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Contents

3 **Dang Nguyen Anh**
Gender Dimension of Labour Migration in the Period of Industrializing and Modernization in Vietnam

15 **Pham Thi Hue**
Power Relations between Husbands and Wives in Rural Families

31 **Dang Bich Thuy**
Adolescent Health and its Determinants in the Context of Innovation in Vietnam

47 **Nguyen Thanh Liem**
Migration, Household Income and Remittances

66 **Le Thi Kim Lan**
Gender Relations in Co Tu Ethnic Community

78 **M.K.**
Workshop "Cooperation Development, and Improvement of Research Quality and Policy Proposal"

79 **Cam Nhung**
Dissemination Workshop of the Study Findings on "Evolving Process of Domestic Violence in Vietnam - Detection from a Qualitative Research"

Gender Dimension of Labour Migration in the Period of Industrializing and Modernization in Vietnam

Dang Nguyen Anh

Abstract: The article aims to examine features of migration seen from a gender viewpoint. It has concentrated on the types of female labor migrants in manufacturing and processing industrial zones. The article has analyzed the following issues: scale of migration; migration destinations; population's driving forces; migration decisions; remittances; difficulties and obstacles; and legal status. In the end, the article has recommended some policies that aim to enhance the social effectiveness of female labor migration so that the needs of the country's industrialization and modernization can be met.

Keywords: Gender, Migration, Women.

Like other countries, migration in Vietnam is principally a socio-economic phenomenon, and an indispensable part of development. As observed in other countries' periods of industrialization and modernization, labour migration is an indispensable feature of Vietnam's growing market economy. It is the clearest manifestation of disparities and unbalanced development across regions as well as areas. Under the impact of economic globalization, the country's differentials in living standards, incomes, job opportunities, social service provision and motivation for a better life are the main pressures resulting in flows of labour movement,

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domestically and internationally. In many regions, people are leaving home to work elsewhere. Almost all of the rural households have at least a member being away from their usual places of residence, regardless of age and gender. Although there may be many reasons behind the movement, all wants to look for a better life for their families and themselves.

To leave rice fields is not a new phenomena in rural Vietnam where population pressure has existed for a long time. However, over the last 5-10 years, rural labour migration has occurred on a much higher scale, with different conditions and nature. This article is aimed to analyze the characteristics of migration from the gender perspectives, focusing on the movement of female rural labours to urban, industrial parks and export processing zones in today's Vietnam. Although the gender dimension of migration is important, it is often neglected in research, or even ignored in policy considerations. To this aim, the article does not intend to examine all forms of human migration such as international export labour, student migration, marriage migration or trafficking of women and children. Trafficking can involve many migrant women, but will be discussed in other time.

1. The scale of migration

Until recent years, leaving home village to work elsewhere has been regarded as for men only, and that while men migrate women stay to take care of children, parents or relatives. Even when women participate in migration, the distance is seen as short, and it is men who make decision to migrate. Grounded on the traditional social norms and values about women's roles, the above viewpoint saw the position of mothers, wives or children in families as dependent migrants.

Such a pattern of migration is no longer true in the present time. In most of the localities, women have gone to work far away from home. Official figures collected by the last Population and Housing Census show that the scale of rural labour migration does not only increase but also takes place in different forms largely participated by females. As compared with the 1980s period, the rate of female migrants had been doubled in the late 1990s, especially among young females at 20-25 years of age, of whom many are never-married. Because statistical data on migration are not broken down by gender, to define the scale of female migration is often limited. However, the number of migrant women in different forms was reported as at least 3.7 million in 2002. Most of them worked as manual labors, service providers, and industrial workers, who look for jobs and

income opportunities in urban centers (VAPEC 2002).

· Of a total of 4.5 million people who changed their permanent place of residence during 1994-99, women accounted for a larger proportion than men (54% versus 46%).

· For all regions, the number of women migrated within a province (4.1%) is higher than that of men (3.2%). There is no significant difference in the proportion of migratory men (3.0%) and women (2.8%) across provincial boundaries.

· The proportion of female migrants aged 20-24 is twice as high as that of other age groups.

· The sex ratio (measured by the number of men compared with women) of people aged 20-24 in urban areas is lower than that of rural areas reflecting the migration flows of the young females from rural areas to urban centers and cities.

(Source: Population and Housing Census 1999).

2. Direction of migration

More and more working women are found to migrate from rural areas to urban as well as industrial zones. These are places where services, business, trade, and industrial production are located and attract female labours. This process is partly related to the process of international labour allocation and globalizing tendency such as foreign direct investment, ability of international integration and exporting goods in the period of modernization.[1] Parallel with the urban - rural direction, female labours also take part in urban - rural migration, but this small group mainly moves with relatives, for family or marriage related reasons.

With the increase of opportunities to work and live in urban places, flows of labour migration have been observed to major cities. This reflects a high demand for female labour in sectors that require a larger force of manual labour such as services, trade and manufacture in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Increasing export requires more labour force to work in the processing and light industries such as garment, textile, footwear, food and seafood processing. These industries have attracted a lot of female labour coming from the countryside. The urban service sector has also served as the destinations of female migrants because a large number of rural women currently work as house maids, street vendors, waitresses, wasted purchasers and collectors, etc. These jobs are not necessarily ruled out each

other as migrant workers are ready to do many jobs in order to get a stable income.

· Scale of female migration varies by migration types. According to the 1999 Census data, the rural-to-rural flow is the biggest, followed by rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban flows.

· It is remarkable that women account for a majority (53% women compared with 47% men) of migrants within rural-to-urban flows.

· Each year Ho Chi Minh City receives about 70,000 migrants in different forms. Women account for a majority (53%). However, the city remain lacking of labour as it requires a labour supply of over 200,000 people every year.

3. Motives for migration

Economic factors, especially income and job search, are major drive for labour migration. To face with the risks of farming and livestock production, big drop in the market prices of agricultural products, rural labors cannot just rely on rice production. The large gaps in cash income between rural and urban areas have pressed farmers to leave countryside voluntarily to look for jobs in major cities. They accept hard and dangerous jobs, do all kind of jobs which are not prohibited by laws to earn a living, and try to remit their families. Although the levels of income and wages of female workers are generally lower than those of men, female migrants are those who take care of children and family. They understand the difficulties of relatives and families far better than anyone else. Lots of people accept hardships and risks to earn a living, with the hope to search for a better life for themselves and their families.

· The survey results on female migration in Ho Chi Minh City conducted by the Vietnam Asia-Pacific Center of Hanoi in 2001 show that 39% of women migrated because of income reasons. Among those who migrated for many times, this proportion is higher (42%).

· The survey results also show that among reasons for migration, the demand for non-farming, trading and service jobs is quite high (36%).

· Other reasons for migration such as marriage, family accounted for a significantly lower proportion (30%).

When talking about migrants, ones often think of poor people coming from rural provinces, who work hard all the year round to earn a living and manage to save a few hundred thousand dongs to go home when the New Year arrives. However, many migrants to urban, settling in cities has

been very successful and get rich by several ways as a result of migration. Ones should not forget that businessmen, civil servants, households doing business who now own decent houses, maintain a stable life and high income are in fact migrants themselves. Economic success and social advantages can make them not be regarded as labour migrants, "spontaneous migrants" or "migrant workers" who are concerned by functional authorities. Urban society does not have a subjective, fair and humanistic outlook at labour coming from the countryside. In spite of poverty alleviation efforts, long-term development and potential in rural areas have not been realized. Migrant remittances, goods, and information have been sent back to the countryside in many forms to assist families, relatives, by migrants, who are mainly women in order to change the rural life.

4. Decision to migrate

Previously women have very little influence on decision of moving residence and important matters in family, nowadays the issue of leaving home to work elsewhere is greatly discussed between spouses, parents and children. Decisions to migrate appear to be more equal from the gender perspectives. With new opportunities of income and jobs, in a more independent environment, female migrants can make personal decisions. They can decide more issues of their own, which they could not do previously. The roles of relatives, family members, friends also have significant influence on migration, although it is not direct. For example, decisions to choose the destinations are largely influenced by migrant social network.

· Result from a survey on 1,500 women migrating to Ho Chi Minh City shows that 62% make decisions themselves, 24% have decisions made by husbands and 8% have decisions made by parents.

· The role of social network is quite significant, 63% of women have family members, relatives in Ho Chi Minh City before they move there.

· 37% of women choose to migrate to Ho Chi Minh City because of the influence of family members and relatives there.

· Support of families, friends to women when they move to the city is mainly in forms of shelter, finding jobs and encouragement.

5. Migrant remittances

In fact, migration is the transfer of people to promising land. Looking at the amount of goods and money that working people can bring, and remit to their families who are left behind, migration is adjusting the differentials in income between rural and urban areas. Labour migrants cannot be

regarded as a threat of unemployment for urban residents. In contrary, they have become indispensable force in diversified employment market in cities, contributing a large part to the growth of urban and industrial centers, improvement of export value and national income, stabilizing social and economic life. Labour redistribution through migration is an important factor to ease the pressure for labour-land and non-farming jobs in rural areas, creating extra source of income and contributing to the stability of society. There should be more proper and fairer views toward migration and migrants.

· According to data of Survey on Living Standards of Vietnamese people in 1998, over 23% of households received money sent within 12 months before the survey, and this amount of money accounts for 38% of household expenditure.

· According to a survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology (IOS 1998), internal migrant remittances accounted for about 60-70% of total income in cash of farmer households.

· Although the wages of female working migrants are often lower than those of male migrants, the proportion of migrant women to remit is higher. The proportion of female migrants to remit to their families in countryside is 34%, whereas that of male migrants is 24%.

· Remittances are mostly used for daily expenses, followed by paying debts, covering school fee, medical care and building house.

Sending money to assist families reflects the Vietnamese family tradition which has played an important part in social life. Migrant remittance can help greatly the left-behind households in paying debts, covering school fees for children and improving health care for family members. The remittances also help reduce farmers' possibility to sell paddy rice when they need cash, so that it ensures food security for rural families. Without migrant remittances, rural households won't have enough income to survive and cover the increasingly high costs of school fees and health services. Migrants often remit home through social network established through friends, relatives working in the same destination area and playing the role of the channel of money transfer and social sponsor.

6. Difficulties and obstacles

From the gender perspectives, female and male labours are under different disadvantages due to their migrant positions. In both urban and rural areas, the wages of female labour are always lower than those of male labours. Cheap and easy-to-use pool of labour in urban includes a bulk of

female rural labours. Their disadvantage position is due to women's relatively lower education level and skills in comparison with that of men. Women carrying out several service jobs such as street vendors, petty shop assistants, housemaids, waitresses are often fallen in intricate situations, even harassed sexually. As woman migrants are vulnerable, they are likely to be abused and exploited. With unstable jobs and income, female workers can be trapped in debts and accept sex work to rise income. Attracted by easier and higher earnings than jobs in factory, some female workers are even "voluntary" to sell sex although they know the risky consequences associated with sex work.

Female labour migrants are least protected in their working conditions. Long working hours in manufactures is very harmful for health. The migrants do not have health insurance, social insurance or occupational insurance, they are not protected against the risks of health, accidents. Their oral work "contracts" are invalid and do not conform to the laws so it is not likely for female migrants to protect themselves.

Housing for workers in industrial zones and urban centers has become very urgent. With the income of between 600-800 thousand VND a month, migrant workers can be able to spend about 60-80 thousand VND a month on the rent (10 percent), sharing a small dwelling with 2-3 other co-workers. The employers do not assume responsibility for providing housing for the workers while local authorities consider that housing is the responsibility of business owners and workers themselves. Housing for industrial workers has been left totally in the hand of the market, manipulated largely by private owners and landlords. The situation has led to the conditions of grotty boarding-houses, co-exiting with the magnificently looking industrial parks. Quite a lot of boarding-houses are upgraded from former breeding facilities, toilet areas, where there is not enough light, air, unhygienic sanitary block. These boarding houses are too crowded and unsafe for living and do not conform to fire regulations. Theft and mugging usually occur in boarding-houses where migrant workers stay.

· An assessment report of National Assembly's Committee for Social Issues (2003) revealed the difficult working conditions and vulnerabilities among female labour workers in industrial and processing zones.

· Lots of companies have tried to prolong workers' probation period for the purpose to avoid signing work contracts. Some other companies sign employment contracts with the short term of only three-months to avoid paying social insurance for workers. Ironically many contract-

based workers are working without a contract.

· Companies and employers do not provide health and social insurance for migrating labour. Several industries, including public companies, have employed unskilled labour seasonally without signing work contracts. If it is discovered by inspectors, they accept paying fine once and continue to do it.

· Unskilled labour workers are those among the first to be sacked because the legal documents and labour regulations are not applied in case work contracts are not signed.

· At present, only 12 out of 63 provinces have maintained a welfare development program for industrial zones. Projects of industrial zones do not include accommodation and facilities for public activities of workers. This limitation leads to difficulties and negative consequences for workers, especially female workers.

With low incomes, migrant workers can afford only cheap housing rents, they are reluctant to rent a place located far away from their workplaces that make daily transport costly and difficult. For these reasons, they accept shabby and poor-conditioned boarding houses. Besides, pressure to earn incomes by overworking time continuously makes the workers very exhausted. In such difficult living conditions, the quality of workforce for industrialization and modernization is more and more degrading. Rapid industrialization and high economic growth has been overwhelmed at the costs of sustainable development for the country's human resources. As a result, migrant workers are the most suffered.

Access to social services is another critical problem for labour migrants. Local authorities and employers usually do not take care of this problem. Their concern about migrant workers is labour, not social security or well-being. In other words, labour migrants are needed but not wanted. Without health insurance, many of them have to take care of their own poor health. However, since the cost of medicine is high, they often hesitate to pay for health care. Official health care programs, including reproductive health care services, do not reach migrants. In fact, health care is not often taken into account within a wide range of migrant needs. Until recently, a small part of expenditure provided for medical care is reserved for migrant health and reproductive health care. This is also a big challenge for the accomplishment of the target of sustainable development and gender equality.

Women migrants are often lack of both accessing opportunity and quality

services of health care, including reproductive health. The health demands are not met as they are ignored by employers and local authorities. In industrial zones, the issue of being single females has been critically felt. The proportion of young females having induced abortion is very high in the areas of industrial parks. Women migrants are vulnerable to sexual abuse and sexual violence, causing the risks of being infected with sexual transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Bad effects on health can also originate from limited information, lack of knowledge on birth control measures, reproductive health care, precautions against sexual transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

7. Legal status

Difficulties and obstacles among female workers are also due to the current barriers to accessing to social services. It would be difficult for labour migrants without a permanent residence to get jobs in official government sector. As a result, they are limited to access to health care, house and land ownership, bank loan, registering vehicles, birth, death and marriage, etc. Regulations related to permanent residence can increase the cost of migration, deepen the difficulties faced by low-income migrants, create barriers and arise negatives in their access to social services.

When differentiating those migrants with permanent residence and those without permanent residence (often for the reason of "reducing pressure" on city infrastructure), the cause of social inequality can be strengthened. Migrants can suffer from differentiation, discrimination in access to social services based on permanent residence which is against the rights and obligations speculated in the Constitution and current laws.

· Quantitative research in Ho Chi Minh City (SCUK 1999) shows that those without permanent residence spent much more to use the social services. Migrants often have to pay 4-5 times higher for electricity, and 7-8 times higher for water consumption than standard rates.

· The proportion of children of migrants in Ho Chi Minh City is low because they do not have a permanent residence. Children of families in KT1 and KT2 categories can go to quality public schools, while children of popular labours have to go to semi-public schools or private schools with higher fees and lower quality.

