

A Study on Urban-Rural Integration of Public Cultural Service System in Chongqing

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Abstract

The construction of urban-rural integration of public cultural service system is a critical task facing Chongqing during the 12th five-year plan period. To fulfill the task, we have to make efforts in the following aspects: First, we should meet the basic cultural needs of citizens. Second, we should narrow the cultural gap between urban and rural areas. Third, we should conserve and exploit Chongqing’s cultural resources and forge a famous cultural brand. Though great improvements have been achieved in this process, numerous problems still need to be solved; therefore, we must continuously work on it and strive for its perfection.

Key words: Urban-rural integration; Public culture; Public cultural service system; Chongqing; Basic cultural rights

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INTRODUCTION

Public cultural service is an important part of governmental public services. Why should we construct public cultural service system? Because it is the basic requirement for

the prosperity of advanced socialist culture and for the building of a harmonious society. Because it is a major way to protect people’s cultural rights. Because it has an important significance for improving the whole nation’s morality and cultural quality and for promoting all-round development of human being. The sixth plenary session of the 17th National Congress of the communist party of China put forward the issue of “deepening the reform of cultural system and booming socialist culture” and formulate the National Human Rights Action Plan (2012-2015) to safeguard people’s cultural rights. In this context, the construction of public cultural service system is an actual practice of national 12th five-year plan, of cultural reform and progress outline during the 12th five-year plan period, and of Chongqing 12th five-year plan. On the one hand, it is the internal need of constructing the national public cultural services demonstration area and building the Midwest No.1 nationally and internationally famous city of culture; On the other hand, it is also the organic composition in the practice of Chongqing urban-rural integration which possesses a strategic significance for the long-term economic and social development in Chongqing.

1. THE CONNOTATION AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF URBAN-CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC CULTURAL SERVICE SYSTEM

1.1 Connotation

Urban-Cultural Integration of Public Cultural Service System is a kind of institution in which resources are planned, allocated and used in a same system so that both urban and rural residents can enjoy similar cultural products or services and both sides are entitled to fair cultural rights. While fulfilling the task, some principles must be observed which are as follows: meeting basic

cultural needs, providing convenience, serving public benefits, evenness, and otherness.

First, we must satisfy people's basic cultural needs and protect their basic cultural rights. Not only is it the starting point for this task, but it is also the duty of a service-oriented government. The public cultural products and services should not be provided to a certain person or group, but to the masses and all groups in society to satisfy their basic cultural needs such as watching TV, listening to the radio, reading books and papers and participating in popular cultural activities.

Second, we should narrow the cultural gap and promote the coordinated development of culture between urban and rural areas. On the one hand, we must invest much more money into the countryside and provide it with enough infrastructure, capital and human resources and, develop public cultural service system under the support of cities in rural areas. On the other hand, we must acknowledge the differences of cultural environments and cultural resources between urban and rural areas, and take measures according to their differences and, take full advantage of cultural resources in the countryside to promote their coordinated development.

Third, we should protect and exploit traditional cultural resources of Chongqing to forge a famous cultural brand. Chongqing, as a historic city, after thousands of years' accumulation, possesses abundant cultural deposits. Besides a variety of historical sites donated by history, it possesses a unique local folk culture formed over a thousand years. On the one hand, we must rely on and take full advantage of Chongqing's cultural resources; On the other hand, we must conserve and carry forward its traditional culture and, inspire innovation and thus forge a famous cultural brand and expand its influence in western China and in the globe.

1.2 Structural Analysis of Urban-Rural Integration of Public Cultural Service System

The urban-rural integrated public cultural service system of Chongqing should include three sub-systems—service supply system, service security system, service management system—all three subsystems are important in order to the construction of urban-rural integrated public cultural service system.

As for the supply system of urban-rural integrated public cultural service, it is the working point of the whole system. It takes two courses in the process of urban-rural integration public cultural service system construction. One is the training of public cultural products suppliers; another is the operation of public culture transmission network. Public cultural products supplier should be trained to be the one with characteristics and of public-interests. Public culture transmission network should be operated expediently and equably.

While training the suppliers, not only need we to ensure enough quantity of public products and services to satisfy the basic cultural needs of people, but also we

should ensure that we do that for public-interests and for protecting people's cultural rights. Besides, we should also have full advantage of Chongqing's resources. As for public culture transmission, on the one hand, we should ensure mutual complementation and interaction among suppliers to make the transmission more convenient; on the other hand, we must break urban-rural cultural barrier and, narrow the gap between them to promote their coordinated development through the perfection of transmission network.

