

HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - CONTENT AND CURRENT VALUES

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Summary: Through theoretical research and practical demonstration, the article affirms the role of Ho Chi Minh's thought in the orientation and development of the current agricultural and rural economy in Vietnam. The value of this thought is demonstrated through promoting economic growth, improving the lives of farmers, protecting the ecological environment, and creating a foundation for sustainable development. That demonstrates the strategic vision and sustainable value of Ho Chi Minh's thought in building the agricultural and rural economy.

Keywords: *Ho Chi Minh's thought, agricultural economy, rural areas*

Introduction: Agricultural and rural development has always played a key role in the socio-economic development of Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's thought emphasizes that agriculture is a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the country, and farmers are the decisive factor in the success or failure of this process. In the current context, when the country is facing many challenges such as climate change and global economic integration, the development of agricultural and rural economy not only aims to improve people's lives but also ensures food security, protect the environment and promote social stability. This contributes to creating a sustainable economy and strengthening the comprehensive and harmonious development of the country.

1. Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on agricultural and rural economic development

Agricultural and rural economic development has always been one of the key tasks of Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's thoughts have put forward core and highly practical principles, helping to orient sustainable agricultural development. These principles bring economic efficiency, at the same time, contribute to improving the material and spiritual life of farmers, creating a solid foundation for the comprehensive development of the country.

First, Ho Chi Minh always emphasized the central role of farmers in the agricultural development process. Farmers are not only producers but also decide the success or failure of this process. He affirmed: “The majority of our people are farmers. Everything must rely on farmers. Farmers must be enthusiastic and enlightened to quickly win the resistance war and quickly succeed in nation building”(Minh, 2011b). This shows respect and appreciation for the role of farmers in the process of building and developing the country. Ho Chi Minh considered farmers as the true masters of the revolution, both the main production force and the preservers and developers of traditional national culture. The promotion of the role of farmers does not stop at their creating material wealth but also in their participation in the decision-making, management, and implementation of agricultural and rural development policies. This requires improving the knowledge and skills of farmers so that they can take on a proactive and creative role in production and economic management.

Second, Ho Chi Minh emphasized that production development must be closely linked to science and technology. He always encouraged the application of science and technology to agricultural production to improve productivity and product quality. He pointed out that farmers “must boldly advance in agricultural science and technology” (Minh, 2011f). This viewpoint demonstrates Ho Chi Minh's strategic vision on the role of science and technology in economic development. He emphasized the research and application of scientific and technological advances in production practices to solve challenges in productivity, quality, and economic efficiency. Ho Chi Minh also affirmed the importance of training and fostering human resources with high scientific and technical qualifications to serve the cause of agricultural development. He believed that to be a leader, one must “understand science and technology” (Minh, 2011e), and that only through science and technology can workers improve labor productivity, reduce manual labor, increase production efficiency, and improve people's lives.

Third, building cooperatives and other forms of production association is one of the core points in Ho Chi Minh's thought. He encouraged the building of cooperatives as a collective economic model to create solidarity and mutual support. According to Ho Chi Minh: Cooperatives are the path to socialism for farmers, because they not only bring practical benefits to the people but also

“reduce the squeezing power of capitalists and imperialists” (Minh, 2011a). He emphasized: “We must gradually improve the lives of our fellow farmers. But if farmers continue to work individually, their lives cannot be improved” (Minh, 2011d). This viewpoint shows his belief in the strength of the collective and the solidarity of farmers in building and developing the economy. He believed that cooperatives help increase production efficiency and improve the material and spiritual life of farmers: “If we want to improve our lives, there is only one way: to organize farmers to work collectively, that is, to organize farmers into agricultural cooperatives” (Minh, 2011d). However, he paid close attention to the fact that cooperatives must be built on a voluntary basis, respecting the rights of members and ensuring democracy and transparency in management and operation. These are important principles to build a strong cooperative, develop sustainably and bring benefits to all members.

Fourth, Ho Chi Minh cared about the material and spiritual life of farmers. He pointed out: The Party and the Government must take care of the people's lives. If people are hungry, cold, ignorant, or sick, it is the fault of the Party and the Government. Ho Chi Minh's will also advised the Party and the State to focus on restoring and expanding economic sectors, developing sanitation and healthcare, and reforming the education system. This shows his special concern for the people, especially farmers, not only stopping at increasing income but also providing the best healthcare, education, and cultural services. A good material and spiritual life will create conditions for farmers to feel secure in production and contribute to the development of the country. Ho Chi Minh emphasized that economic development must go hand in hand with improving the lives of the people, especially farmers. Only when people enjoy a good material and spiritual life can they fully develop their creativity and labor productivity. Caring for people's lives is the responsibility of the state and the whole society to build a fair, democratic, and civilized society.

