



## Research Article

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# Social Justice Ensures Sustainable Development in Vietnam

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## Abstract

*The issue of social justice is a fundamental issue of each era and has a great topical significance because it is posed together with human existence, associated with dreams and aspirations towards a nice and happy life. After all, the goal of economic growth is to serve people, the subject of development, fairly and progressively. Because "Humans, ultimately mastering their social existence, are also thereby mastering nature, mastering themselves, and becoming a free man" (Marx & Engels, 1995, p.333). It is further confirmed in the United Nations Human Development Report (1995) when it says: "what does development mean without regard to human life?". The purpose of economic development, after all, is only a means to serve human development. It is people who create conditions, seize opportunities, and turn them into a driving force to realize their development goals, which in turn will promote socio-economic development. In the process of international integration, Vietnam has actively implemented policies to achieve social justice and has achieved certain results, contributing to improving the living standards of all people. Certain limitations need to be addressed to realize social justice in all of social life. The article analyzes the viewpoints and practices of implementing social justice in Vietnam, thereby proposing solutions to effectively implement social justice in Vietnam today.*

**Keywords:** Social justice, social development, social progress, sustainable development, Vietnam

## 1. Introduction

Social justice is a fundamental value that every society aspires to achieve. It has an essential role in creating stability and social development in each country. The history of human development shows that all social movements leading to uprisings of social classes originate from injustice in life. Their goal is to overthrow the old regime and create a new state that is more progressive, bringing justice and equality to every individual and society. On the contrary, in any community, when Social Justice is well implemented in social relations, members of society feel that they are respected, and deservedly compensated. People will more voluntarily devote themselves to the common cause.

Therefore, social justice is a basic value in life, it is also the goal, as well as the means and driving force of progress and social development in all countries.

Currently, countries around the world, including Vietnam, are strongly affected by the industrial revolution 4.0. In that context, the issue of implementing social justice becomes more urgent. Vietnam is a developing country, with a middle-income level, and people's living standards have improved markedly. However, the implementation of social justice still has limitations, such as low child income, an increasing gap between rich and poor, an upward rate of re-poor, and unsustainable implementation of social security, which harm negatively affected the goal of social justice socio-economic development goals. Therefore, raising awareness about social justice, so that "no one is left behind" is an urgent requirement for sustainable development in Vietnam today. The research content focuses on analyzing and evaluating results, limiting the implementation of social justice in Vietnam, thereby offering basic solutions to well solve social justice in Vietnam during the period of time next.

## 2. Literature Review

*The 2006 World Bank development report entitled Equity and Development*, conducted by a team of eight authors led by economists Francisco Ferreira and Michael Walton, advocated social building fair society considers fairness an important goal. Equity encourages more investment and efficiency leads to faster growth. *Social progress - some urgent theoretical issues* have been raised about the theory of movement, development, and progress, distinguishing the similarities and differences between these three concepts. In particular, the author has systematized typical views on social progress and standards of social progress in the history of philosophy before Marx: from Heziot, Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, Henvetius, Russo, Didero, Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Ho Chi Minh, combining them with some modern conceptions. At the same time, social progress is viewed from two angles: social and moral progress with socio-cultural progress (Chuan, 2000).

In the book *On social progress in the market economy, the concept of social progress* has been presented quite fully over the periods and some typical conceptions of the standards of social justice. At the same time, the work has assessed the development of the market economy to the implementation of social progress (rich-poor divide; income inequality...) (Vuong, 2004);

*The study Social Progress in History: A Study from a Philosophical Point of View*, the author believes that it is people who create conditions, seize opportunities and turn them into development engines to realize their development goals, which in turn will promote socio-economic development. Therefore, determining the true value of development and gathering, promoting and effectively using resources to realize sustainable social progress becomes an urgent requirement (Tri, & Phuong, 2022). To realize social justice, it is necessary to develop high-quality human resources of great significance, contributing to arousing the potential and strengths of people to realize the national aspiration for wealth and happiness (Tri&Thanh, 2022).

