

SOME ISSUES REGARDING THE ENSURANCE OF SOCIAL BENEFITS FOR ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN CAO BANG PROVINCE

Truong Tat Thinh

Military Political Academy
Email: thinh021102@gmail.com

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Ensuring social welfare for ethnic minorities is an important policy of the Party and State in order to contribute to social stability and development, reduce income disparities, and improve material as well as spiritual living standards for fellow citizens. In recent years, Cao Bang province has issued and implemented many policies, mobilized resources to provide social assistance, social relief, social incentives, social insurance and other basic social services such as education and training, health care, housing, electricity, water, information... for the people. Although these activities have brought about a lot of social progress, there are still some limitations. Therefore, in order to enhance social welfare for ethnic minorities, it is necessary to continue to raise awareness, consolidate policies; efficiently mobilize and use resources; implement welfare programs and projects and closely collaborate with related organizations and forces; promote inspection and supervision work. On the basis of laying down some background on some social welfare issues and social welfare assurance, and from assessing the relevant situation as well as clarifying results, limitations and causes, the article proposes a number of major solutions to enhance social welfare for ethnic minorities in Cao Bang province.

Keywords: Social welfare; Social policies; Ethnic minorities; Cao Bang Province.

1. Introduction

Ensuring social welfare is the synthesis of activities carried out by the political system and the society to benefit all members of the society or targeted social groups the fruits of social development. With the characteristics of the locality where the majority of the population are ethnic minorities, Cao Bang province always focuses on the effective implementation of social welfare programs and policies, contributing to improve living conditions for the people. However, besides the achieved results, ensuring social welfare for people in the province still has a number of shortcomings that directly affect the level of social welfare enjoyment of people. Therefore, it is necessary to have the right solutions to enhance social welfare, contribute to improving the lives of ethnic minorities in the province as well as to meet local sustainable development requirements.

2. Research overview

Up to now, in our country, there are a number of scientific researches on social welfare, such as the topic of Bui The Cuong (2000), "Social welfare system and social welfare situation in 2000", Institute of Sociology; the article by author Tran Huu Quang (2009), "Social welfare in the world: conception

and classification", Journal of Social Sciences No. 4 (128) -2009; Pham Thi Hong Diep (2014), "East Asian welfare state model and implications for Vietnam", Journal of Economics and Development, No. 4 (2014) ...

There are many different views on social welfare, some of which agree with the definition of the Vietnamese Encyclopedia that social welfare is a part of national income used to satisfy the physical and spiritual needs of members of society, mainly distributed in addition to income according to labor and redistribution. This concept emphasizes the material resources necessary for the realization of social welfare, that is, how social welfare is implemented depends on the national income of a country and aims to ensure better life for members of society by means of high sociality. There are also many opinions agreeing with Tran Huu Quang's view that, "social welfare: in a broad sense, is a system of institutions, policies and activities to ensure that the needs are met. The most essential part of the people, with the goal is to give all people a decent, kind and dignified life. This system includes areas such as education, health, housing; social insurance, health insurance, social assistance policies (to support the poor and disadvantaged...) and social relief policies (relief from natural

disasters and epidemics) (Quang, 2010). This concept says that social welfare is the activity of the actors on the basis of ensuring institutions to improve the quality of life of the people. Despite the different approaches, most of the respondents said that talking about social welfare is referring to a part of national income used to contribute to the satisfaction of material and spiritual needs of the members of society. It is the sum of activities to redistribute beyond labor distribution to reduce social inequality. The social welfare system includes areas such as education, health care, housing; social insurance, health insurance, and social assistance policies (supporting the poor and disadvantaged...) and social relief policies (relief from natural disasters and epidemics). And so, ensuring social welfare is the sum of activities of both the political system and the entire society in order to benefit all members of society or social groups to enjoy the fruits of social development. This is considered as a means of adjustment to reduce income disparities, improve the material and spiritual life for members of society, create conditions and opportunities for each to develop comprehensively, and create a driving force to promote economic development and social stability

3. Research methods

The article mainly uses the synthesis method, analysis of secondary documents, focuses on scientific works and related reports to clarify the research content. On the basis of synthesizing and analyzing documents and articles, analyzing the current situation and offering solutions to ensure social welfare for ethnic minorities in Cao Bang province today.

