

THE TASKS OF VIETNAM WOMEN'S UNION AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL



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ABSTRACT

Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) was an organization founded in 1930. Its history is closely attached to our country's history for national independence and development. The objective of this study is to find out about the tasks of Vietnam Women's Union at the grassroots level in the new situation, based on the hypothesis: the Vietnam Women's Union at the grassroots level carrying out women's work must be compatible with each object and region, promoting the spirit of mastery, potential, creativity and the highest contribution ability of women from all walks of life, contributing to the great strength of national unity to develop the country development. With this objective, the study focuses on clarifying the following issues: 1/ the propaganda, education, and mobilization of women; 2/ the Union participate in the formulation, social criticism, and supervision of the implementation of laws, policies, and policies on gender equality; 3/ The Union mobilizes and organizes women to participate in economic development, sustainable poverty reduction, and environmental protection; 4/ Mobilizing and supporting women to build happy and sustainable families; 5/ Building and developing a good association organization; 6/ Participating in building the Party, government, Front and mass organizations. The author has used scientific research methods such as analysis and synthesis, deductive and inductive, abstraction and generalization, history, and comparison to come to general conclusions of the study.

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INTRODUCTION

In modern society, women are highly valued. That is reflected not only in official documents of our Party and State but also in social life. Currently, women have many favorable conditions for study, training, work, and promotion equal to men. Women have a crucial role in the progress of society, as K. Marx generalized: Those who know history realize that it is impossible to fix society without the help of women. Seeing the thoughts and actions of women, they know how progressive society is (Engels, 1972)

Speaking of Soviet power and the status of women, V.I. Lenin affirmed: There cannot be complete "freedom" unless women are liberated from the privileges afforded specifically for "men" according to the law. "As long as women have not been given the right to freely participate in political life in general and entitled to take over an office, it will be impossible to talk about socialism and a sustainable democracy (Lenin, 1981)

President Ho Chi Minh also pointed out: "To mention women is to mention half of society, if women are not free, nearly half of humanity will not be free" and "if women are not liberated, socialism is only built half" (Ho Chi Minh, 2000) In nation-building and defense, Vietnamese women hold an important role and position. Women's liberation and comprehensive development are central goals of the Vietnamese revolution, which has a direct and lasting influence on developing the country. Nurturing women's forces, promoting their strength, and taking care of all aspects of women's development is a regular and key task in every revolutionary period. In particular, in the current period, strengthening the Party's work of mobilizing women is a requirement of the cause of national renewal and the comprehensive development of women. Women's mobilization is an integral part of mass mobilization to mobilize all women in the country, contributing to a powerful force, effectively implementing guidelines, policies, and laws of the Party and State, tasks of organizations,

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and mass organizations in the political system. Women's mobilization is associated with the role of women in society, with class liberation, national liberation, and the construction of socialism. Therefore, mobilizing women is an important political task of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Through the revolutionary period, our Party has attached great importance to mobilizing women, taking care of, educating, and encouraging women of all strata to struggle, making great victories of the nation.

In Vietnam, women account for more than 50% of the total population. Vietnamese women have a tradition of being "heroic, indomitable, loyal, and courageous." Women participate in almost all areas of social life, especially in the health and education sectors. Vietnamese women have many good and noble qualities such as patriotism, intelligence, diligence, patience, and kindness. Nowadays, more and more women are of reproductive age.

Besides, there is still a part of Vietnamese women who carry heavy psychological inferiority, resignation, lack of confidence, so they suffer a lot of disadvantages in work and family life. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013)

The market mechanism and the industrialization process, on the one hand, have a positive impact. On the other hand, many social problems have arisen directly related to women. Women face up with many difficulties and challenges when they perform the role of mother, the first teacher of people in the changing social and family conditions in Vietnam. Moral qualities and some good traditional values are somewhat lost, and a pragmatic lifestyle tends to develop in some women. The rate of abortion among adolescent girls and HIV/AIDS infection among women and girls is increasing. Domestic violence, prostitution, trafficking in women and children, and marrying a foreign husband for personal gain are complicated. Discrimination against women and girls still exists in many forms. The percentage of women participating in leadership and management is low, not commensurate with the capacity and development of the female workforce. The source of female cadres is short in some areas, the percentage of female cadres has decreased. Women's work has weaknesses. Leadership orientations, policies, and methods of women's mobilization are still lacking in specificity, not suitable for each object, region, and have not met new requirements promptly.