In the article *Development of social security in Vietnam: Current situation and solutions*, the authors said that: "The Social security system in Vietnam has not yet met the needs of society as policies have been promulgated a lot, but are not synchronized, and have not reached the hands of those who need support when implementing them declared in fact. The quality of public services is still low, and security measures to overcome difficulties in unusual conditions, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, are still delayed and have not yet ensured fairness, inclusiveness, and sustainability. The social security system in the new situation needs to clearly define development goals for the people, attach importance to social inclusion, and fundamentally change the perception of the position and role of communities, businesses, and regions' private sector in the pillars of well-being, reducing the burden of state subsidies and deepening international integration" (Tri, Hoa & Anh, 2022). *Study Impact of Industrial Revolution 4.0 to the Vietnamese cultural development: A Systematic Review* suggests that: Suppose the economy is considered the material foundation of society, meeting material needs. In that case, culture in general and the implementation of social justice are society's

spiritual foundations. The development of each country, economy, culture and social justice are interrelated with each other, in which culture covers all aspects of social activities; it not only governs the influence but also can regulate the development of society (Tri, 2023); Human development in general and Vietnam, in general, is aimed at improving capacity and creating conditions for comprehensive human development, especially adding value to people in the standard of living, education, and health (Tri, Dung & Hoa, 2023).

In general, most of these works continue to clarify the roles, practices, and solutions for implementing social justice in countries around the world in general and Vietnam in particular, from which to conclude lessons learned.

### 3. Method

The study is based on the Marxist view of social justice. Social justice is an early phrase appearing in political and social life. Historically, social justice has been mentioned in different ideological forms since ancient times: religious, cultural, and political. Interestingly, each form of ideology has a different conception of social justice. This demonstrates that the concept of social justice appeared quite early, in various forms, parallel with societies' development history.

The issue of social justice has received more attention from the social sciences in recent centuries from the perspective of disciplines such as philosophy, politics, psychology, sociology, etc. each industry has a different interpretation of social justice. Within the framework of this article, we limit the issue of social justice from the perspective of Marxist philosophy.

*In the Dictionary of Sociology*, two concepts are raised: Equity is the proportion between "dedication" and "enjoyment" in the condition that everyone has the same conditions and opportunities (this should remove inheritance privileges...). Another view holds that social wealth must be distributed according to the needs of each person so that all individuals are equal in material terms, etc (Vien, 1994, p. 43).

As for Marshal's Oxford Sociological Dictionary, social justice is expressed in many aspects. First, fairness is an exchange that is equal in the rate of expenditure and income of all parties involved in the exchange. Second, distributive equity includes the unidirectional distribution of resources over rights, duties, or anything else among the entire recognized group of people. Third, procedural fairness, or procedures and mechanisms that are fair to all, also recognized that a due process that is fair and agreed upon by all can nevertheless lead to a distribution of results that some might consider unfair. Fourth, reward fairness involves fairness in specifying punishments, or levels of compensation, for being victimized. And finally, equity as equality can be equality of opportunity, equality of objective outcomes, subjective equality (equality of outcomes that takes into account public needs or values labor), positional equality (where rewards are distributed according to standard expectations to avoid feeling unjust), or parity (equality of individual contributions) (Marshal, 2010, p.108-109).

When referring to social justice, Ho Chi Minh wrote: "The people have obligations and rights at the same time" (Minh, 2011, vol.8, p.264). In the conditions after gaining independence, Ho Chi Minh always emphasized: "Our country is a democracy. How many benefits are for the people. How much power belongs to the people" (Minh, 2011, vol.6, p.232); "Our state today belongs to all workers. Therefore, workers, farmers, and revolutionary intellectuals need to realize that: Currently, our working people are the masters of our country, not employees of the exploiting class as in the old days. We have the right and enough conditions to build our own free and happy life. The working people are the collective owners of all material and cultural wealth and are equal in rights and obligations" (Minh, 2011, vol.13, p.66).

According to Ho Chi Minh, the purpose of building socialism is to constantly improve people's living standards and ensure fairness and social progress. The goal of economic development is to raise people's living standards and to make people's lives more and more prosperous and happy. Material life, according to him, first deals with food, clothing, housing, and medical treatment. In other words, social progress is achieved when each person has more and more conditions for development; in

which case, the prerequisite is to be the master of their destiny and that of their country, is to "make sure the people have enough to eat, enough clothing, more and more happiness, everyone can go to school, get sick but have medicine, if the elderly do not work, they can rest (...) In short, society is getting more and more advanced, the material is increasing, the spirit is getting better" (Minh, 2011, vol. 9, p.591). Such a society can only be socialist. He also affirmed that it is not only when economic conditions are improved that social progress can be realized, but it must be done when people's lives are still facing many difficulties.

