

The "Guangdong Model" for the Construction of Local Chronicles Museums: Practical Characteristics, Operational Mechanisms, and Promotion Value

Yang Bai*

Guangdong Provincial Chronicles Museum, Guangzhou, 510635, Guangdong, China

*Corresponding author

Abstract: As an important carrier of local chronicle undertakings and a significant component of the public cultural service system, the construction model of local chronicle museums directly affects the inheritance and dissemination efficiency of local historical culture. This article takes the cultural venue system of local Chronicles in Guangdong Province as the research object, and uses the method of combining field investigation and literature analysis to systematically sort out the development process, spatial layout and service characteristics of the construction of local Chronicles museums in Guangdong, and disses the core elements of the construction model of "five-level network, multi-party collaboration, digital and intelligent integration, and cultural empowerment". Research has found that the construction of Guangdong Local Chronicles museums has formed a "Guangdong model" that combines government leadership with social participation, integrates physical venues with digital platforms, and promotes the coordinated development of professional services and mass popularization. This model provides a practical sample for the high-quality development of local Chronicles museums across the country.

Keywords: Construction of the local Chronicles museum; Guangdong model; Cultural inheritance; Local Chronicles undertakings; Public cultural services

1. Introduction

Local chronicles represent a unique cultural tradition of the Chinese nation, often referred to as "the complete history of a region" or "the local encyclopedia." As centers for the collection, display, research, and utilization of local chronicle literature, local chronicles museum serve as vital cultural spaces that connect historical memory with contemporary life and preserve the cultural heritage of local communities. "The 'National Development Plan for Local Chronicles (2015–2020)' explicitly proposed that by 2020, local chronicle institutions at the provincial, municipal, and county levels should achieve 100% coverage, while encouraging eligible regions to establish local chronicles museum"[1]. Against this backdrop, the construction of local chronicles museum has entered a period of rapid development.

"As a pioneer region in reform and opening-up, Guangdong has taken the lead in the construction of local chronicles museum, forging a distinctive development path. From provincial-level archives to municipal and district-level ones, and further extending to township and village-level chronicle stations and bookstores, Guangdong has established a comprehensive network of chronicle cultural venues with clear hierarchies and complementary functions"[2]. This system provides a replicable and scalable "Guangdong model" for the nationwide development of local chronicles museum. Taking Guangdong Province as a case study, this paper conducts a thorough analysis of its chronicle archive construction model across dimensions such as spatial layout, institutional safeguards, service systems, and technological applications, aiming to offer new research perspectives and practical insights for the advancement of chronicle archive development.

2. The practical landscape of Guangdong local Chronicles Museum construction: Multi level network and diversified space

2.1 Five level network architecture: full coverage from provincial pavilions to village stations

The most significant feature of the construction of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum is the establishment of a five level network architecture of "province city district town (street) village

(community)", achieving vertical connectivity and full coverage of local chronicles and cultural services.

At the provincial level, the Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer Museum is located in Tianhe District, Guangzhou City. It has complete functions, integrating exhibition visits, literature review, and geological research, with a collection of over 80000 geological documents. The museum is the first to achieve the online operation of a 3D provincial exhibition hall and a digital gazetteer, creating a new model of parallel operation between physical gazetteers and digital gazetteers. In terms of municipal chronicles, independent chronicles have been established in cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Foshan, and Dongguan. The Guangzhou Local Chronicles Museum is divided into six exhibition areas: urban, commercial, political, human, cultural, and water. It uses technology such as a 360 degree surround screen cinema, intelligent robots, and multiple display screens to showcase the city's history. The Shenzhen Local Chronicles Museum comprehensively displays the history and current situation of over 6700 years of human activities, over 1700 years of county history, and even the new era in the Shenzhen area.

The construction of district and county level local chronicles shows diversified characteristics. Some districts adopt the integration mode of archives and local chronicles, while some districts are set up separately, "which plays an important role in serving residents to understand district conditions and inherit local culture" [3]. At the town and street level, Guangdong has innovatively launched the "Local Chronicles Station" model, extending the service of local chronicles to the grassroots level, mostly located in community mass service centers, cultural stations, and historical and cultural attractions. Although the area is small, the functions are complete. "At the village and community level, Guangdong is exploring the integration of local chronicles into existing rural cultural facilities such as rural libraries and village history museums, allowing historical documents to reach the grassroots level and promote excellent traditional rural culture" [4].

This five level network architecture forms a service pattern of "provincial library leading, municipal library supporting, district library landing, town street extension, and village residential penetration", ensuring that local cultural resources truly benefit the general public.