From theory and practice, it shows that the research on "works of the Vietnam Women's Union at grassroots level" is of great importance to the Party, which based on the position and leading role of women in society, class liberation, national liberation, and the construction of socialism today in Vietnam.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vietnam Women's Union

The Vietnam Women's Union is a socio-political organization in the political system with legal status, representing the legitimate rights and interests of all classes of Vietnamese women. It strives for the development of women and gender equality. The Union is a member of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, a member of the International Federation of Democratic Women, and the ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organizations (The Secretariat of Communist Party of Vietnam, 2018) In Clause 2, Article 9, the 2013 Constitution: "Vietnam Trade Union, Vietnam Farmers' Union, Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, Vietnam Women's Union, and Vietnam Veterans' Association are socio-political organizations established voluntarily representing and protecting the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of their members; together with other member organizations of the Front to coordinate and unify actions in the Vietnam Fatherland Front." (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, The Constitution 2013)

Under feudalism and imperialism, women were oppressed, exploited, and many injustices who wanted to be free and ready to follow the revolution. In the period 1930-1936: The Liberation Women's Organization gradually formed, attracting many women to participate in the climax of the revolutionary struggle (typically the Nghe Tinh Soviets). The organization propagated and mobilized women to join in the struggle for economic rights, improve living standards, and fight against the oppression of the feudal empire. In the period 1936-1938, at the request of the revolution, the Resolution of the Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indochina in August 1937 on the work of mobilizing women set the task of anti-fascism and anti-war in a public and lawful manner (Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, 2018).

Therefore, the women's revolutionary organization was changed to the Democratic Women's Union. The Union propagated the Party's line and viewpoint on women's liberation, equality between men and women, and organized activities associated with women's professions to fight for freedom and democracy, and women's rights, such as the Friendship Association, the National Language Propagation Association. In the period 1939-1941, World War II broke out. The Party advocates: "Mobilizing women to organize anti-war women's associations, relief, and security associations, to help each other fight imperialist wars and claim peace". In keeping up with the situation, the Society took the name Anti-Imperial Women's Association. The association has mobilized women to participate in demonstrations, set up relief and security associations, participate in the fight against the capture of soldiers with the slogans against the imperialist war, for peace, and war compensation. In the 1941-1945 period, the Women's Union for National Salvation was established. Under the leadership of the Party, the Women's Union for National Salvation mobilized all classes of women to join the Viet Minh Front, and national salvation organizations to fight the French, expel the Japanese, build and protect revolutionary bases. Women are a powerful force, making contributions to the victory of the August Revolution in 1945. On October 20, 1946, the Vietnam Women's Union was officially established, including many women's organizations, of which the Women's Union for National Salvation is the major organization, leading the women's movement throughout the country, contributing to the great victory of the Resistance War against the French (1946 - 1954) (Central Committee for Mass Mobilization, 2006).

On March 8, 1961, the Women's Union for the Liberation of South Vietnam- an independent branch organization of the Vietnam Women's Union was established. Ms. Nguyen Thi Dinh was elected as the President of the Union. In 1976, the Women's Union for the Liberation of South Vietnam and the Vietnam Women's Union merged into a unified

organization- the Vietnam Women's Union. Up to now, the Vietnam Women's Union has grown steadily. It has become the core socio-political organization, contributing to the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, and progress in the process to create an equal status for Vietnamese women. After nearly 90 years of growth and development, the Vietnam Women's Union has organized 12 national congresses of women's delegates. Each congress is a historical milestone, marking the continuous development of the Vietnamese women's movement.

