



# RENEWAL OF THEORETICAL THINKING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIET NAM ON ADDRESSING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR MOTIVATING DEVELOPMENT

Pham Thi Thuong\*

College of Economics, Hue University

**Abstract:** Economic benefits (EB) of workers are one of the key motivations that directly promote not only human activities but also the social development. Since 1986, along with the renovation task, the views and perceptions of the Party on the economic interests in general and economic interests of workers in particular have constantly improved, contributing to the creation of the powerful and important motivation in the movement and the comprehensive development of the country.

**Keywords:** Economic benefits, worker, benefit

## 1 The concept of economic benefits

With regard to economic – social life of human, it is inevitable to study the categories of economic benefits (EB). This is considered as one of the driving force in order to promote the economic - social development, and as elements that play an important role in the activities of man. Thus EB is a vital category has been attracting the research interest of many scientists around the world.

The French philosophers are those who have merits in associating benefits with human's social life, considering benefits as the most important dynamics of human behaviors. However, the biggest drawback of the French materialists is that they have not explained yet the origin of the benefits, where the human's benefits come from? Therefore, they think that social benefits are a simple addition of the individual benefits which are born from abstract judgment of man.

By the eighteenth century, the notion of EB was interested and emphasized. According to Adam Smith (1723-1790), all human activities are for the personal benefits, in the work of *The Wealth of Nations* he said that BE of each worker is the motivation to promote him or her to work in the purpose of creating means for society, making the wealth and prosperity of the country; and he claimed that it was the 'self-interested'. Each person knows only self-interest, sees only self-interest, and follows self - interest. But when pursuing the self-interest, there is an 'invisible hand' forcing 'economic man' to perform an unexpected task is to meet the social benefits. Sometimes doing so, they even meet social benefits better than they intend to do so before.

According to the concept of Marxism – Leninism, researching history from the starting point of human being as the central element, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels affirmed: '*History is the activity of man pursuing his own purposes*' [1]. Therefore, researching history is the study of the human, and finding the motivation for the evolution of history which is also the driving force of human activities. According to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the deepest motivation

---

\*Corresponding: [ptthuonktct@gmail.com](mailto:ptthuonktct@gmail.com)

that promotes human to act is the benefit. Since then, in the system of their works, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels scientifically analyzed the categories of EB and benefits.

According to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: *'The economic relations of a certain society first manifested in the form of benefits'* [2]. Thus, EB is the reflection of economic relations and a form of expression of economic relations. Later, this view of Friedrich Engels has been agreed consistently by national and international scientists and considered as the core in the concept of EB.

EB is a form of expression of the relations of production; it depends on the relations of production. And so, EB is a category reflecting the objective economic relationship between the classes and the walks of life, as Lenin asserted: *'Benefits of these classes or others identified objectively according to the role they have in the system of relations of production under the conditions of their living circumstances'* [4]. EB directly meets the needs of existence and development of human beings. Hence, Marxism confirmed the role of EB being the motivation for the economic- social development. Friedrich Engels wrote: EB *'is the motivation moving the mass'* and *'every revolution is conducted firstly because of EB and that EB is the basic regulatory principles that every principle has to follow'* [3].

The scientific viewpoints of Marxism on benefits in general and EB in particular have been inherited by scientists and flourished to these days.

In Vietnam, the issue of EB was soon mentioned by many researchers. According to Dao Duy Tung, EB *'is the forms of expression of economic relations, relations between people in the production. Those who hold the means of production manage the production process, determine the distribution of products; also hold the decisive role in the system of benefits'* [5, 11].

According to Le Xuan Tung, *'EB is the expression of the economic relations under the motivations, purposes, the objective stimulus which promote the human labor.'* [5, 21]. With this concept, EB became the internal motivation of the action. EB reflected economic relations, so, when conducting the research of EB, it is necessary to find out the intermediate chains between economic relations and economic interests. Since then, he affirmed: firstly it is needed to go from economic rules and then to the concreteness; the surface is the demand; EB and ultimately human activities are stimulated by benefits in order to satisfy economic demand.

