

SOME SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF FORMULATING AND ORGANIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ETHNIC POLICIES IN NGHE AN PROVINCE IN THE COMING TIME

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Nghe An is a province with a large number of ethnic minorities living in mountainous areas, so the implementation of ethnic programs and policies has been synchronously and quite effective in recent years. Policies are fully implemented, effectively promoted socio-economic development; the fields of health, education and training, social culture have had positive changes; social policy affair is concerned, the lives of ethnic minorities are increasingly improved. In addition to the results achieved, however, up to now, in the process of formulating and organizing the implementation of ethnic policies in the province, there are still some shortcomings and limitations, a part of ethnic minorities still rely on the regimes and policies of the Party and State, affecting the general development of the province's ethnic minority areas.

Keywords: *Solutions; Formulating and organizing the implementation; Ethnic policies; Ethnic minority area; Ethnic minorities; Nghe An province.*

1. Introduction

The area of ethnic minorities in Nghe An province has a natural area of 13,745 km², accounting for 83% of the total area; the population of ethnic minority areas is over 1.2 million people, accounting for 36% of the province's population; ethnic minorities are nearly 500,000 people, accounting for about 15% of the province's population and more than 40% of the population in the mountainous area. In the past years, the results of the implementation of ethnic minority policies have contributed to changing the face of the countryside for ethnic minority area in the province, contribute to solving the people's essential needs for production, travel, study, health care... Policies have been fully implemented, brought into play effectively, promoted socio-economic development; the fields of health, education and training, social culture have had positive changes; social policy affairs have been paid attention, the lives of ethnic minorities have been improved markedly. Thereby, contributing to gradually narrowing the gap in living standards and average income of the region compared to the

national average; gradually reducing the number of communes and villages with special difficulties; contributing to the comprehensive development of education, training, health, culture... maintaining political security, social order and safety; consolidating and strengthening the great national unity bloc, raising the faith of ethnic minorities in the Party and State.

2. Research overview

Related to this content, many authors have paid attention to research, including some typical research works such as: Minh Chi, "For the sustainable development of ethnic minorities and mountainous area of Nghe An province", General website of the People's Council of Nghe An province, July 11th 2022; Phuong Thao, "Nghe An: Continuing to effectively implement ethnic programs and policies", Online Newspaper of the Communist Party of Vietnam, December 30th, 2022; Kim Oanh, "Implementation of ethnic policies to ensure compliance with regulations, complete, timely and effective", Nghe An Provincial Electronic Information Publication", December

28th, 2022; Nguyen Van Dieu, “Implementing sustainable poverty reduction program in ethnic minority and mountainous areas - a practical view of Nghe An province”, Electronic Journal of Political Theory, March 2nd, 2023; Thanh Nguyen, “Nghe An: Ethnic policy is promoting development for ethnic minorities”, Electronic Newspaper of Ethnic and Development, February 13th, 2023;... Some of the above articles and research works of the authors are valuable documents for the article to inherit, supplement and complete the content of this research.

3. Research methods

The authors use various research methods, including collecting primary and secondary documents and synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating the available documents related to the research issues. These methods aim to clarify the content of this research.

4. Research results

4.1. Overview of socio-economic situation in ethnic minority areas in Nghe An province

Nghe An, a province in the North Central region, spans a natural area of over 16,490.7 km² and has a population exceeding 3.2 million people. The western region of Nghe An comprises 13,747.69 km², accounting for 83.36% of the province’s total area. This region includes 11 out of 21 districts and towns, with 419 km of border shared with Lao PDR. The population of the western region constitutes 35.7% of the province’s total population, with 466,137 people from ethnic minorities such as Thai, Tho, Kho-mu, Mong, and O Du, representing 40% of the regional population. Notably, there are 99 extremely difficult communes, border communes, and safe zone communes, as well as 270 extremely difficult villages in 61 communes in Region II, eligible for investment under Program 135 for the period of 2017-2020. Additionally, Ky Son, Tuong Duong, and Que Phong districts are entitled to investment policies as per Resolution No. 30a/2008/NQ-CP dated December 27th, 2008 of the Government. Furthermore, one district, Quy Chau, with a high rate of poor households, is entitled to the investment mechanism outlined in Decision No. 293/QĐ-TTg dated February 5th, 2013 of the Prime Minister.

For ethnic minorities and mountainous areas of the country in general and Nghe An province in particular, with the attention of the Party and State, the drastic direction of the Government, ministries, central branches and at all levels in the locality, together with the striving efforts of ethnic minorities, has changed the face of rural areas of ethnic minorities and mountainous areas.

