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Research on the Role of Social Organisations in Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation in Ethnic Regions: A Case Study of Guangxi Taking the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association as an Example

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Abstract: This study examines the role and practical pathways of social organisations in ethnic regions in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation, using the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association in Guangxi as a case study. Findings indicate that the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association has effectively promoted cultural exchange, economic development, and social integration in ethnic regions through cultural activities, economic empowerment, and social collaboration. Its practical experience encompasses establishing a "Chamber (Association) + Ethnic Unity" model, organising ethnic cultural festivals, fostering industry-employment linkage development, and innovating community governance mechanisms. Nevertheless, the association continues to face significant challenges regarding resource sustainability, professional service capacity, effectiveness evaluation systems, and collaborative mechanisms. Addressing these issues, the study proposes optimisation pathways: establishing a diversified resource support system, strengthening professional talent development, implementing scientific effectiveness evaluation mechanisms, and refining collaborative networks. This research provides theoretical reference and practical guidance for social organisations in ethnic regions engaged in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation.

Keywords: Ethnic Regions; Social Organisations; Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation.

1. Introduction

(1) Research Background

At the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping explicitly emphasised: "We must take fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation as the main thread, resolutely follow the correct path with Chinese characteristics for resolving ethnic issues, uphold and improve the system of regional ethnic autonomy, strengthen and improve the Party's work on ethnic affairs, and comprehensively advance the cause of ethnic unity and progress." This significant exposition profoundly reveals the central position and guiding role of the sense of community for the Chinese nation in ethnic work during the new era, charting the course for advancing ethnic affairs. The consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community constitutes the bedrock of national unity, the foundation of ethnic solidarity, and the very soul of our spiritual strength. Throughout historical evolution, all ethnic groups have forged a community of shared destiny, interdependent and co-developing across economic, cultural, and social spheres.

In the new era, forging this consciousness is not only an imperative for safeguarding national unity and social stability but also an intrinsic driving force for realising the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Cultivating this consciousness within ethnic regions likewise holds profound practical significance. Ethnic regions serve as China's ecological barriers, resource-rich zones, and areas of distinctive cultural heritage. Their stability and development directly impact the nation's overall strategic layout. In the new era, these regions face numerous development opportunities, such as the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative and the implementation of the rural revitalisation strategy. Strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community can stimulate the endogenous motivation of all ethnic groups, promote their joint participation in national development, enable them to share in the fruits of progress, and drive high-quality economic and social development in ethnic regions.

As a national model zone for ethnic unity and progress, Guangxi has actively explored the "business (association) + ethnic unity" model in recent years. Since Pingnan County in Guigang City established Guangxi's first Ethnic Unity and Progress Association in May 2024, county-level associations have achieved full coverage within less than a year, providing a valuable practical case study for examining social organisations' participation in forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation.

(2)Review of Domestic and International Research Literature

Through extensive reading and analysis of scholarly literature, it has been observed that the concept of "forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation"—a distinctly Chinese construct—lacks direct parallels in Western academic discourse. Nevertheless, the Western academic tradition centred on ethnic integration and social cohesion offers rich insights for reference. Relevant research exhibits a clear paradigm evolution: Charles Taylor (1994) focused on cultural recognition within early multiculturalism theories, while subsequent studies reflected on its risks of fragmentation, shifting towards exploring mechanisms for transcending ethnic identities and constructing shared identities[1]. Within this framework, Robert Putnam (2000) profoundly highlighted in his social capital theory that diverse

community organisations and non-governmental institutions serve as pivotal arenas for cultivating "bridging social capital," effectively fostering cross-ethnic social networks and trust[2]. Concurrently, governance theory emphasises the synergistic role of collaborative networks formed between governments and social organisations in enhancing policy implementation and social integration within nation-state governance. In summary, while international research adopts diverse perspectives, it broadly recognises that social organisations play multiple core roles in inter-ethnic integration: they serve as complementary providers of public services to advance substantive equity; function as social platforms for fostering cross-ethnic interaction and reducing prejudice; and act as practical vehicles for promoting cultural dialogue and policy refinement. This theoretical foundation provides a crucial comparative analytical framework for examining the role of social organisations within the Chinese context.

