

Solutions to Pressing Issues in Current Social Development Management

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Abstract: Pressing issues in social development management and concerns about the moral decline, which has been increasingly severer, have led to the need of a comprehensive and drastic reform to ensure social security and stability. To deal with those issues can be seen as an important task to contribute a part towards national development and modernisation. The cultural foundation and social morality should be strengthened in order to improve the spiritual foundation of the society as a motive to boost economic growth. This paper analyses the current situation in Vietnam before the ongoing social degeneration, giving explanations for the inadequate consequences, drawing some conclusions, and suggesting practical measures to deal with pressing issues, remedy problems in public opinion as well as take proper control over conflicts in order to ensure healthy development and social security in Vietnam.

Key words: Social management; pressing social issues; social morality.

1. Introduction

An important task considered the key to Vietnam's socio-economic development in *Doi moi* is to perform social justice and progress as well as deal with social issues effectively. For the past 30 years, the Party and the State have always laid special emphasis on combining economic growth with social improvement. The close and sensible combination of economic growth, socio-cultural development, and performance of social justice and progress, which has been applied in every development stage and policy, is a principled affirmation shown clearly in our national development strategy. In all documents of the Party congresses, from the 6th National Congress in 1986 to the 11th National Congress, the Party continually highlights specifically both achievements and shortcomings and emphasizes solutions to different social

problems, such as: a gap between the rich and the poor, violence, unemployment, deterioration in the healthcare and education, traffic accidents, fire prevention, crime, social evils, public security, food safety, environmental pollution, epidemic diseases, and multi-level marketing fraud... so that social justice, progress, and security can be performed effectively.

The above-mentioned issues were described again in the Document of the 12th National Congress for the purpose of elucidating causes and finding out appropriate solutions. As underlined in the Political Report of the 12th National Congress, "it is necessary to have effective measures to deal with social relationships harmoniously and prevent social grievances as well as

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contradictions, which may lead to social conflicts... It is necessary to take control and tackle properly all social risks, contradictions, and conflicts. It is essential to strengthen solutions to struggle against crimes and social evils, minimize traffic accidents, and ensure social security and human safety” [5].

2. Current situation and causes

In the current context of transition towards the market economy, new social values have not been explicitly set up. People, therefore, have not yet trusted confidently in their own purity, while the evil has not been controlled strictly. There are risks and urgent matters in almost all aspects of social life. Sophisticated crimes are hidden somewhere in daily life. For several decades in the past, there were never such massacres like those that have taken place recently. At present, not only adults but also children may use knives to kill others without any hesitation; they may harm their own relatives or neighbors due to irrational causes. Why does this happen? In principle, when ones are busy doing a job to earn honest money, they will be satisfied with what they have; as a result, they will feel happy and will trust in life; the evil stemming from grievances surely will disappear gradually. Since our education has not been appropriate and legal regulations have not been effective, violent crime is getting more excessive. Good people are afraid of showing objections to the bad ones. The good as well as those who do good things are not always protected by the law. In reality, some people want to struggle against corruption and prodigality or some want to denounce mistakes of enterprises, organizations, or officials to the higher

authorities, but they are afraid of being victimized or revenged. People, consequently, have not responded actively to the struggle against social evils. Recently, hooligans assaulted savagely a journalist for the sake of making a threat of violence against those who intend to denounce activities of corruption and illegal business. In big cities, people feel very annoyed, when they witness a lot of robberies in the streets. Yet, they do not dare to make any interventions, for they are afraid of being revenged or involved in misfortune.

Local authorities have carried out many campaigns to suppress criminals. Yet, they were mainly done formalistically, so positive results have not been achieved. The social order and security often become better for a short period afterwards. However, they get worse again eventually. Robberies and thefts are still taking place ruthlessly and severely everywhere. In the meanwhile, verdicts in the trial and judgments of the investigation agencies sometimes are disadvantageous to innocent people. Injustice or wrong decisions made on trial make people get more grievances. Social life is likely to be more stressful, suspicious, and insecure, making people worried much; they do not know whom to rely on, when something bad happens to them.

