

REPORT ON THE STATE OF WOMEN IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT VIET NAM

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY

1.1 Socio-economic profile

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is situated almost at the centre of South East Asia with a 3,730km-long land border. It is bordered by China in the north, by Laos and Cambodia in the west and the South China Sea in the east and south. The country covers an area of 330,991 square kilometers.

Viet Nam is an agricultural country. Therefore development of farm production is one of its important strategies. Food output nationwide soared from 17.5 million tonnes in 1987 to 34.3 million tonnes in 1999, doubling in 13 years. From a situation of importing an average of 1 million tonnes of food annually, by 1989, Viet Nam exported 1.4 million tonnes of rice and in 1999, 4.5 million tonnes, ranking second in the world (after Thailand) in the export of rice.

The Government has gradually stopped subsidizing state owned enterprises. As a result, these enterprises have started operating on market principles and have started renovating equipment and technology, improving management techniques and raising the competitive quality of their products. Other economic sectors such as co-operatives, individual and private capitalist economy are also encouraged by the State to boost industrial, small industrial and handicraft production. As a result, since the initial implementation of the new economic line in 1991 industrial production has reached rather high growth rates, averaging 10 to 14 per cent annually.

Economic restructuring and opening up of the economy has had positive results. From 1985 to 1999, the proportion of the primary sector in the GDP has dropped to 25.4 per cent from 43 per cent, while the proportion of industrial and service sectors soared to 34.5 per cent from 29.3 per cent and to 40.1 per cent from 27.7 per cent respectively. Parallel with economic growth, inflation dropped from 3-digit rates in 1986-1988, to 2 digits in 1989-1992, to single digit rates from 1993 to the present.

External economic relations have been expanded along a diversified and multilateral orientation and the national economy is being gradually integrated in the regional and international economies. At present, Viet Nam has forged trade ties with 159 countries. Export turnover has risen from US\$ 723.9 million in 1987 to US\$ 11.54 billion in 1999. In the same period, import turnover increased from US\$ 2.13 billion to US\$ 11.62 billion. From an extremely unfavourable trade balance, the country now keeps equilibrium in the balance of trade. As of early 2000, 700 companies from 66 countries and territories made direct investments in Vietnam with 2,290 projects, with a combined registered capital of US\$ 35.5 billion out of which US\$ 15.1 billion that has

already been invested, making a considerable contribution to the growth of Vietnam's economy.

Generally speaking, the average growth rate of GDP soared from 3.9 percent in the 1986-1990 period to 8.2 percent during the 1991-1995 and 7.18 per cent in the 1996-1999 period as shown in Table 1. In 1999-2000 the GNP per capita was US\$ 375.

Table 1: Annual GDP growth rate in per cent

	91 - 95	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000(forecast)
GDP growth rate	8.2	9.34	8.2	5.8	4.9	5.4

Source: General Department of Statistics and Ministry of Planning and Investment

1.1. 2 Population

The population has undergone many fluctuations. Viet Nam is among the countries with a rapid population growth. Even during the war, the newborn population outnumbered the total of those who were killed in the war. In recent years, the fertility rate has reduced gradually as a result of the Government's population and family planning programmes. Viet Nam's population growth is illustrated in the following tables:

Table 2: Population growth

Unit: 1,000 person

Year	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
1960	30,172	14,770	15,402	4,527	25,645
1970	41,063	20,038	21,025	8,787	32,276
1979	52,462	25,444	27,018	10,094	42,368
1990	66,233	32,327	33,906	13,281	51,908
1999	76,237.9	37,518.5	38,809.4	17,918.2	58,409.7

Source: Statistical Yearbook -1994 and 1999. General Department of Statistics

Table 3: Population of five largest cities in 1999

Unit: 1,000 person

	Hanoi	Hai Phong	Da Nang	Ho Chi Minh	Bien Hoa
Urban	1,538.9	568.2	537.9	4,204.7	607.1
Rural	1,133.2	1,104.8	146.2	832.5	1,382.4

Source: Statistical Yearbook -1999. General Department of Statistics

1.1. 3 Labour and employment

In 1998-1999, immediately preceding the 1999 census, the proportion of people aged above 15 (the workforce) participating in regular economic activities over the previous 12 months was 37,732,000, of whom 8,412,000 worked in urban areas and 29,370,000 worked in rural areas, representing 71.19 per cent of the total population and 79.53 percent of the population within the work age. This proportion in rural areas is

74.22 percent and 78.02 percent and in urban areas is 63.32 percent and 70.32 percent respectively¹.

Unemployment rate in urban areas nationwide was 6.5 percent (of the population in the bracket of over 15 years of age engaging in economic activities) and 6.74 percent (of the population within the work age engaging in economic activities). For female workforce, unemployment was 7.06 percent and 7.42 percent respectively.

The overall unemployment rate of the population within the work age engaging in economic activities is 8.96 percent and for women it is 8.76 percent. In Ho Chi Minh City, the rate was 6.88 percent and 8.36 percent respectively, in Da Nang, 6.04 percent and 8.38 percent and in Hai Phong, 8.04 percent and 8.4 percent.

The figures show that unemployment rate of women was higher than that of men urban areas nationwide. In eight territorial regions and 4 northern regions (from northern central Viet Nam outwards), men's unemployment is higher than that of women while in four regions in the south (from the coastal South central Viet Nam inwards), female unemployment rate is higher than that of men. With the exception of Hanoi and Dong Nai southern province, female unemployment rate in cities is higher than that of men.

Table 4: Proportion of female population aged above 15 engaged in regular economic activities over the past 12 months split into age bracket, urban and rural areas (Unit: percent)

Female workforce	Total		Urban areas		Rural areas	
	From over 15 years of age	Within work age	From over 15 years of age	Within work age	From over 15 years of age	Within work age
Nation-wide	67.38	77.06	55.86	64.54	71.41	81.47

Source: Results of labour - employment survey in 1999 - Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs (Results of the 1999 general census)

1.1.4 Education

Before the economic reforms, the Government subsidized education from primary school to the University. However, this policy has been changed. The Government only subsidizes primary education and provides subsidies for higher education to some poor families and ethnic minorities. Generally, the State provides basic education for everybody and asserts that lifelong education is the right and responsibility of each citizen. The State also promulgated policies to ensure education for the poor and beneficiaries of social priority system.

Table 5: Student enrolment from 1996-1999 (Unit: persons)

School year	Primary schools	Lower secondary schools	Upper secondary schools
1996-1997 Total:	10,348,964	4,872,813	1,171,267

¹ According to the general census in 1999

Female:	4,965,464	2,279,697	532,821
1997-1998			
Total	10,437,770	5,254,420	1,393,199
Female:	4,982,232	2,469,885	646,690
1998-1999			
Total:	10,250,214	5,564,888	1,657,708
Female:	4,842,589	2,596,213	776,628

Source: Education Management Information Centre, Ministry of Education and Training - 1999

Table 6: Enrolment of women in specialty and technical education (Unit: persons)

Age	Secondary technical schools	Colleges	Universities	M.Sc., M.A.	Ph.D.	Dr. Sc.
18 - 19	5,313	1,381	593	-	-	-
20 - 24	93,166	45,514	50,088	236	16	-
25 - 29	115,224	31,179	59,312	495	102	-
30 - 34	124,964	31,392	40,326	895	-	-
35 - 39	134,936	40,450	54,476	1,032	303	-
40 - 44	118,758	32,905	43,971	1,185	447	-
45 - 49	102,922	29,287	35,503	706	410	-
50 - 54	70,159	11,764	18,894	312	372	-
55 - 59	30,265	5,633	9,319	86	74	18
60	16,796	1,804	4,488	149	74	74

Source: Results of labour - employment survey in 1999 - Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs (Results of the 1999 general census)

Table 7: Proportion of literate population from ten years of age and above in urban and rural areas (Unit: persons)

	Literacy			Illiteracy		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Male	27,330,583	6,898,371	20,432,212	1,648,845	206,890	1,441,955
Female	27,254,176	7,113,549	20,140,627	3,645,972	501,702	3,144,270

Source: Results of labour - employment survey in 1999 - Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs (results of the 1999 general census).

