



VIETNAMESE REGULATIONS ON THE POOR ETHNIC AND MOUNTAINOUS CHILDREN'S PROTECTION

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Summary: Education and training development is determined as the leading national policy to ensure equality in learning for poor ethnic and mountainous children. The lack of access to quality education also means losing a potential source of future growth for the country. No schooling and access to written language and education not only reduce children's individual potential but also stifle their intellectual attainment and equal opportunities and increase cycles of poverty and disadvantage for all generations over the country. For mountainous and ethnic minority regions, illiterate children are becoming a drag on the development and integration process, preventing the industrialization and modernization of rural agriculture. Besides the positive changes, education in those regions still reveals several limitations and shortcomings that need to be overcome soon to improve the quality further.

Keywords: Children policy, poor mountainous children, ethnic children, Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, eradicating illiteracy for ethnic and mountainous children has always been a concern under the direction of the Party, State, and all levels and branches. Along with the widespread socialization of education, regimes, policies, and infrastructure for the people here are also focused, facilitating economic development. Therefore, the universalization of education and the eradication of illiteracy also represent a significant achievement, forming a foundation for promoting equality between the peoples. However, in addition to the achievements, certain limitations on inequalities in the access to education among children in various regions, especially ethnic and mountainous ones, still exist. Therefore, synchronous, practical, and appropriate policies to gradually eradicate illiteracy among ethnic and mountainous children.¹

For many years, poverty reduction programs in Vietnam have been implemented very effectively. Since 2013, the proportion of poor and near-poor households according to the national poverty line in the whole country has continuously decreased from 14.1% in 2013 to 12.0% in 2017 and reached 10.2% in 2018.² Despite many successes in poverty reduction, the proportion of poor and near-poor households of ethnic minorities was still 3.5 times higher than that of the country. The Chut had the highest proportion of poor and near-poor households at 89.3%, while the Hoa had the lowest at 2.9%.³ The proportion of school-aged ethnic minority children not attending school decreased nearly twice, from 26.4 in 2009 to 15.5 in 2019. However, certain limitations on inequalities in the access to education among children in various regions, especially ethnic and mountainous ones, still exist. Ethnic children still face many difficulties on their journey to literacy, which makes illiteracy in children not completely eradicated. The main reason is the lack of facilities, transportation, intellectual limitations, and the like in their regions. According to statistics, there are still primary-school-age children not going to school. Currently, 19/53 ethnic minorities in the country have a rate of out-of-school children over 20%, the highest proportion of which was the Brau (35.4%), followed by the Stieng (35.3%). The San Diu and the Tay have the lowest proportion of out-of-school children among the 53 ethnic minorities, at 3.7% and 5.1%, respectively.⁴

Meeting nutritional needs during the school year is crucial for children's development. According to a report, however, about 66 million students in developing countries come to school hungry.⁵ In Moc Chau, a border district of Son La Province in the North of Vietnam, people's lives are still difficult. Therefore, children in border communes often miss school due to having irregular meals. Sharing the



burden by helping them go to school with nutritious meals contributes to creating a future generation with knowledge and an opportunity to change their lives. Because they are in mountainous regions, most schools are built and furnished by the State. However, many students still drop out. Poverty is why many students cannot continue to go to school, or if they can, they have to bring lunch prepared by their parents from home. That lunch is rice with some wild vegetables only and poured with water available in class. Some families even do not prepare lunch for their children. During the lunch break, they walk home 3-4 km from the school to eat lunch and take the afternoon off, which remarkably affects the teaching and learning quality.⁶

Most children's families are poor and near-poor households with limited conditions and finances to support their learning, care, and entertainment. Many children are at risk of dropping out due to their disadvantages.

2. STATUS OF THE POOR ETHNIC AND MOUNTAINOUS CHILDREN'S PROTECTION

1.1. In China

China, a neighbor of Vietnam in Asia, has many cultural similarities. A number of its policies for poor ethnic minority children in mountainous regions achieve significant achievements. Therefore, studying this country's policies is also recommended and referred for Vietnam to improve its policies for poor ethnic minority children in mountainous regions in Vietnam.