To prevent the bad, it is firstly necessary to reform our educational system, making investments into human development in accordance with the principle that ones must learn to be morally righteous, before learning knowledge and skills to enter society or become officials. Family must share the educational responsibility with school and society; children are not only taught to throw garbage into regulated

places, but they also should be taught how to express sympathy and share responsibilities with others; they should be taught not to be rapacious in getting what are not theirs (this is opposite to the behavior of “usurpation” among mighty people in our society at present). What will happen, when robberies and thefts are excessive, but people just show indifference or helplessness? What will happen, when people may kill each other due to a minor contradiction or just for some hundred thousand VND; or, when ones may slaughter the whole family for the sake of getting some millions VND? The reason why people feel insecure and why they gradually lose the trust in present life originates in the irresponsibility of the relevant authorities as well as shortcomings in social management. Without being controlled comprehensively and effectively, the mass media and social networks may cause negative impacts, providing tricks by accident as reference for activities of social evils. We cannot deny positive impacts of the mass media at present. If ones try to exploit issues at any cost for the purpose of attracting readers, however, some greatly negative consequences of course will occur. In many cases, when the accused is asked for the cause of his/her criminal behavior, the answer is that he/she learned it from the newspaper, movies, the internet etc... This is a negative manifestation of the mass media and the press, which leads to social moral decline [3].

Industrialization and modernization have created numerous changes in social life. The previous pattern of behavior as well as traditional moral values are taken into reconsideration. This causes some negative impacts on the dignity of people, resulting in the reverence for materials and the desire

for enjoyment. In every society, there are always good and evil. Our social responsibility is, therefore, to struggle against the evil and turn people to the good. It is impossible to let evil activities take place ruthlessly, causing threats and risks to people’s life. It is urgently necessary to have appropriate mechanisms to control evil and effective solutions to tackle social problems.

Due to the widespread dissemination of violent cultures, additionally, some people have become very aggressive among inherently good-natured people of a nation, where all love peace. If timely corrections are not applied properly in the fields of morality, laws, and mass media, it will be very hard to control over social violence and conflicts. Although globalization is an inevitable tendency, it may lead to poverty in dignity and cultural identity. The question is what we should do to prevent globalization and international integration from spoiling our cultural identity and social morality.

At present, one of the urgent tasks is to strengthen moral values, especially in social development management in our country. Morality is a form of social consciousness; it is a set of principles, rules, and norms to instruct and correct behavior of people. Although it is a reflection on social life, morality is fairly independent. In turn, it can cause impacts on society, accelerating or hindering social development. There is now a moral decline in social life due to the lack of orientations in our country; many new values are accepted easily without selection. In the past, moral values were used to identify the dignity in social relations, but at present morality is disregarded and money is used for human behavior. In the past, the values of community humanity

were highly appreciated, but now people attach more importance to self-serving interest. The lifestyle has also switched from ideal-serving to pragmatic and self-indulgent; people are pursuing material seductions, while ignoring traditional customs and habits. In the meanwhile, a lot of previous moral values still remain preserved and praised conservatively, despite their inappropriateness. All of these have formed a paradox, making people feel more depressed and lose the trust in society. It is one of the reasons for the occurrence of social evils. Those social evils certainly will be excessive beyond our control, if we do not have proper corrections and orientations in time.

According to Luhmann (1993), law is independent from others in the social system. Law exists in parallel with economic, political, and cultural spheres, but it plays a decisive role in running social life. By now, there have been a lot of changes in Vietnamese social values, because of shortcomings in the legal system and legal amendments. Both officials and ordinary people are now experiencing sophisticated legal psychology. They are not fully aware of the duty to respect the law; the legal recklessness is getting more and more popular. The “ask - give” mechanism enables those, who have power, to implement the law arbitrarily according to their own subjective opinions in the name of the law; they even justify and legitimize their wrong decisions above the law. Those, who are involved in the application of the mechanism, also defy the law, while thinking that “nothing bad will happen to them, although they violate the law”. When legal institutions are not determined to implement laws and regulations strictly, but they just do things

by halves, there will be no one responsible for final consequences.

