

Content Interpretation and Characteristic Analysis of China's Local Legislation on Nationwide Reading: Postprint

Authors: Miao Meijuan

Date: 2023-04-01T16:16:04+00:00

Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study examines the content, characteristics, and existing problems of local legislation on nationwide reading in China, aiming to provide reference and guidance for reading legislation in other provinces and municipalities as well as national-level legislation. [Method/Process] Through comparative analysis, this paper conducts a comparative study on the main contents and characteristics of 14 local reading legislations promulgated in China. [Result/Conclusion] The content of China's local legislation on nationwide reading mainly includes legislative purposes, basic principles, nationwide reading resources, nationwide reading facilities, nationwide reading activities, promotion of reading among key groups, and guarantee mechanisms for nationwide reading. Characteristics manifested during the legislative process include transforming local practical experience into statutory content, the growing prominence of public libraries, seizing the development trend of digital reading, and emphasizing broad social participation and resource integration. Future efforts should accelerate the construction of a legal guarantee system for nationwide reading, promote the revision and improvement of nationwide reading legislation, enhance supporting measures to improve legislative operability, and intensify the publicity and advocacy of nationwide reading legislation.

Full Text

Content Interpretation and Characteristic Analysis of Local Legislation on National Reading in China

Miao Meijuan

Department of Information Management, Peking University, Beijing 100871

Abstract:

[Purpose/Significance] This study aims to understand the content, character-

istics, and existing problems of local legislation on national reading in China, providing reference for reading legislation in other provinces and cities as well as at the national level. [Method/Process] Through comparative analysis, this paper examines the main contents and characteristics of 14 local reading legislations promulgated in China. [Result/Conclusion] The contents of local legislation on national reading in China mainly include legislative purposes, basic principles, reading resources, reading facilities, reading activities, promotion for key groups, and guarantee mechanisms. Characteristics of the legislative process include elevating local practical experience into legal content, increasing prominence of public libraries, keeping pace with digital reading development trends, and emphasizing extensive social participation and resource integration. Future efforts should accelerate the construction of a legal guarantee system for national reading, promote the revision and improvement of national reading legislation, strengthen supporting designs to enhance operability, and intensify publicity and promotion of national reading legislation.

Keywords: national reading; reading legislation; local regulations; content analysis

Classification Number: G251

1 Formal Characteristics of Local National Reading Legislation

As of June 2020, 14 provinces and municipalities nationwide have issued local regulations and government rules on national reading, including 9 provincial-level legislations and 5 municipal-level legislations (see). In terms of legal effect, except for Hubei's text which belongs to government rules formulated by local governments, the rest are local regulations formulated by the standing committees of people's congresses at various levels. Regarding legislative style, Shenzhen, Jilin, Yantai, Guangdong, Guizhou, and Ningbo adopt a "general provisions-specific provisions-supplementary provisions" structure, while other texts adopt an enumerative style. In terms of regulation titles, all include the word "promotion," with varying terminology such as "regulation," "decision," and "measure," reflecting a promotional legislative orientation.

2 Content Analysis of Local National Reading Legislation

2.1 Legislative Purposes

Legislative purpose is the soul of a law, playing a guiding, orienting, and evaluating role in legislative activities [15]. The legislative purposes of national reading cover both citizen and societal dimensions. From the citizen perspective, the purpose focuses on safeguarding citizens' basic cultural rights or reading rights. By incorporating reading rights, as part of cultural rights, into legal provisions, the legislation clarifies that its aim is not to compel individual reading

content or behavior, but to regulate government responsibilities in promoting national reading to better protect citizens' basic reading rights. Additionally, most legislations aim to improve citizens' ideological and moral cultivation and scientific-cultural quality, cultivate voluntary reading habits, and enhance civilized qualities.

From the societal perspective, the purpose emphasizes promoting national reading. Meanwhile, advancing the construction of scholarly provinces/cities (such as Scholarly Liaoning, Scholarly Tianfu, Scholarly Suzhou, Scholarly Changzhou, and Scholarly Ningbo), building culturally strong provinces, cultivating and practicing core socialist values, and promoting social civilization progress constitute major legislative purposes. Other purposes scattered across various legislations include promoting learning-oriented society construction, improving national reading ability, enhancing urban comprehensive competitiveness, inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture, and stimulating participation vitality from all social sectors, demonstrating the important role of national reading in promoting urban development and cultural construction.

2.2 Basic Principles

The main principles emerging in the legislation include government leadership/guidance, social/national participation, and public welfare and universal benefit. Secondary principles include equality and convenience, serving the public, guaranteeing key groups, optimizing services, improving quality, resource sharing, departmental coordination, reaching grassroots levels, and cultural inheritance. Among these, government leadership clarifies the main responsibilities and obligations that governments and relevant departments should undertake in promoting national reading, including: implementing the “four incorporations”; establishing national reading work coordination mechanisms for overall guidance; formulating development plans and implementation schemes; improving infrastructure construction and public service systems; strengthening digital reading service platform construction; organizing diversified reading activities to create brands; purifying reading environments and recommending excellent publications; building reading promoter teams; guaranteeing basic reading needs of key groups and regions; establishing evaluation and supervision mechanisms; and implementing incentive systems. Regarding social participation, all legislations provide explicit and specific provisions on diverse subjects and forms of social participation, using legal means to integrate whole-society resources to jointly promote extensive and in-depth national reading development.

