

# Problems and Countermeasures of Urban Crisis

## Review of Storm in Zhengzhou 2007

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**Abstract:** As industrialization and city expanding, the cities are becoming more and more vulnerable. It is of momentous current significance to enhance the city's crisis management, to protect the nation's security, promote the economic development and keep the society steady. This article analyses the situation of our nation's present city crisis management and points out the main problem that the awareness of public crisis is poor; the construction of city's basic facilities is held up; the mechanism of the city's crisis management is lag behind; and the legal model and reasonable supervising system are absent. According to these problems, this article puts forward the our government should adopt these measures below: perfect construction of the city's foundation facilities, reducing the damage of the crisis to the lowest level; improve the forewarning mechanism of city's crisis management, reinforcing the predictability of city's crisis; establish an effective and forceful centralized planning department, forming a collective, three-dimensional city crisis management organization system; reinforce the legal system building, improve the supervising system, making the public crisis management legality.

**Keywords:** city; public crisis; crisis management

## 1 Introduction

Overseas research on the management of the urban crisis oriented mode of research. They emphasized on participation of social organizations and ordinary citizen. Domestic research on the management of the urban crisis on the one hand lack of a systematic pattern of study; the other hand, participation of citizens in our country is not able to achieve. Therefore, the Government acts in our country have an extremely important role. But in the urban crisis management, the domestic research on the urban crisis management lack of accountability of government action and response to urban crisis management system of measures<sup>[1]</sup>.

This article pointed out that the system in the absence of citizen participation in the social context of government action to strengthen the crisis management of the city, and put forward countermeasures to complete urban crisis management from the perspective of government action.

## 2 The Necessity of Urban Crisis Management

The Urbanization is an important process during developing and transforming of mankind societies. It is

also an inevitable outcome of developing of economy and culture in a nation or an area. Cities are flourishing places and center of nation or area's economy, politics, culture, science and transport hub. Cities are also concentrated places of population and nation's wealth. With the advance of city modernization, there are more and more accidents and hidden dangers that hides behind the booming cities. Mankind is faced with more and more unstable elements. Enhance the abilities to resist disasters for the cities, which is strategy demand for realizing nation's sustainable development. On one hand modernized city is a great complex system. The population and buildings are highly concentrated; manufactures and life are highly centralized; the traffic flow is congested; the roads are compromised insufficient; the green plots and spare lands are rare; and the dangerous sources are widely distributed. So once it suffers a disaster, the loss will be heavy. On the other hand the economic prosperous cities have a strong material foundation to prevent and reduce the disasters<sup>[2]</sup>. The city's population is large. People in the cities are highly educated, and there are many scientists and scholars specialize in disasters. What's more, the city's information is linked to the internet. It can predict and prevent

the disasters as early as possible before the disasters coming. Therefore, preventing city disasters actively, and reducing the loss to the lowest level are of significance in constructing our country.

### **3 Status of Chinese Urban Crisis Management**

The heavy storm happened in Zhengzhou on the second day in August ultimately led to the result that at least two people died, and six people got injured. It was an omnibearing test of the government and societies' abilities to meet an emergency. The storm also completely exposed our national cities' wear and the weaken control abilities in the face of crisis. The present situation allows no optimistic. In summary, it is mainly revealed in the four aspects below:

#### **3.1 The Poor Awareness of Public Crises**

The government officers and citizens are lacking of the awareness of public crises. They paid no attention on all the symptoms in latent period of crises. They are lack of vigilance and don't attach enough importance to these symptoms. As a result, many accidents could have been avoided growing to be worse crises within enough time or brought under control through various measures. Due to the manager's careless who are too confident. The emphasis on the crisis management on the prevention in peace time rather than the remedy after crises arises. For the awareness of public crisis poor, we will be at a loss when crises arise<sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, it will cause a panic when the crises spread and increase difficulty in coping with the emergency, causing more severe consequences.