To settle opportunely the key and pressing problems in social management, therefore, it is necessary to strengthen moral education and enhance legal awareness among all officials and people, especially among the youth. Education plays a major role in formation and development of human dignity. It is essential to pay attention to value-oriented education by specifying clearly moral values, especially socialist ones, so that they will be viewed as the lifestyle and behavioral principles. To get success in this, the legal education must be carried out in various forms appropriately for the psychophysiology of every age group. The education content must be specific and practical, avoiding being too formalistic, so that people become more conscious of behavior before the law. The moral education certainly will be just idle talk, if it does not set up a trust among people, firstly the young ones.

It is necessary to make our living environment completely healthy, combining education with inclination towards the good for the entire society and every person as well. The evil mainly stems from the lack of moral and legal education. Legal regulations must be implemented strictly and clearly; law must be seriously respected; and, there must not be a “restricted area” in law-violation handling. Legal violations must be transparently and publicly dealt with. Social justice must be applied equally for all people without any discrimination. In the process of industrialization and modernization, we not only need to promulgate sound guidelines

and policies, but we also have to intensify human resource development to provide citizens of good knowledge and dignity, who respect the law and strive for a society of prosperity, justice, democracy and civilization. Social trust will surely decrease, if deeds do not go together with words; if the role and responsibility of leaders/administrators have not been improved; and, if corruption and waste of public resources still remain widespread.

People feel worried a lot about social moral decline, in which: counterfeit virtue transgresses true virtue; pragmatism is getting greater; and, evil characteristics such as greedy, selfish, and deceptive as well as robbery and murder are more and more common. This may make our national culture deteriorate and lose in oblivion. At the same time, people are also deeply concerned about the lack of rules and principles in management and leadership, which will lead to arbitrary and cursory implementation of guidelines and legal policies, weakening and eliminating gradually dynamics for social development.

There is a problem, of which not all of us, including also administrators, are fully aware. It is not only involved with economic decline, but it is also involved with long-term socio-cultural consequences. In fact, “culture sheds light for people”[1] and it is a foundation for social and human development. Culture is the key issue, in which legal and moral education should be of top priority. The major task of the social development management is to set up and implement appropriate measures to cope with the deterioration in morality and lifestyle as well as decline in culture and education. National culture must be kept and developed on the basis of education. As

we all know, our current educational system has caused severe troubles in society. Unfortunately, we have not been fully aware of the importance of this. It not only results in the weakness in social management and control, but it also reflects the “sclerosis” of law and morality before pressing phenomena in social life. This is the greatest worry, since it is the very signal of human degradation for the entire society.

3. Conclusions and solutions

To deal with pressing issues in social management is always considered as an important task for the entire process of development. Culture is the spiritual foundation of society; it is also included in the targets as well as dynamics in socio-economic development. Cultural decline, however, will take place very rapidly, especially in poor nations, if they do not have appropriate and effective policies for development and international integration. The current moral deterioration and educational decline are shown obviously via people’s worries and doubts about the future social situation.

At present, one of the urgent and fundamental tasks is to set up a sound foundation of social morality, aiming at stimulating the national pride, social and community responsibility as well as personal duties. As taught by President Ho Chi Minh (1977), “it is necessary to make our culture fully penetrate into the people’s thinking; i.e. it can help to eliminate corruption, laziness, and lifestyle of vanity and luxury. Culture should plays a role in making everyone strive for the ideal of self-reliance, independence, and freedom. At the same time, it should inspire people with the sense of single-minded devotion to the nation. In society, culture should help all

people, including both old and young both male and female, to realize their own responsibilities and enjoy the happiness that they deserve to get”.

It is necessary to tackle and remedy social grievances. Yet, it is firstly important to do timely and methodical research on this issue. Sociological surveys and investigations should be carried out to identify pressing and insecure problems in society. The research findings should be used to make forecasts and suggest preventive measures. This is a very important task of our sociology, aiming at contributing a part towards effective and sustainable social management. Systematic research evaluation and statistical analysis of grievances and insecurities in various spheres of social life will enable us to recognize the origin and underlying causes of social problems in order to take proper control and solutions to

social conflicts, ensuring healthy social movement and development in Vietnam towards 2030 and 2040.

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