By absorbing, inheriting, and developing theories on social justice along with summarizing practical experiences in our country and other countries in the world, Vietnam always asserts: "Associating economic growth with progress, social justice; promoting the human factor, taking people as the center; promoting the role of culture - the spiritual foundation of society, the goal and driving force of development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.99). To realize equality of development opportunities, our Party always emphasizes on the "dual" goal of social justice, both in terms of economic efficiency and social efficiency, focusing on development goals. The XIII Congress of the Party not only emphasized the role of the State but also attached great importance to: "Promoting the role of social and socio-professional organizations participating in the formation and regulation of the public relations in the market economic system. Handle well the inadequacies of the market mechanism, ensure social welfare and security, national defense, security and protect the ecological environment" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.133); "Development for people, creating conditions for everyone, especially children, disadvantaged groups, ethnic minorities, and migrants to integrate, have equal access to resources, opportunities to develop and enjoy basic social services equitably and progressive. Continue to perfect and implement the policies of ethnic equality, solidarity, and mutual development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.150).

Along with a summary of the country's development process over more than 35 years of innovation in both theory and practice, the document of the 13th National Party Congress of our Party summarizes: "Associating economic growth with progressive implementation and social balance; promoting the human factor, taking the people as the center; promoting the role of culture - the spiritual foundation of society, the goal and driving force of development" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.99). To realize equality of development opportunities, our Party always emphasizes on the "dual" goal of social justice, both in terms of economic efficiency and social efficiency, focusing on development goals. At the same time, Vietnam needs to strengthen social development management, ensure social justice and sustainability in social development policies, especially social welfare, and social security; synchronously and comprehensively implement economic, progressive, social, and environmental justice goals, on that basis renew and rationally allocate resources to improve the efficiency of social development. It is necessary to correctly forecast the trend of social restructuring in our country in the coming years to build social policies and manage social development according to the development conditions of the country; at the same time, harmoniously handle social relations, control social stratification, and promptly and effectively handle risks and social conflicts, ensure social order and safety, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of the people.

Thus, the essence of social justice is to liberate people and gradually realize people's lofty dreams and aspirations; bringing into play the dynamism and creativity of people in all areas of society, so that society is considered progressive and fair. In other words, social justice is both a standard of social progress and a condition for social progress to be realized. Social justice refers to the equality between people in a certain aspect, usually a matter of obligations and rights, between contributions and enjoyment. Social justice expresses human aspirations and is the goal and driving force of social development. Social justice is to be implemented in all fields (economic, social, cultural...) based on ensuring the equivalence between the creation and distribution of social benefits. Social justice is expressed in the following aspects: (i) in economic terms, social justice is considered as the ratio between the contributions of individuals and the enjoyment of production results - this is the most basic aspect of social justice; (ii) concerning the political and legal aspects of

social justice, relating to and regulating issues of democracy, individual freedom, human rights, party leadership, and state management; (iii) regarding the socio-cultural aspect of social justice, relating to and stipulating issues of ethics, customs, practices, social stratification, and social security; the problem of opportunities for the creation and enjoyment of cultural and artistic achievements.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### 4.1 Results of implementing social justice ensures sustainable development in Vietnam

Before innovation (from 1986 and earlier), the Vietnamese economy only existed in two forms: ownership by the entire people and collective ownership; Private property must not exist. After innovating (from 1986 to the present), the fundamental change has been recognized in various forms of ownership, such as ownership by the entire people, collective ownership, individual ownership, smallholder ownership, and property ownership with private capital. Accordingly, the economy has many components with conditions for existence and development. The Party's great orientation on economic development sets forth the following requirements: "Develop a socialist-oriented market economy with many forms of ownership, different economic sectors, forms of business organization, and forms of economic development distribution methods" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011, p. 73). The state's roles are orienting, building, and perfecting economic institutions, creating an equal, transparent, and healthy competitive environment; using tools, policies, and resources of the State to orient and regulate the economy, promoting production and business and protect the environment; and implementing social progress and justice in each step and development policy. The market economy has created equal opportunities for all members of society in accessing resources, actively choosing production, and choosing markets. Remove subsidies. All transactions related to resources and production results are subject to market laws; The State protects the property rights and legitimate interests of economic owners and ensures fair competition. Consumers are free to choose products. The relationship between producers and consumers is equal the price of goods is an agreement between the seller and the buyer. That is social justice in the market. As a result, the society's resources have been aroused and put into use, creating conditions to promote the growth of the economy over 5.8%/year (period 2011 - 2015) and 6%/year (period 2016-2020) (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.8).

