

IMPACTS ON SOCIAL POLICIES IMPLEMENTATION TOWARDS FEMALE LABOURS IN ENTERPRISES

(Case in Vĩnh Phúc Province)

HOÀNG THANH XUÂN^(*)

As one of eight provinces belongs to hot economic area in Northern Delta Province with good geographical position, Vĩnh Phúc is the connecting bridge between Hanoi and Northern Midlands. In recent years, Vĩnh Phúc's society and economy have achieved the high and continuous growth. Vĩnh Phúc has been forming 13 industrial areas with total number of enterprises as 1,100. Total number of labor is 33,734 in which 16,400 is female labor.

The fast growth of Vĩnh Phúc's enterprises has motivated the job solution; however, it raised issues requiring the implementation of socio – economic policies for both male and female labor. Also, there are many limitations in the working policies for female labor.

We have referred the results of existing research works in order to understanding the impacts of social policies on female labor in enterprises locating in Vĩnh Phúc province. Also, we have applied collecting methods as well as

information processing method to analyze the basic concepts based on the random selection from 600 samples of system and the researches on theory of social policies on female labor in enterprises. These samples are from the lists provided by Vĩnh Phúc Business Association and Vĩnh Phúc Labor Federation^(**).

I. Working Conditions

1. *Factory Conditions:*

FDI enterprises have factories with better conditions than local ones. Firstly, it is the prior investment policies which facilitate joint – ventures to lend lands inside industrial areas and export processing zones. These locations are good places for building clean and safe factories. Secondly, foreign investment projects have to obtain permissions of governmental offices when operating in Vietnam. As a result, they have to meet

^(*) MA., Vietnam Trade Union University.

^(**) Figures from the research work named “Impacts of social policies on female labor in today enterprises – Vĩnh Phúc Province Case” by author.

all requirements of environmental and working conditions, especially better conditions for female labor.

In general, female labor is working in a wide space (77.16%), clean and clear places (76.81%) and working place ensures the quality of lights (93.18%) but rather hot (18.00%). These conditions have reached the requirements of benefit policies and working conditions for female labor. It also reflected that the regulations of social policies for them are being well implemented.

2. *Working Equipments:*

Most of enterprises, who received local investments, are using old and backward machines without the machine covers to protect labor when working. In contrast, FDI enterprises have basically used the modern or advanced technological machines and equipments.

Full equipments are also provided for female labor such as lights (97.62%), ventilators (91.16%), and machine covers to ensure safety of labors (67.35%) and desk fans (51.02%). However, there is difference between equipments of governmental and private enterprises. The percentage of good equipments provided by governmental firms is 10% higher than private one. Besides, private and limited companies offer the limited working equipments for female labor which led to the bad conditions of health and difficult to recover the labor power.

3. *Working Environments*

There are 8 factors which affect the working environment of female labor at work. Dust is the most affecting factors, accounted for 59% while noise is the second things which accounted for 56.9%. Other factors have accounted for less than 50%. One of the biggest reasons is the characteristics of enterprises as well as the requirements are not properly implemented. Companies only focus on profits and do not take care of labor health. As a result, female labor always feels tired and has breathing problems which affect the effectiveness and quality of production. It also directly affects their health, for example, they might have risk of respiratory diseases, skin diseases, eye injuries and digestion diseases.

4. *Service Conditions*

Businesses have provided following infrastructure for labor: toilets (99.67%), Changing rooms (45.51%), bathrooms (33.44%), dormitories (16.06%) for female labor and classes for kids (44.67%). There are some low figures but businesses face difficulty in offering dormitories for labor in current circumstance. The basic conditions for daily activities are provided. Many businesses, however, have not ensured the infrastructure for female labor according to regulation of Working Law.

5. *Working and Resting Time*

These two are the fundamental links which not only related to the reproduce labor power but also the signals of how much social policies take care of female

labor in enterprises.

Working Time

The survey's results showed that there was only 29.08% of female labor working 8 hours per day and they even had to work extra time everyday during busy periods. This negatively affect their health, working conditions and ability to reproduce the labor power. Also, it limited the responsibilites for their own families. 68.96% of female labor have to work an extra two hours per day. Working extra time in a certain timeframe is encouraged by Governments because it can increase the income for people. However, some of them used working time to complete the contract in time and earn profits from labor and females particularly. As a resutl, the total extra working time and day of female labor is over the limits. In fact, this figure might be much more higher due to the characteristics of job and labor intensity of enterprises. Some time, they have to work 2 shifts in order to provide products for customers as schedules. High pressure and working in a long time without having a break has decreased theri health. 60% of them felt tired and painful.

