

# Sustainable Development of China's Religious Charity Policy

Subjects: **Public Administration**

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To effectively implement religious public welfare and charity activity policies, it is necessary to balance the tensions of all parties and create a strong executive force. In view of the current weak locality of religious charity policies, the evasive attitudes and behaviors of religious charity organizations towards policies, and the multiple supervisory layers of government departments, there is an urgent need to establish a policy implementation model led by the government, the main body of the organization, the support of the believers, and the mutual benefit of the community. The legislature attaches great importance to the establishment of a complete system of institutions, the formation of efficient enforcement teams by law enforcement agencies, adherence to legal administration, scientific administration, and innovative management methods and concepts, and creates an environment conducive to the healthy development of a religious charity. Religious charity organizations attach importance to organizational operations and professional services; linking social resources legally and efficiently; strengthening the cooperation and exchange of technology, services, and experience in the field of charity; promoting the professional development of religious charities; and changing religious charity organizations or activities from relying solely on religious beliefs and the status quo of providing services with enthusiasm.

implementation process

religious charity policy

## 1. Making Policies Scientifically and Standardising the Religious Charity Policy System

The legislature and law enforcement agencies should understand the regularity of religious charity work at this stage, accelerate the pace of legislation, and introduce a series of high-quality and practical policy systems for religious charity activities. First, in the policy agenda and formulation stage, by clarifying the interests of religious charity organizations, religious sites, and individuals, the government can reasonably divide the responsibility boundaries of executive agencies and establish a policy approach that encourages regulations instead of restricting supervision. In the process of formulating and implementing religious and other social welfare policies, religious charitable organizations are included in the target group, and religious charities and charitable activities should be treated equally. Second, the party and government should upgrade effective religious activity policies that have been proven in practice to legal procedures and improve the freedom of religious beliefs, the development of religious charity activities, the registration of religious organizations as legal entities, and the taxation and accounting of religious organizations. Finally, in response to the current serious convergence of local religious policies, the eastern and central regions, where a religious charity has developed rapidly and has strong

resources, are encouraged to formulate relevant normative policy documents, highlighting legal registration, legal activities, and tax incentive policies. In western provinces and cities that are strongly influenced by ethnic religions, are weak in philanthropy, and relatively underdeveloped economically, encouragement, support, supervision, and guidance should be provided with the aim of guiding regional policies to adapt to social welfare, charity, and the rule of law in religious affairs.

## 2. Strict Law Enforcement: Strengthening the Development of Law Enforcement Teams

Due to the current political and legal environment, law enforcement agencies need to change the originally planned administrative management methods, strengthen the construction of law enforcement subjects <sup>[1]</sup>, and innovate the governance methods for managing religious affairs in accordance with the law. Examples of such changes are as follows. 1) Innovating the governance methods for managing religious charity affairs in accordance with the law. Neither overall management nor management by religious groups should function independently. Instead, an administrative agency should clarify and assign the functions and responsibilities for each system, ensuring a coordinated management of the religious affairs; thus, changing the phenomenon of absence, prevarication, and lack of management in the law enforcement process. 2) Preventing excessive intervention by some departments and the abuse of administrative power. 3) Improving the legal literacy of religious law enforcement teams and adherence to the concept of administration according to law, especially by strengthening the training of grassroots religious staff.

## 3. Promote the Professionalization of Institutions and Management

At present, most religious charity organizations in China usually only engage in social charity from the perspective of personal beliefs and lack professionalism. Therefore, professional scholars and policymakers need to jointly discuss and construct service policies that can comply with and promote professional and cultural sensitivity, and strengthen value clarification, respect, client centers, inclusivity, and innovation in professional practice. Religious charity service organizations focus on improving the professionalism of internal staff service theory and practice, and the recruitment of personnel has shifted from focusing on religious background to professional background. They also create conditions for religious social service organizations to communicate with each other and gradually incorporate them into unified industry management.

On the one hand, open space in terms of policies to encourage the establishment of their own coordination and communication mechanisms within the religious community; on the other hand, religious and quasi-religious social service organizations should join a unified industry association according to their business fields, and conduct professional information exchanges and upgrade training, according to industry rules and standards, achieving industry self-discipline.

## Referencing Useful Experiences to Build a New Policy Implementation Model

Hong Kong is a typical representative of developed religious social services and is a model for the coexistence of multiple religions. Religious social organizations respond to and deal with various social problems and needs, at the same time providing experience and reference for the policy development of religious social organizations in mainland China [2]. Hong Kong's policies for religious social organizations have a complete set of systems in terms of identity registration, service provision, tax management, preferential treatment, personnel appointments, and supervision and inspection. "Societies Ordinance" and "Companies Ordinance" and "A Tax Guide for Charitable Institutions and Trusts of a Public Character" issued by the Inland Revenue Department requires the organization to determine its type and structure, without restrictions on religious attributes, which guarantees the freedom of organizations to carry out charitable activities and rights, to encourage religious groups and believers to play a role in the charity activities. Since the entry threshold for charitable organizations is relatively easy, Hong Kong government uses strict taxation and fiscal policies to ensure that religious forces do not deviate from government goals in charitable activities, and to achieve transparency and legitimacy of charitable organizations. In addition, Hong Kong government bids public services in a market-oriented form, stimulating religious charitable organizations to form modern organizations in the process of enhancing the professionalism of their organizations and personnel, and finally forming a relationship in which the government and religious charitable organizations pull each other and work together. By comparing the implementation process of policies in Hong Kong, it can be concluded that there are insufficient designs in the pertinence, clarity, operability, and effectiveness of policy rules for religious charity activities in mainland China. The separation of religion and service, the integration of religious resources and government resources, and internal review unification with external supervision are important issues faced by religious charity groups during the process of social transformation. By learning from mature policy implementation experiences and models, at home and abroad, the current conflicts between religion and charity, religious social organizations, and government management and supervision departments, policy content, and the development of religious social organizations can be resolved, thus, guiding religious charities on the road of sound development.

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## References

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