manifestation of the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. With the increasing efforts of eco-environmental protection of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province and the continuous improvement of their green and sustainable development level, it is conducive to further improve the development quality of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province and speed up their high-quality development pace.

### **5. PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM CHARACTERISTIC TOWNS IN SHANDONG PROVINCE**

#### ***5.1 The Problem of Homogenization Is More Serious***

Features are the core of the development of tourism featured towns. Losing features is like losing the soul of a project. However, during the actual development and cultivation of characteristic industries in the tourism characteristic town, due to the insufficient depth of the organizers' excavation of local characteristics, insufficient innovative ideas, single management mode, insufficient supervision and other reasons, it is impossible to build an operation mechanism that can support the sustainable development of the town[1]. After completion, there is a phenomenon of no special characteristics, which eventually leads to the failure of the project. Some places are opportunistic and do not make great efforts in design and construction, do not combine their own characteristic resources, but completely copy the successful cases of others, which eventually leads to the homogenization of many tourism characteristic towns without their own business cards, which can not improve the advantages of tourism characteristic towns.

#### ***5.2 The Relevant System Is Not Perfect***

Since Shandong Province started late in the construction of tourism characteristic towns, it is still in the primary stage. At present, some guidance documents can only give some constructive guidance to the general direction of the project and the initial stage of the project [2]. There are no clear instructions on how to build the project and how to develop the project in the later stage. Without the

explicit instructions of the superior, local governments have issued their own policies, so that different places have different standards for the construction of tourism characteristic towns, resulting in certain differences between different regional standards, which eventually leads to the uneven quality of the built tourism characteristic towns, and even some enterprises seek illegal interests with the help of system loopholes and disrupt the normal order of the market.

### ***5.3 The Rights and Responsibilities of Relevant Departments Are Unclear***

As one of the driving forces to promote the process of new urbanization, tourism characteristic towns are more complex than traditional projects. Tourism featured towns involve many fields and departments, and the boundaries of responsibility and power between departments are unclear, resulting in the phenomenon of multiple leaders or mutual prevarication.

### ***5.4 The Tendency of Real Estate Is Serious***

Nowadays, the real estate industry is basically in a saturated state in the field of commercial and residential real estate, so real estate enterprises need to find a new position to develop. As a national key construction project, China has issued a series of preferential policies to support, which makes many real estate enterprises focus on the project of tourism characteristic town. Some local governments, for their own achievements, regardless of their own conditions, made heavy profits to attract foreign investors to invest in the construction of characteristic towns. Under the banner of building characteristic towns, these foreign businessmen enjoy the exclusive preferential policies of characteristic towns, build houses one by one, but fail to create the proper characteristic towns, and finally make the tourism characteristic towns become a mere formality.

## **6. HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF TOURISM CHARACTERISTIC TOWNS IN SHANDONG PROVINCE**

### ***6.1 To Improve the Innovation Level and Extend the Characteristic Industrial Chain***

As the builder of tourism characteristic towns, the innovation level of enterprises will directly affect whether the project can stand out among many characteristic towns. Therefore, enterprises should study more successful cases of tourism characteristic towns at home and abroad and learn from the construction experience of these cases in order to improve their innovation level. On the basis of improving the innovation level, deeply tap the local characteristic tourism resources, combined with their own innovative ideas, form their own unique characteristic ideas, and then design the tourism characteristic town around this characteristic idea, so as to create their own business card. For those towns with similar characteristics in tourism resources, enterprises can start from the industrial chain. Through the innovative design and research and development of characteristic products for the upstream extension, the elements of tourism characteristic towns are integrated into tourism commodities and souvenirs, and innovative products with local characteristics are developed to enhance tourists' impression of tourism characteristic towns. At the same time, these characteristic products can also play a certain publicity role for the town and improve the popularity of the town. Extend to the downstream to upgrade characteristic services and innovate tourism culture. It can also be organically combined with different industries such as sports, elderly care, health and other industries to create a series of tourism characteristic towns with remarkable characteristics, such as Kangyang Town, so as to form complementary advantageous resources and improve the brand value of the town [3].

### ***6.2 To Issue Relevant Policies and Improve the System***

As the leader of the construction of tourism characteristic towns, the government has invested a lot of resources in this regard, but the imperfection of theory and system makes the construction of Characteristic Towns of local governments chaotic. The construction of tourism characteristic towns in

foreign countries started earlier than that in China. Nowadays, the research on the construction of tourism characteristic towns is relatively thorough, and the relevant system is relatively mature[4]. Therefore, Shandong province can send scholars to the towns with these characteristics to carry out on-the-spot investigation, summarize the successful experience of the construction of the tourism characteristic towns in foreign countries, extract the essence of their dregs, and combine their own national conditions, and introduce a series of policies and systems suitable for their own development, so that the construction of the tourism characteristic towns can be regulated and followed.

