

Ethnic policies to reduce poverty in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in Vietnam: Patterns and solutions toward 2020

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Abstract. Over the past few years, the Party and State have approved policies to support development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas to create conditions for developing and raising the material and spiritual life of ethnic minority people, removing this area from poverty and integration into the common development of the whole country. However, the results of poverty reduction are not stable, the gap between rich and poor between regions, population groups have not been narrowed, especially in the mountainous districts mainly focused on ethnic minorities. The paper focuses on the following: Reviewing the Ethnic's poverty reduction policies, then analyze and evaluate the impact of ethnic policies on poverty reduction for ethnic minority and mountainous. On that basis, make recommendations are put forward to resolve these problems.

1. Introduction

Ethnic minority and mountainous areas account for nearly three quarters of the natural area of Vietnam. These areas are inhabited by 54 ethnic groups, of which there are 53 ethnic minority groups with over 13 million people, accounted for 15% of the country's population. According to the Ethnic Minorities Council, ethnic minorities currently account for about 15% of the population, but account for more than 50% of the total number of poor households. The average income of ethnic minority households is equal to one sixth of the average income of the country. These alarming figures raise questions about the effectiveness of poverty reduction policies for ethnic minorities in the recent past. Ethnic Minority Poverty reduction in mountainous regions is one of vital problem because this is the country's most centralized region in poverty. The Party and Sate always determine the implementation of ethnic policies to help people develop economically, stabilize their live. This is one of the important tasks to unite the ethnic minorities with a firm believer in The Party and Sate.

2. Some major ethnic policies to reduce poverty and social economic development in mountainous areas

2.1 Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Group

These are integrated policies that aim to comprehensively improve the livelihoods of poor households, including access to services and infrastructure; to support production, promote commodity production and market linkages, and vocational training, and create conditions for the development of aspects of economic, cultural and social life for people (Programme 135, Program 30a, and National Target Program on Poverty Reduction ...).

2.2 Group policies impact directly or indirectly improve people's living conditions and national stature

These policies, with targeted approaches, focus on a number of specific and practical areas set out in the realities of economic and social life in ethnic minority areas. (The national target program on clean water, education and training, employment, population and family planning; program to build new rural areas ...).

2.3 Regional policies

These are targeted policies that support certain areas such as: Program on social economic development of Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia border communes, northwestern region; to settle residential land and cultivated land for ethnic minority people in the Southwest; Forest and forest protection for ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands, Western Thanh Hoa etc.

2.4 Policy support for residential land, productive land and employment for ethnic minority

The policy of supporting the migration, implementation of sedentarization for ethnic minorities in order to create favorable conditions for the numbers of households who are nomadic and nomadic are entitled to policies in accordance with the regulations of stable residence, conditions for production development [1]. Contribute to protect the forest, protect the ecological environment and maintain the security - politics, social order and safety.

The above-mentioned groups of policies, programs to facilitate production development, improve the material and spiritual life of ethnic minorities; remove this area from poverty, delayed development, enabling poor households to access social services and awareness raising activities.

3. Achievements: Achievements and limitations

3.1 Achievements

Program 135 Phase II was implemented in the area of 2,275 communes and 3,424 villages. The project has been implemented in 3 areas: Support to production development, capacity building and infrastructure investment support for extremely difficult communes, border communes, safe communes, difficulty villages. Supporting land for production, residential land, housing and clean water, allocated VND4,474 billion, supporting the construction of 373,400 houses for the people; 15,552 hectares of residential land for nearly 72 thousand households; 27,763 hectares of productive land for more than 85,000 households; Nearly 95,000 households have been provided with vocational training assistance. Infrastructure support policy: The allocated budget is VND 2,582.28 billion, invested in 3,999 works (including 1,809 transition works and 2,180 new ones: transportation, water grocery stores, public works, health facilities, water supply, electricity works, markets ...).

The results of the implementation of social economic development programs and poverty reduction programs have made the appearance of poor communes in ethnic minority and mountainous areas significantly improved. 75.2% of the communes have access roads from the commune center to the village; commune health stations are invested and communes have enough primary schools (of which 83.6% are solid schools and classrooms); 67.5% of communes have small irrigation works capable of serving production; 91.8% of communes have access to the commune center; investment concentrated water supply for 67.8% of households.

To take care of raising people's intellectual standards, cultural life, preserving and promoting the national cultural identity. The intellectual level and cultural life of the people are improved; the values of cultural identity of ethnic groups are preserved and promoted. The education of mountainous areas continues to develop. There have been significant changes in investment, size and quality of teaching and learning. Ethnic students enroll in ethnic boarding schools, scholarships with high rates [2]. Many cultural activities of ethnic minority people have been restored and developed.

Improve health and living standards for ethnic minorities: Health care for ethnic minority people is concerned. The medical station has been solidified, the medical staffs and doctors have been strengthened, and the village health network is full. Population, family and children's work is focused, promoting population communication, implementing many family planning methods, reducing the birth rate for ethnic minority areas.

Hunger eradication and poverty alleviation has achieved certain results, decreasing about 3% of poor ethnic households each year, decreasing from 36.6% in early 2011 to 27.6% by the end of 2013 and decreasing rapidly to 21.2% by the end of 2015. Average income per capita reached VND 4.2 million / person / year (Fig. 1).

