



## Gender Equality: Policy and the Problems Raised in Vietnam Today

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**Abstract:** Gender equality is a human right. Women have the right to live worthy of dignity, to be able to do what they want, and not to be afraid. Gender equality is also a prerequisite for promoting development and reducing poverty. Empowered women improve the health and productivity of families and communities, creating solid prospects for future generations. In the past, in Vietnam, the issue of gender equality has been paid attention to by the state and created all conditions for gender equality to take place, however, in reality, gender equality still has some limitations. This study focuses on analyzing Vietnam's gender equality policy, the issues raised, and then proposing solutions further to improve Vietnam's gender equality policy in the future.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Gender Equality Policy, Vietnam today.

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## INTRODUCTION

Creating equality between men and women and empowering women is one of the three millennial goals that Vietnam has completed ahead of schedule in 2015. Policy and legal framework on gender equality in our country are also relatively complete, complete. However, gender inequality and gender-based violence still persist and manifest in many aspects of social life, so realizing the gender equality goal is everyone's responsibility, not just anyone.

Gender equality is an important goal not only for Vietnam but also for other countries in the world, as one of the criteria for assessing the development of a society. According to the concept of the United Nations, gender equality means that women and men enjoy equal conditions for the full realization of human rights, and have the opportunity to contribute to and enjoy the fruits of the development of the United Nations in political, economic, social, and cultural aspects.

In Vietnam, the issue of gender equality has been a concern by our Party and State from a very early age. Although the first program of the Party (the Main Platform) was approved in February 1930, it was brief, only 282 words, but also specifically mentioned the content "Implementing equal rights for men and women" [1]. The realization of equality between men and women is also the consistent thought of President Ho Chi Minh; on the one hand, expressing the honor of women and the aspiration for women's liberation in the Vietnamese revolutionary process; on the other hand, is a "guideline" for the realization of gender equality in our country in the new era. The Vietnamese Constitution of all periods has affirmed the principle of gender equality, as a strong commitment of the whole political system to promoting gender equality in Vietnam.

The Law on Gender Equality was passed by the National Assembly on November 29, 2006, and took effect on July 1, 2007 [2]. The Law consists of

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44 articles divided into 6 chapters with the gender equality objective which is to eliminate gender discrimination and create equal opportunities for men and women in socio-economic development and human resource development. towards substantive gender equality between men and women and to establish and strengthen cooperative and supportive relations between men and women in all areas of social and family life. Article 5, Law on Gender Equality has defined Gender equality as the fact that men and women have equal positions and roles, and are given conditions and opportunities to promote their capacity for the development of the community, and of the family. family and equally enjoy the fruits of that development. The law has created a relatively complete legal framework on gender equality, especially with provisions to ensure uniformity in implementation, including provisions on basic principles of equality. gender, the State's policies on gender equality, and contents of state management on gender equality.

These principles are the basis for the consistent implementation of gender equality work. Along with these principles, the Law stipulates the guarantee of gender equality in all areas of social and family life, including politics; economy; labor; education and training; science and technology; fields of culture, information, physical training, and sports; medical; family. This is the basis for formulating regulations and policies, as well as creating conditions for men and women to have equal opportunities to participate, promote their capacity, and equally enjoy the fruits of development in different sectors field, specifically in the field of family [3, 4].

As citizens, women have political rights, civil rights, economic rights, labor and employment rights; 1 cultural and educational traditions; rights related to proceedings, judicial, etc.

In addition, women also have the right to be created conditions for comprehensive development, promoting their role in society; to have marriage and family protection, the rights of mothers and children; receive protection, health care, and family planning.

Thus, in relation to men, the provisions of the law on women's rights in Vietnam clearly show the view that women are "equal and have priority".

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Current status of gender equality in Vietnam**

Gender-based violence is a manifestation of gender inequality perpetuated by power structures and unequal relationships between men and women. The rate of violence against women in Vietnam

remains high and has not been effectively addressed. Results of the 2019 National Study of Violence Against Women found that nearly two-thirds of women aged 15-64 had experienced at least one form of physical, sexual, or emotional violence (emotional and controlling behavior) and/or economic violence by husband and partner at some point in life and 31.6% in the past 12 months. Violence against women remains hidden as more than 90% do not seek help from public services and half of the women who experience violence do not tell anyone about their situation. Violence against women not only causes severe consequences for women themselves but also for the national economy. The loss of national labor productivity due to violence against women is equivalent to 1.81% of GDP in 2018 in Vietnam – a significant loss for the national economy [5].