1.1. 5 Healthcare

The Government of Vietnam promotes equal access to healthcare. It ensures that everybody is provided healthcare in conformity with socio-economic capacity. The State also provides medical treatment free of charge or with reduced charges to those who have rendered meritorious service to the country, to the poor and those who live in remote areas and ethnic minorities.

Following are fundamental healthcare targets of Vietnamese people for 2000 and 2020:

- Elevating average life expectancy to 68 (2000) and 75 (2020).
- Reducing under-one-year child mortality to 35 percent (2000) and 15-18 percent (2020).

- Decreasing the proportion of newborn babies weighing under 2,500g to 8 percent (2000) and 5 percent (2020).
- Reducing the proportion of undernourished children under-one-year to 30 percent (2000) and 15 percent (2020).
- Ensuring that no one suffers from serious malnutrition by 2020

Table 8: Birth, mortality and natural population growth rates

Unit: per thousand

	Total fertility rate		Crude birth rate		Infant mortality rate	Crude death rate	Natural growth rate	
	98	Apr 98 - Mar 99	98	Apr 98 - Mar 99			98	Apr 98 - Mar 99
Whole country	2.48	2.33	21.01	19.89	36.70	5.56	15.4	14.3

Source: Labour - employment survey in 1999 - Ministry of Labour, War Invalid and Social Affairs (the 1999 general census).

1. 2. POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Vietnam's political system comprises the Party, the Front and mass organisations. The Party is the leader while the State takes charge of management and the function of the Front and political and social mass organisations is to promote the people's mastery.

The Communist Party of Vietnam is the sole party in power. It is one of several organisations within the political system but is the leading force of that system. The Party maps out the development line, policies, strategies and orientation of the country. The Party operates within the framework of the Constitution and the law. The activities of the Party's commissions are linked to those of the commissions of the National Assembly and the boards of people's councils. The Party leads the National Assembly and people's councils at various levels. It exercises its leadership through its organisation system in State bodies and political and social mass organisations and through Party committees and members working in these bodies and organisations.²

Viet Nam's governmental machinery is divided into three parts: legislative, executive and judiciary.³

The National Assembly is the highest organ of State power. It is the main body in the exercise of democracy and is based on people's representation⁴. The National Assembly exercises legislative functions, puts forth law-framing programme for each year and undertakes overall supervision of the observance of the laws it passes. It decides on important issues related to national policy and people's livelihood, chiefly in the fields of planning and budget.

² The Communist Party of Viet Nam - Documents of the Central Committee's Seventh Plenum, 8th Legislature. National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1999. Page 23.

³ Op. Cit., page 51-52

⁴ The Communist Party of Viet Nam - Documents of the Central Committee's Third Plenum, 8th Legislature. National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1997. Page 19,20 and 21.

The Government is the executive body. The President is the Head of the State and is responsible for internal management and external relations. The Prime Minister is head of the Government. Under the Prime Minister is the Deputy Prime Minister. Under Deputy Prime Minister are ministers. Under ministers are vice ministers and then department and institute directors.

The Prime Minister leads the work of the Government and Government members. Ministers are Government members recommended by the Prime Minister and approved by the National Assembly. Ministers are responsible for management of the fields they are in charge of and accountable to the Prime Minister and the National Assembly. Vice ministers are assistants to ministers and are placed under the guidance and assignment of the latter and are responsible to the latter.

It is the function of the socialist State under the rule of law to fix orientation for economic development, to create conditions for economic sectors to develop, to run socio-economic management by law and to exercise its role of ownership over common property. There is a system of division of responsibility between the central and local government.

Local government includes peoples' councils and people's committees at provincial, district, commune, ward and township levels. Following are the functions of people's councils and people's committees⁵

People's councils are bodies exercising state power in localities and are organised at three levels: (i) province and centrally run city; (ii) district, precinct and province-run district town; and (iii) commune, ward and district town. People's councils are bodies representing the people's right to mastery, elected by local people and are responsible to local people and higher State bodies.

People's Committees are elected by People's Councils. They are the People's Councils' executive bodies, and are the administrative bodies of the State in localities. They are responsible for implementing the Constitution, law and other decrees issued by higher State bodies as well as the decisions of people's councils. People's committees are organised at three levels: province, district and commune.

Besides, there are a number of important bodies such as:

The **courts and judiciary bodies** which dispense justice and hear appeals;

The **Inspectorate** which carries out the function of prosecution and control of judiciary operation;

Investigation and **law enforcement** bodies

Justice auxiliary organisations such as **bar, law consultancy and judiciary appraisal** organisations⁶.

⁵ The Second National Report on implementation of CEDAW. Women's Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1999 pages 12,13 and 14.

⁶ The Communist Party of Viet Nam - Documents of the Central Committee's Third Plenum, 8th Legislature. National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, 1997. Page 19, 20 and 21.

Mass organisations include Viet Nam Fatherland Front, Viet Nam Confederation of Trade Unions, Viet Nam Women’s Union, Youth Unions, etc. They are socio-political organisations representing various strata of people participating in State management and unite and rally the various forces in carrying out State policies and citizens’ obligations⁷.

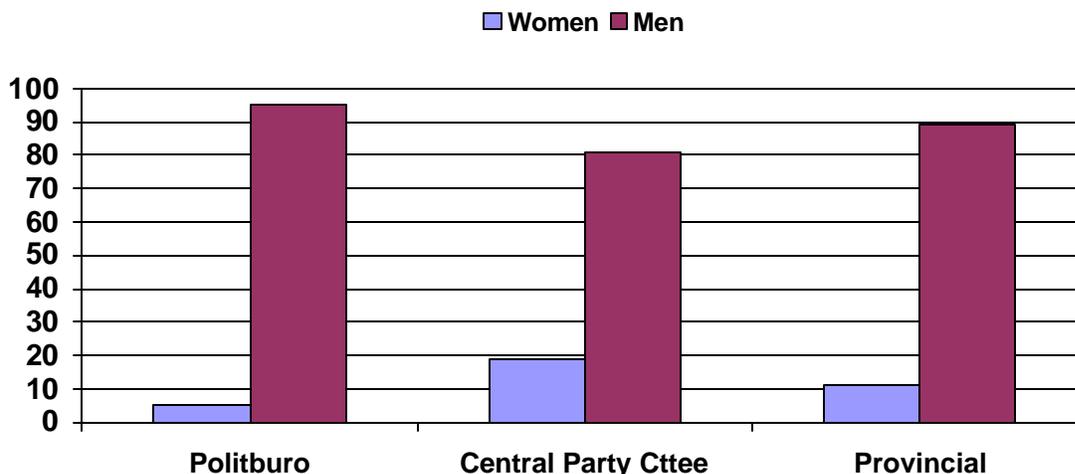
1.3 Participation and representation of women in politics

In Vietnam women and men have equal right for casting votes at all levels and to stand for elections. This right is in the 1946 Constitution and implemented in practice. In 1976 the first woman was nominated and elected to parliament.