2.3 National Reading Resources

Stakeholders related to reading resources include local governments and relevant departments, publishing and distribution units, and national reading service venues represented by public libraries (see). Local governments and departments are mainly responsible for: supporting the creation of excellent publi-

cations and strengthening quality content supply; organizing and formulating recommended reading lists; promoting the integration and sharing of idle social resources; and ensuring and optimizing allocation of public reading resources for specific groups and regions. Publishing and distribution units are responsible for strengthening publication and distribution of various excellent publications and promoting integrated publishing development. Except for Jiangsu and Hubei which explicitly stipulate these as obligatory clauses, other provinces and cities adopt “encourage and support” clauses. Additionally, some provinces and cities have special provisions for publications targeting specific groups, works with regional characteristics, and digital reading resources. Jilin and Ningbo also stipulate deposit systems for publications.

National reading service venues represented by public libraries are mainly responsible for: collection, supplementation, and updating of resources; resource integration and sharing; providing reading resources for specific groups; and recommending excellent publications.

2.4 National Reading Facilities

Legislations require governments at all levels to incorporate national reading public facility construction into urban and rural construction planning, and to scientifically plan and rationally layout various types of urban-rural covering, practical, convenient, and efficient national reading service facilities according to population size, distribution, and service needs, thereby improving the national reading service system. Ningbo further proposes the concept of forming a convenient and accessible public reading service circle. Legislations involve national reading facilities including public welfare facilities, commercial facilities, and digital reading platforms.

2.4.1 Public Welfare National Reading Facilities The establishment and improvement of public welfare national reading facilities are basic conditions for governments to protect citizens’ basic reading rights and represent the concrete manifestation of the public welfare and universal benefit principle in national reading legislation. As the foundation of public welfare facilities, all legislations emphasize promoting the construction of various reading service venues with public libraries at the core, accelerating the development of grassroots facilities represented by comprehensive cultural service centers, rural book houses, community book houses, and workers’ book houses, improving urban-rural public reading service systems, and promoting balanced development of national reading. Simultaneously, they actively promote the provision of national reading facilities in public places such as airports and hospitals, the supporting construction of public reading facilities in residential communities, the development of new public reading spaces, and encourage social reading service venues to open to the public, reflecting a facility layout concept and construction pattern combining traditional and modern facilities, overall planning and embedded distribution (see).

2.4.2 Commercial National Reading Facilities Most legislations require governments at all levels and relevant departments to guarantee or accelerate the construction of publication distribution outlets and commercial reading facilities, and support the development of physical bookstores. Ningbo also explicitly stipulates that commercial complexes and characteristic towns should introduce physical bookstores in their supporting construction, and relevant government-established venues and units should utilize their facilities and conditions to introduce physical bookstores or open public reading service spaces. Additionally, Jilin and Yantai encourage and support social forces to build publication distribution outlets and commercial reading facilities; Guizhou encourages publishing and distribution enterprises to open campus bookstores in universities and other higher education institutions. Regarding service provision, they encourage and support physical bookstores to extend business hours, with Jiangsu and Changzhou encouraging qualified physical bookstores to operate 24 hours, expand reading service venues, conduct public welfare reading services, innovate business models, achieve multi-format integrated development, and meet readers' diverse needs.

2.4.3 Digital Reading Platforms Construction and participation subjects of digital reading platforms include governments at all levels, public libraries, and internet operators. Among them, Shenzhen, Henan, and Guizhou explicitly stipulate that governments bear the main responsibility for building public digital reading platforms; Hubei, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Yantai, and Ningbo stipulate that public libraries should strengthen digital reading, mobile reading, and network reading platform construction, establish digital literature information sharing platforms, and provide users with convenient and quality digital reading services such as remote inquiry and document reading free of charge. Jiangsu, Sichuan, Shijiazhuang, and Changzhou do not specify the construction and promotion subjects of digital reading platforms, which reduces legal enforceability to some extent. Additionally, Jilin and Yantai encourage internet operators to build public reading service platforms to provide more reading resources for the public; Jiangsu and Changzhou encourage mobile operators to send free public welfare information promoting national reading, providing healthy, beneficial, convenient, and efficient reading services for mobile users; Jiangsu, Sichuan, Shijiazhuang, and Jilin also support the development of online bookstores to promote online-offline integrated development.