4. Research results

4.1. Current situation of ensuring social welfare for ethnic minorities in Cao Bang province

Cao Bang is a mountainous, highland and border province in the northeast of the country. The province has 12 districts and 01 city, including 9 border districts, 11 communes in Region I; 49 communes in Region II including 168 villages with extreme difficulties, 139 communes in Region III with 1,430 villages with extreme difficulties. Residents living in the province are mainly ethnic minorities (the province has 08 main ethnic groups living together, of which the Tay accounts for 40.97%, the Nung 31.08%, the Dao 10.08%, H'mong 10.13%, Kinh 5.76%, Hoa 0.03%, San Chi 1.39%, Lo Lo 0.47%, other ethnic groups 0.09%) (Cao Bang Provincial Party Committee, 2019), and life is still very difficult for them.

Over the past years, the Party committee, the government of Cao Bang province have always paid attention to rigorously and effectively enforcing the policies of the Party and the State, especially policies

and social welfare programs. Provincial Party Committee, People's Council, Provincial People's Committee have issued and implemented many policies such as Action Program No. 21-CTr/TU, dated May 28, 2003 on implementation Resolution 24; Resolution No. 13-NQ/TU, dated February 9, 2012, on the implementation of universal access to education, improving the quality of education and training; Directive No. 42-CT/TU, dated September 8, 2004 on accelerating the implementation of ethnic minority policies towards ethnic minorities, Directive 19-CT/TU, dated February 1, 2007 on strengthening the leadership of Party committees at all levels in the implementation of Program 120, Program 134 and Program 135 (phase II) in Cao Bang province; Directive No. 60-CT/TU dated May 27, 2010 on strengthening leadership in implementing the Government's Resolution 30a / 2008/NQ-CP on the program of rapid and sustainable poverty reduction; Project No. 09-DA/TU dated May 25, 2017 on the cadres of the Hmong, Dao, San Chi, Lo Lo and other ethnic minorities in Cao Bang province for the period 2017-2020 orientation to 2025; Plan No. 121-KH/TU dated March 6, 2013 of Cao Bang Provincial Party Committee implementing Resolution No. 21-NQ/TW dated November 22, 2012 of the Politburo (Session XI) on strengthening leadership of the Party for health insurance, social insurance for the 2013 - 2020 period; ...

Agencies, departments and unions have effectively played their roles and responsibilities in regularly propagating and advocating for the efficient implementation of policies; constantly renovating content and mode of operation, proactively assigning, coordinating, exploiting and mobilizing all resources to ensure the welfare of the people. The province has mobilized and utilized effectively all financial resources, attracting aid for the fields of health, education, environment, socio-economic development, ... especially attracting aid for communes of region III, areas whose socio-economic conditions are extremely poor. The total value of aid in 2016 was 3,961,837 USD, in 2017 it was 2,861,369 USD, and in 2018 was 2,173,422 USD (People's Committee of Cao Bang Province, 2019).

The province has prioritized resources to implement the policy of social assistance, social relief, credit support for poor, near poor, and extremely difficult areas. According to the Review Report on 15 years of implementation of Resolution 24-NQ/TW on ethnic affairs, by the end of 2018, Cao Bang province has implemented a policy of direct support to poor households according to Decision 102/2009/QD-TTg dated August 7, 2009 by the Prime Minister with a total budget of 11,824,529 million, for 120,556 people, equal to 66.1% of the annual capital plan. The period of 2013 - 2018 complies with the Prime Minister's