In China, the plan called "Proposal for the National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Development and Reform", consisting of 22 chapters and 27,000 words, set out the ambition that strategic goals to modernize education would be achieved to form a learning and knowledge-rich society by 2020. China also aimed to eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged people by the end of the decade.⁷ The focus of the above education reform plan was to meet the needs of the world. As the economy was starting to grow strong, China took into account training high-quality human resources to sustainably develop the country. This is China's first educational blueprint for the 21st century. In recent years, education reform has become an urgent issue in China, when a variety of educational issues, such as too heavy learning pressure on students or educational imbalances between urban and rural regions, have aroused people's resentment. In fact, the draft was started to prepare in August 2008 and was publicized on the Internet twice to attract valuable feedback from people from all walks of lives. Millions of people were excited to participate, and the draft was reviewed and edited 40 times.⁸

The proposal expresses the ambition and determination to build good, reputable schools and bring high-quality education to each student. No child has to drop out of school due to financial hardship. According to Yuan Guiren, Minister of Education, the proposal would address the major issues in China's education system, bottlenecks in education development, and other issues of public concern. The plan, for example, includes equal educational opportunities for the children of migrant workers in major cities. In addition, by 2020, the quality of compulsory education would have been equal in all regions and provinces, ensuring that all school-age children and young people have access to compulsory education.

On November 26, 2011, the Government of China decided to implement a nutrition improvement plan for rural students receiving compulsory education to achieve this plan. The central government invested more than ¥16 billion (\$2.47 billion) to support ¥26 million students with ¥3 per day for food. China became a country where the government actively supported student nutrition through financial investment. By October 2012, national and provincial pilot programs had provided nutritional food to 33 million rural students. According to a 2012 survey, in addition to ¥3 provided by the central government, each student needed an additional ¥0.8 for other activities. In 2014, the amount of money provided by the central government to the pilot schools increased to ¥4, with a total amount of about ¥20 billion.⁹ For many rural families, school meals remain the primary source of nutrition for their children.¹⁰

This thorough plan shows China's determination to change the outdated and ineffective education system to become a society with high-quality and competitive learning. Education is economics. A



booming economy stems from well-trained and scientific minds. With the advantage of a large human resource, China will surely advance on the world stage if it develops a strong one, too.¹¹

In 2020, Do An, an autonomous district in Guangxi Province, had an area of 4,092 km² and a population of about 726,000 people. It is one of China's most remote and impoverished districts. A decade ago, lunch at Longfu School (a primary school in Du'an) consisted only of rice and steamed soybeans. Compared to other schools in the country, students here were shorter and thinner. In fact, malnourished meals as in Longfu were also prevalent in impoverished rural regions across China. In the 2000s, China still had about 750 million people in poverty. Most of them were mostly in rural and mountainous regions. In 2011, China was determined to improve the physical fitness of rural children. They launched a "10-year campaign to nourish rural school kids", providing a nutritious and free lunch to schools in poverty-stricken regions.

Every Monday morning in Du'an, 20 refrigerated trucks carried 4 tons of meat, 8 tons of vegetables, and 10.8 tons of rice to 300 schools. The food was adequate for 300 schools to provide lunch for 80,000 students a week. "I prefer to eat at school than at home," said Ajian, a fifth grader at Longfu School. "School lunch has enough meat and vegetables. There is no limit, so I can eat as much as I want." According to a report from the CDRF, 10 years ago, 12 out of 100 rural students were stunted. The average height difference between rural and urban children was 6cm. In the "10-year campaign to nourish rural school kids", Du'an was funded ¥500 million (nearly VND 1,780 billion) by the government. They spent ¥96 million (about VND 340 billion) building canteens, and schools themselves paid ¥70 million (nearly VND 250 billion) to hire canteen staff. In November 2020, Du'an was lifted out of poverty. Despite the development of the local economy, many rural families were still in need.

However, the cost of food of all kinds increased. In comparison between 2021 with 2012, the price of eggs and rice tripled, and that of pork showed a fourfold increase. Meanwhile, the government's support per meal for students since 2014 has remained ¥4 per child (equivalent to VND 14,000). The CDRF proposed to increase the average support to ¥5 per meal (equivalent to VND 18,000) and continue to implement the "10-year campaign to nourish rural school kids" policy.