2.4.4 Management of National Reading Facilities Most legislations require management units of national reading service facilities to establish and improve service management and facility maintenance systems. Specific contents include implementing free opening, announcing service items and opening hours, improving safety management systems and service norms, clarifying service standards, standardizing signage and identification, specifying facility managers, and requiring or encouraging extended opening hours during statutory holidays and public rest days to guarantee public reading needs. Guizhou

also encourages the use of information technology to manage national reading facilities. Yantai and Ningbo clarify the public disclosure responsibilities of municipal and county governments and relevant departments for public reading service facilities; Jilin stipulates the main responsibilities of governments at all levels, village committees, and residents' committees in improving the construction and management of rural and community book houses. Additionally, Hubei, Shenzhen, Shijiazhuang, Yantai, Guangdong, Guizhou, and Ningbo make specific provisions and countermeasures regarding the encroachment, damage, or demolition of public reading service facilities, and changes to their nature, function, configuration standards, and building area.

2.5 National Reading Activities

Most legislations designate World Book Day and Confucius's birthday as local national reading days, and hold reading festivals, reading months, and reading seasons to cultivate and consolidate various scholarly brands (see). Among them, Changzhou and Ningbo organize reading festivals and reading day activities around Qu Qiubai and Wang Yangming respectively, reflecting strong local cultural characteristics; Shenzhen and Shijiazhuang specially establish "Minors' Reading Day" and "Chinese Classics Reading Day" to strengthen youth reading and classics reading, demonstrating the advancement of reading legislation. The legal establishment of reading days and reading festivals highlights the responsibility and determination of governments at all levels to legalize, normalize, and brand reading development. Additionally, legislations actively require and mobilize public libraries, physical bookstores, and relevant social organizations to extensively participate in national reading day and reading festival activities, playing exemplary and leading roles, creating quality national reading brands and cultural calling cards, and fostering a favorable atmosphere for promoting national reading. Shenzhen also clarifies that the organization mechanism for reading month activities follows the principle of "government advocacy, expert guidance, social participation, enterprise operation, and media support." Activities during reading days and festivals include: organizing diverse national reading promotion activities such as themed forums, speech and reading contests, reading essay competitions, reading salons, book exhibitions, excellent publication recommendations, and reading brand displays; promoting national reading "seven entries" activities; carrying out Chinese classics reading, "Farmers' Reading Month," primary and secondary school reading star competitions, and "Scholarly Series Selection" activities; and selecting national reading advanced models and promoting relevant experiences.

Beyond establishing branded reading activities, legislations also require or encourage state organs, enterprises, public institutions, people's organizations, and social organizations to actively carry out diverse, regular, public welfare, and universal reading activities according to their own characteristics and conditions, promoting the normalized development of national reading. Hubei, Jilin, Yantai, Guangdong, and Guizhou also emphasize strengthening the organiza-

tion and development of grassroots national reading activities, requiring township governments, sub-district offices, and village (neighborhood) committees to organize rural book houses to carry out national reading activities according to local actual conditions or under the guidance of county-level press and publication authorities.

2.6 Promotion for Key Groups

All legislations focus on protecting minors' reading rights while strengthening reading care services for special and disadvantaged groups including the elderly, disabled, migrant workers and their children, children from extremely poor and low-income families, rural left-behind children, welfare institution children, urban migrant children, students with reading disabilities, prisoners, detainees, drug rehabilitation personnel, and community correction subjects. These services provide reading convenience, solve reading difficulties, meet basic reading needs, and promote balanced development of national reading. Beyond general provisions, Shenzhen stipulates that certain funds may subsidize the provision of reading resources such as infant and toddler books and parenting guidance books to families with newborns; Guizhou provides that governments should increase support for reading activities in rural schools and private schools for left-behind children and youth, establish reading assistance mechanisms between urban and rural schools, encourage the arrangement of reading instructors or volunteer reading companions for left-behind children and youth; Jiangsu, Jilin, Guizhou, and Ningbo particularly emphasize that public libraries should establish special reading venues for visually impaired readers and provide special services such as book delivery and free lending of smart audiobook players; Shijiazhuang and Jilin stipulate that measures such as allocation, donation, policy preferences, and increased investment should be used to key support national reading promotion work in poor areas, ethnic minority areas, and border areas.

Regarding minors' reading protection, all legislations require establishing a "four-in-one" mechanism combining government, schools, society, and families to promote minors' reading habit formation (see). Specific responsibilities include: governments and relevant departments formulating minors' reading promotion plans, implementation schemes, and reading classification guidance directories; providing reading guidance and skills training for parents, guardians, and teachers; organizing guidance, assistance, and research for students with reading disabilities. Education administrative departments also bear responsibilities for guiding schools to offer or adjust relevant courses, conduct reading teaching evaluation, and develop school reading teaching assessment. Schools are required to regard cultivating students' reading ability as an important part of quality education, guarantee students' extracurricular reading time, and enrich campus reading content and activities through purchasing suitable reading materials, improving campus reading facilities, 配备 reading promotion teachers or conducting teacher training, offering necessary reading courses, organizing reading activities, establishing campus reading interest groups, and strengthen-