Sex selection based on gender stereotypes was identified as the main cause of the imbalance in the sex ratio at birth in Vietnam. The main factor driving sex selection behavior based on gender stereotypes of many couples is the preference for sons, which is rooted in traditional culture and the patriarchal family system. Adult sons are often responsible for taking care of their parents in their old age, so they often share a house with their parents. Religious and social norms require boys to take on ancestor worship and other important life events.

In terms of society, having a son helps to raise the status of parents, and sons are often favored in inheriting land and property. The preference for sons is a strong manifestation of gender inequality and discrimination against women. A combination of three factors, namely a preference for sons, the popularity of sex selection technology, and low and limited fertility, has created socio-cultural conditions for sex selection behavior on the basis of gender stereotype favors boys, increasing the imbalance in the sex ratio at birth to 111.5 boys per 100 girls in 2019, the third-highest in Asia after China and India. In some provinces, this unbalanced sex ratio at birth even exceeds 126. When compared with the sex ratio at birth (105 boys/100 girls), the situation in Vietnam shows that found that the shortage of girls in 2019 was 45,900 children [3, 5].

The imbalance of sex at birth will have a demographic impact. For the adult age group of 15–49 years, for example, there will be 1.5 million more males than females by 2034. This number is estimated to continue to grow to nearly 2.5 million males. surplus by 2059 if the sex ratio at birth does not decline. It is a trend that demographers often refer to as "marriage pressure", in which men tend

to have more difficulty in finding a mate [5]. The imbalanced sex ratio at birth will not only affect men but also women, and a decrease in the number of women does not mean an increase in the value of women and girls. In contrast, efforts to find a partner can significantly increase child marriage, trafficking in women and girls, violence against women, and prostitution.

### **Gender equality policy in Vietnam**

Caring for and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of women, in the family as well as in society, has been the consistent policy of our Party and State since the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945), now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Therefore, the implementation of gender equality in our country has achieved great and substantive results. Humanistic policies, suitable for each historical period on gender equality, have made progress for women in our country and achieved many results, which are reflected in specific numbers.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed to be established by President Ho Chi Minh on September 2, 1945, the 1946 Constitution (the first one) provided for gender equality rights. Article 9 of the 1946 Constitution clearly states: "Women are equal to men in all respects" [6].

In the 1959 Constitution, women's rights and obligations are clearly defined. Article 24, Chapter 3 of the 1959 Constitution stipulates: Women in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have equal rights with men in terms of political, economic, cultural, social, and family activities.

For the same jobs, women receive the same wages as men. The State ensures that female workers and public employees are entitled to leave before and after childbirth while still receiving full wages.

The State protects the rights of mothers and children and ensures the development of maternity homes, daycare centers, and kindergartens. The State protects marriage and the family.

In the 1980 Constitution, women's rights were both incorporated into the basic rights of citizens and separately regulated to create important highlights and affirm women's rights.

Article 55 states: "All citizens are equal before the law." This is the most common rule for all sexes, showing no discrimination in front of society. Article 57 stipulates: "Citizens do not distinguish between ethnicity, male-female, social class, etc. from 21 years of age and older can be elected to the

National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels" (the highest state power agencies at the central and local levels) [7].

Article 63 states: "Women and men have equal rights in all aspects of politics, economy, culture, society and the family. The State and society take care to raise women's political, cultural, scientific, technical, and professional qualifications, and constantly promote the role of women in society.

The State has a labor policy suitable to women's conditions. Men and women with the same job, equal wages. Women have the right to take maternity leave before and after giving birth and still receive full salary if they are workers or employees, or maternity allowance if they are members of cooperatives.

The State and society will take care of the development of maternity homes, kindergartens, kindergartens, public canteens, and other social welfare facilities, creating favorable conditions for women to produce, work, study exercise, and rest" [7].

In the 1992 Constitution [6] and 2001 revised and supplemented Constitution[7], the above provisions were basically maintained and continued to be maintained until the 2013 constitution. of the Constitution, the Law on Gender Equality was promulgated in 2006 [2]. Accordingly, the rights of Vietnamese women are regulated more fully, specifically, and comprehensively. Specifically:

1. Husband and wife are equal to each other in civil relations and other relationships related to marriage and family.
2. Husband and wife have equal rights and obligations in the ownership of common property, in the use of the husband's common income, and in deciding on family resources.
3. Husband and wife are equal with each other in discussing and deciding to choose and use appropriate family planning measures; use the time off to take care of sick children as prescribed by law.
4. Sons and daughters are cared for, educated by their families, and created equal conditions for studying, working, playing, entertaining, and developing.
5. The male and female members of the family are responsible for sharing the household chores.

