The Status of Sustainable Livelihood for Ethnic Minorities in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam

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Abstract:
The article has generalized the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economic life of Thai Nguyen people in general and ethnic minorities in particular. At the same time, develop a theoretical framework for sustainable livelihood for ethnic minorities. From there, assess the status of sustainable livelihood based on indigenous values of ethnic minorities in Thai Nguyen. Thereby, encouraging Vietnamese State management agencies to create favorable conditions and support sustainable livelihood for ethnic minorities in Thai Nguyen.

Keywords: Sustainable livelihood, ethnic minorities, Thai Nguyen

1. Introduction

In 2021, the complicated developments of the COVID-19 pandemic have negatively impacted all aspects of socio-economic life. In Thai Nguyen province, due to the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, more than 1,300 businesses closed their tax codes and stopped operating. Some types of services, trade interruption. Tourism activities are almost "frozen". In that context, with the drastic and flexible direction of the Party committees and local authorities, all levels, branches, people and business community have joined hands and agreed to effectively implement. The "dual goal" is to prevent and control the epidemic, protect the people's health, and recover and develop socio-economically, and ensure social security. As a result, Thai Nguyen has achieved many positive results in the implementation of the socio-economic development plan for 2021, creating an important premise for the implementation of the plan objectives for the period 2021-2025.

Despite many difficulties, the economic development results of Thai Nguyen in 2021 still achieved many positive results. Notably, the province's gross domestic product (GRDP) is estimated to increase by 6.56% compared to 2020, higher than the average growth rate of the whole country. Per capita income is estimated at 95.1 million VND, equivalent to 4,121.8 USD/person/person, an increase of 6.4 million VND/person compared to 2020. Budget revenue in 2021 will reach over 16,750 billion VND, equal to 137% of the estimate assigned by the Ministry of Finance, equal to 107% of the estimate assigned by the Provincial People's Council. Industrial production value for the whole year 2021 is estimated at 844 trillion VND, up 7.7% over the same period. The production value of agriculture, forestry and fishery for the whole year 2021 (at 2010 constant prices) is estimated at 14,647.2 billion VND, up 4.18% over the previous year. The total value of exported goods in 2021 of the whole province is estimated at 28.85 billion USD, up 17.9% over the same period... Although the COVID-19 epidemic directly affects businesses as well as attracting investment, In the past year, Thai Nguyen has issued Decision on investment policy and investment registration certificate for 35 projects using domestic and foreign investment capital with a total registered capital of over 6,300 billion VND, bringing the total number of projects. There are 817 valid non-budget projects using domestic investment capital with a registered capital of about VND 141,540 billion. The province newly granted and adjusted capital for 27 FDI projects with a total registered capital of 158.06 million USD, bringing the total existing FDI projects in the province to 171 projects with a total registered capital of over 8.7 billion dollars ...

Not only achieving the economic development targets, Thai Nguyen has many imprints in the implementation of social development targets when fully and timely implementing social security policies, especially the social security policy, preferential policies for people with meritorious services to the revolution, unexpected relief, social assistance, poverty alleviation, care and assistance to the elderly, disabled people, children in extremely difficult circumstances, people living in low-income areas minorities. As a result, the poverty rate in 2021 will decrease to 2.17%, down 0.65% compared to 2020, exceeding the set plan. In addition, the province has
implemented policies to support workers and employers facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the contribution to the Insurance Fund for Occupational Accidents and Diseases with a total money was reduced by more than 57 billion dong. Thai Nguyen has implemented specific support policies during COVID-19 outbreaks, such as providing financial support for isolation, food, accommodation and testing for more than 2,200 laborers and citizens of Thai Nguyen province who are giving birth. living and working in Bac Giang province returned home with a total amount of over 4.5 billion VND; supporting Thai Nguyen people living in Ho Chi Minh City and southern provinces and cities to implement social distancing for more than 11,600 people with a support amount of nearly 23.4 billion VND; organized to welcome 247 Thai Nguyen citizens from southern provinces and cities that are facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 epidemic to return to their homeland, supporting the entire cost of air tickets and isolation costs for citizens. The province supports 3,107 preschool and high school teachers and staff who are contracted to cook with an amount of nearly 6 billion dong...

Thai Nguyen is also one of the first provinces in the Northern midland and mountainous provinces to implement the digital transformation program in a synchronous, timely, flexible, creative manner and achieve many positive and complete results. City provides 100% of administrative procedures eligible for level 4 on the provincial public service portal, widely deploys information technology application platforms for epidemic prevention and control, initially builds and deploys Deploying digital social platform and application "ThaiNguyenID"...