With regard to the security system of urban-rural integrated public cultural service, it is the supporting point of the whole system. It supplies material and human resources and capital. This subsystem means providing targeted, convenient infrastructure and, professional, efficient human resources and, equable, sufficient fiscal investment.

We need to take people's actual needs into detailed consideration while constructing public cultural infrastructures, which requires us to consider the differences of needs and of consumptive ability between urban and rural residents. The talented team building mainly consists of two parts: the building of producers who produce high-quality public cultural products and services, and the building of officers and administrators who maintain and manage the regular operation of the system. While we are focusing on "how to make the pie big" (financially), we should also pay attention to "how to divide the pie equably", so as to ensure financially equal distribution.

As to the management system of public cultural service, it holds the wheel for the whole system. Public cultural service system needs the guidance of cultural policies and regulations, and needs to be revised through a whole set of the performance appraisal system. This subsystem aims to formulate policies and regulations and, to formulate a set of performance appraisal system for public cultural system.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION RESEARCH ON CHONGQING'S PUBLIC CULTURAL SERVICE SYSTEM

Since 2003, Chongqing has taken public cultural service as an important part of social service program and, has continuously carried out by the construction of public cultural service which has greatly promoted urban-rural integration of basic culture services. Followed the principles of serving public interests, meeting basic requirements, evenness and convenience, Chongqing has been performing well in terms of cultural supply, security and management.

2.1 The Supply System of Chongqing's Public Cultural Service

Chongqing adopted a new mechanism to operate public-interest organizations and, promoted a unified open, competitive but ordered supplying system; meanwhile, it encouraged state-owned cultural enterprises to expand

its scale and quicken its pace in industrialization and marketization. It also encouraged the development of mixed ownership economy, and conducted cross-industry, cross-regional resource integration, fostered a batch of leading cultural enterprise groups, introduced domestic and foreign well-known cultural industry enterprises, and played a demonstration role. Chongqing has further relaxed market access and supported private cultural enterprises to enter the cultural industry in key areas, and has enhanced the innovative ability of the cultural industry, small and medium enterprises, and improved the market competitiveness of the cultural industry. Some government-involved public cultural services organizations which enjoy cooperation from various parties gradually grew up, undertaking the original functions of public cultural services once performed independently by the government. Therefore, the government role in the development of social culture has returned to be the supervisor and server.

2.2 Security System of Chongqing's Public Cultural Service

In recent years, the city invested 6.748 billion yuan to build Chongqing Grand Theater, Chongqing library, The Three Gorges museum and Chongqing Sichuan Opera Art Center, and other 13 city-level cultural facilities, whose grass floor area reach up to 715,800 square meters, more than 10 times large before it become a municipality directly under the central government. For nearly three years, the city financed 31 suburban areas with 30 million yuan each year in building cultural centers, libraries, museums, cinemas and theaters. Large cultural facilities in counties reached 119, with a total construction area of 180,000 square meters. Cultural information resources sharing project has completely covered counties, townships and villages; 809 cultural centers in towns (it is the number after villages and towns got combined; the remaining will be completed by the end of 2011) and 100 streets cultural centers have been built; The 8,967 administrative villages in the city have been supporting culture activity room, and over 9,000 farm book houses and 16,150 book borrowing rooms were built; "the full coverage of radio and television promise" action was strongly implemented to realize this objective before other areas in the west could do so; rural movie projection program went in the top of the nation, achieving the goals of "projecting one movie in each village per month" and of "letting the rural primary and middle school students watch at least 6 movies every school year"; it also opened the museum (memorial hall) and art gallery, library, cultural center (station), and other public welfare culture unit to the public for free. Libraries and cultural centers, in accordance with unified requirements, strengthened the personnel management and training of the staff ability, established and standardized the leading professional system that professionals hold the post as community culture instructors, and actively developed and introduced community professionals and literary

backbones. In addition, Chongqing set up Chengdu citizen culture art school in the city cultural center and, through widely opening branch schools and basic coaching centers, it formed a complete coverage public cultural education counseling network system.

