

Original Paper

Research on the Mechanism Innovation of Lawyers’ Participation in Grassroots Social Governance in Ganzi Prefecture

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Received: August 15, 2025 Accepted: September 1, 2025 Online Published: September 11, 2025
doi:10.22158/elsr.v6n3p159 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/elsr.v6n3p159>

Abstract

The participation of lawyers in grassroots social governance in ethnic minority areas can effectively enhance the effectiveness of grassroots governance and promote social harmony and stability in these areas. Based on exploring the particularities of grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture and the necessity of lawyers’ participation in it, this article examines the current situation and deficiencies of lawyers’ participation in grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture, and proposes innovative mechanisms for lawyers’ participation in grassroots social governance from the aspects of institutional guarantees, service models, talent cultivation, and evaluation and supervision. It aims to provide theoretical references for improving the grassroots social governance system in ethnic minority areas.

Keywords

Lawyer, Ganzi Prefecture, grassroots social governance

Ganzi Prefecture is located in the plateau area in the western part of Sichuan Province, boasts a complex geographical environment, unique ethnic culture, and diverse social structure. With the rapid economic and social development, grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture faces numerous challenges, such as the collision between traditional customs and modern rule of law, diverse and complex contradictions and disputes, and insufficient public service supply. As professionals in the legal field, lawyers possess unique advantages in participating in grassroots social governance. This article aims to explore how to fully leverage the role of lawyers in grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture

through mechanism innovation, providing new ideas for the modernization of social governance in ethnic minority areas.

1. Analysis of the Particularities of Grassroots Social Governance in Ganzi Prefecture

The grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture possesses distinct ethnic and regional characteristics. From the perspective of geographical environment, the terrain is complex, transportation is inconvenient, and population is scattered. These special geographical conditions lead to high costs and difficulties in social governance, making it difficult to achieve balanced coverage of public services. In terms of ethnic composition, the ethnic minority population accounts for 78.97% of the total population. Multiple ethnic groups including the Han, Yi, Qiang and Hui live together, forming a social pattern featuring the exchange and integration of diverse cultures.

In terms of cultural tradition, Ganzi Prefecture is deeply influenced by Buddhism, where religious norms, ethnic customs, and traditional morality play a significant role in social governance. Many conflicts and disputes are often resolved through mediation by religious figures or in accordance with traditional customs, which poses a certain tension with the modern legal system. At the same time, with the acceleration of modernization, the values of local residents are gradually changing, and the collision between tradition and modernity is becoming increasingly evident.

From the perspective of social structure, Ganzi Prefecture is undergoing a transformation from a traditional agricultural and pastoral society to a modern society. On the one hand, the urbanization process is accelerating, and a large number of farmers and herdsmen have begun to enter cities for employment and living, which has also brought new social governance issues. On the other hand, the phenomenon of rural and pastoral areas becoming empty is severe, and the number of left-behind elderly, children, and other vulnerable groups has increased. This change in social structure has made grassroots social governance face unprecedented complexity.

2. The Necessity of Lawyers' Participation in Grassroots Social Governance in Ganzi Prefecture

2.1 The Practical Need to Resolve Complex Conflicts and Disputes

Conflicts and disputes in Ganzi Prefecture often involve sensitive factors such as ethnicity and religion. If not handled properly, they can easily lead to secondary issues or escalate conflicts. Lawyers, with their professional legal knowledge and extensive practical experience, can objectively and impartially analyze problems and propose practical solutions in accordance with the law, thus avoiding the intensification and escalation of conflicts. Especially in common issues such as disputes over grasslands, disputes over the harvesting of caterpillar fungus, and marital and family conflicts, the intervention of lawyers can not only maximize the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of the parties involved and standardize the resolution of conflicts and disputes, but also maintain grassroots social stability in ethnic areas and promote economic and social development in ethnic areas.