The Women's Union has a crucial role in encouraging women to be self-reliant and improve their understanding of gender, laws, and knowledge. It also has the function of inspection and supervision of implementing the Constitution, laws, and State policies related to the rights and lives of women and girls to create conditions for women to entitle equality and development. It has guided and helped women to understand child-rearing, preserve the moral values and good traditions of Vietnamese women, and organize prosperous, equal, and progressive family living. It has built and consolidated strong associations at all levels, training and fostering union cadres, introducing virtuous and talented women to join the Party's leadership agencies at all levels, etc. It has united with women from other countries, progressive organizations, and individuals in the region and around the world for equality, development, and peace.

Resolution No.11-NQ/TW on women's work in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization of the country affirms that "Promoting the great role and potential of women in the cause of industrialization and modernization, building and defending the Fatherland, raising the status of women, realizing gender equality in all fields of politics, economy, culture, and society are among the important tasks and goals of the Vietnamese revolution in the new period". The purpose of the Union is to work for gender equality and women development, protect the legitimate rights and interests of women; actively contribute to the cause of building and defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for rich people, strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization (Vietnam Women's Union, 2017)

The Union operates on the principles of voluntariness, democracy, union, and unity of action. Voluntariness is shown in the willingness, self-discipline, and actively participating in the activities of the Union. Democracy means that each member has the right to participate in discussing the general affairs of the Union, and they may stand for election, nominate, elect, and participate in voting according to the law and the Union's Charter. It is a group of women from all walks of life, regardless of class, age, region, ethnicity, or religion, joining the Union to strive for a common goal. The principle of democratic centralism in the activities of the leading bodies of the Union at all levels: The leadership bodies of the Women's Unions at all levels are established by-election, implementing the principle of collective leadership and individual responsibility; the minority subordinates to the majority, the juniors subordinates to superiors, individuals subordinates to the organization.

Women's Mobilization Work at the Grassroots Level in the New Situation

Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW of the 10th Politburo on women's work in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization of the country stated that it is necessary to promote the role and great potential of women in the cause of industrialization, modernization, national building, and defense. Raising the status of women, realizing gender equality in all fields of politics, economy, culture, and society is one of the tasks and goals of the Vietnamese revolution in the new period. At the same time, it is necessary to take care of women in all aspects, to pay full attention to their legitimate rights and interests so that women have conditions to perform well their roles as citizens, workers, mothers, and first teachers. Building and firmly developing a contingent of female cadres commensurate with the crucial role of women is an objective requirement and content in the Party's cadre work strategy. Women's work is the responsibility of the whole political system, society, and family. In which the core of leadership is the Party committees at all levels, the direct responsibility belongs to the state management agencies at all levels with the role of the Vietnam Women's Union at all levels (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2007)

In terms of goals, by 2020, women will improve their qualifications in all aspects. Women have educational and professional qualifications to meet the requirements of industrialization, modernization, and international economic integration. Striving for our country becomes one of the most progressive countries with gender equality achievements in the region.

The document of the 12th Part National Congress determined: Raising the level of all aspects and the material and spiritual life of women; well implement gender equality, create conditions for women to develop talents. It is necessary to research, supplement, and perfect laws and policies for female employees, create conditions and opportunities for women to perform well their roles and responsibilities in the family and society. Resolutely fight against social evils and strictly punish acts of violence, trafficking, and infringing upon women's dignity (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011). Directive No. 21-CT/TW of the Secretariat (January 20, 2018) on promoting women's work in the new situation requires Party committees, party organizations, Fatherland Front, and other socio-political organizations to focus on performing well the task (the Secretariat of Communist Party of Vietnam, 2018). It is necessary to raise awareness about women's work and gender equality. Building, perfecting, and well implementing the legal system and policies on gender equality, creating conditions for the development of women. It is critical to build a prosperous, equal, progressive, and happy family. It is essential to develop the image of Vietnamese women with health, knowledge, professional skills, dynamism, creativity, cultural lifestyle, and benevolence. It needs to build a team of highly qualified female scientists, leaders, and managers to meet the requirements of accelerating the cause of industrialization and modernization. Building and consolidating the really strong Vietnam Women's Union gave full play to its pivotal role in women's mobilization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Propaganda, Education and Mobilization of Women

