

Research on the Development Strategy of Rural Sports Events Supporting Public Sports Services in Sichuan Province under the Background of National Fitness

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Abstract: The in-depth promotion of the national fitness strategy and the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy provide important opportunities for empowering public sports services for rural sports events. This article takes Sichuan Province as the research object, using literature research, field research, and case analysis methods to systematically sort out the current development status of rural sports events and public sports services in Sichuan Province, analyze the internal mechanism of rural sports events supporting the development of public sports services, and diagnose the practical obstacles in the process of their collaborative promotion. Research has found that rural sports events can improve the quality and efficiency of rural public sports services through four mechanisms: resource integration, demand activation, capacity cultivation, and brand radiation. However, Sichuan Province is currently facing serious problems such as homogenization of events, insufficient connection between events and services, lack of collaboration among multiple entities, and incomplete institutional guarantee system. Based on this, development strategies are proposed from four dimensions: creating a distinctive event system, strengthening the precise connection between events and services, constructing a diversified collaborative governance pattern, and improving the policy element guarantee system. The research results not only provide targeted solutions to solve the problem of imbalanced supply and demand of rural public sports services in Sichuan Province, but also provide theoretical references and practical paradigms for exploring the implementation path of the national fitness strategy in rural areas of multi-ethnic provinces in western China.

Keywords: National Fitness; Rural sports events; Public sports services

1. Introduction

The in-depth promotion of the national strategy for national fitness and the comprehensive implementation of the rural revitalization strategy provide core guidance for the balanced construction of China's urban and rural public sports service system. Rural sports events, as a key link between national fitness practice and rural public sports service supply, gradually highlight their empowering value. As a multi-ethnic and diverse agricultural province in the western region, Sichuan Province has the characteristics of vast rural areas and abundant folk sports resources, as well as the reality of uneven allocation of public sports service resources between urban and rural areas and insufficient supply efficiency of rural sports services. The development of rural sports in Sichuan Province faces both typical challenges and unique advantages of differentiated development.

In recent years, Sichuan Province has actively responded to the call for national fitness by holding diverse sports events such as mountain hiking, folk wrestling, and rural marathons in rural areas. Preliminary results have been achieved in activating the rural sports atmosphere and improving local sports facilities. However, there are still problems such as insufficient coordination, lack of long-term effectiveness, and limited universality in the connection between event hosting and public sports service supply. The current academic research on rural sports events and public sports services mainly focuses on exploring macro mechanisms, and there is a relative lack of research on differentiated strategies based on the regional characteristics of western provinces.

Based on this, this study is based on the actual development of rural sports in Sichuan Province, analyzing the internal logic of rural sports events supporting public sports services, diagnosing existing obstacles, and proposing adaptive development strategies, in order to provide theoretical references and practical paradigms for filling the gaps in Sichuan's rural public sports services and promoting the implementation of the national health strategy in rural areas.

2. Related concepts and theoretical basis

The development of this study requires a clear definition of core concepts and solid theoretical support. By clarifying the connotation and extension of key concepts and sorting out the applicable theoretical system, it lays a solid theoretical foundation for the subsequent analysis of the linkage logic between rural sports events and public sports services, and proposes targeted development strategies.

2.1 Definition of core concepts

In the context of the new era, national fitness has broken through the traditional single category of "mass sports exercise", and its connotation has been extended to meet the diverse sports needs of the people as the core, with the goal of building a higher-level public service system for national fitness, realizing systematic sports practice activities that enable the sharing of sports resources, the promotion of sports rights, and the coverage of sports health for all; Its extension covers multiple dimensions such as mass sports event organization, sports facility supply, sports guidance services, and sports culture dissemination. From the perspective of rural sports development, the national fitness strategy proposes three core requirements for rural areas: first, equalization of sports service supply, that is, narrowing the gap in the allocation of sports resources between urban and rural areas; The second is the universalization of sports participation, which guarantees the rights of rural residents of different ages and groups to participate in sports; The third is the localization of sports development, which combines rural regional characteristics and cultural traditions to innovate sports practice forms.

The rural sports events referred to in this study are sports competitions that rely on the natural ecological resources and folk cultural resources of rural areas, are held within the rural area, with rural residents as the core participants, and have competitive, leisure, and cultural characteristics[1]. According to the types of events, they can be divided into three categories: one is traditional folk events, such as the putting competition of the Qiang ethnic group in Sichuan and the wrestling competition of the Yi ethnic group, which carry ethnic culture and rural memories; The second type is outdoor leisure events, such as mountain cross-country, rural marathons, and rural fishing, which rely on the natural endowments of rural mountains, rivers, forests, and fields; The third is mass competitive events, such as rural basketball leagues, table tennis matches, etc., to meet the basic competitive sports needs of rural residents. In terms of scale, it covers provincial-level demonstration events, city and county characteristic events, township popularization events, and village level neighborhood events; From the perspective of participating entities, it includes diverse groups such as local residents in rural areas, fitness enthusiasts in surrounding cities, professional athletes, and foreign tourists.