As of May 2020, China spent a total of ¥147.2 billion on "school meals". They supported all schools in 1,762 poor districts in 29 provinces, providing lunch for 40 million students. "Thanks to this program, the physical fitness of rural children has improved significantly," proudly said Lu Mai, Vice President of the China Development Research Foundation (CDRF). According to data from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, from 2012 to 2019, the average height of female students increased by 1.69 cm and male students by 1.54 cm.¹² For mountainous and ethnic people, free lunch for children at school is still a great help. In addition, this policy for mountainous and ethnic children helps parents be more involved in their children's education. It can reduce information conflicts between parents and children, thereby promoting more educational investment.¹³

1.2. In Vietnam

Vietnam has 54 ethnic groups, of which the Kinh accounts for the majority at 85.3% (82,085,729 people), leaving 53 ethnic minorities at 14.7% (14,123,255 people) (Steering Committee of the Central Population and Housing Census (2019)). Although ethnic minorities have the lowest proportion of the population in the country in general, they hold a very important position in the country's development and integration process. Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW, dated November 04, 2013, by the 11th Central Committee on the fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education, serving industrialization and modernization in a socialist-oriented market economy during international integration once again affirms and emphasizes the need to pay attention to investing and further developing the quality of education in ethnic and mountainous regions "prioritizing investment in education and training development in extremely disadvantaged and ethnic regions, borders, islands, remote regions, and policy beneficiaries, etc.". For ethnic and mountainous children, education is the most effective way to bring about equal opportunities to develop and change their future. Therefore, our State has not stopped paying attention to and promoting the eradication of illiteracy



for ethnic and mountainous children, especially children from disadvantaged families in the region, to facilitate equal opportunities.

The Northern Midlands and mountainous regions, and Central Highlands have a higher rate of multidimensional child poverty than many other regions. Similar to general poverty, multidimensional child poverty is also very high among ethnic minorities. Compared with nearly half of Kinh/Hoa children, ethnic children have a much higher rate of multidimensional poverty due to the lack of many indexes, except for the health insurance indexes.¹⁴

In order to achieve the s in sustainable development objectives with the slogan “no child is left behind”, over the years, Vietnam has made great efforts to implement many practical actions to eradicate illiteracy across the country and for poor ethnic and mountainous children in direct and indirect forms. Accordingly, the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction, Program 135 (dated July 31, 1998, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 135/QĐ-TTg approving the program on socio-economic development in mountainous, deep-lying and remote communes with special difficulties (known as Program 135)), the National Target Program on New Rural Development has been implemented to bring socio-economic development to localities, facilitating the implementation of education policies. At the same time, the Government has directed the development and promulgation of many mechanisms and policies prioritizing the investment in education and training development in ethnic and mountainous regions, such as Decision No. 692/QĐ-TTg, dated May 04, 2013 of the Prime Minister approving the project “Eradicating illiteracy by 2020”; Decree No. 86/2015/ND-CP, dated October 02, 2015 of the Government regulating the mechanism for collection and management of tuition fees applicable to educational institutions in the national education system and policies on tuition fee exemption and reduction and financial support from the academic year 2015-2016 to 2020-2021; Decree No. 116/2016/ND-CP, dated July 18, 2016 of the Government regulating policies on support for students and schools in communes and villages with special difficulties; Decree No. 57/2017/ND-CP, dated May 09, 2017 of the Government regulating policies on prioritizing enrollment and study support for ethnic preschool children and students.

Decision No. 622/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister, dated May 10, 2017, promulgating the National Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, in which 17 sustainable development objectives of Vietnam to 2030 are specified; In particular, objective no. 4 specifies, ensures the quality, fairness and comprehensiveness of education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for everyone, including ethnic and mountainous children. On June 19, 2020, the 14th National Assembly approved Resolution No. 120, approving the investment policy of the National Target Program on Socio-Economic Development in ethnic and mountainous regions in the period of 2021-2030. These legal bases have practical meaning in the illiteracy eradication for children. In particular, several specific objectives and indexes are aimed at comprehensively solving the shortages of ethnic and mountainous children, facilitating their entitlement to social rights equally, such as ending all forms of poverty everywhere with a focus on ethnic children; Ensuring nutrition, enhancing physical health, ensuring health for both ethnic and mountainous children, etc. thereby creating initial conditions for children to have access to education and other opportunities.