#### **3.2 The Basic Facilities Construction Work is Lag**

The state of urban infrastructure, dependence extent on urban infrastructure of the city and management capacity of urban plays a significant role in Occurrence, development and the results of disasters, which is one of the major elements that affect public security. The reasons of disasters in many frequent disasters-stricken area in the cities are closely linked with the urban basic facilities of

the state. The construction of basic facilities in many cities of our country is lagged, unreasonable planned, low level designed, incompetence. Basic facilities in some old cities are too aging to meet the increasing need of the developing of cities. In fact, the state of city basic facilities has become an important restricting factor in city security. The rainstorm in Zhengzhou, 2007, just exposed the cracks in the construction work of the basic facilities in Zhengzhou. Places where were slightly lower in the city were full of water, submerged many vehicles including buses. It had an influence on the citizen's trip.

#### **3.3 Crisis Management Mechanism Drop Behind**

In Our national government, horizontal management is decentralized, namely arrange corresponding department to manage the crisis especially according to the type of the emergency; and vertically is centralized management that the higher authorities unified command the work to meet an emergency and as local government play a supporting role. The government is lack of comprehensive strategies and policy planning on the city crisis management, and lack systematized and institutionalized education, training and organizational structures. We are also short of adjusting and coordinating mechanisms. In addition, our national present city crisis management organizations are decentralized and severed from top to bottom. The earthquake bureaus, the tax bureau, bureau of public security, the fire-fighting bureau, the public health bureau, the civil defense office and so on do things on their own way. There is neither an effective and forceful centralized planning department nor a collective, three-dimensional city crisis management organization system. The information diffusing channels are blocked. When public crisis such as city storm arises, it needs not only help from municipal construction department, but also other departments' cooperation and coordination to reduce the damage of the crisis to the lowest level<sup>[4]</sup>.

#### **3.4 The Supervising System is Absent**

As for city floods and other public crises, our country lacks not only a set of effective handling procedures and regulations, but also a perfect legal protection for the actions of the government. For example in the city basic

facilities' construction, some city basic facilities are repeated constructed and vicious competed, but other basic facilities haven't been constructed or maintained for a long time causing a serious waste. It is a general problem in our cities. In the aspect of storm forewarning, while countries have developed special regulations require departments to establish and improve disaster weather warning issued by the green channel, the forewarning information related to the safety of people's lives and possessions is sold as a kind of goods, due to lack of a corresponding supervising system. As a result that most citizens didn't receive the message of the storm and suffered a loss could be originally avoided. The establishment of legal norms may not necessarily be able to effectively protect the interests of the public. Only by establishing a corresponding supervising system and combine the supervising system and legal model can we protect citizens' interest practically.

#### **4 Countermeasures for Urban Crisis**

The next few decades continues to be boom times of Chinese economy, but the population, resources, and environment and disasters problems is even more prominent. In order to enhance the ability for the city to react and coordinate in the face of crisis, we must adopt the practical and effective measures to enhance the public crisis management in every direction.

##### **4.1 Perfect the City Basic Facilities**

The government should enhance the city ability to resist crises. The city basic facility construction system consists of city traffic, water supply, drainage power supply, gas supply, heating system, environmental sanitation and the engineering of guarding against disaster. Each has its own function and plays a part of protection in city's life productions and other economic and social activities. The city basic facilities' matching construction should take priority over other common constructions, and it is necessary in advance. For example, the urban drainage works consist of rainfall drainage works, sewage and drained works. The function of the rainfall drainage works is to collect and drain rainfall in time, to resist

floods and high tides, to avoid and drain the pools of water in the city proper. From the storm in Zhengzhou in 2007, we can find that one of the reasons which caused serious consequences was that the rainfall drainage works construction was lagged. So, the government should draw a lesson from it and take efforts to develop the construction of the city foundation infrastructure works. Besides, while developing the city foundation construction, we should make every effort to avoid destruction of the nature. At present the greatest impact on the natural ecological environment is the large-scale transition developing construction of human. And sustainable urban development does not require as much as possible in the space into a connected system, so that the ecological system could access to extension. For example, if the quantity of the urban sewage drained is larger than that of natural drainage, the consequence is obvious. The urban land or extensive land is covered with artificial hard paved floors; when it rains, the rainfall will be led into the river system. The two parts will be joined together and grow into floods inevitable. The floods will threaten people's life and possessions, cause soil erosion and make the nature get into a vicious circle. So the urban foundation facilities should be planned and constructed from the view of the ecological system. While enhancing the ability to meet an emergency, we can realize the sustainable development.