· Skilled migrants with better income may not have a permanent residence. However, as compared with low-skilled and poor migrant workers, their better income would allow them to "pay" for social services as required.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

As a major component of population change in relation to development, migration is important in terms of reality and policy. Since the middle of the 1990s, migration in Vietnam, especially to urban and industrial zones has been attracting more and more both male and female labour. The increase in scale, proportion and migrating forms of women, especially to urban, industrial zones is reflecting Vietnam's intensive process of industrialization and modernization. It would be hard to achieve sustainable development if policies do not realize the importance of gender dimension of labour migration.

Female labour has expressed their ability to adapting themselves to new places of destination, regardless of urban or rural area. The pressures to migrate among female workers are made up with desire to find better life, and cash income for themselves and their families. Migration still occurs and becomes an opportunity to improve living conditions, although it comes with risks and expensive costs. Although there are legal barriers or economic sanctions, that process continues increasing in scale because it is suitable to the demand of people and connects closely to people's desire to earn a living. The positive roles of migration cannot be denied. Migrant workers, no matter what they are males or females, have been contributing to families and society, and the nation's growth. However they have not been able to provide good conditions to work and have stable life, to make more contribution to the national development.

However, regulations and policies have not until now taken into account the characteristics of migration and the gender dimension of this process. In addition to inadequate regulations, social and legal environment have not created good conditions and accommodate migrant workers. Female migrants are disadvantaged and suffered from hard working and living conditions in the places of destination. They are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Having examined the current situation of labour migration, especially of female workers, the present article comes up with specific policy recommendations and propositions as follows:

1. Other countries' experiences have showed that labour migration will happen on a larger and larger scale within the period of industrialization and modernization. Many nations have to pay prices for the lack of attention to this important process. Despite psychological and social costs, migrants themselves accept hard work and try to stay in the urban destinations to make a living. Policies and strategies of government ministries and departments should include long-term and more comprehensive visions migrating tendency and labour movement, towards stabilizing lives of migrant labours, alleviating the risks and difficulties by assisting labour migrants, instead of intervening directly or trying to restrict this process.

2. Providing social security for labour migrants is a key factor to achieve rapid industrialization and sustainable development. Business sector needs to provide labour migrants with proper work contracts and insurance in accordance with present labour codes and regulations. In a short term, it is important to develop housing for workers in industrial parks, build low-cost and subsidized dormitories for workers. Housing policies for the workers should be considered as a social investment without cost-benefit calculation. Having a safe and convenient lodging for workers is a big concern among labours with low income. Illegal dwellings and poor boarding houses will have chance to grow quickly, affecting badly the health and life of the workers, especially vulnerable ones such as migrant women and children. It is very necessary to formulate a policy to raise the responsibilities of employers, and local authorities to deal with the problem of housing for workers in industrial zones.

3. Economic growth should goes hand in hand with social development goals. In addition to housing, access to health care services, especially from gender perspective, should be warranted. Female labour needs suitable and gender-sensitive services in health care, information, knowledge, and good practice, effective methods to prevent unwanted pregnancy and sexual transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. This is especially critical for low-income workers in urban centers and young women working and living in industrial zones.

4. In present hovering circle, people must have permanent houses if they want to obtain residential registration, and in order to have permanent houses, they have to show permanent residential permits. It is also necessary to simplify the complicated procedure and stipulations about residential registration because the current system has been limiting opportunities to stabilize people's work and lives. The system of resident registration has been assigned new "functions" without or with a very little attention to the gender equality. The use of residential permit as an entrance criterion for people to access to social services is very unreasonable and need to be abolished. It is the time to bring the registration system back in its incident function.

5. It is important to disseminate information and clear procedure for reg-

istering temporary residence among migrant workers in order to help them avoid difficulties, risks and dependence on landlords when they need to register to stay. Local authorities in receiving areas, especially industrial zones with many female workers work and stay should cooperate with enterprises and employers in supervising and supporting necessary procedures for migrant workers to stabilize their lives, safe working condition to improve health and social security, promote positive impacts of migration. To achieve the objective of gender equality, it is necessary to provide information and improve the capacity of migrant workers in the whole process of moving, living and working in the places of destination.

6. Qualified growth requires stability in social development, because human resources serve as an important component and a visible objective of economic growth. Policies related to migrant workers should be considered and assessed on the basis of social interests. If not, people's belief in social equality will disappear and economic achievement, the figure of GDP growth would loose much of its significant meaning.■

Notes

[1] By October 2004, in all over the country, 105 industrial zones and 5 export processing zones had been established, of which 68 zones have been operated. Until now, these industrial zones have attracted 770.000 direct labours and about over 1 million indirect labours.

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Power Relations between Husbands and Wives in Rural Families

(The Provinces of Yen Bai, Thua Thien Hue and Tien Giang)

Pham Thi Hue

Abstract: This article studies the power of husband and wife in respect of their decision making in production, buying expensive property, family relationship, and social activities. By using analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from a research "Rural Families in Transitional Vietnam", the author shows that husbands are still the ones who make more decision and wives are still the ones who make least decision in rural families of Vietnam. The factors like contribution to the family income, education, age, and ethnic group have different influence on decision making of husbands and wives. The economic contribution nearly does not affect the husbands' decision making but it significantly improves the wives' rights in making decisions. Husbands in the groups under 30 or over 60 years old have the highest likelihood for making decisions while wives' right of making decisions increases with their age. Husbands with lower the education level have more right of decision making but the wives' right of making decisions is directly proportional to their qualifications. Kinh husbands have more right in making decision than husbands of ethnic groups while wives of ethnic groups have more right in making decisions than Kinh wives.

Keywords: Power, Family, Women, Gender.

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Introduction

Power relations between husband and wife can be examined by looking at decision making in respect to daily expenses, occupational choice, education, and children's rearing. French and Raven (1959) pointed out six bases of power in the family from a micro-systemic view. They include: 'legitimate power' sanctioned by the belief system in the family; 'information power' achieved by knowledge and speech ability; 'reference power' achieved by affection and attraction; 'coercive power' achieved by using physical or psychological force over other members in the family; 'expert power' based on education, qualification or experience that is relevant to family issues at hand; 'reward power' as the ability to have influence on other family members by bringing them the benefits they desire.

Unlike French and Raven (1959), Robert Blood and Donald Wolfe (1978) consider family power from a macro perspective. According to Blood and Wolfe, there are three kinds of resources that determine the power between husband and wife in the family; i.e. income, occupational prestige, and educational attainment. In most cultures, men have priority over these resources hence they are often more powerful in the family. Blood and Wolfe suggest that the power relations between a husband and his wife can be examined by studying decision making, income, occupational prestige, and educational attainment of a husband and his wife (Blood and Wolfe 1978, Young 1992).

1. The data

The next part of this paper will consider the power of husband and wife as regards the making of decisions in relation to their contribution to the family income, education, age, and ethnic group. The paper draws on data collected within the SIDA/SAREC funded Swedish-Vietnamese project on Rural Families in Transitional Vietnam (RDE05), coordinated by the Institute of Sociology in Hanoi, Vietnam and Linkoping University in Sweden. The chapter addresses the three provinces of Yen Bai, Tien Giang and Thua Thien Hue.

In this study, 899 persons answered the questionnaire. However, only 885 respondents are married which accounts for 98.4% of the total research sample. 51.4% of the respondents are male while 48.6% are female. Characteristics such as age, education level, religion, ethnic group or their contribution to the family income in the three provinces of Yen Bai, Tien Giang and Thua Thien Hue have been drawn upon from the quantitative research as all of these characteristics refer specifically to married people.

In terms of age, in this study, couples in the age group of 40-49 hold the highest percentage of respondents with 33.9% of wives and 34.1% of husbands; next are the couples in the 30-39 age groups with 30.2% of the wives and 27.5% of the husbands. Young couples of less than 30 years of age account for a small number of respondents with only 10.3% of the wives and 4.3% of the husbands, while older couples of over 60 account for 8% of the wives and 14.6% of the husbands.

In terms of education, twice as many wives as husbands have a lower education level and are illiterate compared to their husbands. However, for a higher level of education, the percentage of husbands is double that of wives. For example, in the group of people who have attained an education level above grade 10, 21.9% of the husbands have attained this higher education level, while there are nearly half as many wives with only 12.7%.

Concerning ethnicity, most of people who responded belong to the Kinh. 76.3% of the husbands and 77.7% of the wives who responded are Kinh people. The remaining group (23.7% husbands and 22.3% wives) belong to other ethnic groups such as Tay, Muong, Thai and Dao residing mostly in Yen Bai province.

Regarding economic contribution to the family, in the total of 882 husbands, there are only 311 contribute the most to the daily expenditure in the family, accounting for 37.5%; and 62 husbands, or 7%, contribute the second most. The percentage of wives contributing the most to the daily expenditure is 15%, and 22 % of the wives contribute the second most. In comparison with the wives, husbands in the rural area of Vietnam are still the main bread winners in the family.

Decision making in the rural families of Vietnam in the quantitative research mentioned above approachs decision making regarding production, buying expensive property, family relationship, and the social activities of couples. The following part focuses on the analysis of these quantitative statistics on decision making among husband and wife in these fields.

2. Decision making of husband and wife in production

Statistics show that the husband makes the decision in the family with the highest percentage of 51.9%, accounting for more than half of the respondents. The percentage of wives who mostly make the decision is lowest with only 16.4%. Both husbands and wives making decisions together account for 31.7% of the respondents. If we take a look at the sex of the respondents, more husbands answer that they are the main decision makers, and that the percentage of wives who are the main decision makers is

less than the same answers of the wives about their husbands. For example, 62.3% of the husbands said that they make more decisions in production, while only 8% of husbands agreed that their wives are the people who make more decisions. 41.1% of the wives said that their husbands make decisions more, and 25.1% of them said that they decide more.

2.1. Interrelation with economic contribution

The decision making among husband and wife in the family is strongly related to their contribution to the family income. Studies have shown that the more one contribute to their family income, the more they are likely to make decisions in their families (Cromwell and Olson 1975). Furthermore, studies have shown that once women are economically independent, they will become less dependent on their husbands and be more autonomous (Bui Thi Thanh Ha 1997, Le Ngoc Van 1999a, 1999b, Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002).

Table 1 shows that regardless of how little or much they contribute, husbands still have priority in making decisions regarding production. If husbands are the major contributors, 62.7% of them will be the main decision makers while the rate only decreases 2.7% to 60% of husbands who are main decision makers when they are the second or secondary contributor. In general, economy is not the most important factor as regards as husbands' decision making in the family production activities.

Data from in-depth interviews and group discussions show that in families a husband, or father, is considered to be the most powerful person. A wife and children a household fell they should obey the senior male of a household as expressed in the saying: "only a father can say whatever he wishes". Even a sick, weak, or deceased senior male of a household is

Table 1. Economic contribution and the decision making in production (%)

Economic contribution		Husbands decide more	Wives decide more	Equal on decision making	Total
Husband	*1st contribution*	62.7	5.9	31.5	100
	2nd contribution	60.0	15.0	25.0	100
Wife	*1st contribution*	38.2	31.3	30.5	100
	2nd contribution	44.6	22.8	32.6	100

highly respected. A female farmer in Thua Thien Hue province said "M*y husband cannot work hard. But both my children and I, we need to hear what he thinks before we decide to do anything. If he agrees, we dare to go on"*.

The extent to which a woman contributes to a family's income has significant influence on her decision making in respect to production. The right of wives to make decision will be stronger when their economic contribution increases. Among wives who are the first contributors, 31.3% of them said that they are the main decision makers but if wives are the second contributors, the percentage of them making decision decreases by 8.5% to 22.8%. Husbands themselves agree. In respect to husbands who are the main persons earning money for the family, only 5.9% of them say that their wives are main decision makers. When the husbands come second as economic contributors, a 9% increase in the percentage of husbands who say that their wives are the main decision makers occurs up to 15%. Hence, the wives' income and their contribution to family income improve their having a say in family production (Bui Thi Thanh Ha 1997, Do Thi Binh 2001). However, the position of wives in this field even depends on other factors such as age, education, and ethnicity.

2.2. Interrelation with age

Regardless of how young (30 years old) or old (more than 60 years old) husbands are, they consider themselves as main decision makers in family production matters (58.3% and 59.5% respectively). Only a few husbands less than 30 years old (8.3%) say that their wives are the main decision makers in respect to production. While wives in the age group of over 60 hold the highest percentage. However, the percentage of both husbands and wives who are both over 60 years old who say that they are the main decision makers is higher than the average (husband: 59.8%; wife: 21.3%). Thus husbands and wives of over 60 years old have an important voice in decisions making over production among families in the rural Vietnam. Elderly people are experienced in agricultural production and they are often the first persons to be asked when important decisions regarding production need to be made.

The reason why young husbands (under 30 years old) are in the group of main decision makers in production is that newly married young couples usually live together with husbands' parents for a while by Vietnam cultural tradition. In this study, 69.7% of newly married couples live together with husbands' parents right after wedding and from 1 to 5 years is

62.5%. A newly married wife, on the other hand, usually keeps silent in order to learn her husband's family's traditions (Bui Thi Thanh Ha 1997, Do Thi Binh 2001, Rydstrom and Drummond 2004, Rydstrom 2003, 2004, Werner 2004). A female farmer said: *"There are many differences. Not living together with my husband's parents means that we can decide by ourselves. When we were living together with my husband's parents, we did not have so much power. When living together with husband's parents they will be those who hold most power in the household*." (Female, farmer, Tien Giang). Furthermore, young men who get married are seen as adults and therefore considered to be old enough to make decisions in their families. A young man's parents will eventually hand over their authority to their married son.

2.3. Interrelation with education

A husbands' right of decision making is inversely proportional to their educational qualifications. The lower the education they have, the stronger the decision making power they have. For example, 64.5% of illiterate husbands state that they are the main decision makers in family production activities, which is the highest rate. Husbands with an education level between grades 1-5 who make decisions is less with 56.2%, while 48.7% of the group of educated husbands up to grades 6-9 make the decisions. Education is not a factors that have an influence on the decision making of husbands. Illiterate and low education husbands may have more influence on than high education husband by a belief that men's intelligence is brighter than women: "mind of a superficial man even without much thought is also brighter than thereof a woman who thinks deeply" (a proverb).

In contrast, the wives' right of making decisions is directly proportional to their qualifications. The higher qualified they are, the stronger influence they have on making decisions about production. For example, only 5.8% of illiterate wives say that they are the main decision makers. However, for the group of wives educated up to grade 1-5, the percentage increases to 17.2%, and 22.2% for the group of wives with an education of grade 10 and above. Additionally, the percentage of both the husbands and wives making decisions together increases when their qualifications are higher. Hence, educational level influences the degree of decision making for wives. Similarly, higher educational level facilitates the collaboration of a couple and decision making regarding production (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002, Tran Thi Kim 2003).

2.4. Interrelation with ethnicity

Kinh husbands have more right in making decisions than husbands who belong to other ethnic groups. Wives who do not belong to the Kinh have more influence on decision making than wives of Kinh people. 53.9% of the husbands who responded and 53.9% of wives who are Kinh people said that they are the main decision makers in production, in comparison with 45.1% of the husbands and 43.4% of wives of the large group defined as 'other ethnic groups'. 23.2% of the wives and 23.5% of the husbands of other ethnic groups say that the wives are the main decision makers in production in comparison with 15.1% of the wives and 14.5% of the husbands who are Kinh who say the same. A male farmer of Dao minority said: "*Kinh people may discuss that they will sell that pig tomorrow, but discuss is only to discuss, and final decision still belongs to men. However, here, selling or not is decided by women, not as Kinh people, and husbands are just to suggest. This pig, if you want to sell, it must be asked for your wife acceptance. Your wife agrees, it would be sold. If she does not accept, it can not"* (Male, farmer, Dao minority, Yen Bai). It is possible that patriarchy has a stronger influence on Kinh families than in families of other ethnic groups (Mai Huy Bich 1991, Luong Van Hy 1989, Rydstrom 2002, 2003, 2004, Werner 2004).

