Current environmental protection and sustainable development in Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh ideology

Ngoc Hanh Do^{1,*}

¹University of Politics, Ministry of National Defence, Thach Hoa, Thach That, Hanoi, 10000, Vietnam

Abstract. In the thesis, the author focuses on analyzing the special features on the environmental protection by Ho Chi Minh in the 2 aspects: awareness and actions. Thence, the great contributions and devotion by the Ex-President Ho Chi Minh to Vietnam's environmental protection and sustainable development are continuously asserted in the thesis; thus, the special features of "behavior toward the nature" culture, Ho Chi Minh's scientific thinking, broad-minded, and profound political vision have been proven. This is the scientific foundation for Vietnam to apply to the guideline for sustainable development, especially for economic development in attachment with the environmental protection under the strong impact by the Industry 4.0.

1 Introduction

The natural environment plays a specially vital role in the social and human development, according to Ho Chi Minh Ideology. Therefore, Ho Chi Minh supposed that, in order to gain the social development at present and in the future, humans must understand and know about the nature, use natural resources economically, care for, and preserve for the environment. That proves Ho Chi Minh Ideologies on the environmental protection were very close to the modern viewpoint on the sustainable development. Today, when confronting with such global pressing issues as the environmental change and natural calamities. More than ever, we have further & further felt about the great-ness and meanings beyond the age on the environmental protection in Ho Chi Minh Ideology. In the article, the author focuses on analyzing the special features on the environmental protection by Ho Chi Minh; thereby, proposing some solutions to apply Ho Chi Minh's ideology for sustainable development for Vietnam in the coming time.

2 Materials and research methods

The author used resources from magazine articles published related; articles by a number of domestic and foreign authors; Ho Chi Minh's full set, National Political - Truth Publishing

* Corresponding author: dohanh2402hvct@gmail.com

House, Hanoi; ... by means of survey, historical and logical methods, evaluates, statistics, analysis, comparison, inductive and deductive to solve problems that have been raised.

3 Research results

3.1 Special features on the environmental protection in Ho Chi Minh Ideology

With his grand and prominent dialectical thinking, Ho Chi Minh clearly got aware that: one of the most vital foundations for the humans' existence & development and society lied in the nature. Around 5 or 6 decades ago, in Vietnam, complicated happenings did not arise in the humans' living environment. They had not turned into the pressing issue whereas some "alarming" environmental issues turned up in such some developed industrial nations as the UK, France, Germany, and the USA, etc., they had not yet reached to the global scope. In 1972, the first International Conference on Environment took place in Stockholm, Sweden, and 20 years later, the UN Conference on Environment and Development was organized in Rio, Brazil. Ho Chi Minh, with his broad vision, foregoing thinking, talent, sharpness, and profoundness, made anticipation on risks and aftermaths of changes in the living environment to be caused by negative impacts and humans. Moreover, he also took initiatives to propose several vital and profound theses on the relationship between humans and the nature, especially the role of the protection for the living environment. He regarded it as one of the prerequisite conditions for the human and social existence & development right during the 1950s and 1960s of the 20th Century. By borrowing Karl Mark's words, Ho Chi Minh confirmed that humans must "understand and know about the nature to force it to serve for the humans' happiness".

In Ho Chi Minh Ideology, the nature is shown as something that is very close, simple, and intimate because "Homeland means the country". In the speech at the Northern Conference on Irrigation, Ho Chi Minh pointed out: "... the Vietnamese owned the two words "Homeland" and we also call the Homeland as the Country; both land and water will form the Homeland". The history of human society's development, from the dawn until later, has continued proving that, for humans and the human society, the nature has played a vital and indispensable role. That is the living environment – the prerequisite condition as well as the object so that humans – through their real-life activities, firstly, their activities for labor and production to maintain their own and the human society's existence & development. In the past, Karl Mark ever highlighted that humans are parts of the nature and that: the nature was an "inorganic body" of the humans and the human society.