2.3 Management System of Chongqing's Public Cultural Services

Chongqing government issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Construction of Public Cultural Service System" (issued by Chongqing CPC committee, no.17, 2008), the municipal propaganda department and the administration of Radio Film and Television and other departments formulated a series of supporting policies documents and, set up key task annual quantification appraisal system. To increase fiscal investment, during the period of "11th five-year plan", Chongqing totally invested to public cultural service system construction with a volume of 3.266 billion yuan, in which 671 million yuan were financed by the central government, 2.35 billion yuan by the city, 245 million yuan by its counties; In particular, Chongqing creatively executed a plan that 4 yuan per square meter collected from urban construction would be used in cultural facilities construction in suburb areas. Chongqing has also strengthened team construction. The municipal party committee office transmitted a document issued by the municipal propaganda department and other five departments—the "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Propaganda and Cultural Construction at the Grass-Roots Level" (issued by Chongqing party Committee (2010) no. 53). Municipal propaganda department, the administration of Radio Film and Television and other functional departments trained propaganda personnel of all levels in rotation.

3. CURRENT PROBLEMS IN CHONGQING'S PUBLIC CULTURAL SERVICE SYSTEM

3.1 Lack of Enthusiasm

The CPC central committee, the state council, the CPC municipal committee and municipal government, attach great importance to the construction of public cultural service system with a sense of cultural consciousness and cultural self-confidence. They are strongly promoting the progress of this work; but, the counties, generally show a lack of enthusiasm and initiative. Some magistrates with growth-oriented thoughts looked down on cultural construction, which has resulted in the lack of funds for construction, and slowing down major engineering. Some people thought that public cultural service system construction was just to encourage people to sing, dance and do activities. Neither they focused on the implementation of Scientific Outlook on Development, on the building of a harmonious society, or on the protection of people's basic cultural rights, nor had any long-term planning on the construction of public cultural service system.

3.2 Unbalanced Development

On the one hand, regional development is out of balance. Since the public culture service system construction will be influenced by regional economic development, the development of “one center” is significantly better than that of “two wings”, and the development of central urban areas is better than that of counties and suburbs. 19 cultural centers in districts, for example, cover a building area of 86,000 square meters, while 21 county cultural centers only cover a building area of 49,000 square meters; 19 district public library cover a construction area of 113,000 square meters, while county public library cover a construction area of only 53,000 square meters. On the other hand, “two centers” are out of balance. Because the public culture service system construction will be affected by the service scope, urban residents live in a comparative small area, the construction of “15-minutes cultural service center” is relatively easy; but for rural residents living in fairly separate areas, the construction of “half-an-hour cultural service center” is very difficult.

3.3 Backward Software Construction

The Construction of cultural hardware such as facilities relatively went well, but the construction of cultural software such as product supply and service management comparatively fell behind, in other words, the function of public cultural services system has not been given full play. It shows as follows: The lack of new forms and new contents, singular service facilities and manners, and the lack of popular products. For instance, many county libraries have limited books; Many county cultural houses barely held activities, resulting in the low enthusiasm of the masses; many cultural station facilities in villages and towns are rarely used by people for lacking organization or funds. Because most of youths and adults in villages worked outside, the majority who stay in villages are children and the elderly. Rural study is used infrequently, whose major users are village officers, teachers and students; Cultural information resources sharing program are not used widely.

3.4 Security Mechanism Needs to Improve

First, it has not formed a systematic, sustainable, long-acting institution for financial input and operation, social participation, personnel training and service management; it has no safeguards in legal level. Second, cultural undertaking expenditure covers about 0.3%-0.4% of total fiscal expenditure, much of that was invested in major cultural projects. Except for municipal cultural units, district and county cultural centers, libraries, village cultural centers barely have any funds for equipment maintenance, regular activities or content construction. Third, the public cultural service team can hardly meet the need for basic level culture-related work in the new era for lacking of young professional team members especially those who are good at literal and artistic creation, planning and organizing and management. Moreover, cultural office

positions are generally taken by village or towns leaders who are not professional in public cultural services.

4. THE PLAN ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF URBAN-RURAL PUBLIC CULTURAL SERVICE INTEGRATION IN CHONGQING

These problems mentioned above are actually about the discord between cultural building and management. We should coordinate building, management and practice in the construction of urban-rural public cultural service integration in order to further improve public cultural service's function.

4.1 Complete Public Cultural Service Network

Public cultural service network construction is a long-term process, but in different stages, it has a different focal point. Over the next five years, on the one hand, it will strengthen public the cultural fronts and, improve the cultural functions of main cities and, speed up the construction of “red rock” (revolutionary) education base and other “twelfth five-year” top ten public welfare cultural facilities; And the speeding up the upgrading of the county public cultural service facilities, especially the cultural center and library, should fully meet the national standard grade; besides, most counties should have museums, characteristic cultural blocks and cultural squares. All these counties, villages and towns should build theaters. On the other hand, it will expand public cultural service networks. The network will mainly be expanded to villages and urban communities. It is especially important to implement rural cultural center construction project and, to speed up the construction of street culture center, center for community cultural activities, cultural square and cultural park and to provide mobile cultural service facilities and perfect logistics distribution system of public cultural services, and also to implement the electronic reading room construction project.

