

Optimizing Pathways for Constructing Livable, Business-friendly, Harmonious, and Beautiful Villages in Guangzhou from the Perspective of the Rural Revitalization

Based on the Empirical Research of Town A in Conghua District

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ABSTRACT

"Constructing livable, business-friendly, harmonious and beautiful villages" is an important deployment made by the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in comprehensively promoting rural revitalization. Taking Town A in Conghua District, Guangzhou as an example, this paper attempts to analyze its connotative characteristics from the four dimensions of livability, business-friendliness, harmony and beauty. It discusses the practical obstacles encountered by Guangzhou in the process of building livable, business-friendly, harmonious and beautiful villages and further explores feasible construction paths, in order to help the development of rural areas in Guangzhou and promote the practice of rural revitalization.

Keywords: Rural revitalization, Livability and business-friendliness, Harmonious and beautiful villages, Guangzhou, Empirical research.

1. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the construction of "Beautiful Village" has focused on environmental beautification, but has neglected the simultaneous improvement of economic vitality and social harmony to a certain extent. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China replaced the term "beautiful village" with

"livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful village," which emphasizes the interaction of environmental beauty, economic development, social harmony and cultural prosperity to jointly promote rural revitalization. [1] As a national central city with a population of over 20 million, the development of Guangzhou's suburban villages is unique and complex, which has important demonstration significance for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. Town A, with its dual natural resources of hot springs and a national forest park, faces numerous challenges such as a single industry, an aging population, and talent loss. [2] It holds representative research value.

Therefore, this research team, with the theme of "Building Livable, Business-friendly, Harmonious

Data Source: Field data were collected during the "Hundreds of Millions of Villages and Towns" project conducted by the "Team Jin-ying Zhu-meng" from the Digital Intelligence Management School of Guangdong Nanhua Vocational College of Industry and Commerce in Town A, Conghua District, Guangzhou, in July 2024. Grateful acknowledgment is extended to team members for their fieldwork collaboration and to Town A officials and villagers for their patient cooperation.

and Beautiful Villages," conducted a field investigation in Town A, Conghua District, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province, aiming to reveal the current situation and problems of Guangzhou's rural areas in terms of livability, business-friendliness, harmony, and beauty, and to propose practical optimization paths to contribute to the sustainable development of Guangzhou's rural areas.

2. RESEARCH

2.1 Research Base Information

Town A, a representative suburban village in Guangzhou, was selected as the research object for

this study, and a combination of questionnaire survey and field interview methods was employed. During the survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with village cadres, Party and Mass Service Center staff, and villagers to obtain abundant first-hand information. At the same time, a total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, and 93 valid questionnaires were collected, resulting in a recovery rate of 93%. The reliability test showed that the Cronbach α coefficient was 0.921 (>0.8), and the KMO value for validity testing was 0.853 (>0.6), indicating high reliability of the data. Descriptive statistics and cross-analysis were performed using SPSS 26.0 software to ensure the accuracy and scientificity of the research results. ("Table 1")

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of sample characteristics (N=93)

Variable	Category	Proportion	Notable features
Gender	female	70.97%	Reflecting the gender structure of the rural left-behind population
Age	≥ 51 years	35.48%	Reflecting the aging trend of rural population structure
Education	Junior high school and below	65.59%	Low education level may restrict industrial transformation
Profession	Farming/Other	56.92%	The stability of non-agricultural employment needs to be improved

2.2 Analysis of Survey Results

The "livability" dimension focuses on five indicators, including roads, toilets, and medical care; the "business-friendliness" dimension focuses on income, employment stability, and industrial diversity; the "harmony" and "beauty" dimensions conduct operational analysis through subject cognition, participation in cultural activities, and identification with local spirit.

2.2.1 Satisfaction Analysis of the Dimension of "Livability"

Villagers rated road accessibility (3.85 points) and neighborhood relations (4.0 points) highly, but their satisfaction with public toilets (3.1 points) and medical services (3.55 points) was significantly lower. In terms of spatial governance, 32.26% of villagers reported that garbage was not removed in a timely manner, and 50.54% of villagers only participated in sporadic tree planting activities, showing a split state of "focusing on construction and neglecting maintenance". It was reported by village cadres that some villagers, influenced by traditional concepts, collected waste items for sale and were reluctant to discard them, which affected the cleanliness of the rural environment to a certain extent. At the same time, due to the uneven strength

of the village collective economy, some economically weak villages faced a shortage of funds, and even basic road repairs were difficult to achieve. In addition, villagers generally reported that the village lacked entertainment facilities and that children lacked suitable places for activities after school and on weekends.