Therefore, humans and the human society cannot exist or develop if lacking the nature – the living environment. In Ho Chi Minh Ideology, the nature is shown as one of the vital premises and foundations to meet needs of humans and the human society for existence & development: "The people will get rich and the country will get strong if having land and water". The nature has offered privileges such favorable conditions as climate, various, and diversified natural resources, etc., to the Vietnamese. Ho Chi Minh had ever stated: "The forest is golden as the forest ... provides much wood and forest products that may be exchanged for many machines and goods, etc.; the mountain is Silver because the mountain ... supplies much ore that may be used for industrial construction to develop the economy". Upon the nature in combination with virtues of diligent & smart working, etc., the Vietnamese shaped a life for themselves and boosted up the country's development. Together with the humans' working and creativity, natural resources get vital and essential for the career to build up and construct a new society in Vietnam.

The special features are also shown in Ho Chi Minh's thinking: the nature does not only offer sources of precious properties but poses humans in front of series of harsh challenges

like droughts, floods, typhoons, and erratic rain & sun, etc., as well. Truly, the difficulties and challenges sometimes cause unpredictable aftermaths. According to Ho Chi Minh, “water may bring about benefits but it also may cause harms. Too much water will cause floods but too little water will cause droughts, etc.,”. In reality, droughts, floods, typhoons, and many other natural calamities are the risks that directly threaten humans’ activities in life and cause poverty & diseases. Thus, Ho Chi Minh considered floods and droughts as “enemies” that were as dangerous as invaders. Humans must make best efforts to prevent and fight against them.

The philosophy “clement weather, favorable terrains, and concord among the people” has been inherently familiar to the Oriental people in general and the Vietnamese in particular so far. The successful August Revolution turned the status of the Vietnamese as slavers into the country and their fates’ owners. With the leadership, management, and administration of the State, the Vietnamese people have upheld the tradition of patriotism, solidarity, and diligent working, etc., for the career to build up the country and for the happiness of humans. They are the lively expressions “concord among the people” – the decisive factor for success. Besides the dependence on “concord among the people”, however, the effectiveness of humans’ activities is affected by such conditions as “clement weather and favorable terrains”, too. “Clement weather and favorable terrains” are the very favorable objective conditions, including the natural ones for humans to deploy activities in life. They are firstly the material production activities. In other words, that shows perceptions of the Oriental people for the relevancy between humans’ activities and the objective rule of the nature’s maneuvers.

Impacts of “clement weather and favorable terrains” on the Vietnamese’s activities are shown very clearly in the agricultural production field that, on one side, has remained rather dependent on the nature as well as biological processes and on the other side, it is still the key economic activity by the majority of the Vietnamese. Ho Chi Minh reckoned: “If the weather is good, the Vietnamese will harvest much but on the contrary, if it is bad, the harvests will be faltering”. Therefore, right from the first years of the career to build up the North, he asserted that our important tasks were not only for economic development but also for fights against the harsh nature and that, “Our Party must do many things: build plants, co-operatives so that farmers and workers will have enough to eat fully and wear warmly; so that the country will get stronger and stronger and so that the people will get richer & richer. Today, we even do the task to fight against the”.

Ho Chi Minh early realized unpredictable harms caused by humans’ activities to exploit the nature with deprivation. For instance, if the forest resource was exhausted, there would not be wood any more. Water source would disappear and soil would get infertile due to erosion and washouts, etc., He pointed out that “... if letting the people destroy a bit, farms destroy a bit, and even geological exploration teams destroy a bit, it will be very disastrous. It is easy to destroy forests but it will take dozens of years to re-grow them. Such the deforestation will make many impacts on the climate, production, and life”. He strictly criticized the disorderly deforestation and regarded it as the act of “disposing gold into the sea”. That thinking by Ho chi minh gets more special and meaningful today when humans have realized that the natural resources are not indefinite, especially some like forests, soil, and minerals, etc., are very rare or they are not renewable.

3.2 Distinctive features in Ho Chi Minh’s actions for environmental protection

With his precise, scientific, and talented thinking, Ho Chi Minh decisively asserted about the tasks to preserve, protect, and care for the natural environment – it was the long-term plan to maintain the existence and development of the very humans at present and in the

future. He advised the people to actively make production and diligently work but they should practice the saving not only in terms of time, efforts but also in terms of property consumption. Ho Chi Minh himself is an exemplary example for a simple and saving lifestyle with a plain house on stilts, spare meals, a rattan bed, and sedge mats, etc., Saving here does not totally “tightening too much” but it is to build up the Homeland. It can be said that Ho Chi Minh’s ideology for saving practice conveys a deep value of culture and humanity, especially in the current context when requests for rational and economical use of natural resources become basic principles for sustainable development.

