

Capabilities and Challenges of Local Governments in Responding to Emergencies

-- Taking the Jiamusi stadium collapse as an example

Jun Shen

School of Public Administration, Sichuan University, Chengdu 610000, China

Abstract: China is now facing social structure transformation and social structure upgrading, more and more social problems are becoming more and more prominent, so there are more and more public emergencies, and the demand for the government's governance capacity is also higher and higher, and the importance of the local government's ability to cope with emergencies should not be ignored. Emergencies, such as traffic accidents, public health, extreme weather events, etc., often bring huge property losses and casualties to the society, seriously affecting economic development and social security. Under such circumstances, local governments, as the most direct and grass-roots government units, their ability to respond to emergencies is directly related to the control of disasters, the efficiency of rescue and the speed of post-disaster recovery. The study of local government's ability to respond to public emergencies is of great significance in enhancing the credibility of the government and maintaining social harmony and stability. In order to better improve the response capacity of local governments in dealing with public emergencies, this article starts from the theories of public management, and discusses the causes, mechanisms and effects of public emergencies in depth. In addition, the article also points out some challenges faced by local governments in coping with emergencies. Firstly, the early warning mechanism is imperfect, which makes local governments unable to predict and prevent the occurrence of similar events in advance. Secondly, there are insufficient rescue resources, especially in large-scale emergencies, and local governments need more rescue forces and resources to cope with them. Moreover, the lack of public participation is also a problem, which requires local governments to strengthen publicity, education and mobilization to improve the public's awareness of emergency response and self-rescue and mutual-rescue capabilities. Through the in-depth analysis of the collapse of the Jiamusi City Gymnasium, this paper points out the shortcomings of the local government in dealing with public emergencies, so as to provide new ideas for the local government governance, in order to better enhance the government's governance capacity and credibility, and to build a harmonious and stable social environment.

Keywords: Emergencies; Multiple Subjects; Governance Capacity.

1. The Background of the Study

1.1. Historical Background: Building Collapses and Remedial Actions in Many Parts of the Country

On April 29, 2022, 54 people, including 44 students of the Changsha Medical College, were killed in a collapse of a building built by residents in the Jinbenqiu neighborhood of Jingshanqiao Street, Wangcheng District, Changsha City, Hunan Province. The building was originally five-story or partially six-story, but the owner, Wu Zhiyong, raised it privately to eight or partially nine stories without any construction approval and set up a large number of support columns in the building structure in violation of the law. When the accident occurred, at about 12:20 p.m., the house suddenly collapsed, causing a large number of people to be buried. Immediately after the accident, the local government organized a large-scale rescue operation, but due to the seriousness of the house collapse and the difficulty of rescue, the rescue work continued for several days. After the accident, the State Council set up an accident investigation team to conduct an in-depth investigation into the accident. The results of the investigation showed that the accident was due to the owner's lack of regard for life, insatiable greed, without any construction approval procedures, the original building heightened to eight or part of the ninth floor. At the same time, the relevant testing organizations are irresponsible,

only to receive money without doing anything, and even openly do a group purchase wholesale "safety inspection report" of the exclusive business. In addition, the competent administrative departments at all levels have rent-seeking power, negligence in effective supervision and other issues, resulting in the supervision and restraint mechanism has become a "setup + vacuum". In the handling of the accident, a total of 62 people were held accountable, including four Chinese cadres. Wu Zhiyong, the owner of the house involved in the incident, and other 14 people suspected of the crime of major responsibility for the accident, the crime of providing false documents, and the crime of picking quarrels and provoking trouble, were dealt with by the public security organs in accordance with the law.[1].

At 14:52 on July 23, 2023, the roof of the gymnasium of the 34th middle school in Qiqihar City, located in Longsha District, Qiqihar City, Heilongjiang Province, collapsed. At the time of the accident, there were 19 people in the gymnasium, of which 4 people escaped on their own and 15 people were trapped. After rescue, all 15 trapped people were found, but unfortunately, 11 of them have been killed, another 4 people were injured. After the accident, the people's government of Heilongjiang province quickly set up by a number of departments composed of accident investigation group, to carry out in-depth investigation. After the investigation, the preliminary conclusion that the accident is a due to illegal repair and construction, illegal stacking of perlite, perlite stacking resulting in rainwater retention,

resulting in a substantial increase in the roof load of the stadium, exceeding the load-bearing limit, resulting in the instantaneous collapse of a major production safety liability accidents. The accident investigation team also identified problems in the safety supervision of the local party committee government and relevant departments, and analyzed the main lessons of the accident. In order to deal seriously with those responsible for the accident, 51 relevant responsible persons were held accountable, including 6 who were subjected to compulsory measures by the judicial authorities, 5 who were recommended to be transferred to the judicial authorities for handling, and 33 public officials who were recommended to be subjected to various degrees of punishment.

