

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR LIVELIHOOD IN HANOI'S URBAN FRINGE DURING THE CURRENT URBANIZATION PROCESS

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Summary: *Livelihood is the way of living that is selected by the people in accordance with the natural conditions, socio-economic characteristics, ecological environment and is affected by various factors. The urbanization process has brought about many livelihood opportunities for people in Hanoi's urban fringe. However, it also poses a lot of challenges and shortcomings that require to be solved drastically, such as the employment for laborers after the conversion, social security, etc. On the basis of the study on opportunities as well as challenges for livelihood in Hanoi's urban fringe during the urbanization process, this article proposes some solutions for sustainable livelihood development in the future.*

Keywords: Opportunity, urbanization, Hanoi, livelihood, challenge.

Introduction

The urban fringe is considered to be an area that has typical activities for both rural area and urban area. It is very difficult to determine the boundaries of the urban fringe. Normally, people rely on urban planning policies and administrative management measures. However, it can be understood that the urban fringe area is the middle area between the inner city and the suburb of a specific urban area.

Hanoi city has undergone through 4 times of boundary changes (since 1954), some administrative units have been separated and merged for many times, and now consists of 30 districts and urban districts [6]. Hanoi's urban fringe has a long tradition of providing food, foodstuff and handicraft products for the City. At present, Hanoi's urban fringe is negatively impacted by the urbanization process.

Urbanization is an indispensable process of any nation in the development process. "Urbanization, from a demographic and economic geography perspective, is a rural-to-urban migration, an increasing concentration of rural population living in the urban area [3, p. 81]. From the social aspect, urbanization is understood as the process of reorganizing human habitat" [3, p.82]. Thus, from the broad term, it can be seen that urbanization is a process that changes the socio-economics together with the industrialization process. The urbanization process is characterized by the revocation of the rural land use rights of households to construct urban areas, industrial areas and urban infrastructure. While land is considered to be the most important means of production for farmers, the land acquisition means that an agricultural labor force will lose their jobs; which has dramatically changed the lives and livelihood of many households, especially farmers in Hanoi's urban fringe. This process not

only brings new livelihood opportunities, but also poses to them the challenges that need to be minimized to sustainably develop this area.

1. Opportunities

Firstly, it helps increase the financial resources. The urbanization process has caused many households to lose agricultural land, but they have been compensated with large amounts of money compared to the average income of many households in returns. In addition, the increase in the land value as a result of urbanization in the urban fringe makes the natural capital of households be offset in terms of economic value.

Secondly, the sustainable urbanization will promote the economic growth and the social development. The urbanization creates many job opportunities and new livelihood opportunities for households. The urbanization will create favorable conditions for workers to change their employment structure, from the low-income pure agricultural jobs to new, stable and high-income jobs. Instead of mainly performing agricultural activities, households now switch to non-agricultural activities such as industry, handicraft, trade and services. These activities will attract the local labor force and migrant workers from rural areas, contributing to job creation for residents in the urban fringe areas and rural areas, helping to raise people's awareness of economic activities.

Thirdly, there is transformation to new living modes and spaces. This transformation is under the impact of urbanization changes the production space and residential space from agricultural production to non-agricultural production and rural to urban living space. This transformation also has positive effects, helping to improve the lives of households.

Fourthly, there is a transformation of living standards and lifestyles. In fact, this transition has given people a higher income than before. The agricultural production has unstable production due to weather and many other causes, while current income from non-agricultural production is higher and less tough. Moreover, along with the socio-economic development, the conditions for life, living and entertainment are growing, helping improve the educational level and people's living standards in urban areas.

2. Challenges

In addition to the opportunities and positive impacts on the livelihoods and lives of farmers in the urban fringe, there are still many challenges that they have to face during the transformation.

Firstly, there is a challenge from the employment and vocational training for farmers whose land is acquired. This is the most difficult and troublesome issue in the transformation process. The urbanization process reduces agricultural land, resulting in the underemployment of a large number of laborers. In fact, many agricultural laborers, especially young laborers cannot find stable jobs and have their expected income. Moreover, agricultural laborers with small and fragmented production habits and practices will face many difficulties when the urbanization takes place. The untrained labor level accounts for a large proportion while the local workers do not meet, or only meet a part. Therefore,

employers must recruit skilled workers from other places. This is paradox not only in the urban fringe, but also in the new industrial areas. Moreover, the urbanization will increase the risk of unemployment, the difficulties in finding jobs, and raise the gap between the rich and the poor, social evils, etc.

