

Migration Process in Vietnam in the Context of Global Climate Change

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Abstract: With a population of over 90 million, Vietnam is one of the most populous countries in the world, and a great potential for the workforce. The paper analyzes the correlation of population rapid growth and a part of Vietnam territory may be reduced due to sea level rise, which could lead labor forces to migrate, possibly towards Russia, Europe - the region has a long history in receiving the Vietnamese migrants. Suggestions are also made for Vietnam to cope with global climate change.

Key words: Global climate change, immigration, labor force, Vietnam, Russia.

1. Global climate change leads to labor migration

There were many disasters occurred in the 20th century, categorically natural and artificial disasters. The strong population growth in the world also took place in the 20th century. Among many global threats upon humanity, International Association of Academies of Sciences suggested that global warming is inevitable. One of the main reasons is increased emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that made climate warming. In the 1990s, emissions increased by 1.1% annually; in the 2000s, it was 3%. This will lead to unpredictable consequences, including rising sea levels and many flooded regions.

Many research results indicate that sea level rise has been happening especially rapid since the 20th century. According to climate research forecasts, oceans level will

rise approximately 35 – 40 cm by the end of the 21st century. Climate research models reveal satellite and hydrological observation data suggesting that sea level rise diversifies across the world. A special report on climate change done by expert groups predicted that by the mid-2090, ocean water level would rise from 0.22 to 0.44m than in 1990, and it would increase by about 4 mm per year.

This will lead to a reduction in the traditional residential locality, reducing jobs, boosting demand for migration. The submerged parts of populous countries in Southeast Asia and South Asia including Vietnam - one of the most vulnerable countries due to climate change – may result

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in serious political and social consequences. The overall picture about Vietnam may be as follows:

In 2011, Vietnam's population was 87.8 million (ranked 13th in the world), population density was 270 persons/km². Although the planned birth control policy of Vietnam is proving fruitful and overall population growth rate has decreased, the population of Vietnam has increased by more than 20 million people in 20 years (1990- 2010).

It is assumed that in case sea level rises 78 - 95 cm on average, the Vietnam coastal water level will increase 105 cm. There may be 7 coastal provinces engulfed, nearly 40% of the Mekong River Delta, more than 10% of Red River Delta and Quảng Ninh will be flooded. The consequence of the increasing flood numbers is that Vietnam may lose 5% of the land territory. Vietnam may suffer major economic issues such as gross domestic product (GDP) falls by 10%, agricultural production cuts by 7%, rice loss 5 million tons, 11% housing, nearly 4% railways, 9% national road transport system, 12% provincial roads engulfed and destroyed. This will lead to serious economic and social consequences. Obviously, Vietnam is forced to consider unprecedented immigration because of climate change beside caring population quantity, population growth rate and density of the country.

The migration to other areas of the country, and possibly to other countries is inevitable. Approximately 38% of the population in the Mekong Delta province, nearly 9% of the Red River Delta and

Quảng Ninh, nearly 9% of the central coastal province and about 7% of Hồ Chí Minh City should move, and the number may reach millions. Scenario of Vietnam coastal regions flooded may lead to an unprecedented large-scale migration. The issue is therefore not only matter of a locality, within a country, but at international level. Large climate affected migrants are likely to cause serious population structure and socio-economic issues for host countries had them not ready to deal with, for example, illegal migration will spike. Traditionally, the level of migration from Vietnam to Russia is still relatively high, Russia is therefore on the top list countries for immigrants. Careful considerations should be made regards to potential migration from Vietnam to Russia and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia instead of worsening immigration matter.

2. The development of Vietnam population today

From 1990 to 2010, Vietnam's population increased by 20.7 million, bringing the total population to 87.8 million from 67.1 million in 1990. In 2015, Vietnam population may reach 92.1 million people, ranks No.15 of the world. However, the study shows that the population growth rate of Vietnam is uneven; it tends to descend below 90 million and is aging rapidly. From 1990 to 1995, it was largest and nearly 7 million people added. Since 2010, the natural population growth in Vietnam has been controlled and gradually decreased. This is partly due to the impact of family planning

policy of Vietnam government (Giang Thanh Long, 2010).

From 1990 to 2010, the rate of urbanization in Vietnam increased significantly. Despite urban population increases, urbanization rate in Vietnam is still low, there is nearly 70% of the population still live and work in rural areas. From 1990 to 2010, the coefficient of overall fertility declined. The figure was 16.6 ‰ in 2010 compared with 27.3 ‰ in 1990. General coefficient birth in this period also fell down from 3.2 ‰ in 1990 to 1.8 ‰ in 2010. The overall mortality ratio also decreased to 5.2 ‰ in 2010 from 6.9 ‰ in 1990.

Coefficient of young mortality in the study period in 2009 was 19 ‰, down from 39 ‰ in 1990. During this period, Vietnamese life expectancy also increased from 69.6 years in 1990 to 72.3 years in 2010, women from 69.6 years in 1990 to 76.2 in 2010. During this period, male number rose slightly while female decreased, or 98 male/100 female.

In the period 1980 - 2011, Vietnam changed dramatically in three age groups. Those under the age of 14 declined significant, accounting for only 25.2% compared with 41.7% in 1980. The group aged 15 to 64 increased from 53.3% in 1980 to 69.3% in 2011. The population over 65 years increased from 5.0% in 1980 to 5.5% in 2011. This indicates that Vietnam population is aging, a disadvantage of labor in the future. However, Vietnam is enjoying demographic dividend which is a dynamic development

of labor market.