Public sports services are a general term for public goods and services provided by the government and social forces to meet the basic sports needs of the general public [2]. Its core elements include sports facilities, sports organization services, sports guidance and training, sports events and activities, and sports health monitoring. In rural settings, public sports services exhibit characteristics such as dispersed service recipients, localized service demands, and limited service supply. The evaluation criteria need to take into account the completeness of facilities on the "supply side", service coverage, and the satisfaction and convenience of the masses on the "demand side". It should not only meet the basic fitness needs of rural residents, but also adapt to the complex demands of rural industrial development and cultural inheritance.

2.2 Theoretical basis

The theory of equalization of public services emphasizes that all members of society, regardless of geographical, identity, or income differences, can fairly enjoy basic public services of roughly equivalent levels. Its core essence is to narrow the urban-rural, regional, and group gaps in public services [3]. This theory provides a core basis for analyzing the development difficulties of rural public sports services in Sichuan Province. Currently, there are problems such as uneven facility configuration and imbalanced service efficiency in urban and rural public sports services in Sichuan. Rural sports events can serve as

an important lever to promote the equalization of public sports services. Through the resource sinking, facility sharing, and service extension leveraged by events, the shortcomings of rural public sports services can be gradually filled, and the balanced allocation of urban and rural sports service resources can be achieved.

The governance theory advocates breaking the management mode of a single subject and building a public affairs governance system with the collaborative participation of multiple subjects such as government, market, and social organizations, emphasizing the division of rights and responsibilities and positive interaction among various subjects. In the field of rural sports event operation and public sports service supply, this theory can guide the construction of a collaborative governance pattern of "government coordination, market operation, social participation, and village autonomy": the government bears the responsibility of policy guidance and supervision, market entities play the advantages of resource integration and professional operation, and social organizations and village autonomy organizations are responsible for demand matching and service implementation, thereby improving the efficiency and adaptability of event and service supply.

The theory of sustainable development requires that economic and social development should take into account the needs of contemporary people and the development rights of future generations, and achieve the unity of economic, social, and ecological benefits. Applying this theory to this study means that the strategy for rural sports events to assist public sports services needs to follow three principles: firstly, ecological sustainability. The hosting of events should protect the natural ecology of rural areas and avoid damage to the rural environment caused by venue construction; Secondly, social sustainability requires that events and services align with rural cultural traditions, driving the cultivation of rural sports talents and cultural inheritance; The third is economic sustainability. Through the linkage between sports events and rural industries, a long-term closed loop of "event feedback service and service promotion industry" is formed to ensure the continuous supply of public sports services.

The theory of sports industry integration points out that the sports industry can achieve element integration and business innovation with related industries such as culture and tourism, agriculture, and health and wellness, generating a "1+1>2" integration benefit. This theory provides a path support for empowering public sports services with rural sports events, that is, by promoting the deep integration of rural sports events with rural cultural and tourism industries and characteristic agriculture, creating integrated formats such as "sports+cultural and tourism" and "sports+agriculture", while improving the economic benefits of the events, the industry benefits will be fed back to the upgrading of rural public sports facilities and service optimization, achieving the transformation of event benefits into public sports service efficiency.

3. Development status of rural sports events and public sports services in Sichuan Province

Since the implementation of the national strategy for national fitness in Sichuan Province, the province's sports industry has shown an overall trend of coordinated promotion between urban and rural areas. Rural sports events and public sports service construction have achieved phased results, but there are still significant urban-rural development differences due to regional conditions, resource endowments, and other factors. This chapter starts from the overall pattern of the national fitness industry in the province, systematically sorts out the development status of rural sports events and public sports services, and provides practical basis for subsequent mechanism analysis and strategy proposal.

3.1 Overall situation of the development of national fitness in Sichuan Province

In recent years, guided by policies such as the "National Fitness Regulations" and the "Healthy Sichuan 2030" planning outline, Sichuan Province has continuously increased investment in the national fitness industry and built a five level national fitness work system of "province city county township village". According to the "Blue Book on the Development of National Fitness" released by the Sichuan Provincial Sports Bureau, as of the end of 2024, the proportion of people in the province who regularly participate in physical exercise has reached 38.2%, an increase of 4.5 percentage points from 2020; The per capita sports venue area has reached 2.6 square meters, exceeding the phased target of the national "14th Five Year Plan".