There are many inappropriate points in working time of female labor who are pregnant or feeding new born kids. For example, they have to do night shift or even business trips. There are 24.51% of those have to do extra time when they are pregnant, 21.68% of those who are feeding new born kids. This rate is even doubled for those working in private

enterprises, 60.03% and 55.73% respectively. 23.86% of labor still work when they are pregnant and 19.61% of them even do the night shifts. The labor law regulates female labor, who has kid under 12 month old, is not allowed to work but companies still require them to work extra time (15.69%), do night shifts (9.08%) and even go business trips (1.96%).

Break - Time

The research has showed that 92.97% of female labors are offered day offs after giving birth as regulation in which 71.45% was off for 4 months, 16.28% within 5 months and 5.24% off in 6 months. Also, there are 7.03% of them offered maternity leave in which 1.62% has 2 months and 5.41% has 3 months. Basically, female labor will be allowed to have 30 minutes off per day when they are pregnant or 1 hour off to feed their kid. However, the time for traveling and feeding babies is not enough which proved that the policies do not support female labor. For example, they will violent the labor law if having more days off than the number regulated and might be fired. These cases are specially applied in FDI enterprises or those using foreign workers.

The relevant policies about working and breaking time do not effectively work for female labor. In other words, the implementation of those policies has not been properly done.

Policies about holidays or annual leave

are being implemented as regulation but the breaking time for female labor, especially those have to feed babies or sick kids is not compatible with reality. Working extra time is also affect to their health.

Some companies, especially FDI ones, has taken care of health, working time and break time of female labor. Most enterprises, however, do not apply the right working and breaking timeframe as regulated in Labor Law due to the implementation of signed contracts.

Social insurance is also an important policy. Most of female labor in Vĩnh Phúc Province has working insurance which is able to ensure their income and old – age life of them after retirements or in accident cases. 92.81% of female labor got medial insurance, 83.66% was offered pregnant allowance, 80.72% had working accident allowance, 79.08% had illness allowance, 64.05% received allowance for occupational diseases and 42.81% was offered other incentives.

The survey was basically implemented with those enterprises who has been working with the complementary social insurance. For now, there are just few of companies applying the optional social insurance despite this requirement was regulated in the Labor Law. So it clearly pointed out that the social policies do not effectively work and the female labor does not receive the basic benefits from these policies.

II. The role of enterprises, union and labor in the implementation of social

policies

The role of enterprises: The result of researches showed that some enterprises have not fully understood the law or tried do some Vietnamese Law's violence such as Labor Law, Union Law or Law on Gender Equality. For FDI enterprises, they basically do not understand the Labor Law completely and some even do not care about the law and let staff to do research by themselves (8, page 60).

One of the functionality of those who use labor is to sign the working contract when hiring them but the rules of signing off is the direct activities between owner and labor. In fact, however, most of labor does not directly sign their working contract with owner. If any, there might be not relevant points or points against the regulation.

The role of union: The role of union is limited in the implementation and deployment of policies towards female labor. The research has applied the ordinal scale for opinions of members at 3 levels as effective, normal and ineffective. There are 28.71% opinions which showed that the union has effectively taken care and protected the benefits for its member as regulated in working policies. However, 52.29% of opinions were the Union only moderately completed their role and 19% pointed out that the role of Union is ineffective. Therefore, the level of effectiveness of union in enterprises was

low and limited. They do not meet the requirements of labor as the representatives of labor who will care and protect for their benefits.

Union members of enterprises are those who do not receive the professional training about the benefits and obligations of union and female labor, hence, they do not have time to research or master the relevant policies. On the other hands, some members of union as well as owners of enterprises do not fully understand the legal foundation of social policies relating to the right obligations and benefits of working labor.

The role of labor: Most of female labor (79.15%) lived in agricultural areas before working in these enterprises and had low level of education. There percentage of female's labor educational completion was 16.71% for secondary school, 46.69% for high school, 21.20% for intermediation and 15.40% for Colleges or University. In general, they have a limited knowledge and do not get used to industrial operations or responsibility for their own jobs, as a result, they quite often make mistakes then got punishment. Due to the shortage of knowledge of labor law, workers do not fully understand their rights and benefits which enterprises should have done. Consequently, the violence of law by accident has appeared and resulted in bad impacts on labor, for example, female labor should keep one copy of working contract after signing off in case of any conflict happens.