Decision No. 570/QĐ-TTg dated May 17, 2012 on approving the Plan for stable population allocation in Vietnam-China border communes in the period of 2012 - 2017, the level of support for households to stabilize their residents is increased to 50 million VND/household, resulting in 80 households with a budget of 4,000 million VND. Implementing housing support for poor households in the 2016 - 2018 period, the province has lent each household 25 million VND, with a preferential interest rate of 3%/year. Total loan amount with preferential interest rate is 39 billion VND; the total number of households that are allowed to borrow to build or repair houses is 1,560. At the same time, the authority has granted health insurance cards to 4,438,104 turns of poor households, ethnic minorities living in disadvantaged communes; supported for 818,335 turns of pupils and students; provided hunger relief support for 2,355 households with 14,083,675 tons of rice and 329 million VND dong. With the support of the State, organizations, forces, many households have escaped poverty, gradually stabilizing and improving their lives. In 3 years (2016 - 2018), the number of households living in poverty decreased by 13,525 households, the rate of reduction is 11.0% (average annual decrease of 3.67%); the average income/person/year of the province is 26.7 million VND with the average income/person/year of ethnic minority households being 25.37 million VND. The rate of poor households in 2018 of the whole province is 30.81% and 13.53% of near poor households; poor households are ethnic minority ones accounting for 99.07% of total poor households and near poor households account for 98% (Cao Bang Provincial Party Committee, 2019)

The province has also fruitfully implemented the social preference policy, ensuring that people and families having member under preferential treatment policy can properly and fully enjoy the State's policies, the scope and beneficiaries of the policy are increasingly extended; subsidies and preferential allowances have been gradually improved. As of February 2019, the number of people enjoying the monthly preferential subsidy in the whole province is 5,248 subjects, with a total monthly payment of over 8.3 billion VND. In particular, the province has supported 8,000 households under preferential treatment policy in housing under Decision No. 22/2013/QĐ-TTg with nearly 224 billion VND (equal to 92% of the capital plan).

In particular, the province has expanded and improved the quality of social services for the people. The province has fully and promptly implemented regimes and policies for cadres, teachers and students; actively take care of improving schools and classrooms and conditions for schools in remote and extremely difficult areas and take care of organizing life for boarding students; continue to maintain and

maintain the results of universal access to education and illiteracy eradication. The proportion of children entering kindergarten increased from 32.73% in the 2003-2004 school year to 97.2% in the 2017-2018 school year. In the school year 2017-2018, the secondary school graduation rate was 99.87%, the high school graduation rate was 94.31%. All boarding schools for ethnic minorities have enough classrooms, dormitory houses, kitchens, cafeterias,... to ensure minimum needs for study. Ethnic minority pupils and students are entitled to benefits in accordance with regulations such as allowances for meals, accommodation, travel, books, school supplies, health insurance, with a minimum allowance equal to 50% of the common minimum salary of the State; the number of months to be subsidized for the year is 10 months; for the final year of the course, the period of benefits is calculated until graduation.

Health care services for ethnic minorities have had important developments. The number of communes meeting the national criteria for commune health/the total number of communes is 112/199 communes, equal to 56.28%; 169 communes have medical stations with doctors, equaling 84.9%; 2,487 villages (100%) have village health workers; 99.4% of ethnic minorities are provided with health insurance cards. The quality of medical examination and treatment has been gradually improved, basically meeting the people's needs for medical examination and treatment; comply with regulations and policies for patients; ensure the supply of medicines to serve the medical examination and treatment and disease prevention for the people. Up to now, 100% of communes and wards have implemented the national health target program; Preventive medicine activities have significantly contributed to improving the quality of care and protection of people's health right from the grassroots level. In 2003, children under 1 year of age are fully vaccinated with 6 vaccines, reaching the rate of 90%; by 2018, it will increase to 8 vaccines, reaching the rate of 90%. Activities to prevent and combat child malnutrition have been widely deployed, on schedule; The proportion of malnourished children under 5 years old by age in 2003 was 33.9%, by 2018 it decreased to 19%; The infant mortality rate decreased from 17.6 ‰ in 2003 and by 2018 to 15.9 ‰; The infant mortality rate decreased from 21.6 ‰ in 2003 to 20.6 ‰ in 2018.