4.2 Strength the Actual Effects of Public Cultural Service

First, we should enrich the content of cultural front. While providing each village cultural center with one newspaper fence, one table tennis table, one basketball stand and a batch of newspapers and magazines, we should spare efforts to build more newspaper fences in urban and rural areas. Second, we should strengthen public cultural service supplies. In this regard, we should safeguard people's basic cultural rights and interests and meet their multi-level cultural needs and, expand service areas and innovate service mode and, improve service quality. For example, we can carry out activities for grass-roots masses, migrant workers, leftover children and old people; we can also promote the digital and network technology application in the field of public cultural services, adhere to government-leadership combined with society participation, and support the development of private nonprofit cultural

institutions; in addition, we can establish fare subsidy mechanism for high art performances to promote the popularity of high art, promote the transition of public cultural service supportive policy from “supporting people” to “supporting programs”, establish and improve the system that institutions openly serve the society, and conduct public popularity and re-education activities of arts and culture, and so on. Third, we should conduct cultural activities of public-interest. Centering on major anniversaries, traditional ethnic festivals and major events, we can carry out cultural-themed activities, continue to organize Chongqing cultural & art festival, “Chongqing performance season” and other large cultural festival activities; furthermore, we should support county cultural activities and cultivate characteristic culture brands, guide and encourage voluntary service in culture.

4.3 Build A Professional Team for Public Cultural Services

Since human beings are the most active factor in productivity, we must ensure by all manner of means that passionate and professional people carry out the task of building public culture service system. The first step is to cultivate the leading talents, implement the “cultural celebrities” project and, further carry forward the youth culture talent cultivation projects such as “five batches” talents and “ba-yu rookies”, thus training and reserving backbone personnel for the performance and management of public cultural activities. Additionally, we should support and cultivate a batch of intangible cultural heritage and folk cultural inheritors. The second step is to foster professionals. We will continue to implement the “project of hundreds of youth backbone taking temporary post for experience”, cultivate high-quality talents in the field of cultural management and cultural activities, and vigorously develop social cultural backbones. The third step is to strengthen grass-roots team, select and openly recruit professionals and cadres working for villages and towns, and organize college village officers to engage in grass-root cultural works; moreover, we should expand off-staff cultural propaganda team by recruiting voluntary workers. The fourth step is to perfect training and incentive mechanism, set up a training system under which municipal propaganda department leads, county propaganda department implements, cadres and professional training centers cooperate with each other. Besides, we should set up a new salary allocation system to attract talented person, and promote the institutionalization, standardization of talents honoring, and adhere to the recognition and appreciation of the top ten grass-roots cultural workers and excellent county culture propaganda cadres.

4.4 Innovate the System

Public cultural service itself is a kind of institutional arrangement. In order to promote the public cultural service system construction, we must have a systematic, scientific and effective institutional guarantee. We shall bring the

public cultural service system construction into important agenda at all levels of government, into the overall planning of the local economic and social development, into the local fiscal budget, and focus our work on the following three aspects: first is the innovation of evaluation system. We should take public cultural service system construction in scientific development evaluation system and, take “utilization, participation and satisfaction” as the evaluation index for improving performance, at the same time, improve the proportion of cultural propaganda work and PCSS construction in officers’ assessment. The second task is the improvement of the system of laws and regulations. China’s current cultural laws and regulations are not perfect, but Chongqing should have the courage to “eat crabs” and promote cultural legislation to enhance the coerciveness of public culture service system construction. Currently Chongqing should promptly formulate Regulations on the Public Cultural Services. And also, it should make a hard constraint on the building of public cultural services system in terms of planning, construction, management, use and safeguard and so on. Third, we should establish financial security mechanism, perfect the public finance system to ensure that the growing rate of fiscal spending on cultural construction is higher than that of the regular revenue and that the cultural undertakings spending account for more than 1% of fiscal expenditure. The city and counties should set up special funds for culture propaganda to secure the operation of major public cultural projects, activities, and all levels of public cultural facilities. County finances should arrange public cultural service operation and activity funds in accordance with the standard of 5 yuan per resident.

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