Women’s right to participation in position of leadership and decision-making are stipulated in resolutions and policies, and apply to all levels, sectors and geographic regions. Commitment to the enhancement of the position of women is also articulated in official documents. For example, Politburo Resolution 04-ND/TW, July 1993, declares that there should be an increase in the number of women in position of authority in all sectors within Party Committees and in the Government. Two specialized institutions, the Vietnam Women’s Union (VWU) and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) represent the rights and interests of women in the community, the party and the Government.

However, due to some reasons such as remnants of Confucianism ideology, family burdens, lack of training etc. women ‘s participation in public decision–making at the national level is still limited.

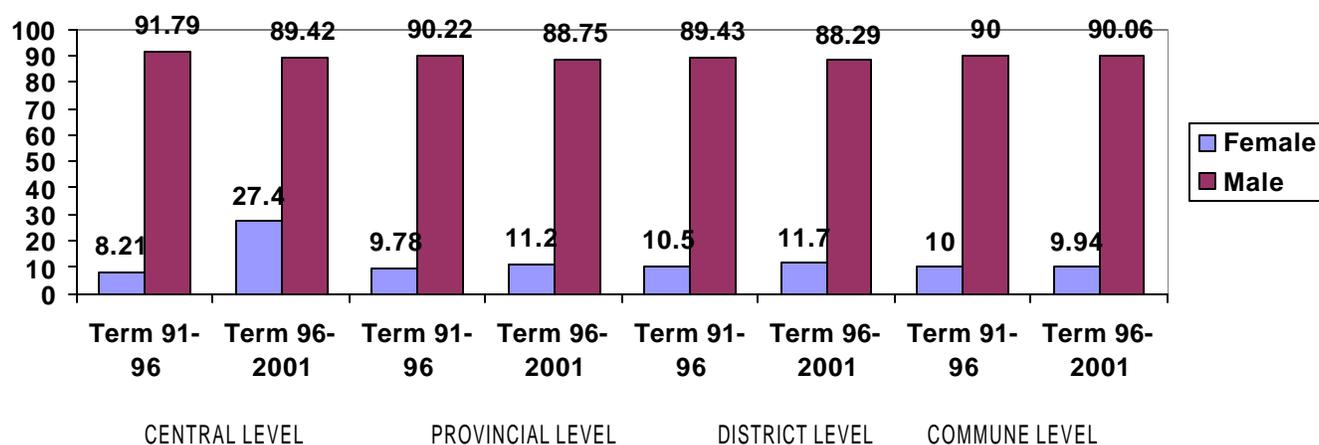
Chart 1: Women in Communist Party Committees



source: NCFAW, NCFAW-UNDP Project VIE /96/011, Statistics on Gender in Viet Nam, 11/99.

⁷ The Second National Report on implementation of CEDAW. Women’s Publishing House, Ha Noi, pages 12,13 and 14.

Chart 2: WOMEN IN PARTY COMMITTEES



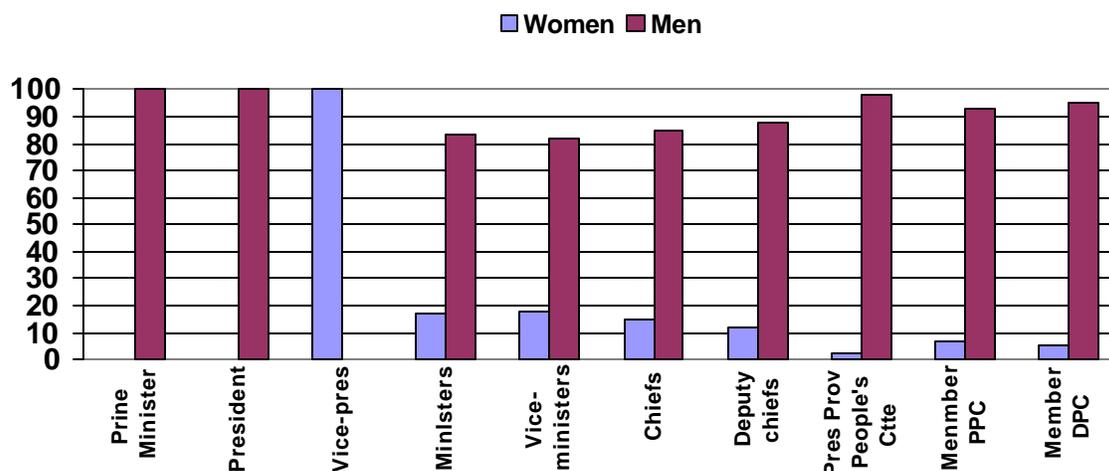
Source: The Central Party's Department of Organization and Personnel, 4/1997

Table 9: Women in key positions in Party Committees

POSITION Term 1996 – 2001	Central level		Provincial level		District level		Commune level (1)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Politburo	1	5.26						
Secretary			5	8.2	13	2.61	270	3.3
Deputy Secretary			0	0	22	3.96	171	3.03
Standing member			55	8.21	263	7.09	365	7.5
Party's Inspection Board	1	14.28	20	13.42	106	10.4	396	5.1

Source: -The second country report on the implementation of CEDMW, Hanoi 1999 - *Document of the VIII National Women's Congress, 1997.*

Chart 3: Government



Source: NCFAW, NCEAW-UNDP Project VIE /96/011, Statistics on Gender in Viet Nam, 11/99.

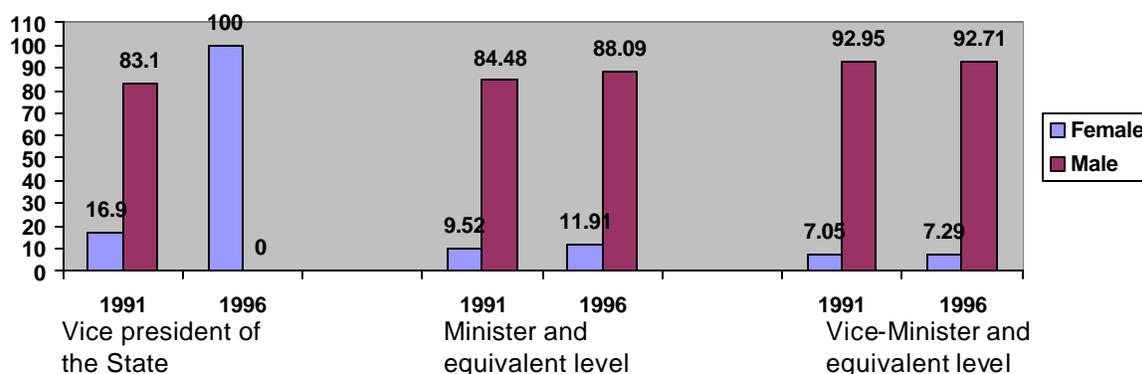
At all levels, women leaders tend to be segregated in domestic or social sectors and few are involved in sectors such as the economy, science and technology. In general, men play the dominant role in the leadership and administration of the country.