2. Theoretical basis

2.1. Livelihood

In 1983, in the work “Rural development: Putting the last first”, Chambers and Robert formally used the term "livelihood" (2). Since then, scientists and development agencies have embraced this concept and tried to put it into practice. The DFID's framework for sustainable livelihoods analysis defines: "livelihood includes the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities necessary for a living". (3)

Sustainable livelihood was defined by Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway (1992) as follows: “Livelihood includes the capacities, assets and activities of earning a living. A sustainable livelihood is a livelihood that can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance capacities, assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation, contributing benefit the livelihoods of others locally and globally in the short and long term”. (4)

2.2. Framework theory of sustainable livelihood DFID

The framework for sustainable livelihood analysis of the Department for International Development (DFID) is widely applied by scholars and development agencies in the analysis of livelihood and poverty. This analytical framework refers to the factors and components that make up a livelihood, including: (1) The priorities that people can recognize; (2) The strategies they choose to pursue those priorities; (3) Institutions, policies and organizations that determine their access to assets or opportunities and the outcomes they obtain; (4) Their approaches to the five types of capital and their ability to use them effectively; (5) People's living context, including economic trends, technology, population, shocks and seasons. (5)

The framework for sustainable livelihood analysis refers to the concept of "capital", which holds that there are five types of capital assets, or forms of capital, to ensure a secure livelihood or reduce poverty, including: (a) Physical capital is the infrastructure and goods that producers need to support their livelihoods; (b) Financial capital implies the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood goals; (c) Social capital is the
social resources that people use to pursue their livelihood goals, including: relationships, networks, group membership, beliefs, interdependence and exchange provide important informal security networks; (d) Human capital represents skills, knowledge, ability to work and good health, which all together form the conditions that enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their goals. subsistence consumption. At the household level, human capital is the quantity and quality of a household's labor, and this type of capital depends on the size of the household, education and occupational skills, management ability, health status, etc. health, knowledge of formal and informal property structures (such as rights, laws, norms, governmental structures, procedures...); (e) Natural capital is all the natural materials used to create a livelihood. There are many resources that make up natural capital including land, water, forests, biodiversity, and non-renewable resources such as minerals. (6)

2.3. Indigenous knowledge

The term "indigenous knowledge" was first used by Robert Chambers in a publication published in 1979. It was later used by Brokensha and D. M. Warren in 1980 and continues to be used and developed for to this day. (7)

Unlike "academic knowledge" which is formed mainly through wise men, systematized and passed down through education and books, indigenous knowledge is formed, exists and develops in the process of working production activities, behavior with the natural and social environment of all members of the community; gradually supplemented and perfected, passed on from generation to generation through many forms such as: experience, singing, riddles, customs, habits... Indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge difference. (8)

Regarding the definition of indigenous knowledge and its role in development in contemporary society, there are many different opinions. According to Mcelwee Pamela, a definition of indigenous knowledge is challenging. A group led by the International Committee of Scientific Societies, a global body of science, has stated that: Traditional knowledge is an accumulation of knowledge, understanding, practices and expressions acquired maintained and developed by people with a long history of interacting with the natural environment. These sophisticated interpretations, interpretations, and meanings are part of a cultural complex that includes language, names and classification systems, resource usage habits, rituals, beliefs, and practices. worldview... Traditional knowledge forms the basis for local decision-making about many fundamental aspects of daily life: hunting, fishing, gathering, agriculture and animal husbandry; prepare food, conserve and distribute food, locate, collect and store water; fight against disease and casualties; interpretation of weather and meteorological phenomena; manufacture of tools and clothing; construction and maintenance of housing; navigation and navigation on land and sea; manage ecological relationships of society and nature, adapt to environmental and social changes... (9)

**Indigenous knowledge classification**

Vietnamese and international researchers in many different professional fields classify indigenous knowledge differently, but there is no consensus.

According to Simon Brascoupe' and Howard Mann(10), indigenous knowledge covers the following areas: 1) Agriculture and horticulture; 2) Astronomy; 3) Forestry; 4) Human health, traditional medical remedies; 5) Knowledge of animals, fish and ecosystems; 6) Sustainable use of natural resources and the environment; 7) Traditional classification systems for life and other resources; 8) Knowledge system and oral customs; 9) Spirit, belief; 10) Symbols and symbols; 11) Traditional culture and arts.