Improvements in electricity, clean water and information services have been made. The number of communes (to commune centers), wards and townships having access to the national electric grid is 100%; the number of households with electricity from the national grid reaches 90.89%; the number of rural households with electricity from the national grid reaches 87.71%. The rate of urban population

using clean water is estimated at 86%; the rate of the rural population using clean water is estimated at 88%; 100% of communes in the province have had mobile phone coverage, the number of internet users has increased.

In addition to the achieved results, ensuring social welfare for people in Cao Bang province still has some limitations and shortcomings. Some policies are overlapping, spread and fragmented, difficult to implement. The direction and implementation of policies in a number of agencies and units, especially at grassroots, has not been regular and synchronous; financial resources are insufficient and not diversified, especially socialization resources.

These limitations directly restricted the quality, effectiveness of policy implementation and the level of social welfare benefits of people. Up to now, the level of benefit enjoyment of people is still low, the gap in benefit enjoyment between ethnic groups is still large. Social assistance and social relief are not timely in some places, direct support policies are not close to actual needs, so it has not been effective. The rate of poor households in ethnic minority and remote areas is still high, the result of poverty reduction in some places is not really sustainable. The level of enjoyment of educational services remains uneven, the proportion of children attending school at the right age in remote areas is low, the situation of students dropping out of school, especially primary school students in the villages and remote areas still occur. Medical services and health care in some medical centers have not met the requirements; There is a lack of equipment, the number of nurses and doctors serving medical examination and treatment, and the opportunity to access medical services is limited (Cao Bang Provincial Party Committee, 2019)

The shortcomings and drawbacks are, on the one hand, due to the low economic starting point of the province, conditions for production and life are still inadequate. The area is geographically separated and often affected by natural disasters. On the other hand, the party committees and authorities at some district levels are not deeply aware, not hard enough in leadership, direction, and not promptly remove the difficulties and problems at the grassroots level. The qualifications and experience of management staffs in some districts are still limited, they find themselves confused in implementing projects, programs, and policies on social welfare, especially communal officials. The demands for investment are enormous, while the state resources are limited; insufficient total investment, scattered population, backward and fragmented production methods, low educational level of the people have all significantly affected the process of ensuring social welfare for the people in the province.

4.2. Discussion

Over the past years, Cao Bang province has effectively implemented social welfare policies for ethnic minorities, contributing to improving and enhancing the lives of the people. For the society for ethnic minorities, in the coming time, Cao Bang province should focus on well implementing some of the following issues:

Improve propaganda and awareness raising on ensuring social welfare for ethnic minorities. It is necessary to focus on propagating and educating about social welfare programs and policies of the Party, State and local governments, focusing on propagating; resolutions on socio-economic development, local programs and projects to implement national target programs, Resolution of the 5th Conference Session XI „Some issues of social policy in 2012 – 2020 period“, the Vietnam Social Security Strategy for 2012 – 2020 period; Resolution No. 21-NQ/TW „On strengthening the Party’s leadership in the work of social insurance and health insurance for 2012 – 2020 period“ of the Politburo; Master project on socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas for 2021-2030 period, ...

In order to ensure the social welfare of ethnic minorities, it is necessary to continue to well implement the policies of the Party and State, especially the policies of ethnic minorities; focus on building and promulgating local policies in accordance with the practical, psychological and living conditions of ethnic minorities in the province, in order to effectively implement the program to ensure the social welfare for ethnic minorities. In which, focusing on rational and efficient use of local resources; Invest heavily, improve the quality of public services to ensure a high level of benefits for social welfare for ethnic minorities in the province. Emphasizing on promoting the internal strengths of the people in self-assurance of social welfare, creating an inner strength to self-guarantee social welfare.

