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Measuring Livelihood Resilience in Mountainous Regions of Southwest China: Toward an Integrated Approach

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摘要: Livelihood resilience is the amalgamation of resilient thinking and sustainable livelihoods, with a focus on how systems can maintain or recover secure operations in the face of disturbances. As an emerging research paradigm, livelihood resilience serves as a potent analytical tool to effectively address concerns about household livelihood sustainability. However, debates have arisen on which values should be embedded in livelihood resilience, giving rise to two divergent perspectives that emphasize objective material environments and subjective perceptual attitudes, each of which has inherent limitations. Therefore, measuring livelihood resilience remains a challenging task. In light of this challenge, the present study proposes an integrated approach that combines objective indicators of the material environment with subjective indicators of perceptual attitudes. Following the principle of system integration, we employ the fully arranged polygon graphical index method to assess the livelihood resilience of rural households in mountainous regions of Southwest China. Additionally, we conduct a comparative analysis to examine disparities in livelihood resilience among different demographic groups and within diverse environments to enhance our understanding of resilient behaviors triggered by mountainous environments and promote equality in livelihood resilience outcomes. The results indicate generally low levels of livelihood resilience among mountainous regions in Southwest China, with significant differences observed among different demographic groups but nonsignificant differences among diverse environments. Finally, policy implications for increasing livelihood resilience within the study area are provided. The application of this integrated approach, which combines assessments of the objective material environment and subjective perceptual attitude while adhering to the principle of system integration, represents a scholarly response to the ongoing debate on livelihood assessment.

关键词: Livelihood resilience; Integrated approach; Objective material environments; Subjective perceptual attitudes; Mountainous regions of Southwest China