ing reading guidance. Guizhou emphasizes that while schools actively guide and encourage students to conduct paper reading, they should scientifically apply digital reading resources. Libraries, cultural centers, museums, art galleries, science and technology museums, community education centers, and minors' cultural activity venues are required to establish and improve minors' reading zones, provide reading resources and services, and organize reading activities. Yantai and Ningbo also emphasize that municipal public libraries should build fully functional children's libraries with corresponding professional personnel and support schools in conducting relevant extracurricular activities; Shenzhen encourages enterprises, public institutions, the Communist Youth League, and other organizations and individuals to carry out various forms of minors' reading promotion activities. Family reading and parent-child reading are strongly advocated, requiring parents or other guardians to set reading examples and guidance for minors, create favorable family reading atmospheres, and cultivate good reading habits. Education authorities, women's federations, the Communist Youth League, and other people's organizations should promote family reading by organizing reading activities and providing reading guidance and support.

2.7 Guarantee Mechanisms for National Reading

2.7.1 Organizational Guarantee Except for Guizhou and Jilin, other provinces and cities stipulate that governments should strengthen organizational leadership over national reading work, establish national reading work coordination mechanisms, and organize, guide, and coordinate national reading promotion work within their administrative regions. Establishing a unified institution where all relevant national reading departments can participate in decision-making and guidance can extensively mobilize whole-society reading resources and provide sufficient support and long-term mechanisms for protecting citizens' reading rights and improving citizens' reading quality. Among them, Shenzhen and Ningbo clarify the member composition of national reading guidance committees; Shenzhen and Shijiazhuang further specify the specific responsibilities of guidance committees, enhancing clause pertinence. Except for Sichuan and Yantai which do not clearly stipulate the affiliation of coordination mechanisms (with Shenzhen and Changzhou placing them under cultural authorities and others under press and publication authorities), most provinces and cities have established such mechanisms.

Additionally, Jiangsu, Heilongjiang, Changzhou, Jilin, and Ningbo stipulate the lawful establishment or encouragement of establishing national reading promotion associations and societies to organize national reading promotion, research, and service work and improve the national reading promotion service system. Hubei, Heilongjiang, and Jilin explicitly mention encouraging and supporting the establishment of mass organizations such as reading associations and reading clubs to organize national reading activities.

2.7.2 Financial Guarantee All legislations explicitly stipulate incorporating required funds for national reading into government annual fiscal budgets, establishing a financial guarantee mechanism for national reading work. Jiangsu, Hubei, Heilongjiang, Changzhou, Yantai, Henan, Guangdong, and Ningbo further specify the use scope of national reading funds, including: national reading infrastructure construction; organizing major reading activities; publicity and promotion of national reading activities; supporting publication of excellent publications; purchasing national reading public services; and supporting national reading work in rural areas, poor areas, ethnic minority areas, border areas, and old revolutionary base areas. Individual legislations also include organizing national reading training, cultivating reading service organizations, training reading promoters and volunteers, building physical bookstores, and deepening national reading theoretical research.

To encourage social capital investment in national reading services and broaden funding sources, Jiangsu, Shenzhen, Heilongjiang, Changzhou, Guangdong, and Ningbo encourage and support the establishment of national reading public welfare foundations. Among them, Shenzhen, Guangdong, and Ningbo also clarify specific uses of national reading funds, including supporting public welfare reading organizations, training reading service volunteers and reading promoters, implementing reading promotion services for special and disadvantaged groups, organizing reading promotion activities, and conducting reading ability assessments, reading surveys, and reading research.

2.7.3 Personnel Guarantee Personnel guarantee mainly focuses on reading promoters and organizations, and reading promotion volunteers. Guangdong and Henan discuss the establishment of reading promoters and organizations from both government and social perspectives: on one hand, governments should establish national reading promoter teams to organize professional reading guidance and promotion services suitable for various reader groups; on the other hand, they encourage and support cultural groups, educational institutions, and other social organizations to develop professional reading promoter teams and institutions, provide public welfare reading services, and promote the socialization and professionalization of national reading services. Except for Suzhou, Yantai, and Ningbo which each involve one party, other provinces and cities do not specify responsible subjects, belonging to encouragement and advocacy clauses. Yantai and Jilin further elevate to the institutional level, requiring the establishment of reading promoter systems in public national reading service venues and formulating management measures for national reading promoters to improve selection and training mechanisms.

Other provisions on volunteer services include encouraging and supporting the establishment of national reading volunteer service organizations, encouraging and supporting individuals to participate in national reading promotion work, supporting the construction of grassroots volunteer service outlets for national reading, and carrying out national reading volunteer service activities. Among

them, Guangdong, Henan, and Ningbo explicitly encourage and support teachers, civil servants, scientific and technological workers, literary and artistic workers, press and publication workers, library staff, university students, and retired personnel to join reading promoter teams as volunteers, actively playing exemplary and leading roles in reading. Meanwhile, Jiangsu, Hubei, Shenzhen, Jilin, Yantai, Guangdong, Guizhou, and Ningbo also stipulate the responsibilities of governments and relevant departments to provide free relevant knowledge and skills training and necessary support guarantees for reading promotion organizations, reading promoters, and volunteers to improve reading promotion and service capabilities. Guangdong also requires government departments to establish reading promoter team information databases.