From the perspective of urban-rural development pattern, the national fitness industry in the province presents the characteristics of "leading in urban areas and catching up in rural areas". The specific data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Overall situation of the development of the national fitness industry

Indicator	Urban area	Rural areas	urban-rural gap
Proportion of population who exercise regularly	45.7%	31.2%	14.5 %
Per capita sports venue area	3.2 square meters	1.8 square meters	1.4 square meters
Coverage rate of social sports instructors	2.8 per thousand people	1.2 per thousand people	1.6 people

3.2 Development status of rural sports events in Sichuan Province

Sichuan Province, relying on multi-ethnic culture and diverse geographical resources, has formed a rural sports event system of "folk customs+outdoor activities+competition". According to statistics, in 2024, more than 1200 rural sports events of various levels and types will be held in the province, covering 183 agricultural counties (cities, districts) with over 5 million participants. From the perspective of event types, folk and traditional events account for 27%, represented by Qiang putting, Yi Torch Festival wrestling, horse racing, etc., which have both sports competition and cultural heritage attributes; Outdoor leisure events account for 45% of the total, including mountain cross-country races along the Sichuan Highway, rural marathons in southern Sichuan, and rural fishing competitions in western Sichuan, fully revitalizing natural ecological resources in rural areas; Mass competitive events account for 28%, with grassroots leagues such as "Village BA" and "Village Super League" being the main types, making it the most popular type of event for rural residents to participate in.

In terms of organizational entities, rural sports events in Sichuan Province present a pattern of "government led and social coordinated". 62% of the events are hosted by city and county sports departments, 25% are jointly organized by township governments and village collectives, and 13% are operated by social enterprises and sports associations in a market-oriented manner. In terms of funding sources, government financial subsidies account for 58%, social sponsorship and event ticket revenue account for 32%, and village collective self-financing accounts for 10%. The funding structure is still mainly based on public finance, and the market-oriented fundraising ability needs to be improved.

Among the participants in rural sports events, local villagers account for 65%, and their main motivations for participation are "leisure and entertainment" and "neighborhood socialization"; 30% of urban fitness enthusiasts and tourists mainly participate in high-end outdoor leisure events; Professional athletes account for 5%, mostly invited as special guests for provincial demonstration events, playing a role in professional guidance and event promotion.

3.3 Development status of rural public sports services in Sichuan Province

In terms of facility supply, by the end of 2024, rural areas in Sichuan Province have achieved full coverage of administrative village sports facilities, with basic facilities such as basketball courts and table tennis tables covering 98.7%. However, the coverage rate of high-quality facilities such as multi-purpose sports fields and outdoor fitness trails is only 32.1%, and more than 80% of the facilities are concentrated in township government offices. The quality of facilities in remote villages is relatively low. In terms of service supply, about 8000 sports guidance and training activities are carried out annually in rural areas of the province, but the services are mostly focused on basic fitness skills teaching, with less than 15% of specialized services for the elderly and special groups; The coverage rate of sports social organizations in rural areas is only 21%, and the capacity of grassroots sports service organizations is weak.

To accurately assess the supply-demand adaptability of rural public sports services, this study conducted a questionnaire survey on 5000 rural residents in 21 cities and prefectures in Sichuan Province using stratified sampling method. A total of 4827 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective response rate of 96.54%. The research results show that the demand for public sports services among rural residents presents the characteristics of "facility demand first, prominent event demand, and urgent guidance demand". The distribution of core demand and corresponding supply situation are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Development status of rural public sports services in Sichuan Province

Service type	Proportion of demand from villagers	Current supply coverage rate	Supply and demand gap	Description of supply characteristics
Improve fitness facilities	68%	98.7% (infrastructure) 32.1% (high-quality facilities)	Significant gap in high-quality facilities	The infrastructure has achieved full coverage, but there is a shortage of high-quality facilities such as multifunctional sports fields and outdoor fitness trails, which are concentrated in township residences
Carry out characteristic events	57%	41%	Regional supply inequality	The competitions are mostly concentrated in villages with convenient transportation, with less coverage in remote mountainous areas, and the proportion of folk and health themed events is relatively low
Strengthen professional guidance	42%	29%	Dual gap between professional talents and specialized services	Basic fitness guidance can meet the needs, but the proportion of specialized services such as youth sports training and elderly health guidance is less than 15%
Youth sports training	37%	12%	Serious gap	There are almost no regular youth sports training services at the grassroots level below the county level, and they rely more on school sports resources to supplement
Elderly health and sports services	31%	8%	Extreme gap	The supply of rehabilitation sports and fitness guidance services for the elderly is seriously insufficient, with a facility aging adaptation rate of only 19%

