

SOCIAL MODERNIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF JUSTICE IN VIETNAM PRESENTLY

LƯƠNG VIỆT HẢI (editor), LÊ XUÂN ĐỊNH, NGUYỄN ĐÌNH HÒA. **Social modernization for the purpose of justice in Vietnam presently.** H.: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2008, 240 pages.

Summarized by
TÙNG KHÁNH

Social modernization is one of the most urgent and burning issues currently which has both strong theoretical and practical meanings. In the world direct research on processes of social modernization was carried out many decades ago. However, up till now debates on these processes have been getting hotter and hotter and keeping expanding. The rationale behind this is due to strong social and economic changes happening in many countries and in the world at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. Thus the task of interpreting the new phenomena of the socio-economic life generally, and that of correcting, completing and developing the concepts of social modernization for them to be suitable to the new conditions is an indispensable demand particularly.

Reality has shown that processes of social modernization vary from country to country. Each country has its own

process of modernization suitable to its conditions and in accordance with the common itinerary of the mankind. It is this uniqueness and diversity of ways and methods of modernization that create the diversity and variety of the mankind civilization. So the question is “what specific characteristics does Vietnam have on the way to social modernization? Do the relations between the modernization process and other social processes affect the general development process? With the conditions of our country can social modernization achieve the purpose of justice? If Yes, in what way can this process be accelerated? Identifying these matters bears important meanings to Vietnam now and its future of development. These are also the matters that have been touched upon by authors such as Lương Việt Hải, Lê Xuân Định and Nguyễn Đình Hòa in their book which is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 1. *Characteristics and contents of the social modernization process in our country currently*

In this chapter, the authors have proposed a systematic introduction of the basic concepts of social modernization which reveals that “Social modernization is actually an evolutionary process of the society from a lower to a higher state, a renovating and developing process of the production force to a higher level which helps boost the economy and society to achieve economic growth, enhance the spiritual and physical life of the people, establish social advances on the basis of technologic and scientific achievements”. With such fundamental contents, social modernization is not restricted within the transformation from the “traditional” to “modern” society, but is expanded to cover all the processes of boosting social growth and advances occurring in the contemporary society... (p.31).

After analyzing and evaluating all the great achievements that had been accomplished during the past renovation period, the authors have drawn out some main characteristics of the social modernization process of Vietnam in the process of national modernization and industrialization as follows:

- *First*, “our country is carrying out the modernization process, which means changing our society from its current state to a more modern state. However, the current state of our society is not traditional to the fullest meaning of the word and the modern society that we are directing at is not a Western current society ...” (p.35).

- *Second*, as seen from social modernization angle our economy is presently evaluated as an active developing economy with high growth speed by the world. This is a big advantage because it not only create momentum for more economic development but also serves as a lever and foundation for all the modernization processes in different fields of the socio-economic life.

- *Third*, social – political stability. On the large scale, social – political stability is a necessary social environment for economic growth in particular, and the implementation of modernization process in general; in addition, this is an important and favourable characteristics for the acceleration of the modernization and industrialization process of our country.

- *Fourth*, in whatever field it is, economic, social or technical, human resource is always the subject of the social modernization process. It plays a decisive role in the failure or success, slowness or rapidity of the modernization process. It is the most inherent element of the process, which already contains the contents and purposes of the labour force (p.48).

- *Fifth*, the overall transformation of the economy and society. This is seen as the fundamental contents as well as an indispensable trend of modernization. This transformation happens in economic structure, production relations, social relations and superstructure institutions all together... (p.53). Most importantly is the transformation from the centralized, bureaucratic subsidiary management mechanism to market

economy with socialism direction under state management. The main purpose of this change is to establish a modern state management mechanism. And this transformation is the most significant and fundamental characteristic of the modernization process. It affects all of the other contents and characteristics of the process in general.

To accomplish the basic contents of the modernization thoroughly, comprehensively, and consistently in the immediate period is also aimed at completing the strategic objective of wholly modernizing our home country – building a society of rich people, strong nation, an equal, democratic and civilised society.

Basing on the above fundamental features of the social modernization the authors have identified the most basic contents which need to be given first priority in order to speed up the process of social modernization in our country presently. Accordingly, indispensable contents which serves as a resituate condition of the modernization process is to develop the economy and to step up the industrialization process. Second, hastening the growth rate of the market economy with socialism direction, including the trend of forming and developing intellectual economy. Third, solving social problems such as eradicating hunger and reducing poverty, creating job opportunities, increasing income and living standards, developing agriculture, protecting health of the community, guaranteeing social security and order, developing education and culture, etc.. And increasing intellectuality of the people, creating basic and comprehensive

changes in education and training, science and technology. This is not only the basic contents which carries strategic meaning, greatly influences the overall process of national modernization and industrialization, and is of “infrastructure” nature and “strategic foundation” for every social modernization process, but also one of the fundamental conditions and criteria constituting the human development index that our society is thriving for ... (p.64-86).