Additionally, Shijiazhuang, Guangdong, and Guizhou have relevant provisions on staff in national reading service venues represented by public libraries and rural book houses, including reasonably setting national reading service positions, 配备 corresponding professional personnel or specifying management personnel, and conducting regular business guidance and training.

2.7.4 Supervision and Evaluation Mechanisms Legislations institutionalize supervision and evaluation to achieve positive effects of promoting construction through evaluation. In terms of supervision and evaluation subjects, legislations establish regulatory mechanisms combining government supervision and social supervision. In terms of supervision and evaluation contents, they mainly include five aspects: incorporating national reading promotion work into government assessment scope; establishing national reading survey and evaluation systems; public evaluation systems and demand consultation feedback mechanisms; school reading teaching assessment and evaluation; and legal liabilities (see).

2.7.5 Incentive Mechanisms Except for Liaoning, Shenzhen, and Sichuan, other provinces and cities require establishing national reading incentive mechanisms and reward systems to commend and reward units, families, and individuals making outstanding contributions to national reading promotion work. Shenzhen, Sichuan, Shijiazhuang, and Changzhou also explicitly propose conducting selection activities for outstanding units, families, and individuals and “Scholarly Series” selection activities, providing publicity and encouragement by establishing advanced models and cultivating excellent brands. Other incentive measures include tax preference systems for fund donations, support and incentive mechanisms for excellent publication production and physical bookstore development, reading point incentives for readers, and encouragement and guidance mechanisms for social force participation.

3 Characteristic Analysis of Local National Reading Legislation

Beyond characteristics presented in the above content analysis, legislations also demonstrate the following features:

3.1 Elevating Local Practical Experience to Legal Content

All local reading legislations focus on solidifying good methods and advanced experiences created in practice into legal provisions, making them institutionalized and legalized. This is mainly reflected in two aspects: First, elevating reading months and reading festivals that have been carried out for years into statutory reading holidays, such as Shenzhen Reading Month, Longjiang Reading Month, and Guangdong Southern Country Scholarly Festival. Second, legalizing characteristic practical experiences and basic models, such as Jiangsu's "Scholarly Jiangsu" construction index system, Shenzhen and Yantai's public welfare reading organization and reading promoter systems, Guangdong's national reading coordination mechanism, and Yantai and Ningbo's urban study rooms, rural cultural auditoriums, and "central library-main library-branch library-grassroots service point" library service systems. Solidifying local experiences through legislation not only fully affirms long-term reading promotion practices and services in various regions, but also further strengthens and promotes targeted and operable local practical experiences at a higher level, providing them with legal guarantees such as fiscal funds and responsible subjects to enable normalized, scaled, and sustainable development.

3.2 Increasing Prominence of Public Libraries

The Public Library Law of the People's Republic of China explicitly designates "guiding and serving national reading as an important task of public libraries," legally manifesting the role of public libraries in national reading. This has positively influenced subsequent local national reading legislation, with legal provisions on public libraries gradually increasing. Particularly in reading legislations represented by Yantai and Ningbo, public library provisions account for as many as 14 and 15 articles respectively, increasingly highlighting the important role and value of public libraries in national reading. Throughout these legal provisions, the role of public libraries can be summarized as: provider of national reading service venues; recommender and purchaser of excellent reading materials; organizer of reading activities; provider of reading services; guide for reading activities conducted by government agencies, enterprises, public institutions, and other organizations; and preservation center for local literature resources. Additionally, Yantai, Ningbo, and Shenzhen legislation specifically emphasizes the important role of public libraries in minors' reading and disabled persons' reading. To realize these functions and better exert public library service effectiveness, legislations provide guarantees from aspects such as resource circulation and updating, service system construction, digital plat-

form construction, multimedia reading product development, cooperation and exchange, and co-construction and sharing.

3.3 Keeping Pace with Digital Reading Development Trends

With the rapid development of the Internet and mobile terminals, digital reading has gradually become popular and has become an important method for promoting national reading in the “Internet Plus” era. Therefore, all legislations keep pace with digital reading development trends, vigorously encouraging and supporting the development and application of new technologies and new media in national reading activities from multiple aspects including facilities, resources, platforms, services, activities, and research, providing more convenient and efficient reading services for urban and rural residents. Digital reading-related contents in the legislation include: constructing and promoting digital reading facilities represented by electronic newspaper screens, self-service borrowing machines, digital libraries, and smart libraries, as well as digital equipment such as smart audiobook players for disabled persons; developing and applying multimedia reading products, accelerating the digital transformation of publications, and promoting various reading methods such as mobile reading, network reading, electronic reading, and TV reading; achieving interconnection, co-construction, and sharing between digital resources of various reading device terminals and digital resources within administrative regions; and recommending excellent digital publications; strengthening government and public library digital reading platform construction, encouraging the opening of social public reading service platforms and resources; establishing and improving various digital, networked, mobile, and self-service reading services; conducting digital reading promotion activities or projects; and conducting research on multimedia reading services such as digital reading, audio reading, and video reading, and developing and promoting reading technologies, carriers, and facilities.