Alongside, Ho Chi Minh always cared for, reminded, requested, and encouraged all sectors, fields, and all people to actively participate in preserving the nature and protecting the living environment. He summarized the task of environmental protection for each sector and field as follows: For agricultural production, the irrigational work must be well-done and it is regarded as the top vital measure while for the aquaculture, “in addition to fishing, people must pay attention to fish farming”... Especially, Ho Chi Minh was very interested in the afforestation work, and highlighted “The afforestation work is very vital. The people may not realize this now. Even you, have not realized this vital task” ... In order to explain deep meanings in all aspects of economy, culture, society, and environment for that helpful and beneficial work for the country, he wrote: “We are preparing for building up the new countryside. The first thing for this is to properly construct housing. If so, we must grow many good trees right now to collect wood later, etc., Fruit trees, trees for wood, and industrial trees also bring about tremendous sources of profits. We should also make best efforts to grow trees and plants to fight against sandstorms, erosion, and protect fields, etc.,”. He suggested a “great initiative” – Tet for growing trees to get the green color tree and several tremendous material & spiritual sources of profits for the country and humans: reminding sectors, fields, levels, and organizations to make Tet for growing trees really become the nationwide movement for the masses and it should be regularly conducted. It can be seen that Ho Chi Minh’s initiative of Tet for growing trees in particular and his ideologies for forest protection & development in general show great meanings, especially at present when we have to make lots of efforts and spend much money to deploy extensive national programs to prevent the risk of exhausting forest resources, environmental pollution, ecological imbalance, to recover forests, and make bare soil and hills green, etc., In the angle of the modern ecology, the movement of Tet for growing trees is the lively expression in Vietnam’s ecological culture values.

Scientific and technical achievements & advances have been proven through the mankind’s historical development that they always contain potential strengths in themselves. They may bring about extremely huge benefits to humans. On the other hand, they also may impose unpredictable risks and threats towards the humans. In the past, when “anatomizing” the capitalism, Karl Mark ever highlighted consequences, especially the social ones due to scientific & technical development made by the bourgeois simply for profits. As having lived in the age when the scientific and technical revolution strongly took place and moreover, Ho Chi Minh had ever been to several developed industrial countries in the world, he had experienced both positive, advanced things and negative aftermaths caused by this revolution. He requested such scientific and technical knowledge to be disseminated & applied to the life in a practical and precise way because he had made anticipation and prevented the possibly arising aftermaths. If disseminating them and letting the masses struggle with them but not caring for or following-up with them to see if they can turn the knowledge into the reality or not or if the outcomes are good or not, etc., “if so, we are irresponsible”. His Ideology shows especially profound meanings full of the spirit of humanity: all is for the joint-benefit and for humans’ happier & better life. Today, in the context of the market economy and impacts by the rule of profits, scientific and technical advances are sometimes abused due to the undisciplined loose management, unawareness,

and even conscienceless of some individuals with self-interested & selfish intention so humans confront with severe aftermaths like the environmental pollution, exhaustion of natural resources, food poison, and diseases, etc., we feel more deeply about the humanity values on this issue in Ho Chi Minh Ideology.

For his whole life, from the youthfulness until when he became the President of the Country, Ho Chi Minh had always led a simple and plain life with the proximity and attachment to the nature. Before entering the immortal world, he also reminded the Party and State not to organize sumptuous funeral offerings so that the people's time and money would not be wasted. In his will and for "his own business", Ho Chi Minh showed a very simple and ordinary wish that "... my body shall be burned ... I expect that the "burning" shall gradually get common because it shall be good for the alive in terms of hygiene and sanitation. Furthermore, it shall not occupy land. My body's ash should be buried on a hill, etc., A simple yet firm and cool house should be built on the hill so that visitors will have the place to rest. There should be a plan to grow trees and plants on the hill. Whoever visits the area shall grow a plant or a tree for memory. Whatever plant or tree is grown there must be good. Many plants and trees will form a forest after several days. This shall be good for landscapes as well as beneficial for agriculture". Ho Chi Minh also thought of the joint-benefit above all and wished to leave nice things for next generations despite the what-called "private" thing for him. That was really a soul profuse of humanity and the noble sacrifice. The fame of Ho Chi Minh, with his devotion for the Fatherland and the people's interests, has become an immortal symbol in the heart of the people and it has been better than all "stone steles and bronze statues" ever.

