Achievements of Comprehensive Human Development in Vietnam After 35 Years of Reform

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Abstract: *The Communist Party of Vietnam has always attached great importance to the position and role of people in the development of the country. Since the implementation of Doi Moi, especially in the context of industrialization, modernization, and deepening international integration, our Party has placed comprehensive human development as the goal of the country's reform. The Party and State have adopted guidelines, policies, and solutions for comprehensive human development in Vietnam to successfully implement the strategy of developing high-quality human resources to serve the cause of national renewal, promote national development, promote human resource development, and enhance industrialization, modernization, and international integration. We have made remarkable achievements.*

Keywords: *awareness; achievement; comprehensive human development; Vietnam.*

1. Perception of the Communist Party of Vietnam on comprehensive human development

President Hồ Chí Minh was the first to apply Marxism-Leninism to the specific historical situation of Vietnam. He affirmed, "People are the most precious capital, taking care of people's happiness is the highest goal of our regime." "For the sake of ten years, we must plant trees, for the sake of 100 years, we should cultivate people." The thought of building comprehensive human development has become a consistent and transparent thought throughout his revolutionary activities.

Aware of the role and position of human resources in the process of national development, the Communist Party of Vietnam has adopted Marxism-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh Thought as a guide on human issues and comprehensive human development. The "Brief Political Platform" of 1930 defined the goal of "liberation of workers and peasants from the yoke of capitalism." The "Political Thesis of the Indochina Communist Party" also defined goals such as "To overthrow the French imperialism, feudalism and landlords," to allocate land to the middle and poor peasants, "Eliminate current taxes," "Eight hours a working day," improving the lives of… "boatmen and the toiling masses," and implementing "Equal rights for men and women." All the goals stated in the important documents of the Communist Party since its founding are to ensure politically and economically the comprehensive development of the people.

When commencing the construction of socialism in the North, President Hồ Chí Minh advocated that to build socialism, first, there must be a new socialist people. According to his thought, socialism will create socialist people, socialist people are the subject of the whole cause of building socialism; building a new human being requires training and building a person to develop comprehensively in virtue, intelligence, health, and beauty. The criteria of the new socialist man is a person with socialist thought, a socialist morality and lifestyle, a socialist manner and capable of mastering these criteria.

After the country's reunification, the Party Central Committee issued a series of guidelines, policies, and solutions to develop Vietnamese people comprehensively in both mental and physical strength, in terms of workability and socio-political positivity, in terms of life ideals, lifestyle, intellectual capacity, ethics, and cultural bravery, to successfully implement the strategy of developing high-quality human resources to serve the country's reform, and accelerate industrialization, modernization, and international integration. In 1976 the Fourth Congress of the Party defined the path of building a unified country advancing towards socialism, which specified "Building a socialist new man; abolishing the human system that exploits people, eradicating poverty and backwardness." Since the late 1980s people have been considered the center, the driving force and the goal of socio-economic development.

Implementing the Party's guidelines and policies based on Marxism-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh Thought, from the reform until now, the issue of comprehensive human development has always been considered a problem by the Party and Government. Our Party has always determined the importance of building and developing people. In "The Platform for National Construction in the Transitional Period Towards Socialism," supplemented and developed in 2011, the Communist Party of Vietnam determined that, "The socialist society that our people are building is a society: rich people, strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization; owned by the people; has a highly developed economy based on modern production forces and appropriate progressive production relations; has an advanced culture imbued with national identity; the people have a prosperous, free, and happy life, and have conditions for comprehensive development." At the same time it asserted, "Building a comprehensively developed Vietnamese people must become a goal of the development strategy of Vietnam"[(1)]. Thus, the platform emphasizes the requirement to promote the human factor based on ensuring fairness and equality in citizenship rights and obligations, combining economic growth with social progress in orientation and general social development.

Especially since the beginning of the 21st century, the Communist Party of Vietnam's ideology on comprehensive human development has been fully expressed and increasingly perfected through the documents of the congress. The goal of building the Vietnamese people is to develop them comprehensively politically,

ideologically, intellectually, morally, physically, and creatively, with a sense of community, compassion, tolerance, and with respect for love, a cultured lifestyle, and harmonious relations in the family, community and society. It has always been the cross-sectional goal of our Party and has been continuously supplemented and perfected through the congresses.