2.2 Urgent Demand to Address the Shortage of Public Legal Service Resources

From the perspective of the actual situation of public legal service supply, the participation of lawyers helps to compensate for the shortage of legal service resources in ethnic minority areas. Due to factors such as geographical environment and economic development, Ganzi Prefecture has long faced issues such as a limited number of legal service institutions, a shortage of legal professionals, and limited channels for the public to obtain legal assistance. In the face of the growing demand for legal services from the public, fully leveraging the advantages of the vast professional community of lawyers, through forms such as roving consultations, village-based services, and remote assistance, can not only meet the legal service needs of the people in Ganzi Prefecture, but also extend legal service resources to the grassroots level, alleviate the imbalance and insufficiency in the supply of public legal services, and promote the equalization of public legal services.

2.3 Core Needs for Promoting the Process of Rule of Law in Ethnic Minority Areas

As legal professionals, lawyers play an irreplaceable and important role in advancing the process of legalization in ethnic minority areas. By providing legal services, conducting legal publicity, participating in dispute mediation, and other means, lawyers can enhance the public's awareness of the rule of law, help the public establish the concept of "acting according to the law and seeking legal advice when encountering problems," and promote positive interaction between the modern legal system and ethnic customs. Especially in Ganzi Prefecture, the participation of lawyers helps bridge the gap between national laws and local customs, thus achieving the organic unity of legal effects and social effects.

3. Current Situation and Problems of Lawyers' Participation in Grassroots Social Governance in Ganzi Prefecture

3.1 Overview of the Lawyer Team in Ganzi Prefecture

As of now, Ganzi Prefecture boasts a total of 35 law firms and 206 practicing lawyers. This includes 100 full-time and part-time lawyers, 79 public lawyers, 4 corporate lawyers, and 23 legal aid lawyers. In terms of gender, there are 97 female lawyers and 109 male lawyers. Regarding ethnicity, 95 lawyers belong to ethnic minorities. In terms of educational background, 8 lawyers hold bachelor's degrees or below, 179 have bachelor's degrees, and 19 have master's degrees or above. Over 96.1% of the lawyers have bachelor's degrees or above. In terms of distribution, lawyers are primarily concentrated in economically developed central counties such as Kangding and Luding, while other counties face a relative scarcity of legal resources (Note). In terms of professional structure, lawyers in traditional fields such as civil and criminal law account for a significant proportion. There is a shortage of composite legal talents who are familiar with local ethnic languages, proficient in ethnic affairs, and possess grassroots social governance experience. Furthermore, the lawyer team exhibits high mobility. Due to factors such as the plateau environment, working conditions, and career development opportunities, the number of lawyers who can stay rooted at the grassroots level is limited, making it difficult to form a stable and sustainable service force.

3.2 The Current Situation of Lawyers' Participation in Grassroots Social Governance in Ganzi Prefecture

3.2.1 Social Entities Purchasing Legal Services and Legal Aid

The engagement of lawyers by governments, enterprises, institutions, social organizations, and individuals when needed, or the provision of legal aid to vulnerable groups based on assignment, remains one of the most primary and widespread ways for lawyers to participate in grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture. While meeting the personalized needs of clients and safeguarding their legitimate rights and interests, lawyers have also promoted the formation of a local atmosphere where people respect, study, abide by, and utilize the law, laying a solid foundation for the construction of a law-based Ganzi, a law-based Sichuan, and a law-based country.

3.2.2 Participate in Legislative and Policy Consultation

Some lawyers also serve as NPC representatives, CPPCC members, or legal experts. Leveraging their solid professional knowledge and rich practical experience, they continuously promote the improvement of the social governance system in ethnic minority areas by participating in top-level design and legislative consultation, fulfilling their supervisory duties, and serving as a bridge and link.

3.2.3 Integrate into the Diversified Mediation System

Ganzi Prefecture has established 3,307 people's mediation organizations of various types and at various levels, and has improved the linkage working system of people's mediation, administrative mediation, and judicial mediation, striving to resolve conflicts and disputes at their source. This inevitably involves the participation of numerous lawyers. As one of the important forces in various mediation organizations, the participation of lawyers will effectively resolve common issues such as grassland disputes, labor contracts, marriage and family issues, facilitate reconciliation among disputing parties, save litigation costs and judicial resources, and maintain harmony and stability in ethnic minority areas.