Secondly, there are conflicts, social evils and increased violence due to land disputes - the main source of livelihood for many rural households in the urban fringe. The urban fringe is concentrated in many residential areas, with different intellectual and cognitive levels, multi-dimensional and complex social relations, etc., leading to a tendency of conflicts and contradictories of interests among residential groups. Some social evils such as addiction, gambling, etc. have increased dramatically since people have more idle time, money and no job.

In addition, the land in the urban fringe is becoming increasingly scarce, along with the urbanization process, land prices soar and create psychological pressure on people. Consequently, the poor can be pushed further or forced into less valuable areas or lack of public services and environmental pollution, the society becomes unstable, conflicts and violence escalate.

Thirdly, there are social differentiation and great potential risks. It is a fact that many farmers' families were previously poor and in needy situation, thanks to the urbanization process, they have a large sum of money and seek to satisfy their longing dreams despite of losing their land. They use compensation money first of all to build houses, then buy utilities to serve their families and their own activities while they do not use the rest to invest, find jobs, but for playing or involving in social evils. People feel that their livelihoods are fragile and unsustainable compared to the days of working in the agricultural sector. The inevitable consequence will lead to differentiation between rich and poor and the interest conflicts between social groups arise. This fact helps people penetrate deeper into the market, but also makes their lives more dependent on the market.

The transformation of livelihood also affects people's psychology. Many people feel that their new livelihoods are fragile and unstable compared to the agricultural production in the context that they do not have preparation and experience in business strategies. To a certain extent, non-agricultural production activities pose risks and uncertainties of new livelihoods.

Fourthly, the urbanization also raises many other shortcomings. The development of industries is inconsistent, the scale and content of agricultural production activities change, the structure of occupations changes, etc. On one hand, the urbanization changes the urban and the urban fringe rapidly, but on the other hand, it also degrades people's habitat due to population increase pressure, the chaos of a part of the population with different lifestyles, broken infrastructure, environmental pollution, over-exploited natural resources, affecting the sustainable development, national food security strategy, human health, etc.

3. Resolution of livelihoods for farmers after agricultural land conversion

In order to create sustainable livelihoods for people in Hanoi's urban fringe, attention should be paid to the following solutions:

Firstly, it is required to well perform the urban planning work, linking urban development planning with the economic restructuring process. The issue of spatial planning, urban development planning of urban economic development, determination of the focus on economic development, job creation for workers, environmental issues, etc. are the issues that need to be considered and solved from the planning stage.

Secondly, it is required to develop vocational training plans in association with supporting jobs for people whose land is acquired and create stable jobs for people. Training plans must be associated with the plan of using and arranging jobs after the farmers are retrained. It is necessary to develop a variety of occupations in rural areas through short-term vocational training programs in the area and have plans for vocational trainees to develop themselves.

Thirdly, the State and local authorities in Hanoi's urban fringe must prepare forms of support for people before their land use purpose changes; on one hand, these forms of support will give people an active psychology in choosing and creating their jobs and livelihoods; on the other hand, with active support forms, the State equips people with necessary premises to access new jobs and step by step develop and concertize the domestic labor market and meet the labor demand in the integration conditions.

Fourthly, it is necessary to have a specific legal framework for which it is obligatory to stipulate responsibilities and obligations to enterprises using land in resolving jobs for farmers whose land is acquired. Implementing support programs in combination with supervision of enterprise training and on-the-job recruitment. Intensify the inspection and supervision, have sanctions to promptly handle violations of training and recruitment commitments.

Fifthly, it is crucial to reorganize agricultural production and promote programs to support on-the-job employment for workers; accelerate the restructuring of agricultural production towards the direction of commodity production and agricultural development towards ecological sustainability; encourage the development of traditional handicrafts and non-agricultural jobs to thoroughly solve and create jobs for rural areas. Trade village industrial clusters should be built with the functions of technical transfer and general service zones associated with employment services and service-performing skills.

Conclusion

It can be said that urbanization is an indispensable process in the industrialization and modernization period in our country today. Besides the positive factors, many shortcomings have been arising in this process. Many workers who used to be agricultural farmers still lack social capital, so they cannot find jobs, or have enough jobs to ensure their sustainable

livelihood strategies in the context of increasing pressure from the market economy. Given that fact, the urban agricultural development is the right and most appropriate direction. Although the urban agriculture models in Hanoi are newly formed, are stopped on a small scale and narrow scope of operation, it initially shows the socio-economic and environmental effectiveness. Sustainable urban fringe agriculture development is an inevitable trend of the future agricultural development.

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