

Research on Chinese Basic-level Crisis Management's "Difficulties" and Countermeasures

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ABSTRACT

Public crisis is inevitable in human social development's process which cannot leave government's basic support. The township government is the lowest level in Chinese administrative organ having the management characteristics with policy guidance and the flexibility in operation, macro regulation function and social dispersion, cross - management and diversification. Now there is also critical to reveal basic-level crisis management's difficulties in facing unexpected events, such as unequal access to information in public crisis events, weak consciousness and ability in public crisis, improper "afterwards" in public crisis management, weak public crisis management's transparency and so on. So when facing major crisis events in construction's modernization, it is necessary to establish early information warning mechanism, post-prevention mechanism, emergency management departments construction in government and other measures to improve Chinese basic-level government's ability to deal with public crisis.

Keywords: Basic-level government, Crisis management, Difficulties and countermeasures.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public crisis is inevitable in human social development's process and public crisis' management cannot leave government's basic support, which is inseparable from central government's leadership and also cannot leave basic-level government's execution with people's participation in cooperation to cope with human's major crisis events. Since COVID-19's outbreak in the world, basic-level governments have made great effort and achieved great success in China, at the same time, they have still had some "difficulties" which is worth thinking. Therefore, how to analyze basic-level management's "difficulties" and solutions has some important theoretical and practical value.

2. THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS IN BASIC-LEVEL CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis management refers to a science to deal with a crisis in all aspects before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis with the increasing crises' number.[1] In facing major natural disasters,

basic-level management is an important guarantee to protect people's lives and property. Since the SARS in 2003, China has paid more attention to constructing a crisis management system and systematically dealt with some crisis incidents. At present, China has initially formed a unique basic-level crisis management characteristic.

2.1 The Basic-level Crisis Management Policy's Guidance and Operation's Flexibility

Township government is the most basic-level units in China which must be led by the central government according to the central government's policy and its higher level government's policy guidance combining with local basic-level crisis management's feature forming the policy characteristics with unity and flexibility. Township and village level governments and below them are currently the main body in sudden public crisis to make key decisions, but because of the facts in basic-level governments with relatively simple structure, weak personnel, experience and ability such as information being not so clear enough, it is easy to cause crisis' prevention and resolving ability

insufficiency, the intelligence information's distortion and weakening control organizations at the basic-level society ", etc. Therefore, the central government and the higher level government's decision are particularly important. The basic-level governments must deal with a crisis event scientifically and solve a public crisis to deal with natural disasters' impact on the society according to the policy given by their higher level crisis management department.

2.2 The Basic-level Crisis Management Function's Macro-control and Social Decentralization

The public management system should be composed of government, social organizations, enterprises, individuals, etc., according to modern management theory's requirements, which is a "socialized" mechanism with the whole society's participation. Central government or basic-level government alone is difficult to effectively mobilize various aspects of resources to deal with public crisis events better, because basic-level governments are less available resources, weak foundation, lack of human resources, a higher level government can't cover all the things to dealing with major public crisis events and fail to control crisis event's spread. And through market regulation's diversification and social management's flexibility, every main body in regulating crisis events can make full use of all kinds of social resources, each subject uses its advantages to deal with major crisis events to prove efficiency in the crisis event. A crisis rescue and prevention mechanism with multi-sector cooperation led by the government and extensive participation by the public will be formed.

2.3 The Basic-level Crisis Management Departments' Crossing and Diversification

In recent years, although there has been often some public crisis in China, great disasters haven't appeared so much. So basic-level governments paid little attention to public crisis management's construction, crisis management events scatter in various government departments presenting a cross department and diversified characteristics, most basic-level government crisis management departments are rarely alone. When they encountered major crisis event, they will only set up crisis management department to deal with the crisis events as a result of temporary workers being

lack of crisis management consciousness and management thought, timeliness and phase of crisis event, professional, integrated, mandatory features such as understanding is not enough. A failure to deal with public crisis events strictly and effectively restricts crisis management function in basic-level government to a large extent. Therefore, they should set up an abnormal system in public affairs management on the basis of normal government management to improve basic-level crisis management ability.

3. THE DIFFICULTIES IN BASIC-LEVEL CRISIS MANAGEMENT

At present, along with Chinese handling major crisis management continuously, Chinese government public crisis consciousness is more and more strong, crisis management system construction has made great achievements, but because of a shortage of basic-level crisis management practices in China, there are some difficulties in crisis management. For example, the public crisis events' information acquisition is not equal, the public crisis management consciousness and ability are not strong enough, the public crisis management "post-action" management is not appropriate, and the public crisis management transparency management information is not strong.