3.4 Emphasizing Extensive Social Participation and Resource Integration

Provisions on social participation and resource integration run through all legislative texts. Beyond obligatory provisions for governments at all levels, relevant departments, and grassroots mass autonomous organizations, legislations also actively encourage, support, and guide state organs, enterprises, public institutions, social organizations, and individuals to participate in and promote national reading work through multiple clauses. Social participation forms clarified in the legislation include donations, sponsorships, reading resource exchanges, volunteer services, and other public welfare behaviors, as well as market-oriented approaches such as government purchase of services, specifically including: donating to national reading funds, books, and other reading materials and related equipment; constructing and providing public reading venues and facilities, and opening internal reading service venues free of charge; organizing national reading promotion activities and providing public welfare reading ser-

vices; cultivating reading promotion organizations, reading promoters, and reading volunteers; and publicizing and promoting national reading to create a favorable atmosphere. To fully mobilize the enthusiasm of social forces, Hubei, Shijiazhuang, Heilongjiang, Guangdong, and Guizhou also stipulate implementation methods to encourage and support social forces to participate in national reading, including government purchase of services, project subsidies, and reward-based subsidies. Under the premise of government leadership, mobilizing extensive social participation can effectively solve problems such as insufficient funding for national reading, insufficient total public reading resources and facilities and their uneven distribution, and single supply of reading products and activities, boost the optimal integration and reallocation of various social reading resources, and promote reading resource sharing and service level improvement. On the other hand, it can actively promote the socialization, professionalization, and diversification of national reading services, improve the coverage, applicability, and influence of national reading, and truly mobilize and attract whole-population participation in reading.

4 Deficiencies and Reflections on National Reading Legislation

Currently, China's local national reading legislation still suffers from problems such as lack of national legislative guidance, low effectiveness of local regulations, vague definition of citizens' reading rights leading to virtualized government responsibilities, biased legislative promotion subjects, repetitive and ambiguous clauses, poor legal enforceability due to promotional legislative orientation, and insufficient publicity and promotion, requiring further reflection and improvement.

4.1 Accelerating the Construction of a Legal Guarantee System for National Reading

Legislation is the most basic guarantee for achieving institutionalized operation of national reading [16]. Therefore, it is necessary to further accelerate the legal construction of national reading in China, forming a national reading legal guarantee system combining comprehensive laws, specialized laws, and industry laws to provide legal support for protecting the realization of public reading rights.

- (1) Accelerate the national legislative process for national reading to play a leading and guiding role in local legislation, and actively promote local national reading legislation work. Since the National Reading Promotion Regulations were included in the State Council's legislative work plan in 2013, they remain in the draft implementation stage. Meanwhile, compared with the 100% local legislation target proposed in the National Reading "13th Five-Year" Development Plan, only 9 provinces have issued local regulations and government rules, accounting for approximately 26.5% of

the national total, indicating an arduous construction task. Therefore, people's congresses and governments at all levels should actively learn from existing domestic and foreign reading legislation experiences, closely focus on practical and prominent issues in administrative regions regarding national reading systems and mechanisms, investment guarantees, reading effectiveness, and promotion for key groups, accelerate national and local national reading legislation work, and provide rule-of-law guarantees for deeply promoting national reading. Additionally, addressing the reality of low-level national reading legislation in China, it is necessary to timely elevate the effectiveness level, upgrading national-level national reading legislation from administrative regulations to laws, and elevating local government rules to local regulations, thereby establishing a national reading legislative pattern dominated by people's congresses and coordinated by governments, enhancing the legal effectiveness of national reading and improving the national reading legislative system.

- (2) Promote specialized legislation for minors' reading. Foreign regulations promoting and guaranteeing reading all reflect emphasis on minors' reading, with specialized legal provisions for children and adolescents' reading promotion, such as the United States' Reading Excellence Act [17], No Child Left Behind Act [18], and Japan's Act on Promotion of Children's Reading Activities [19]. China's existing reading legislative texts also specially emphasize minors' reading, but no specialized law for minors has been issued. Therefore, it is necessary to vigorously promote the formulation and implementation of national-level children's reading promotion regulations to effectively protect children's reading rights, especially those of rural children.
- (3) Revise and improve provisions on national reading in industry laws. Besides specialized legislation, the formation of a national reading legislative system also requires active coordination from other departmental laws such as education, publishing, libraries, and intellectual property [20]. Therefore, relevant departments and institutions should add reading-related clauses to laws such as the Education Law, Compulsory Education Law, Higher Education Law, Publishing Administration Regulations, and Copyright Law in accordance with the requirements of the times for national reading, achieving effective connection with national reading legislation and improving national reading legislative content through industry laws.