1.2. The Background of Reality: The Beginning and End of the Collapse of the Jiamusi City Gymnasium

The Jiamusi gymnasium collapse occurred on November 6, 2023, at the Yuecheng Sports Club in Huainan County, Jiamusi City, Heilongjiang Province. At the time of the accident, seven junior high school students were engaged in basketball activities at the sports club. According to reports, the students began playing basketball at the sports club at around 18:00 on the same day. At around 19:20, one of the students noticed something unusual on top of the gymnasium, informed his peers, and attempted to flee the scene. Unfortunately, the roof of the gymnasium collapsed shortly after their departure. Rescue operations were quickly initiated, with firefighters and other rescuers arriving at the scene to conduct a search and rescue operation. During the rescue operation, three students managed to save themselves, one of whom suffered minor injuries and two others were unharmed. However, four students were still trapped in the rubble. [2]Rescuers were able to rescue one of the students at around 19:50 hours and immediately took him to the hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, the remaining three students were rescued, due to serious injuries, after the rescue efforts unfortunately died. According to the preliminary investigation, the cause of the collapse of the gymnasium may be related to the persistent snowstorm. Previously, Birnam County meteorological department has issued a snowstorm red warning signal, and recommended that the relevant units and individuals to take the necessary protective measures. Government departments also issued notices to suspend classes and businesses, but unfortunately, the Yuecheng Sports Club was not closed, leading to the tragedy. After the accident, the governments of Jiamusi City and Huainan County responded quickly by setting up the "11-6" Yuecheng Sports Club Roof Collapse Disposal Leading Group, under which a number of specialized rescue and treatment groups were set up, including on-site search and rescue, order maintenance, aftercare, accident investigation and medical treatment. They urgently dispatched city and county firefighters, forest firefighters and other rescue forces, fully engaged in rescue work, and did a good job in the aftermath of the work.

2. Problems in the Governance of Emergencies in Jiamusi City

The Jiamusi City is located in the eastern part of Heilongjiang Province. According to the results of the seventh national census, the resident population of Jiamusi City is more than 2.15 million people. In this stadium collapse

accident, Jiamusi city government and Huainan county government quickly responded to the "11.6" Yuecheng sports club roof collapse accident set up a leading group, under a number of specialized rescue team and processing team, including on-site search and rescue, order maintenance, aftercare, accident investigation and medical treatment, etc., and emergency dispatch of firefighters and other rescue forces around the country. And emergency dispatch of firefighters and other rescue forces around the world, fully engaged in the rescue work of the accident, and do a good job in the aftermath of the accident. However, the fact that this accident occurred only a few months after the Qiqihar accident shows that the government still has the following problems in responding to public emergencies.[3]

2.1. Inadequate Government Regulation

In the Jiamusi gymnasium incident, although the Government had strengthened its supervision of the building prior to the first accident, it fell short of form and revealed many deficiencies, including a lack of supervision. The lack of government supervision was limited by the quality of construction, which was reportedly characterized by obvious problems in the construction of the Jiamusi Stadium, the use of substandard materials for the structural parts of the building, and improper construction techniques, which led to structural weaknesses, as well as by the fact that the building was not constructed in an environmentally sound manner. The poor maintenance and supervision of the gymnasium is also reflected. [4]It is also reflected in poor maintenance and supervision, as it is reported that there are loopholes in the maintenance and supervision of the gymnasium, and that the regular inspection and maintenance of the building have not been given sufficient attention, leading to problems that have not been detected and solved in a timely manner, such as the accumulation of perlite and the accumulation of snow. Inadequate supervision by the relevant departments is also an important issue, as the safety inspection and acceptance standards for gymnasiums have not been effectively implemented, and the responsibilities of the supervisory departments lack clarity. Another direct cause was the severe weather. On the day of the accident, Jiamusi City was experiencing extremely severe weather conditions, with high winds and heavy rainfall that may have had a significant impact on the structure of the stadium. Such weather factors may have exacerbated the structural vulnerability of the gymnasium, leading to the collapse. These aspects could be fairly indicative of poor governmental supervision.[5].

