



Khóa Hội Thảo Về Phát Triển Kinh Tế

Economic Development Seminar 6-12-10-12, 1971

ADMINISTRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

by Dr. NGUYEN QUOC TRI

Professor at the National Institute of Administration

(ENGLISH ABSTRACT)

11

The Administrative Side of National Development

Dr. NGUYEN QUOC TRI, Dec. 3, 1971

The economic, psychological, sociological or cultural aspects of national development have been the prime emphasis of scholars, observers and experts concerned with development issues. The administrative facet of national development appears to have been completely neglected in the literature on development. This paper attempts to bring attention to this administrative side.

Three main topics are presented and discussed by the writer in this paper. First, the decisive role played by administration in development efforts is emphasized. Second, the failure of development programs due to administrative deficiencies is pointed out. Third, a systems' approach to development is suggested.

Crucial Role of Administration in Development.

In developing countries, administration plays a decisive role in development efforts because of the potential contribution of the public bureaucracy and of administration as an instrumental science. In the United States and other western countries, the role of the government has been kept to a minimum to leave the private sector as much liberty of action as possible. However, in developing nations in general, and in Vietnam in particular, the public administration system tends to be all powerful and has an overriding influence upon all spheres of life -- political, economic and social -- in the society.

Given this predominant function of the bureaucracy as a leading subsystem of the society, and given the weaknesses of other subsystems, no development work can be achieved without its leadership, direct intervention, help, guidance or at least benevolent neutrality.

To achieve desired objectives, administration as an instrumental science concerned with the study of ways of managing resources -- land, labor, capital -- has a great deal to contribute to development efforts. Any substantive field of development, whether in industry, agriculture, education or health, must go through the administrative process (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting) to reach development objectives.

Failure of Development Programs Due to Administrative Deficiencies.

Administration in developing countries has not been viewed as an instrumental science with which to manage resources. Rather, it has been viewed as consisting of routine rules and procedures that only require average intelligence and common sense to learn easily through experience. As a result of this view, development plans and programs in developing countries have suffered many deficiencies in their administrative aspect.

According to USAID experts, administrative deficiencies constitute the most important single cause of failure in many development programs. These deficiencies can be summarized as:

- Shortage of managerial manpower to cope with the demands of growth and modernization;
- Lack of key development institutions;
- Inadequacy of project management: lack of soundly conceived, well-managed development projects;
- Lack of capacity for local action: inadequacy of local government and central field services.

A Systems Approach to Development.

The above mentioned deficiencies appear to result from the overemphasis placed by developmentalists upon the economic, financial and technical sides of development enterprises at the expense of the administrative side. The capital-based approach, which assumes that underdeveloped countries mostly require capital to develop and which follows the Marshall Plan tradition and Keynesian economics, has failed to cope with the complexities in developing societies. The knowledge-based approach, proposed by technicians who assume that technical skills are what people in the Third World need to improve their lot, has not succeeded in meeting the problem.

The lack of effective results from these two approaches may be due to their one-sidedness. Development, in the opinion of this writer, should be conceived in system terms, acknowledging the interrelationships, interaction, interdependence between different component parts, sectors and subsystems of the entire social system. Development plans, programs and projects should thus be mutually supportive instead of

working separately or at cross-purpose and should contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the whole system. With this systemic view, the role of the development-minded and management-oriented administrator becomes of paramount importance in mobilizing, coordinating and integrating all kinds of resources (especially experts and technicians from various disciplines working to achieve desired objectives) and in knowing and using the interdisciplinary aspects of administrative science.