

Socializing Education and Healthcare in Vietnam Market Economy

Nguyen Ngoc Ha *

Chu Thi Thanh Vui **

Abstract: Vietnam social and health education in recent years has supported the development of the market economy, attracted huge resources for social development, contributed to reducing budget and met increasing and diversified needs of people. Along with socializing health and education, a market for health and education has also been formed. Because socializing health and education brings a lot of benefits, it should be further promoted. To make this a reality, strict implementation of current policy and legislation should be made, regulations on health and education ought to be perfected, state apparatus of education and health must be restructured, a healthy competitive environment providing educational and health care services need creating, more accesses to foreign investment in the field of education and health are available, and over-favoring degree needs eliminating.

Key words: Education; health; socialization; market; service.

1. Introduction

Education and health are important sectors of society, they relate to human life rights and basic needs. Social progress with sustainable development depends much on the progress in education and health. Given the importance of education and health, all modern states pay much attention to develop them. In Vietnam today, education and health have been particularly focused on. Along with the economy innovation, education and health have also been fundamentally reformed, and it still needs more innovation. There lacks a long-term strategy for innovating education and social consensus. One of the recognized contents of education and healthcare reform is socialization of education and healthcare. But what is the nature of socializing education and healthcare? And what are benefits and necessity of

socializing education? This article refers to these hot debate issues.

2. The nature of socializing education and healthcare

Socialization of education and health in Vietnam accompanied the innovation process from centralized economy to market economy mechanism; it is the shared responsibility to provide education and healthcare services from the state to non-state sector. Social and health education is also associated with identifying state function: it governs by policies and checks instead of direct operation of educational institutions and healthcare. This concept has received a lot of approvals.

(*) Assoc. Prof., Ph. D., Vietnam Social Sciences Review, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.

(**) M.A., Nam Dinh University of Nursing.

Before Renovation 1986, education and health got subsidy from State – the only institution provided such services for the people. The only owners in the manufacturing sector were state and collective enterprises, and most education and healthcare belonged to the state. In other words, State was monopoly in the field of education and healthcare to prevent private businesses from making profits in this area. State-subsidized education and health care, even for a large budget for education and health. Besides its positive aspects, it made people depend on the State, they were reluctant to invest in education and healthcare. The State did not allow private economy and prohibited recruiting employees to gain profits because they thought it was the exploitation of workers.

Bearing that thought, the state obviously did not allow private businesses to invest in education and healthcare for profit. Although many people could raise capital to invest in these sectors, regulations and legitimate did not allow them to do that. Limited State sources and almost no private enterprises could join to provide educational and healthcare services for the people were the reason why the people's huge demand for education and health could not be supplied. Realizing the increasing need for education and healthcare while it could not afford to invest in education and healthcare services, the State gradually allowed private enterprises to participate in providing educational and healthcare services under state provision. Private enterprises were allowed in providing educational services and healthcare. It is the transition from centrally - planned mechanism to market mechanisms in education and health. One of the most important business purposes of the entrepreneurs is profit. That

also means that the education and healthcare are business markets. Anyone capable of funding capital and meeting the law requirements can open schools and hospitals, regardless of Vietnamese or foreign nationality.

In other words, there exist public schools and hospitals together with private schools and hospitals. The capital for private schools and hospitals can be funded by Vietnamese or shared with foreigners. Vietnamese are allowed to have private educational and healthcare services within Vietnam territory (i.e., attending private schools and having private medical services), but they are also allowed to have educational services and healthcare from private schools and hospitals abroad. What is more, socializing education and healthcare means there is a market for education and health. Socialization of education and healthcare is a normal practice in developed countries. However, it is something new in Vietnam because the State has for a long time eliminated socialization of education and health, and nobody was allowed to provide educational and healthcare services to get benefit.

In the past thousand years, Vietnam feudal state did not subsidize education and health. People had to manage their own education and healthcare, or the State did not prohibit private education and healthcare services. Thus, socializing healthcare and education was a normal practice in Vietnam feudal society. In other words, Vietnam socialized healthcare and education from thousands of years ago. Vietnam feudal state was not responsible for education, they just recruited talents or opened exams to select them. Sometimes the monarchy opened public schools, but the number was very limited, for example Quoc Tu Giam

(Quốc Tử Giám) school for kings' princesses and mandarins' children; the students were paid scholarship by the State, and they did not have to pay tuition. In general, the state was not directly responsible for education, they did not spend money for schools nor pay attention to learning content, rather it was people's own interests. Learners chose their own teachers, decided what to learn; therefore, teaching was a profession. Anyone wanted to learn had to pay fees, so teachers competed to attract students, they invested to meet the needs of learners. In general, only the rich could afford schooling and healthcare. Feudal state did not open public hospitals nor pay for physicians. Medicine is a profession, and doctors could earn their living due to remuneration paid to their patients. Physicians may become rich with high professional skills. In reality, socialization of education and healthcare is a normal practice in market economies.

3. Socializing education and healthcare with the establishment of education and healthcare market

In socializing healthcare and education, education and healthcare services are recognized as a commodity. In the market economy, education and healthcare is a sub-market. Whether this market is good or bad depends on buyers and sellers. In developed countries with sufficient legal system, the education and healthcare is quite sound. They endlessly advertized to attract students and patients. Many schools and hospitals brands can attract customers (students and patients) from all over the world. However, there are still frauds in education and healthcare in these countries that lead to customers' damage.

