

THE SITUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN RURAL EDUCATION IN TRAN DE DISTRICT, SOC TRANG PROVINCE

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Abstract. The study was conducted to describe and analyze the situation of gender equality in education in Tran De district, Soc Trang province through descriptive statistical methods. The research results showed that gender equality activities in Tran De district, Soc Trang province have achieved many positive results, brought new prosperity to improve the lives of people in the district and women of ethnic minorities in particular, especially Khmer women. Females accounted for 47% of total educational staff. Out of a total of 99 managers at affiliated schools, 49 of them staff are female (49.49%). The leadership ability of females is also increasingly receiving recognition from many sides and in many fields. Women gradually have a position both in the family and in society, they have been participating in the socio-Economic Activities, and studying to improve People's Educational Level.

Keywords: Gender equality, rural education, Tran De district, Soc Trang province.

1. Introduction

The role and position of gender in the family, society in each country, each historical period are still very different. Women still suffer more disadvantages than men. Therefore, gender equality is still an urgent requirement to ensure an equitable, effective and sustainable development of a society [1; 2]. The issue of gender equality has even more profound significance in the education sector. Gender equality in education has led to an increase in the average quality of human resources in society. Gender equality in education is an essential task in the long-term socio-economic development. Education needs to be invested in the qualifications of the teaching staff as well as the facilities for training [3]. The study selected the area of Tran De district for the research purpose because it is far from the center, many Khmer people are living there, the economy is still limited, people's income is only from a few types of small and unstable production like farming, offshore fishing and knitting so that professional

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training is a fairly rare problem for this group of woman. Gender equality has always been considered a concentrated field on social justice, in which women and men are provided with the best conditions, equally enjoying the accomplishment of their own labor, and fulfilling their obligations for the family and society. Some studies have shown that, in cities and urban areas, the rate of men and women attending school does not have much difference, but the more rural, remote, and ethnic minority the areas are, the clearer difference is shown [4]. In fact, in areas that is far from the center, people access to information more or less limited than in places with socio-economic development. People, especially ethnic minorities, are facing many difficulties in languages and communication, and have fewer opportunities to study and contribute. Outdated ideas still exist, creeping into people's lives but mainly focusing on vulnerable groups, namely women - they have to carry many family-social responsibilities. Although the state constantly supports and enhances the status of women, inadequacies still exist.

Education is considered as a training environment, forming a personality, playing an important role in changing people's thoughts and perceptions. When teachers and staff of the education sector who have professional qualifications and understand gender equality are well trained, they will be the propaganda for many generations of students on this issue. Women working in the educational workplace are both teachers of the society and teachers of the family. When the woman is well-qualified, it will be a considerable advantage for the family and society. Therefore, the study is conducted to clarify the current situation of gender equality in Tran De district, including achievements and limitations, from which proposing some specific solutions in the future to overcome.

2. Content

2.1. Research methodology

Research data were collected from previous studies and magazines from websites on the Internet; Annual report on Tran De women development from 2015 – 2019, in-depth interviews of Tran De's Vice Chairman, Mo O's Vice Chairman and Lich Hoi Thuong's Chairman.

2.2. Findings and discussions

2.2.1. The situation of gender equality in education

Gender equality is a matter for males and females to have an equal position and role, to be created conditions and opportunities to promote themselves for the community development, the family and to be enjoyed the same benefits about the achievement of that development [3]. Gender equality is legal equality, opportunity (including equality in work remuneration and access to human capital and other productive resources) and speaking (an ability to influence and contribute to the development process). Gender equality is also the process of overcoming gender inequality between males and females, but not eliminating the natural differences between them through special treatment with females. In order to achieve gender equality in an environment where female's opportunities, conditions and social position

are lower than males is special treatments should be given to the priority to females which is the basis of true equality [4; 5].

In contrast to gender equality, gender inequality is a different treatment for males and females in terms of opportunities, participation, right access, control and enjoyment of resources. Discrimination between males and females and the idea of male chauvinism can be considered as a big influence on domestic violence against females [6]. Inequality is the inequality between males and females, between groups of males and females in opportunities, access rights to resources, the use and enjoyment of social achievements [7].