3.2.4 Actively Carry out Public Legal Services

In recent years, the legal profession in Ganzi Prefecture has always adhered to the principle of "being a good lawyer that satisfies the party and the people". Under the leadership of the Ganzi Prefecture Justice Bureau, it has actively carried out various public legal services, including serving key projects, delivering legal knowledge to enterprises; nourishing people's hearts with legal education, delivering legal knowledge to temples; lawyers who are party members visiting villages, helping to revitalize and strengthen party building; providing warmth to children's hearts and legal protection, delivering legal knowledge to schools, etc. Especially during the "9.5" Luding earthquake rescue and post-disaster reconstruction, lawyers who are party members in Ganzi Prefecture fully demonstrated their exemplary role as pioneers, organizing service teams to rush to the front line. They not only participated in emergency work such as road clearance, material handling, and stability maintenance at resettlement sites, but also innovatively established comprehensive legal service stations, providing legal services to the people in the disaster area through methods such as "fixed-point service + mobile service + household propaganda + on-site mediation". At the same time, through conducting legal training, delivering legal

knowledge to enterprises, delivering legal knowledge to construction sites, and legal health checks, they actively served enterprise development, assisting in post-disaster reconstruction and industrial development. The post-earthquake public legal service practices of the legal profession in Ganzi Prefecture were selected as one of the top ten typical cases of public legal services in the provincial legal profession, fully demonstrating the responsibility and professional value of the lawyer team in grassroots governance in Ganzi Prefecture.

3.3 Inadequacy of Lawyers' Participation in Grassroots Social Governance in Ganzi Prefecture

3.3.1 The Participation of Lawyers is Insufficient

As mentioned above, there are only 100 social lawyers in Ganzi Prefecture, accounting for less than 50%, and the number of lawyers per 10,000 people is only 1.86, which is still far behind the 4.93 lawyers per 10,000 people in Sichuan Province. Moreover, due to the vast territory and sparse population of Ganzi Prefecture, as well as inconvenient transportation, the participation frequency, intervention frequency, and coverage of lawyers in matters such as legal publicity, grassroots dispute mediation, and public welfare legal services are severely restricted. Especially since most lawyers are mainly concentrated in the prefectural capital Kangding and a few county towns, there is a serious shortage of legal services in the vast rural and pastoral areas. After a conflict or dispute occurs, it is difficult for the masses to find a lawyer to intervene in a timely manner. The insufficient participation of lawyers not only restricts the in-depth advancement of local rule of law construction but also significantly hinders the effectiveness of grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture.

3.3.2 The Forms of Lawyer Participation Are Limited

In Ganzi Prefecture, lawyers' participation in grassroots social governance is primarily characterized by "passive response", mainly through accepting clients' entrustment to represent them in litigation, accepting assignment to represent clients in legal aid cases, and carrying out various public legal services under the leadership of the Party Committee of the Ganzi Prefecture Justice Bureau. However, they are less involved in more proactive and forward-looking governance links. At the same time, the forms of service are relatively single, relying mostly on traditional service methods, failing to fully integrate ethnic languages and cultural customs familiar to local people to innovate legal popularization carriers and service methods, and also failing to form a three-dimensional service network of "offline stationing + online extension" to address the issues of uneven coverage of legal resources and limited participation of lawyers.

3.3.3 Service Adaptability Needs Improvement

Influenced by factors such as geographical environment, historical customs, religious culture, etc., some local residents prefer to resolve disputes through traditional methods and have low trust in legal professionals such as lawyers. Meanwhile, the vast majority of lawyers don't understand the local language and lack in-depth knowledge of the ethnic customs, religious culture and so on in Ganzi Prefecture. When handling conflicts and disputes, they fail to "adapt to local conditions" and "vary with

individuals”, prescribe the right remedy, and ignore ethnic sentiments, community consensus, etc., which further exacerbates resistance from the masses.