Despite its new appearance, Vietnam market of healthcare and education is very

promising. Not only private schools and hospitals involved in providing educational and healthcare services in different forms, but many public schools and hospitals also engaged in this activity (extra learning and treatment on demand). Hence, the school and hospital system have been growing and modern.

In education, many public schools advertise to attract more students thanks to its advantages from state budget. A portion of school fees is paid for teachers. High ranking schools attract many students, in turn teachers and administrators will have a high income and vice versa. Currently, there is a huge need for learning, because Vietnamese are very studious and willing to spend big money for the study. This makes education market very potential, especially when state gives incentives in education. Socialization of education has brought many achievements.

But negativity of socializing education is not small, it is even the alarming phenomenon. To maximize profits, many public schools practice advantage of regulations or even violate the law. By advertising, they attract big number of learners who they collect much money and return them a bunch of useless knowledge. Finally it turns out that students cannot do anything with that useless knowledge. Students go to university to learn for a job, but the learning outcome can hardly help them manage it, so they have to retrain or take other jobs. It is a waste for society. Education market becomes more active when the State rules that recruitment and appointment of employees based on qualifications. With such provisions, many people go to school to get certificate rather than knowledge. They hire someone to learn at school instead of them, a phenomenon that probably appears in Vietnam. Such

negative phenomena in Vietnam education market today are not rare. But that is not the nature of socializing education, because education socialization does not inevitably cause such negative phenomena.

In health care, socialization has brought many achievements. Thanks to resources from people, the health system has developed rapidly. Not only private hospitals but also public ones have also been investing to become more spacious and modern. People have more opportunities to choose to treatment on demand. Besides, there are still corruptions in the relationship between healthcare buyers and providers, and the buyers are often the injured: the service they are entitled does not correspond to the amount they pay. Like in education, it is not the nature of socializing healthcare. Socializing healthcare is not the cause for such negative phenomena.

4. Measures to promote socializing education and healthcare

Socialization of education and health is the inevitable trend of the market economy. As the market economy develops, the trend of socializing education and healthcare is stronger, because it is beneficial to society. These benefits may include attracting idle resources to develop education and health, downsizing the public sector, reducing budget and thus reducing the tax burden for citizens and corruption, etc. Proper socialization of education and healthcare is like buying and selling a commodity service. When the state failed to meet the diverse needs of people in terms of education and healthcare, they provide for each other instead. Notably, the purchase must follow market principles and fair. To promote the socialization of education and healthcare, the following measures should be paid attention:

First, current policy and legislation must be strictly implemented. In the process of socializing healthcare and education, the government has formed a system of policies and legislation of healthcare and education towards market mechanism. Everyone especially those involved in providing education and healthcare services must strictly follow policies and legislation on education and healthcare. Negative phenomena in the fields of education and healthcare are not cause of socializing healthcare education, rather they are violations of these regulations and policies. For example, provisions on the criteria for the recognition of academic titles are not strictly complied. There are still widespread violations, and we should fight against the negative phenomena rather than socialization of healthcare and education.

Second, legal system of education and healthcare should be perfected. The state should create a fair regulatory environment to everyone involved in education and healthcare business. The law should be specific, clear and stable to make people comply regulations and laws. However, current legal system of Vietnam is still insufficient.

Third, state management apparatus of education and healthcare should be restructured, because they are still too big, especially education. Compared with the period of subsidized education and healthcare, the current structure is still a waste despite its restructuring. Along with intensification educational socialization, State apparatus of healthcare and education should be like those in developed countries.

Fourth, a healthy competitive environment for providing education and healthcare services must be created, because all economies require fair competitiveness. Business in the education and healthcare

should apply the general regulations. The private schools and hospitals should be treated fairly like public schools and hospitals. The State may subsidize more to healthcare and education like the period of centrally planned economy. State subsidies to the poor are necessary and socially agreed provided that it does not lead to injustice. If public schools and hospitals receive subsidy from state, private schools and hospitals will be difficult to survive because of price difference. Moreover, the unfair subsidy may result in public schools hospitals rely too much on state budget.

Fifth, foreign investment in education and healthcare should be further extended. Tens of thousands of Vietnamese pay to use foreign healthcare and education abroad. We can save a lot of money by having people a chance to study and use medical service domestically through extending foreign investment in education and healthcare provided that they meet the standards.

Finally, over favoring qualification in education should be eliminated, because it assesses people only through qualifications. Currently, Vietnam education gains a lot of public interests since there are many widespread negative phenomena. The essence of these negative phenomena is the unfair trading between buyer and seller, or between the service providers and people in need of educational services. What they can buy and sell is just certifications, not knowledge. Thus, the buyer is a factor contributing to the negativity in education. The reason why people spend money to buy certification is to be employed by or appointed to certain positions. Without such privilege, no one would buy what they do not need.

5. Conclusion

Education and healthcare are socially critical and sensitive areas. In the market

economy, education and healthcare are a market establishing relationship between buyer and seller. Many people still believe that education and health cannot be bought or sold. This concept is not correct because the buyer and seller must pay the money and receive outcome. Fair trading in general and healthcare and education in particular will be beneficial for both the buyer and seller because they get what they want. Those without money need subsidy from State through social security and welfare system. Socialization of healthcare and education in Vietnam in recent years has gradually developed along with the development of market economy. Despite its inevitable limitations, education and healthcare socialization basically meet the people's increasing needs, therefore it should be strengthened further.

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