3. Decision making of husband and wife over buying expensive properties

The order of husbands and wives in making decisions over buying expensive properties does not differ. The first position is still among the agreement between husbands and wives (44.9%), after which comes the husbands (38.9%) and the wives come last with (16.2%). Although wives are the ones who decide on small daily expenses, and even though they may keep all the money, they have less right in making decisions on buying expensive items (Rydstrom 2003).

For many husbands, a wife is regarded as a keeper of the money box. It is safer in the sense that less loss occurs and more money will be reserved for family matters when the wife is in charge of the money. Besides, keeping money in the family is women's responsibility: *"women's role is to keep family money. It is our long tradition"* or *"men never keep family money"*. Also husbands admit their dependence on their wives' management of family money and decision making in daily expenditure. They said *"What she feeds me. That's all"*. However, a husband will decide regarding bigger procurements and expenses while consulting with his wife remains a formality. According to the husbands who responded in

this study, wives are not smart enough to make decisions. The following interview exemplifies this: *"In my family, my wife is the money keeper, but keeping money only means to keep it in a box. I decide regarding big expenses. Because a wife is usually less smart than her husband. A husband should be the main decision maker over big matters of the family. And a wife, she should be the money keeper. Moreover, a husband usually goes out for a drink and will then spend all the money"* (Male, farmer, Thua Thien Hue).

3.1. Interrelation with economic contribution

Statistics show that once the contribution from the husband or wife increases, their influence on decision making will increase. However, the rate of increase between husbands and wives is different: Wives' influence increase more than husbands.

Table 2 shows that among wives who are the secondary contributors for their family income, only 17.7% of them are the decision makers in buying expensive goods. But if wives are the primary contributors, this rate is 26.7%, an increase of 9% while the similar percentage for husbands is 40.3% and 44.2% with an increase of only 3.9%. So the wives' contribution to their family income has remarkably promoted their influence on making decisions over expensive procurements (Bui Thi Thanh Ha 1997, Le Tieu La and Le Ngoc Hung 1998).

3.2. Interrelation with age

The influence on making decisions in buying expensive items among husbands in the young age group (under 30) and old age group (over 60) is much more than husbands of the other groups. For example, 48.6% of the husbands under 30 years old and 48.7% of the husbands over 60 years old

Table 2. Economic contribution and making decisions over buying expensive items (%)

Economic contribution		Husbands decide more	Wives decide more	Equal on decision making	Total
Husband	*1st contribution*	62.7	5.9	31.5	100
	2nd contribution	60.0	15.0	25.0	100
Wife	*1st contribution*	38.2	31.3	30.5	100
	2nd contribution	44.6	22.8	32.6	100

said that they are the main decision makers in buying expensive items. The percentage of husbands in the age groups from 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 are 39.6%, 29.8% and 44.4% respectively. The situation for wives is different as their influence on decisions making regarding the procurement of expensive items increases in accordance with their age. The older they are, the more influence they have. However, in the age group under 30 years old, there are only 14.1% of the wives who have more influence on decision making when it comes to the buying of expensive goods for their families; the percentage increases to 15.1% for the age group of 30-39 year olds, and 20.6% for the group over 60 years old, which is 6.5% higher than the group of wives under 30 years old (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002, Werner 2004).

3.3. Interrelation with education

A large gap in the influence on decision making among illiterate husbands and wives in respect to the procurement of expensive goods. For other groups, this gap is not remarkable. 54.8% of illiterate husbands said that they are the main decision makers in buying expensive items for their families. This is the highest rate in comparison with the average number of only 38.9%. Illiterate wives account for the lowest percentage (7.4%) of people who make decisions on buying expensive goods, in comparison with the average of 16.2%. This is 7.4% less than the percentage of husbands. In this manner, literacy has a large influence on the wives' decision making over buying expensive goods for their families. On the other hand, there is not much of a difference between the influence on decision making over buying expensive items among Kinh husbands and husbands of other ethnic groups, as well as among Kinh wives and wives of other ethnic groups (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002, Tran Thi Kim 2003).

4. Decision making of husband and wife in family relationship

Similar to the influence over the buying of expensive properties for the family, the percentage of husbands and wives who make decisions together about family relations account for the most (47.7%), after which come husbands who make decisions with 40.5%, and only 11.8% of wives make decisions which is 5% less than the percentage of wife decision makers in production and buying expensive properties.

4.1. Interrelation with economic contribution

Statistics show a similarity to those of production in that the husbands' contribution to the family income does not affect the relationship with family relatives. Even when the husbands are the secondary contributor,

Table 3. Economic contribution and decision making in family relationship (%)

Economic contribution		Husbands decide more	Wives decide more	Equal on decision making	Total
Husband	*1st contribution*	62.7	5.9	31.5	100
	2nd contribution	60.0	15.0	25.0	100
Wife	*1st contribution*	38.2	31.3	30.5	100
	2nd contribution	44.6	22.8	32.6	100

the percentage of people who say that the husbands are the decision makers is higher than husbands who contribute most to the family.

In Table 3, it is clear that the husband decides more with 47.7% of the husbands and 30.8% of wives who are the first or primary contributors to their family who say that they make more decisions regarding family relationships. But when husbands and wives are the second or secondary contributors, this percentage increases to 49.2% and 31.9% respectively, higher than the percentage of husbands and wives who contribute most to the family income.

However, the wife's contribution to the family income promotes their right in making decisions over family matters. When wives are the first or primary contributors, 20.3% of them said that they are the main decision makers but only 12.6% (decrease 7.7%) of the secondary contributors say that they are the main decision makers. The economic factor affects a wife's influence on making decisions in respect to family relationships (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002). Decision making here, according to a male farmer is *"the right to use money in the way that she wants"* because wives make more money, *"The husbands only work in the field, but the wives can earn money, then they decide everything. For example, husband will attend a wedding today, she says: "You should get VND 100,000" and he get money and go. If he wants to get VND 200,000, he cannot. The wife earn much money, she has power"* (Male, farmer, Tien Giang).

4.2. Interrelation with age

Statistics show that in family relations, the highest percentage of both husbands and wives' making decisions belongs to the youngest group (under 30 years old) and the oldest group (over 60 years old). For example, 55.9% of husbands and 14.3% wives in the group of under 30 say that they are the main decision makers regarding family relations and 46.3% of husbands and wives in the group of over 60 years old say the same thing. This is in comparison with the average percentage of 47.7% and 11.8% respectively. So the age of both husbands and wives affects the decision making power over issues regarding relations with relatives.

4.3. Interrelation with education

Similar to the findings of production and buying expensive properties for families, the husbands' influence on decision making in respect to family relations is higher when their education level is lower. In contrast, the wives' higher education level will promote their rights in decision making. For example, 58.1% of illiterate husbands say that they are the decision makers in family relations which accounts for the highest percentage. This decreases to 50% for husbands with an education level between grades 1-5, 33.5% for husbands educated between grades 6-9, and 39.5% for those with an education from grade 10 and above. This is in comparison with the average percentage of 40.5%. The percentage of wives regarding this issue is 5.8% for illiterate wives, 14.6% for wives with an education level between grades 1-5, 11.7% for those educated between grades 6-9, and 11.8% for those with an education from grade 10 and above, in comparison with the average of 11.8%.

The educational qualifications of both husbands and wives influence the percentage of those who make decisions together regarding family relations. When the qualifications of both husbands and wives are higher, the possibility of them making decisions together also increases considerably. For example, only 29% of illiterate husbands say that they and their wives make decisions regarding family relationships together, while the percentage of husbands who have an education level between grades 1-5, 6-9 and above 10 is 38.2%, 53.1% and 50.5% respectively. Similarly, the percentage of illiterate wives making decisions regarding family relations is 24.6%, while those educated between grades 1-5 is 40.1%, grades 6-9 is 53.1% and 57.3% for wives with education qualifications above grade 10 (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002, Tran Thi Kim 2003).

4.4. Interrelation with ethnicity

Kinh husbands decide more than husbands of other ethnic people in family relationship. 43.4% of Kinh husbands say that they are the main decision makers while only 30.2% husbands of other ethnic minorities say the same which is 13.4% less than the percentage of Kinh husbands. It can be

seen that ethnic groups also have influence on the decision making among husbands and wives in the rural Vietnam.

5. Decision making of husband and wife over social activities

According to tradition, men often do the external work, while women mostly do the internal work. It implies that men are often responsible for the main activities other than housework, or activities which involve communicating with outsiders; women are often responsible for the housework. However, statistics from this study show that there is an alteration in this responsibility model between men and women. Both husbands and wives together are mainly responsible for their families' general social activities. Husbands deciding alone on these matters come next according to the statistics, while wives alone have little responsibility in this field.

The study shows that the model in which both husbands and wives discuss and come to an agreement together on social activities accounts for the highest rate with 48.1%, whereas husband decision makers come next with 42.9% and least of all is the percentage of wife decision makers with only 11.1%. This is also the overall lowest percentage among all four fields about the right of making decisions between husbands and wives in the families.

5.1. Interrelation with economic contribution

Similar to the other three fields of production, buying expensive properties and relations with family and relatives, the field of making decisions on social activities does not show much change in the percentage of husband's who make the decisions. When husbands are the first or primary economic contributors, 49.5% of them say that they decide over the social activities more. This percentage slightly decreases to 48.4% when the husbands are the second or secondary contributors, and decreases by not much (0.6%) (see Table 4).

However, an economic contribution to the family has an influence on the wives' decision making. It promotes the right of making decisions for the wives in the field of social activities. When wives are the first or primary contributors, 22% of them say that they are the decision makers on their families' social activities and when they are the second contributors, this percentage decreases with a considerable amount of 12.9%. In other words, wives' contribution for their family income promotes their participation in making decisions regarding general social activities of both husbands and wives (Le Tieu La and Le Ngoc Hung 1998).

Table 4. Economic contribution and decision making over social activities (%)

Economic contribution		Husbands decide more	Wives decide more	Equal on decision making	Total
Husband	*1st contribution*	49.5	4.9	45.5	100
	2nd contribution	48.4	8.1	43.5	100
Wife	*1st contribution*	34.1	22.0	43.9	100
	2nd contribution	36.6	12.9	50.5	100

5.2. Interrelation with age

A high percentage of husbands in the group of 50-59 year-olds with 53.2% say that they are the main decision makers in social activities, and then come the group of husbands over 60 with 47.6%, the youngest group of husbands under 30 years old accounts for 44.4%, while the group of 30-39 year-olds has the lowest percentage of 37.7%. Wives in the age group of 50-59 have the least percentage of decision makers with only 9.8%. The highest percentage of decision making wives is in the age group of over 60 years old, and the group under 30 years old takes second place with 12.8%. In this case, the difference in age affects the decision making rights of husbands and wives over general social activities.

5.3. Interrelation with education

Similar to the other three mentioned fields, the right of making decisions in social activities of husbands is stronger when their education level is lower. In contrast, the wives' higher educational qualification helps them gain more rights in making decisions. For example, 58.1% of illiterate husbands say that they are the main decision makers in the family, which accounts for the highest percentage. The rate for husbands with an education level from grade 1-5 is 51.8%, grade 6-9 is 39%, and above grade 10 is 37.7% which is the lowest percentage among the four husband age groups. The percentage of illiterate wives who make decisions is 8.7%, for those with an education between grades 1-5 is 11.4%, grades 6-9 is 12.5%, and above grade 10 is also 12.5% in comparison with the average of 11.1%. The percentage of husbands who make decisions decreases with the increase in their education, so it can be seen that the highest percentage of decision making husbands is found among the illiterate group of

husbands and the lowest is from the group of husbands with educational qualifications above grade 10. In contrast, the percentage of wives making decisions on social activities increases with an increase in their education level, with the lowest percentage among the illiterate group and the highest percentage among wives with an education of grade 10 and above. Education thus stimulates wives' rights and restrains husbands' rights in making decision over social activities.

Furthermore, the percentage of husbands and wives who say that they discuss and make decisions together on issues relating to social activities increases parallel with their education level (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002, Tran Thi Kim 2003).

5.4. Interrelation with ethnicity

The situation with this interrelation is not different from the other abovementioned fields. Kinh husbands are still those who make more decisions on social activities compared to husbands of other ethnic groups. 45.8% of Kinh husbands say that they are the main decision makers while the percentage of husbands of other ethnic groups is 32.7%.

6. Conclusion

Power relations between husbands and wives in families of rural areas in Vietnam has less changes in comparison with former research results. Husbands are still the ones who make decision in production regardless of feminization phenomenon in agriculture in rural Vietnam now. In terms of buying expensive properties, family and kinship relationship and social activities, the most powerful decision makers are equally both of husbands and wives, husband decision makers are nearly the same. Wives are still the ones who have least decision making in all the four research fields.

Of all the factors that have the largest influence on the decision making among husbands and wives, the economic contribution nearly does not affect the right of making decisions as regards all of the above studied fields. Regardless of whether there is more or less economic contribution to the family, change does not seem to occur regarding the husbands' decision making rights. However, the economic factor directly affects the wives' rights. Once the wives' contribution for their household income increases, they will gain more rights in making decisions and vice versa.

Age is also a factor that affects the decision making of husbands and wives in the family. For the husbands, the age groups with the highest likelihood for making decisions are under 30 or over 60 years old. For the

wives, their right of making decisions increases with age: The older they are, the stronger their decision making will be in all fields. For both husbands and wives, making decisions together occurs most frequently when they are over 60. In general, couples over 60 years of age are decisive in all the family issues regardless of whether or not they are husbands or wives.

Qualification is also an important factor that affects the right of making decisions for husbands and wives in the families of rural areas. However, the influence of educational qualifications on the husbands' right is different than the wives' rights and at times even in contrast. When husbands have a low education level, they are often the decision makers. In contrast, wives make more decisions when they have a higher education level. Furthermore, the possibility that both husbands and wives make decisions together will increase when their education level increases. In this way, education facilitates wives' influence on decision making and a couple's collaboration regarding the making of decisions.

Ethnicity is one of influenced factors on the decision making. Husbands and wives have to follow the culture of their ethnic groups where they were born. In general, Kinh husbands have more right in making decision than husbands of ethnic groups. In contrast, wives of ethnic groups have more right in making decision than Kinh wives.■

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Adolescent Health and its Determinants in the Context of Innovation in Vietnam

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Abstract: In recent years, the growth in Vietnam's economy on a large scale and the social changes due to the innovation (Doi Moi) has strongly impacted people's life. Along with the national changes in the time of the innovation, adolescents in Vietnam has been sharply influenced by the opportunities and challenges in the process of their development and in various fields including health factors. Very sensitive and easily affected by their surrounding environment, adolescents tend to face with health problems differently from adults and they are more likely than adults to engage in risky behavior. This article reviews the basic features of adolescent' health and its determinants in the relation to the socio-economic changes in Vietnam.

Keywords: Health, Adolescent, Innovation.

Introduction

Adolescents make up an increasingly large portion of Vietnam's population. According to the 2004 statistics on population change and family planning, adolescents between the ages of 10 to 19 make up 22.8% of the population. And 31.8% of the population is composed of individuals between the ages of 10 to 24 (General Statistics Office 2005). Along with

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the national changes in the time of innovation, this part of the population has been sharply influenced by the opportunities and challenges in the process of development and in various fields including health factors. Particularly, these teenagers are transitioning from being children to becoming adults. Very sensitive and easily affected by their surrounding environment, adolescents tend to face health problems when there is a great social change in the process of development and integration in Vietnam.

This article reviews some basic features of adolescents' health and some related factors in relation to the changes in Vietnam's economy in recent years.