Next, the authors analyzed and clarified that social justice is the aim of social modernization in our country currently. The first aspect of the issue is justice in the context of market economy. According to the authors justice in market economy may differ in certain respects from justice in other economies generally. The market economy that we are setting up is not the one of capitalism previously and currently existing in the world. Therefore, the market economy of our country, apart from possessing some general features similar to other countries, has its own particulars.

By scientific arguments and interpretations the authors stated that the market economy we are creating and developing can ensure social justice well and it is only this economy that can do this the best given the development conditions of the labour force. This is defined by objective indispensability (p.97).

On economic respect, our country is still poor and slowly developed; thus social modernization is a must. To modernize our society we must establish and develop market economy. But the market economy in Vietnam

presently is just newly established, thus incomplete, inconsistent and underdeveloped. Despite this fact we still can and need to perform social justice. It is not necessary to be rich in order to effectuate justice; the poorer we are the more necessary for us to implement fairness if we want to create a harmony atmosphere, mutual trust, and a stable society (p.100-101).

On strategic field, wide and deep, our state of socialism regulates to guarantee equal development among areas and between rural and urban regions. It is important to adjust incomes but the key issue of the modernization process is to help different areas to develop equally. Only in this way can fruits of the economic growth be distributed evenly. Distribution in accordance with one's devotion is the fairest method of distribution now, especially in the process of accelerating modernization and industrialization since it guarantees people with equal opportunities, equal living and working conditions (p.107).

It is possible to say that social justice in the process of industrialization and modernization must go parallel with economic growth and be restricted by economic growth. However, it is apparent that social justice goes beyond economic boundary. It is also realized in the even distribution of the fruits of social development in cultural, educational, medical, infrastructural fields, etc.. Here justice also means equality. To perform justice on these fields the state must be the regulation center to regulate resources reasonably on the social scale. Social justice is one of the elements which has great influence on the quality of economic

growth and social development. That distribution of resources to different areas, regions, and industries is carried out evenly to create equal opportunities, equitable living and working conditions for people reflects exactly the essential nature of socialism orientation and the role of economic management of the state for the purpose of social justice.

Guaranteeing favourable conditions for all the people to enjoy the fruits of development in every field is a permanent and significant task of the state if it wants to implement social justice. On this respect creating equal opportunities for people to benefit from the fruits of social development in the process of industrialization and modernization is the deepest and highest manifestation of social justice realization (p.112).

In referring to the fact that social justice is the indispensable aim of the social modernization process the authors wanted to emphasize that like other countries that are carrying out the process Vietnam's possesses both similar and particular features. The history of modernization shows that many countries consider economic growth is the primary, even the only goal of the process. Being different from these countries Vietnam has chosen and will be consistent in modernizing the country in the direction of socialism. Therefore, industrialization and modernization process in our country is not only aimed at high economic growth rate, but also at a noble humane value – that is social justice. Social justice has become one of the primary goals of the modernization process because of the following reasons: Firstly, the development model in which economic

growth is given first priority has not achieved a stable, equal, and advanced social development. Secondly, the ideal and purpose of the revolution of our Party and people is to successfully build up a society of “rich people, strong nation, a fair, democratic and civilised society”. Thirdly, economic growth is an important condition for development; nevertheless, it is not the sole objective of the industrialization and modernization process. Social modernization is always carried out on the basis of human resources. Thus developing human resources, particularly the working force and creating social harmony are prerequisite conditions for the success of the modernization process. With this meaning, it is possible to say that implementing social justice is not only an indispensable aim but also an inner need of the industrialization and modernization process.

Currently Vietnam has not been able to overcome immediately all the injustice in the society or achieve an absolute and perfect equality at once. These can only be achieved through a long, permanent, step-by-step process given the development level of the society, especially in economic field. Thus it is not reasonable to be overhasty, voluntary in identifying directions and giving solutions with a hope of establishing the most complete and ideal justice in the society (p.131). For the purpose of social justice to be realized, according to the authors “it is not enough to rely only on the state although the state plays an important and decisive function in the process which cannot be replaced. It is necessary

to recognize that individuals, community, and society alike have a role to play because the increasing level of social justice is also the result of the efforts and responsibility of these contributors” (p.144).

Chapter 3. *Some solutions to accelerate the modernization process for the purpose of social justice.*

Basing on the analysis of typical features of a developed market economy, according to the authors the following measures and requirements should be taken to speed up the overall economic growth rate:

- *In terms of awareness and attitudes*, it is necessary to have a new breakthrough in terms of economic thinking which helps step up the progress of establishing a fully comprehensive market and a socialism-oriented market economy institution, breaking with the old mechanism of bureaucracy and subsidiary.