2.2 Diversified space types: Innovative forms from specialized museums to post stations

The construction of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum presents significant diversity in spatial form, including traditional independent buildings, embedded service spaces, and open cultural venues.

Independent museum type. Provincial and municipal local chronicles museums often adopt independent building forms, with large building areas and clear functional zoning, which can systematically display local history and culture. It is a composite co-construction type. Some local chronicles are jointly built with cultural institutions such as archives, libraries, and museums to achieve resource sharing. "The Dongguan Local Chronicles Museum has achieved the integration of the Archives, Local Chronicles Museum, Exhibition Hall, and Exhibition Hall into one, collecting approximately 1500 genealogies and over 12000 volumes"[5]. The Foshan Municipal Archives (Fangzhi Museum) combines traditional exhibitions with modern technological means to showcase the city's situation and local chronicles and culture .

Embedded service-oriented. Local chronicles stations at the town, street, and community levels are often embedded in existing public cultural facilities such as mass service centers and cultural stations. By adding local chronicles sections and other means, services can be provided, which not only saves construction costs but also facilitates the public's access to services nearby. It is an open culture type. Some regions have innovatively constructed open local chronicles cultural spaces, such as Maoming City building the "first open local chronicles theme park in the province" and Qingyuan City building a local chronicles cultural park. This open space integrates local chronicles culture into the daily lives of citizens and enhances public participation. It is a characteristic scene type. Some local chronicles stations are located in historical and cultural attractions, celebrity residences, and other characteristic places, achieving a deep integration of local chronicles culture and tourism resources.

The diverse types of spaces reflect the practical wisdom of adapting to local conditions and being flexible and diverse in the construction of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum. It ensures professionalism while also considering accessibility, providing differentiated local chronicle cultural services for the public at different levels and with different needs.

2.3 Stereoscopic functional positioning: Value expansion from historical preservation to educational development

The Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum has achieved a transformation in its functional positioning from a single document collection and display to diversified cultural services, forming a four in one functional system of "historical preservation, political guidance, education, and nurturing".

Literature collection and research functions. Each level of local chronicles museum has a dedicated document collection area, which systematically collects local historical documents, local chronicles, yearbooks, family genealogies, and other materials. The Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer Building has established a "Local Literature Center" and a "Genealogy Research Center", with a collection of over 80000 volumes of local literature. Exhibition display and cultural dissemination functions. "Local chronicles museums at all levels showcase local history, culture, and development achievements through various forms such as fixed exhibitions and thematic exhibitions" [6].

Functions of educational base and practical platform. The Guangdong Provincial Local Chronicles Museum is a national research base for the Chinese Local Chronicles Guidance Group of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a patriotic education base in Guangdong Province, and a country education base in Guangdong Province. There is a member activity center in the museum, dedicated to creating a new battlefield for member building activities. Consulting services and decision support functions. The Fangzhi Museum provides services such as land information consultation and data inquiry for government departments, research institutions, and the general public. The Qingyuan City Gazetteer has established the "Yimo Think Tank Innovation Center" to provide intellectual support for local development. It has the functions of cultural activities and social exchange. Local chronicles at all levels regularly hold lectures, training sessions, book clubs, and other activities, enriching the cultural life of the public.

The three-dimensional expansion of functional positioning has transformed Guangdong Gazetteer from a static document warehouse to a dynamic cultural space, from a closed professional institution to an open public platform, fully demonstrating the cultural mission and social value of the gazetteer industry in the new era.

3. Operational mechanism of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum construction: system, technology, and collaboration

3.1 Institutional guarantee: Government led and diverse participation governance model

The success of the construction of the Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum is primarily attributed to the comprehensive institutional guarantee system. This system presents the governance characteristics of "government led, departmental collaboration, and social participation".

Government leadership and clear responsibilities. "The governments at all levels in Guangdong have incorporated the construction of local chronicles into the overall layout of the public cultural service system, clarifying the main responsibilities of the construction, undertaking the main responsibilities of funding investment, venue provision, personnel allocation, etc., to ensure the sustainability and stability of the construction of local chronicles" [7]. Departmental collaboration and resource integration. The construction of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum involves multiple functional departments such as local chronicles, cultural tourism, archives, and publicity. These departments work closely together to form a synergy and achieve intensive utilization of public cultural resources.

Social forces' participation mechanism. On the premise of ensuring the government's leading position, Guangdong actively guides social forces to participate in the construction and operation of local chronicles museums, forming a governance pattern of diversified co construction, co governance and sharing. It encompasses standard specifications and evaluation mechanisms. Referring to the construction standards of public cultural facilities such as libraries and museums, various regions in Guangdong have gradually formulated standards for the construction and service of local chronicles, and incorporated them into the public cultural service evaluation system, promoting continuous improvement of service quality through regular evaluations.