3.1 The Information Acquisition's Asymmetry in Public Crisis Events

Crisis management must pay close attention to time, which is an important premise to eliminate crisis. Crisis management effectiveness depends on getting news timeliness, accuracy, fast speed, in advance, etc. According to the effective information for the first time, Government can set up scientific approach and take action timely and efficiently to handle crisis. However, during the basic-level Governments deal with current crisis management, there are still some phenomena, such as lag, vagueness and lack of authority in obtaining information which restricts handling crisis management events' efficiency and affects basic-level government's credibility to some extent. At present, Chinese basic-level crisis management's early warning system is still at the construction, and its practice mechanism is imperfect, the early warning and prevention mechanism in villages and towns are very weak. At the same time, getting the crisis management information is still unequal and not so clear enough causing information's authority being not enough. When basic-level governments

explain the superior policy information, there is still not accurate enough to lead to get ineffective information. When crisis event changes rapidly especially after several intermediary organizations' transmission, basic-level organizations will cause inadequate preparation time in crisis management, while the inadequate preparation process will also lead to onerous jobs. Altogether crisis management methods' simplification with lack of early warning mechanism will affect crisis management events' effect.

3.2 The Basic-level Crisis Management's Consciousness and Ability Are Not Strong

Now Peace and development are still our world's themes, the basic-level governments and the public are not strong enough in their awareness and ability to deal with public crisis events with lack of sufficient awareness in prevention. Public crisis events are characterized by suddenness, urgency, destructiveness and persistence which are often impossible to guard against, especially major public crisis events, such as flood, earthquake and epidemic situation. If basic-level governments have weak public awareness, insufficient understanding for crisis' causes and symptoms, insufficient training, and insufficient preventive measures, it will be caught unprepared with a real crisis occurs, and problems such as improper command and chaotic action will occur. In addition, there is also a public crisis management personnel quality and ability, especially the basic-level government personnel ability and psychological quality are not so good. When the people are not able to work in an effective organization which is in lack of ability to cope with crisis, such as basic-level government can't risk assessment mechanism, they won't have ability to use new technologies to supervise crisis events and ignore early warning and prevention. They can not realize crisis events' depredation and incident handling's urgency.

3.3 The Improper Post-crisis Behavior in Basic-level Crisis Management

Robert Heath also proposed in 4R crisis management's theoretical framework that crisis situation rarely produces a single influence but can cause another crisis problem or crisis situation, which is called ripple effect or the "post-management".[2] For the public crisis management event, the subsequent damage may be more serious than the previous period. Therefore, the public

crisis's "post-management" becomes more important. If the "post-event" is handled improperly, the basic-level governments lack an effective post-event prevention and control system to deal with the chain reaction, it will result the crisis from small to large, from part to the whole in serious consequences. For example, after a "catastrophic" event, epidemic publicity, protection, psychological issues, property safety issues, emotional comfort issues, etc. needed carried out on a large scale. If such "post-event" behavior cannot be handled scientifically, serious problems will occur. Such as during "SARS" in 2003, people bought white vinegar so much to be out of stock, and even raised prices in commodity market with no sound prevention and control measures after the accident by the basic-level government system to cause the social public panic.

3.4 The Basic-level Crisis Management Information is Difficult to Grasp

Information openness and transparency have long been Chinese government's goal and have gradually improved in the social practice and experience. However, because public crisis management events occur too suddenly, with strong contingency and randomness, it is difficult for governments to grasp some accurate information for the first time, and there are often problems such as insufficient convenience and transparency with information disclosure. For a long time, there are still some contradictions in government's response capacity in crisis' information, processing scheme, process and results which seriously affected public crisis events' process. Therefore, the information's transparency can aggravate public crisis' destructive power to lead to government's crisis management ability's slow development, and even affect government's effective formulation and scientific crisis management programs.

4. MEASURES TO SOLVE BASIC-LEVEL CRISIS MANAGEMENT'S DIFFICULTIES

When dealing with public crisis, basic-level governments should adopt scientific management methods and measures, formulate advanced crisis early warning system, establish perfect post-crisis prevention and control system, establish scientific crisis management department, improve crisis awareness, open information to build a transparent government.