Domestic scholars have primarily focused on specific entities such as social organisations, examining their role and contributions in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation. Sun Yufei (2023), using the Central University for Nationalities as a case study, conducted an in-depth examination of the role and practices of student societies in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation. Findings indicate that student societies at the university align with institutional strategic planning by organising on-campus physical activities, innovative online initiatives, and collaborative events both within and beyond the campus. These efforts facilitate exchanges among faculty and students of diverse ethnic backgrounds, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging to the Chinese nation to a certain extent. However, certain challenges persist, including unclear positioning among some societies, room for improvement in activity quality, insufficient support for development, and narrow developmental perspectives. The author proposes leveraging the unique strengths of student societies to encourage active student participation in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation. Specific recommendations include strengthening self-positioning and proactive awareness, diversifying activity formats, enhancing activity quality, increasing institutional support, and refining collaborative mechanisms[3]. Wu Yuegang and Yang Shiyao (2024) analysed the enabling role of student societies in fostering a shared sense of community for the Chinese nation within ethnic-minority universities. They contend that student societies serve as vital channels for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, key pathways for promoting students' socialisation and civic engagement, and dynamic spaces for cultivating core socialist values and constructing a shared spiritual home for the Chinese nation. Student societies in ethnic-minority universities play an irreplaceable role in permeating the shared spiritual home of the Chinese nation, consolidating the "Four Confidences," and enhancing the "Five Identities" value consensus. They facilitate ethnic youth in addressing contemporary and societal challenges through intellectual, emotional, and practical engagement [4]. Chang Jinfeng and Li Xintian (2024) examined the challenges faced by social organisations in ethnic regions in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation, analysing their practices, constraints, and pathways.They noted that while these organisations actively explore practices across economic, cultural, social, and ecological dimensions, they face persistent challenges including inadequate statutory provisions, fundraising difficulties, and low public recognition. Recommendations include maintaining Party leadership, aligning with ethnic policies, incorporating the consciousness into organisational charters, enhancing members' professional capabilities, fostering endogenous development momentum in ethnic regions, and leveraging economic growth to advance ethnic unity[5].

Domestic scholarship on fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation exhibits characteristics of integrating theoretical research with practical exploration, and unifying macro perspectives with micro-level empirical studies. However, research on the role of social organisations in fostering this sense at the micro-practical level remains insufficient, and the specific operational mechanisms through which particular social organisations contribute to this endeavour have not been fully explored. Taking the Guangxi Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association as a case study, this paper examines the practical experiences, challenges, and optimisation pathways of social organisations in ethnic regions when forging a sense of community for the Chinese nation.

2. Development Status and Practical Experience of the Guangxi Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association

2.1. Current State of Organisational Development

Since its pioneering establishment in Pingnan County on 31 May 2024, the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association has achieved leapfrog development within a mere year. By August 2025, it had successfully established an organisational network covering all counties and districts across the city, attracting over 300 elite members from more than 20 sectors including cultural tourism, youth volunteering, and commercial services. This organisational framework adopts a governance model of "Party committee leadership, government responsibility, social collaboration, and public participation". Under the joint guidance of the United Front Work Department, the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, and the Civil Affairs Bureau, it has formed a complete corporate governance structure. Each association elects its council and supervisory board democratically, establishing specialised working committees for cultural exchange, economic services, and public welfare. This has created a multi-tiered, broad-spectrum, and multidimensional organisational framework. This unique "business association + ethnic unity" model preserves the resource advantages of business associations while highlighting the social function of ethnic unity. It organically integrates economic capital with social capital, injecting new vitality into ethnic work in the new era.

2.2. Practical Experience

2.2.1. Cultivating Cultural Identity: Building a Shared Spiritual Home

The association effectively leverages its role as a cultural bridge, employing traditional festive celebrations and systematic educational campaigns to efficiently foster cultural exchange and spiritual resonance among ethnic groups. Regarding traditional festivals, associations capitalise on key

occasions such as the March Third Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Double Ninth Festival to regularly organise ethnic cultural events. During the 15th Guigang Lotus Culture Festival, the association orchestrated nearly 30 distinctive cultural activities. These seamlessly integrated ethnic song and dance performances, traditional handicraft exhibitions, and ethnic culinary tastings, presenting a vibrant ethnic cultural extravaganza. These activities not only showcase the distinctive charm of diverse ethnic cultures but, more significantly, establish platforms for interaction among all ethnic groups. Through shared participation, they foster cultural recognition and emotional bonds. In the realm of publicity and education, the association leverages systematic working mechanisms to consolidate shared ideological understanding.

