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Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on social welfare

This is a piece of basic research that aims at building and improving a system of social welfare science and sociology in Vietnam.

The authors have defined the concept “social welfare” and based their analysis on it. Based on historical documents they have examined and analyzed Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on social welfare in accordance with the following stages:

1. The period before the August revolution of 1945
2. The period the August revolution of 1945 and resistance war against French colonialists (1945-1953)
3. The socialism building period (1954-1969).

The authors' analysis has shown that Ho Chi Minh's thoughts are expressed clearly in all measures, solutions and forms that aims to effectively implement the main domains of social welfare. These thoughts are based on the idea of mobilization of comprehensive strength of the whole population's great solidarity, of government system, and local authorities at different levels, of social organizations, ethnic groups, religions and all the population.

NGUYEN HUU MINH

Some social aspects that are of research concern in processes of administrative reform

Administrative reform is an important part of the renovation carried out by Vietnam's communist party and government in the management transition from a central-planned economy to socialist-oriented market one. In recent years the administrative reform has contributed to raised production capacity of the whole society, given impetus to economic growth and created favorable conditions for Vietnam's integration into global economy.

However, the administrative reform has been facing some great challenges. For instance, the administrative system still has had a lot of weakness, the apparatus and the staff of public servants have not met requirements of the renovation. To identify some root causes of this state of affairs, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive studies of the implementation processes of the administrative reform. Based on recent empirical data, the author has pointed out sociological aspects that are of research concern from the following issues: the extension of people's participation, settling administrative procedures, and the creation and development of public servants and cadres at grassroots levels.

The topics may be as follows: proper form for people participation in management of local socio-political life; advantages and disadvantages of direct democracy and representative democracy at grassroots; mechanism for effective functioning of the Regulation on democracy at grassroots while traditions of the so-called “village democracy” are persistent; socio-economic implications of public administrative services in processes of the administrative reform; impacts of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors on staff reduction, etc.

Conducting sociological studies of the above-mentioned issues may contribute to finding solutions that speed up and implement more effectively the administrative reform process in Vietnam.

HOANG CHI BAO

On Relations between commune and village, management and self-management

Starting from good awareness of theoretical and practical premises of renovation of the political system in countryside, the author has deepened his analysis of the following issues

- commune and village, management and self-management in countryside
- a reforming of local authorities at a commune level and renovation of training for grassroots cadres at commune and village levels as a necessary condition for improving the management and self-management in countryside.

The author supposes that strong organization and good cadres are conditions for a strong revolution movement and they create talents and initiatives, favorable environment for democracy implementation and bringing mass's initiatives into play. This is a key issue for political system in countryside at present.

BUI QUANG DUNG

Dispute resolution among people: a glimpse from a qualitative study

This article has briefly presented the results of a qualitative study on disputes and dispute resolution in Vietnam that was conducted in October and November, 2001 in Soc Trang, Quang Ngai and Hai Duong provinces.

Sentiment-oriented life style rules over Vietnamese people, especially in rural areas. Most people consider disputes and conflicts as something "negative". Using collective "strength" as well as relying on mass mobilization, agitation and explanation is the consistent principle in resolving disputes of most of the social institutions involved in the resolution of disputes. The fact reveals a specific feature of group life, which regards the nature of this life as unification and harmony, and any threat that can erode this social unification is negative.

Till now the basic social reference of peasants is mainly their village community. The view of peasants of disputes presents the sentiment-oriented life style on the one hand, and it relates to a certain social space: village on the other. A general proof of this is the behaviors of most people, particularly in rural areas, who usually try their best to resolve disputes inside their families or villages.

The question inferred from this research is that seemingly people's legal consciousness is still restricted to the context of traditional social institutions, such as families and villages. We should acknowledge the importance of this question in administrative reforms and the "grassroots democracy" implementation at present.

NGO THI CHINH

Some remarks about demographic and labor structure of peasant households of the Kinh people in the plain Thai Binh and mountainous Dien Bien, Lai Chau Province

Demographic and labor structure is an issue, which needs research, in social organization and management. It is related to economic development, management of human resources and planning of population growth.

This article is a first step to approach the issue of peasants' demographic and labor structure in two sites that differ from each other with regard to natural environment. The first site is the Cong Hoa commune, Hung Ha district, Thai Binh province in the Red river delta. The second one is the Thanh Luong commune, Dien Bien district, Lai Chau province in the mountainous north-west.

The author has analyzed differences between households and labor relations. The analysis has demonstrated that land and environment conditions, traditional social relations and new ones established in migration and resettlement processes have created dissimilarities and similarities in people's life in Thai Binh province and mountainous Dien Bien (Lai Chau).

ALBERTO MARTINELLI

Presidential address at the 15th ISA congress (excerpts)

In the opening session of the 15th ISA congress in Brisbane (Australia), 7-13 July 2002, Prof. Alberto Martinelli (Italy), president elected at the 14th ISA congress, made a speech that dealt with sociology's problems and issues in the context of the world today. *Sociological review* has translated some excerpts of his speech. The translation includes

1. A single system and a fragmented world
2. The theme of the congress, and
3. What should be changed in our sociological perspectives?