3. The demographic factor in Vietnam labor market development

Agricultural labor: Vietnam's population increased rapidly. After 50 years (1950-2000), the population increased by nearly 3 times, and it continues to rise. The rapid population growth is one of the increasingly difficult causes for workers to find jobs while the government has to guarantee both economic growth and restructure. Labor in the manufacturing sector accounted for 80.6% in 1996 and 69.7% in 2011, significantly higher than in many countries around the world (World Bank, 2014), and agriculture labor force was still big. However, this rate has been decreasing as a result of urbanization and new foreign industrial zones. This leads farmers lose land and have to find jobs in cities and become unskilled workforce or workers in the new industrial zone, accounting for 48.4% and 65.3% in 2000 and 2011 respectively (United Nations, 2011: 222).

Industrial workers: Although the number of workers in industrial production is lower than in agricultural labor, it is clear that from 1996 to 2011, Vietnam was moving toward industrialization and more characteristics of an industrialized country appeared. An active part of the population turned to industrial production and basic construction, from 19.4% in 1996 to 30.3% in 2011. Vietnam labor has been being restructured. Employment structure trends in the major cities of Vietnam including Hà Nội, Hồ Chí

Minh City and other major cities are characterized "post-industrial" and higher in other parts of the country. Positively, recent unemployment rate in Vietnam was not high (2.4% and 2% in 2008 and 2011 respectively). Despite low unemployed rate, the demand for working abroad is still high. According to the Department of Labor Abroad under Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, the total overseas Vietnamese workers were 88.000 in 2013. Obviously, Vietnam is a potential labor migrant country and the migration is mainly for employment purposes.

4. Migration from Vietnam to foreign countries

According to the authorities of Vietnam, there are about 4 million Vietnamese people living, working, and studying in 103 countries and territories. Among them, more than 80% in the industrialized development countries; 3.2 million people have permanent residence regulations; over 500,000 employees working in over 40 countries and territories; tens of thousands of pupils, students, graduate students and collaborators are studying, working abroad; nearly 300,000 Vietnamese women get married with foreigners; in addition, a significant number lives illegally, victims of trafficking and residents of border provinces freely migrate to neighbor countries. In 2010, Vietnam received USD 8 billion remittances made by migrants, despite the impact of the economic crisis. Vietnamese people mainly migrated to the United States, Japan, Australia, Canada, Cambodia, England, and

Thailand. Migration to Vietnam is not large compared with migration abroad, in 2010 it was 69.3 thousand people, of which 3.4% were refugees (Consular Department, 2011).

Migration from Vietnam to Russia has a long history, especially in search of jobs. Among far Russian countries, Vietnam ranks second in the number of immigrants. In 2011, there were 3,294 Vietnamese people immigrated to Russia, most for work purposes. The 2010 survey data revealed that the majority of Vietnam migrants went to the western regions of Russia where they mainly lived in central (45%) and Vonga basin (21%).

There are no exact figures on the number of Vietnamese people in Russia. According to the census of 2002, there were about 26 thousand Vietnamese people lived in Russia, but the 2010 survey data revealed that this figure dropped to 14 thousand people. In reality, this number may be much larger, up to 100-150 thousand people. Currently, the majority of Vietnamese people lives and works in Moscow, Stavropon, Bascortopxtan, Vongagrat, Xverlop, Khabarop and some other regions in Russia. In Moscow, there are newspapers and magazines published in Vietnamese and VTV channels for Vietnamese citizens living in Russia. Vietnamese people mainly study, do business, agriculture and restaurant services and employment in the manufacturing sector is growing. They mainly come from North of Vietnam.

According to the Bureau of Statistics of Russia (Rosstat), the number of Vietnamese

migrants to Russia is some hundreds a year. In addition, there was an increase of illegal immigrants in 1997 and 1998, and the number of illegal Vietnamese immigrants in Russia may reach 30,000, and about 10% has the invitation of the Embassy of Vietnam in Russia. According to the data of FMS, there were 46,000 work permits issued to Vietnamese citizens to work in Russia in 2010 but the number fell sharply in 2011 to 10,900.

The next potential collaboration level is migration for learning in Russia. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, students from Vietnam and Malaysia ranked third in 2011 - 2012 among the countries away from Russia. Vietnamese students in Russia are 2,500, accounting for 6.8% of the whole foreign students. Noticeably, the number of Vietnamese students in Russia tends to fluctuate. Despite the exact number of Vietnamese immigrants to Russia has yet to know and distance, the migration flow continues to be formed in the field of labor and learning.

5. Conclusion

First, the process of globalization and climate change are objective factors contributing to immigration among countries, it is inevitable. Regarding this issue, all countries need to have appropriate policies to exploit advantages and reduce negative effects on their own socio-economic development process.

Second, without prompt and appropriate immigration policies, countries cannot control the flow of migration and immigration,

especially under the adverse impacts of climate change. Vietnam is potentially one of the five countries severely affected by natural disasters, floods and sea level rise, there needs to have assessment on the prospects of massive migration from the coastal provinces of Vietnam. Considering the pattern of the phenomenon, possible migration process and socio - economic panorama is the appropriate method to warn areas threatened by climate change and dealing with unexpected massive immigration.

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