4.2 Promoting the Revision and Improvement of National Reading Legislation

- (1) Content revision and improvement. Deficiencies in national reading legislation content mainly manifest as missing expressions of "reading rights" and "reading interests," unclear concepts of "government guidance" and "government leadership," and low participation of educational administra-

tive forces leading to weakened reading education. To effectively protect citizens' reading rights, standardize government legal responsibilities in national reading, and mobilize multiple departments such as press, radio, television, culture, and education to fully participate, legal provisions should clarify a citizen reading rights-oriented and government-led reading guarantee mechanism, and strengthen the participation of education administrative departments in cultural legislation.

Meanwhile, some legal provisions have problems such as conceptual and semantic repetition, cumbersome clauses, contradictory statements, unclear identification of responsible subjects, and lack of necessary content. For example, Yantai's Articles 23 and 38 both describe "public libraries regularly supplementing and updating resources"; Hubei and Heilongjiang juxtapose the terms "digital reading, mobile reading, and network reading," causing conceptual overlap; Liaoning and Shenzhen lack provisions on key groups and legal liabilities; Guangdong's Article 14 mistakenly refers to library "business hours" instead of "opening hours"; and vague terms such as "relevant departments and units" in various legislations cause lack of responsible subjects, reducing the operability of legal provisions.

Additionally, local legislations need to address key points, development trends, and weak links in national reading in recent years, such as digital reading, mobile reading, classics reading, graded reading, new public reading space construction, construction of basic standards for national reading public services, reading guarantees for special areas, and national reading festivals. Combined with more excellent and mature practices and experiences emerging in various localities, these should be solidified through legal means to ensure national reading legislation keeps pace with the times and meets the public's increasingly elevated reading cultural needs and new aspirations for a better life in a moderately prosperous society.

- (2) Form revision and improvement. Deficiencies in national reading legislation form mainly manifest as some local regulations being issued in the form of "decisions" with relatively simple content, and some "regulations" having logical deficiencies among various parts, causing confusion. Therefore, existing "decisions" can be upgraded to "regulations" by refining their clause contents according to the structure of "general provisions, reading promotion, key groups reading promotion, reading guarantees, legal liabilities, and supplementary provisions," and enhancing the pertinence and logic of legal provisions by adjusting logical relationships among various parts of "regulations."

4.3 Strengthening Supporting Design to Improve Legislation Operability

Besides numerous vague terms such as "relevant departments and units" that reduce legal operability, there are also problems of low legal operability caused

by lack of corresponding implementation schemes and supporting designs, affecting effective legal implementation to a certain extent. Therefore, during legal implementation, provinces and cities should promptly formulate and improve development plans, implementation rules, and various supporting systems combined with legislation, improving legal enforceability and operability through quantifying and specifying concrete implementation details.

- (1) Supporting designs related to government development plans. Hubei, Shenzhen, Heilongjiang, Shijiazhuang, Jilin, Guangdong, Guizhou, and Ningbo all stipulate that governments at all levels and relevant departments should formulate national reading development plans, implementation outlines, promotion plans, and minors' reading promotion plans. However, in practice, only Jiangsu, Hubei, Sichuan, Shijiazhuang, Heilongjiang, and Yantai have formulated corresponding development plans, work plans, and concrete implementation opinions after policy issuance, while other provinces and cities have not implemented them. This causes difficulties in implementation due to lack of concrete designs for national reading fund investment and budget formulation, reading facility planning and layout, etc. Meanwhile, supporting designs that should be issued by governments, such as national reading assessment and evaluation systems, basic standards for national reading public services, national reading basic and classified recommended reading lists, and national reading facility construction plans, are also weak.
- (2) Supporting designs for incentive and service policies to attract social forces. To mobilize and encourage extensive social participation, most legislations adopt legal provisions with encouragement, support, guidance, promotion, and assistance as main measures. However, without supporting designs, it is difficult to fully mobilize enthusiasm. Therefore, it is necessary to promote active participation through formulating and effectively implementing various substantive incentive and support policies. Supporting designs related to attracting social participation mainly include: support measures for excellent publications, physical bookstores, and online bookstores; national reading evaluation and reward measures; "Scholarly Series" selection management measures; cultivation and incentive mechanisms for national reading volunteers and reading promoters; and policies encouraging social forces to participate in national reading.