Specifically, the policy of supporting mountainous students with special difficulties are stipulated in Decree 116/2016/ND-CP of the Government (hereinafter referred to as ND 116).¹⁵ Accordingly, mountainous students are entitled to the support prescribed in Clause 1, Article 2 of Decree 116, including:

- a) Primary and secondary school students as prescribed in Clause 1, Article 4 of this Decree;
- b) High school students who are ethnic minorities as prescribed in Clause 2, Article 4 of this Decree;
- c) High school students are Kinh people as stipulated in Clause 3, Article 4 of this Decree.”

Article 4 of Decree 116 stipulates as follows:

- 1. For primary and secondary school students, one of the following conditions must be met:
 - a) Being a semi-boarding student studying at an ethnic minority semi-boarding school;



b) Being a student whose parents or sponsors have permanent residence in communes and villages with special difficulties, studying at primary and secondary schools in communes of region III, villages with special difficulties in ethnic and mountainous regions; communes with special difficulties in coastal land or deep inland but rivers and canals cut and surround and islands.

Houses are away from the school, with a distance of 4km or more for primary school students and 7km or more for secondary school students with difficult transportation. They have to cross rivers and streams without bridges; climb high passes and mountains; go over the landslide and rocky areas;

c) Being a student whose parents or sponsor have permanent residence in communes of region III and villages with special difficulties in ethnic and mountainous regions, studying at primary and secondary schools in communes of region II of ethnic and mountainous regions. Houses are away from the school or terrain where traffic is difficult, as specified in Point b, Clause 1 of this Article.

2. For high school students who are ethnic minorities, the following conditions must be met:

a) Being studying at a high school or a high school level at a school with more than one level;

b) Students and their parents or sponsor have permanent residence in communes in region III, villages with special difficulties in ethnic and mountainous regions; communes with special difficulties in coastal land or deep inland but rivers and canals cut and surround, and islands.

Homes are away from the school with a distance of 10 km or more or in the terrain where traffic is difficult. They have to cross rivers and streams without bridges; climb high passes and mountains; go over landslides and rocky areas.

3. For high school students who are Kinh people, in addition to the conditions specified in Clause 2 of this Article, have to be members of poor households.”

Therefore, students who are beneficiaries will be entitled to the support levels specified in Article 5, Decree 116 as follows:

1. Students who are beneficiaries as stipulated in this Decree are entitled to food, housing and rice subsidies as follows:

a) Food subsidies: Each student is supported at 40% of the base salary per month and is entitled to no more than 9 months/academic year/student;


b) Housing subsidies: For students who are self-sufficient in accommodation because the school cannot arrange semi-boardings accommodation in the school, they will be supported at 10% of the base salary each month and are entitled to no more than 9 months/academic year/student;

c) Rice subsidies: Each student is supported with 15 kilograms of rice per month and is entitled to no more than 9 months/academic year/student.”

Thus, according to the provisions of Decree 116, students in mountainous regions and regions with special difficulties will receive 15kilograms of rice per month and food subsidies equivalent to 40% of the base salary (equivalent to nearly 600 thousand VND/month), housing subsidies equivalent to 10% of the base salary (equivalent to nearly 150,000 VND/month). Besides, depending on each locality, additional support policies may exist for students in mountainous regions and regions with special difficulties.

Regarding the policy of tuition fee exemption and reduction, for ethnic and mountainous regions, the Government stipulates tuition fee exemption for secondary school students in villages with special difficulties and communes in three ethnic regions, communes with special difficulties in coastal land or deep inland but rivers and canals cut and surround, and islands from the academic year 2022 - 2023.¹⁶

Students of ethnic minority schools and schools of pre-university; ethnic students living in regions with difficult and special difficult socio-economic conditions; children attending 5-year-old preschools in regions with special difficult socio-economic conditions, communes in coastal land or deep inland but rivers and canals cut and surround, and islands with special difficulties are exempt from tuition fees according to Decree No. 86/2015/ND-CP, dated October 02, 2015, of the Government regulating the mechanism for collection and management of tuition fees applicable to educational institutions in the national education system and policies on tuition fee exemption and reduction and financial support from the academic year 2015-2016 to 2020-2021 and Decree No.