4. Innovative Paths for Lawyers’ Participation in Grassroots Social Governance Mechanisms in Ganzi Prefecture

4.1 Strengthen the Cultivation of Legal Talents

The scarcity of lawyers in Ganzi Prefecture is one of the primary reasons for the insufficient participation of lawyers in local grassroots social governance. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of legal talents, especially lawyers who are proficient in both the local language and Chinese languages and familiar with local ethnic customs, religious culture, and other aspects. At the same time, it is important to enhance exchanges and cooperation with counterpart assistance regions, fully leverage the professional strength of the legal industry in these regions, and assist in grassroots social governance in ethnic minority areas of Ganzi. Furthermore, based on the actual situation in Ganzi Prefecture, the continuing education system for the legal industry should be improved, and lawyers should be regularly organized to learn about ethnic policies, folk culture, mediation skills, and other related topics.

4.2 Innovating Service Supply Mode Mechanism

Firstly, we have implemented a tiered and categorized service model that can be tailored to the different situations in urban areas and agricultural and pastoral areas. In agricultural and pastoral areas, we adopt a combination of “mobile services + fixed-point stationing” to proactively deliver legal services to the doorstep, ensuring full coverage of basic legal services. Secondly, we have promoted the allocation of lawyer resources to the grassroots level. By implementing the “one village (community) one legal advisor” system, conducting regular legal health checks, and establishing specialized legal service teams, we actively engage with grassroots social governance to meet the diverse needs of the people. Thirdly, we have fully utilized modern technology to build platforms for bilingual legal intelligent consultation, remote case handling, and early warning and monitoring of conflicts and disputes, breaking through the constraints of time, space, and geography, making legal services readily available.

4.3 Establish a Lawyer Service Supply Guarantee System

First, establish a stable financial guarantee mechanism. Fully incorporate lawyer services into the government procurement service catalogue to provide basic financial support for lawyers to participate in grassroots social governance. Second, improve the incentive compensation mechanism. For public welfare matters such as rural services participated by lawyers, reasonable compensation can be provided through diversified methods such as special subsidies, performance incentives, and tax relief, to enhance the initiative, enthusiasm, and sustainability of lawyers’ participation. Third, construct a scientific evaluation and supervision mechanism. Introduce third-party evaluation institutions, use service efficiency, quality, and public satisfaction as important indicators, conduct evaluations and assessments of lawyers’ services in grassroots social governance, and utilize the results. Recognize and reward those with excellent evaluations, and implement warnings, rectifications, and even withdrawals for those with

unqualified evaluations. Improve the supervision mechanism, promote the disclosure of service information, accept public appraisal and feedback, and comprehensively enhance the transparency, standardization, and credibility of lawyer services, forming a virtuous development pattern of “survival of the fittest and continuous optimization”.

5. Conclusion

The participation of lawyers in grassroots social governance in Ganzi Prefecture is of great significance for promoting the modernization of the governance system and governance capacity in ethnic minority areas. Through mechanism innovation, the professional advantages of lawyers can be fully utilized to enhance the level of legalization and professionalization of grassroots governance. In the future, it is necessary to further strengthen institutional design, resource investment, and cultural integration to establish a long-term mechanism for lawyers’ participation that is in line with the characteristics of ethnic minority areas. At the same time, local cultural traditions should be respected, and modern rule of law should be organically unified with ethnic customs, providing legal guarantees for social stability and long-term peace and order in ethnic minority areas.

Project

This article is the final outcome of the Sichuan Minzu College’s school-level scientific research project, “Research on the Practical Issues of the Lawyer System in Ethnic Minority Areas —— Taking Ganzi Prefecture as an Example” (Project No.: XYZB18030SB).

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Note

The data is sourced from the judicial department of Ganzi Prefecture, with the statistical deadline being August 15, 2025.