Hoang Xuan Ty (11) , indigenous knowledge includes the following areas: 1) Knowledge of cultivation; 2) Knowledge of animal husbandry; 3) Knowledge of forest management and community resources; 4)
Knowledge of nutrition and human health; 5) Knowledge of community organization and passing on experience to descendants.

Ngo Duc Thinh (12), indigenous knowledge includes: 1) Knowledge of nature and environment (including the universe); 2) Knowledge about the human being (physiology, nutrition, treatment); 3) Knowledge of production, exploitation and rational use of natural resources; 4) Knowledge of social behavior and community management; 5) Knowledge of artistic creation.

Pham Quang Hoan (13), indigenous knowledge includes the following areas: 1) Knowledge on the use, protection and management of natural resources, mainly forests, land and water resources; 2) Knowledge in agricultural production; 3) Knowledge of traditional crafts; 4) Knowledge of folk medicine and health care; 4) Knowledge of social administration and management.

3. The livelihood resources of ethnic minorities in Thai Nguyen

Entering 2022, Thai Nguyen province sets the common goal of adapting safely, flexibly, and controlling COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control, promoting administrative reform to remove difficulties for businesses and people, ensuring the maintenance and promotion of production and business of enterprises in the area; well implement the contents of the provincial master plan after being approved by the Prime Minister. The province organizes the implementation of the five-year socio-economic development and public investment plan for 2021-2025, accelerating the construction progress of the southern infrastructure system of the province, focusing on related projects. connection, area connection. Thai Nguyen actively improves the investment environment, attracting investment projects of a pervasive nature, creating a driving force for socio-economic development; develop agriculture and rural areas, ensure social security, reduce poverty sustainably…

The whole province strives in 2022 to achieve a growth rate of 8%, industrial production value to increase 9%, export value to increase. exports increased by 9%, of which local exports increased by 11% compared to 2021. Per capita income reached 105 million VND/person/year, state budget revenue in the province reached 18,000 billion VND, the rate of trained workers reached 72%, of which degrees and certificates reached 30.5%. The rate of poor households decreased by 1% or more, 100% of communes met the national standards on health, the rate of schools meeting the national standards reached 86.2%

Right in the first days of the year, the province accelerated its progress. The level of implementation of groundbreaking works, projects and plannings will be implemented from 2021 such as: Formulating the planning of Thai Nguyen province in the period of 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050; adjust the general planning of Thai Nguyen city to invest in building large public space complexes such as squares, pedestrian streets, new urban areas, administrative offices of the province; new investment in Thai Nguyen Stadium with 22,000 seats, meeting national standards; invest in a 42 km dynamic road connecting Thai Nguyen - Bac Giang - Vinh Phuc provinces with a total investment of nearly 4,000 billion VND and many other important arterial roads. In addition, the province focuses on attracting investment to build thousands of social houses, high-rise buildings are the highlight for the urban area, contributing to creating jobs and promoting commerce, services, deploying urban areas. many key projects, notably the infrastructure investment project of Phu Binh Industrial Park - Urban - Service; Yen Binh concentrated information technology park project; High-tech application agricultural zone project. Thai Nguyen also plans to invest and attract investment from 2 to 3 new industrial parks with a scale of nearly 2,000 ha...

About socio-economic characteristics of ethnic minority areas in Thai Nguyen
In the 2019 census of 53 ethnic minorities, an ethnic minority area is defined as an enumeration area where the number of ethnic minorities currently living accounts for 30% or more of the total population of that area. As of October 1, 2019, Thai Nguyen province has 124 communes in ethnic minority and mountainous areas (currently 110 communes). The number of ethnic minority households is 130,917 households with a total population of 384,348 people, accounting for 29.87% of the province's population.

Communes in ethnic minority areas already have health stations, accounting for 100%, equivalent to the results of the 2015 survey. Most of the commune health stations in ethnic minority areas have been built solidly or semi-permanently, reaching 100%, an increase of 6.93% compared to 2015. The percentage of communes having health stations meeting national standards for commune health in the period to 2020 reached 96.3%, increasing 1.4 times compared to 2015 (68.07%).

At commune health stations in ethnic minority areas, there are currently 842 leaders and medical staff working, including 129 doctors. The majority of leaders and staff at commune health stations have medical, nurse or nursing qualifications, accounting for over 80%. There are 97.7% villages in ethnic minority communes with village health workers.

The province has 556 schools and 275 schools in ethnic minority areas, respectively, an increase of 38 schools and a decrease of 19 schools compared to 2015. The percentage of permanent schools has reached 91.4% (an increase of 9% compared to 2015), while the percentage of schools that are built solidly is only 48.7%. The total number of teachers currently teaching at schools and schools in ethnic minority areas is nearly 13,283 people; in which, 4,873 teachers are ethnic minorities (accounting for 36.6%), 4,074 teachers are ethnic minority women (accounting for 83.6%).