There are, however, 17.30% of them have not kept any documents.

In fact, most of female labor does not care about the concepts of Labor Law. Results of the research on the female interest level in working policies regulated in Labor Law have shown the low interest level of them in these policies. There is, however, the difference between the answers from different enterprises. For example, the female interest level of those who work in governmental enterprises in social policies are higher than those working in private one even it was a slight difference.

After all, female labor needs to improve their own knowledge about working law by which to ensure the benefits they should receive from these policies.

III. Conclusion and Recommendation

Those above contents of how social policies impact on female labor who are working in enterprises located in Vĩnh Phúc province, have clearly pointed out following issues: Policies, law and standard values in working regulation as well as policies issued for female labor have been implemented and achieved some improvement at first stages. Female labor has received benefits but not enough and some regulations have not been deployed in time. The inequality of labor arrangement by gender still has limitation therefore it is necessary to implement following solutions:

1. Solution Overview

Edit, modify and complete some

regulations in the Labor Law on female labor, especially those are working in private enterprises.

The social policies themselves, sets of law or even documents in those law should have good ideas which are compatible with practice by which they could ensure the equality for owners and working labor.

2. Solutions in details

Working Conditions: Enterprises who do not meet the requirements of safety and clean, for example, conditions of machines and working environment have negatively impacted on the health of female labor during working. So they should repair those equipments and check the working environment to measure the level of noise as well as the degree of dust, humidity and light.

Working and Breaking Time: Regulation about working and breaking time should be well – implemented. Do not require female labor to work extra time in unavailable conditions and further explanation if needed.

Social insurance and clean and working safety: Pay attention to protect labor as well as the safety when working. It is the responsibility for owners and labor to improve the quality of life as well as working conditions for female labor.

Salary: Enterprises need to build a wage rate to report for Vĩnh Phúc Office of Labor – Invalids and Social Affairs and Vĩnh Phúc Confederation of Labor. Also, these reports should be

published for all labor.

Labor Law Implementation: Hiring female labor will be the priority as the regulation which will facilitate to offer a stable job and income.

3. Organization

Increase the responsibility and level of enterprises' owners: It is necessary to increase the general level and knowledge of policy mechanism for owners. It is the requirement for them to have training courses about working clean and safety as well as legal regulations about the wages policies, working conditions, working and breaking time, social insurance, working contract and labor protection when hiring them.

Improve the legal awareness of female labor: Improvement of the governmental operations will increase the awareness of rights and obligations for female labor. This will ensure the equality of female labor as regulation and offer special solution to increase the rate of woman joining in economic and management activities.

Increase the role of representation and ability of union: For those enterprises already had their own union, union will be the representators who protect the legal benefits for labor, especially monitor and cooperate with professional team

Improve and Strengthen the monitoring and supervision: It is requirement for both owners and labor to implement

policies on female labor. The monitor mechanism and reward evaluation have not been received the appropriate attention. Also, the implementation legal regulation and the moral standard values are not put in a right position. As a result, the improvement of monitoring how enterprises implement policies on female labor is required.

REFERENCES

1. Vĩnh Phúc Confederation of Labor. Reports on Labor Protection Summary 2010 and Schedule of 2011.
2. Vĩnh Phúc Confederation of Labor. Reports in Policy Implementation on female labor in private enterprises 2010.
3. Vĩnh Phúc Office of Labor – Invalids and Social Affairs and Vĩnh Phúc Confederation of Labor. The summary report on implementing wage policies at business manufacture area, social insurance and labor allowance in 2010.
4. Department of Socio – Economic Policies, Vĩnh Phúc Confederation of Labor. Report on results of implementing Labor law in first 6 months of 2011.
5. Labor Law of Socialist of Republic Vietnam (modified and edited in 2002 and 2006). H.: National Politics Publishing House, 2007.
6. Law on Social Insurance of Socialist of Republic Vietnam. H.: Labor Publishing House, 2007.
7. Law on Gender Equality. H.: National Politics Publishing House, 2007.
8. Trần Hàn Giang (chieft editor). Female labor at private indstrial areas and legal supportin service in Vietnam. H.: Social Sciences Publishing House, 2001.