145/2018/ND-CP dated October 16, 2018, of the Government amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 86/2015/ND-CP. According to Decree No. 86/2015/ND-CP, children attending preschools and ethnic students in regions with special difficult socio-economic conditions are entitled to a 70% tuition fee reduction. Shortage of access to education services for adults and children of the poor persists in most ethnic minorities. The status of ethnic minority people who are literate is not high, with more than half of the population of some ethnic groups being illiterate. Currently, about 14 provinces with a large number of ethnic minorities have a very high rate of illiterate people of working age, such as Lai Chau, Ha Giang, Dien Bien, Son La, Bac Kan, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, and Cao. Bang, Ninh Thuan, Kontum, Gia Lai, Soc Trang, Tra Vinh, An Giang. This shows that the eradication of illiteracy for adults is a huge challenge for ethnic minorities. In recent years, policies on the development of school networks, facilities and teaching equipment for highland education have been strengthened. However, the policy system has not met the requirements of the scale development and the improvement of education and training quality in the locality, especially in some specialized schools in ethnic and mountainous regions. The policy of merging small schools into larger ones faces many difficulties because the traffic is not much upgraded (there are still many temporary classrooms, borrowed and rented classrooms). The largest investment program for education in ethnic regions is the program to solidify schools and classrooms. However, the implementation process is very slow because the disbursement of capital is still delayed.

Accordingly, the objects are children whose parents, or father, mother, or sponsor nurturing them for 6 consecutive months or over reside in communes, wards and towns belonging to ethnic and mountainous regions according to Decision No. 861/QDTTg dated June 04, 2021, of the Prime Minister approving the list of communes of Region III, Region II, Region I in ethnic and mountainous regions in the 2021-2025 period; Decision No. 612/QD-UBDT dated September 16, 2021, of the Minister and the Chairman of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs approving the list of villages with special difficulties in ethnic and mountainous regions in the 2021-2025 period studying at public preschool education institutions. In Lao Cai, a northern mountainous province of Vietnam, the above objects will be supported with 100% of tuition fees according to the regulations of Lao Cai People's Council for each school year for those who have to pay tuition fees according to the provisions of Decree No. 81/2021/ND-CP dated August 27, 2021, of the Government regulating the mechanism for collection and management of tuition fees applicable to educational institutions in the national education system and policies on tuition fee exemption and reduction and financial support from the academic year; service prices in the field of education and training. Supporting the rest according to the tuition fees of Lao Cai People's Council according to each academic year for those who are entitled to tuition fee reduction under the provisions of Decree No. 81/2021/ND-CP dated August 27, 2021, of the Government regulating the mechanism for collection and management of tuition fees applicable to educational institutions in the national education system and policies on tuition fee exemption and reduction and financial support; service prices in the field of education and training.¹⁸

According to the survey results on the socio-economic situation of 53 ethnic minorities in 2019 conducted by the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs and the General Statistics Office, there are more than 56.4 thousand villages in communes of ethnic regions nationwide (as of October 01, 2019). It reflects the universalization of education, facilities and educational conditions for children in this region. According to the survey results, Vietnam has more than 1.4 million ethnic children of primary school age - universalization of education level to eradicate illiteracy, equivalent to the age of 5 to 9 years; in which, the Tay, the Thai, the Khmer, the Muong, the Hmong, and the Nung are the ethnic groups having the largest number of children of primary school age. The rate of solid schools increased from 77.1% (2015) to 91.3% (2019); the rate of children attending school at all levels increased, and the rate of ethnic children of school age but not attending school has decreased nearly 2 times from 26.4% in 2009 to 15.5% in 2019.

However, the survey results also show that there are still certain limitations on inequalities in children's access to education among regions, especially with ethnic and mountainous children. Ethnic children still face many difficulties on their journey to literacy, which makes illiteracy in children



not completely eradicated. According to statistics, the situation of children of school age but not attending school still exists at all levels of education (primary school 3.1%, secondary school 18.4%, high school 53%). The rate of ethnic minorities aged 15 and over who can read and write the national language is only 80.9%. Moreover, 19/53 ethnic minorities in the country have a rate of out-of-school children over 20%, the highest proportion of which was the Brau (35.4%), followed by the Stieng (35.3%). The San Diu and the Tay have the lowest proportion of out-of-school children among the 53 ethnic minorities, at 3.7% and 5.1%, respectively. Regarding the primary level, for every 100 children of primary school age, about 2 children are not allowed to attend school. In particular, the Raglay is 3.1%, the Gia Rai is 2.9%, the Khang is 1.9%, the Hmong is 0.1%, the Ngai is 0.5%, the Cham is 0.4%, the Stieng is 0.8%, etc.; The net enrolment rate in primary school reaches 96.9%.