1. Brief situation on adolescents' health

In recent years, the growth in Vietnam's economy on a large scale and the social changes due to the innovation (*Doi Moi)* has strongly impacted people's life in both positive and negative ways. In terms of people's health, the National Health Report (2001-2002) remarks: along with the improvement in people's standard of living, people's health has been much enhanced, yet there are many dangers to people's health due to some factors such as the environmental changes and lifestyle (Ministry of Health and General Statistics Office 2003).

Adolescents also have been affected by changing trends in diseases. The adolescent age is considered to be the key turning point in shaping their future behavior in relation to their health (Maggs, Schulenberg & Hurrelmann 1997, cited Santrock J. 2004). Deriving from the changes in psychology, adolescents run high risks of bad health in comparison with other age groups, especially some diseases and illnesses related to their lifestyles and living environment in our modern time of globalization and urbanization (Michael Gracey 2000, Worrell & Danner 1989, cited Mary R. Rolison & Avraham Scherman 2002).

Recent research in Vietnam has shown that there are a lot of threats to the health of adolescents, such as reproductive health, depression, usage and overuse of drugs and stimulants, accidents, and violence during the time of national development and integration.

1.1. Sex and reproductive health of adolescents

It is normal for adolescents to care about sex. In this period, adolescents begin to show some concern and thoughts about sex discovery, sex curiosity and sexual experimentation (Ministry of Health and other organizations 2005). However, adolescents' sexual behaviors can bring about many risks to their health because of their lack of experience in applying contraceptive devices and practicing safe sex. Because adolescents have sex spontaneously to satisfy their desire and because they may have sex

with partners who have limited understanding of contraceptive devices, sexually active adolescents are more at risk than adults (Santrock J. 2004).

Nowadays in Vietnam, sex before marriage is becoming more acceptable among the youth and in society (Nguyen Quy Thanh 2006, Vu Quy Nhan 2006, Khuat Thi Hai Oanh et. al. 2006). Some risks to the reproductive health of adolescents are: unwanted pregnancy, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases.

According to the Health Ministry and World Health Organization (2002), the rate of abortion among adolescents is alarmingly high (20%). Research results reported at the Hospital of Protecting Mothers and Newborn Babies indicate that during six months (March through August 2001) among the 2,344 women coming to have an abortion, 457, or 19.5%, were adolescents between the ages of 16 to 24 and 80% of them (457 adolescents) were unmarried. More remarkably, the rate of non-use of contraceptive devices is high: 93% (Nguyen Thi My Huong 2001).

According to the National Survey on adolescents and youths in Vietnam (SAVY), among the unmarried group of adolescents and young people having sex, only 20% said they use contraceptive methods (Vu Quy Nhan 2006: 26). As a result, non-users of contraceptive methods are at increased risk of contracting diseases such as sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, abortion and bearing children as adolescents.

Often, adolescent abortions are performed when it is almost too late, which is very dangerous because not only do the girls have to hide the pregnancy longer, but they are at increased risk of serious consequences such as blood poisoning, metrorrhagia, childlessness and high risks of death (WHO 2002).

According to the Committee of Population, Family and Children, and Consulting Population Office (2003), in Vietnam 6.6% of rural women between the ages of 15 and 19 are having babies; in urban areas, 1.6% of women between these ages bear children. While this statistic is not alarmingly high, yet it is better to be concerned about these problems because being pregnant and having babies at this young age can cause hazards for both mothers and babies. Additionally, women at this age are at risk for miscarries, premature deliveries, and difficult deliveries (WHO 2002). Apart from the health risks, adolescent mothers are at risk of suffering social consequences such as being forced to quit school early, developing little love for raising the babies, and enjoying at best limited help from the child's father. Young fathers may often accept low-paying jobs after graduation. Also, an adolescent's children often do not receive full attention and care in the early and most important stage of the pregnancy. As a

result, they run the risk of weak development in physical and mental health (Santrock J. 2004).

In terms of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among adolescents, while updated statistics are not yet available, some research suggests that adolescents are at an increased risk for this type of disease due to practicing unsafe and unprotected sex (Hospital of Skin and Venereal Diseases 2001, Committee of Population, Family and Children, PRV 2003). The rate of HIV transmission tends to be highest among the young. As of 31 May 2004, there were 81,206 people infected with HIV in Vietnam, including people in the age group 13 to 29 years (Vu Quy Nhan 2006: 36).

Adolescents' health is affected negatively by government defined "social evils" such as sexual abuse and rape, and adolescent rape has been on the increase in recent years. Worse yet, many rape victims are quite young. In 1996, among the 50 girls between the age of 12 and 18 in Ho Chi Minh City reported to have been raped, the average age to have been raped for the first time was 12.2 years old (Children Family Population Committee, PRP 2003: 32). The rape of children under 12 years old is also an alarming issue: in 1999, the rate of raping children accounted for 49% of rape cases. This number rose to 54% in 2000 (Do Nang Khanh 2002: 187). Further, the statistics reported by the Ministry of Public Security (2001) reveal some concerning problems regarding the rapists of children: From 2000 to 2001, child rape cases rose from 1684 to 1913 cases in which 53.2% were sexual abuse and the rest involved intentionally causing injuries and child trafficking. It is remarkable that the rate of child sex abuse in some areas is high: in the Mekong Delta the rate is 84.7%; in the South Central part the rate is 71.5% (Ministry of Public Security 2001, cited GSO and other organizations 2005: 37-38). In recent times, there has been a series of articles on sex abuse on school girls (for reference available on society and law items of some websites, see http://dantri.com.vn & http://vnexpress.net). The victims not only have to suffer from bad health but they also get mentally and spiritually hurt, especially when they are still immature adolescents. In their research on rape, Spataro and his collaborator (2004), warned that rape can cause disorder in the victim's character and behavior for their whole life, even when victims are grown up.

In terms of adolescent prostitutes, the number of adolescent prostitutes makes up a considerable rate. According to the survey in both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in 2000, 70% of the prostitutes are under 25 years old, including 13.6% under 18 years old. Most of them suffer from sexually transmitted diseases. Especially some of the girls have dangerous diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis (17.8%); drug addictions (32.3%) and HIV/AIDS (20%) (Do Nang Khanh 2002: 188-189).

1.2. Mental health

During adolescent the changes and development in psychological functions can cause disorders in mental health resulting in abnormal behaviors, mixed feelings and thoughts, difficulty in studying, and troubles in relationships. Adolescents are particularly at risk for depression, a mental disorder which is twice as high among adolescents as it is among people in other stages of life (Santrock J. 2004: 37-40; 271-278).

In Vietnam nowadays, adolescents are afflicted with some mental health disorders at an alarming level. According to a recent survey, adolescents and young people account for the high rate of having depression nationwide: in big cities 47.2% of adolescents suffer depression; in other cities, the proportion is 46.8%; and in towns and districts, the proportion is 42.0%, whereas this rate in the country as a whole is 39.9% (Nguyen Huu Minh 2006a: 34).

The project "Taking care of pupils' mental health in Hanoi" conducted by Hanoi Health Service, Mai Huong Mental Hospital and Melbourne University (Australia) found some alarming numbers regarding the mental health of adolescents. In a research sample of 1,202 pupils of primary and secondary schools between the ages of 10 and 16, 19.46% of them suffer mental health problems (http://vietnamnet.vn/xahoi/2007/02, dated 2 February 2007). In 2005 alone, among a total of 5,000 patients with "abnormal" symptoms who had a medical check up at the National Mental Hospital, 30% were pupils and students (New Hanoi Newspaper 23 March 2006).

Although there haven't been many statistics gathered on adolescents' suicide, some research has provided initial judgments on this issue. The SAVY survey shows that 3.4% of the research subjects say they once intended to commit suicide (Ministry of Health and other organizations 2005). Mai Huong Mental Hospital also provides the number of suicide cases including 10% of which are during the ages of 10 to 17 years old (http://vietnamnet.vn/xahoi/2007/02, dated 2 February 2007).

1.3. Use of addicted substances and adolescents' health

The use of addicted substances such as wine, beer, cigarettes and recreational drugs is known to have considerable adverse consequences. Ksir (2000) argues that the use of drugs can entail a heavy price in terms of mental health, including drug dependence, self deterioration, social disturbance, and contracting fatal diseases (cited Santrock J. 2004: 462). Recent statistics show that not a small percentage of Vietnamese youth

smoke cigarettes, consume alcoholic drinks and are increasingly addicted to drugs.

Among the SAVY sample, most of the research targets focus on adolescents, among whom 43% of male adolescents said they had smoked cigarettes, whereas only 1.2% of the female adolescents reported smoking cigarettes. More remarkably, about 1/5 of male adolescents from the ages of 14 to 17 in the target group had smoked cigarettes before (Ministry of Health and other organization 2005). The survey results at 27 secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City reveal that 28% of the pupils smoke cigarettes, including 17% of whom smoke from six to ten cigarettes a day, 6% smoke from 11 to 19 cigarettes a day and many smoke more than 20 cigarettes a day (cited Dao Huy Khe 2006: 13). This survey indicates that Vietnam should take measures to curtail and prevent the smoking habit of school adolescents.

In terms of having alcoholic drinks in Vietnam, the SAVY survey reports that 56.9% of the adolescents and young people in the target group had consumed alcoholic drinks before. Within this sample, 34.9% of 14 to 17 year old adolescents reported drinking wine and beer once, and the rate of male adolescents having alcoholic drinks is higher than the female one: 69% in comparison with 28.1% (Ministry of Health and other organization 2005). The National Health Survey Result (2001-2002) also finds that 1/3 of the males over age 15 drinking wine and beer once a week report that they began to have alcoholic drinks before the age of 20 (Ministry of Health, General Statistics Office 2003:92).

It is vital to have concern about drug abuse among adolescents. At the end of 1998, 2,837 students at university and high school or less were identified as drug addicts (1,785 are at high school or less, even including a 9 year old primary school pupil). Hanoi, in particular, had 558 students addicted to drugs (Tran Viet Trung 2002). In the SAVY survey sample, 5% is the rate of adolescents and young people addicted to drugs (Ministry of Health and other organization 2005: 63).

Drug use has a close relation with the law breaking behaviors of teenagers (Pham Van Hung 2002). The number of drug addicts among adolescents is high. In Xuan An re-education camp, in Long Thanh district, Dong Nai province, there are at least 1,500 law breaking children with more than 65% of them who had previously used heroin (Pham Dinh Chi 2001).

1.4. Accidents and injuries

In Vietnam, road accidents are the main causes of deaths among adolescents from 14 to 25 years old (Ministry of health and other organization 2005). On the other hand, the number of deaths due to injuries in accidents are considerable high in comparison with the mortality pattern of the world (Nguyen Duc Vinh 2006).

The rate of having road accidents among adolescents in the target group of SAVY is high: 14% reported they had road accidents at least once, and this type of accident among rural adolescents was 26.6%, which is higher than that in the urban areas (10.2%). Along with the risks of road accidents, violent behavior also affects adolescents' health. The SAVY statistics reveal this fact among adolescents: for the whole investigation sample, 8% of the adolescents said they were beaten to the point of suffering injuries. The number was even higher among male adolescents, where 15% of the male rural adolescents between the ages of 18 to 21 and 15.7% of the urban male adolescents in this same age group reported having been beaten to the point of suffering injuries. The rate among female adolescents was lower: only 2% (Ministry of Health and other organization 2005).

Moreover, accidents at work and during recreation also pose risks for adolescents' health. Joacchim & Hoang Thi Huyen (1997) report a variety of risks suffered by working children, including injuries while fetching for wood, broken arms while herding oxen and buffaloes, drowning after washing grass, and injuries due to stepping on sharp-pointed objects and glass. Injuries can also be suffered during children's and adolescents' recreational activities, including climbing, stone throwing, and swimming in lakes, ponds and rivers (Truong Xuan Truong 2005).

Some other factors affecting adolescents' health relate to their movement, with risks to their physical and mental health due to long working hours, low income, punishment, and being easily cheated and seduced into committing crimes and engaging in "social evils" such as sex and labor abuse. Especially the roaming group of adolescents working in bars and restaurants are easily seduced and attracted to use drugs and have high risks of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Policy Department, Ministry of Labor and Social Affair 2001, Vu Ngoc Binh 2000, 2002).

In short, the statistics cited above indicate that a portion of Vietnamese adolescents face high risks to their health. The habits of having alcoholic drinks, smoking, using and getting addicted to drugs, early pregnancy, a high rate of abortion, contracting sexually transmitted diseases, road accidents and injuries, and suffering labor and sex abuse are the main dangers to adolescents' health. Such dangers demote adolescents' potential to devote themselves to the development of the country and ensure their personal quality of life.

2. Some factors affecting the health of adolescents

This section mainly focuses on some features impacting adolescents' health in recent times in relation to the changes of family functions, the roles of companions in promoting wholesome or unwholesome behaviors, and the influence of media on modern life.

2.1. Family changes and their impacts on the health of adolescents

Being a basic unit of society, families are affected by the nation's recent economic and social changes, which in turn impact the scale, structure, and functions of families and influence family members' health, including the health of adolescents.

In recent years, Vietnam's household structure has narrowed and tended toward nuclearization, or the rise of the two-generation family. Household size and structure decreased in the years 1993 to 1998, from 4.97 people per household to 4.7 people, and down to 4.4 people per household in 2001- 2002 (General Statistics Office 2004: 16). The change in the family structure impacts family members' health. The fact that families have fewer children has been reported to play an important role in reducing the risks of contracting diseases and increases the overall welfare of children (Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy, UNFPA 2000).

However, in terms of raising and educating children, this change has caused some particular difficulties for parents in raising and educating their children. Le Tieu La (2004) suggests that in a family with only two generations, there will be a shortage of grandparents to guide and care for their descendants. Because the parents are busy, lacking time to take care of their children, they may neglect to cultivate their children's spirits, culture and moral conduct. Traditionally, grandparents have taken up this task. Le Ngoc Van (2004) also remarks that the narrowing of family structure somewhat boosts the equality and democratic freedom between couples. Yet on the other hand, it is hard for them to control, supervise, educate and raise children due to the lack of relatives and family members' assistance.

In terms of economy, thanks to the economic development policies in the modern times, the families become more active and their living standards are highly improved. As a result, the expenses for daily needs are increased. Comparing the survey on living standards for 1997-1998 (General Statistics Office 2000) to the survey on the households living standards in 2002 (General Statistics Office 2004), family expenses rose between 1998 and 2002: Whereas families spent 21.4% of their income on food in 1998, this percentage rose to 26.6% in 2002. Likewise, health care costs rose from 4.2% in 1998 to 4.8% in 2002. At the same time, the number of indigent households in Vietnam declined remarkably, from 58% in 1993 to 20% in 2004 (The group of Sponsors 2007).

A family's high living standards enhance the chance of health improvement, and reduce the risks of family members' malnutrition. The National Health Survey Result (2001-2002) charts the relation between the living standard and the state of health of adolescents. For example, the rate of malnutrition in terms of height of 10 to 15 years old reduce as living standard is increased: 45.8% in the poor group; 36.6% in the nearly poor group; 30.2% in the average group, and reduced to 25.6% in the decent living standard group and only 14.8% in the rich group (Ministry of Health and General Statistics Office 2003: 377).

However, to get a higher income, some families focus too much attention on the financial matters and consequently lack time to raise the children well and so make the family function less effectively, leading to children's bad behavior. One research report of the Children and Family Population Committee in 2002 shows that 30.2% of people living in the urban center of Hanoi and 23.3% of people living in the city's outskirts say they have too little time in educating and taking care of their children (cited Le Ngoc Van 2004: 20). Similarly, Nguyen Duc Manh (2004: 162) reports that not only the poor families try to seek for money to the exclusion of other responsibilities, but the rich also depend on their finances as the measure of their investment in their children, and neglect their responsibilities of forming their children's conduct, health and studies. Vu Tuan Huy (2005) further reports that most of the adolescents using drugs are from rich families without parental supervision and care because these parents are too busy with their businesses. Even for the recreation which is wholesome for the children, if they are not well-cared, they may have the risks of bad health such as injuries from the lively games of adolescents (Truong Xuan Truong 2005).