Propagating and raising awareness about the role of women, the importance of women's work, Law on gender equality, Law on prevention and control of household violence. Through branches of associations, women's groups are gathered in the form and model "Happy family" clubs, "No third child", "Family without children with impaired nutrition", "Families without violence" at all levels, the Association regularly communicates, educates and mobilizes women, families and communities to raise awareness about gender equality and domestic violence prevention, implementation of population/family planning, practice of reproductive health care, child rearing, prevention of social evils. Propaganda and awareness raising about the role of the family, the responsibility of the family women, men and family members in building a prosperous, equal, progressive and happy family; popularize and mobilize women and family members to implement the law and policies on marriage and family; preserve and promote the good qualities of Vietnamese families.

Through all levels of party committees, authorities, socio-political organizations, cadres, party members, people of all classes, mass media agencies, political schools and schools of the national system carry out propaganda, education and mobilization of women to actively participate in activities at agencies, units and localities.

Participating in the Formulation, Social Criticism and Supervision of the Implementation of Laws, and Policies on Gender Equality

The social criticism of the Vietnam Women's Union towards laws and policies on gender equality in the making of scientific and practical observations and assessments that clarify the nature from a gender perspective directly related to the decision of a Party's undertakings and policies and the formulation of legal documents to ensure gender equality. Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW dated April 27, 2007, on women's work in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization of the country identifies the Vietnam Women's Union as a representative socio-political organization that represents and protect the legitimate rights and interests of women, proactively to advise and propose to the Party and State on guidelines and policies related to women, well-performing the function of supervision and social criticism.

Through social criticism activities, the Vietnam Women's Union provides more scientific and objective grounds and arguments to help the agency draft policies and laws under natural and social characteristics of women and men. The content of social criticism should focus on issues such as Policies for mothers and fathers; rights and responsibilities for achieving gender equality goals of agencies and organizations; rights and responsibilities of the Vietnam Women's Union. In the process of social criticism, it is necessary to ensure the leadership of the Party, close coordination with relevant agencies and organizations; comply with the provisions of the Constitution and laws, international commitments, and social ethics, especially promoting the participation and contributions of women from all walks of life. At the same time, it must be done in an open, transparent, objective, and honest manner. Social criticism and supervision of the implementation of laws, and policies on gender equality are important tasks of the Vietnam Women's Union.

Mobilizing and Organizing the Women's Union to Participate In Economic Development, Sustainable Poverty Reduction, and Environmental Protection

According to the traditional concept, the husband is the "pillar" in the family, taking the main responsibility for making income for the family. The wife mainly takes care of house cleaning, child-rearing, housework, health care, and meals for her husband and children. Today, that traditional concept has changed. The role of women is not only limited to cooking but the second "pillar" in the family, along with men sharing economic responsibilities and well-organized material life for the family. In modern society, the role of women is assessed as equal to that of men, that is: "Both men and women build houses and homes". The pivotal role of women in the family economy is reflected in two aspects: direct labor and production to generate income and management of the family's resources. The income-generating activities that women participate in to share with their husbands in the family's economic burden are diverse and abundant, including working as a wage earner; cultivation, animal husbandry, trading, service, handicraft production. Not only working on the spot, but tens of thousands of rural women have also had to move away from their homeland, husband and children, migrate to more developed economic areas, both at home and abroad, endure material and spiritual difficulties to work to earn a living to improve family life. Facing complicated developments in the market economy, weather, epidemics, etc., women are still active and proactive in income-generating activities, contributing to the family economy, hunger eradication and poverty reduction, increasing family income, and getting rich legitimately (Thuan & Huong, 2008)