The 10th Party Congress of 2006 continued to state the goals of, "Building and perfecting the values, personality and people of Vietnam, while protecting and promoting the national cultural identity in the industrialization and modernization period, and international economic integration"(2). It also affirmed that "…Reform must be for the benefit of the people, stemming from reality, and being sensitive to new things. Revolution is the cause of the people, for the people, and by the people. The opinions, aspirations, and initiatives of the people play an important role in the formation of the Party's reform policy." In that spirit, the 11th Congress held in 2011 once again affirmed the goal of, "Focusing on building the Vietnamese people's personality in terms of ideas, intelligence, morality, lifestyle, physical well-being, national pride, social responsibility, and observance of the law, especially among the young generation"(3). The 12th National Congress of 2016 determined that "Building the Vietnamese people for comprehensive development must become an objective of the development strategy."(4)

On the one hand, the current 4th Industrial Revolution creates favorable conditions and opportunities for development but also causes the construction and development of people to face many new difficulties and challenges. Especially important is the development of human resources for improving the quality of Vietnamese people to meet their practical needs. The changing international and domestic contexts have been posing problems in both theory and practice that have required the Communist Party of Vietnam to continue to supplement, develop, and orient the country for comprehensive human development. Summarizing the experience of 35 years of reform, the 13th Congress emphasized, "…in all work of the Party and State, we must always deeply grasp the concept of "people are the root;" must always truly believe, respect and promote the people's right to mastery, persistently implement the motto "people know, people discuss, people do, people monitor, people supervise, people benefit…;" at the same time affirming that "The people are the center and the subject of the reform, construction and defense of the Fatherland; all undertakings and policies must really come from the people's life, aspirations, rights and interests, taking the people's happiness and well-being as a goal to strive for."

It is necessary to "make the most of the human factor," considering "the human being as the center, the subject, the main resource and the goal of development." The 13th Congress associates comprehensive human development with realizing the goal of building a society of "rich people, strong country, democracy, justice and civilization…" "people have a prosperous, free, happy life and have conditions

for comprehensive development." In the closing remarks of the 13th National Congress, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong emphasized, "Can it be done or not, will it turn the Resolution into a vivid reality, will it create material wealth? Bringing wealth and happiness for the people or not is the actual success of the Congress"(5). A progressive and just society with full economic, political, cultural, social, and environmental conditions for comprehensive human development are the true values of socialism. And it is also the goal and path that President Hồ Chí Minh, our Party, and the people have chosen. It is consistently and persistently pursued.

2. Some achievements in comprehensive human development in Vietnam after 35 years of reform

The achievements of comprehensive human development after 35 years of Doi Moi (Reform) have proven that our Party has become more and more aware of the role of the people in socio-economic development. People are both goals, as well as the driving force of socio-economic development. Humans are both products and subjects of history. From that awareness, our Party and State have always cared, nurtured, and promoted the human factor for the sake of a rich people, a strong country, a democratic, fair, and civilized society; and at the same time identified humans as the center and also the subject of all development. Based on those strategic perceptions, the building of a new socialist human being in our country in recent years has also achieved several positive aspects. People's lives are increasingly improved. Culture, education, and training in science, and technology have made many advances. The building of an advanced culture imbued with national identity in combination with absorbing the cultural quintessence of mankind has made much progress. The protection of natural resources and the environment is increasingly focused. The life of all social strata has also been significantly improved.

From an economic point of view

The socialist-oriented market economy, led by the people, plays the driving role that Vietnam builds not only to achieve its economic goals but more importantly its social goals, which are for the comprehensive human development of Vietnam, putting people first, and making people the driving force behind the goal of development. Based on the guiding views of the Party, since the beginning of the Doi Moi process begun in the second half of the 1980s, Vietnam has made great achievements of historical significance in the economic field. Our country's economy is developing at a high speed with per capita income increasing significantly. Per capita income in 1986 reached about 100 USD. By 2010 GDP per capita had surpassed 1,000 USD per year, marking the start of Vietnam's entrance to the group of middle-income countries. And by 2020 after nearly 35 years of Doi Moi, our country's GDP per capita reached 2,779 USD. Especially in the 2016-2020 period, despite severe natural disasters, storms and floods, and raging epidemics,

which severely affected all aspects of socio-economic life, the average growth rate of GDP still reached about 6 %, and labor productivity increased by 6%[6]. The results of economic growth have had a positive impact on improving human capacity and creating conditions for people to participate more in economic development.