Inequality in education means that the learning opportunities of males and females are unfamiliar and the potential development of one gender is more important than the other. Inequality in education is often understood to be an unfair distribution of learning resources (budgets, teachers, technology or facilities, etc.) among different groups in society, making groups have little or no opportunity to receive education and achieve the accomplishments they could have achieved [5;7]. This type of inequality is often attributed to its roots of economic inequality. Of course, it can also be related to social inequality (gender, region, ethnic, language, etc.), but in the real context of Vietnam, the most important is still the difference between the rich and poor. The fact is that these two things are inseparable [8].

In the world, there are many studies on the issue of gender equality which shows the interest of people on this issue, and this is the leading goal in promoting gender equality, empowering more females. In Korea, a small number of females appointed with long-term contracts in science and technology accounted for 19% while it was 81% of males. Not only are they limited to promotion to a higher position, but those with family responsibilities often choose not to continue their career due to limited childcare facilities as well as opportunities for technical development and skills after childbirth [9]. A quarter of people worldwide still believed that higher education is more important for males than females. This ideology is also reinforced in schools. Even textbooks promote this prejudice and ignore females' historical contributions. While most teachers are females, school leaders are often males. Females make up just over a quarter of those registered for technical, manufacturing and construction programs, as well as information and communication technology programs. Such gender prejudices often lead to a permissive attitude - not only socially but also legally - for child marriage, early pregnancy, housework, and even sexual force, even at school. At least 117 countries and territories still allow child marriage. Four countries in sub-Saharan Africa prohibit females from returning to school during or after pregnancy. And females children in most countries are more than twice as likely to be involved in household chores than male children. Countries such as Angola, Central African Republic, Djibouti and Mauritania barely mention gender in all of their educational strategies [10].

In Vietnam, gender equality is considered as a matter of special priority by the Party and the State. The Gender Equality Law sets out the goal of creating equal opportunities for males and females in socio-economic development and human resource development, but in reality, inequality still exists. The gender inequality index in Vietnam is 0.337, ranked 71/195 countries and territories. It is illustrated that

Vietnam still faces many challenges in ensuring gender equality between males and females [9]. In education, inequality manifests itself in many aspects, including some specific signs such as the opportunity to participate in the national education system, the difference disparities in educational attainment, male and female qualifications, and opportunities for improving professional qualifications. In rigid traditional views, male and female role values are discovered as the underlying causes of gender inequality in Vietnam [5;6]. Females have significantly lower education levels than males. Females tend to focus more on lower secondary education and lower (70.78% and 60.28% respectively), and less in the upper secondary and higher groups (29.22% and 40.33, respectively). Females are often expected to give up higher education to their brothers and tend to drop out of school to take care of their families. In urban areas, investment in education is many times higher than in rural areas, and this investment is increasing by the levels of education from low to high in both areas. Inequality in education is quite common in terms of literacy and education levels among regions, between ethnic minorities and Kinh, urban and rural areas [5; 11]. Some causes leading to inequality in rural education are also existing prejudices about the role and position of females in the family and society, due to the thought of “patriarch of males in the family”, the thought of “male chauvinist”, ...[12; 13; 14].

A gender stereotype is one of the causes of gender inequality, especially ethnic minorities. This is an ethnic group that often concentrates on residing in remote and isolated areas, in which are in extreme difficulty, and most of the family’s life still face many setbacks. Besides, the existence of traditional customs, beliefs and ancient customs in their lives also makes women become the most difficult social group. They are an important social force that has a comprehensive influence on the development of ethnic minority areas. In order to contribute to improve the living standards, educational level, and ensure social security and national sovereignty, the implementation of gender equality in the ethnic minority community is a prior important social work. Gender equality among ethnic minorities is an issue that needs special attention both in development goals and in the process of making policies on ethnic relations in our country in the context of deep integration into the global economy.

In order to meet the target of implementing gender equality, striving to 2020, women will be improved in all aspects with education, expertise and skills to meet the requirements of industrialization - modernization and international economic integration; people having a job markedly improved in the physical, cultural and spiritual life; people have participated more and more in the work of society, equally in all fields. In Tran De district, Soc Trang province, the implementation of the Government’s Resolution No. 57/NQ-CP dated December 1, 2009 on promulgating the government’s action plan to implement the Resolution 11/NQ-TW of The Politburo on women’s work in the period of accelerating national industrialization and modernization has been carried out seriously and actively. After many years of implementing the Resolution No. 11-NQ/TW, the work of women in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization in Tran De district, Soc Trang province, has achieved many results as follow:

For management, as of November 2019, the whole area has a total of 1,531 staff, teachers, and employees, of which females are 47%. Out of a total of 99 managers at affiliated schools, 49 of the staff are female (49.49%). The leadership ability of females is also increasingly receiving recognition from many sides and in many fields, typically in the school labor union organizations in the district, there are 39 out of 44 female holding positions of Chairman, accounting for 88.63%. In addition, out of a total of 209 professional team leaders, 101 are female (48.5%). The implementation of gender equality also gives women more opportunities to access an educational environment and to receive more opportunities to improve their education. By the time, along with the process of innovation and development, the female intellectuals working in the local education field has not only increased in quantity but also increased in quality. In terms of professional qualifications, 391 women out of 983 have obtained university degrees, accounted for 43.8% and 176 females out of 363 people with College degrees. Since then, the local female employees are somewhat aware of the importance of improving their professional qualifications, as a foundation for future development.

In the field of politics, the number of female staff members is also growing. As for the level of political theory, although the proportion of staff participating in political training is still relatively low, the local female staff still receive the proper attention from leaders in the process of developing political career. Specifically, there are 20 female staff out of 88 who have an intermediate level of political theory and 01 female out of a total of 04 people with a high level of political theory. The above results showed that the work of women in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization in Tran De district has gradually created remarkable positive changes [1].

In order to develop gender equality activities in education and advancement of women, the Department of Education and Training has established a division for the advancement of women including 07 members (According to Decision No. 927/QDTC-CTUBND dated August 10, 2011 of the Chairman of the District People's Committee; Decision No. 855/QDTC-CTUBND dated December 13, 2012 of the Chairman of District People's Committee on the establishment of a Steering Committee to implement the project as propagating and educating the quality and morality of Vietnamese women in the period of accelerating industrialization modernization of the country, building the plan and timely implementation to schools and documents related to gender equality and the advancement of women [1].

It can be seen that gender equality is a very important issue concerned by the society, particularly scientific research. If the issue of female liberation is the most fundamental in females' struggle, the equality right between males and females is considered as the most fundamental content. In the recent years, gender equality has become one of the global development issues. Gender equality is about the equality of women's status, opportunities and rights with men. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, by the end of the twentieth century, all countries had achieved important achievements in human development, but there will be still differences in development indicators between men and women. In particular, the capacity development of women in all countries is lower than that of men, especially in underdeveloped countries [2].

2.2.2. Advantages and disadvantages of implementing gender equality activities in education in Tran De, Soc Trang

Several advantages and disadvantages of the implementation on gender equality activities in education have been held in the study site. From the previous research and an in-depth interview, the study identified some advantages of its issues. Firstly, the division for the advancement of women at the local has created favorable conditions for women to participate in the management positions and leadership in educational institutions [3]. The educational institutions here always consider the management which is decisive in advance of requirements, new tasks, and has important implications for the content of gender equality activities; the close linkage in departments and unions to implement the plans and goals for the advancement of women and gender equality mentioned. Secondly, for many years, the Department of Education and Training has made the request the leaders to arrange and use the force of female staff and teachers who are well-qualified for political quality and professional qualifications in key positions in schools, increasing the proportion of female staff working in as managers in educational institutions because the head of the Education and Training Department is a member of the district division for the advancement of women. Thirdly, the Education and Training Department has proactively proposed many appropriate measures to improve women's qualifications, well implement the task of universal education, maintain and develop the school systems. The quality of education continued to be improved, the movement for good teaching and good studying has been maintained and expanded. And, finally, many prior policies to support the State in the field of education and training are strictly implemented. Women are increasingly given more priority in training and retraining which are always interested in by leaders, creating conditions to improve their professional skills through short and long-term training courses, helping women to have more motivation to strive for a good job”.

In addition to the advantages and achievements gained thanks to the work of gender equality, many difficulties still needs to overcome. First of all, the control of division for the advancement of women in schools has not made regular progress since human resources have not met the needs, mainly focusing on the professional examination. The advisory to the Steering Committee to operate effectively is still facing difficulties due to the concentration of professional work in the education sector. Second, the implementation of gender mainstreaming into working plans in some schools has not been paid attention to; propaganda is not extensive; the operational experience of division in schools on gender equality is still limited and experience in operation is not high. Third, there is a large difference in education access and benefits from governmental education support policies, and educational outcomes between city, urban and rural regions. It is difficult to synchronize access to education. Although the local government has many policies on tuition fee exemptions and reductions for the poor and ethnic minorities, many poor people and Khmer people still have difficulty in accessing special education. Especially, when the women study, they are considered as the weaker force in the family.