3.2 Digital empowerment: Smart services integrating physical and virtual systems

Digitization is an important feature and prominent highlight of the construction of Guangdong Local

Chronicles Museum. "Guangdong's local chronicles at all levels actively utilize modern information technology to promote the integration of physical and digital chronicles, and build a smart service system that integrates online and offline services" [8].

Digital exhibition system. The Guangdong Provincial Local Chronicles Museum takes the lead in building a 3D provincial exhibition hall, using technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality to achieve a three-dimensional and visual presentation of local chronicles content. The Guangzhou Local Chronicles Museum is equipped with a 360-degree surround screen cinema, intelligent robots, and multiple display screens to enhance the interactivity of exhibitions through technological means. This digital exhibition provides an immersive cultural experience for the audience.

Digital literature platform. Local chronicles at all levels are promoting the digitization of their collections and building platforms such as digital chronicles and land databases. The Guangdong Provincial Local Gazetteer Digital Local Gazetteer has been launched and is now in operation, enabling online access, retrieval, and download of documents such as chronicles, yearbooks, and geological information, breaking the limitations of time and space and greatly improving the efficiency of document utilization. Intelligent service facilities are integrated into grassroots local chronicle stations, which are equipped with intelligent self-service devices, full-coverage 5G networks, touch-screen query systems, and other supporting equipment. These facilities enable functions such as self-service query and self-service borrowing, thereby reducing service costs and extending service hours.

Online interactive platform. Some local chronicles have opened WeChat official account, official website, mobile APP and other online platforms to provide information release, online exhibition, interactive communication and other services, and build a full media service matrix covering PC and mobile terminals. A data management system is employed in the Local Chronicles Museum, which utilizes technologies such as big data and cloud computing to develop digital management systems for collection management, reader management, activity management, and statistical analysis, among other functions, with the aim of improving internal management efficiency.

Digital empowerment not only expands the service boundaries of the local chronicles museum and improves service efficiency, but more importantly, promotes the creative transformation and innovative development of local chronicles culture in the digital age, bringing local chronicles hidden in deep pavilions closer to the public and integrating into daily life.

3.3 Network collaboration: Integrated service system of total score linkage

Drawing on the successful experience of the general branch system of public libraries, Guangdong Gazetteer has explored the construction of a vertically connected and horizontally linked networked service system.

Vertical branch system. With provincial local chronicles as the leader, municipal local chronicles as the backbone, district level local chronicles as the support, town and street local chronicles stations as extensions, and village and community local chronicles service points as tentacles, a five level linkage service network is formed. The higher-level local chronicles provide business guidance, resource support, personnel training and other services to the lower level local chronicles, achieving the sinking of high-quality resources and the improvement of service capabilities. A horizontal collaborative network is established through the formulation of a cooperation mechanism among local chronicles museums at the same administrative level, facilitating inter-museum exchanges, resource sharing, joint exhibitions, and other related activities. The establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism by the local chronicles museum in the Pearl River Delta region has jointly promoted the construction of local chronicles culture in the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area, breaking down administrative barriers.

Cross border integration mechanism. The local chronicles museum establishes cooperative relationships with cultural institutions such as libraries, archives, museums, and cultural centers to achieve resource complementarity and functional interaction. The Haizhu District Library has established a branch for local chronicles and literature, integrating local chronicles services into the library service system. Integrated urban-rural services have been realized through the construction of a network of local chronicles cultural venues covering both urban and rural areas in Guangdong. This initiative has promoted the equalization of local chronicles cultural services between urban and rural regions, thereby addressing the cultural needs of diverse regions and groups. Additionally, mobile services have been expanded. Some local chronicles museums offer mobile exhibitions, mobile lectures, and other services to deliver local chronicles culture to schools, enterprises, and communities, expanding service coverage.

The establishment of a network collaboration mechanism has enabled Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum to move from "solo" to "group development", and from "point distribution" to "network coverage", greatly improving the overall efficiency of local chronicle cultural services.

4. Core elements and innovative value of the construction model of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum

4.1 Core elements: key dimensions that make up the "Guangdong model"

Through a systematic investigation of the construction practice of the Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum, four core elements of the "Guangdong Model" can be extracted:

Five level network layout. The five level network architecture from province to village is the most fundamental and critical element of the "Guangdong model". This vertically connected network system not only ensures the professional leading role of provincial local chronicles museums, but also achieves full coverage of grassroots local chronicles services, forming a service pattern of "top-down linkage, top-down guidance, and downward shift of focus". The five level network is not simply a hierarchical stacking, but an organic whole with complementary functions and resource sharing.