Chu Van Cap unified viewpoints of the contemporary scientists about EB: *'EB is a form of expression of the production relations through economic rules'*. Therefore, the author emphasized that EB is the inseparable word in the internal mechanism of economic growth and rules.

In summary, investigating category of EB, national authors have agreed on several points: EB is an objective economic category. Finding the source of EB, scientists confirmed that it has an intimate relationship with the needs, and it is also the object to satisfy the economic needs of the subject. EB expresses to be the economic ties, relations between subjects and environment when handling the economic needs of the subjects. Through the research, the authors aim to consider the concept of EB in two angles.

In the narrow sense, EB *is an economic category representing the benefits and useful for a certain subject in the process of solving its economic needs.* And so, EB is the method to satisfy the economic needs of the subject.

In broad sense, EB *is an economic category - a form of expression of the relations of production. It objectively arises in the specific economic - social circumstances, concisely expresses an economic tie, directly stipulates the trends and the operation engine of social subjects.*

## 2 The changing process of thinking and perception of the Party on economic benefits

The process of formation and thought changing of the Party about EB is expressed through the stages.

### Before 1975

In the two wars, the country had to mobilize the manpower and serve the war in the purpose of gaining the freedom, independence and reunification of the country. As a result, common benefits of the whole nation become the most basic and urgent benefit. To do so, the Party instructed: *'Relying on the standpoint of national liberation, taking national interests as the supremacy, all the problems of the revolution aimed at these purposes to solve' and 'put the national interests above the interests of the other classes; unifying the national force is the core in order to overthrow French imperialism'* [6,50]

In 1955, the features of the revolution were that the country was divided into two parts, simultaneously, the Party led the two different revolutionary strategies: the socialist revolution in the North and the resistance against America in the South. And in the constructing the North following the socialism, problems of EB began to be interested and resolved by the Party. In the economy, EB has existed under three subjects: EB of country, EB of community and EB individual workers. In terms of social management, the Party unified the benefits and created a harmonious mechanism, which highlighted the common benefits and favored each individual, namely: *'it is a must to reasonably resolve the relationship between common benefits of cooperative with individual benefits in the principle of solidarity and social benefit', 'for the people, especially the workers, it is needed to make people understand that the benefits of the country, of socialism and of everyone are unified'* [7,25]. With the same unified viewpoint of EB, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed: *'in our regime, the benefits of the country, collective and individual benefits are the unity'* and he stressed: *'If the individual benefits contradict the collective ones, the revolutionary ethics require that the former must obey the latter'* [8, 38, 150]

It can be said that the promotion the common benefits of society, of nation, of collectivism, collective value of this stage are absolutely necessary and appropriate. It was the time when the sacrifice and devotion about manpower and fortunes for the revolution, all for the benefits of the nation were the mainstream of social life, and obvious acceptance of people.

### In the period of 1975 -1985

In the early years, promoting the spirit of the previous stages, concentrating and fully exploiting common benefits, the Party assumed that benefits were the most powerful motivation in socialism. Therefore, to make the country develop faster to socialism, it was necessary that *'based on the strength of the collective ownership regime and proper plan, applying policies to encourage appropriately, the organizational measures and effective mobilization, especially promoting socialist emulation'* [9, 71].

However, the management mechanism of planning, centralization and extended subsidization along with the state in which the policies of the Party focusing on promoting the general, collective issues and collectivism, but underestimating the individuals (humans) and neglecting personal benefits could not promote the motivation, positivity and creativity of individuals in

life and economic development. After the war, many legitimate needs of people for food, clothing, housing and daily living (temporarily delayed before) required to be satisfied, but they were not met. Besides, the administrative mechanisms of bureaucracy and the consequences of wars made people less creative, passive, dependent due to being subsidized by the collective and the state.