2.2.2. Economic Empowerment: Consolidating Material Foundations

The Association employs a dual-pronged approach of industrial development and public welfare assistance to establish a robust material foundation for fostering a shared sense of community among all Chinese ethnic groups. Regarding industrial advancement, it fully leverages the strengths of its member enterprises to inject powerful momentum into the economic development of ethnic regions. For instance, Guangxi Xinlianxin Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., a member enterprise of Guiping City Association, invested 22 billion yuan to establish a new materials industrial park. Its operational 300,000-tonne compound fertiliser project employs over 70% local staff. Upon full completion of the large-scale chemical project, it is projected to create over 1,500 job opportunities. This "industry-led employment" model enables people of all ethnicities to share in the fruits of modernisation during this phase of shared development. In terms of public welfare and relief assistance, various associations have actively raised funds to implement a series of public welfare projects that benefit people's livelihoods and warm hearts. The total funds raised by these associations have exceeded 6 million yuan, supporting over 2,000 students from ethnic minorities facing hardship. Tong'an Orthopaedic Hospital in Pingnan County collaborates with the associations on specialised medical assistance, allocating 500,000 yuan for healthcare support to disadvantaged individuals across ethnic groups. During traditional festivals, the associations organise filial piety activities honouring the elderly, visiting and offering condolences to over 500 disadvantaged individuals from various ethnic groups. These public welfare initiatives not only address practical difficulties faced by the populace but also sow the seeds of mutual support and solidarity among ethnic groups.

2.2.3. Social Synergy: Fostering an Interwoven Social Environment

Leveraging innovative community governance models and conflict resolution mechanisms, the association has advanced deep integration among ethnic groups in social life. Regarding community governance, it actively pioneers "interwoven" community development. Guantianxia Residential Area in Gangbei District, a multi-ethnic community, has established service platforms including the "Party Member Vanguard" volunteer service team, the "Five Elders" workshop, a dispute mediation room, and a consultative council under the association's guidance. It has innovatively promoted a three-tier democratic management model linking Party members to grid units, grid units to building managers, and building managers to property owners. This governance model has tangibly fostered mutual understanding and acceptance among residents of all ethnicities, cultivating a community environment characterised by shared living, learning, co-construction, resource sharing, collaborative work, and collective celebration. In mitigating conflicts, the association has served as a distinct "social lubricant". Hecheng Community has established a comprehensive ethnic affairs service system through its "Four Networks" (Organisational Network, Care Network, Service Network, Management Network) and the "Eight-in-One" Working Committee. This system has proven remarkably effective in addressing practical difficulties faced by residents of all ethnicities and resolving grassroots conflicts. Eight Shared Initiatives" working committee, thereby constructing a comprehensive ethnic affairs service system. This framework has demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in addressing the practical difficulties faced by residents of all ethnicities and resolving grassroots conflicts.

3. The Practical Challenges Faced by the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association in Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

(1)Challenges to Resource Sustainability

The Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association faces severe sustainability challenges in resource provision.This predicament manifests primarily across three dimensions: singular funding sources, deficiencies in the policy support framework, and limited self-development capacity. Regarding funding sources, the Association over-relies on phased contributions from chambers of commerce and enterprises, lacking stable and diversified funding channels. Although over 6 million yuan has been successfully raised to date, the majority of these funds originate from donations by a small number of member enterprises. The continuity and stability of subsequent funding remain highly uncertain. This singular funding model exposes the association to significant risks when planning long-term projects and hinders its ability to undertake systematic work requiring sustained investment. Initiatives such as the development of "mutually embedded" communities, which necessitate long-term commitment, are frequently interrupted or scaled back due to unstable funding. Regarding policy support, the government's procurement mechanism for services remains underdeveloped. Currently, there exists no dedicated procurement catalogue specifically for social organisations participating in ethnic unity initiatives, nor stable fiscal support channels. Whilst local governments theoretically endorse such involvement, practical implementation lacks clear regulations concerning the scope, standards, and procedures for service procurement. This systemic inadequacy hinders associations' access to sustained government funding, leaving them reliant on ad hoc project subsidies and event funding. This severely constrains long-term organisational planning. Existing fiscal incentives prove ineffective in stimulating broader societal engagement in ethnic unity advancement.