2.2. Inadequate Governmental Contingency Plans

In the Jiamusi stadium incident, although the government initiated the emergency plan at the first time, the incident also revealed the obvious inadequacy of the emergency plan, which was firstly reflected in the imperfect formulation of the emergency plan. Before the incident, the government did not formulate a detailed and practical emergency plan for the various types of risks that the stadium might face, such as extreme weather, fire, earthquake, etc. Moreover, the government's emergency drills were also insufficient before the incident. Moreover, the government's emergency drills were not enough before the accident. Even if the emergency plan was formulated, if regular emergency drills were not carried out, people might still have insufficient understanding and implementation of the emergency plan, and it would be

difficult for them to make the right response in an emergency situation. Another important point is that the government's emergency resources are insufficient: in the event of an incident, there is a lack of necessary emergency equipment and materials, such as fire-fighting equipment, first aid equipment, evacuation tools, etc., resulting in three of the four people rescued from the incident being seriously injured and killed. And in this humming process of emergency response speed is also slow, in the event of the occurrence of the incident, because of the poor transmission of information, coordination and other reasons, resulting in a slow emergency response speed, delayed the rescue of the best time, buried several people in half an hour before they were rescued. There is also a lack of emergency rescue capacity, after the incident, because of insufficient number of rescue personnel, inadequate skills and other reasons, resulting in poor rescue results, increasing casualties. Lastly, the emergency rescue command system is not sound: after the incident, the lack of an effective emergency rescue command system led to confusion in rescue operations and the inability to organize rescue effectively, resulting in the loss of personnel and property.[6].

2.3. Inadequate Coordination Mechanisms between Government and Citizen Self-organization Networks

In the Jiamusi stadium incident, the Jiamusi city government took a variety of measures to work with citizens to respond to the accident and disaster, and achieved significant results. However, the whole process still reflects the lack of initiative and foresight in the coordination between the government and the citizens' self-organized network, firstly, it is reflected in the lack of public education and training, before the accident, although the government has organized relevant education and training to make people aware of the hazards of illegal construction and disaster weather, and the relevant knowledge has been added to the curriculum of primary and middle schools and the disaster prevention drills were held etc., but in the concrete work, it is just a formality. However, in the concrete work, it is just a formality, and the relevant departments, in order to cope with the inspection from the higher level, have not really realized the education and guidance for the citizens. The accident also reflected a lack of after-action assessment and feedback. In this accident also reflects the insufficiency of assessment and feedback after the incident, after the Qiqihar stadium incident, although the Government organized a number of building safety assessment and inspection, but the results of the inspection lack of corresponding feedback, not to mention the lack of visual form for citizens to recognize the degree of damage to the building and the degree of disaster prevention, that the Qiqihar incident is only a case, so that the side of the safety inspection is neglected.

3. Analysis of the Causes of the Problem of Governance of Events at the Jiamusi Stadium

3.1. Lack of Specialized Technical Support from the Government

In Jiamusi City, the collapse of the stadium accident, the government lacked the appropriate professional and technical support. In the government of all major construction facilities

in the safety inspection, the lack of appropriate professional and technical support, especially the lack of relevant professionals, in the safety inspection is often departmental leaders visit type investigation, accompanied by the main person in charge of the local inspection. This actually strengthens the role of the person in charge, weakening the role of professional and technical personnel, in the inspection, the relevant leaders of the safety factor and other cognitive lack of relevant construction managers, supervisors tend to be more aware of the specific information of the building, but such personnel are often absent from the scene of the inspection, resulting in the failure to detect the problem in a timely manner. The government's professional assessment capability is also inadequate, especially when it comes to underestimating the damage caused by extreme weather, which leads to laxity in safety precautions. After the accident, the government's professional rescue capability was also insufficient. Half an hour after the accident, rescuers rescued one student, while the remaining three students died of their injuries after being rescued. The Government's ability to govern and its credibility will be jeopardized if it is denied the relevant professional and technical support for a long period of time in such public emergencies.[7].

