

Experience and Pathways of Ganzi Prefecture's Intangible Cultural Heritage Participation in Rural Cultural Revitalization

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Abstract:Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (hereinafter referred to as “Ganzi Prefecture”) is located in western Sichuan Province, China. It is a multi-ethnic region with unique geographical environment, profound cultural traditions, and effective cultural protection and inheritance mechanisms, resulting in a rich and diverse array of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) resources. In recent years, with the implementation of China’s rural revitalization strategy, Ganzi Prefecture has actively explored the pathways and experiences of ICH participation in rural cultural revitalization. This paper introduces the overview of ICH resources in Ganzi Prefecture, analyzes the successful experiences of its participation in rural cultural revitalization in the context of rural revitalization policies and pathways. The aim is to provide a reference for similar work in other regions.

Keywords:Ganzi Prefecture Intangible Cultural Heritage; Rural Cultural Revitalization; Experience; Pathways

Ganzi Prefecture, as an important birthplace of Tibetan culture, possesses ICH of immense historical, cultural, and social value. Intangible cultural heritage is the living memory and wisdom of ethnic cultures, serving as a bond that maintains ethnic identity and cultural diversity. The ICH of Ganzi Prefecture not only records the local people’s lifestyles, aesthetic concepts, and value systems but also carries their deep understanding and emotional expressions of nature and society. These ICH play an irreplaceable role in promoting ethnic unity, enhancing cultural confidence, and improving cultural soft power.

1. Overview of Ganzi Prefecture's Intangible Cultural Heritage

Sichuan Province has eight items listed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List, four of which belong to Ganzi Prefecture: Tibetan Opera, Tibetan Medicinal Bathing, Dege Sutra Printing, and Gesar. According to the latest data from the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Network, Ganzi Prefecture has 18 national-level ICH items, including Gesar, Tibetan Opera, Tibetan Embroidery, Tibetan Calligraphy, and Tibetan Thangka; and 93 provincial-level ICH items, including Tibetan Incense Making, Horsemanship Dance, Tibetan Thangka (Baiyu Embroidery Thangka), Fan-style Tibetan Medicine Therapy, and Xianzi Dance (Ganzi Geda Xianzi Dance).

1.1. Folk Music and Dance

The folk music and dances in Ganzi’s intangible cultural heritage are diverse and rich, representing the deep cultural heritage and unique charm of the local people. Among them, the most representative is the Kangding Love Song. In addition, Guozhuang dance and Tibetan dances are also important intangible cultural heritage projects in Ganzi.

1.2. Traditional Handicrafts

Traditional handicrafts in Ganzi’s intangible cultural heritage include Tibetan weaving, and tie-dyeing techniques, among others. Tibetan weaving involves handcrafting with high-quality wool from sheep or yak, creating items like carpets and clothing with exquisite craftsmanship and ethnic patterns. Tie-dyeing, on the other hand, uses processes like dyeing, knotting, and washing on fabrics like hemp and cotton to produce textiles with unique colors and textures, commonly used in clothing and accessories.

1.3. Folk Activities

The non-material cultural heritage of Ganzi encompasses a rich and colorful folk culture, including traditional festivals, wedding customs, and local customs of the Tibetan people. Among these are the Tibetan New Year, the Wangguo Festival, and the Xuedun Festival. Addi-

tionally, traditional customs like Kangba weddings and rituals honoring mountains and waters reflect the local people's reverence for nature and life, enriching the folk culture essence of Ganzi.

1.4. Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine in Ganzi's intangible cultural heritage is a precious cultural legacy that combines rich medical knowledge with ethnic wisdom. This traditional medicine, primarily based on Tibetan medicine, encompasses herbal remedies, acupuncture, massage, and other therapeutic methods. It emphasizes personalized diagnosis and treatment, focusing on the balance and harmony of body, mind, and spirit. Not only does it have significant efficacy in treating ailments, particularly excelling in conditions like rheumatism and digestive system disorders, but it also reflects the Tibetan people's understanding of and care for life and health.

1.5. Traditional fine arts

Traditional fine arts in Ganzi's intangible cultural heritage include Tangka painting, Tibetan weaving, and tie-dyeing techniques, among others. Tangka painting is a unique religious art form that uses mineral pigments, silk, or fabric as materials, showcasing profound religious themes and exquisite techniques, often depicting Buddhist stories and imagery, seen as a fusion of art and faith. Tibetan weaving involves hand-weaving with materials like wool and hemp rope to create items such as carpets, clothing, and bags, featuring vibrant colors and rich patterns, reflecting the Tibetan people's aesthetic pursuit in life and cultural heritage. Tie-dyeing is a traditional dyeing technique that involves folding, tying, and dyeing fabrics to create unique patterns and textures, showcasing rich ethnic flavors and exquisite craftsmanship.