Associations themselves exhibit severely inadequate self-sustaining capabilities, primarily relying on external resource inflows without establishing a virtuous cycle of income generation through market-oriented channels such as service fees or social enterprise operations. Given the strong public good attributes of their service content, it proves difficult to

charge service recipients directly. The association lacks specialised personnel and relevant experience in operating social enterprises, hindering its ability to secure sustainable income through market-oriented operations. This resource dependency not only compromises organisational independence but also constrains the enhancement of service capabilities and the expansion of service coverage. How to maintain its public welfare attributes while exploring a sustainable development pathway has become a major challenge for the association.

(2)Insufficient Professional Service Capabilities

The Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association exhibits pronounced shortcomings in its professional service capabilities, manifesting primarily across three dimensions: problematic talent structure, inadequate specialisation in service methodologies, and limited service coverage. Regarding talent development, the association critically lacks composite professionals proficient in both ethnic theory and policy, alongside expertise in project management, social work, and resource linkage. Among current operational staff, those with specialised ethnic affairs backgrounds constitute less than 30%. Most personnel transitioned from commercial sectors or hold part-time positions. This staffing structure results in pronounced deficiencies in theoretical grounding and professional competence, rendering staff ill-equipped for complex ethnic service delivery. Particularly in highly specialised domains such as ethnic policy interpretation and cultural dissemination, they frequently demonstrate inadequate capability.

Regarding service delivery methods and approaches, the association lacks systematic, professional service tools and methodological guidance. Current activities predominantly remain superficial, such as song and dance performances or festival celebrations, lacking specialised interventions to foster deeper psychological identification. When implementing ethnic unity education initiatives, emphasis often falls on organising cultural events, yet there is no systematic cognitive guidance or emotional cultivation programme. In ethnic relations mediation, traditional interpersonal communication methods predominate, yet professional conflict resolution techniques and tools are absent. This deficiency in specialised approaches hinders efforts to address deep-seated psychological identification and value construction, thereby undermining the practical effectiveness of the work.

The association's service coverage exhibits pronounced geographical imbalance. Current activities and services predominantly concentrate in county-level urban centres, with severely inadequate coverage of remote villages and dispersed ethnic minority communities. Over 80% of association activities occur in county towns and surrounding townships, while less than 20% extend to remote villages. This uneven service coverage leaves many dispersed ethnic minority communities unable to access effective support, creating distinct service gaps. Key contributing factors include poor transport links in remote areas, high service delivery costs, and inadequate grassroots networks. Overcoming geographical constraints to establish a comprehensive service network covering every corner of the region has become the critical focal point for enhancing the association's service effectiveness.

(3)Absence of an Effectiveness Evaluation System

The Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association suffers from systemic deficiencies in performance evaluation. This manifests primarily across three dimensions: incomplete evaluation metrics, inappropriate assessment methodologies, and insufficient utilisation of evaluation outcomes. Regarding the evaluation framework, no systematic or quantitative assessment tools or methods currently exist. Evaluations of the association's work rely predominantly on qualitative descriptions and showcase of exemplary cases, making it difficult to accurately reflect the actual effectiveness of its operations. This deficiency is particularly pronounced when assessing profound objectives such as fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation. There are no operational evaluation dimensions or specific indicators for this purpose. Regarding the effectiveness of promoting ethnic interaction, exchange, and integration, current assessments rely solely on superficial metrics like the number of activities or participants, failing to evaluate deeper impacts such as enhancing mutual understanding, building trust, and fostering shared identity. Methodologically, existing evaluations reveal significant shortcomings. Assessments predominantly employ subjective approaches such as work summaries and discussion forums, lacking scientific data collection and analysis tools. Furthermore, evaluations are often conducted internally as self-assessments, with insufficient independent assessments carried out by third-party professional institutions. This unscientific approach renders evaluation outcomes largely superficial, failing to authentically reflect actual achievements and challenges. Particularly when measuring deeper impacts such as shifts in beneficiaries' perceptions, emotional endorsement, and behavioural change, professional evaluation tools and methodologies are essential. For the practical effectiveness of ethnic unity and progress education, scientific methods like pre- and post-tests alongside follow-up surveys are imperative to achieve accurate assessment.