At the 6<sup>th</sup> Central Plenum (9/1979), with the idea of 'making the production boomed', the Party was aware of the dynamics of economic development and gave out the harmonious combination of the three EBs: EB of the state, EB of the collective and EB of individual workers, of which the EB of individuals was considered as the motivation for the development process. In the current period, acknowledging again this perception of the Party, it can be said that it is an improvement - the breakthrough in the perception of the party. But in fact, this thinking was not mentioned in details until 1982, especially the EB of workers in the agricultural sector.

At the fifth congress (1982), especially at the 8th Central Conference (1985), the Party stressed: *'Carrying out the proper consistency of the three benefits, namely guaranteeing benefits for the whole society, ensuring the benefits of the collective, paying attention to employees' hearts' and 'understanding the requirements and aspirations of the mass, having the policies consistent with the benefits of workers, looking for forms and specific measures to harmoniously combine the three benefits'* [9, 80]. Thus, the issue of combinations of benefits to motivating the socio-economic development was posed and solved by the Party in the period prior to the reforms. However, at this time, the problem of benefits was not addressed properly making the motivation of the individual and economic sectors in society lost.

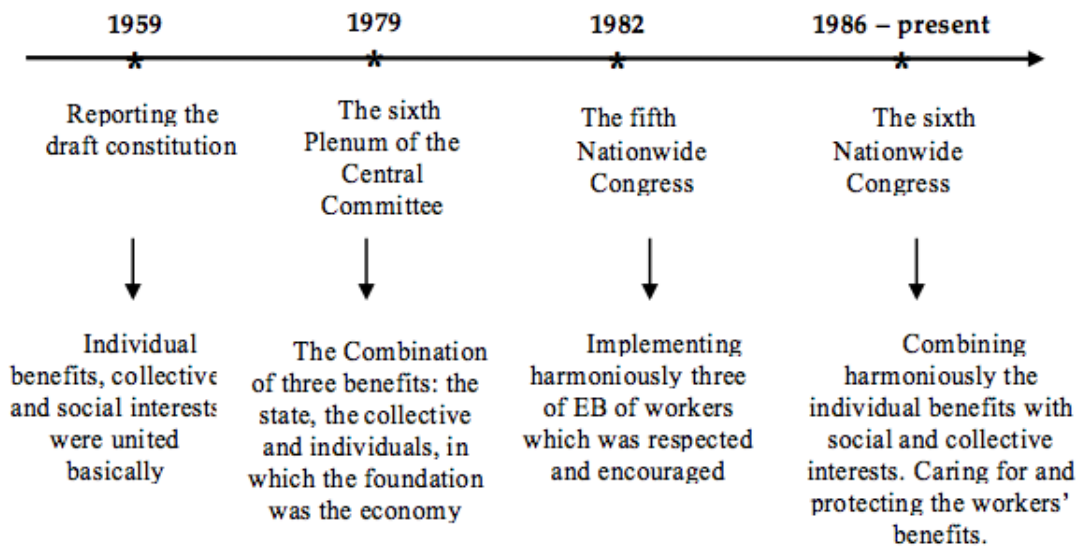
### **The period of 1986 to present**

Willing to look straight at the truth, tell the truth and evaluate the truth, the Sixth Congress of the Party had pointed out: *'All the guidelines and policies of the Party must originate from the benefits, aspirations and abilities of workers, and arouse the enthusiasm of the mass'*, and analyzing the innovation of the economic management mechanism, our Party emphasized *'in the renovation of the mechanism of economic management it is necessary to properly solve the benefits of society, collective and employees with an emphasis on the benefits of employees'* and *"properly to handle the relationship among these benefits, especially to ensure the legitimate benefits of the laborers..."* [10, 29].

Thus, the Sixth Congress formed a new concept of EB and agreed upon the fact that EB is the direct motivation for the activities of individuals in particular, and the development of the society, in general. This is a necessary change, because along with the development process, we had to gradually remove the planning, centralization and subsidizing mechanism. We also switch to the market economy, orientate socialism, recognize the role of market. The highlight of EB of workers creates the strong motivation, promotes the socio-economic development of the country and the reality has proved the correctness in viewpoints that the Party set out.