From a political point of view

Since the founding of the country, Vietnam has not stopped making efforts to build a State of the people, by the people and for the people. First, while building a socialist rule-of-law state, improving the quality of life, enhancing the legal system, and the mechanisms and policies to strongly promote socialist democracy. At the same time, it is building a clean and strong socialist rule-of-law State of Vietnam. It is also working to perfect judicial reform, strengthen the legal system and ensure social discipline, while creating mechanisms to be exemplary in following the law and ensuring the practice of socialist democracy by Party committees, Party organizations, authorities, and the Vietnamese Fatherland Front of Vietnam and socio-political organizations at all levels of cadres and party members.

After the 1946 Constitution, human rights were constantly expanded in that and the following revised Constitutions. The 2013 Constitution, especially, has a separate chapter on human rights, citizens' rights and obligations. In addition, more than 100 laws and codes related to human rights have been newly promulgated, amended, or supplemented. The Party and State have applied many specific measures to ensure people's rights in civil, political, economic, and socio-cultural fields.

With the axiom "people know, people discuss, people do, people inspect, people monitor, people benefit," and "ensure all state power belongs to the people,"[7] the people are allowed to participate, contribute and pay attention to all undertakings, lines, and policies of the Party and State. They also participate directly in all activities of the country, expressed by participating through the National Assembly and through socio-political organizations and mass media.

From the viewpoint of culture and education

Aware of the great role of culture in comprehensive human development, our Party and State have always cared about leading, directing, and implementing guidelines and policies based on the view that culture lies at the foundation of the country. The spirit of society is both a goal and a driving force for the sustainable development of the country. Our Party determined that building the Vietnamese people to develop comprehensively is closely linked with "building an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity," "closely and harmoniously linking traditional values with modern values," and with "comprehensive and synchronous development of cultural fields, cultural environment, and a rich, diverse, civilized and healthy cultural life"[8].

Over the past 35 years, we have had many innovations and creations in the field of culture, striving to fulfill the task of building Vietnamese culture and people

to meet the requirements of sustainable development of the country. We have attained many achievements in culturally comprehensive human development, one of which is promoting the building of a healthy environment and cultural life. The quality and efficiency of cultural activities have been improved. The maintenance and promotion of traditional cultural identities and distinctive and rich cultures of regions and ethnic minorities are concerns of the Party and State. The identification and elimination of harmful cultural customs and the elimination of backward and negative cultural practices in social life have achieved many good results. This is especially true of cultural industries such as cinema, publishing, fashion, fine arts, photography, performing arts, event organization, etc. It has developed rapidly in recent years, bringing the value of cultural products to the people. Achievements in the field of culture have contributed to inspiring Vietnamese people to develop comprehensively in literature, body and beauty. In addition, traditional culture including the culture of ethnic minorities are now in focus. The country has invested in development, making a worthy contribution to the cause of conservation, and affirming the values and identity of Vietnamese culture. The people's cultural and spiritual life, freedom of religion, and beliefs have also been restored and respected.

In terms of learning, comprehensive education to develop Vietnamese people in virtue, intelligence, body, and beauty has always been the guiding thought of our Party and State. As a leading national policy, the field of education and training not only serves the development of human resources and productive forces, but the top task must be to develop a comprehensive human being both materially and physically, focusing on their spiritual, intellectual, talent, physical, moral, lifestyle and creative aspirations. The legal framework for innovation in education and training is becoming more and more complete. The National Assembly has passed laws amending and supplementing some articles of the Higher Education Law in 2018 and the Education Law in 2019. The quality of education from preschool to higher education has been maintained and improved.