3.2. The Absence of a Role for Industry Associations

In the Jiamusi stadium accident, the local construction industry associations also actively participated in the safety situation of the mapping, safety standards, but the binding force of the industry associations is still insufficient, in this accident, first of all in order to industry self-regulation ability is insufficient, the industry associations should play a role in self-management and self-restraint, but in this accident, due to the industry associations of self-regulation ability is insufficient, resulting in some of the provisions of the regulations were not corrected in a timely manner, such as building safety standards did not adjust to the specific building conditions, especially in crowded places like campuses. However, in this accident, due to the lack of self-regulation ability of the industry association, some non-compliance behaviors could not be corrected in time, for example, the building safety standards could not be adjusted according to the situation of specific buildings, especially in crowded places such as campuses. Secondly, it is also reflected in the insufficiency of professional guidance ability, industry associations should provide professional guidance and services to help member units to improve their business ability and service quality. Insufficient capacity in this area may affect the quality and safety of construction projects. [8]The peak load-bearing capacity and disaster prevention capability of the gymnasium in this accident were obviously not professionally and reasonably assessed, thus leading to the tragedy. More importantly, it is also reflected in the lack of risk prevention ability, industry associations should have a sense of risk prevention, and be able to detect and prevent potential risks in a timely manner. Before this accident, the industry knew that extreme weather would occur, and the government also made relevant notices, requiring major public places to close down, but the stadium was still open when the accident occurred, in which the industry association obviously did not play the role of risk warning. Inadequate capacity in this area may result in major risks not being effectively controlled.

3.3. Inadequate Social Monitoring Mechanisms

Prior to this accident, although the local people had spontaneously carried out safety inspections of local buildings, the scope of what the local people were able to inspect was very limited, especially in the absence of a mature monitoring mechanism in the process of building construction, for example, in the case of unauthorized building construction, the people had limited ways of reporting, or even dared not report, and so on. In terms of construction bidding, the degree of information disclosure is low, and it is difficult for people to obtain relevant information about developers. The imperfection of the social supervision mechanism leads to low public participation, an important part of the social supervision mechanism is public participation. The safety of public facilities. If the public does not pay much attention to the safety condition of public facilities, or there is no effective way to participate in the supervision, then it is difficult to realize effective social supervision. At the same time, the media supervision is not enough: the media is an important force for social supervision, if the media supervision is not enough, it may lead to some problems being covered up, and cannot be exposed and solved in time. And the monitoring mechanism is not transparent. And the monitoring mechanism is not transparent, if the monitoring mechanism is not transparent, the public is difficult to understand the process and results of the supervision, also can not evaluate the effectiveness of the supervision and feedback. In addition, the supervision is not strong enough, if the supervision is not strong enough, it will lead to some irregularities can not be investigated and dealt with in time, thus increasing the probability of accidents. In order to improve these problems, it is necessary to strengthen public participation, improve the monitoring of the media, increase the transparency of the monitoring mechanism, increase the supervision to ensure that all public facilities can be effectively monitored and managed. At the same time, there is also a need to strengthen safety education for the public and to enhance their safety awareness and self-protection capabilities.[9].

4. Conclusion

The occurrence of disaster time threatens the life and safety of the public, and once it occurs, it often causes irreparable consequences and losses, and even causes people's fear in a short period of time, affecting social stability. In the handling of public emergencies, local governments assume the leading role in dealing with accidents, local governments must deal with accidents in a timely manner, and do a good job in the aftermath of the accident, to prevent similar accidents from recurring, while doing a good job in a timely manner to guide public opinion. However, in the actual occurrence of accidents, we find that the local government in dealing with accidents often still have a lot of shortcomings, such as government supervision is not in place, the government's

emergency response plan is insufficient, the government and the citizens of self-organization network coordination mechanism is not sound, etc., and cause the above shortcomings of the reasons from the government and society, as well as the industry and the media and other aspects, but the main lack of professional technical support in the government, the role of industry associations, the role of social supervision mechanism is not perfect, etc However, the main reasons for these shortcomings are the lack of professional technical support from the government, the absence of the role of industry associations, and the imperfection of social supervision mechanisms. In order to overcome the above problems, the government must carry out vigorous reforms in all aspects to improve its response and handling ability in unexpected accidents, so as to better enhance the government's governance ability and credibility, and to promote the harmonious and stable development of the society.

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