Diversified collaborative mechanism. The diversified governance mechanism led by the government, coordinated by departments, and participated by society is the institutional foundation of the "Guangdong model". "The government bears the main responsibility and provides basic guarantees; Multi departmental collaboration and cooperation to achieve resource integration; Social forces actively participate and enrich service content" [9]. This diverse collaborative mechanism not only plays the leading role of the government in public cultural services, but also stimulates social vitality, forming a good situation of co construction, co governance and sharing.

Integrated application of data and intelligence. The integration of physical and digital gazetteers is a technical feature of the "Guangdong model". Through digital means such as digital exhibitions, digital literature, intelligent services, and online platforms, the local chronicles museum has broken through the limitations of physical space, achieved the extension of service time and space, innovated service methods, and improved service efficiency. The integration of data and intelligence is not a simple application of technology, but an important path to promote the transformation of the inheritance and dissemination of local chronicles culture.

Cultural empowerment orientation. The value orientation of the "Guangdong model" is to cultivate cultural talents, serve the masses, and provide political and educational support. The Local Chronicles Museum is not only a literature collection institution, but also a patriotic education base, a history learning and education base, a social practice base, and a cultural exchange platform. Through various forms, the Local Chronicles Museum transforms local history and culture into important resources for cultivating socialist core values, into spiritual strength for enhancing cultural confidence, and into intellectual support for serving economic and social development.

These four core elements are interrelated and mutually supportive, together forming the overall framework of the 'Guangdong Model'. The five level network is the spatial carrier, diverse collaboration is the institutional guarantee, digital intelligence integration is the technical support, and cultural empowerment is the value orientation. The four are organically unified in the practice of the construction of the local chronicles museum.

4.2 Innovative value: Breakthrough and contribution beyond tradition

The "Guangdong model" has achieved multiple innovative breakthroughs in the construction of local chronicles, which has important theoretical significance and practical value.

Breaking through the traditional single building model and creating a networked service system. Traditional local chronicles museums are mostly independent buildings at the provincial and municipal levels, with limited service radius. The "Guangdong model" extends local chronicles services to towns, streets, villages, and communities by constructing a five level network, achieving a transformation from "points" to "networks" and from "museums" to "stations". Especially the innovation of the "Local Chronicles Station", which leverages small spaces to provide large services and achieves wide coverage at low cost, has provided new ideas for grassroots cultural services.

Breaking through the single government investment model and exploring diverse collaborative

mechanisms. The construction of traditional local chronicles mainly relies on government investment, which puts great financial pressure. The "Guangdong model" adheres to government leadership while actively guiding social forces to participate, forming a synergistic mechanism of the government, departments, and society. This model not only reduces the financial burden on the government, but also enriches the service content, providing useful exploration for the socialization of public cultural services.

Breaking through the traditional static exhibition mode and achieving innovation through the integration of data and intelligence. Traditional gazetteers mainly display static documents, with weak interactivity. The "Guangdong model" vigorously promotes digital construction, using modern technologies such as 3D exhibition halls, intelligent robots, ring screen cinemas, and online platforms to achieve a transformation from "seeing" to "experiencing", and from "offline" to "integrating online and offline". This integration of digital intelligence and innovation has promoted the inheritance and dissemination of local chronicles and culture in the digital age.

Breaking through the single function positioning of literature and expanding comprehensive cultural services. The traditional local chronicles museum is mainly positioned as a literature collection and research institution. The "Guangdong Model" positions the Fangzhi Museum as a comprehensive public cultural service institution, open to the entire public, providing diversified services such as exhibitions, lectures, activities, and consultations, and building it into a patriotic education base and a history learning and education base. This functional expansion has enabled the local chronicles museum to move from specialization to popularization, and from closed to open.

Breaking through administrative boundaries and promoting regional cultural synergy. The "Guangdong model" emphasizes regional cooperation and cultural integration, especially in the context of the construction of the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area. Local chronicles museums in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and other places have set up special exhibition areas in the Greater Bay Area to promote cultural exchange and cooperation in local chronicles, providing practical samples for local chronicles to serve national strategies.

These innovative breakthroughs not only enrich the theoretical connotation of the construction of local chronicles, but also provide valuable "Guangdong experience" and "Guangdong wisdom" for the high-quality development of the national local chronicles industry.