Concurrently, the application of evaluation outcomes remains severely disconnected from organisational learning and continuous improvement. The absence of reliable assessment data hinders associations in implementing targeted work enhancements, preventing the establishment of a virtuous cycle of "practice-evaluation-optimisation". Furthermore, the lack of evaluation results dampens the enthusiasm of external supporters: government departments struggle to make precise resource allocation decisions without accurate knowledge of programme effectiveness; donors, unable to ascertain the actual impact of their contributions, become reluctant to provide further support. This situation not only impedes the effective allocation of resources but also hinders the organisation's professional growth and service capacity enhancement. Establishing a scientific and rational evaluation system has thus become an urgent imperative for advancing the association's professional development.

(4)Inadequate Collaborative Mechanisms

The Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association exhibits significant deficiencies in its collaborative framework, manifesting across three dimensions: insufficient internal coordination, inefficient external collaboration, and absent grassroots coordination mechanisms. Regarding internal coordination, despite integrating resources from multiple business associations, member units primarily collaborate at the project level. There remains a lack of a deeply integrated resource-sharing platform and a regularised coordination model. Business associations retain considerable autonomy, encountering numerous obstacles in resource sharing, information exchange, and operational coordination. During large-scale ethnic unity initiatives,

issues such as redundant resource allocation, delayed information transmission, and inconsistent action sequences frequently arise, undermining overall effectiveness. This state of apparent aggregation yet actual fragmentation hinders the Association's capacity to fully leverage resource integration. Regarding external coordination, associations exhibit insufficiently close cooperation with other societal entities such as government departments and mass organisations. This manifests specifically as follows: collaboration with ethnic affairs departments largely relies on personal connections rather than institutional arrangements, lacking stable communication channels and cooperative mechanisms; cooperation with functional departments like education, human resources and social security, and culture and tourism lacks systematicity, often remaining confined to ad-hoc coordination for temporary matters; Lack of coordination with mass organisations such as trade unions, the Communist Youth League, and the Women's Federation prevents the formation of effective synergies. This absence of external cooperation mechanisms frequently leaves the association operating in isolation when advancing initiatives, hindering its ability to leverage broader societal resources to enhance effectiveness.

Regarding grassroots collaboration, the association's responsibilities and authority boundaries remain unclear when interacting with community residents' committees, property management companies, and homeowners' committees. Collaborative mechanisms remain underdeveloped. During specific initiatives like "mutually embedded" community development, operational efficiency is frequently compromised by ambiguous responsibilities and poor coordination. During the establishment and operation of community ethnic affairs stations, unclear delineation of authority between the association and neighbourhood committees regarding venue usage, staffing, and event organisation has hindered progress. Furthermore, grassroots communities lack systematic coordination mechanisms for tasks such as ethnic relations mediation and services for ethnic minority residents. These deficiencies in collaborative frameworks directly undermine the practical outcomes of the association's service delivery, hindering the effective realisation of its service efficacy.

4. Optimised Pathways for the Guangxi Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association in Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

(1) Establishing a Diversified Resource Support System

Facing the challenge of securing long-term, sustainable resources, the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association urgently requires the establishment of a resource support model combining "diversified funding + public welfare operations + policy safeguards". To build this system, efforts must advance simultaneously in three areas: innovation in fundraising mechanisms, strengthening policy support, and integrating social resources. Regarding fundraising mechanism innovation, the Association should deeply explore integrated development pathways combining public welfare with market operations. While upholding its public welfare nature, it could launch low-cost service projects with ethnic characteristics. Drawing inspiration from the "Pomegranate Flower Charity Canteen" model, it could offer free services to severely disadvantaged groups while implementing tiered pricing for other groups based on actual circumstances. Leveraging existing industrial resources within various trade associations, the organisation can foster the growth of ethnic-themed social enterprises. This includes developing market-oriented products such as ethnic cultural and creative items and distinctive ethnic foods. For instance, Pingnan County Cultural Tourism Association could create tourism souvenirs incorporating ethnic unity elements, while the Milk Tea Association could develop a series of beverages with ethnic characteristics. Profits generated through market-oriented operations would then be reinvested into public welfare activities, establishing a virtuous cycle of self-sustaining development.