4. Mechanisms and existing problems of rural sports events supporting the development of public sports services in Sichuan Province

4.1 Internal mechanism of rural sports events supporting the development of public sports services in Sichuan Province

The hosting of rural sports events can form a strong resource aggregation effect, laying a solid hardware and financial foundation for the supply of public sports services. On the one hand, the demand for venue renovation during the event preparation stage will drive the government and social capital to upgrade existing sports facilities in rural areas, while also giving rise to a group of composite venues that combine event hosting and daily fitness functions.

For example, some areas in Sichuan Province have transformed field roads into fitness trails to host rural marathon events. After the event, the trails have become the core venue for villagers' daily walking, achieving the transformation and reuse of event facilities into public sports service facilities. On the other hand, the diversified funds absorbed by the operation of sports events, such as financial funds and social sponsorships, can not only ensure the operation of sports events, but also be proportionally allocated to the special fund for rural public sports services for the maintenance of grassroots sports facilities and service procurement, forming a resource loop of "event fundraising facility quality service optimization", effectively alleviating the shortage of funds for rural public sports services.

Rural sports events are a key carrier for understanding the sports needs of villagers and driving the optimization of public sports service supply. During the event, the participation and feedback of villagers of different ages and groups can provide precise demand orientation for the supply of public sports services. For example, in some Yi ethnic settlements in Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, after hosting folk wrestling events, the demand of villagers for youth wrestling training and elderly health and sports guidance became concentrated. The local sports department immediately added relevant services to achieve precise matching between service supply and villagers' needs. At the same time, the strong sports atmosphere created by the event can activate the sports participation awareness of rural residents, shifting them from "passive service acceptance" to "active demand service". This shift in demand side will promote the public sports service supply system to shift from a "top-down" one-way delivery to a "top-down linkage" two-way interactive mode, greatly improving the adaptability and inclusiveness of services.

The full process operation of rural sports events is a practical classroom for cultivating rural sports talents and strengthening grassroots sports service organizational capabilities. In the preparation, organization, and execution of sports events, local volunteers, village officials, and sports enthusiasts in rural areas can accumulate practical experience in event planning, personnel organization, safety assurance, and gradually grow into the backbone of grassroots public sports services. According to research data from the Sichuan Provincial Sports Bureau, from 2022 to 2024, there will be over 3000 local social sports instructors trained through rural sports events in the province, with more than 60% of them participating in public sports services in their villages for a long time. In addition, the organization of sports events can also promote the formation and improvement of social organizations such as rural sports associations and fitness clubs. These organizations can undertake public sports service functions such as regular sports activity organization and facility management after the event, making up for the shortage of sports service personnel in grassroots governments, and building a capacity improvement chain of "event training talents, talent strengthening organizations, and organizational excellent services".

The brand effect formed by characteristic rural sports events can expand the influence and radiation range of rural public sports services. The event IPs created in some areas of Sichuan Province based on regional characteristics, such as the "Southern Sichuan Rural Marathon" and the "Western Sichuan Folk Sports and Culture Festival", not only attract people from surrounding cities to participate, but also enhance the popularity of rural sports, thereby promoting the development of public sports services towards cross regional coordination. For example, after building a brand for rural mountain off-road events, a certain county collaborated with three surrounding counties and districts to jointly build a cross regional outdoor fitness trail network, achieving cross regional sharing of sports facilities and expanding the radiation radius of public sports services from individual villages to county-level linkage circles. At the same time, the integration of event brands and rural cultural and tourism brands can also attract social capital to pay attention to the rural sports field, introduce market-oriented service entities for public sports services, and enrich service supply models.

4.2 Existing problems of rural sports events supporting the development of public sports services in Sichuan Province

Firstly, the phenomenon of homogenization in sports events is prominent. There is a problem of "emphasizing form over characteristics" in rural sports events in some areas of Sichuan Province. Most regions simply copy the "village BA" and "village super" models, failing to combine local ethnic culture and natural endowments to create differentiated events. For example, there is insufficient excavation of folk culture in multi-ethnic settlements in western Sichuan, and insufficient revitalization of rural resources in hilly areas in eastern Sichuan, resulting in limited attractiveness and sustainability of events, making it difficult to form a stable resource aggregation and demand activation effect. Secondly, the long-term operational capability of the event is lacking. Out of 13% of market-oriented events in the province, only 21% achieved profitability, with most events relying on short-term government funding support and lacking commercial development and brand operation capabilities; Moreover, the funding allocation mechanism for sports events and public sports services is not clear, and some event funds have not been returned to the services according to the plan, resulting in insufficient release of the service empowerment value of the events. In addition, there is a shortage of professional talents in the event industry, and grassroots event organizers are mostly temporary personnel, lacking professional ability in event planning and service linkage, which restricts the quality of event empowerment services.