Being an economic unit, the family's labor distribution is changed along with the family's size, as young members also join in producing and working to enhance the family income. A research report from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs indicates that the number of adolescents from 11 to 17 years old joining in making money for their families increased between 1998 and 2003. The most evident impact of this group of adolescents is the increased trend of working intensity and long working hours. More specifically, in the period of 1998 to 2003, the rate of overtime working increased from 1.6% to 9.1%, in the group of adolescents working for the household, and from 4.8% to 73.6% among adolescents working for their families' small enterprises (ILO 2006).

It is evident that the joining in the process of working and producing things to enhance family income is considerable and vital for the family. Yet, this affects children's health, especially in terms of work overload and accidents. Some young adolescents can be easily affected in their physical development due to overload of work for their age, such as carrying or transporting heavy loads, or being directly exposed to poisonous chemicals such as pesticides. Even if such work does not lead to clinical injury, it leaves the children in pain and may cause other side effects to their physical health (Joacchim and Hoang Thi Huyen 1997). Mental tension due to responsibilities on the jobs, or job particularities can also impact working minors' health such as the children who run errands to help their mothers or the small children who join in service jobs (Dang Bich Thuy 2006).

In terms of the rural adolescents moving to the urban areas, along with the risks of labor abuse, they face the high risks of health due to sexual abuse and social evils. Mai Quynh Nam (2004) warns that unsettled working conditions, low income and lack of adults' supervision lead the adolescents into the tramp life. In addition, the adolescents have difficulties in integration and familiarity with city life and its environment. As a result, they may easily become criminals.

Another factor on the psychology of adolescents is their parents' separation and divorce. The rate of divorces in recent years has increased, especially in the urban areas. According to the statistics from the People Supreme Court, the number of divorced couples increased from 51,361 in 2000 to 54,226 cases in 2001, and to 56,487 cases in 2002. Particularly during the eight months from 1 January 2003 to 30 August 2003, there were 41,326 divorce cases (cited Le Ngoc Van 2004: 30-31). Parents' divorce can result in serious consequences to the children's emotions and feelings. As for the research results from SAVY, parents' divorces were reported to increase their children's depression: 40.7% of adolescents living with parents have depression, whereas, the number of depressed adolescents living with divorced parents is 56.7% (Nguyen Huu Minh 2006c: 32-35)[1].

Apart from the family changes, other vital factors also shape the behavior of adolescents. For instance, in terms of reproductive health, the children often do not get full assistance or instruction from their parents regarding the use of safe contraceptive methods. The reason is parents' limited understanding of such matters, or the fact that parents assume that this is a delicate subject which is hard to discuss directly with their children. Further, the adolescents themselves may be too shy or ashamed of talking about this subject (Trinh Van Thang 2004)

2.2 Friends

Adolescents' relationships with their fellow mates plays an important role in their overall health and well-being. Many adolescents try to prove themselves so that they can become members of the group of their friends. Many wholesome or unwholesome health behaviors can be shaped and developed due to the impact of adolescents' friends (American Psychologiacal Association 2005; Santrock 2004).

In Vietnam, according to the research statistics from SAVY, adolescents report positive reinforcement from their friends to prevent using addicted substances. This includes a high rate of motivation from friends to prevent smoking cigarettes (74.3%), drinking alcohol (72.1%), and using shaking drugs (67%) and heroin (71.1%). However, there have been negative influences from friends regarding using addicted substances. About 50.8% of smoking adolescents say they imitate their friends and 91% of them have close friends who habitually smoke cigarettes. In terms of alcoholic drinks, 37.2% of the age group from 18 to 21 and 15.8% of the age group from 14 to 17 report being induced by their friends to drink. Further, while the use of drugs is illegal, yet 0.2% of adolescents reported being pressured to use shaking drugs, and 0.6% of them reported such pressure to use heroin. In terms of sex before marriage, the rate of adolescents reporting having been induced to engage in sex was 8-12%, whereas in the rural area the rate is 5.2- 8.3%. The rate of male adolescents reported to be dragged into watching pornographic films was 8.5-13% (Ministry of Health and other organization 2005, Dao Huy Khe 2006).

The contradictions among friends are also the main cause of the deterioration in adolescents' mental health. When their friends leave, betray, or despise them, adolescents may suffer loneliness, disappointment, resentment, and disorientation in life. This can lead to harmful impacts on their bahevior and mental health, including stress, depression, and potential intention to commit suicide. This has been confirmed through many research endeavors, including Santrock (2004), Bagwell, Newcomb, & Bukowski (1998), and Hasen, Giacoletti, & Nangle (1995).

2.2 The mass media

Helen Konstantos and her collaborators (2006) and Santrock (2004) emphasize the roles of mass media in the life of adolescents in shaping their viewpoints on lifestyles, conduct, and behavior as these relate to health.

In Vietnam nowadays, the mass media is day by day developed in their

quality and forms to meet the demands of all kinds of people. The easy access to mass media such as TV, radio, and the Internet brings adolescents mass knowledge of the world around them. This helps them to know various kinds of ideologies, and enjoy valuable spiritual values such as those found in novels, music, movies, cuisine, and fashion.

In terms of health, the mass media provides adolescents with knowledge. For example, according to a recent survey, among sources for information on 4 topics related to family planning; impregnation, menstruation; gender, sex; and marriage and family, 93.4% reported consulting the mass media, while 80.5% and 80.2%, respectively, also reported consulting friend groups and experts (e.g., teachers, clinic staff, population consultant), and only 63.2% reported relying on their family (parents and brothers and sisters) (Nguyen Huu Minh 2006b: 31-32).

SAVY also confirms that the media educational activities, especially HIV campaigns, and drug prevention during the last three to five years have played a vital role in making the adolescents aware of the dangers of HIV and drug addiction. 81.8% of the adolescents say they have information about drugs and 95.7% of them say it is not safe to share injection needles, which can cause the spread of HIV/AIDS (Ministry of Health and other organization 2005).

Yet, the speedy growth of mass media is also linked to deleterious impacts on adolescents' health. For example, logging on to harmful websites of sexually explicit films can promote an indulgent life and unsafe sexual intercourse. Besides, adolescents may be easily seduced by strangers on the Internet, and they may even be sexually abused (see http://vnexpress.net/GL/Xa-hoi/Loi-song/2007; http://vnexpress.net/GL/Phap-luat/Hinh-su/2007; http://dantri.com.vn/Sukien/skphapluat.vip/2007; http://vietnamnet.vn/xahoi/2007) on rapes after getting acquainted on the Internet.

A recent survey shows that many students, especially boys, log on to sexually explicit websites, from which they download the photos, pictures and stories (Nguyen Quy Thanh 2006). Another group of researchers also express their concern about the use of the Internet among children and adolescents: "On coming to a computing club, we saw many small children aged from 11 to 13 paying much attention on the computer screen. At first sight, we thought about the effects of modern technology. On the contrary, they were using the mice to control the girl to rip the clothes off her body" (Dang Canh Khanh 2006: 354).

The hot scenes aired on some television channels may also impact adolescents' health. After doing research on the impact of television on adolescents, Santrock (2004) concludes that adolescents spending time watching violence on television tend to have more impulsive and violent actions than those who do not. Particularly, these male adolescents may be more easily involved in crimes and public security devastation. Similarly, the sexual messages on television may become the norm for sexual behavior among unmarried young couples. Although the effects of watching television among adolescents in Vietnam have not been fully researched, there have been many warnings regarding the potential dangers of adolescents' unwholesome behaviors as a result of their exposure to new and unfamiliar cultures broadcasted on television. According to Dang Canh Khanh (2006), the hot scenes, violent actions and murders on television are unacceptable; yet they are repeated so many times on television that now they have become common.

In the time of the development of television channels in Vietnam (Center and local areas, MMDS, Cable Television, Digital Television), with imported channels, the researchers' concerns are a matter of fact. It is time we took the impact into consideration for the sake of adolescents' health.

3. Conclusion

Along with the national development, with considerable improvement of the economy and reduction of poverty, adolescents have more preferable conditions to access the ways of enhancing spiritual and physical health than the previous generation. However, the above analysis argues that in fact, adolescents continue to face old and new risks to their mental and physical health.

Many factors impact the health of adolescents in the times of innovation and considerable changes in Vietnam. Despite the positive impacts, such as people's rising living standard and more regular medical check-ups and more social care and attention to adolescents' health, some negative impacts on adolescents are obvious and in need of attention. The deterioration and change in the educational function of the family, children's continued labor, the significant influence of friends on some unwholesome behaviors of adolescents, and some of the negative effects of the mass media are among the top dangers to the health of adolescents in Vietnam.

The health demands of adolescents are different in quality in comparison with other segments of the population. The difference is derived from the sharp change in this age group's psychophysiology as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescents' particular sensitivity to the living environment may place them in danger of having bad impacts on their health. Therefore, it is very important and necessary to continue doing

research and formulating policies relating to adolescents' health. These policies not only target the health demands of adolescents but they also need to be incorporated with more comprehensive issues such as policies on family, medical care, education and culture, to ensure a better life and environment for adolescents and to keep them away from risks of mental and physical health.■

Note

[1] Nguyen Huu Minh considered those having one of two states (feeling sad of the life in general and feeling so sad or helpless not wanting to work normally) being fallen into depression state

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Migration, Household Income and Remittances

(The Provinces of Yen Bai, Thua Thien Hue, and Tien Giang)

Nguyen Thanh Liem

Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to provide a better understanding of the relationship among migrants, remittances, and household income. The paper uses data from the interdisciplinary research project on Rural Families in Transitional Vietnam in rural areas of three provinces namely Yen Bai, Tien Giang, and Thua Thien Hue. It is found that migration from rural areas could be much higher than what is usually seen in official statistics. The relationship among migration, household income and remittances are interesting. For instance, the findings suggest that migration of the poorest helps poor households in rural areas to come closer economically to the rest; meanwhile, migration of the richest would contribute much less to their rural households, but it might expand the gap in the long run between migrant children from rich households and children, migrant or not, from poor households. It is also found that migrant children who are older, never married, and who move further than the provincial boundary are more likely to send remittances. Women are consistently found to have a stronger influence on remittances than men. This paper suggests an important and strong role of women in the household as the ones who hold the family ties.

Keywords: Migration, Household children.

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Introduction

Migration is a livelihood strategy for rural families to cope with poverty. On the one hand, rural households use migration as an investment for some family members to diversify risks of the household, and on the other hand, to gain supplementary incomes during the off-peak season of agricultural work in rural areas. Through remittances, households left behind in rural areas expect to improve their living standards. Remittances are not only used to compensate expenses, debts, and income loss of the households left behind due to migration (Ganepola 2002: 7, Ramamurthy 2004: 28), as they also help the households left behind to meet daily needs (Asis 2003: 10, Ganepola 2002: 7), improve its living conditions (Hadi 1999: 5, Ramamurthy 2004: 28), enable land purchase, facilitate saving and investment (Gulati 1993, Hadi 1999: 5, Ramamurthy 2004: 28) and invest in education and care for children (Asis 2003: 10, Ganepola 2002: 7, Hong Kong iMail 2000).

Despite the frequently attained positive effects of remittances, some studies found only little, no effect, or even negative effects of remittances on the households from where the migrants came. Kothari thus argued that "Those who are left behind in households where others have moved, may become further vulnerable through lack of regular and sufficient remittances and other forms of support from those upon whom they are dependent in various ways but who have moved away" (Kothari 2002: 16). The review of Smith-Estelle and Gruskin in Nepal showed an even worse case where migrants could only send little or no money home as most of them have hard-working low-end jobs with poor payment (Smith-Estelle and Gruskin 2003: 146). Skeldon found in Asia that "many migrants go into debt in order to finance their migration" (Skeldon 2003: 8).

Regardless of a considerable number of studies on the economic impact of migration on rural households, the findings remain inconclusive. The relationship between migration and income of rural families is complicated for its mutual nature. As migration is always associated with extra costs, it is usually argued that the poorest segment of the population cannot migrate. On the other hand, poverty is usually found as a motive or pressure to move. Migration from rural areas may also contribute to the improvement of economic conditions of the households left behind through remittances. The interrelationship among migration, remittances and household income is even more complicated in the contemporary

context of rapid socio-economic development in Vietnam.[1]

1. Research questions

The main purpose of this paper is to provide a better understanding of the relationship among migrants, remittances, and household income. Here, 'children migration' is defined as the migrated children of respondents. This means that the children referred to in this paper are those who have left their parent's household. It should also be mentioned a limitation of this study because of the lack of some information including duration of residence, time of migration, reasons for migration, amount of remittance, purposes and the use of remittance, financial supports from household to migrants, and the socioeconomic status of individuals at the time of migration. However, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. How does income differ between households with migrated and households without migrated children in rural Vietnam?

2. How does income differ between households that received remittances from their migrated children and households that did not receive remittances?

3. Which households receive remittances from their migrant children?

4. Which migrant children send remittances?

2. Data and method

This paper uses data from the SIDA/SAREC funded interdisciplinary research project on Rural Families in Transitional Vietnam (RDE05) coordinated by the Institute of Sociology in Hanoi, Vietnam and Linkoping University in Sweden. The paper draws on data collected in rural areas of three provinces namely Yen Bai (2004), Tien Giang (2005), and Thua Thien Hue (2006). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. This paper makes use of both types of data with a more substantial use of quantitative data. About 300 households from each province were successfully interviewed and are used for analysis.

It is important to keep in mind that the expression 'migrant children' refers to children of respondents, who do not live in the same district as their parents participating in the survey. In fact, there are also many children who live in a different household in the same commune or living in a different commune in the same district. 34 percent of the 'children' live in the same commune but in a different household than the respondent's household; 14 percent of the 'children' live in other communes in the

same district; 12 percent live in other districts of the same province; while the rest live in other provinces or countries. Most 'children' in the last group live in other provinces as there are only a few living abroad. However, the main reasons for intra-district migration are usually a household split or marriage, and they are very different from the reasons for inter-district migration that are usually more diverse and associated with economic reasons. Limitation to inter-district migration is chosen for this reason as well as for the comparability with other previous studies on migration in Vietnam.

Migrant households are defined as households that have at least one migrant 'child'. Households, as defined from the survey, are defined as a group of people who had lived in the same house, either sharing meals or not, with the respondent during one month prior to the time of interview. Although rural Vietnam is repeatedly mentioned hereafter, mostly it implies the three study sites as presented above which do not represent Vietnam as a whole. Generalized statements in this paper, therefore, should be read with caution. The next part presents the manner of 'children migration' and some basic characteristics of 'migrant children'.

3. 'Migrant children' from rural areas

There is a great variation in the distribution of 'migrant children' by province, and almost a fifth to half of the households in rural areas of the surveyed provinces have migrant children. It is found that 17, 30 and 42 percent of the households in rural Tien Giang, Yen Bai, and Thua Thien Hue, respectively, have 'migrant children'. Given that this survey is not entirely about migration but about rural families in transition in general, these figures are strikingly high indicating the popularity of migration in rural areas. Furthermore, this finding strongly implies that further analyses and studies need to consider the vast regional variation.

Another interesting finding of 'children migration' is that the average number is also quite high. On average, each household that has 'migrant children' in Yen Bai, Tien Giang and Thua Thien Hue has 1.84, 1.58, and 2.17 'migrant children' respectively.