Table 10: Female leaders in central agencies

POSITION	1986		1991		1996	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Vice-president of the State	0	0	1	16.9	1	100
Female ministers and equivalent level	3	4.8	4	9.52	5	11.91
Female vice- ministers and equivalent level	13	4.9	11	7.05		7.29
Female chief of Department or Institute	13	4.2	30	13.33	46	13.01
Female deputy-chief of Department or Institute	154	6.1	54	8.97	84	12.12

Source: Document of the VII and VIII National Women's Congress (1978 and 1997)

Chart 4: Women in the Central Administration



Source: The 2nd country report on the situation of the implementation of CEDAW, Hanoi Women Publishing House, 1999

In the last decade, gender policies regarding leadership and decision – making have attained initial positive results. Women now occupy positions of leadership at all levels of the Party and the State. For example, the proportion of female deputies to the National Assembly reduced in the previous terms: 32 per cent (1971-1976), 27 per cent (1976-1981), 22 per cent (1981-1987), 18 per cent (1987-1992), 18.5 per cent (1992-1997), it has now increased to 26.22 per cent (1997-2002). Vietnam ranks 2nd in Asia-Pacific and 9th among 135 countries in the World Inter-Parliamentary Alliance in the proportion of women in the National Assembly.

2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The notion of urban governance in Viet Nam means: city, provincial, district government including Party Committees, People's Committees, People's Councils. Under these are mass organizations and other agencies.

2.1 Women's participation in urban local government

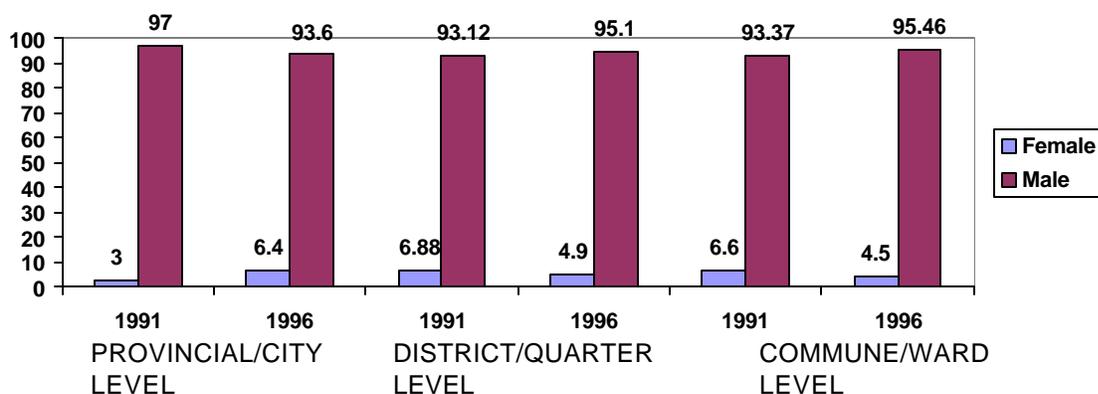
Progressive policies relating to Gender issues have been enacted in many laws such as the Law on Marriage and the Family (issued in 1999 and revised in 1986 and 2000), the 1992 Constitution, the Law on Nationalities, the Labour Code, the Law on Inheritance and Penal Code. The State acknowledges equality between men and women both in the family and society. Men and women have equal right to vote and stand for election. For promoting the participation of women in urban local government, the amended Constitution 1992, Article 63 declares that: "male and female citizens have equal rights in all fields – political, economic, cultural, social, and family... The State and Society shall create all necessary conditions for women to raise their qualifications in all fields and fully play their roles in society etc."

The Marriage and Family Law 1986, Article 12 states that: “Husband and wife shall be free to choose their respective professions and to take part in political, economic, cultural and social activities.”

The Penal Code 1992, Article 125 declares that: “Any person employing the use of violence or committing other serious acts in order to prevent women from participating in political, economic, scientific, cultural or social activities shall be subject to a caution, to non – custodial reform for a period of up to one year, or to a term of imprisonment of between three months and one year⁸.”

While no formal or informal forums, meetings or other consultative mechanisms limits or constrains the participation of women in urban local governance, the rate of women in leadership positions in the People’s Committees, which administer policy and programmes at lower levels are low. Very few women hold leading positions in the key fields such as economic management, planning, and scientific research and management.

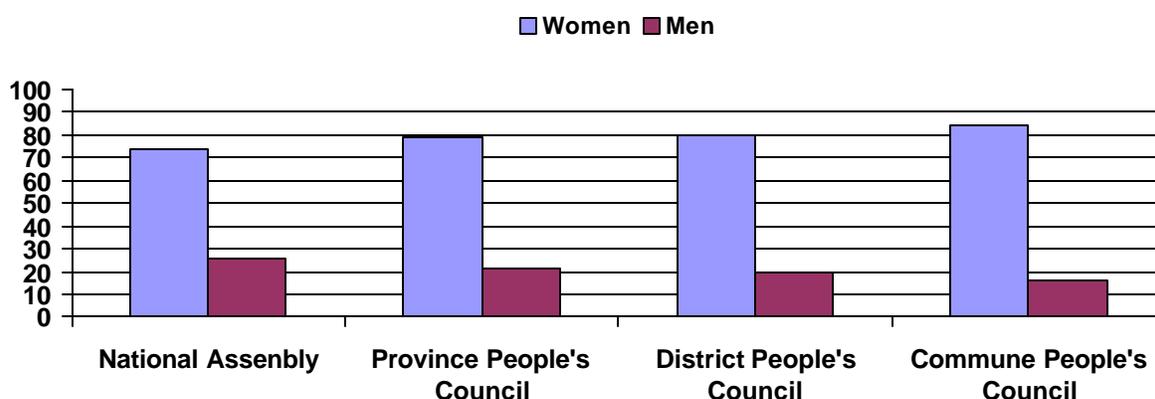
Chart 5: WOMEN IN PEOPLE’S COMMITTEE



Source: The Government Commission for Organization and Personnel 4/1997.

The National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) coordinated with Vietnam Women Unions (VWU) and local governments to organize training for female candidates for the 1999 People’s Councils elections. The contents of the training were: promotion of political, economic, cultural knowledge, gender awareness, leadership skills etc. Simultaneously, NCFAW carried out propaganda, advocacy campaigns to encourage people to vote for women candidates. They used local radio to talk about gender in society in general and in elections in particular. In the electors’ meetings, they created opportunities for female candidates to meet and talk with voters. Because of these activities the number and quality of elected women increased. Moreover, elected women had more self-confidence. The impact of these activities was considerable and led to changed views and attitudes of people about women in leadership. This model will be studied and replicated in the coming period.

⁸ The Fundamental Law, Thegioi Publishers, Hanoi, 1993, P. 25,26,84

Chart 6: Elected positions – 1999

Source: NCFAW, NCFAW-UNDP Project VIE /96/011, Statistics on Gender in Viet Nam, 11/99.

Table 11: Female representatives in people's councils at various levels nationwide since 1994

	Percentage of female representatives 1994 – 1999 term	Percentage of female representatives 1999 – 2004 term
Province	20.4%	22.5%
District	18.0%	20.7%
Commune	14.3%	16.3%

Source: Local Government Department, Government Personnel Commission.

2.2 Gender sensitising of urban local government

The empowerment of women is one of Vietnam's key development strategies. This strategy is included in state laws and government policies and has been systematically carried out. Today, attention has been paid to communication on the equality between women and men in all fields and gender theory through the mass media (including the radio, T.V, newspapers and magazines). Moreover, many training courses on Gender have been held from the national to the grass-roots level for different target groups including intellectuals, staff of government and non governmental organizations, policy makers, managers, social activists and women themselves. Many field researches on gender issues have been undertaken and have contributed initial results to improving social awareness as well as made new recommendations relating to women and gender issues. To be effective policies and laws have to be based on reality. Vietnamese social scientists have assisted its policy makers and law formulators by undertaking field research to address many problems relating to gender equality. Gender theories have been taught in universities in order to provide students with basic knowledge and research methodologies so that they can join this new field of research.

3. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Legal and political initiatives

In Viet Nam there are no special laws, legislation, constitutional amendments that mandate or provide a quota for women's representation in urban local government. While there are programmes to recruit or encourage women to stand in the national government, there are no special programmes for women in the urban local government.

Table 12: Ratio of female Presidents and Vice-presidents of Peoples Committees

Position	Provincial/city level			District/quarter level			commune/ward level		
	89-94	94-99	99-2004	89-94	94-99	99-2004	89-94	94-99	99-2004
People's Committee member	3	6.4		6.88	49		6.63	4.54	
President	2	1.64	3.3	1.4	1.8	1.8	2.82	2.6	1.3
Vice-president	26	11.56	13.48	5.27	8.5	8.5	3.58	1.28	2.6

Source: The Government Commission for Organization and Personnel (GCOP), 4/1997.

3.2 Training and support mechanisms for women in urban local government

All candidates (male and female), who are appointed or elected in urban local government are entitled to receive special training and need to pass examinations at the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy. The Personnel Department of the concerned Local Government decides who should attend the special training and who should give the examination. Up to now, the percentage of women cadres, who have received training, is still low. In 1996-1997 only 5.5 percent of those who received training were women. In 1997-1998 this figure improved to 12.3 percent. In 1998-1999 the figure slipped to 10,7 percent and in 1999-2000 it increased again to 15,3 percent (Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy, 5 /2000). However as stated in Section 2.1, due to the special efforts of the government, the percentage of women receiving training will increase in the near future.

4. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

To make a deeper inquiry in women's participation in urban local government, the following section will focus on qualitative analysis of 16 cases. The author tried to select a bigger sample but due to several constraints this was not possible. Below is the sample structure and results of the qualitative treatment of the group of interviewed women in decision-making positions in urban local government.

The positions of the sixteen women in government are as follows:

Deputy Chairperson of the National Assembly	01
Permanent member of the National Assembly; Head of National Assembly's Cultural, Youngster and Children Education Commission:	01

Deputy chairperson of municipal or provincial people's committees:	06
Provincial Party committee deputy secretary, chairperson of provincial people's committees:	01
Precinct Party committee secretary	01
Chairperson of provincial women's associations:	01
Head of provincial people's mobilization commissions:	01
Deputy chairperson of provincial people's councils:	01
Director of precinct Party committee's inspection board:	01
Deputy chairperson of precinct people's committees:	01
Deputy director of childcare commissions:	01

Of the 16 women in leading position, 10 are immediate local government leaders while 6 others belong to electoral system.

4.1 Education

Of the group of interviewed women, 12 are university graduates and 4 are postgraduates. Generally speaking, the group of women in leading position of urban local government acquired high levels of education.

4.2 Family circumstance

All of the interviewees are married and include 2 widows. 12 out of 16 women have two children each, including 2 who no longer have to bring up their children. The afore-said figures reveal that women in leading position are those who did not give birth to a great number of children. Almost all women in leading position do not have dependent members in their families except one who has 3 dependent members.

4.3 Age structure

Most of women leading urban local government are aged between 41 and 60 (15 persons). Only one was aged in the 20-30 year bracket.

4.4 Entering local governments

Almost all women interviewed have no relatives who are either politicians or government executives (13 persons). There are 2 persons whose relatives are government executives. As such, it can be said that those women who strive to become leaders have not benefited from special favours from relatives or sought support from relatives who are political leaders or government executives.

The majority of women in leading positions said that the present work they are performing is an assignment (8 persons). The remainders either were elected or work on a voluntary basis.

“I find my present post suitable to my forte. I also find that women and children are those who suffer much, chiefly women in rural areas. As such, being a woman, I must take a leading role” (Case No. 8).

“I decide to undertake the present work because it suits my training and my specialty and I myself love it” (Case No. 3).

“I like to participate in social activities so as to confirm women’s role and through them, to prove that women are able to perform these complicate work. Therefore, I want to create opportunities for many other women to be self confident and understand that there is no work that women cannot do” (Case No. 10).

The number of women who are constantly motivated and encouraged to undertake leading position is rather high. 12 of the interviewees asserted that they were always motivated and encouraged to undertake leading position in local government. The number of women motivated and encouraged by their families and colleagues represents a highest percentage (5 persons) while 3 women said they constantly received motivation and encouragement from Party organizations. One said she received encouragement solely from her husband. Three avoided answering while two revealed that they were motivated and encouraged by no one.

The path to rise up to the present leading position by the interviewed women is extremely hard and rough. Results of case interviews show that almost all of those interviewed have the qualities of perseverance and firmness of purpose and emphasized education and learning in their lives. Many have had to overcome difficulties and obstacles from family and society to study and increase their knowledge (cases Nos. 1, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 15). Many graduated with distinction, surpassing male students and were recommended for continued study. One was even recommended for a doctoral degree (case No. 1).

There are women who took part in the resistance war, were imprisoned by enemy for many years and then worked their way up from being an executive from ward, commune to precinct, municipal and central level (case No. 2). Almost all interviewed women have been promoted gradually from the lowest post in local government system.

Most of the women who have striven to attain the present position have emphasized education and learning in their lives.

“I’m a country girl who was sent to workers’ and farmers’ complimentary education school, then entered the Agricultural College where I studied for 5 years. After that I was sent for a two-year study at the National Political Institute. Having worked for two years, I had to make further study in the Soviet Union. My endeavour to rise up was difficult indeed” (Case No. 8).

“Initially, I had to work to earn a living. After making gradual effort, I have been trusted, fostered and assigned the present work by my organization” (Case No. 5).

“I finished the tenth form in 1970, participated in the work of the Youth Union’s commune chapter, became commune Party cell secretary, then farm co-operative accountant. After assuming various leading posts at commune and district level, I am now appointed chairperson of the provincial people’s committee” (Case No. 10).

“I worked as a teacher from 1968 to 1982 and was recognized as an excellent teacher for many years. With all my endeavours, I became vice director of the education service and then vice chairperson of the provincial people’s committee in charge of culture and education work” (Case No. 13).

4.5 Factors hindering women’s effort

Answering the question of “Is there any factor that hinders women’s effort, for example in election or recommendation?” the number of women holding that there is hindrance and there is no is equal (8 say yes and 8 say no).

Gender difference is the fundamental factor that makes women’s effort to take leading position more difficult than men. Almost all interviewed women shared this viewpoint.

“At the 1982-1986 term of the district people’s committee, I was recommended by the district people’s council to stand election for the post of member of the secretariat of district people’s committee. At that time, I was just 30; as such, the organizing board and the presidium met three times to ask me to withdraw from the electoral list to give way to a man because if I took the post, that man would be eliminated” (Case No. 7).

“If the persons assigned by the Party to carry out personnel work lack a sense of objectivity, are biased with individuality while acting as consultant and the senior echelon lacks information about a cadre, then it would be very difficult for that cadre to be promoted. Moreover, if a male and a female cadre meet the same conditions, it is not certain that that female cadre would be promoted” (Case No. 9, 16).

“I may surpass other comrades in terms of working capacity and service duration, but when making introduction to guests or at conferences, male colleagues are often introduced first, before female” (Case No. 14).

“I myself am capable of undertaking a post higher than the present one. However another person is holding that post. And the personnel division does not want to put women in posts that are higher than those held by men. And in society, not all people support women” (Case 8,16).

“In fact, there is “competition” with male cadres. For instance, at the election to the post of provincial people committee deputy chairperson in charge of cultural and social affairs, there were three candidates - two male cadres and me. Being a woman, I could not campaign for myself” (Case No. 15,16).