### ***6.3 To Clarify the Responsibilities of the Department and Purify the Market Environment***

It should establish a clear boundary between the power and responsibility of the tourism departments involved in the characteristics of the small town in Shandong Province, and clear the relationship between the tourism departments involved in the power and responsibility of the small town as soon as possible. For the phenomenon that some departments still do not act or shift responsibility on the premise of clear responsibility, Shandong Province should circulate a notice of criticism and give corresponding punishment according to relevant laws, so as to purify the market environment and attract more private capital into the construction of tourism characteristic towns[5].

### ***6.4 To Strictly Control the Standard and Remove the Real Estate***

On the one hand, some local governments only consider the immediate interests, take the characteristic towns as a tool to increase their political achievements, ignore the interests of the masses, and use the preferential policies of tourism characteristic towns to attract foreign capital to build pseudo characteristic towns. On the one hand, because the government's supervision of characteristic towns is not in place, those who use false materials to apply for characteristic town projects are not timely and effectively identified, and the benefit evaluation and achievement acceptance of those built characteristic towns are not in place. Therefore, on the one hand, Shandong Province should issue relevant regulations to strengthen the management of its own organization. On the other hand, the qualification criteria for

being selected into characteristic towns should strictly be controlled. The tourism characteristic town projects under construction need to be monitored at all times and inspected regularly. Once the tendency of real estate is found, it should be corrected immediately. It is also necessary to a good job in the acceptance of the completed tourism characteristic town projects, evaluate and accept them in strict accordance with the national standards, and rectify those that fail to meet the standards until they are qualified.

### ***6.5 To Accelerate the Green and Sustainable Development of Tourism Characteristic Towns***

Accelerating the green and sustainable development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province is an effective countermeasure to promote their high-quality development. First, It should change the development mode of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province and practice the concept of green development[6]. In the process of developing characteristic towns, adhere to the development path of resource-saving and environment-friendly, improve the efficiency of resource use and prevent resource waste. Second, it should strengthen environmental remediation, improve environmental pollution discharge standards, reduce environmental pollution sources and reduce them from the source. Third, It should speed up the greening construction of small towns with tourism characteristics, improve the greening coverage of small towns and create a good ecological environment.

### ***6.6 To Accelerate the Transformation of New and Old Driving Forces of Tourism Characteristic Towns***

Accelerating the transformation of new and old kinetic energy of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province is an effective countermeasure to continuously promote the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. First, It should speed up the pace of technological innovation and upgrading of enterprises in tourism characteristic towns, improve the scientific research and technological capacity of enterprises, and then improve the production efficiency of enterprises, which is conducive to promoting the economic benefits and quality of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. Through the application and promotion of new technologies, it can further promote industrial

upgrading and innovation, and provide new power support for accelerating the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. Two, It should innovate the development mode of tourism featured towns, and promote the transformation of the development mode and development mode of tourism featured towns with the Internet plus[7]. Through the "Internet plus" mode, it will speed up the development of tourism featured towns, such as government informationization, economic information, social informatization and cultural information, which will further activate the driving force of tourism featured towns. Third, accelerate the integrated development of industries, cultivate and develop new industries, gather more factor resources around new industries, cultivate new economic growth poles of tourism characteristic towns, and then promote the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns.

### ***6.7 To Speed up the Construction of Tourism Characteristic Towns With Human Text***

Accelerating the construction of characteristic towns with human text is an important measure for the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province. On the one hand, it should actively accelerate the citizenization process of agricultural transfer population, promote people's all-round development, improve the comprehensive quality of agricultural transfer population, provide strong support for their employment and entrepreneurship in tourism characteristic towns, and further provide higher quality labor force for the industrial development of tourism characteristic towns, so as to reduce the unemployment rate[8]. On the other hand, provide employment and reemployment service support for residents of tourism characteristic towns, meet their employment and entrepreneurship needs, promote the continuous increase of income of small town residents, improve and improve their quality of life, realize the development of people-oriented characteristic towns, and then promote the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province, which can also avoid the adverse impact of high unemployment rate on the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns[9].

## **7. CONCLUSION**

As a new driving force of economic development, tourism characteristic towns are conducive to driving investment growth and promoting the development of urban-rural integration, which in turn helps to promote factor agglomeration and reconstruction of economic and geographical pattern, and realize and drive local economic development. Shandong Province should pay attention to and vigorously develop tourism characteristic towns, and take the high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns as the focus and fulcrum of economic transformation, which plays a positive role in improving the quality of county economic development in Shandong Province. The high-quality development of tourism characteristic towns in Shandong Province can drive economic development, absorb excellent talents and high-quality capital in big cities, alleviate the problems of transportation, employment and housing in big cities, and play the role of undertaking urban construction. On the one hand, it can promote the interaction of various elements of the city, on the other hand, it can promote the construction of supporting services and infrastructure public facilities in villages and towns, which is conducive to the improvement of living standards, accelerate the coordinated development of urban and rural areas, and provide new impetus for Shandong Province to further promote the implementation of new urbanization and Rural Revitalization Strategy.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

Yang Wang was responsible for experimental design and wrote the manuscript, Pingqing Zhang analysed data and contributed to revising and editing.

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