



STREAMLINING THE ARMY OF MACRO -ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS IN OUR COUNTRY

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Most economists currently think the main cause of economic success of a country is not its natural resources or geographical position, it is just the Government's management role and grey matter of the army of economic management officials. In this article, we would like to show the status quo of this army and some suggestions to improve their potentials in the national industrialization and modernization.

Macro-economic management officials are regarded as those implementing the macro-economic management in state management agencies as well as relevant agen-

cies, not mentioning officials in the Party organizations and the State cultural bodies. They play an important role in building, implementing and perfecting the country's line of economic renovation, using economic management instruments, executing economic policies of the Party and the Government and making them come true.

I. SITUATION

Our country now has 61 provinces, the central government includes 27 ministries and agencies at ministerial level and 25 agencies directly under the Government with the number of civil servants amounts to 1,236,373. The central agencies are staffed by 129,763 officials, 74% of which have university degrees and higher. The majority of our officials were well trained: around 80% of current officials in ministries took BA and MA degrees.

Although some two-thirds of our macro-economic management officials had been trained before 1989 when our country had not shifted into the market economy, but they have tried their best to grasp the requirements, features and systems of the market economy, and they have not only adapted themselves to new mechanisms but also learned experience of economic management from other countries. Furthermore, they are capable of using economic management instruments which are fully strange to the centrally-planned economy. In general, the army of macro-economic management officials have made significant contribution to the renovation of macro-economic management in our country. However, this army also reveals obvious shortcomings.

II. SHORTCOMINGS

Firstly, there are both redundancy and shortage of

officials, wide gap in quality and quantity of officials and outdated management knowledge.

Most of our officials had been trained and gained experience in the former centrally-planned economy, so newly-provided knowledge which are not systematic cannot yet help them control the market mechanism, they felt perplex between the two economic management systems and did not know how to use effectively new instruments to manage the current market economy, and bureaucracy and corruption are still common. In addition, there is redundancy of officials because they cannot meet new requirements of the task in term of quantity and quality.

Secondly, the distribution of officials is not proportional to ages and genders.

Most of macro-economic management officials are men, the percentage of male employees is 65%, female 35%. Male officials account for 81% in the Ministry of Trade, female servants make up 48% in the State Bank. Half of officials are over 45 years old, only one fifth are under 35. Only the two sectors, finance and banking, have the highest percentage of officials aged under 35, 43% in the State Bank and 44% in the Ministry of Finance. Officials aged under 35 represent only 5% in the Ministry of Trade and 4% in the Ministry of Industry. The percentage of officials aged over 45 is highest in the Ministries of Industry and of Agriculture and Rural Development, 76% and 69% respectively. The number of officials is uneven in ages. Ages ranging from 40 to 45 and those from 55 to 60 which will retire in the next five years make up a large proportion. As a result, in the next 10 to 15 years, senior experienced officials will retire and 4-5% of current juniors can hardly fulfill their task in the future.

Causes of the above shortcomings:

- Firstly, as mentioned most of our macro-economic management officials were trained and had experience from a non-market economy. Moreover, the training was not practical and not really suitable for our socio-economic conditions.

- Secondly, although the country recorded significant economic achievements after many years of *đổi mới*, it has not yet had a strategy for selecting, recruiting,

training, assigning, employing, promoting, and fostering the army of civil servants in line with the task of renovation.

The country has not really a strategy to attract talents, sometimes the agencies still stresses the past merit and consider the post as sharing benefits. If the recruiting of civil servants is aimed to solve the redundancy or to share benefits, the State machinery cannot be effective and cannot eradicate the red tape and embezzlement.

The former organization of staff regarded macro-economic management officials as civil servants and did not re-evaluate and re-select them periodically on the basis of achievement and efficiency. The Government staff is like a safe shelter for preventing every competition of jobs and incomes. Wages are not enough to encourage them to improve their skill.

- Thirdly, we have not had a systematic and effective retraining program on the market economy. To improve the knowledge of management officials, some agencies and localities took the initiative in opening courses through collaboration with universities and institutes. This led to certain successes. However if it is not strictly controlled, it will cause bad consequences in training.

III. SOME MEASURES

Firstly, the Government should have a strategy to build the army of civil servants meeting the requirements of the market economy under the socialist orientation.

State agencies shall stressed the organization of their staff in line with the market economy and the national industrialization and modernization. The task of recruiting, training and employing must be based on a scientific process. The recruiting shall be equal and open to every citizens regardless their social strata. Those passing the recruitment examination will take posts as economic management officials. Forms of recruitment of civil servants shall be diversified and renewed.

Secondly, officials should be standardized in accordance with the market economy under the socialist orientation. The criteria must be concretized in terms of ethic, specialized knowledge, political level, foreign language, computer...for the basis of recruiting, assigning, promoting and fostering. Authorities should not assess a worker by feeling randomly and discriminating in favor of him/her due to the same group or native regions.

Thirdly, the army of macro-economic management officials should be refined and rearranged.

The retraining must be strictly, fundamentally and systematically implemented. Authorities should review to see who need retraining and at what level they are trained. Subjects directly concerning the macro-economic management such as economics and law should be paid full attention to.

The assigning of officials should guarantee the continuation between the generations. Agencies should boldly promote skilled and qualified young officials to important posts. In the meanwhile, leading experts and economic advisers should be given good treatment.

Fourthly, the Government should give impetus to its talented officials so as to avoid their applying for jobs in other sectors. It also executes effectively and resolutely the Anti-corruption Ordinance to bring degenerate and incapable cadres out of its machinery.

Reference:

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