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Driving and Implementation of "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" on Rural Economic Growth

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Abstract: As a city rich in intangible cultural heritage in the southeastern part of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guigang has effectively driven rural economic growth by implementing the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model. This paper elaborates on the overview, classification, and characteristics of Guigang's intangible cultural heritage resources, as well as the driving mechanisms of the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model for rural economic growth, including direct economic benefits, industrial ripple effects, and employment and entrepreneurship stimulation. Simultaneously, it analyzes the challenges and issues faced during the implementation of this model. In response to these problems, strategies such as improving collaborative mechanisms, strengthening infrastructure construction and service quality enhancement, and reinforcing market promotion and brand building are proposed. The aim is to promote the sustainable development of Guigang's intangible cultural heritage tourism industry and foster rural economic prosperity.

Keywords: "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism"; Rural Economic Growth; Implementation Strategies

Introduction

As a vital component of traditional Chinese culture, intangible cultural heritage not only embodies the national spirit but also serves as a significant resource for driving local economic development. As a city with a long history, Guigang possesses abundant intangible cultural heritage resources, which hold immense value for tourism development. In recent years, alongside the rapid growth of the tourism industry and the deepening implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, Guigang has actively explored the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" development model. This initiative aims to foster the integrated growth of intangible cultural heritage and the tourism sector, thereby stimulating rapid economic development in rural areas.

1. Overview of Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources in Guigang City

1.1 Classification and Characteristics of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Guigang City, located in the southeastern part of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is a city with a long history and rich cultural heritage. Its diverse intangible cultural heritage resources span various fields, including folk literature, music and dance, traditional opera and drama, and handicrafts, representing cultural treasures passed down through generations by the local people.

In the realm of folk literature, Guigang City boasts a wealth of legends, stories, proverbs, and ballads. These works, with their unique artistic charm and profound cultural significance, reflect the historical life, social



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customs, and folk traditions of the people of Guigang. Not only do these literary pieces preserve the local cultural memory, but they also provide invaluable cultural heritage for future generations.

Musical and dance intangible cultural heritage in Guui City is equally rich and diverse. Whether it is instrumental performances, folk song singing, or traditional dances, they all reflect the exceptional talent and unique creativity of the Guui people in the realm of musical arts. These musical works feature beautiful melodies, and the dance movements are vigorous and powerful. They not only serve an entertainment function but also play a significant role in folk festivals, weddings, and other events, carrying deep local sentiments and ethnic identity.

Opera and drama intangible cultural heritage is a major highlight of Guui City's culture. Local opera genres such as Guiping rod puppet opera and Pingnan Niu Ge opera are deeply cherished by the local people for their unique performance styles and exquisite skills. These opera genres not only preserve traditional performing arts but also incorporate local characteristics, making them important windows showcasing the cultural charm of Guui.

In the realm of traditional handicrafts, Guui City boasts numerous unique skills, such as oil-paper umbrella making and Sanli knife forging. These handicrafts are renowned both domestically and internationally for their exquisite craftsmanship and distinctive styles. The inheritance and development of these handicrafts not only promote the local economy but also contribute to the preservation of traditional culture.

The characteristics of Guigang City's intangible cultural heritage are mainly reflected in the following aspects: First, uniqueness—these cultural heritages are distinctive cultural achievements formed by the people of Guigang through long-term historical practices, showcasing strong regional and ethnic features. Second, continuity—these cultural heritages have been passed down through generations via oral transmission, mentorship, and other methods, maintaining their vitality and continuity. Third, diversity—Guigang's intangible cultural heritage encompasses a wide range of categories, including literature, art, craftsmanship, and more, reflecting the richness and diversity of local culture.

1.2 Current Status of Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection

In recent years, the Guigang Municipal Government has placed great emphasis on the protection of intangible cultural heritage, implementing a series of measures to strengthen its preservation and transmission. On one hand, through methods such as surveys, identification, and documentation, the city has conducted a comprehensive inventory and classification of intangible cultural heritage resources across the region, establishing a relatively well-developed system for cataloging such heritage. To date, Guigang has one national-level intangible cultural heritage project (the "Fire Pump Custom" of Pingnan County's Da'an Town), over 20 autonomous region-level projects, and hundreds of municipal and county-level projects. On the other hand, the municipal government has increased support for inheritors of intangible cultural heritage by providing transmission funds, establishing inheritance bases, and organizing training workshops to encourage and support inheritors in conducting transmission activities and cultivating new groups of practitioners^[1]. Additionally, efforts have been made to promote the integration of intangible cultural heritage with industries such as tourism and education. By developing intangible cultural heritage tourism routes and creating related tourism products, the government aims to enhance the visibility and influence of intangible cultural heritage, injecting new vitality into the local economy.