3.3 The grasp of Ho Chi Minh Ideology on the environmental protection in Vietnam's current sustainable development

The living environment-related pressing and global issue forces the humankind to change their perceptions on the relationship among the nature, society, and humans; thus, humans must behave fairly and rationally toward the environment. The environmental protection becomes the typical specific trait of the age and the national policy of almost all nations. Today, the contemporary world has been moving toward a new strategy for development - the sustainable development; in which the co-evolution by humans and the nature is the key & throughout principle. Although Vietnam remains a developing country, Vietnam does not fall outside that joint and common tendency. In the career of the country's industrialization and modernization for the objective of "rich people, a strong country, and the democratic, fair, & civilized society", than ever before, Vietnam realizes the level as well as the meaning of going beyond the age in Ho Chi Minh Ideology on the environmental protection for the current sustainable development.

First of all, the awareness of and Vietnam State's viewpoints on the combination of socio-economic development with protection of natural resources and environment need unifying. In the context of the market economy and impacts by several factors, quite a few localities, sectors, and production & business units (both collective and private ones) continue pursuing the economic growth so they increase profits by all means, even violating laws or abusing gaps in the laws of the State, especially the Law on Environmental Protection. The phenomenon of Vedan MSG Company (Japan's enterprise) shows that the Company is only one of the enterprises that have not strictly enforced requests for waste treatment for the environmental protection - this is the compulsory condition that must be complied with right from when being granted with a license for operation. Some localities even underestimate this request in order to attract many enterprises over to invest for production and development in their areas. Thus, viewpoints of Vietnam's State on sustainable development must be deeply aware of and thoroughly

grasped so that the thinking of gaining economic growth by all means must be strictly eliminated because if developing the economy but disregarding or forgetting the objective for social development & environmental protection, the cost shall be unpredictable; even the consequence shall be “anti-development”. “The sustainable development must not only be the joint guideline but more importantly, it needs socializing and applying with the awareness & specific realistic actions by all entities in the entire society”.

Secondly, the legal system needs accomplishing to form a cultural habit of “living and working in line with constitution and laws” in the entire society of Vietnam. Laws, on one hand, pave a favorable legal corridor for all economic entities (sectors and all laborers) for free production and economic development in line with laws; on the other hand, they are “tools” to settle breaches and assure for all disciplined social activities. Thence, the legal system must be powerful enough & applied strictly, objectively, and fairly for all people.

Thirdly, education & training, sciences - technologies should be strongly developed. The socio-economy develops slowly but not firmly because of not having or the shortage of basic premises. In the current context, high quality human resources and advanced scientific & technological levels are keys to the socio-economic development. In the comparison among resources, the human resource, especially, the high quality laborers is top dominant. Together with it, scientific - technological levels are the basic factors for economic development as well as for the settlement of environment issues. Therefore, we need to quickly & firmly develop the country’s education - training and sciences – technologies. That is the basic measure for the sustainable development.

Fourthly, the State of Vietnam needs to actively build up and enforce social issue-based policies because the issues arise during the development process. The good settlement of the social issues shall bring about the stability in the social life - the especially vital factor for the country’s socio-economic development toward the socialism. Obviously, the settlement of the social issues is not the responsibility of the State only but it is also the responsibility of all people and the entire society.

4 Conclusion

The sustainable development in all of the three aspects: economic, social, and environmental sustainable development is the joint-tendency in nations and territories worldwide and simultaneously is the outstanding feature of the contemporary world, reflecting the joint-effort by the international community for the objective of assurance and enhancement of the current and futuristic generations’ living quality. That is also the prioritized strategy for development that the State and people of Vietnam moves toward for. In the process of industrialization and modernization of the country for the purpose of “rich people, strong country, a fair society, democracy, civilization”, more than ever, we see the stature and meaning more clearly. ahead of time in President Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on environmental protection issues.

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