The numbers of male and female migrants are similar in Yen Bai and Thua Thien Hue, but there are significantly more female than male migrants in Tien Giang. The findings of feminization of migration indicate a mobile female population. The increasing flow of female migration from Western Southern ('*mien tay nam bo'*) to marry foreigners, and to meet an increas-

Table 1. Number of migrant children by province among households that have at least one migrant child

Province	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Yen Bai	1.84	0.97	1	5	91
Tien Giang	1.58	0.97	1	5	50
Thua Thien Hue	2.17	1.21	1	6	125

Figure 1. Gender of migrant children by province

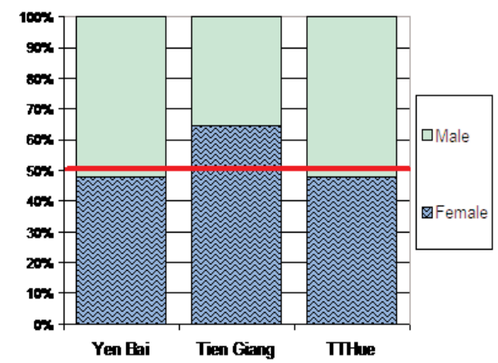


Table 2. Age of migrant children by province

Province	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	N
Yen Bai	30.8	8.5	28	16	59	166
Tien Giang	31.8	7.3	31	17	51	79
Hue	24.6	6.8	23	6	50	268

ing labour demand for entertainment services, would be the main reasons explaining the high proportion of female migrants in Tien Giang province.

Consistent with findings from other sources of migration, it is found in this study that most migrants are young. After an unknown duration of residence (as data was not collected), half of the migrants in Yen Bai, Tien Giang, and Thua Thien Hue are less than 28, 31 and 23 years old respectively.

The majority of migrants are currently married and single; only less than 3 percent of them face marital interruption, i.e. divorced, separated, and widowed. Apparently, the proportion of migrants who are single at the time of the migration is higher because some of them would have married sometime between the time of their move and the time of the survey. The contrast between Tien Giang and the other two provinces again appears: while 52 and 65 percent of the migrants in Yen Bai and Thua Thien Hue respectively are single, only 15 percent of the migrants in Tien Giang are single. This result is consistent with the above discussion and observation of the feminization of migration in Tien Giang. The higher proportion of migrants facing marital interruption in Tien Giang does not necessarily mean higher marital risks; this would mostly be caused by the higher likelihood of marriage and older age of migrants in this province.

The proportions of migrants having primary education or less in Yen Bai, Tien Giang, and Thua Thien Hue are 4, 20 and 31 percent respectively. The proportions of migrants having senior secondary school education or more in Yen Bai, Tien Giang, and Thua Thien Hue are 82, 39 and 20 percent respectively. However, except for the case of Yen Bai where the education of migrants is remarkable, it is difficult to gauge from this descriptive analysis whether these figures represent higher or lower levels of education. Although the education of migrants can be compared to the education of non-migrants, the age selectivity of migrants needs to be considered, i.e. older children of a household usually move first. However, age selectivity can be controlled but what cannot be controlled in this study is that some migrant children may have gained more education since they left their natal household.

Results in Table 3 show the frequency of a return visit of migrants; this table shows that 'migrant children' visit their rural home very frequently. This table also shows that 'migrant children' from Thua Thien Hue visit least frequently and 'migrant children' from Yen Bai visit their rural home more often. Together with the findings from education, it is most proba-

Table 3. Frequency of return visit of migrant children by province

Frequency of return visits	Yen Bai	Tien Giang	Thua Thien Hue
Daily	**41.92**	**29.11**	**23.62**
Monthly	**21.56**	**46.84**	**16.61**
Few times per year	**30.54**	**21.52**	**42.80**
Few years	**4.19**	**2.53**	**15.13**
Never	**1.80**	**0**	**1.85**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**
N	167	79	271

bly that there is a large proportion of 'migrant children' in Yen Bai who are educated people working or living in nearby districts or provinces.

4. Income differences between migrant and non-migrant households

Results in Table 4 show that the average annual per capita income of households with migrated members is VND 5,419,762, which is significantly higher than that of households without migrant children that earn on average VND 4,512,583. On average, income is an important factor enabling migration. It should be noted here that while some households send children to school as a long-term investment, others are sending them out to get jobs and to make quick money for urgent needs of the migrant or/and households. The former group usually comprises the richer households while the later comprises the poorer. Unfortunately, they are lumped together in this study because of the lack of information on the purposes of migration.

There are reasons to believe that the relationship between household income and migration would be more complicated than a linear relationship. Although it is true that the more affluent have the ability to enable migration of their children, there also exists evidence which demonstrates that poverty is a reason to move. In rural Vietnam many poor households have to sell their land for cash to pay for daily expenses. Hence, many households have become landless, and they have to work for other households to make a living. And while jobs in rural areas are lacking and sea-

Table 4. Difference of mean income per capita (VND) across migrant status

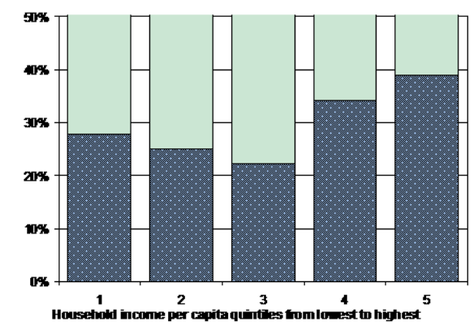
	Mean	[95% Confidence interval]		Median
Households without migrant children	4,512,583	4,274,889	4,750,278	3,650,000
Households with migrant children	5,419,762	4,961,358	5,878,167	4,500,000

Note: Results from t-test show significant difference at p=0.0001

sonal, many households choose migration as a way out of poverty. In other words, while the richer are able to enable migration, the poor are also under pressure to move.

Income quintiles consisting of 5 rankings of household incomes per capita have been generated in order to check for the complexity of the relationship between migration and income. Figure 2 presents this relationship. Results in this graph confirm that the relationship between migration and income is not linear; this relationship follows a U-shape curve. The proportion of households that have 'migrant children' in the lowest income quintile, i.e. lowest income, is higher than that of households without migrant children in the second and third quintiles. The proportion of households that have migrant children of the 5 percent poorest households is also higher than that of households in the middle income quintile. This finding, therefore, is not in favour of the finding that it is not the poorest segment of the population that can enable the migration of their children, at least in the contemporary context of rural Vietnam. In fact, the rapid economic development of Vietnam has lead to significant socio-economic changes. Huge investments in infrastructure, the rapid development of transportation means, the flourishing of mass-media, and the speedy growth of the job market in urban areas throughout the last decades have all minimized the cost of migration. Probably the poorest segment of the population who are unable to move in Vietnam includes a very small proportion of the population, i.e. a very small sub-group of the poorest income quintile. This segment is dominated by a larger majority, who are able and under the great pressure of landlessness and seasonal

Figure 2. Proportion of households with migrants by household income per capita quintiles



Note: Pearson chi2(4) = 16.27 Pr = 0.003

unemployment, to move.

Nevertheless, it is also clear that the proportion of households with migrants among the richest income quintiles is much greater than the poorest income quintiles. This finding implies a higher mobility of children of the rich compared to the poor. Unfortunately, data addressing reasons for migration of children were not collected and hence we do not know whether or not the motivation of the children of the rich to move is distinct from that of the children of the poor. Based on field interviews, it is frequently found that the rich are usually able to send their children to school and/or to improve the living standards of the children, while the poor send their children out to work in order to gain extra income for the household or at least to reduce the financial burden of the household. These findings and observations may result in a further implication that, while the richest and the poorest may both gain from migration, the richest tend to gain more. In other words, while migration of the poorest closes the gap between poor and middle-income groups, migration of the richest amplifies the gap between them and the rest of the population. These findings are still preliminary as evidence from the current survey is not strong and hence further studies are to be expected.

5. Income differences between households depending on whether they have received remittances

The proportion of households that have received remittances from their migrant children in Yen Bai, Tien Giang, and Thua Thien Hue are 30, 38, and 51 percent respectively.

The results in Table 5 show that the households that received remittances are usually poorer compared to all households that have migrant children. Among households that have at least one migrant child, households that received remittances from their children earn about VND 4,914,591 a year; and households that did not receive remittances from their children earn a significantly higher VND 5,711,439 a year. This result is reasonable as migrant children from the richer households are not under pressure to send remittances to help their families, even if those migrant children are successful at their place of destination.

By household income per capita quintiles, there is not a clear pattern of the relationship between household income per capita and the likelihood of receiving remittances. Although the proportion of migrant children from households in the poorest income quintile sending remittances is higher than that of the migrant children in the next quintile, it is smaller than that of migrant children in the third and fourth quintiles. Also, 'migrant children' from households in the richest income quintile are least

Figure 3. Proportion of households with migrant children that have received remittances from them by province

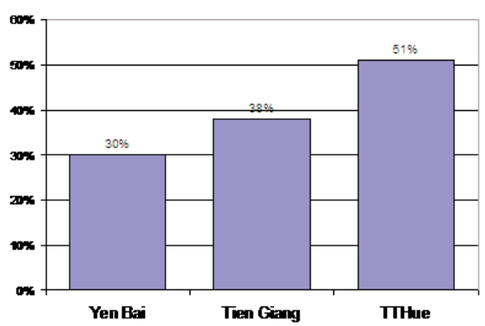


Table 5. Income difference by remittance status among households that have migrant children

	Mean	[95% Confidence interval]	
Households without migrant children	4,512,583	4,274,889	4,750,278
Households with migrant children	5,419,762	4,961,358	5,878,167

Note: Results from t-tests show significant difference at p=0.05

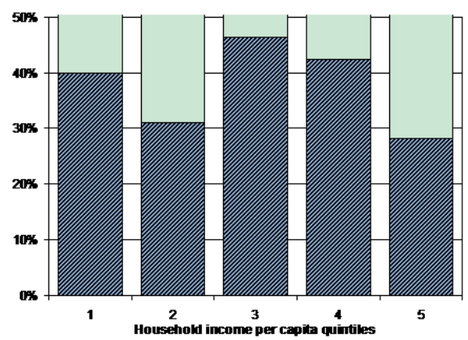
likely to send remittances to their family at home. This finding further suggests that it is not all migrant children but only 'migrant children' from the richest households who are not under pressure to send remittances to their families.

Another noticeable finding here is the very low proportion receiving remittances among next-to-the-lowest income quintile; while the higher proportion of households in the poorest income quintile received remittances from 'migrant children'. It is probable that migrants from those households are less able to send remittances to their families compared to higher income groups; but they are under less pressure to send remittances than the poorest income group.

6. Households receiving remittance from their migrated children

A critical question considering remittances is: which households in the rural areas receive remittances from their children? Various factors considering the characteristics of the households left behind and the characteristics of the migrant would affect remittance sending and receiving behaviour. In this part, we are more interested in households that receive remittances or characteristics of households that may have a strong influence on the migrant behaviour of sending remittances. From the previous part, we have seen that the rich may not receive remittances from migrant children as they do not need it, while the poor are more likely to receive remittances as it is more important to the household. Besides, it is expected that the more migrant children a household has, the more likely that

Figure 4. Proportion of households that received remittances from migrant children by household income per capita quintiles



household receives remittances from them. Migrants from larger households have closer ties to those who are left behind and hence are more likely to send remittances. Migrants are also more likely to send remittances when they are more dependent in the household. Remittance sending behaviour also depends on characteristics of the household head including his/her gender, age, and education. Furthermore, remittance sending patterns would vary by place of residence as different regions have different culture and socio-economic conditions that might shape the understanding of sending remittances. Also, migrants from different regions may have very different characteristics and motivations to move and hence exert different opinions about sending remittances.

The relationship between remittance sending patterns and household characteristics is analyzed using logistic regression models and the results are presented in Table 6. The same pattern is found of the relationship between household income per capita and remittances with the lowest likelihood of receiving remittances among households in the next-to-the-poorest income quintile. However, it should be noted that with every extra member, the likelihood of receiving remittances in the household decreases by 22 percent. A possible explanation for this is that the larger the household size the more support to each member of the household is

available, and hence those households pose less pressure on 'migrant children' to send remittances. For the small households, migrated children may require replacement of support in different ways, such as hiring care takers to look after their parents or hiring labourers to do farm work. Such replacements pose a greater need on the household for remittances, and greater responsibility of migrated children to send remittances to pay for such replacements or services.

As expected, the likelihood of receiving remittances is higher among households that have more dependent people: the likelihood of receiving remittances increases by 33 percent for every increase in the number of dependents in the household. This reflects a responsibility in migrated children to their families left behind. Regarding characteristics of the head of the household, although the relationship is not significant, the coefficient shows a tendency that female heads of household are more likely to receive remittances from migrated children than male heads of household. Households with older heads are more likely to receive remittances from their migrated children.

The regression model in Table 6 looks more closely at gender composition and is showing interesting findings in gender differences. While the likelihood of receiving remittances does not depend on the number of male dependents, it increases significantly by 2.3 times for every increase in the number of female dependents. Together with the finding that the likelihood of receiving remittances tends to be higher in households with a female head of household, this finding indicates much stronger ties between migrated children and their female family members at home. While the likelihood of receiving remittances does not decrease significantly as the number of male members in the household increases, it does decrease significantly by 44 percent for every increase in the number of female members in the household. A possible explanation is that women left behind provide better support as a replacement for the absence of migrated children to all members left behind. This is especially true in the settings like Vietnam where women traditionally are the care givers. With a better replacement, households with more females left behind may pose less pressure on migrated children to send remittances. Great regional variation is found: The likelihood of receiving remittances among rural households in Tien Giang and Hue are 2.05 and 2.94 times higher respectively than that of households in Yen Bai.

Table 6. Results from logistic regression models predicting likelihood of receiving remittances of rural households

	Odds Ratio		[95% CI]		Odds Ratio		[95% CI]	
Income quintiles								
1 – Very poor	1		-	-	1		-	-
2 – Poor	0.57		0.23	1.43	0.62		0.25	1.57
3 – Average	1.40		0.55	3.55	1.64		0.64	4.25
4 – Rich	1.10		0.45	2.69	1.20		0.49	2.98
5 – Very rich	0.83		0.33	2.14	0.99		0.38	2.60
#migrant children	1.25	*	0.95	1.63	1.25		0.95	1.63
Household size	0.78	*	0.61	1.01				
#male member					1.00		0.69	1.44
#female member					0.56	**	0.36	0.89
Number of dependent	1.33	**	1.00	1.78				
#male dependent					0.88		0.57	1.36
#female dependent					2.26	***	1.32	3.87
Household head								
Male	0.62		0.27	1.41	0.68		0.29	1.60
Age	1.03	**	1.01	1.06	1.04	**	1.01	1.07
Years in school	1.01		0.97	1.05	1.01		0.97	1.05
Place of rural household								
Yen Bai	1		-	-	1		-	-
Tien Giang	2.10	*	0.94	4.69	2.05	*	0.91	4.63
Hue	2.71	***	1.30	5.66	2.94	***	1.39	6.24
Log likelihood			- 162.0				- 158.9	
LR chi2			31.32				37.58	
Pseudo R2			0.088				0.106	
N			263				263	

7. Migrated children who sent remittance

In the next part, we look at remittances from the perspective of migrated children. The question is: which migrant children send remittances to their rural households? Again, logistic regressions are used for the analysis. As one household may have more than one migrant child, migrant children are clustered by household. Results form logistic regressions are presented in Table 7. The first regression model presents the relationship between various characteristics of migrated children and the likelihood of sending remittances. It is found that the income effect remained with the lowest likelihood of sending remittances among children from households in the next-to-the-lowest-income quintile, and it is lowest among children from households in the richest income quintile.

Results in Table 7 clearly show that being single or never married, and being older is associated with a higher likelihood of sending remittances. It is probable that the married migrants have split from their parents' household to have their own households, and remittances are sent to the household where their spouse lives rather than to their parents' household. The finding that the older migrants are more likely to send remittances home may simply reflect a higher sense of responsibility among the older migrants. Moreover, the older migrants may also have more ties at the rural place of origin which motivates them more to send remittances. The ties between migrated children and those left behind at the rural place of origin are also captured by the frequency of return visits of the migrants; but the relationship between remittances and frequency of return visits is neither strong nor clear. Other data regarding 'migrant children' include gender, education status, and number of people living in the same household at the place of destination.