Fifth, the principle of sustainable development is an important highlight in Ho Chi Minh's thought. He stated that development must ensure sustainability, social justice, self-reliance, and innovation. He required that “every cooperative must have a plan to plant forests and actively protect forests. If the forest is exhausted, there will be no more wood and if the water source is lost, the fields will lose their color, causing floods and droughts” (Minh, 2011f). This point of

view shows that agricultural economic development cannot be separated from the protection of the environment and natural resources. The development process must be based on self-reliance, encouraging innovation to adapt to changes in circumstances and the environment. He believed that sustainable development must be built on the basis of a balance between economic, social, and environmental factors. Only when this balance is ensured can sustainable and long-term development be achieved.

Sixth, Ho Chi Minh considered agriculture to be the foundation for the country's industrialization and modernization. He pointed out: Vietnam is an agricultural country, therefore “to develop industry and the economy in general, we must take agricultural development as the root and main factor” (Minh, 2011c). This demonstrates Ho Chi Minh's strategic vision of the role of agriculture in the country's development process. Agriculture not only provides raw materials and food for industry but is also a market for industrial goods. Sustainable agricultural development will create a solid foundation for the industrialization and modernization process, while ensuring food security and sustainable socio-economic development. Ho Chi Minh clearly recognized that agriculture and industry have a mutual, supportive relationship. Only when agriculture develops strongly can it create favorable conditions for industrialization and modernization, thereby bringing the country onto the path of sustainable development and prosperity.

2. Practical value of Ho Chi Minh's thought in the development of agricultural and rural economy today

Ho Chi Minh's thought on agricultural and rural economic development has been applied extensively and comprehensively in practice, bringing about many encouraging results.

Firstly, the national target program on new rural construction is a symbol of success in creatively applying Ho Chi Minh's thought into practice. This program, with the goal of improving people's lives, improving infrastructure, and promoting agricultural production, has brought about many encouraging results. According to the report of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, by April 2022, the whole country had 6,009/8,211 communes (equivalent to 73.2% of the total number of communes) meeting new rural standards (Huong & Thanh, 2023).

Policies to support rural development, such as the construction of roads, irrigation systems, schools, and medical stations, have significantly improved infrastructure in rural areas, creating a new look and improving the material and spiritual life of the people.

Secondly, policies to support the development of sustainable agricultural production have encouraged innovation and application of science and technology in agriculture, helping to improve productivity and product quality, protect the environment, and enhance the competitiveness of agricultural products in the international market. Effective agricultural economic models such as new-style cooperatives, value chain production linkages, high-tech applications, and organic production have been widely deployed, bringing about many positive results and making important contributions to rural economic development. Training and skill development for farmers are focused on, helping them access modern production techniques and methods, creating a qualified agricultural workforce to meet the requirements of a modern and sustainable agriculture.

Third, improving the material and spiritual life of farmers is a highlight in the practical value of Ho Chi Minh's thought. Community development and infrastructure improvement programs such as Program 135 have brought about significant changes in remote areas and ethnic minorities. Villages have electricity, clean water and roads, improving living conditions and opening up economic development opportunities. Socio-economic development projects such as building irrigation systems, supporting high-quality crop and livestock varieties and vocational training have helped people improve productivity and production efficiency. New economic models such as new-style cooperatives and value chain production linkages have created conditions for farmers to access larger and more stable consumer markets. This not only helps increase people's income but also significantly improves their quality of life, demonstrating the success in applying Ho Chi Minh's thought into practice.

Fourth, sustainable agricultural development and environmental protection are important values in Ho Chi Minh's ideology. Farming models such as rice-shrimp integration and mangrove planting have brought double benefits: increasing farmers' income and protecting the environment. Forest planting and protection policies have contributed to protecting the ecological environment, combating

climate change and creating sustainable livelihoods for people living near forests. Education and propaganda programs have raised awareness, changed behaviors and farming habits, helped protect the environment and improve the quality of agricultural products. These policies not only help improve production efficiency but also create a better, more sustainable living environment for people, while affirming the role of Ho Chi Minh's ideology in environmental protection and sustainable development.

Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's ideology on agricultural and rural economic development has brought great practical values. The success of cooperative models, new rural development programs and sustainable development policies have demonstrated his strategic vision. From promoting economic growth, improving people's material and spiritual lives to protecting the environment, this ideology has laid a solid foundation for the country's sustainable development. Lessons from Ho Chi Minh's ideology continue to be the guiding principle for agricultural and rural economic development policies, contributing to building a prosperous and civilized Vietnam. This ideology not only provides development directions but also a solid theoretical foundation to help shape policies and strategies for sustainable agricultural development, while at the same time arousing patriotism, national pride and responsibility of each citizen in the process of building and developing the country.

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