The above shortcomings are due to the limited socio-economic conditions of ethnic and mountainous areas, unfavourable transportation, difficult family economic circumstances, and limited awareness of the role of education in development. This soon leads children to participate in economic activities to help their families. According to statistics, the rate of poor and near-poor households of ethnic minorities is 3.5 times higher than the national rate. The number of poor ethnic minority households accounts for 22.3%, and near-poor households account for 13.2% of the total number of ethnic minority households in the country. The high rate of poor ethnic minority households is concentrated in Dien Bien, Quang Binh, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa, Lai Chau, etc., in which the Chut has the highest rate of poor and near-poor households with 89.3%.

In addition, in ethnic minority areas of Vietnam, 1.4% of the total villages have not joined the national power grid; 5.2% of the total villages have roads to communes, districts, etc., not paved with asphalt, concrete or gravels and stones; 16.3% of the ethnic minority areas in the border areas have not had solid classrooms. This rate is even higher in some provinces in the Northern midlands and mountainous regions, the Central Highlands, and the South. Typically, Bac Kan's rate is 26%; Tuyen Quang's is 25.8%; Dien Bien's is 24.6%; Dak Lak's is 20.9%; Hau Giang's is 29.5%, etc. Meanwhile, the rate of solid schools and classrooms in ethnic minority areas is lower at 54.4% and 65.5%, respectively.

At the same time, the survey results show that 1.2% of 7.81 million children under 5 years old have not been registered for birth. It directly affects the management of civil status and access to policies and rights for children, including education. Especially in the Northern Midlands and Mountains and the Central Highlands, the rate of under-5-year-old children not being birth registered is the highest in socio-economic regions, at 2.3% and 2.9%, respectively. These are two areas with difficult mountainous and plateau terrain where many ethnic minorities live and many multidimensionally poor households concentrate.

On the other hand, the existence of consanguineous marriage, even at a high rate, and the obsolete practices of some ethnic groups affect the health and constitution of children to a greater or less degree, partly reducing the educational opportunities of children there, especially for girls when child marriage still occurs.

In the current context, the fact that children in general and ethnic and mountainous children, in particular, do not have access to quality education also means the loss of a potential source of growth for the country in the future. No schooling and access to written language and education not only reduce children's individual potential but also stifle their intellectual attainment and equal opportunities and increase cycles of poverty and disadvantage for all generations over the country. For mountainous and ethnic minority regions, illiterate children are becoming a drag on the development and integration process, preventing the industrialization and modernization of rural agriculture.

3. SOLUTIONS FOR ETHNIC AND MOUNTAINOUS CHILDREN'S PROTECTION

In order to gradually eliminate illiteracy among ethnic and mountainous children, it is necessary to thoroughly grasp the guiding ideas mentioned in the document of the 13th Party Congress: "Focusing on improving and well-implementing ethnic policies in all fields, especially specific policies to solve the difficulties of ethnic minorities. To create livelihoods, jobs, stable cultivation and settlement for



ethnic minorities, especially in remote and border areas. Focus on effectively implementing the National Target Program on Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the period 2021-2030”.

3.1. Regarding nutrition policies for poor mountainous and ethnic minority children in Vietnam

In Vietnam, the problem of illiteracy eradication for mountainous and ethnic children is always a matter of concern in the country's development, integration, industrialization and modernization process. Ensuring nutrition for ethnic and mountainous children in the illiteracy eradication process needs to be paid attention to and implemented with specific plans and policies.

The results of “China's 10-year campaign to nourish rural school kids” are also a major reference plan for Vietnam to improve children's nutrition in the illiteracy eradication process and improve the nutrition of ethnic and mountainous regions, and this is an urgent issue.