Regarding policy support, associations should proactively engage with departments such as Ethnic and Religious Affairs and Civil Affairs to optimise government service procurement mechanisms. It is recommended that proven initiatives like "ethnic unity progress publicity and education" and " Ethnic Relations Mediation" into the local government's advisory catalogue for service procurement, thereby securing stable fiscal backing. It is further recommended that the government establish an incentive scheme where subsidies are replaced by rewards, offering tax breaks or financial incentives to member enterprises demonstrating outstanding performance in driving economic growth and creating employment opportunities in ethnic regions. For enterprises like Guiping City's Heart-to-Heart Company, which generate substantial local employment, tiered subsidies based on the number of new jobs created could be implemented to achieve a positive incentive effect.

Regarding social resource integration, the association should establish a multi-tiered resource integration platform. Leveraging existing funds, it could create a special fund for ethnic unity development to encourage sustained donations from enterprises and local dignitaries. Building upon existing platforms like the "Employment Station" and " Hecheng Station" to establish a precise "resource-demand" matching system. This would gather key employment and training needs from all ethnic groups and precisely align them with member resources to enhance utilisation efficiency. Additionally, project collaborations and resource-matching conferences could facilitate effective connections between corporate/foundation resources and organisational needs, forming a sustainable resource supply network.

(2) Strengthening Professional Talent Development

The Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association's current shortfall in professional service capabilities should be addressed through systematic talent development. This necessitates establishing a three-pronged capacity-building framework of "systematic training + professional recruitment + tool development", elevating professional standards across three dimensions: talent cultivation, intellectual reinforcement, and tool innovation.

Regarding talent cultivation, strategic partnerships with renowned universities are recommended to establish training bases for ethnic unity personnel. Specialised curricula covering ethnic policy theory, project management, and social work methodologies should be developed. Training should adopt a dual-track model combining theoretical instruction with practical guidance, including regular exchanges for key personnel to advanced regions. Particular emphasis should be placed on expanding service coverage in remote areas. This can be achieved through establishing mobile service stations and cultivating local ethnic affairs specialists to address

service gaps. Drawing on Guigang City's experience of integrating the concept of strengthening the Chinese national community consciousness into its cadre education system, the association could implement centralised rotational training for its staff. This would primarily enhance their theoretical understanding of ethnic affairs and their practical operational capabilities.

Regarding intellectual support, a multi-tiered professional advisory network should be established. Experts in ethnic studies, social work and related fields should be invited to form a consultative panel, providing specialised guidance for project design and impact assessment. Following Guigang City's approach of convening thematic seminars, experts could be invited to discuss ethnic work practices, thereby providing theoretical underpinnings for the association's development. Collaborate with professional social work institutions through joint project initiatives, applying social work methodologies to elevate service standards. During the establishment of "mutually embedded" communities, employ specialised approaches such as community work and group work to accelerate the social and psychological integration of all ethnic groups.

Regarding tool innovation, focus on developing standardised service toolkits to provide frontline staff with practical guidance. Drawing on the association's accumulated experience, create tools such as the Ethnic Unity and Progress Activity Guidance Manual and the Ethnic Relations Mediation Workflow. This ensures services operate within established frameworks. Innovative approaches should be taken to develop cultural identity assessment tools, such as designing a grassroots-oriented Chinese National Community Consciousness Assessment Scale. By employing pre- and post-test comparisons, the actual effectiveness of cultural activities can be precisely measured. The development and application of these tools will effectively enhance the standardisation and professional calibre of services, preventing activities from becoming mere formalities devoid of substance.

(3) Establishing a Scientific Evaluation Mechanism for OutcomesAddressing

deficiencies in the evaluation framework, the Guigang Ethnic Unity and Progress Association should construct a multidimensional assessment system encompassing "process + outcome + impact." This system requires implementation across three dimensions: establishing evaluation indicators, reforming evaluation mechanisms, and implementing dynamic monitoring. This ensures the scientific rigour, systematic approach, and practical effectiveness of the evaluation process. Regarding indicator construction, a multi-dimensional framework encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions should be developed. The cognitive dimension may be assessed through knowledge tests and thematic competitions to gauge the public's understanding of the Chinese national community concept. The emotional dimension could be measured via satisfaction surveys and in-depth interviews to evaluate ethnic groups' identification with and sense of belonging to Chinese culture. The behavioural dimension may be assessed through indicators such as participation levels in activities and community volunteer engagement rates, evaluating the internalisation of the concept. A dual-track evaluation mechanism for economic development and social integration should be established, assessing both the economic benefits of projects in creating employment channels and increasing income, and the social benefits in enhancing ethnic interaction, exchange, and integration, thereby forming a comprehensive evaluation framework.