2. Driving Mechanism of "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" on Rural Economic Growth in Guigang City

2.1 Direct Economic Benefits Drive

The "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" model has brought significant direct economic benefits to the rural economy of Guigang City. By integrating intangible cultural heritage resources with tourism resources, Guigang has successfully attracted a large number of visitors for sightseeing, thereby directly boosting local tourism revenue. The unique appeal of intangible cultural heritage—such as exquisite handicrafts, distinctive folk performances, and rich historical legends—has become a key factor in attracting tourists. During their visits, tourists not only experience Guigang's abundant cultural heritage

but also enjoy local specialty foods and purchase handicrafts. These consumption activities directly drive the growth of the local economy. With the further development of the "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" model, infrastructure construction in Guigang's rural areas has also improved significantly. To better meet the needs of tourists, local governments have increased investment in rural infrastructure, including roads, accommodations, and dining facilities. These investments not only enhance the tourist experience but also provide more employment opportunities and income sources for local residents. Additionally, by hosting various intangible cultural heritage festivals, exhibitions, and other events, Guigang has further expanded its visibility and influence, laying a solid foundation for future tourism development.

2.2 Driven by Industrial Spillover Effects

The implementation of the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model in rural areas of Guigang City has also generated significant industrial ripple effects. With the continuous increase in tourist numbers, the tourism-related industrial chain has gradually expanded. In terms of catering, local farmers have leveraged intangible cultural heritage resources to develop food products with local characteristics, such as traditional snacks and farmhouse cuisine. These delicacies not only satisfy tourists' culinary desires but also provide farmers with additional sources of income. In terms of accommodation, the growing number of tourists has spurred the rapid development of local homestays and farm stays, creating more employment opportunities for farmers. Additionally, the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model has boosted the sales of local specialty products like handicrafts and agricultural goods. During their visits, tourists often develop a strong interest in these local items, and their sales not only bring direct economic benefits to farmers but also promote the development of local specialty industries. As these industries continue to grow and strengthen, the economic structure of Guigang's rural areas has been optimized and upgraded, injecting new vitality into future economic development.

2.3 Employment and Entrepreneurship Stimulus

The implementation of the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model in rural areas of Guigang

City has significantly boosted local employment and entrepreneurship. With the rapid development of the tourism industry, local farmers have gained more opportunities to participate in tourism-related services, such as working as tour guides, in catering, or in accommodation. These roles not only provide farmers with a stable source of income but also enhance their professional skills and overall competencies. The "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model has also created new entrepreneurial opportunities for local farmers. By leveraging intangible cultural heritage resources, farmers can develop tourism products with distinct local characteristics, such as handicraft production and agricultural product processing. These entrepreneurial ventures not only hold broad market prospects but also generate substantial economic returns for farmers ^[2]. With the advent of the "internet+" era, farmers can further expand their sales channels and increase income by utilizing e-commerce platforms and other online channels to promote their tourism products to a wider market. Through the implementation of the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model, rural areas in Guigang City have not only achieved rapid economic growth but also provided farmers with more employment opportunities and entrepreneurial space, laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the rural economy.

3. Challenges and Issues in the Implementation of "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" in Guigang City

3.1 The Conflict Between Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Tourism Development

In the process of advancing the "intangible cultural heritage (ICH) + tourism" model in Guigang City, the contradiction between ICH preservation and tourism development has become increasingly prominent. On one hand, intangible cultural heritage, as a precious spiritual asset of humanity, requires protection and transmission as its primary task. However, in the course of tourism development, to attract visitors and enhance economic benefits, ICH resources often undergo a degree of commercialization and entertainment-oriented processing, which may, to some extent, compromise the authenticity and uniqueness of ICH culture. For instance, some ICH performances might lose their original cultural connotations to cater to tourist preferences, and the

production of certain handicrafts could decline in quality due to the pursuit of mass production. This contradiction not only affects the transmission and development of ICH culture but may also diminish tourists' understanding and respect for it. On the other hand, conflicts arise between ICH preservation and tourism development in terms of resource utilization and spatial planning. With the rapid growth of the tourism industry, the demand for developing ICH resources continues to increase, potentially placing pressure on ICH protection. How to rationally utilize resources while safeguarding ICH culture, avoiding overdevelopment and resource degradation, is a critical challenge that Guigang City must address in implementing the "ICH + tourism" model.

3.2 Shortcomings in Tourism Infrastructure and Service Levels

Although Guigang City has achieved certain results in promoting the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model, there are still shortcomings in tourism infrastructure and service levels. In some rural areas of Guigang, infrastructure such as transportation, accommodation, and catering remains relatively underdeveloped, making it difficult to meet the growing demands of tourists. For example, some roads leading to intangible cultural heritage sites are narrow and rugged, resulting in poor accessibility; some accommodation facilities are rudimentary, with hygiene conditions and service quality needing improvement. These infrastructure deficiencies not only negatively impact tourists' experiences but also hinder the further development of the local tourism industry.