2.2.3. Solutions for gender equality in education in Tran De, Soc Trang

In order to minimize the situation of inequality in rural education in Tran De district,

Soc Trang province, the study proposed some specific solutions as follows:

Firstly, raising people's awareness: (1) pushing actively closing gender gaps in workplaces, classrooms and schools is necessary. It helps raise the awareness of teachers and students about gender equality, especially changing the mindset of students and teachers; (2) One of those difficulties to raise awareness of people here is social prejudice and language barriers, local people should eliminate prejudices and barriers for both males and females. How education resources allocated, budget allocations and management responsibilities for upper secondary education need reconsideration; (3) Focusing on scaling up good models to implement gender equality is important here, local authorities need to implement propaganda models on gender equality such as "Gender equality club", working division "Counseling, supporting gender violence", Building the "Shelter houses" to support gender abusers. In particular, (4) promoting the implementation of the provisions of the law, national action programs on gender equality like integrating gender equality works into political tasks of institutions, schools, agencies, socio-economic development programs of localities; (5) Strictly handle violations and gender discrimination to deter people's contributions into the society, these cases need to be widely disseminated in various forms, such as holding mobile trials; oral propaganda at residential areas; integrating into local radio and television programs to create the best spillover effect to warn and prevent people from violating.

Second, promoting the implementation of the provisions of the law, national action programs on gender equality as well as upholding the role of division for the advancement of women: It is necessary to change the current regulations which are not appropriate or make limit gender equality. Especially, the Law on Marriage and Family 2014, in Clause 1, Article 71, clearly stated that "Parents have equal obligations and rights in taking care of and bringing up young children together". But in Clause 4, Article 2, on the basic principle of the implementation of the marriage and family regime, continues to maintain the gender prejudice regulated, "mothers-helping to fulfill the noble function of the mother; implement family planning". This rule is no different from assuming that the responsibility of raising children still belongs to the mother, family planning is still the responsibility of the wife. That is to say, it is necessary to adjust inappropriate regulations and to eliminate gender prejudice in the legal documents.

Thirdly, actively narrowing gender gaps in the workplace and all fields: It can be seen that it needs to be orienting and encouraging the implementation of gender equality in all areas of social and family life, including politics, economics, labor, education and training, science and technology, culture and information, sports, healthcare and family. There are no gender preconceptions, no prejudice; Elimination of all gender discrimination, including direct and indirect discrimination. Gender equality in health care: Reforming and developing a health counseling network, especially reproductive health; safe sex and sex education for all ages; encouraging males and females to apply contraceptive measures; propagating and guiding females to know how to take care of themselves and their families; disease prevention, renovating improved policies, social

infrastructure so that they have conditions to develop their careers (better kindergarten system, kindergarten, and so on).

Fourthly, focus on scaling up gender equality implementation models: The localities have implemented and developed models of propaganda on gender equality such as “Gender equality club”, working division “counseling, supporting gender violence”, building the “Shelter houses” to support the people who are violent. Gender equality in general has a positive effect on the quality of human resources of the future and is of great importance to the country’s development. In addition, the implementation of action plans and models on gender equality in education in general and in the education sector at the study site, in particular, is highly essential, contributing to the country’s renovation and building society as its democracy, progress, justice and civilization.

3. Conclusions

The above results showed that the work of women in the period of accelerating industrialization and modernization in Tran De district has gradually created remarkable positive changes. Improving the role of women in education is a necessary measure to address gender inequality in education today in rural areas, particularly in Tran De, Soc Trang. The society should not maintain gender prejudice as well as create gender prejudice, in which all gender discrimination needs to be eliminated, including direct and indirect discrimination. In general, gender equality activities in Tran De district, Soc Trang province have achieved many positive results, brought new prosperity to improve the lives of people in the district and women in particular, especially Khmer women. Women gradually have a position both in the family and in society, they have been participating in socio-economic activities, studying to improve people’s educational level. Besides, there are still many shortcomings in funding for propaganda activities, organizing classes for women, vocational training classes and so on. Therefore, policies and models to promote gender equality must focus on gender mainstreaming into social, school and family policies. This has a great significance in pushing back the gender inequality, contributing to the development of human and social development.

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