Cross-analysis revealed that the villagers' education level was positively correlated with their satisfaction with medical services ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that people with higher education are more sensitive to the quality of public services.

2.2.2 Analysis of the Dilemma of "Business-friendliness" Dimension

Only 17.2% of the respondents were satisfied with their current incomes, and only 31.18% of the respondents believed that the employment environment was stable. Regression analysis showed that income satisfaction was significantly correlated with "policy support" ($\beta = 0.41$) and "industry diversity" ($\beta = 0.28$) ($R^2 = 0.36$), indicating that the intensity of policy support and the degree of industrial diversification have an important impact on villagers' income satisfaction.

Rural industrial development currently faces numerous challenges. Although the tourism

industry holds a dominant position in rural industries, its seasonal characteristics are extremely pronounced, with a clear distinction between peak and off-peak seasons. In the realm of agriculture, traditional fruit cultivation, such as that of lychees and longans, predominates, and e-commerce penetration remains relatively low. Villagers have reported that employment opportunities in rural areas are limited. Besides operating restaurants and working in hot spring hotels, the majority are compelled to seek employment elsewhere. Village cadres have also indicated that the fruit planting industry is highly susceptible to natural factors, resulting in unstable yields. Moreover, the intensity of market promotion significantly impacts sales volumes, which can be substantial when publicity is effectively executed.

2.2.3 *A Study on the Differences in the Cognition of "Harmony" and "Beauty"*

43.01% of villagers believe that the main body of rural construction should achieve "multi-party coordination", but only 5.38% clearly define their own responsibilities. This data reflects that the villagers' main body consciousness is relatively weak. Chi-square test shows that there is a significant correlation between the propaganda channel and the villagers' willingness to participate ($\chi^2 = 12.34$, $p < 0.01$). Specifically, the villagers who learned about the policy through the "village committee propaganda" channel were 23.6% more willing to participate in rural construction than those through other channels, indicating the importance of propaganda work.

Villagers generally feel that the atmosphere of traditional rural festivals is becoming increasingly weak. In terms of cultural heritage, the crisis of cultural heritage is equally severe: the awareness rate of the "irrigation canal spirit" in Village A is relatively low, and the Cantonese opera troupe in Village B is facing difficulties due to the lack of young people, which suggests that rural cultural identity urgently needs to be reshaped. [3]

3. PROBLEMS

Although Town A has achieved remarkable results in rural revitalization, there are still some problems to be solved in the process of building a livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful villages.

3.1 *Intensifying Environmental Pressures and Ecological Challenges*

It is a significant challenge for Town A to balance economic development with environmental protection. In the process of developing the homestay and catering industries, a series of environmental problems have gradually emerged. Kitchen waste is increasing daily, yet garbage classification and treatment have not kept pace, and the phenomenon of littering is widespread. During the survey, which took place in summer, odors could be detected, posing considerable pressure on the ecological environment.

Some villagers and operators of homestays and restaurants have weak environmental awareness and lack the concept of sustainable development, exacerbating the contradiction between ecological environment and economic development. Protecting the ecological environment while promoting economic growth has become a major challenge for Town A.

3.2 *Single Industrial Structure and Unbalanced Development*

At present, it is observed that the industrial structure of Town A is still relatively simple, primarily based on agriculture and tourism, with a lack of diversified industrial support. Although rural tourism has developed, it lacks depth and breadth and fails to effectively integrate natural and cultural resources.

In addition, some villagers have lost their income from planting due to land acquisition and have misunderstandings about the government's actions. Moreover, the development of villages is unbalanced, with the infrastructure and public service levels of some villages needing urgent improvement. This situation restricts the overall development of Town A to a certain extent.

3.3 *Talent Shortage Restricts Development*

With the acceleration of urbanization, rural talent loss is serious, especially the outflow of young people and high-quality talents, resulting in a lack of sufficient talent support for rural development. The labor force remaining in the village has a relatively low level of education, which also makes the villagers relatively weak in the job market and difficult to obtain high-skilled, high-income job opportunities.[4] This restricts the

further development of Town A in rural revitalization.

3.4 Insufficient Funds and Limited Investment

It is necessary to recognize that rural revitalization requires a lot of capital investment, but the current funding sources of Town A are limited, mainly relying on government investment and a small amount of social capital. During the survey, village cadres and staff almost all mentioned the problem of capital shortage when talking about future development. Insufficient funds have led to limited investment in infrastructure construction, industrial development and other aspects, making it difficult to meet the actual needs of rural revitalization.