4.4 Strengthening Publicity and Promotion of National Reading Legislation

Legislation is the first step to effectively popularizing national reading, but to enhance effective implementation of reading legislation and improve public awareness, it is necessary to establish normalized publicity and promotion mechanisms to strongly enhance the social influence of national reading legislation. On one hand, provinces and cities should strengthen series publicity activities

targeting government departments and relevant units, enhance organizational leadership, earnestly study the legislative purposes and principles of national reading, and promote targeted solutions to practical problems in regional national reading to facilitate the implementation of reading legislation. On the other hand, they should strengthen national reading legislation publicity and popularization work among the general public, using various platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok, and diverse forms including text introductions, video displays, and knowledge competitions to convey the main contents and relevant knowledge of national reading legislation to the public. This enhances public understanding that reading legislation aims to protect their reading rights rather than compel reading behavior, emphasizes the joy and importance of reading, creates a strong reading atmosphere of “loving reading, reading good books, and reading well” throughout society, fully mobilizes citizens’ reading enthusiasm, and gradually internalizes reading as everyone’s conscious choice, guiding citizens to establish a lifelong reading development concept.

References

- [1] Standing Committee of Jiangsu Provincial People’s Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Jiangsu Provincial People’s Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.jsrd.gov.cn/zyfb/hygb/1213/201501/t20150115_{155216}.
- [2] People’s Government of Hubei Province. Measures of Hubei Province for Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.hubei.gov.cn/govfile/ezl/201412/t20141224_{10
- [3] Standing Committee of Liaoning Provincial People’s Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Liaoning Provincial People’s Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. <http://www.lnrd.gov.cn/esupervise/show-10266.html>.
- [4] Standing Committee of Shenzhen Municipal People’s Congress. Regulations of Shenzhen Special Economic Zone on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.szrd.gov.cn/szrd_{zlda}/szrd_{zlda}_{flfg}/flfg{szfg}/201907/t20190731_{1
- [5] Standing Committee of Sichuan Provincial People’s Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Sichuan Provincial People’s Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. <http://www.scqs.gov.cn/info/5483/90985.htm>.
- [6] Standing Committee of Shijiazhuang Municipal People’s Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Shijiazhuang Municipal People’s Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.pkulaw.cn/fulltext_{form}.aspx?Db=lar&Gid=045b1c201271cbe532fbac68a9a17064bdfb&keywo
- [7] Standing Committee of Heilongjiang Provincial People’s Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Heilongjiang Provincial People’s Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. <http://sft.hlj.gov.cn/web/service/local-law-data-detail/1950.html>.
- [8] Standing Committee of Changzhou Municipal People’s Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Changzhou Municipal People’s Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://rd.changzhou.gov.cn/html/rd/2017/NPHHJQAN_{0712}/11548.html.
- [9] Standing Committee of Jilin Provincial People’s Congress. Regula-

- tions of Jilin Province on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://wgxj.changchun.gov.cn/zcfg/gfxwj/dfxfg/201801/t20180112_{1071034}.html.
- [10] Standing Committee of Yantai Municipal People's Congress. Regulations of Yantai City on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.pkulaw.cn/fulltext_{form}.aspx?Db=lar&Gid=61a7cf6f9edd0338e29ff4c1fa1ce60bdfb&keyword=
- [11] Standing Committee of Guangdong Provincial People's Congress. Regulations of Guangdong Province on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.by.gov.cn/zwgk/zdlyxxgkzl/whjgxxgkzl/tsggwgk/zcfg/ggtsgfwgf/content/post_{4737662
- [12] Standing Committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress. Decision of the Standing Committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. <http://www.henan.gov.cn/2019/04-21/743477.html>.
- [13] Standing Committee of Guizhou Provincial People's Congress. Regulations of Guizhou Province on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.guizhou.gov.cn/zwgk/zfxgk/fdzdgnr/lzyj/dfxfg/201912/t20191216_{31984923}.html.
- [14] Standing Committee of Ningbo Municipal People's Congress. Regulations of Ningbo City on Promoting National Reading [EB/OL]. [2020-09-06]. http://www.nbrd.gov.cn/art/2020/6/28/art_{3241}_{4162566}.html.
- [15] Zhu Maolei. *Limitations and Optimization of China's National Reading Legislation* [J]. *Science-Technology & Publication*, 2018(11): 84-91.
- [16] Huang Mingtao. *Research on the Operability of China's Local National Reading Legislation—Based on Analysis of 7 Local Regulations and Rules* [J]. *Science-Technology & Publication*, 2017(12): 10.
- [17] U.S. Department of Education. *Reading Excellence Act (1998)* [EB/OL]. [2020-09-04]. <https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/promisinginitiatives/rea.html>.
- [18] *No Child Left Behind Act (2001)* [EB/OL]. [2020-09-04]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_{Child}_{Le
- [19] Wu Lingfang. Brief Introduction to Japan's Act on Promotion of Children's Reading Activities [J]. *Library and Information World of Primary and Secondary Schools*, 2004(10): 60, 57.
- [20] Tan Xiaojun, Zhou Anping. Dilemmas and Countermeasures of China's National Reading Legislation in the New Era—Based on Analysis of National Reading Legislative Texts [J]. *Modern Publishing*, 2019(1): 8.

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.