2. The Significance of Ganzi Prefecture's Intangible Cultural Heritage Participating in Rural Cultural Revitalization

The participation of Ganzi Prefecture's intangible cultural heritage in rural cultural revitalization signifies the preservation and inheritance of its unique cultural symbols and invaluable treasures, revitalization is primarily manifested in several aspects:

2.1. Cultural Inheritance and Preservation

Intangible cultural heritage is a precious wealth passed down through generations of the people of Ganzi Prefecture, including folk customs, traditional crafts, religious customs, etc. By participating in rural cultural revitalization, it can strengthen the protection and inheritance of these intangible cultural heritages, prevent them from gradually disappearing due to time and social changes, and maintain cultural diversity and richness.

2.2. Promoting Local Economic Development

The protection and development of intangible cultural heritage can become a new pillar and growth point for rural economy. For example, utilizing intangible cultural heritage to conduct cultural tourism, handicraft production, folk performances, etc., can drive the development of local tourism, handicrafts, services, and other industries, promote employment growth, and improve the income level of rural residents.

2.3. Enhancing Cultural Soft Power

Intangible cultural heritage is a cultural symbol and identifier of a region, which can enhance the region's cultural soft power through its unique cultural characteristics and charm. This helps to enhance Ganzi Prefecture's influence and competitiveness in cultural exchanges, tourism promotion, international cooperation, etc.

3. Experience and Pathways Integrating Ganzi Prefecture's Intangible Cultural Heritage into Rural Cultural Revitalization

3.1. Government Policy Support

The government of Ganzi Prefecture places great importance on the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). A

series of policies and measures have been implemented to provide financial support and institutional guarantees for ICH projects:

Establishment of Special Funds: The government has set up dedicated funds for ICH protection. These funds are used to support the protection, research, and promotion of various ICH projects, ensuring sustained financial support for their development.

Policy Implementation: The enactment and implementation of the “Ganzi Prefecture Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Regulations” in 2013 provided a legal framework for ICH activities, clarifying the responsibilities of all relevant parties and setting standards for protection work.

3.2. Social Participation

The development and promotion of ICH rely heavily on community involvement. Social forces play a crucial role in the protection and promotion of ICH in Ganzi Prefecture, creating a collaborative environment through the participation of social organizations, enterprises, and individuals:

Community Participation: Local communities actively engage in the protection and transmission of ICH. Community-led activities, such as various cultural festivals and heritage workshops, help raise public awareness and mobilize residents to protect their cultural traditions and heritage.

Corporate Sponsorship: Enterprises sponsor ICH projects, incorporating cultural elements into their corporate social responsibility plans. This not only provides financial support but also boosts economic benefits in rural areas through cultural tourism. For example, various counties and cities in Ganzi Prefecture have created cultural murals themed on “Ganzi ICH,” which enhance the cultural life of the people and subtly promote Ganzi ICH.

3.3. Cultural Transmission and Education

Education and training are fundamental to the sustainable transmission of ICH in Ganzi Prefecture:

Training Centers: Establishing ICH training centers that offer courses and workshops to teach traditional crafts and skills. These centers provide a structured environment for learning and practicing ICH, ensuring the transfer of skills to future generations.

School Curricula Integration: Incorporating ICH knowledge into school curricula to foster cultural identity and awareness among young people. For example, the Art College of Sichuan University of Nationalities offers a major in “Ethnic Art,” which primarily teaches “Thangka” painting to local Tibetan students. This initiative not only involves students in cultural heritage learning but also allows other students to gain a direct and in-depth understanding of the “Thangka” ICH project.

3.4. Integration with Cultural Tourism

Combining ICH with rural tourism has proven to be an effective method for promoting cultural heritage and boosting economic development through:

Annual Cultural Festivals: Highlighting local ICH elements, such as the Kangding Love Song Festival, which attracts tourists and provides a platform for showcasing traditional music, dance, crafts, and food.

Interactive Projects: Creating interactive projects that allow tourists to participate in traditional activities such as Thangka painting or Tibetan weaving. These hands-on experiences not only enhance visitors’ appreciation of ICH but also provide additional income for local artisans.

Conclusion

In the context of the current rural revitalization strategy, ICH, as an important component of cultural resources, holds significant importance for promoting rural cultural revitalization, boosting rural economic development, and improving people’s quality of life. Through scientific protection and reasonable utilization, ICH can be transformed into a driving force for rural development, aiding in achieving sustainable development in rural areas. Therefore, studying the experience and pathways of Ganzi Prefecture’s ICH participation in rural cultural revitalization holds important theoretical and practical value.

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