Regarding innovation in evaluation mechanisms, it is necessary to establish a third-party evaluation system and a mechanism for applying evaluation results. It is recommended that third-party professional institutions, such as universities and research institutes, be invited to conduct periodic independent evaluations of association projects to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of assessment outcomes. Evaluation results should be linked to resource allocation mechanisms, such as government procurement of services and project funding, thereby creating a positive incentive structure where "high-quality services receive greater resources." An evaluation feedback mechanism should be established to promptly relay assessment findings to project implementation teams, assisting them in consolidating best practices and identifying shortcomings to continuously refine operational measures and enhance service quality.Regarding dynamic monitoring, digital tools should be leveraged to establish long-term tracking systems. Utilising existing digital platforms such as the "Smart Rural" cloud platform enables real-time monitoring of project implementation progress. A mechanism for long-term follow-up with project beneficiaries should be instituted, employing periodic visits and questionnaires to assess the sustained impact of projects in fostering ethnic unity and deepening national identity. This integrated approach of dynamic monitoring and long-term tracking enables comprehensive control over project outcomes, providing scientific evidence for continuous improvement.

(4)Enhancing Collaborative Network Development

Addressing deficiencies in the collaborative mechanisms of Guigang's Ethnic Unity and Progress Association requires establishing a multi-tiered collaborative network characterised by "Party and government leadership + social collaboration + grassroots implementation." This network's construction must be systematically advanced across three dimensions: refining departmental coordination mechanisms, building collaborative platforms for social forces, and innovating grassroots collaboration models. Regarding the refinement of departmental collaboration mechanisms, a multi-tiered organisational coordination network should be established. This includes implementing a joint conference system for ethnic affairs led by the United Front Work Department and the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Department, scheduling regular coordination meetings between the Association and departments such as Education, Human Resources and Social Security, and Culture and Tourism to eliminate information silos. A "Guidance Document on Work Coordination Between the Ethnic Unity and Progress Association and Government Departments" should be developed. precisely delineating responsibilities in policy dissemination, service delivery, and conflict resolution to foster a framework of clear accountability and orderly coordination. Drawing on Guigang City's "Red Grid Governance Project" experience, we should mobilise property managers, "Red Family" members, social workers, and other stakeholders to participate in grid-based management, establishing a comprehensive collaborative governance network.

Regarding the construction of a collaborative platform for social forces, a multi-tiered social coordination system should be established to integrate resources from various business

associations and social organisations. The formation of an "Ethnic Unity Alliance" would enable mutual resource utilisation and coordinated action. The association has already consolidated over 20 business association members; building upon this foundation, the alliance's scale can be further expanded to enhance collaborative momentum. An information-sharing platform should be established to construct a database for ethnic unity advancement work. This facilitates experience exchange among social organisations and optimises resource allocation. Cross-regional exchange activities must also be promoted to synthesise the replicable and scalable elements of the "Guigang Model." Methods such as experience-sharing forums and field visits should be employed to foster mutual learning and benchmarking among social organisations across different regions.

Within the realm of grassroots collaborative model innovation, we must earnestly advance embedded community governance innovations. Building upon pilot achievements in multi-ethnic residential communities, we shall further implement the three-tier democratic management model: "Party members linked to grid units, grid units linked to building managers, and building managers linked to property owners." This will develop new formats for grassroots deliberation and consultation, and popularise the "Jiangnan Night Talks" collaborative governance model. By organising democratic deliberation sessions during the "hour after dinner", solutions to pressing community concerns and difficult issues can be jointly discussed. These innovations in grassroots cooperation embed ethnic unity work deeply within community governance, fostering mutual understanding and trust among residents through shared participation in community management, ultimately achieving profound societal integration.

5. Conclusion

The practice of the "Association for Ethnic Unity and Progress" in Guigang City, Guangxi, demonstrates that social organisations, through their unique capacity for resource integration, social mobilisation and service penetration, can become indispensable and dynamic forces in the frontline work of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. The challenges they face are developmental issues that require resolution through deepening understanding of the status and role of social organisations, coupled with systematic institutional design and capacity building. Moving forward, efforts should focus on further invigorating social organisations to establish a new framework for advancing ethnic unity and progress through coordinated efforts by government, market, and society. This will provide a more robust social foundation for forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation.

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