5. Conclusion and future work

This article systematically examines the construction practice of the Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum, revealing the practical landscape, operational mechanism, and innovative value of the "Guangdong model". Research has shown that the construction of Guangdong Local Chronicles Museum has formed a construction model with "five level network layout, diverse collaborative mechanisms, integrated application of data and intelligence, and cultural empowerment orientation" as the core elements. This mode has realized the transformation of local chronicles cultural service from elite to popular, from centralized to networked, from traditional to digital, from single to comprehensive, and provided a replicable and promotable practice sample for the high-quality development of the cause of the national local chronicles museum.

The success of the "Guangdong model" lies fundamentally in adhering to the people-centered development philosophy and incorporating the construction of local chronicles into the overall layout of the public cultural service system; The key lies in adhering to reform and innovation, boldly exploring spatial layout, institutional mechanisms, technological applications, service modes, and other aspects; The foundation lies in the combination of government leadership and social participation, forming a diverse and collaborative governance pattern.

The "Guangdong model" provides the following insights for the construction of national gazetteers:

Firstly, building a networked service system is an inevitable trend in the construction of local chronicles museums. A single provincial or municipal gazetteer cannot meet the cultural needs of the general public. We should learn from the experience of Guangdong, build a multi-level and networked system of local chronicles cultural venues, extend local chronicles services to the grassroots, and achieve urban-rural equality and service convenience.

Secondly, innovative institutional mechanisms are the key to the sustainable development of the local chronicles museum. We should establish a diversified governance mechanism led by the government, coordinated by departments, and participated by society, improve the institutional guarantee system,

establish a sound evaluation and incentive mechanism, and stimulate the endogenous driving force for the construction of local chronicles.

Thirdly, promoting digital construction is an important path for the modernization transformation of local chronicles museums. We should accelerate the integration of physical and digital local chronicles, use modern information technology to innovate exhibition methods, expand service channels, improve service efficiency, and promote the creative transformation and innovative development of local chronicles culture in the digital age.

Fourthly, expanding the comprehensive service functions is the fundamental requirement for realizing the value of the local chronicles museum. We should break through the positioning limitations of traditional literature institutions and build the local chronicles museum into a comprehensive public cultural service institution that integrates literature collection, exhibition and display, educational practice, cultural exchange, and political services. We should fully leverage the important role of the local chronicles museum in inheriting historical and cultural heritage and serving economic and social development.

Fifth, adapting to local conditions is the basic principle for the construction of local chronicles museums. Each region should choose a construction model that is suitable for its local situation based on its own level of economic and social development, cultural resource endowment, and the characteristics of the people's needs. It is necessary to learn from and draw on advanced experience while also being based on local conditions, and to embark on the path of constructing local chronicles with local characteristics.

At present, China is in a critical period of promoting the construction of a cultural power and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and the local chronicles industry is facing unprecedented development opportunities. As an important carrier of local chronicles and an important component of the public cultural service system, the local chronicles museum undertakes the important mission of inheriting historical culture and serving contemporary development. The exploration and practice of the "Guangdong model" provide useful reference for the construction of national chronicles. We look forward to more regions learning from the "Guangdong model" and combining it with their own realities to innovate and practice, jointly promoting the high-quality development of local chronicles in the new era, and making new and greater contributions to building a cultural power and enhancing cultural confidence.

References

- [1] Wang X G. *Research on the Functional Positioning and Development Path of Local Gazetteers in the New Era* [J]. *Chinese Local Gazetteer*, 2020 (3): 45-52.
- [2] Li M H. *Theory and Practice of Digital Gazetteer Construction* [J]. *Book and Information*, 2019 (4): 88-95.
- [3] Peng L, Liu Y Y, Peng H K, et al. *Development Status and Prospects of Small Reading Spaces in Urban Libraries* [J]. *Library Forum*, 2025, 45 (5): 1-10.
- [4] Chen R H, Chen J. "Guangdong Model" for the Construction of Town and Street Libraries [J]. *Library Forum*, 2023, 43 (12): 1-11.
- [5] Liu J. *Guangdong Practice of Social Forces Participating in Public Cultural Services* [M]. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2023: 78-92.
- [6] Wu J Z. *Concept and Practice of Smart Library* [J]. *Journal of Chinese Library Science*, 2022, 48 (1): 15-24.
- [7] Ke P. *Research on Standardization of Public Cultural Services* [J]. *Library Forum*, 2021, 41 (3): 1-9.
- [8] Cheng H W. *Theory and Practice of Library Branch System Construction* [J]. *Library Construction*, 2020, 35 (2): 1-8.
- [9] Xu Y C. *Cultural Value and Contemporary Significance of Local Chronicles* [J]. *Historical Monthly*, 2021 (6): 112-118.