Outdated concepts of “respect for men and disdain for women” originated from Confucianism and still exist. They are a great hindrance to women’s effort, especially in elections. This is a factor that all interviewed women admitted. This attitude of disdain towards women is responsible for the lack confidence that many voters show towards women candidates and often vote for their male counterparts.

“50 percent of the population in the precinct are Hoa (people of Chinese origin), the majority of whom have not eradicated the idea of “giving birth to one boy is yes, and to ten girls is none”. Under such circumstances for women to win elections is really difficult and they can only be promoted through recommendations” (Case No. 4).

“Society does not respect and trust women as men” (Case No. 1).

“The factor that obstructs a woman to stand election and to be recommended is the idea of “respect for men and disdain for women” (Case No. 14).

Family burden also constitutes a major hindrance. Results of investigation demonstrate that women who engage in political work in cities have tried to keep good familial relations so as to concentrate on work and training. Almost all of them have happy, harmonious and united families. In our survey samples, there is no woman with a great number of children, the greatest being two. 13 out of 15 interviewed female executives said that they had no prevention from families in fulfilling their assignments. This shows that it will be difficult for women who are not supported by their families to acquire positions of leadership.

“Of course, being a woman, I have met with a number of difficulties. Besides the working time at my agency, I have to spend time for my family, my husband and children and have little time to come into social contacts. Therefore, my understanding of society as well as information sources in various fields I am supposed to access is very restricted. I therefore have very little time to spend to care for myself (in terms of health and beauty), to read books and journals and to study. All these require a rational arrangement of time in order to fulfill my tasks” (Case No. 9).

“Apart from working time, there must be contacts and communication in order to have more information necessary for managerial and social work. However, women’s familial function is very great and I still have to spend time for my family. Consequently, my integration and obtaining of information is very restricted” (Case No. 10).

“There are many hindrances to women because female executives, besides the tasks assigned as men, are still burdened with the duties and functions of a wife, a mother and many other domestic work. If women do not know how to arrange their time in a scientific way, they will be embarrassed in terms of time and quality of work. This is the cause for women to exclude themselves from leading position in local government” (Case No. 15).

Generally speaking the interviewees did not face harassment from their superiors and colleagues. Most of them asserted that better gender awareness over the recent years had changed the behaviour of many executives and colleagues. As a result, more respect had been shown to women in leading positions. Nevertheless, a lot of issues needed to be settled in the treatment regarding male and female executives in terms of distribution of responsibility, promotion, recommendation, etc.

A no small number of male executives are still worried when promoting female cadres to leading position.

“Some male executives who were my predecessors have admonished me that there was no use for women participating much in social work. Women’s work is taking care of their families, husbands and children. Participation in politics and local government is men’s work. Of course they matched their words with their deeds: they did not support me in work or even hindered and caused difficulties to me” (Case No. 15).

“Some executives did not back me when I was recommended to stand election for the post of district Party committee secretary because I was a woman” (Case No. 7).

“When I speak about female cadres and policies regarding them, the chairman of the meeting and some others expressed disapproval because they held that being a woman, I always struggle for my gender” (Case No. 7).

Many male colleagues also assumed a competitive attitude and showed no cooperation.

“Even among colleagues there exists a disdain for women. Outwardly they said priority should be given to women, but in fact they did not want to assign work to their female colleagues” (Case No. 15).

“Of my subordinates at present, there are many that were my colleagues some five or ten years ago including male colleagues. Initially, when I was promoted, not everybody “submitted” me. Of course, they did not speak out, but I understood implicitly through their work and their attitude. It was their attitude that made me to rise up and step by step conquer them by my intellectual superiority and deeds”.

The aforementioned views expressed by female executives demonstrate not only their difficulties but also their vast will to rise up.

Apart from factors that hamper women analysed above, women still meet with other difficulties and obstacles when holding leading positions in municipal and urban local government. Nine out of the fifteen interviewed women stated that they had met a lot of difficulties and hindrances. Some of these are discussed below.

Some were of the opinion that prejudice still exists when electing women to leading position

“There is no prohibition but hindrance exists” (Case No. 15).

“A portion of men have no confidence in women’s capacity to hold leading position in local government” (Case No. 8).

“Though there is progress regarding viewpoint and awareness, in reality, promotion of women to leading posts is still very limited. The number of women keeping key leading posts at provincial, district and commune level as well as directorship of services, sectors and businesses is still few” (Case No. 13).

“Key female cadres at precinct and district level and at municipal services and sectors are still few. It is more difficult for women to elbow themselves into municipal local government. In many terms of the provincial people’s committee, there was only one woman at the most to hold the post of vice chairman. I know that there are many female cadres who have capacity and good quality but cannot hold leading posts in municipal local government because their superiors’ failure to show concern and create conditions for them” (Case No. 9).

The awareness of cadres engaged in personnel work also constitutes a major hindrance to promoting women to leading posts in urban local government.

“The prevention of women from keeping leading posts originates from the limited view women adopted by decision-making executives at various levels. Especially, those working in personnel work have not adopted a judicious viewpoint” (Case No. 7).

Some interviewees felt that prevention of women from holding leading posts in municipal and urban local government also comes from women themselves. For example, they felt that women do not exert much personal effort, lack consistency and firmness in dealing with work and suffer from inferiority complex and even narrow-mindedness.

“Besides men’s lack of generosity and tolerance, women’s holding of leading posts in local government are still limited by their own inferiority complex” (Case No. 4).

“In some special cases, it is because a number of women in leading position in urban local government have not made bold to use the assigned power and therefore have been restricted to unimportant jobs” (Case No. 8).

“The government management at various echelons demands firmness and a high degree of appraisal with certainty. Therefore, head of an agency must have a strong character, as each of her decisions is very important. These requirements do not agree with women’s flexible, tender or convincing character. This has influenced the promotion of women’s forte and knowledge in leading work” (Case No. 10).

4.6 Improvements in the position of women in decision-making in local government

During the renovation years in Viet Nam, the atmosphere has become more favourable towards women’s status in society, including their holding of leading position in urban local government. Market-oriented mechanisms have created a natural filter that permits energetic, capable and educated women to be selected to hold positions commensurate with their qualifications. The market mechanism has consolidated and promoted the status of women in society as outlined by legal documents, policies and directives confirming women’s position and role in national industrialisation and modernisation. The Viet Nam Women’s Union and women’s mass organisations have made positive contribution to these changes. Almost all interviewed women asserted that it was the renovation drive that had created more favourable conditions for them to advance in their professional careers. It is women’s positive and concrete contributions to the fruits of the renovation drive that has created initial changes in society’s fixed ideas concerning women.

“There have been changes in society’s fixed ideas regarding women’s capacity and struggle, that is to say society has admitted that women are capable of participating in urban local government on an equal foot with men” (Case No. 5,16).

“There have been changes more favourable to women because there is dissemination on gender equality and satisfactory eradication of backward customs and practices including the idea of respect for men and disdain for women” (Case No. 7).

“Through the recent elections of people’s councils at various levels, I see that the atmosphere is more favourable to women and the percentage of women’s participation in people’s councils is higher.” (Case No 9,16)

“Generally speaking, there have been changes and increased awareness by society, the various echelons and sectors vis-à-vis women. Awareness and assessment

concerning women's role in society and in holding leading position as well as their role in the management and direction of society as a whole is increasing" (Case No. 13).

4.7 Changes among women themselves

In addition to the changes in society, many of the interviewees were of the opinion that women themselves now have a better awareness of gender issues and have overcome their inferiority complex and have become more self-assertive.