It is an interesting finding that migrants to other provinces or countries (mostly other provinces as there are only a few cases moving to other countries) are much more likely, i.e. 2.3 times, to send remittances to their household back home in rural areas. There are various possibilities for this difference. It is probable that there are a larger proportion of inter-provincial migrants who move for economic reasons, while more intra-provincial migrants move for marriage. The former reason usually is associated with a higher likelihood of sending remittances, while it is not true for the latter. At the same time, inter-provincial migrants may include a selective group of people who have better vision, better knowledge, better infor-

Table 7. Results from logistic regression models predicting likelihood of sending remittances from migrant children to rural households

	Odds Ratio		[95% Conf. Interval]	
Income quintiles				
1 – Very poor	1		-	-
2 – Poor	0.69		0.24	1.93
3 – Average	1.62		0.60	4.34
4 – Rich	1.72		0.63	4.71
5 – Very rich	0.85		0.32	2.24
Migrant child				
Male	0.89		0.57	1.37
Age	1.11	***	1.05	1.16
Years in school	0.94		0.85	1.03
Never-married	3.49	***	1.92	6.35
Place of destination				
Same province	1		-	-
Different province	2.30	**	1.14	4.62
Return visits				
Daily	1		-	-
Monthly	1.48		0.10	21.78
Several times a year	2.16		0.15	31.11
Once a year or more	1.29		0.08	20.23
Never return	0.84		0.05	13.52
Place of rural household				
Yen Bai				
Tien Giang	2.68	**	1.03	6.93
Hue	2.35	*	0.92	6.00
Log pseudo likelihood			- 293.8	
Wald chi2(15)			46.48	
Pseudo R2			0.124	
N			484	

Note: Individuals are clustered by households

mation and potential support outside the provincial boundary; hence, greater incomes and remittances are the rewards for those who cross provincial boundaries. There is also a possibility that migrants to other districts in the same province bring remittances home on their return visits and were not reported as remittances.

Again, regional variation is found: migrants from Tien Giang and Hue are much more likely to send remittances to their families back home than migrants from Yen Bai. Nevertheless, the reason for this difference is not clear.

Finally, it should be noted that while both characteristics of 'migrant children' and their households back home are included in a regression model predicting the likelihood of sending remittances, most findings remained.

8. Conclusion

Findings from this paper provide a valuable reference showing that migration from rural areas could be much higher than what is usually seen in official statistics and also with a greater regional variation of migration. 17 percent of rural households in Tien Giang to 42 percent in Thua Thien Hue have inter-district 'migrant children'. If intra-district migrated children are included, those figures are even much higher as the proportion of inter-district and intra-district migrant children are similar.

The relationship among migration, household income and remittances are interesting and suggest several implications for current socio-economic development policies and further research. In general, it is found that households with migrant children have higher incomes than households without them. Moreover, this relation is not linear but follows a U-shape curve, i.e. children of the poorest and the richest household income quintiles have higher mobility than children of the middle-income households. Field observations and interviews suggest that motivations for migration among these two groups at the two ends would be very different; although both are moving for economic reasons, the poorest households send their children out to work and to earn money for the household; while the richest households send their children out for education and better living conditions for their children, not the household.

Even though we did not have information on the reasons or motivations to move, the presented observations gain further support from another finding in this study of a higher likelihood of receiving remittances among the poorer households in rural areas, and, moreover, the lowest likelihood

of receiving remittances is among the richest households. Those findings may further imply that, in the current context of rapid economic development of Vietnam, migration of the poorest helps poor households in rural areas to come closer economically to the rest. In addition, migration of the richest would contribute much less to their rural households, but it might expand the gap in the long run between migrant children from rich households and children, migrant or not, from poor households. These conclusions, however, are preliminary and call for further studies as the relationship between household income, remittances, and contribution of remittances is complicated.

Regarding answers to the questions which rural households receive and which migrated children send remittances, patterns of the relationship between household income and remittances remained in multivariate analysis. Besides, households with older household heads are more likely to receive remittances. For the second question, it is found that 'migrant children' who are older, single or never married, and who move further than the provincial boundary are more likely to send remittances. While the older migrants would be more responsible, it is not necessarily true that married migrants are less responsible in that they are less likely to send remittances. It is most likely that the married have split to have their own households, hence they are less likely to send remittances to their parents or the respondents, and more likely to send remittances to support their own family. This interpretation, however, requires more supporting evidence from further in-depth studies. Great regional variations are found this finding is not unexpected given the great socio-economic and cultural diversifications of the country, and it suggests the need for flexibility in migration and development policies.

Finally, great gender differences are found, but further works for interpretation of these differences are needed. More specifically, this study provides further evidence for the current trend of feminization of migration in Vietnam: It is found that female children are not less mobile, if not more, than their male counterparts as in provinces like Tien Giang. More interestingly, women are consistently found to have a stronger influence on remittances than men. It is found that households with more female members are less likely to receive remittances; but households with a higher number of female dependents are more likely to receive remittances, while none of these relationships are significant for male counterparts. Although the relationships are not significant, there are clear tendencies that households with female heads of household are more likely to receive remittances from their migrant children, and female migrant children are more likely to send remittances. This paper suggests an important and strong role of women in the household as the ones who hold the family ties.■

Endnotes

[1] See also Hardy (2005) for a comprehensive study on migration in Vietnam.

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Gender Relations in Co Tu Ethnic Community

(Analysis Based on Research Conducted in Thuong Lo commune, Nam Dong District, Thua Thien Hue Province)

Le Thi Kim Lan

Abstract: To identify the existing gender issues in Co Tu - an ethnic minority group, who is mainly living in the central part of Vietnam, a research was conducted in Thuong Lo commune, Nam Dong district, Thua Thien Hue province. The research findings reveal that despite of some positive changes in line with the current socio-economic development, the gender labor division of Co Tu is still based on the traditional ones, in which women are mostly engaged in traditional economic activities such as cultivation, breeding, and reproductive one, while men play an important role in a forestation, forest-exploitation and community work. Although Co Tu women have to spend a lot of their labor and time for production, their income is lower than men's, their social status does not correspond to their contribution, and it is men who make most of the final decisions in the family and community. This practice restrains Co Tu women from accessing development resources for the cause of hunger elimination, poverty reduction and women liberation.

Keywords: Gender, Women, Ethnicity.

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In order to determine what key gender issues exist in Co Tu ethnic community - a minority community concentrated in the Central part of Vietnam, a study was conducted in Thuong Lo commune, Nam Dong suburban district, Thua Thien Hue province. Based on research findings, this article first reflects on the gendered pattern of labour allocation in the production, reproduction, and community work of the Co Tu, including the contribution to income and social position of local women and men. The article then discusses some aspects of gender inequality in the community in order to put forward some solutions to make gender relation of Co Tu ethnic group more equal and progressive.

1. Methods and areas of study

The study used a gender and anthropological approach to analyze male-female relationships in Co Tu ethnic community in Thuong Lo commune. The research method included semi-structured interviews with heads of hamlet, village patriarch, chairpersons of Women's Union and Farmers' Union and focus group discussions with key individuals in the four hamlets of Mu Nam, La Hoi, Doi and Cha Mang in the commune. In each hamlet 20 - 32 Co Tu males and females participated in a discussion. In addition, we conducted in-depth interviews with 9 women and analysed 12 households in 4 hamlets representing 3 different socio-economic levels: those who were better-off, average and poor households. During the time when the study was conducted in local area, the research survey team took part in some production and cultural activities with Co Tu ethnic community to learn more about gender relationship in families and community.

In addition, during the study process, principles and methods of quick rural survey were applied and combined to collect information for gender analysis.

The study was conducted in Thuong Lo, a poor commune among 10 communes of Nam Dong suburban district - a mountainous suburban district of Thua Thien Hue province (Thua Thien Hue Department of Statistics 2003: 43). Geographically, Thuong Lo commune is 3 km from Khe Tre town (center of Nam Dong suburban district), it is next to Huong Hoa commune in the North, Quang Nam - Da Nang province in the West - East, Huong Loc commune in the South. Natural area of the whole commune is 10,640m^2. With regard to infrastructure, Thuong Lo is near Khe Tre so rural transportation is well developed and convenient: most roads between the hamlets are paved. Thuong Lo commune has 217 households, with 1,078 residents, distributed in the hamlets as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. Population distribution in Thuong Lo commune

	Household	Resident	Men	Women
Cha Mang hamlet	47	242	124	118
La Hoi hamlet	32	151	81	70
Doi hamlet	108	564	358	206
Mu Nam hamlet	30	121	61	60
Whole commune	217	1078	624 (57.9%)	454 (42.1%)

Among them, Mu Nam has recently been established as a hamlet, the majority are young couples who live separately in new households (Report on Social and Economic Situation of Thuong Lo commune in 2005).

Data from Table 1 show that the population characteristics of Thuong Lo are different from that of other communities due the fact that it has a larger proportion of men than women; men account for 57.9% whereas women account for 42.1% of population. This is especially noticeable in Doi hamlet where men account for 64% and women account for only 36%. The local people attribute this population gender imbalance to natural fertility. However, girls who are born and grow up in this area are often not as healthy as boys. This may account for the gender imbalance (up to present, there have been no accurate statistics of the number of girls getting sick and dying compared with that of boys). At present there are 2 main ethnic groups of Co Tu and Kinh living in Thuong Lo commune. Kinh people account for only 6%, while Co Tu people account for 94%.

Co Tu people living in Thuong Lo are significantly influenced by the market economy and Kinh culture. They are no longer engaging in shifting cultivation and have instead formed new tribal villages. However, due to having lived as shifting cultivators for so long, traditional cultural values still remain a significant part of everyday life of the Co Tu people. Their main economic activities are agriculture, forestry and small business activities. Nonetheless, the main livelihood of the Co Tu people is tilling the fields on mountain slopes, gardening and exploiting natural products from forest. In recent years, some Co Tu families have engaged in small business such as buying goods from the market and selling goods at home in a variety shop.

Co Tu cultural and religious life is symbolized by the image of a Guon house. The house symbolizes the Co Tu's concept of the universe and where gods are worshipped. The Co Tu also express their relationship between human and nature through songs and lullabies which are full of mountain and forest harmony.

2. Study result

2.1. Labour allocation according to gender in Co Tu ethnic community

According to gender researchers, labour allocation according to gender happens "on the basis of 3 types of work: production, reproduction and community work" (Sam Landon 1998).

Results from group discussions, analysis of households and semi-structured interviews show that Co Tu ethnic women and men in Thuong Lo have different roles in the 3 types of work including production, reproduction and community work.

The survey indicates that productive labour plays a major role in the economic activities of Co Tu people. In addition to traditional economic activities like tilling the fields on mountain slopes, the Co Tu concurrently exploit natural products and engage in new forms of production with the market. With regard to agricultural production, Co Tu women and men cultivate rice in the fields on mountain slopes and water fields. In addition, they grow secondary crops like corn, potatoes, cassava, green bean, pumpkins, green vegetables, and do gardening, grow banana and other fruit trees. With the active support of projects and universities in the central part of the country, the Co Tu have strongly developed their skills to breed livestock and poultry in Thuong Lo. Many households breed from 3 to 5 cows through new methods (growing grass, breeding cows in cages), each household breeds from 2 to 3 pigs. Regarding forestry, Co Tu people have also developed forestry (planting Keo trees) by exploiting forest products by collecting honey, palm leaves, rattan, traditional medicine trees, firewood, and hunting animals. In addition, they quickly have become used to engaging in the market economy. Some households engage in business trading to increase household income.

In fact, labour allocation according to gender takes place based on the above economic pattern. Both women and men participate in cultivation, breeding and forestry - 3 main economic types of Co Tu people. However, the result from our group discussion in 4 hamlets shows that most of interviewees think that women take main part in and are responsible for cultivation, breeding and exploiting some forestry produces, except wood, like

firewood, mushrooms, traditional medicine trees, etc.

Specifically, women take part in 11 phases and are responsible for 9 phases of 12 main phases in cultivation while men take part in 9 phases and are responsible for 3 phases. Regarding animal breeding, women are responsible for most of work of taking care of and processing food for livestock, especially looking for food for pigs, growing grass, cutting grass and processing food for cows, and cleaning breeding facilities. "Women are mainly responsible for major types of plants and livestock like rice, cassava, pepper trees, banana, breeding cows and pigs, men only do some heavy work to help women like digging holes, cutting big trees, burning off land for cultivation... Women do the rest of work" (Co Tu woman, 45 years old, Mu Nam hamlet). Basically, at present, agricultural production of Co Tu people is mainly done by manual work, with almost no machinery. Therefore, to produce food for families, working people in Thuong Lo, especially women, must invest a lot of labour effort. Cultivating rice, corn and cassava, the main types of food for Co Tu people, on mountain slopes depends on nature and the care of labourers. "Fields on mountain slopes are often far away from home, even hours on foot, and it is very difficult to get there on rainy days. Many women have to carry young children on their backs since there is nobody to take care of them at home. When the women return home, they also have to carry cassava, corn or firewood" (Young woman, 28 years old, Cha Mang hamlet). However, male labour still plays an important role in heavy work such as breeding animals, building breeding facilities, burning off land for cultivation, cultivation, digging in the fields, carrying produce home. However, this type of work is not required often.

In forestation, men are the main labour force, including exploiting, foresting and protecting forest. The reasons men engage in these types of labour derives from men's advantages in physical health. Men who are strong can go into the woods for many days, they can climb up high trees to get honey or hunt animals. In addition, traditional beliefs regarding men's role in labour among the Co Tu people contintues to have a substantial influence on allocation of labour: it is known that men here have been used to these types of work for generations. Therefore, in their eyes, these types of work are still reserved for men. "It takes many days to go into the woods; they have to climb up high mountains and trees. They must be able to climb up the high trees to get honey. Men do not have to take care of young children, they are strong, so they can go and climb up trees, women just stay at home to do farming work and breeding pigs as they

cannot do that" (Woman, 22 years old, Doi hamlet).

Unlike Van Kieu people in some communes in Darkrong suburban district, Quang Tri province, Co Tu women in Thuong Lo commune have known recently how to engage in business trading and are always principally responsible for trading and service businesses. Although they are only small variety shops and only about 2 - 3 households in each hamlet engage in this business, it is a very important aspect to examine Co Tu women's possibility of accessing the market economy.

Reproduction includes activities happening within household. This is often mentioned by feminists of different schools when analyzing the labour allocation according to gender and its impact on the position of women. Survey result shows that men share very little work related to reproduction like housework, taking care of children with women. The burden of housework is still mainly put on women's shoulders. In addition to earning a living, women have to prepare everyday meals, carry water, collect firewood, and take care of children, sick people, and old people. While women are engaging in reproductive tasks, men spend this time to rest, entertain or drink. "... Men in the village just eat, drink, and argue. Their wives have to work all day, but their husbands just pick quarrels with their wives after they get drunk. I am now 28 years but still single. I am scared at this situation" (Women, 28 years old, Mu Nam hamlet). It is in people's subconscious here, "men have long affirmed that housework is naturally [the] responsibility of women... and housework is not paid" (John J. Macionis 2004: 403). This situation of the Co Tu is similar to a previous study conducted on gender relationships in families of some other ethnic minorities in Northern mountainous area such as Tay, Giao, H'mong, Thai (Nguyen Linh Khieu 2002: 29).