Ethnic policies are implemented synchronously and effectively, contributing to raising people’s intellectual level, material and spiritual life and cultural traditions of ethnic minorities; ensure that ethnic minorities have access to basic health care services; agro-forestry production in ethnic minority and mountainous areas is having positive changes, the economic life of ethnic minorities has been gradually improved and raised; per capita income in 2016 reached 22.9 million VND; the rate of poor households decreased from 31.35% in 2011 to 28.39% in 2016. The political system continues to be consolidated; operational quality has many positive changes. National defense, security, social order and safety are guaranteed, national border sovereignty is maintained.

* *Some existences, limitations and challenges*

Firstly, the weather is very severe, with frequent pipe floods, flash floods, landslides, storms and whirlwinds; drought, aridity, pandemic. The terrain and area are complicated, travel is very difficult; flat land for production and people’s livelihood is not much; investment rate for works serving production and life is very high.

Secondly, people’s intellectual level is still limited, professional qualifications and ability to perform their responsibilities and duties of cadres and civil servants at grassroots level have not met the requirements. The ability to apply science and technology to production, improve productivity and product quality of ethnic minorities is extremely difficult; policies on vocational training for laborers have not been effective; medical facilities can only partially meet the medical examination and treatment needs of ethnic minorities; cultural enjoyment of ethnic minorities is still limited, traditional culture is being lost and deformed; part of the ethnic minorities have the idea of waiting and depending; many households want to be poor in order to enjoy the support regimes of the State and localities.

Thirdly, the situation of political security, social order and safety in ethnic minority areas in the border areas still has potential complicated factors, there is still illegal immigration.

Fourthly, investment in infrastructure in difficult communes and border communes is still slow, with low efficiency. Socio-economic development projects and programs in border communes have not been synchronized, the quality of some works and projects is still low. The socio-economic infrastructure, particularly in transportation, electricity, and water, does not meet the requirements for development.

4.2. *The actual situation of building and*

organizing the implementation of ethnic policies in Nghe An province

The current policy to support ethnic minorities is quite comprehensive in all fields and covers the area where ethnic minorities live. Mechanisms and policies have gradually changed in perspective and thinking, strongly decentralizing the locality on the basis of openness and transparency in the construction and planning work. The support has shifted from direct support to households to support for communities and groups of households, transitioning from “giving” to lending.

From 2005 to now, the State has issued about 100 guiding documents, orientations, legal documents on poverty reduction policies, policies to support ethnic minorities and extremely difficult areas, in which there are 02 major resolutions of the Government, namely Resolution No.30a/2008/NQ-CP dated December 27th, 2008 on the program to support rapid and sustainable poverty reduction for 61 poor districts and Resolution No.80/NQ-CP dated May 19th, 2011 on the orientation of sustainable poverty reduction in the period from 2011 to 2020; over 10 Decrees of the Government, more than 30 decisions of the Prime Minister and 30 circulars and joint circulars of ministries and branches guiding the implementation.

In addition to the general policies of the State that Nghe An is implemented, in Nghe An province there are also specific guidelines and policies implemented in ethnic minority and mountainous areas, specifically Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW dated July 30th, 2013 of the Politburo on the direction and tasks of Nghe An province development; Decision No. 2355/QĐ-TTg dated December 4th, 2013 of the Prime Minister approving the socio-economic development Project in the western region of Nghe An province to 2020...

Stemming from the specific context and conditions of the locality, the People’s Committee of Nghe An province has issued mechanisms and policies to support production development, hunger eradication and poverty alleviation, in which the province has issued many legal documents on poverty reduction policies, policies to support ethnic minorities and extremely difficult areas, such as: Directive No. 07/2013/CT-UBND dated March 12th 2013 of the Provincial People’s Committee on strengthening the state management over the implementation of ethnic policies in Nghe An province; Decision No. 2165/QĐ-UBND dated May 20th, 2014 on the implementation plan of the Prime Minister’s Action Program to implement the strategy of ethnic affair; over 05 resolutions of the People’s Council, more than 10 decisions of the provincial People’s Committee and guiding

documents of departments, agencies and branches guiding the implementation of the ethnic policy...

4.3. Some reviews, comments

4.3.1. The positive sides

Ethnic policies are a prerequisite for implementing local socio-economic development plans.

Ethnic mechanisms and policies, policies under programs and projects on hunger eradication and poverty reduction are increasingly suitable to the needs of beneficiaries. Implement the principle of “Maximizing creativity, self-reliance of the whole community and the internal strength of poor households to rise out of poverty”; ensuring “open democracy, transparency, strengthening decentralization for the grassroots, strongly promoting the ownership of the people directly participating in the Program”, the beneficiaries of the poverty reduction policy are increasingly involved in the process of selecting targets, participating in the construction, organization of management, operation, use and maintenance of the works.