4.1 Establishing an Advanced Warning Mechanism

Public crisis advanced warning mechanism is the most important link in emergency management. "In emergency management, advanced warning mainly refers to that the information about risks should be told the potential affected persons before the dangerous elements are transformed into public crises, so that they can take necessary actions to make corresponding preparations". [3] Through the early warning system, government can predict the risk in time and correctly to reduce people's harm and property's loss. For example, Sichuan province's early warning mechanism especially in MianZhu's warning, the government had plenty of time to make a special emergency plan, issued earthquake disaster warning to the various villages and towns, accelerated the personnel's evacuation, transferred the people's property, reduced disasters' impact, protected more than 5,000 people' lives in the region to achieve crisis prevention's goal and risk reduction. Therefore, an advanced public crisis forecast warning mechanism is very necessary, which is a trend and an indispensable link in our modernization construction, only in this way, can government timely get the information, rapid response, send personnel to investigate, make decisions quickly, comfort victims to reduce the loss.

4.2 Improving Emergency Management Departments and Institutions

Crisis is both an opportunity and a challenge. "Every crisis not only contains failure, but also breeds success' seeds, which is crisis management's essence to discover and cultivate potential opportunities for success." [4] When crisis can be handled properly, they can change crisis' development to a health direction, if not, they can cause great disaster, so the government should keep pace with the time to set up emergency management department, deal with management crisis event, turn a crisis into driving force for social change and improvement to improve the government's crisis management consciousness effectively. Such as "New York City's crisis management system including. New York City fire department, police station, transport, environmental protection bureau, information technology and communications agency, health and psychological health and epidemic prevention bureau, health bureau, health and hospital alliance, and many other government agencies, they can clearly define the

urban crisis management system in New York City agencies in the crisis management roles and responsibilities, Which agencies are responsible for different types of crisis matters." [5] "Whether a government can use effective means to concentrate social resources to solve crisis in a shortest time and protect people's interests to the maximum extent, crisis management is also an examination in a country's management ability and management level". [6] In a crisis, it is necessary to set up an emergency management department which can have more experience and ability to combine multiple departments, integrate social resources, fast response, avoid crisis involving multiple departments, poor communication results in low efficiency.

4.3 Improving the Post-disposal Mechanism in Basic-level Crisis Management

To build early warning and prediction mechanism are an important task before managing a public crisis, while the prevention and control system is a management stage after the public crisis, which is how to deal with a series of crisis events. When dealing with the crisis, they should not only see the crisis itself, but also see a series of consequences and hazards produced by the crisis, such as market chaos, price gushing, material shortage and rumors. All those require the government to establish a basic-level protection system to maintain the region safety and normal operation. "According to Robert Health' crisis management theory, the 4R working procedure is essentially a process management, which especially requires the timeliness and flexibility in each stage such as crisis risk assessment, resource allocation, crisis scope and response measures selection". [7] In crisis, the basic-level governments should strengthen in market's supervision to maintain market's stability, resolutely crack down on events that disturb market order to allocate resources rationally and ensure people's daily needs, restore the normal state and order in the region in a planned way. For example, Japanese government pays attention to national education and training about crisis through training in life and school training, they can increase crisis consciousness, improve self-help communal skills, avoid social chaos and order imbalances.

4.4 Strengthening Information Openness and Transparent Construction

With information technology, in major public crises, the public need to know more about government's behavior and actions, in which whether they are in line with people' interests, whether they meet social development' requirements, and whether they have undertaken due responsibilities. Information disclosure is conducive to construct a transparent government which can reduce information asymmetry between the government and the public to reduce the contradictions. In crisis events, government policies' openness can help the public to participate in crisis management activities, express their will, supervise government's behavior. Government's execution procedures' openness is conducive to explore and discover the government's actions' legitimacy and effectiveness in crisis events, which is conducive to construct a country ruled by law to help improve government's enthusiasm, so that when facing with a crisis, the basic-level governments can deal with problems fairly. Timely and accurate information delivery by basic-level governments to the public is conducive to reduce panic incidents, enhance public trust in the government to improve basic-level governments' credibility.

5. CONCLUSION

In the process of modernization development in future, there may happen a variety of public crisis events, "from crisis emergency management, it is necessary to face sudden risk, process and consequences on the basis of analysis in effective early warning, prevention and control and processing".[8] Only by establishing the perfect crisis early warning, prevention and reduction, recovery mechanism, can they safeguard the people's fundamental interests and deal with the problems in public crisis events to make country development stability.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

JunfengXu is responsible for experimental design and contributed to revising and editing; Bingyu Li wrote the manuscript.

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