The promulgated laws and other legal documents increasingly concretize the provisions of the Constitution on women's rights, the most

prominent of which are the Law on Social Insurance (2006, 2014), Law on Residence (2006), Law on Domestic Violence Prevention (2007), Law on Nationality (2008), Labor Code (2005), Law on Domestic Violence Prevention (year). 2007), Law on Marriage and Family (2000, 2014), etc.

In addition, on December 24, 2010, the Prime Minister signed Decision No. 2351/QĐ-TTg approving the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the 2011-2020 period. The Strategy has the following general objectives: "By 2020, basically, ensure substantive equality between men and women in terms of opportunities, participation, and enjoyment in political, economic, cultural and social fields, contributing to developing rapid and sustainable development of the country" [10]. Together with the Law on Marriage and Family, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control, and other relevant legal documents and policies, these are important legal bases for promoting gender equality in general and gender equality in the family in particular.

The 2013 Constitution more specifically stipulates women's rights on the basis of inheriting and developing the provisions of the previous Constitutions. The provisions from Article 14 to Article 49, Chapter II - Constitution of 2013 stipulate human rights, civil rights, in which women's rights [11, 12].

### **Some suggested solutions**

First, continue to promote communication to raise awareness of gender equality among all classes of people and women themselves. Develop and implement communication activities, and gender equality models suitable for ethnic minorities, in remote and isolated areas.

Second, uphold the responsibilities of the Party Committees and authorities at all levels, especially promoting the role of the heads of agencies and localities in realizing the national goals of gender equality; arrange and assign work to female cadres, civil servants, and public employees to ensure compliance with regulations on gender equality. It is necessary to clearly define the responsibilities of the head when the targets on gender equality at agencies, units, and localities are not met [13, 14].

Third, improve the system of legal documents on gender equality: Implement the direction of the Secretariat on continuing to implement Resolution 11-NQ/TW dated April 24, 2007, of the Ministry of Government on women's work in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization of the country; implementing the

content of gender equality work according to the Resolution of the 6th Conference of the 12th Party Central Committee on strengthening the protection, care and improvement of people's health and population work in the current situation. new shape; directing the review of 10 years of implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, reporting to competent authorities and the National Assembly for submission of the Labor Code (amended) project in 2019, which supplements and amends issues related to the Law on Gender Equality. regarding gender equality.

Fourth, review, amend and adjust a number of indicators of the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2015 - 2020 and the National Gender Development Statistical Indicators Set in line with reality and trends. domestic and international development direction, ensuring feasibility and efficiency.

Fifth, strengthen inter-sectoral coordination and step up the mobilization of domestic and international resources for gender equality work. Promoting gender equality and improving the role of women in the economy, focusing on 03 basic contents: promoting gender equality for the sake of sustainable [15], innovative, and inclusive economic growth; improving the competitiveness and innovation capacity of women-owned small, medium, and micro enterprises; narrowing the gender gap in human resource development [15, 16].

Sixth, pay more attention to training and capacity building for cadres, civil servants, and public employees, especially potential female cadres and cadres working as advisors on gender equality work. Promulgate policies to facilitate and encourage women to self-improve, improve their qualifications and actively participate in political, economic, and social activities, contributing to women's empowerment in general. in general and increase the participation of women in management and leadership positions and in elected bodies in particular; especially for young female leaders, and female ethnic minority cadres. Promoting the role of the Women's Union in protecting women's rights.

### **CONCLUSION**

To overcome the above situation, our Party and State have constantly improved the legal framework and policies on equal rights in the field of gender equality such as the Law on Marriage and Family, the Law on Gender Equality, and the Law on Prevention and Control. domestic violence, etc. whose focus is the Law on Gender Equality and the adoption of international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, etc. I am protected.

After 16 years of implementing the Law on Gender Equality, the propaganda to raise awareness of gender equality among officials and people at all levels, branches, and localities throughout the country has achieved remarkable results. Through many forms of propaganda and education on gender equality, agencies, organizations, officials, and citizens clearly see the risks and reality of gender inequality that is preventing the development of gender equality. development of the country, thereby gaining a correct awareness of the importance of gender equality for social and community development.

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