##### **4.2 Perfect the Forewarning Mechanism**

The forewarning mechanisms of crisis not only decrease the chances of the crisis, but also lay a good foundation for the government to deal with the crisis events. A comprehensive crisis management system, first of all have early-warning mechanisms and risk identification system, and timely collection, identify, analyze and process various kinds of information to effectively detect potential crises. it also has a keen insight of opportunities hidden in the crisis, seize the initiative for the crisis processing. The government crisis management system should be able to forecast the future and be on guard; in addition to that it should have the ability to fore-cast tendency like a procedure. So it can form several projects

to choose from, put forward a proposal and a goal for the forewarning of the government crisis management. It should also make ceaseless efforts to improve the forewarning, supervise and control system. To test whether the citizens received the forewarning information on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, the journalist visited 100 common citizens while is stochastic in the street among which more than eighty citizens said they hadn't received any forewarning information and only 11 citizens said they had received the forewarning information through various channels. No matter how the government explains the reasons, it is the government to blame themselves. Because the forewarning information was failed being sent out that caused many serious consequences. Therefore, the government should appoint corresponding, professional people and equip it with communications, transportation and engineering equipment. Through establishing the organization of networks, command systems, rescue teams, physical security, the follow-up support, comprehensive laws and regulations, social communication and education systems, to build a unified leadership, command and intelligence, decision-making more scientific and security in a unified technology to prevent the systematic urban crisis Emergency warning systems, enhance the city's comprehensive crisis management capabilities and ability to resist risks.

#### **4.3 To Establish an Integrated, Three-dimensional City Crisis Management Organization System**

Chinese current urban crisis management organization is basic fragmented, but the crisis is not sub-compartmentalization to attack the city, therefore, must establish a permanent, unified, powerful computer administration system of the city. The organization system should include the urban crisis management decision-making and command structure, research advisory bodies, information agencies, implementing agencies, etc. To establish a unified urban emergency command and dispatch centers. It include the establishment of an integrated information network and communication systems in order to unify the Alarm Center, Alarming platform, public security, fire fighting, first aid and transportation linkage sectors united in a complete set of

intelligent information processing and communication programs. The core of a unified city emergency command center is the integration of urban emergency service resources, a unified alarm, unified command, quick response, resource sharing, joint action, in order to provide the public with the appropriate emergency services for the city's public safety to provide a strong protection<sup>[5]</sup>.

#### **4.4 Strengthen Legal Construction, Perfect the Supervising System**

The national legal existence is closely related to crisis matter. Other laws should also be based on the crisis management legislations. The crisis management legislations should make a distinct stipulation on the confirmation and proclamation of the emergency state and the legal responsibilities of the government, all kinds of organizations, management and the public. It is not only beneficial to improving the government's ability in dealing with the crisis matter and the government can make a sufficient assessment of the crisis matter and prepare for it, but also beneficial to defending the government's legality and authority to the maximum during the public emergency period. The government should learn a lesson from the storm in Zhengzhou as soon as possible and enact the regulations in publishing the early warning of the meteorological disaster. The related departments which are in charge of giving out alarm and don't do it thus bring a loss to the people's life and possessions should be prosecuted and punished under the law.

### **5 Conclusions**

The cities are the comprehensive of human civilizations. With developing of the modern technological, urban functions should be more powerful. As long as the government proceed from the foundational interest of the people, perfect the urban foundational facilities construction work and the early warning mechanisms of city crisis, establish an effective, vigorous centralized planning department, enhance the communication and legalized construction, and perfect the corresponding supervising system, we will be able to improve the abilities for the city to meet various emergency and crisis

matter. Thus decrease the loss brought by the crisis to the lowest level, protect the security of citizen's life and possessions, improve government's capacity to win public trust, promote the harmonious and stable growth of the society.

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