In the component projects of the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in the Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in the period of 2021 - 2030, 1st phase, from 2021 to 2025 (hereinafter referred to as the Program), approved by the Prime Minister in Decision No. 1719/QĐ-TTg, dated October 14, 2021, also known as Project 7.19. Specifically, Project 7 of the Program “Health care for the people, improve the health and stature of ethnic minorities; prevention and control of child malnutrition” sets out the goal of improving the health of ethnic minorities in terms of the constitution, mind, stature, and longevity. Strengthen grassroots health work so that ethnic minorities have access to modern health care services. Continue to control and eliminate the epidemic in ethnic and mountainous regions. However, the Project needs more specific plans to improve the health of ethnic minorities in terms of physical and mental health, stature and longevity. In Vietnam, a charity group named “Niem tin” has implemented a project called “Nuoi em” in Dien Bien (a northern mountainous province of Vietnam), helping many highland children go to school with only VND 150,000/child/month. In the “Nuoi em” project, each adopter will have personal information, photos, and phone numbers of parents, village leaders, and teachers to verify. Adopters only need to text the code to receive the personal information of the adoptees.²⁰

According to the project of “Bua com niu chan tre toi truong”, for each meal, children will eat meat, tofu, soup, and vegetables for VND 8,500/serving; rice supported by the locality and family; 4 meals per week and 6 meals per week for preschool children for VND 6,800/serving.²¹

The project has grown rapidly across the country, helping students overcome difficulties and reducing the afternoon dropout rate from 80% to just 5%. As of the 2021-2022 school year, the project has about 41,000 students supported by this project.²²

Thus, it can be seen that this form has achieved specific results in practice. Therefore, it is possible to build and develop this form into a policy or a specific action plan to contribute to eliminating the long distance and encouraging those children to keep going.

3.2. Updating, adjusting and supplementing policies and legal provisions on the right to study of ethnic minorities to meet practical requirements while improving and building the education system.

Strengthen the state budget investment capital to invest in developing and upgrading school and class facilities, school sites, and boarding schools, especially preschool and primary schools, according to standardization and friendliness with children, providing a safe and effective learning environment for children. Care for regimes and policies for teachers and officials working in education in mountainous and ethnic minority regions. Encourage and create conditions for attracting teachers to hold onto villages and hamlets in remote and disadvantaged areas; adopt policies to support participants in literacy training in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions. Strengthen socialization and call for community responsibility in literacy for ethnic and mountainous children. At the same time, the education sector needs to develop programs, textbooks and teaching methods suitable to each ethnic group and each region on the basis of two languages (mother tongue and common language).

3.3. Strengthen the priority of human resource training for ethnic, mountainous and extremely disadvantaged areas in a variety of appropriate forms

Foster ethnic minority languages, cultures, and customs of ethnic minorities for teachers and staff working to eradicate illiteracy and fight against re-illiteracy for the people, especially ethnic minority children. Combine centralized and on-the-job training, improving the quality of human resources in ethnic minority areas. Have a process of training, fostering, planning, and using ethnic minority people to meet practical needs. Well-implement preferential regimes and policies in enrollment and training, ensuring educational opportunities for ethnic minority students.

In the coming time, continue to review the promulgation of policies to separate ethnic minority and mountainous regions according to development level; separate communes, districts, and provinces as mountainous and highland administrative units to ensure no overlap. Promptly promulgate a new decree to consolidate documents regulating the remuneration regime, avoiding the implementation of overlapping and inadequate policies between the Government decrees for cadres, civil servants, public employees, and workers in the education sector who are working in areas with extremely difficult socio-economic conditions in the direction of clear and reasonable regulations on specific objects, areas, and norms. Continue to focus on investing resources for the cause of education development for ethnic minorities and mountainous people.

3. CONCLUSION

Education helps preserve and impart knowledge and skills from generation to generation, contributing to moral training and perfecting each individual's personality. Therefore, education plays an enormous and irreplaceable role in people in modern society. The right to education for poor children in mountainous areas and ethnic minorities is a prerequisite, directly affecting the implementation of human and civil rights. Through education, each person is better equipped with the means to protect his or her own human rights, and those of others and to contribute to the general development of society. The effect of China's policies for poor mountainous and ethnic children has achieved many good results, has many similarities and is a reference source for Vietnam's policies.

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