"Women themselves have made endeavours to grow up and fulfill satisfactorily their tasks, at the same time to build up an abundant, happy, equal and progressive family." (Case No. 3)

"Many women have expressed their political resolve and intellect through meetings with electors when contesting elections." (Case No. 9)

"A portion of women have made bold and pioneering strides, fulfilled their tasks and struggled for women's equality and progress." (Case No. 13)

4.8 Affirmative action in favour of women

Almost all interviewed women held that the State has worked out priority policy vis-à-vis women in leading position in government, especially in some work considered suitable to women such as education, labour, social welfare, culture and care of children. However, a great number of them were also of the opinion that priorities granted to women were only at the level of policy and settlement of common issues. The concretization of these policies in practice and in each specific case still revealed many drawbacks.

"In Ho Chi Minh City, the women work board of the municipal Party Committee has been concerned with female cadres' planning work, paying attention to outstanding students and working out systems and policies to encourage them to rise up." (Case No. 2)

"We have promulgated a policy of granting particular subsidy to women when they study to improve their specialty and managerial level." (Case No. 3)

"During the renovation years, we have given some minor priorities to women. For example, in the policy to retrain cadres, provinces granted extra subsidy to participants in training courses. The subsidies given to women subsidy is VND50,000/month higher than men." (Case No 15)

"A great number of documents and directives regarding women's working conditions have been promulgated. This proves that urban local government has been concerned with women." (Case No. 4)

Many women were of the view that the concretization of priorities given to women participating in urban local government is still limited.

"As men working as cadres are numerous, it is easy to select them. They also have easy access to and often work with cadres in charge of personnel work, therefore these cadres and executives are always close to them and they get promotion more easily than women." (Case No. 7)

“Though there are certain priorities, women still have to strive for self-training and to rise up. Many workshops must be organised for exchange of views with men at various echelons so that they will really sympathize with and understand more about women. This will put women in a more favourable situation when there is promotion. Women must be educated in methodology and must be bolder when assigned with tasks.” (Case No .8,16).

4.9 Impact of women in leading positions in local government on society

All of the interviewees were of the view that the growth of the number of women holding leading position in urban local government has exerted a positive influence on improvement of women’s position in society. They felt that women leaders in local urban government were extremely necessary as they contributed to the improvement of women’s role in society. Outcomes of recent sociological survey have demonstrated that this assessment is correct. Some respondents felt that Women in leading position have a better understanding of women’s problem.

“Women in leading positions will understand women’s existing conditions as well their requirements and difficulties and consequently will be more concerned about gender issues.” (Case No. 1)

“When women lead local urban government, they understand and show more concern to problems related to women’s and children’s interest. More than any one else, they are women and therefore have more sympathy and understanding of gender and child related issues and consequently they will better help formulate policies related to women and children.” (Case No. 9)

“Women participating in local government, apart from managerial function in their assigned fields, will facilitate discussion and suggestion of policies and orientations relevant to women and children.” (Case No. 110)

“Whenever there is a certain number of women in local government, more concern will be shown to women’s interest. For example, in Tan Binh precinct and precinct No. 11 of Ho Chi Minh City where Party committee secretary and precinct chairperson are women the percentage of women at various levels in the precincts is also rather high (40-50 percent). So are northern Tay Ninh and Tuyen Quang provinces.” (Case No. 2)

“The quantitative (and also qualitative) development of women in government at various levels has created opportunities for women to participate in formulation of province’s and each area’s plans and projects for socio-economic development.” (Case No. 13)

“It is the growing number of women participating in local government that has caused debates and decision on many issues and policies regarding gender. The large number of women taking part in local government also creates an identity in work and mutual assistance among them so that they may satisfactorily fulfill their tasks.” (Case No. 10)

4.10 Contributions by women in leading positions urban local government

Results of the survey reveal that almost all female leaders of urban local government have satisfactorily fulfilled their tasks and made positive contributions to socio-economic development of cities. They have also contributed actively to the struggle for women's equality and have constantly worked to raise women's positions and role in society. These contributions find their expression in two aspects. First, they have supported promotion of women in decision-making positions in political, economic, cultural and social aspects at various levels. Secondly, they have participated in formulating and carrying out specific policies to improve women's situation in society.

"In my working capacity, I have always worked out policies to increase female cadres in various fields and assign them task commensurate with their capacity." (Case No. 5)

"In my capacity as chairperson of women union chapter, I have participated in female cadres' planning, supported and created conditions for women to participate in leading local government at various levels and the provincial people's council. I also joined various divisions and sectors in recommending promotion of women to leading posts." (Case No. 8)

"As chairperson of the provincial people's committee, I have put forth solutions to increase female cadres in direction and management work at various levels and raise the percentage of female executives and the proportion of women participating in people's councils at various echelons." (Case No. 10)

"I have always created the most favourable conditions for women to take part in leading local government in pivotal fields and created conditions for them to be equal with men." (Case No. 11)

Reality has demonstrated that once women reach decision-making positions in urban local governments, these local governments show more concern to improving living and working conditions of women. Almost all women in leading position consider this as part of their responsibility.

"If women participate in local government, such as holding the post of vice chairperson of provincial, district, township people's committees, all women's activities are favourable including allocation of budgetary fund to women's work and women's voice will be heard in executives' meetings." (Case No. 8)

"I have been concerned with women's interest whenever I make decision on issues relating to women. I always put forward decisions to care for and protect their interest and progress." (Case No. 1)

"Whenever I put forward documents or decide on an issue, I always mull over whether it is beneficial to women and children. For instance, I have decided to grant a VND 100,000 allowance to women when they have intra-uterine devices inserted." (Case No. 7)

“In my working capacity I have directed, organized and coordinated many gender-awareness courses for key cadres of the province, districts, township and various sectors in the province, especially before elections to people’s councils.” (Case No. 13)

All of the interviewees stated that they had participated in action programmes and projects to improve women’s participation in local government.

“Previously when I was chairperson of the committee progress of Vietnamese women, I provided guidance and acted as director of project “Improving capacity to implement the national action plan for women’s progress till 2000” (project VIE -96-001). I guided formulation of the national strategy and national action plan for women’s progress.” (Case No 2)

“I have participated in many programmes and projects for women’s development such as malnutrition control programme, hunger eradication and poverty alleviation programmes, etc.” (Case No. 3)

“I am director of the precinct executives’ club with a membership of 94 women. The club has become a place where female cadres meet, exchange experience and improve their awareness, thus helping them to better fulfill their assigned tasks.” (Case No. 5)

“I have successfully provided guidance to a provincial project for promotion of women and a project to eradicate illiteracy for women and girls. I also helped foster gender knowledge for local government executives at various levels and fostered female candidates to people’s councils at various echelons so that they have more prestige when meeting with voters.” (Case No. 7)

“I have made positive suggestions to the local government in issuing provincial decision No. 19 which stipulates that women attending training courses will be entitled to an attendance allowance 50 percent higher than that of men and a policy to grant an extra salary subsidy worth VND 50,000/month to female cadres whose children are under 3 years of age.”

“In the recent elections to the people’s council and people’s committee, I have provided guidance and consultation, recommended people to stand elections and ensured an increased proportion of female participation in these organizations. I have given a lot of comments and created conditions for female candidates to come close to electors so that the latter have confidence in female candidates.” (Case No. 10)

Almost all interviewees have participated in formulation and direction of municipal or local projects for development or improvement of conditions. Their contributions have resulted in initiating projects, ensuring that these projects are successfully completed and in carrying out projects started by their predecessors to a successful completion.