The material and spiritual life of ethnic minorities has been remarkably improved, national defense and security have been maintained and the solidarity of all ethnic groups has been strengthened and consolidated. Ethnic minorities in many areas have abandoned farming practices, swidden cultivation, slash and burn cultivation; stabilize sedentary farming and settlement to improve production. The contingent of cadres at commune and village level has been improved in terms of capacity to manage and administer and implement local policies, programs and projects [3]. The political system is increasingly strengthened and consolidated. The face of rural mountainous areas, ethnic minorities have changed and flourished.

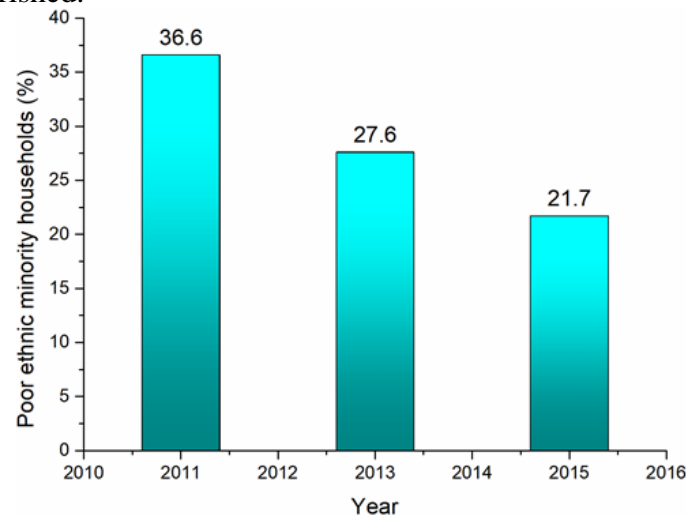


Fig. 1. Poverty reduction results for ethnic and mountainous areas, 2010-2015

3.2 The cause of the limitations and problems

The main cause is that ethnic minority and mountainous areas are vast, rugged terrain, bisected complex, severe weather, frequently affected by natural disasters and floods. Residents living in areas are dispersed; difficulties in walking, people have fewer contact services opportunities, as well as social welfare and economic information market opportunities.

The social economic conditions in some provinces have a low starting point, especially for systems of essential infrastructure; production level of people still rely on a simple platform mainly backward extensively self-supporting, self-sufficient, based on nature; general standard knowledge is limited.

Another cause that hinders poverty reduction in ethnic minority areas is the limited level of education of the people. Therefore they do not know the production techniques, spending; allocation of capital is not reasonable, inefficient. Many families are supported by the project to lend money at preferential interest rates, but do not know how to use it in production and business, so finally cannot escape poverty.

State management and direct implementation of policies on productive land in ethnic minority in mountainous areas also revealed many shortcomings and weaknesses. The direction and guidelines in planning and adjustment of land use is limited. Goals in recovering land from agriculture, forestry, and land solutions to create and assign them to the poor ethnic minority households that need land and for landless production were deployed for a long time, but the results showed that it did not achieve its objectives.

Poverty reduction policies, programs and programs are often short-lived, overlapping, creating the inferiority of the poor. The resources for poverty reduction are scattered and scattered. Lack of specific solutions between the implementation of poverty reduction policies and the social security policy; the coordination between the ministries, branches and localities is not close and ineffective.

4. Solutions in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at reducing poverty and social economic development for ethnic and mountainous areas toward 2020

In order to achieve sustainable hunger eradication and poverty alleviation and social security, it is necessary to continue to effectively implement existing policy groups and always make adjustments to suit the reality. At the same time, in order to further promote the effectiveness of the policy on hunger elimination and poverty alleviation and socio-economic development in mountainous regions Ethnic minorities in the new period, the following solutions should be synchronously implemented:

Firstly, to continue implementing and concretizing current policies and guidelines on the basis of assessing, reviewing, supplementing and concentrating on the implementation of ethnic policies in all domains. Especially, 2 national target programs and specific policies to deal with pressing issues of ethnic minorities; Priority is given to areas with particularly difficult socio-economic conditions. Adjust the points are no longer appropriate [4]. To increase investment resources for the implementation of programs and projects which are being implemented effectively.

Secondly, to focus on infrastructure development, priority is given to investment in the construction of cross-regional and inter-regional traffic routes with the shift of production structure, increasing the level of capital and scientific support. The problem of housing, residential land, and arable land is related to ethnic minorities.

Thirdly, development of human resources and education, raise the people intellectual level ethnic minority people. To improve the quality of ethnic minority human resources; To enhance the capacity of the contingent of cadres in the system of agencies in charge of ethnic affairs from the central to grassroots levels; To advise on arranging the placement of ethnic minority cadres in agencies in the political system with reasonable proportions in order to properly implement the Party's and State's undertakings and policies on ethnic affairs.

Fourthly, to adopt preferential policies, encourage farmers to develop household economy and farm economy, develop the processing industry and traditional handicrafts. To change the structure of plants and animals, to form specialized farming areas. There is a policy of consumption with stable prices of agricultural commodities for ethnic minority people.

5. Conclusions

The Party and State have always identified poverty reduction as one of the urgent issues, especially for ethnic minorities and mountainous areas. In comparison with areas with high socio-economic growth, poverty reduction in ethnic minorities is more complex and takes longer time to work. The main task of poverty reduction is not just supporting the development of production and the target groups of poor households but also enhancing the capacity of individuals, families and communities on economic, education, public health, environmental and natural resources protection, gender equality, social management, etc. All of these aspects are explored in this paper. Then, some suggestions are proposed for the optimization of it on the basis of analyzing the problems it faces. Help accelerate the pace of social economic development and improve living conditions for the people.

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