The Seventh National Congress of the Party (1991) pointed out: continuously emphasizing the combination *'in the harmony among personal benefits, social and collective benefits'*, *'caring and protecting benefits of employees...'* [11, 53]. This view of the Party was further emphasized in the next Congress, the ninth Congress (2001) showed: *'Continuously improving the material and spiritual life of the people, and implementing the social justice'*. Thus, the state and the people strive for the development of the country towards a harmonious combination of the benefits of individuals, collectives and society.

The changing process of thought and perception of the Party about EB can be generalized through the following model



(Source: The research process of author)

### 3 Recognizing the economic subjects and the economic benefits of the market economy with the socialist orientation in our country today

The ninth Congress (2001) of the Party affirmed the general economic model of Vietnam today being the market economy with socialist orientation. This is a commodity economy in many components following the socialist orientation, operating under the market mechanism in the management of the state. In this economy, the securing for the benefits of workers in economic sectors is inevitable which is the essence of socialism and an important condition to gradually go to the goal of freedom for workers and the elimination of all forms of exploitation.

In reality, the perception and differentiation of the system of EB in the transition to socialism are complex. This distinction brings only the relative nature and should be based on the identification of economic sectors. Mentioning to this perspective, it is possible to determine the system of EB as follows:

- The state entity and EB of the state: the latter is formed from income contributions of economic units and citizens of all economic sectors into the national budget.
- In the economic units of the different economic sectors, besides the contribution to ensure EB of the state, there are other subjects and EB according to their own characteristics:
  - + Economic sectors of the state, including EB of national enterprises and EB of individual laborers.
  - + Collective economic sectors, including EB of collective and EB of individual laborers.
  - + The private economic sectors, including EB of business owners and EB of individual laborers.

+ Economic sectors with the foreign investment, including: EB of business owners and EB of individual laborers.

It can be inferred that in society, there have been three basic types of benefits: social EB, collective and personal EB (private business owners, business managers, laborers, producers, etc.) having the most generalized nature.

Identifying the system of EB under the economic components brings the vital significance in the concretization of economic – social policies in order to ensure the implementation and harmonious combination among EB, which can create the integrated resources and general driving force for socio- economic development.

Since 1986 until present, with the policy of harmonious combination of EB, it can be ensured the implementation of common benefits of all classes in the society including wealth for the people, strength of the nation, and civilized, democratic, equal society; successfully building socialism. Besides, we can harmoniously solve EB of every subject, individual and every class in society, and simultaneously create conditions for them to participate in developing the economy, enriching themselves, family and society. In 2007, GDP growth rate of Vietnam ranked third in Asia, after China and India; by 2014, the GDP growth rate was 6%, making Vietnam a country with high GDP growth rate in the second position in the world, after China. National income according to GDP in 2007 was \$ 835 per person per year, and in 2014 it increased to \$ 2 000 per person per year. The positive changes in the economy have created the conditions for the implementation of poverty alleviation programs; social policies have achieved good results. According to the new standard, in 2004, Vietnam had 27.5 % of poor households, and in 2014, the number of poor households dropped to 6 %. At the same time, we have successfully implemented the programs, namely poverty alleviation, reduction of the differentiation between the rich and the poor in society, promotion for investment in remote areas, socialization of social policies in healthcare, culture, education, etc. As the result, it is possible to realize the standpoint of the Party and State towards the harmonious combination of benefits.

However, solving the issue of EB of laborers in the market economy with socialist orientation is a difficult and complicated task. Currently, there have been a number of issues requiring solutions.