3.5 The Villagers' Concepts Have Not Changed and Their Enthusiasm Is Not High

Rural revitalization is a process of collective efforts, which requires the joint efforts of the government and the majority of villagers, rather than relying solely on the government's leadership. However, at present, villagers generally believe that rural revitalization is the government's business. In activities such as greening actions, villagers are found to lack participation awareness and initiative, which in turn restricts the formation of a co-construction and co-governance mechanism.

4. COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS

In response to the above-mentioned problems, the following countermeasures and suggestions are put forward to promote greater success in building a livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful village in Town A.

4.1 "Livability" - Strengthening Ecological Environment Protection and Achieving Green Development

First, it is essential for cadres should take the lead. Village cadres should play an exemplary role by organizing staff to clean the streets regularly and calling on the masses to participate actively to create a clean and beautiful rural environment together. Second, it is necessary to strengthen supervision and law enforcement. Environmental supervision and law enforcement on business

premises such as homestays and restaurants should be increased, and behaviors that damage the ecological environment should be cracked down on to ensure that the rural environment is effectively protected. Third, extensive publicity and mobilization should be carried out. Through a combination of "online and offline" methods, using broadcasts, WeChat, posters and banners on bulletin boards, and door-to-door visits, policies and measures for building a livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful village and protecting the environment, such as garbage classification, should be publicized to the masses. Fourth, a green and low-carbon lifestyle should be actively promoted. Material and spiritual rewards should be given to the masses who report sanitation dead corners, littering and other behaviors to stimulate the enthusiasm of villagers to participate in environmental protection.

4.2 "Business-Friendliness" - Optimizing Industrial Structure and Strengthening the Construction of Talent Teams

First, it is essential to optimize the industrial structure. The government should further optimize the industrial structure and promote diversified development. In the agricultural sector, it should continue to promote the development of characteristic agriculture, expand sales channels through live broadcasting, and strengthen marketing and brand building. In the tourism sector, it should strengthen the standardized development of the homestay industry, formulate relevant standards and policies, and guide the homestay industry to develop towards specialization and branding. Moreover, the integrated development of the homestay industry with rural tourism, cultural and creative industries, and other industries should be enhanced to form a diversified industrial pattern. Second, great attention should be paid to the construction of talent teams. It is necessary to formulate preferential policies to attract high-quality and professional agricultural and rural tourism talents to start businesses and work in Town A. The treatment and welfare levels of talents should be improved, and the construction and management of the talent service system should be strengthened to provide convenient and efficient services for talents.

4.3 "Harmony" - Promoting Innovation in Social Governance and Enhancing People's Sense of Happiness

First, it is crucial to actively seek policy and financial support from higher authorities and formulate and improve relevant policies and measures. Efforts should be made to increase policy publicity and interpretation to ensure effective implementation of policies. Second, the local government should strengthen publicity and education efforts on policies and knowledge of livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful villages, improve villagers' awareness and understanding, and enhance their sense of responsibility. Third, the local government should broaden the channels for villagers to participate in the construction of livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful villages and strengthen platform construction. It should encourage villagers to actively participate in the cause of rural revitalization and increase incentives and support for villagers to improve their sense of gain and happiness. Fourth, the local government should further strengthen rural cultural construction by exploring and inheriting rural cultural resources and creating rural cultural brands with local characteristics to enrich the spiritual and civilized life of villagers.

4.4 "Beauty" - Strengthening the Leadership of Party Building and Giving Full Play to the Role of Party Organizations as a Fighting Fortress

In the coordinated progress and positive interaction of livable, business-friendly, harmonious, and beautiful villages, Party building serves as both an adhesive and an amplifier. It empowers and promotes each other, jointly building a powerful engine for rural revitalization. On the one hand, efforts are being made to enhance the effectiveness of Party building leadership by improving the system of Party member responsibility zones and implementing environmental governance tasks in the form of assigned areas to strengthen organizational building. On the other hand, Party building leads the overall situation, branches are established along the industrial chain, and Party members are assigned to connect the three teams of homestays, orchards, and e-commerce live broadcasts respectively, with responsibilities assigned to individuals;[5] and capacity training is emphasized, with Party

members organized to go out for inspection every quarter, and after returning to the town, "micro-lectures" are conducted to transform advanced experience into practices suitable for the local area.

5. CONCLUSION

Through empirical analysis, the current situation and problems of Guangzhou's rural areas in terms of livability, business-friendliness, harmony and beauty are revealed by this study, and targeted construction paths and countermeasures are proposed. It is suggested that future research should further expand the scope of research, deepen data analysis, and explore more universal paths for rural revitalization. Moreover, it is essential to strengthen policy tracking and evaluation in order to provide strong support for the sustained and in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.[6]

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