The total number of road kilometers from the commune center of the ethnic minority area to the district center is 1,637 km. Most of the roads from the commune center of the ethnic minority area to the district center have been hardened with the rate of hardening kilometers (paved or concrete) reaching 99.1%. Over 98% of the villages in the ethnic minority areas have hardened roads to the commune center, 1.2 times higher than in 2015 (79.9%).

**About population and demographic characteristics of ethnic minorities**

As of April 1, 2019, the population of 53 ethnic minorities in the province is over 384 thousand people, accounting for 29.87% of the total population of the province. After 10 years, from 2009 to 2019, the population of 53 ethnic minorities has increased by over 82,000 people. The average annual population growth rate for the period 2009-2019 of the 53 ethnic minorities is 2.41%, higher than the average growth rate of the Kinh ethnic group (0.94%).

The rate of child marriage of ethnic minorities is 13.13%. The percentage of ethnic minorities who are consanguinely married is 0.14%.

The rate of ethnic minorities participating in the labor force is 83.4%. In which, the labor force participation rate of ethnic minority men is 1.9% higher than that of ethnic minority women.

The proportion of the workforce being ethnic minorities with professional and technical training (from primary school to higher is 17.7%; the workforce of ethnic minorities without professional expertise accounts for a high rate of 82.3%. This is a limitation of the ethnic minority workforce in accessing the labor market and improving labor productivity to generate income.

Out of the total number of employed people, ethnic minority workers working in the "Simple Labor" occupation group still attract the most ethnic minority workers with the rate of 52.7% and are mainly unskilled workers in the region. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Regarding housing conditions, activities and cultural and spiritual life of ethnic minority households.
Almost all EM households have houses (reaching 91.2%). Among households with houses, the majority of EM households live in permanent or semi-permanent houses, accounting for 90.5%, 5.5 percent lower than the provincial average at that time. survey point April 1, 2019 (95.8%). The whole province still has 9.5% of ethnic minority households living in unstable or simple houses. The average housing area per capita of ethnic minority households is $21.4m^2/person$, $4.4m^2/person$ lower than the province's average at the survey time of April 1, 2019 (25.8m2).²/person).

99.9% of ethnic minority households have access to the national grid, an increase of 1.1% compared to 2015 (98.8%), the rest are using other power sources (0.1%); the percentage of EM households using hygienic latrines (septic or semi-septic latrines) is 69.1%.

Television has become a popular living device of ethnic minority households, accounting for 74.3% of ethnic minority households. The percentage of EM households using landlines, mobile phones and tablets is 97.9%. The percentage of households with Internet access of ethnic minorities accounts for 80.2% of the total number of ethnic minority households. Other basic living facilities are also used by the majority of EM households. In the whole province, there are still 19% of ethnic minority households keeping livestock and poultry under or close to their houses, the highest is in Phu Luong district, which accounts for 31.5% of ethnic minority households in the whole district.

The percentage of ethnic minority households receiving financial/material support in 2018 across the province was 19.4%, which translates into 45,761 million VND, along with social policy credit loans have contributed to helping households Ethnic minorities have resources for economic development, improving production and business management, thereby improving quality of life and creating motivation to escape poverty.

3. Conclusion

Indigenous knowledge is closely related to the lives of ethnic minorities, experienced in history, so most of it is knowledge related to the environment, production methods, animal husbandry, cultivation, care, community health, social organization and management... Indigenous knowledge is reflected strongly in folk songs, legends and cultural practices of ethnic minorities. To develop sustainable livelihoods for ethnic minorities cannot rely solely on the available indigenous knowledge experiences of the people and communities. It is imperative to transfer modern scientific and technological advances into life and production on the basis of conformity with cultural values and indigenous knowledge of each ethnic group. The sustainable livelihood objectives/results of ethnic minorities are: raising incomes, improving welfare, reducing vulnerability, improving food security, and using natural resources sustainably.

References


xii. These are general statistics by ethnic groups of the whole country. We have not had the conditions to calculate and separate the incomes of ethnic minorities in the Northeast provinces.

xiii. Tran Le Bich Hong: Impact of poverty reduction policies on the livelihood of poor ethnic minority households in Vo Nhai district, Thai Nguyen province, PhD thesis in Agricultural Economics, University of Economics Thai Nguyen Economics and Business Administration, 2018, pp.41-42.