Some tourism practitioners lack professional competence and service awareness, with insufficient understanding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage, making it difficult to meet tourists' needs for exploration and experiential engagement with such cultural assets ^[3]. Additionally, Guigang City faces shortcomings in areas such as tourism information services and safety guarantees, which require further improvement and enhancement.

3.3 Insufficient Market Promotion and Brand Building

In terms of market promotion and brand building, the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model in Guigang City also faces certain challenges. The city's insufficient promotion and publicity of intangible

cultural heritage tourism resources have resulted in limited external awareness and understanding. Some intangible cultural heritage sites and tourism routes lack popularity and influence, making it difficult to attract a large number of visitors. The absence of competitive and locally distinctive intangible cultural heritage tourism brands hinders Guigang City from establishing a unique competitive advantage in the tourism market. These shortcomings in market promotion and brand building not only affect the visibility and reputation of Guigang's intangible cultural heritage tourism resources but also constrain the sustainable development of its tourism industry.

4. Implementation Strategies of "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Tourism" in Promoting Rural Economic Growth in Guigang City

4.1 Improving the Synergistic Mechanism for Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Tourism Development

To effectively address the conflict between intangible cultural heritage (ICH) preservation and tourism development, Guigang City needs to establish a comprehensive collaborative mechanism for ICH conservation and tourism development. This mechanism aims to balance the protection and inheritance of ICH with the economic benefits of tourism development. Specific measures include: formulating detailed plans that integrate ICH protection and development, clearly defining key indicators such as protection scope, development intensity, and tourist capacity; establishing a multi-stakeholder participation mechanism involving the government, ICH inheritors, tourism enterprises, and local communities to ensure the authenticity of ICH and the sustainability of tourism development through consultation and cooperation; strengthening education and promotion of ICH to enhance awareness and respect among tourism practitioners and visitors, thereby reducing the negative impact of commercialization on ICH. Through the establishment of this collaborative mechanism, Guigang City will be better positioned to achieve a win-win situation for both ICH preservation and tourism development.

4.2 Strengthening Tourism Infrastructure Development and Service Quality Enhancement

To address the shortcomings in tourism infrastructure and service levels, Guigang City needs to increase

investment and strengthen the construction of tourism infrastructure and the improvement of service quality. In terms of infrastructure development, priority should be given to improving transportation conditions to intangible cultural heritage sites, widening roads, optimizing traffic signs, and enhancing the convenience of travel for tourists. The construction of supporting tourism facilities such as accommodation and dining should be strengthened, with improvements in the quality and hygiene conditions of these facilities to meet the diverse needs of tourists. In terms of service quality enhancement, training and management for tourism practitioners should be intensified to improve their professional competence and service awareness, ensuring that tourists receive a high-quality travel experience during their visits. The development of tourism information service systems should be advanced, providing detailed travel guides, online booking services, and travel safety tips to enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Through the implementation of these measures, Guigang City will significantly boost its tourism appeal and competitiveness^[4].

4.3 Strengthening Market Promotion and Brand Building

To enhance the visibility and influence of Guigang City's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) tourism, it is essential to strengthen market promotion and brand building. In terms of market promotion, full advantage should be taken of new media platforms such as the internet and social media, combined with offline activities, to carry out diverse promotional campaigns, such as ICH cultural festivals and tourism photography competitions, to attract more tourists' attention and participation. Cooperation with channels like travel agencies and online travel platforms should be intensified to broaden market promotion channels and increase the exposure of ICH tourism resources. Regarding brand building, the unique value and charm of ICH culture should be deeply explored to create distinctive local ICH tourism brands, such as ICH-themed hotels and ICH handicraft experience centers. The shaping and dissemination of the brand image should be enhanced through unified visual identity systems and brand slogans to boost brand awareness and reputation. Through the implementation of these

measures, Guigang City will be better positioned to showcase the allure of its ICH culture, attract more tourists for experiences and consumption, and thereby promote the sustained growth of the rural economy.

Conclusion

In summary, the implementation of the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model in Guigang City has injected new vitality into rural economic growth. By improving the collaborative mechanism for intangible cultural heritage protection and tourism development, among other measures, Guigang has successfully transformed intangible cultural heritage resources into tourism assets, attracting a large number of visitors. This has driven the growth of related industries and provided farmers with more employment opportunities and entrepreneurial avenues. In the future, Guigang should continue to deepen the development of the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model, strengthen the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, enhance the quality of tourism services, and promote the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage tourism, thereby making greater contributions to the prosperity of the rural economy.

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