The rate of students going to school and completing the primary program after five years is 92.08%, ranking at the top of ASEAN. In 2019 the results of the Program to assess the learning outcomes of primary school students in Southeast Asia (SEA-PLM) show that the quality of Vietnam's primary education ranks among the top of ASEAN countries. Education results at the upper secondary level are increasingly improved, especially among Vietnamese students who participate in regional and international Olympic competitions. Their record shows they always win many high prizes. A Vietnamese presence in research indexes and international publications has also increased sharply. For the first time, Vietnam has four higher education institutions ranked in the top 1,000 best universities in the world. There are 11 Vietnamese higher education institutions in the list of top 500 universities in Asia[9]. In addition, the work of educating students in

political, ideological, ethical, and life skills has made many positive changes. In the new General Education Program, the content of ethics, lifestyle, and life skills education continues to be focused on and implemented throughout all subjects and educational activities.

From the social point of view

Our Party has established that "Economic growth must be associated with social progress and justice in every step throughout the development process…" with "Good implementation of social policies, ensuring social security and welfare, human security, etc. to improve the people's quality of life and happiness"[10]. Economic growth has created favorable conditions for Vietnam to find better solutions to the social problems posed by people in reality. Over the years, the Party and State have prioritized investment in human development in areas such as health care, job creation, alleviation of poverty, and incentives for people with meritorious services and social assistance. They have effectively and strictly managed social development, ensured social security and human security making progress in social justice while building a healthy and civilized cultural and social environment. They have focused on improving the quality of health services, the quality of life of the population, while linking the population with these developments. They have paid attention to all people, ensured policies on labor, employment, and income, carefully implement social welfare and social security. The Party has also skillfully implemented social policies, ensure social and human security, created strong changes in social development management, realized social progress and justice, and improved the quality of life and happiness index of the Vietnamese people.

Disparity on the income inequality measure of consumption (GINI) has increased but is relatively low in the ASEAN region. Vietnam has also been doing well in gender equality. With a Gender Development Index value of 0.997, Vietnam ranks 65th out of 162 countries and is the highest among the five-country groups. In the field of employment, many solutions to create jobs and increase income for employees have been implemented. The unemployment rate of the urban labor force has decreased gradually from 4.5% in 2010 to 3% in 2020 [11].

In the field of poverty reduction, the Party and State have synchronously implemented many multi-dimensional, inclusive and sustainable poverty reduction measures and achieved positive results. The rate of poor households has decreased continuously from 30% in 1992 to 8.3% in 2004. In the period 2010-2020, the rate of poor households decreased rapidly, from 14.2% in 2010 to 7% in 2015, according to the poverty line for the period 2011-2015. From 2016 through 2020 it reduced further from 9.2% to less than 3%, according to the multidimensional poverty line [12]. In the medical field, the nationwide medical examination and treatment network has been reorganized, and the grassroots medical organization system has been strengthened, proving itself capable of providing better primary

health care for the people. Vietnam is internationally evaluated as one of the few countries with a complete health network, organized throughout the villages, and is a model that many countries around the world are interested in learning from.

From the environmental point of view

The environment is closely related to and directly affects the people's quality of life, health, and development. The view on environmental protection and sustainable development has been endorsed and discussed by our Party and State in a series of documents such as the National Plan on Environment and Sustainable Development 1991-2000, the Law on Protection of the Environment in 1993 (amended and supplemented in 2005), Directive 36 dated June 25, 1998, of the 8th Politburo, Resolution 41 of the 9th Politburo from November 15, 2004, the Law on environmental protection in 2005, Strategic orientation for sustainable development in Vietnam (2006), National environmental protection strategy to 2010 with an orientation to 2020. Most recently, in the document of the 13th National Congress, our Party has introduced the policy of "proactively and effectively adapting to climate change and reducing natural disasters…" "sustainable management, exploitation and resources using and focusing on environmental protection, ensuring sustainable development…"(13) to promote sustainable development associated with environmental protection. Environmental protection in the past years has achieved many positive results, sources of pollution are being controlled, environmental quality has been improved, and nature conservancy and biodiversity have made much progress. Monitoring, inspection, and handling of violations from causing environmental pollution have achieved many good results.

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