- *To complete market economy institution*. The State should adopt the legal-building program, based on the needs which have been evaluated, simultaneously carry out the plan of legal amendment and supplement in accordance with international commitments.

- *To enhance State administration effectiveness and human resource development*. high economic growth and the acceleration rate of comprehensive market economy should be combined with the enhancement of State administration to keep pace with the needs, in which human resource development is one of the most important solutions.

- *To promote economic structure transformation and modernisation* is an essential task. Economic structure is resulted from a process of development in various industries and fields, including the enhancement of investment effectiveness. The modernisation of investment structure is an urgent task to ensure economic growth.

- To constitute social modernisation, democracy can be viewed as the most effective tool for social fairness. So is for economic activities, which require transference and openness.

- To promptly renovate State-owned enterprises.

- *To clear hurdles and create favourable business environment* for agricultural and rural development. (p. 163-177).

The authors state that, the foundation and enforcement of social policies for human equality, in the start and modernization progress as a whole, is one of the main factors for the completion of modern society, a system of social relations imbued with humanism values. Clearly, social policies should take focus on ensuring the accordance, unity of values (devotion and beneficialness among individuals, between individual and society). Only on that base, can social policies effectively deal with social problems arising from human-being realities and be socialized, legalised as basic social rights, socio-economic driving-force for all work-people (p.184). In exploring the maintenance of social stability, execution of social equality, creation of driving force for socio-economic development as well, the authors argue that, the formation and

enforcement of social policies should be proceeded from the socio-economic reality of Vietnam; simultaneously be abided by the following scientific viewpoints, principles:

1) It is imperative that formation of social policies to match with reality, in other words, it should reflect viewpoint on history, specification. The purpose of social policies is nothing but for the people and of the people;

2) Social policies should be suited to the *viewpoint on development*. Their purposes are to serve people, and in returns for better and more effective exploring, fostering human resource;

3) The formation and adoption of social policies should be matched with viewpoint on *comprehensiveness and consistency*. Social policies consist of system of particular policies, in fields of economy, culture, education, science-technology, environment...;

4) Sound and appropriate social policies should reflect the viewpoint on humanitarianism. Humanitarianism should be viewed as a main purpose of all social policies;

5) *Social equality* is an important principle in the formation and implementation of social policies, which ensure the harmony among social relations, beneficiary one firstly.

In the process of industrialisation aimed at social equality presently, social policies should focus on dealing with such main issues as overpopulation, labour policy, social security; social stability, elimination of social evils. Importantly, these policies should be built on solid scientific foundations, originated from real life and formed,

implemented by an appropriate mechanism.

Regardless of difference in approach and level of social equality resolve, the above-mentioned contents is the core part of theory and social model development in the world nowadays. Realities in our renovation over the last two decades have shown that, in market economy, social equality can be achieved, given an appropriate system of policies, a sensible adjustment and the maintenance of socialist orientation. State-socialism – with its social administrative and adjustment function, plays a very important role in the enforcement of social equality in industrialization and modernisation process. The State should actively pay attention to key phases, socio-economic fields, especially infrastructure. Thanks to this investment, the State is capable of producing the more equal development among areas and regions, on the basis of bringing their advantages and potentials into full play, promoting the development rate in backward and underdeveloped regions. This will result in the minimal uneven level of socio-economic development, a more equal distribution of socio-economic achievements, a reduction of socio-economic “hot issues”. The enforcement of social equality in field of production in the process of modernisation is likely to require the State adopt appropriate adjusting policies to gradually eliminate the disparity in conditions, opportunities and level of development between cities, urban areas and underdeveloped regions, notably the mountainous, remote, revolutionary and resistant bases ones. To ensure the implementation of social equality, the State, as the subject of the

modernisation process, should adjust macro-economy, by creating favorable legal environment abided by market mechanism with State regulation, promoting investment in infrastructure, adjusting investing capital, establishing exchange rate, legalising a consistent and stable tax system.

Additionally, the State should implement equal principle in distribution of productive materials. This will serve as a key tool for social distribution of production. Besides system of adjustment policies, the State must set up an overall, unified legal spectrum aimed at the establishment of a stable macro environment and driving-force for social modernisation. In social field, it is necessary for the State to adopt social policies for the purpose of bridging the rich-poor gap, eliminating the split over social class, providing every people with equal access to education, culture, health care, information and new knowledge.

Finally, the authors state that, in the process of modernisation in general and formation, implementation of social policies in particular, the State always plays a very important role. Clearly, it is entitled with the power to re-distribute development achievements. Small and weak State see no signs of accelerating modernisation, without State's active, positive participation and interference. In this aspect, State is also the key director of modernisation process. To better enhance the State's role is also a solution to accelerate the social modernisation process for the purpose of building a rich people, strong country and a fair, democratic and civilised society.