The effectiveness of implementation of ethnic minority policies and poverty reduction programs has been increasingly improved. The identification of beneficiaries of poverty reduction support is specified in each specific program or project, so that the level of benefit for the poor in highland areas and ethnic minority areas is significantly increased. Resources for the implementation of ethnic policies are also highly concentrated.

The contingent of local cadres and people in poor communes and communes with special difficulties in ethnic minority areas have been trained in knowledge of organizing and managing poverty reduction projects, their capacity has been raised one step; 90% of communes have assumed the role of investor of works and projects.

Thus, it can be seen that the policy of the Central Government is very comprehensive, suitable for ethnic minority areas in Nghe An province, relevant departments, agencies and branches have advised the Provincial Party Committee and Provincial People’s Committee to issue guidelines, policies for mountainous ethnic minority areas, concretized documents, organized implementation in Nghe An province. During the implementation process, it was timely discovered and proposed to the Central Government to supplement and amend policies with problems that are no longer suitable with local realities.

Nghe An has effectively organized the implementation of ethnic policies. The guidelines and policies on ethnic affairs have created significant resources, thereby facilitating the socio-economic development of ethnic minority areas in

Nghe An province. Since then, the ethnic minority and mountainous areas of Nghe An province have made significant progress, with outstanding development compared to previous years, such as transportation, housing, domestic water, production support, education support, health care and grassroots cadres... The picture of ethnic minority areas in Nghe An province changes rapidly and towards comprehensive development; villages and hamlets of ethnic minorities in Nghe An province have been further solidly consolidated for the Party and State; the friendship between Vietnam and Laos in the border area with Nghe An province continues to be consolidated and developed well through the implementation of the policy on ethnic minority areas in Nghe An province.

4.3.2. *Some shortcomings, limitations*

In addition to the achieved results, the promulgation and organization of implementation of mechanisms and policies also revealed shortcomings and limitations, focusing on the following main contents:

- Many policies are comprehensively mentioned, but the issuance of organizational documents is too slow, specifically: After Decree No. 05/2011/ND-CP dated January 14th, 2011 of the Government on Ethnic Affairs, the issuance of implementing documents is still slow.

- The content development between policies still has many overlaps. That leads to concern that the same content will be affected by many different projects. However, the level of support in each project is often not the same, both in terms of quantity and time of implementation, so it will be difficult to avoid unfairness, leading to depression and questions. On the other hand, the process of commenting and selecting objects is also difficult to carry out precisely for each project, leading to many difficulties.

- Management and direction are still overlapping, there are too many ethnic policies, programs and projects on poverty reduction, which has created great pressure, especially for local cadres. Each program and project requires separate planning, budgeting, implementation and reporting at the payment request of agencies assigned to manage it, while the content is not much different, costs a lot of time for procedures, low management efficiency. In the same communes and villages with special difficulties in ethnic minority areas, poverty reduction policies are directed and managed by the provincial Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs under Program 135; Directed and managed by the provincial Department of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs under the Poverty Reduction

Program, Resolution No. 30a/2008/NQ-CP dated December 27th, 2008 of the Government on the Program to support rapid and sustainable poverty reduction for 61 poor districts, it is difficult for the locality to integrate.

- The coordination between ethnic policies, poverty reduction programs and projects is not close: Because there are so many projects, mechanisms and policies on poverty reduction, decentralization for different departments and agencies to manage, guide and pay payments to each component of each project, the coordination between the project and even between the components of each project is often very difficult. The number of promulgated policies is large, difficult to control; an object affected by many policies at the same time; there are policies to support the same poor households, but due to the issuance at different stages, different levels of support cause comparisons and questions among the people (such as housing support policy under Decision No. 134 supporting 5 million VND/household; Decision No. 167 to support 6-7 million VND/household...); the same object is a poor household in the same area, entitled to the same production development support policy, but different levels of support because they are beneficiaries of different programs such as Program 30a, Program 135... On the other hand, many policies have not been resolved completely according to the set goals due to lack of resources and many obstacles in implementation such as policies on support for residential land, production land, and daily-life water for the poor ethnic minorities,...

- Lack of participation of the people and interest groups in the policy formulation process.