At the same time, awareness of vocational training, and the development of vocational education in the whole society and the people have had a dramatic change; the position and role of the vocational education system in the national education system have been enhanced. Vocational education results have contributed to improving the quality of human resources. According to the latest report of UNDP (December 16, 2020), Vietnam is classified in the group of "high human development countries", ranked 117 out of 189 countries; The human capital index (HCI) is second only to Singapore in Southeast Asia (World Bank Report, 2020).

Thus, Vietnam achieved the above results because the Party and State consider job creation as a priority direction in the realization of social progress, with the view that "Career is the root of people's livelihood".

On hunger eradication and poverty reduction. Per capita income has increased continuously over the years, and people's living standards in regions, especially the poor, have improved, so the poverty rate has decreased continuously at a high rate in the whole country. Specifically, in 1993 the country had 58.1% poor households, by 2015 it was less than 4.5%, (particularly in extremely difficult areas, less than 30%) (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016, p.110); the human development index (HDI) increased from 0.683 (in 2000) to 0.728 (in 2011), ranking 128/187 countries, in the upper middle group of the world; In 2011, our country completed 6/8 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which set by the United Nations for developing countries by 2015 (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016). Currently, Vietnam is implementing the Targeted Reduction Program. Sustainable poverty in the 2016-2020 period was strongly implemented, shifting from a single- to a multi-

dimensional approach, focusing on the poorest groups and households. The rate of multidimensionally poor households in the whole country will decrease from 9.88% at the end of 2015 to less than 3% in 2020 (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 43). The World Bank's Vietnam development report assessed that Vietnam's achievements in hunger eradication and poverty reduction are among the most successful stories in the process of economic development (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016).

About social insurance. Vietnam considers social insurance work as one of the key tasks of the socio-economic development process, ensuring the rights and obligations of millions of workers. In recent years, based on stable economic growth, the number of participants in social insurance has increased rapidly, contributing to ensuring the safety of employees when facing risks in life. The rate of participation in compulsory social insurance, voluntary insurance, and unemployment insurance is increasing, contributing to ensuring safety when workers encounter risks in production. Currently, Vietnam continues to invest in building new and upgrading, expanding many hospitals, developing sea and island healthcare, and encouraging the development of non-public healthcare. People's types of insurance are increasingly expanding with diverse products. The subjects participating in social insurance, health insurance, and unemployment insurance are increasing day by day and enjoying the regimes and benefits of regulations. The number of people participating in social insurance reached more than 11.5 million. Health insurance coverage is over 90% of the population (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.65).

Social assistance work has gradually shifted to a human rights-based, human-centered approach. The beneficiaries of social assistance were expanded, and the standard of social assistance was adjusted to increase, creating conditions and opportunities for the disadvantaged to stabilize their lives with the movements of "Muslim, Mutual Aid", "Fund for the poor", "Grateful return", "Drink water, remember the source" are held regularly and attract the response of many social forces, significantly contributing to improving social security for all people, especially the poor.

The capacity of the system of medical facilities is consolidated and developed. As a result, people have easier access to medical services. In addition, medical facilities and equipment are also focused on investment, better meeting the people's medical examination and treatment needs... Vietnam is one of the few countries with a comprehensive health system that has been adjusted and organized widely to villages and hamlets; it has mastered many world-class high-tech techniques such as limb, heart, liver, and kidney transplants...; it controls many dangerous diseases, including Covid-19; and it proactively produces many types of preventive vaccines, most recently a vaccine against Covid-19...The average life expectancy of people increased from 62 years old in 1990 to 73.7 years old in 2020. In 2019, the development index Human Development (HDI) of our country reached 0.704, belonging to the group with the highest HDI in the world, especially compared to other countries with the same level of development (Trong, 2021).

However, besides these results, the implementation of social justice still has limitations such as policies and laws are not synchronized; the effectiveness of social management still has many limitations and shortcomings. Poverty reduction is not sustainable; education and health care in mountainous, highland, and ethnic minority areas are still limited. Medicines, traffic, labor, and food are not safe. Crime and social evils are still hidden and complicated in many places. The principle of distribution by labor has not been thoroughly implemented; "Policies on salary, income, social insurance, health insurance, and social welfare are not effective; the benefits of the people from the country's development achievements have not been harmonized" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.86).