Firstly, there has been the settlement of the relation of economic benefits among subjects. In today's economy, there is no obvious delimitation of ownership, therefore the question what the nature of the relationship among employers, governments, agencies and businesses is needs to be answered. The nature of this relationship will define the characteristics of economic benefit relationship among subjects together, and as a result the economic benefits of each subject can be determined. If they are just employees, what will be their rights and obligations? Conversely, if they are owners, what will be their rights? Obviously, when we are unable to differentiate the relationship among subjects, it is impossible to reasonably divide the benefits, in general, and economic benefits among subjects, in particular. In that difficult situation, we cannot encourage all subjects to be eager to work, and therefore, we waste the driving force of the development from the subjects.

Secondly, there has been the problem in the economic relations of foreign investors in Vietnam. The open market economy today attracts more and more joint venture companies and foreign ones to invest in our country. The issue of EB in economic relations with foreign inves-

tors in our country is evident in some aspects: What are the benefits of the host country (Vietnam), of the joint venture companies and the businesses? Benefits of the Vietnamese laborers participating in foreign companies?

Besides, in practice, it can be easily seen the trend which appreciates the personal benefits or the benefits of small collectives, especially for the direct production businesses. There have been also the phenomena of relying on the name of collective benefits, but actually only for individual ones, for the benefits of a particular group of people and for the benefit of local units. The cases of corruption, embezzlement, bribery in recent years have been the expression of an infringement in the relationship of benefits being good examples of trends of absolute relations. Because of the personal interests, people are willing to illegally do anything despite the moral and laws.

In the current context, due to the requirements of innovation and improvement of socio-economic policies, the Party continues to assert viewpoints, harmoniously advocates combining the individual, collective and social benefits. In order to properly handle the above relationship of benefits, it is required to be obviously aware of and grasp well the following basic issues:

Harmoniously combining the individual, collective and social benefits on the basis of the principle arguments of the Party: everything is for man, the well-being of man is both the goal and driving force of socio-economic development.

In all areas and activities, it is necessary to appreciate and solve benefits properly and harmoniously; it means that we have not only pay enough attention to individual benefits, but also appropriately care for the collective interests, benefits of agencies and of units. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure the common benefits of the society and country, implement the views that our Party affirmed: *'The objective and the main motivation of the development are just due to man and for man. Socio-economic strategies have put man at the central position... The benefits of individuals, of every collective and of the whole society are organically linked, in which individual benefits are the direct motivation'*.

It is essential to continue perfecting the innovative socio-economic policies of the state in the spirit of harmonious combination of three benefits: benefits of individuals, collectives and the society.

## 4 Conclusion

In recent years, the practice of harmonious combination of the benefits creates a positive mechanism, becoming the driving force for the subjects to perform dynamically and creatively, which in turn bring enormous socio-economic achievements, contributing to gradually improve and enhance the living standards of the citizens. To meet the next development trend of the country, it is essential to create a mechanism of harmonious combination all the EBs. Just doing that, we can create a sustainable development - enhanced economy coupled with the progress and social justice.

## References

1. Karl Marx - Friedrich Engels. *Whole volume. Hanoi National Political Publishing House*, pp. 1995-141.
2. Karl Marx - Friedrich Engels (1970), *Collection. Volume 1. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*, p. 749.
3. Karl Marx - Friedrich Engels (1971), *Collection. Volume 2. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*, p. 479.
4. Lenin V. I. (1981), *Whole volume. Volume 29. Moscow Publishing House*, p. 82.
5. Dao Duy Tung (1982), *Discussion about the three economic benefits. Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House*.
6. Communist Party of Vietnam (1983). *The basic decisions leading to the victory of the revolution in August. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*.
7. Vietnamese Workers' Party (1986), *The Party's documents on the ways to develop agriculture in the north country. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*.
8. Ho Chi Minh (1976), *Socialist revolution and construction of socialism. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*.
9. The Communist Party of Vietnam (1982), *Documents of the fifth Nationwide Congress. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*.
10. Communist Party of Vietnam (1987), *Documents of the sixth Nationwide Congress. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*.
11. Communist Party of Vietnam (1991), *Documents of the seventh Nationwide Congress. Hanoi Truth Publishing House*.