The movements "Women help each other to develop the family economy", "Women help each other to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty", "Women start a business"... are held every year and have helped hundreds of thousands of women's families to get out of poverty. With these practical activities, the Union has supported and created conditions for poor women and families to get out of poverty and develop a sustainable family economy. Women's unions at all levels coordinate with Bank for Social Policies, Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, microfinance programs, and women's savings groups. They collaborated with the Agriculture and Rural Development sector to provide credit to support capital and guide production knowledge for millions of women, to help them increase their incomes, reduce hunger and poverty (Vietnam Women's Union, 2017)

Mobilizing and Supporting Women to Build Happy and Sustainable Families

In addition to directly participating in productive labor to generate income, women also organize, encourage, and create conditions for family members to participate in economic activities, increase income for the family and ensure the role of the person holding money for the family. Especially women show the role of the person taking care of the health of family members. Health care, housework, meeting nutritional needs, reproducing labor power are activities aimed at ensuring the

elderly, children, the sick, and all members of the family are in good health. Without care and nurturing, children will not be able to develop their capacities. Elderly people will not live long and have healthy lives. Without care, including physical and mental care, adults will not be healthy enough to study and work well. Many researchers and social managers especially emphasize the meaning of the function of reproduction of labor power, considering it a very essential factor for sustainable development.

Although many women participate in social work and are as successful as men, in general, housework and family management are still mainly women's jobs. As the organizer of the family's material life, the woman must first well manage the family's regular and irregular sources of income.

Women need to plan and implement plans for collection, spending, and saving of those income sources; make full use of family resources; distribute labor to members in a reasonable way, while promoting their potential and creativity, ensuring the health of members, and ensuring gender equality in the division of labor; at the same time knowing how to coordinate resources to meet the needs of family members.

Building and Developing a Strong Union

It is determined that building a strong union is the central task, the mode of operation with the motto "strong direction to the grassroots", "where there are women, there are Union activities". The improvement of the quality and operational efficiency of a union at all levels has contributed to maintaining security and building a strong grassroots political system. Improving the quality of grassroots unions; strengthening innovation in content and mode of operation, diversifying forms of gathering, and attracting members. It is necessary to propaganda for members and women to understand the meaning and role of the Union; their rights and obligations when participating in Union activities; disseminating directives, resolutions of the Party, policies, and laws of the State; Propagating the good qualities "Confidence - self-respect - loyalty - courage" of Vietnamese women in the period of industrialization and modernization of the country. Regularly organize sessions to share experiences and solutions to attract women aged 18 and over to join the Union; social mobilization and organize activities to take care of the material and spiritual life of members and women; promptly resolve the members' grievances, organize appropriate and practical movements and promote the internal resources of members in the movement implementation.

Participating in Building the Party, Government, Front and Mass Organizations

Contributing to building the Party and government is one of the important functions of the Union. Decision 218-QD/TW dated 12/12/2013 of the Politburo on the participation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, and people in building the Party and the government. The Union has performed this decision quite well. It has been creative and flexible in advising and directing; selecting and focusing on monitoring and social criticism contents, directly linked to key and urgent tasks and towards issues of concern to the majority of women. The Union has detected and prevented many violations in time; corruption and wastefulness, contributing to building a clean and strong contingent of cadres and party members; promptly adjusting inappropriate regulations, ensuring conformity with the realities of social life, protecting the people's legitimate rights and interests, and improving the leadership capacity and combat strength of the Party organization, effectiveness, and efficiency of State management.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from the predecessor organizations to the present day, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Vietnam Women's Union has united, mobilized, and gathered women from all walks of life, upholding the patriotic, heroic and loyal, courageous tradition, actively contributing to the cause of building and defending the socialist Vietnamese Fatherland, for rich people, strong country, democracy, justice, and civilization.

Theoretically, the author has clarified the concepts of women and the concepts, positions, roles, functions as well as operating principles of the Vietnam Women's Union at the grassroots level.

Research shows that the implementation of women's mobilization work at the grassroots level of the Union is quite suitable for each audience and promotes the spirit of mastery, potential, creativity, and the highest ability to contribute from all classes of women, contributing to the great strength of national unity for the development of Vietnam.

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