On the one hand, there is a lack of connection mechanism between sports events and public sports services. At present, rural sports events in Sichuan Province are mostly staged activities, lacking systematic connection with normalized public sports services, and there is a phenomenon of "excellent

service during the event and interrupted service after the event". For example, in some regions, sports guidance services temporarily added during events are terminated immediately after the end of the event and have not been converted into regular services; Due to the lack of long-term management and maintenance mechanisms, the facilities renovated for the competition have also experienced problems of "post-match idleness" or "damage and disrepair". On the other hand, the accessibility of services needs to be improved. The public sports services empowered by sports events are mostly concentrated in township stations and event hosting villages. The coverage of remote villages and special groups (such as left behind elderly and disabled people) is insufficient. According to research, the proportion of special services for special groups in rural event supporting services in the province is less than 8%, and the sharing rate of facilities in remote villages is only 17%, which has failed to effectively promote the equalization of public sports services.

From the perspective of subject collaboration, the current rural sports events and public sports services in Sichuan Province are still dominated by the government alone, with insufficient participation from the market and social entities. Market entities are mostly limited to event sponsorship and have not deeply participated in event operation and service supply; The participation of rural autonomous organizations and sports clubs is mostly auxiliary work, lacking the discourse power of service decision-making and resource allocation, leading to the governance dilemma of "government taking over and weak social participation". From the perspective of regional coordination, there is insufficient linkage between events and services in different cities, counties, and districts within the province, and a cross regional resource sharing and service coordination system has not been formed. For example, the event resources and facility resources in the mountainous areas of northern Sichuan and the plain areas of southern Sichuan are not complementary, which restricts the scale and quality improvement of public sports services.

Firstly, there is a lack of specialized policies and standards. Sichuan Province has not yet introduced a special policy to empower public sports services with rural sports events. There are no clear regulations on the proportion of event funds to support services, the division of responsibilities for long-term facility management, and the evaluation standards for service quality. This has led to a lack of unified guidance in practice in various regions, resulting in resource waste and service deficiencies in some areas. Secondly, the security and regulatory mechanisms are weak. During the event, there were inadequate safety measures in some remote areas, and the quality supervision system for public sports services after the event was not established, resulting in a lack of quantitative assessment of service effectiveness; At the same time, the coordination mechanism between event hosting and rural ecological protection is insufficient, and some outdoor events have caused damage to the natural environment of rural areas, affecting the sustainable development of sports services and rural ecology.

5. Conclusion

This study takes the national fitness strategy as the macro background, focusing on the coordinated development of rural sports events and public sports services in Sichuan Province. Through theoretical analysis, current situation assessment, mechanism analysis, and problem diagnosis, the study systematically explores the internal logic and practical path of rural sports events empowering public sports services, and forms the following core conclusions.

Research has confirmed that rural sports events can provide key support for improving the quality and efficiency of rural public sports services in Sichuan Province through four mechanisms: resource integration, demand activation, capacity cultivation, and brand radiation. They can not only promote the upgrading of sports facilities and resource sinking, but also activate the sports needs of villagers and cultivate grassroots service talents. However, the current coordinated development of the two still faces practical obstacles such as homogenization of events, weak service connection, insufficient coordination of entities, and lack of institutional guarantees. Moreover, due to differences in regional resource endowments, the development pain points in southern Sichuan, western Sichuan, northern Sichuan and other regions show significant differentiation characteristics.

The strategies proposed based on this include the construction of a distinctive event system, precise connection between events and services, the establishment of a diversified collaborative governance pattern, and the improvement of policy element guarantees. These strategies provide targeted solutions to solve the problem of supply-demand imbalance in rural public sports services in Sichuan Province, and also provide a practical paradigm for exploring the implementation path of the national fitness strategy in rural areas of multi-ethnic provinces in western China.

This study has limitations such as limited sample survey coverage and insufficient quantitative evaluation of the benefits of event empowerment services. In the future, a benefit evaluation index system for empowering public sports services with events can be further constructed, and research on cross regional collaborative development models can be deepened. At the same time, digital technology can be combined to explore the integration path of intelligent events and services, promoting higher quality and sustainable development of rural sports.

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