- Many policies on allocation of resources are not guaranteed and not timely. There are projects that do not allocate budget but only provide guidance and direction from the Central Government, such as: Decision No. 551/QĐ-TTg dated April 4th, 2013 of the Prime Minister approving Program 135 on supporting infrastructure investment, supporting production development for extremely difficult communes, border commune, communes in safe zones, villages and hamlets with special difficulties; Decision No. 33/2020/QĐ-TTg dated November 12th, 2020 of the Prime Minister on criteria for demarcation of ethnic minority and mountainous areas according to development level for the period of 2021-2025 and Decision No. 1342/QĐ-TTg dated August 25th, 2009 of the Prime Minister Approving the plan of sedentary cultivation for nomadic ethnic minorities until 2012... Because the locality is a poor province, the local budget is not self-balanced, the revenue is not enough to spend and have to rely

mainly on support from the central budget.

5. Discussion

From the practice of implementing ethnic policies in Nghe An province, a number of solutions to improve the effectiveness of ethnic policy formulation and implementation are proposed.

Firstly, establish a coordination mechanism between policy formulation agencies and implementing organizations. The development and implementation of policies currently lacks close coordination between sectors, often just a list of policies without specific action plans. Each branch has many plans but does not identify priority areas. Therefore, in order to develop policies in the most comprehensive way, it is necessary to develop regulations on coordination and clear assignment of responsibilities across sectors. At the same time, defining responsibilities between agencies more specifically.

Secondly, increase the participation of the people in the process of formulating and organizing the implementation of policies. At present, the participation in proposing ideas for policy development or contributing to the development of policy options and measures of those affected by the policy is still limited. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the participation of the people and considering this a mandatory requirement in the policy making process, creating conditions for all people to receive information and contribute to draft policies directly related to them.

Thirdly, arranging adequate and timely resources. Focusing on researching and proposing policies to support ethnic minorities to develop on the basis of improving their ability to access resources for development and social welfare, associated with comprehensive development with

the promotion of traditional cultural values of ethnic groups in all aspects of people's life.

6. Conclusion

In general, the development and implementation of ethnic policies in Nghe An province has achieved remarkable results, proving that the implementation of ethnic policies in recent years has gradually contributed step by step to change the face of the countryside for ethnic minorities and mountainous areas in the province such as rural transport infrastructure, schools, medical stations... solving the people's essential needs for production, travel, study, health care... Policies have been fully implemented, brought into play effectively, promoted socio-economic development. However, in the process of formulating and organizing the implementation of programs and policies to be still slow; the progress of disbursement of capital has not yet met the requirements as set out in the plan. Therefore, in the coming time, Nghe An province needs to continue directing the implementation of ethnic policies more effectively in ethnic minority and mountainous areas, ensuring compliance with the law, adequate and timely and effective. Promoting propaganda on ethnic policies, popularize legal education, mobilizing ethnic minorities to promote the spirit of self-reliance, efforts to overcome difficulties to escape poverty and get rich legitimately; unite and help each other to well implement the guidelines of the Party, policies and laws of the State. In particular, it is necessary to regularly provide information and exchange guidelines, policies, professional training for the core team, reputable people, especially the work of mobilizing the masses, the work of fighting against law violations among the people; fully implementing policies for the contingent of reputable people in the province.

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MỘT SỐ GIẢI PHÁP NÂNG CAO HIỆU QUẢ XÂY DỰNG VÀ TỔ CHỨC THỰC HIỆN CHÍNH SÁCH DÂN TỘC TRÊN ĐỊA BÀN TỈNH NGHỆ AN TRONG THỜI GIẢN TỚI

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Nghe An là tỉnh có đông đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số sinh sống trên địa bàn miền núi nên việc thực hiện chương trình, chính sách dân tộc đã được thực hiện đồng bộ và khá hiệu quả trong thời gian qua. Các chính sách được tổ chức thực hiện đầy đủ, phát huy hiệu quả, thúc đẩy phát triển kinh tế - xã hội; các lĩnh vực y tế, giáo dục và đào tạo, văn hóa xã hội có bước chuyển biến tích cực; công tác chính sách xã hội được quan tâm, đời sống đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số ngày càng được cải thiện. Bên cạnh những kết quả đạt được, tuy nhiên, đến nay trong quá trình xây dựng và tổ chức thực hiện chính sách dân tộc trên địa bàn tỉnh vẫn còn một số tồn tại, hạn chế, một bộ phận đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số còn trông chờ vào các chế độ chính sách của Đảng và Nhà nước, làm ảnh hưởng đến sự phát triển chung vùng đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số của tỉnh.

Từ khóa: Giải pháp; Xây dựng và tổ chức thực hiện; Chính sách dân tộc; Vùng dân tộc thiểu số; Dân tộc thiểu số; Tỉnh Nghệ An.