Emphasizing on improving the quality and efficiency of organizing the implementation of social welfare programs and projects for ethnic minorities. Funding support to basically settle the situation of ethnic poor and re-poor households in the province due to lack of productive land, residential land, domestic water and temporary houses. Ensuring that people have enough food, water for daily life, materials for production and stable housing. Continue to implement the policies to subsidize plant seeds and animals, preferential credit capital, agricultural and forestry extension so that people can escape poverty and stabilize their lives. Improve the quality of teaching and learning, consolidate the building of facilities for schools, classes, teaching and learning equipment. Construct and reinforce commune health stations, regional polyclinics to meet the health care needs of the people; to

supply common and essential medicines for ethnic minorities in remote, difficult, and border areas; to promptly prevent dangerous epidemics, protect the health of mothers and children, prevent malnutrition and encourage people to well implement population and family planning. Increase the duration of radio and television programs in ethnic minority languages; free supply of magazines, film projection, cultural performance for the people.

5. Conclusion

Ensuring social welfare for ethnic minorities is a consistent policy of our State Party, demonstrating the good nature and superiority of the social regime

in our country. Effective policies of the Party, State, and Cao Bang province have regularly paid attention to ensuring social welfare for ethnic minorities, contributing to improving the lives of the people, stabilizing politics and social, creating a driving force for socio-economic development, consolidating the solidarity block in the area. Currently, under the multidimensional impacts of objective and subjective factors, there is a need for more drastic participation in the political system and the entire society, especially the great efforts of the ethnic minorities themselves; creating synergy to enhance social welfare for people, making them enjoy more and more development achievements.

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MỘT SỐ VẤN ĐỀ VỀ ĐẢM BẢO PHÚC LỢI XÃ HỘI CHO ĐỒNG BÀO DÂN TỘC THIỂU SỐ Ở TỈNH CAO BẰNG HIỆN NAY

Trương Tất Thịnh

Học viện Chính trị
Email: thinh021102@gmail.com

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Tóm tắt: Bảo đảm phúc lợi xã hội cho đồng bào các dân tộc thiểu số là chính sách quan trọng của Đảng, Nhà nước ta nhằm góp phần ổn định, phát triển xã hội, giảm bớt sự chênh lệch về thu nhập, nâng cao đời sống vật chất và tinh thần cho đồng bào. Những năm qua, tỉnh Cao Bằng đã ban hành và tổ chức thực hiện nhiều chủ trương chính sách, huy động các nguồn lực để thực hiện trợ giúp xã hội, cứu trợ xã hội, ưu đãi xã hội, bảo hiểm xã hội và các dịch vụ xã hội cơ bản như dịch vụ giáo dục đào tạo, y tế chăm sóc sức khỏe, nhà ở, điện nước, thông tin... cho đồng bào. Mặc dù hoạt động này đã đạt được nhiều kết quả tiến bộ, tuy nhiên vẫn còn bộc lộ một số hạn chế. Do đó, để tăng cường bảo đảm phúc lợi xã hội cho đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số cần tiếp tục nâng cao nhận thức, đổi mới, hoàn thiện chính sách, huy động và sử dụng có hiệu quả các nguồn lực, tổ chức thực hiện tốt các chương trình, dự án phúc lợi và phân công, phối hợp chặt chẽ giữa các tổ chức, các lực lượng, tăng cường kiểm tra, giám sát trong tổ chức thực hiện. Trên cơ sở khái quát một số vấn đề về phúc lợi xã hội, bảo đảm phúc lợi xã hội, tập trung đánh giá thực trạng, làm rõ kết quả, hạn chế và nguyên nhân, bài viết đề xuất một số giải pháp chủ yếu tăng cường bảo đảm phúc lợi xã hội cho đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số ở tỉnh Cao Bằng hiện nay.

Từ khóa: Phúc lợi xã hội; Chính sách xã hội; Dân tộc thiểu số; Tỉnh Cao Bằng.