Community work is often related to collective activities, in which many people participated and benefit. For example, many people take part in: community organizations, meetings, building roads, repairing welfare works, storm prevention, cultural community activities, etc. In general, both Co Tu women and men participate in this kind of work, but men play the main role. The reason is that men often tend to extend their activities outside families and they have more time to take part in social work than women. However, because Thuong Lo commune is in an area where the government and foreign agencies are conducting development projects, the goal of creating gender equality is examined and incorporated at the beginning when a project is set up. As a result, the proportion of women participating in community work is quite high. For example, in Cha Mang

hamlet in 2 years of 2003 - 2004, there were 11 courses for training techniques in production and taking care of health in which women participated in 9 training courses and there were 6 training courses in which more women participated than men: about 40% of women participated in hamlet meetings. It is also important to mention that one reason there could be more women than men is that in this area "men often go into the woods, so women have to go to meetings in their places" (Men, group discussion, La Hoi hamlet).

2.2. Gender interrelation between labour and income

As analyzed above, among 3 types of work with gender labour allocation, Co Tu women are the main source of labour in reproduction activities, housework and agricultural production. Analysis of women and men's time budgets in Doi and Mu Nam hamlets shows that in general, each day women spend more time on production and reproduction than men do, but their time for sleeping and resting is often much less than that of men (Table 2).

Regarding cost of labour, the cost of women's labour is also higher than that of men. Results from group discussion (with 24 household representatives) in Doi hamlet shows that there are 19 people held the opinion that women work more than men and 5 people held the opinion that women work as much as men do. Group discussion in La Hoi hamlet (with 32 household representatives) also shows similar results; there are 29 people with the opinion that women work more than men and 2 people with the opinion that women work as much as men do.

However, when assessing women and men's contribution to household income, most people think that men make more contribution to income

Table 2. Comparison of time women and men spend on labour work of in Thuong Lo (hour)

Area / Content of time	Doi hamlet		Mu Nam hamlet	
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman
Time spent on production	7	9	7.5	7.5
Time spent on reproduction	3	7	2	8
Time spent on resting and sleeping	14	8	14.5	8.5

than women. In Cha Mang hamlet, 18 out of 26 people think that men have higher income than women, 8 people think that men's income is as high as women's. In La Hoi hamlet, 27 people think that men's income is higher than women's, 3 think that women's income is higher than men's and 2 think that men's income is as high as women's.

Why do Co Tu women spend more time and effort on production than men but are considered to make less contribution to household income than do men? Analysis of working people's ability to contribute to income shows that their income depends on a number of factors such as working time, working power, production skill and experience, technical equipment, ways to organize and manage production and especially occupational value. In addition, there are jobs with high income, and jobs with low income - an assessment that depends on the value of the product assessed by the market and quantified by price of product. In explaining this situation, a local person said: "Why do men have higher income than women? Because they can go into the woods and can climb up trees. If they just find a beehive, they can get from VND 300,000 to 500,000 in 3 to 4 days, as much as what it takes me half year to earn... I am not so strong, and busy taking care of children, so I only grow rice, and bananas which cannot be harvested until a year later. A bunch of bananas can only be sold for up to VND 20,000. Therefore I cannot earn as much as men do even if I work all day and night" (Woman, 52 years old, Doi hamlet).

Therefore, the key point is that Co Tu men have the good health and the time to engage in work with high income. Men do not have to spend as much time and effort as women on other production activities. However, men are not able to find honey, get palm leaves or rattan all the year round (they can only get them within 3 to 6 months a year) which means these activities cannot be a permanent livelihood. In addition, another reason is that women have to spend too much time on reproduction activities, which do not bring any income and are not appreciated "There is a lot of housework but it does not bring income, and is not taken into account" (Woman, 38 years old, Doi hamlet).

The research also shows that Co Tu women do not have many opportunities to participate in those kinds of work that have a potentially high income; traditional labour allocation (housework is still women's own burden) impedes their opportunities. In addition, local people's conceptions about labour making products and income is still undeveloped. While the fruits of men's labour is quite visible from the large amount of money men make after going into the woods each time, women's work is

not as visible. How many people know who supplies and prepare food for men? Who is responsible for doing the housework for husbands, fathers and sons so that they are able to go into woods? Clearly, in order to do types of work with high income, men need support of women, but women's support has not yet been recognized properly. This observation is also the same as the conclusion of socialist theoretical feminists: "Women are responsible for a large amount of economic activities, cooking, sewing, laundry and taking care of children etc... Products and service which are results of these types of work are used directly and never get to the market, so they are regarded as "unpaid, non-economic activities" (Englewood, Cliffis 1995: 184, 185). Income is one of important factors affecting men and women's positions in families and society. As women do not have as high income as men, it is indispensable that their voice in families and community is not as powerful as men's. Moreover, low income also influences improvement of livelihood, health of women and their children.

2.3. Domestic violence and women's position

Equal gender relationships have to be non-violent relationship, no matter if it is mental or physical violence. During the time when Co Tu people set up a new life in the mountain villages in Thuong Lo commune, they gradually eliminated unsound customs, prejudices and misleading behaviours to women. However, there is still domestic violence in some hamlets, and some cases are very serious and regrettable. In a group discussion in Cha Mang hamlet, a 55-year-old woman said: "in this hamlet, there are still men beating wives. Some drunken men pick quarrels with wives and children. Some men even beat their wives black and blue and they have to go to the hospital. Hamlet and Women's Union representatives come to deal with it, and sometimes even take the men to commune police stations. The men must write a guarantee that they will not beat their wives but they still keep beating their wives". Also in this discussion, one man who often beats his wife said: "why do you have to intervene into our family's business? I just beat my wife, she does not listen to me, she does not follow my order and she is too foolish, so I have to beat her".

One woman who is often beaten by husband said that: "My husband often drinks and does not take care of family. If I complain, he will beat me immediately. I have to take care of the family with 4 - 5 children. If the meal is not ready when he gets home, he will scold and beat me. He even scolds and beats me at the same time... Last year, he did it 4 - 5 times, one time I was injured so badly that I had to go to the hospital... Sometimes I shout for help from neighbours, sometimes I keep silent, as if I shout for help, he will beat me more, nobody knows when he closes the door to beat me" (Woman, Cha Mang hamlet).

Results from group discussions in La Hoi, Doi, Mu Nam hamlets show that domestic violence in these hamlets is not as serious as in Cha Mang, but everybody admits that there are still cases where husbands beat wives in their local areas and there haven't been any effective solutions to prevent and stop this phenomenon.

Survey results shows that reason for domestic violence in Co Tu community is mainly because of the influence of patriarchal thoughts: a wife has to follow her husband's order. This thought is reinforced by men's position in terms of income. They always rely vaingloriously on their higher income to force their wives to obey their opinions and decisions. The second reason is men and women in Thuong Lo are not very aware or knowledgeable about domestic violence prevention and control laws so men do not/cannot control their behaviours within the framework of law and women haven't known about protective aspect of the law in order to protect themselves. In addition, the intervention of local authorities at all levels and local unions is not strict enough to prevent and stop domestic violence. Moreover, it is becoming quite popular to see men drinking, which is the principle factor causing cases of domestic violence in Thuong Lo. "Most men drink, the younger they are, the more they drink, they even drink all day. Sometimes they spend all their wages on drinking. A family even gathers to drink for 2 days when they just sell a cow. After that, they are so drunk that they do not know anything. Some men even throw away all cooking pans, swear neighbours and beat their wives and children" (Woman, 30 years old, Mu Nam hamlet). Poverty of the households is also another factor leading to violence. As the Chairwoman of Woman's Union of Thuong Lo commune says: "Economic difficulties, worrying about food and clothes are also factors leading to disputes in some families, at that time nobody listens to others and husband counts on his power to infringe wife".

The social position of Co Tu women is one of the more important matters when gender is mentioned in this ethnic community. Their position can be defined based on many factors like: ability to contribute to income, access to resources and the difference in men and women's right to make decisions. The following part will analyze men and women's right to make decisions according to survey result in Cha Mang and Mu Nam hamlets.

Analysis of the decision making process in most families shows that most

ideas about family issues are made by men, but before making a decision, husbands and wives often discuss the matter with each other. This fact indicates that there is equality in the relationship between Co Tu men and women. However, men are still the ones who make final decisions, and if there is no agreement between husband and wife, "the wife often has to obey the husband's opinion". In access to resources like getting a loan, using loans and applying technical methods, women in Thuong Lo actively participate in the decision making process. This is due to the influence of the development project for Co Tu people in Thuong Lo. When granting loans and applying technical methods, project personnel are very concerned about women's interest and participation. Therefore, the project staff regularly checks to make sure women are given the right to make decisions; this ensures the improvement of women's position. In general, the right to make final decision is still in favour of men, in both family and community. This also coincides with studies on the position of H'mong women in the North. "In the family, men make most of the decisions. Women are only regarded as the maids and their opinions are just taken into account as reference" (Dang Thi Hoa 2001: 33).

Moreover, as analyzed above, domestic violence in Co Tu community exists mainly due to patriarchal thoughts. As long as women haven't been liberated from gender discrimination, they are still under the pressure of work, domestic violence and most of decisions are still made by men, then Co Tu women haven't been able to have equal social position to establish a prosperous, happy and progressive life.

3. Conclusion and recommendations

Results from the survey in Co Tu ethnic community in Thuong Lo commune show that at present there are 3 basic gender matters requiring consideration. First, gender labour allocation of Co Tu people is mainly based on a traditional model, but includes changes suitable to the present social and economic conditions. Women play important roles in traditional economic fields like cultivation, breeding livestock, and reproductive activities; men play important roles in forestation, exploiting natural forestry produces and community work. However, Co Tu women still haven't gained the social position corresponding to their contribution. This makes Co Tu women less able to access to developing resources of poverty alleviation and women liberations.

Second, at present there hasn't been an equal gender correlation in the economic relationship between Co Tu men and women. Women have to spend a lot of time and effort on labour work, but their income is much lower than that of men.

Third, the gender relationships of Co Tu people at present contains a gender gap that contributes to gender discrimination and violence toward women.

The government continues to build and improve policies and plans that incorporate gender sensitivity, especially policies and plans for areas with ethnic minorities. To improve the effectiveness of policy application, it is necessary to specify these policies; responsibility should be allocated specifically during the implementation - the policy implementation should be examined, supervised and assessed periodically. There should also be rewards and punishment sanctions in the implementation process in general, especially in policies related to gender.

The government needs to regularly improve the awareness of gender of staff in authority, unions and people, both Co Tu men and women in Thuong Lo, as well as in other areas. This can be done through propagandizing and educating people in gender equality in many combined forms like organizing classes of gender education, incorporating gender issue in meetings of hamlets, Women's Union, Youth's Union, in cultural activities, and mass media in the local area. It is necessary to educate and deal with cases of violence causing physical and mental injuries to women. Local men should also be mobilized to share the burden of housework and production with women so they can have more time to rest, participate in activities to improve cultural life in the area.■

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Workshop "Cooperation Development, and Improvement of Research Quality and Policy Proposal"

With the function of giving advice to the Vietnamese Government on women's issues, the Vietnam Women's Union has to fulfill the two important tasks: improving the research quality and proposing policy. The workshop "Cooperation development, and improvement of research quality and policy proposal" was operated on from 17th to 20th of March 2008 in Hanoi under the chair of the Deputy Chairwoman of the Vietnam Women's Union - Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Thuy. The workshop participants were presidium members/unit representatives of the Vietnam Women's Union; delegates of some ministries; and two specialists of the Institute of Social Studies of Netherlands.

The workshop aimed to create a forum for exchanging opinions on the relation between research and policy in order to find the answer to the questions of how to develop the linkage between researchers and policy-makers in the fields of women research and development; how to effectively use research results; how to avoid waste in scientific research; and how to match research with the need to build socio-economic policies which are related to women, gender and development of the Vietnam Women's Union. Particularly, the build of a research strategy in the Vietnam Women's Union was also raised at the workshop.

On the first day of the workshop, the four research results, including (1) Value chain in knitting work: the case of Tan Uoc and Phu Nghia communes, Ha Tay province; (2) Women's micro enterprises and their position in the family; (3) Gender relations and the improvement of value chain in ceramics work; and (4) Women's need for changing land use purposes at the locality, were presented and discussed.

Over the next two days, the workshop focused on the linkage between research and policies through practical experience in Vietnam and in some international organizations. The following five topics (1) Role analysis of research and policy; (2) Research and policy cycle; (3) Clarification of several research types such as exploration research, policy research, active research and response research; (4) Gap between research and policy; and (5) Solutions to link research with policy were taken into a deep discussion. Practical lessons learned such as the use of research results for policy-building in Vietnam and in the Vietnam Women's Union; gender policy scope and interference through the experience of the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the case of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), etc., were also presented.

On the last day of the workshop, the participants discussed the draft contents of the Research Strategy of the Vietnam Women's Union in the period of 2008-2020 and listened to the guide from the ISS specialists about the theoretic framework in research policy building. At the ending ceremony, Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Thuy emphasized that the workshop not only made contribution to the improvement of research quality but also helped the Vietnam Women's Union to better fulfill the task of policy-building to the Vietnamese Government in the next period.■

M.K.

Dissemination Workshop of the Study Findings on "Evolving Process of Domestic Violence in Vietnam - Detection from a Qualitative Research"

On 29th January 2008, in Hanoi, Institute for Family and Gender Studies with the sponsor of the Ford Foundation (United States) organized a dessemination workshop to announce findings of the project studying "Evolving process of domestic violence in Vietnam – Detection from a qualitative research".

Participants at the workshop include Associate Professor, Doctor Tran Duc Cuong, Vice President of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, Ms. Susan Wood, representative of Ford Foundation, representatives from government institutions like Department of Family under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, General Statistics Office, representatives from international organizations like United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), International Organization of Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Population Council, etc. and many researchers from research Institutes, non-government organizations and universities in Hanoi.

After speeches of representatives of Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences and the Ford Foundation addressing the importance of the project and congratulating research team who had been working hard for this achievement, representatives of the research team stated significant findings of the study.

The project of qualitative research "Evolving process of domestic violence in Vietnam – Detection from a qualitative research" was conducted by Institute for Family and GendeÎ Studies in one year (2007) with financial support of the Ford Foundation (the United States). The study was aimed to provide necessary information about domestic violence from a study on the scale of the whole country and to study the nature and development of domestic violence more thoroughly and the necessity of measures to prevent domestic violence before it actually happens in families.

With the above purpose, the study is directed toward three main objectives of: i) Providing a general picture of the process of causing, uncovering and settling domestic violence and the risk of women suffering from violence in family; ii) studying reasons and consequences of domestic violence in Vietnam; iii) Analyzing factors of risk and protection at levels of individual, family and community which increase or reduce domestic violence.

Information was collected through in-depth interviews and group discussions focusing on 6 groups of subjects: officer of local authorities, household representatives, people causing violence, victims, divorced people and the youth who are going to start marriage life. The total number of 196 individuals from both urban and rural area in 6 provinces and cities all over the country participated in the study.

Findings from this study shows that domestic violence occurs in different situations, areas and residential groups, but it develops in a certain cycle and tends to repeat. Domestic violence happens in all physical, mental, economic, sexual ways and most victims are still

women. Factors influencing conflicts and causing domestic violence at several levels like individual, family, community and society have been making the problem of domestic violence more complicated and making it more difficult to prevent.

Lots of contributing opinions acclaimed study findings and raised some matters to be clarified. For example, is domestic violence mainly affected by economic or cultural factors? In which cases don't disputes lead to violence? How can disputes be settled? How are differences between urban and rural area expressed? Which factor can protect family from violence? What should be done to improve ability of individuals and organizations participating in settling domestic violence at grassroots level?

In conclusion, from this workshop, research team acknowledged great interest and a lot of significant contributing opinions of the delegates. The report will be amended and finished in the coming time, especially measures to improve awareness of domestic violence, promote the role of communication in preventing domestic violence and establishment of instructions on the Law of Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in Vietnam.■

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