A selfish and self-interested lifestyle also began to form and has increasingly penetrated many strata of society. The lifestyle in favor of enjoyment, and living in a hurry is gradually destroying the personalities of many people, leading to many traditional values gradually becoming obsolete. Meanwhile, the crisis of trust is also a major obstacle to the establishment of social relations and the realization of economic and political goals. Along with that, sexual abuse, child abuse, and deviant behavior of students tend to increase;

These limitations and inadequacies show that the implementation of and living in a hurry is gradually destroying many people's personalities political and cultural development.

#### 4.2 Solutions for social justice ensures sustainable development in Vietnam

First of all, in macroeconomic policymaking, the relationship between economic growth and social justice must be harmoniously resolved, step by step, firmly and synchronously with both goals of economic and social justice. Continue to strongly affirm the need and importance of social justice implementation. From there, it serves as a solid basis for the formulation of the State's guidelines, policies, and laws on the implementation of social justice throughout the development process. Raising awareness among all levels, sectors, and the whole population about the relationship between economic growth and social security; especially in agencies that plan and implement socio-economic development policies. Do not let misconceptions in the planning and implementation of economic policies forget about the need to harmonize with policies to implement social justice.

Second, it is necessary to have a new mindset about progress and social justice in the new era. The implementation of policies to create equity in Vietnam in the past seems to be only on the "surface" and has not yet solved the root cause of poverty, the core of poverty is inequality of opportunities, thereby solving the problem. Necessary synchronous solutions have not been fully focused on and implemented. Therefore, in the coming time, besides continuing to implement subsidy programs and redistributing income, it is necessary to change the mindset in formulating measures to tackle the root of poverty to implement poverty reduction measures poverty reduction program progress, and social justice. To do this, the orientation in the coming time is: To promote comprehensive development of human resources; improve the effectiveness and practicality of education and training; support the poor to participate in radiology services; labor market development.

Third, deal well with labor, employment, and income, ensuring the quality of people's lives. Having a job and increasing income will help people be able to meet their legitimate material and spiritual needs, help them access good quality services, improve their status in society, and integrate with the surrounding environment. In that spirit, all levels and sectors need to promote social investment promotion, create more jobs, develop and perfect policies on wages and salaries, and fundamentally overcome irrationalities. Which, attaching importance to improving the quality of human resources; Vocational training and job creation for workers must be associated with socio-economic planning, economic development programs, occupations, and orientations for economic restructuring of each locality.

Fourth, actively prepare necessary resources, which focus on mobilizing social resources in the implementation of social security to ensure social justice. When promulgating social policies, it is necessary to ensure material resources from the state budget and other sources for the implementation of such policies to create trust among people and all classes of society.

It should be clearly defined that the state still plays a leading role in organizing the implementation of social policies. It mainly focuses on building mechanisms and policies, to ensure minimum law enforcement and support. To maintain a good social safety net, the state must gradually reform the social security system toward socialization to reduce the burden on the budget and be suitable for socio-economic conditions. Mobilize humanitarian contributions of domestic and foreign organizations and individuals to participate in the implementation of social security programs.

Fifth, expand the scope and beneficiaries of social welfare in stages suitable to the level of socio-economic development. Vietnam is a developing country, and the economy is not yet strong enough to deploy a comprehensive social welfare system, therefore, in the process of implementing the social welfare system, it is necessary to proceed step by step, prioritizing the implementation of the social welfare system for disadvantaged groups, the elderly, young children, the disabled..., then gradually expand the beneficiary group, accelerate and promote forms of socialization of social welfare

activities. Experience in many countries with successful social welfare models shows that the private sector is a key force in creating social welfare funds while creating conditions for people to freely choose. Choose your form of protection.

## 5. Conclusion

Implementing social justice is a correct and transparent policy of the Party in leading the country. The basic purpose of the social justice policy is to ensure people's living standards and socio-political stability. Implementing social justice is both a goal and a driving force for comprehensive human development, an important measure in realizing the country's sustainable development goals. In the process of international integration, Vietnam has achieved positive results in the implementation of socio-economic development policies to ensure social justice. However, Vietnam is still facing many difficulties in implementing social justice to reduce unsustainable poverty, the gap between rich and poor tends to widen; underemployment and unemployment are still increasing; The quality of social security services is still low and does not meet the needs of the people... With the proposed solutions, the author wishes to contribute to finding the right direction for well-implemented social justice in the community. In the coming time, Vietnam will achieve the goal of "striving for the middle of the twenty-first century, our country becomes a socialist-oriented developed country" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p.112).

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