“During the time I worked in the provincial people’s committee, I formulated many programmes and projects and provided direct implementation guidance to the city’s healthcare, education, cultural and scientific fields.” (Case No. 1)

“I have planned and satisfactorily implemented projects to improve people’s health in the province. I also gave instruction to medical consultation and treatment of illness and helped completely eliminate iodine deficiency and alleviate goitre for women and people in the locality.” (Case No. 7)

“I have formulated and directed projects to research issues related to single women and assisted them. I also implemented a project to improve the awareness of women candidates before they stood for elections to people’s councils. I also implemented a project to control the trafficking of women.” (Case No. 8)

“I have participated in formulating and directing many programmes and projects at the local level such as the programme for improvement of urban environment, the programme for farm economy, garden, field and fruit tree development and programme to mobilize people in the construction of infrastructure, roads, electricity and safe water supply, etc.” (Case No. 10)

“The programmes for which I provided guidance in relation to the city’s cultural and social affairs sectors are and will bear satisfactory results.” (Case No 14)

Fourteen of the 16 women interviewed stated that their participation in leading local government had not caused any adverse impact, on the contrary, even helped spur common progress. Two refused to give answers perhaps because they felt that the query was subtle and sensitive.

4.11 People’s perception of women in local government

Answering the question “Do you think that whether people’s concept regarding women participating in leading urban local government has changed, and if so, has it changed for the better or worse in the past ten years?” all female executives held that the change was for the better. No one was of the opinion that the change was for the worse.

“Through elections to National Assembly deputies and people councils’ representatives at various levels, people have supported female candidates (previously there were people who did not want to vote for female candidates because they thought that women should not take part in public life and care for family affairs instead.)” (Case No. 22)

“At present, more and more women are participating in local government work and holding many key posts in the city as well as of its 22 precincts and districts.” (Case No. 4)

“The concept of respect for men and disdain for women has gradually changed. At present, many families that have had 2 daughters or 1 daughter do not want to give birth to more children. In the mountainous region where people meet with difficulties and their cultural standard is still limited, as many girls are coming to schools as boys. The number of women participating in leading local government from the grassroots to provincial level has grown. For the first time, in my province the people’s committee deputy chairperson is a woman, while a woman of H’mong ethnic minority acts as district people’s committee deputy chairperson. To date, five provincial and district people’s committee deputy chairpersons, two people’s council deputy chairpersons and two enterprise directors are women in the whole province.” (Case No. 7)

“People at present have adopted better concept regarding women. For example, previously it would be very difficult to appoint a woman as chairperson of a ward people’s committee; now it is much easier.” (Case no. 8)

4.12 On future plans and female cadres' aspiration

Answering the question of future intentions and aspirations, most of female executives demonstrated their determination to fulfill satisfactorily their assigned tasks and wished to confirm to society that women's participation in leading local government is completely suitable and their work was not worse than men. They also expressed their desire that society will have more and more judicious awareness and behaviour regarding gender.

"I hope Party, State agencies and mass organisations will carry out satisfactorily gender equality in all fields and at all levels. Specifically, there must be plans to train, foster, appoint and rationally use female cadres. Policies must be worked out and conditions created to alleviate women's family burden." (Case No. 2)

"At present, I wish to undertake research in my area on the population question among the H'mong ethnic group and find solutions to reduce H'mong women's domestic work and enable them to participate in social work and in leading local government." (Case No. 7)

"I want to fulfill my assigned tasks in an extremely satisfactory manner in order to confirm, by the result of my work, my role as an executive of the municipal people's committee and I wish, by the quality and efficiency of my work, my ethics and morals, to assert that female cadres are successfully able to perform their work." (Case No. 14)

"I wish to continue my education and increase my managerial knowledge further." (Case No. 12)

4.13 Recommendations of the interviewees

Almost all female executives' recommendations are focused on the necessity to have rational policies and mechanisms so that women may participate actively in all aspects of social activities.

"Co-ordination between Party, local government and mass organizations in carrying out strategies and plans of action in the name of women's progress must be strengthened. By so doing, it also means striving for gender equality in all fields." (Case No. 2)

Some views focused on strengthening state managerial role regarding actions for gender equality and elevating quality and operational efficiency of the Committee for Women's Progress. Many are of the opinion that the Labour Code must be amended as they deem the stipulation that women retire at the age of 55 while men retire at 60 unreasonable. According to them, that is not equitable and equal. (Case Nos. 5, 6 and 7)

"After this study and survey, I aspire that specific measures will be worked out to help women raise their level of knowledge through short-term training courses and workshops and conditions will be created for them to have access to more information. The State must map out policies and measures for women to participate in local government. Such policies must be endorsed thoroughly from the Politburo of the

Communist Party of Viet Nam and the Government so as to create a basis for the subordinate levels to implement it.” (Case No. 8)

Some are of the view that the State must create conditions for women to participate in local government when they are still young so that they may steadily advance in their careers and that if concern is not shown to this question, women when promoted later on, will not enjoy confidence when they are assigned with difficult tasks.

To conclude this qualitative analysis, we wish to reiterate a proposal and desire of a female executive, i.e. “Let female executives unite further their hands in the name of gender equality.” (Case No. 4)

5. ANNOTATED LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

5.1 Annotated list of organizations

Vietnam Women Union
39 Hang Chuoi, Hanoi
Tel: (844) 9713436- 9713437

National Committee for the Advancement of Women
39 hang Chuoi, Hanoi
Tel; (844) 8210068 – 9711350
fax: (844) 9711349 – 9711348
e-mail ncfaw@undp.org.vn

5.2 List of individuals

Ms. Ha thi Khiet, the president of NCFAW and VWU

Ms Tran Mai Huong
Tel; (844) 8210068 – 9711350
fax: (844) 9711349 – 9711348
e-mail ncfaw@undp.org.vn

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIONS

Viet Nam still pursues electoral system. For example, to elect deputies to the National Assembly and people's councils at various levels, the Fatherland Front will put forth a list of eligible candidates. In addition to this, there are a number of candidates who stand election of their own. This list will be presented at electors' meeting for discussion. After that, elections will be held. In all the electoral links, there are many deficiencies regarding equal treatment of women candidates. Therefore, we would like to recommend a number of effective and specific measures to develop female quantity and quality in urban government:

- 6.1 There must be plans to constantly foster and improve knowledge for women in State bodies and mass organisations so as to create a supplementary sources of female executives great in quantity and strong in quality.
- 6.2 Courses on gender must be held for cadres at levels competent of recommending candidates to stand election so as to mitigate old ideas on gender (if any) among these cadres. The issue of women holding leading position must be officially put forward at meetings to recommend candidates to leading apparatus. Attention must be paid to female candidates who stand in election on their own.
- 6.3 Before elections, special training courses must be held for female candidates, with special attention to leadership and managerial knowledge and skills).
- 6.4 Wide-reaching dissemination campaigns and canvassing must be organised among people so that they adopt a judicious attitude and viewpoint concerning election of women to leading organs.
- 6.5 In both the *election* and *appointment* process, it is necessary to select really capable women and to avoid favouritism and injustice. By this way, the quality of women in leading positions will be improved. Women in leading positions must be trained in gender so that they are able to put forward and settle women's issues in policies at macro and micro level.
- 6.6 To continue training elected women in leadership knowledge and skills so that they may stand firm in their positions.
- 6.7 Not only the Viet Nam Women's Union and the National Commission for Women Progress but all State bodies and local government at various echelons must be responsible for raising quantity and improving quality of women in leading position.

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