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**STATE ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL
EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN
NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS**

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**ABSTRACT ON DOCTORAL DISSERTATION OF
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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

The Party and the State of Vietnam have made great efforts to improve the socio-economic life, including education in general and general education in particular, for 53 ethnic minorities nationwide. It is not only used as a measure to improve the people's living conditions but also as a way to achieve socio-economic development.

Among the six socio-economic regions in Vietnam, the northern mountainous region is composed of 14 provinces which are inhabited by various ethnic groups living together. Special attention has been paid to and investment has been made in general education in this region by the Party and the State in their socio-economic development programs. State administration over education for northern ethnic minorities has acted to improve the academic quality here in a radical way. As general education for ethnic groups in northern mountainous areas is not only characterized by common features of general education but also by characteristics assumed by ethnic learners, proper attention should be paid to state administration relevant to education for these groups as a prerequisite to provide effective and efficient educational services for these people. Therefore, research into state administration in this field should be conducted with aims to find solutions to improving general educational services for ethnic children by means of improved state administration. That provides the rationale for the dissertation topic **“State administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas”**.

2. Research objectives and tasks

2.1 Research objectives: The dissertation gears its research towards state administration over general education for northern ethnic groups as a means to provide bases for solutions to improved state administration in this field.

2.2 Research tasks:

+ To provide a general idea on and clarify the theoretical and practical basis for state administration over general education for ethnic groups.

+ To analyze the natural and socio-economic conditions as a determinant to state administration over general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

+ To analyze the realities of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

+ To analyze and assess the realities in state administration over general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas, whereby discovering good points, limitations and causes thereof.

+ To propose some solutions relevant to state administration over general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

3. Research object and scope

3.1. Research object: The practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas of Vietnam today.

3.2. Research scope

- In spatial terms: the northern mountainous region, including 14 provinces: Ha Giang, Cao Bang, Bac Can, Lang Son, Thai Nguyen, Bac Giang, Hoa Binh, Son La, Lai Chau, Yen Bai, Lao Cai, Dien Bien, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang.

- In temporal terms: Study is conducted into relevant data and materials issued as of 2008 (the time when MOET issued Direction for the educational development for ethnic minorities for the period 2008-2020).

- In terms of content: Study is conducted into issues relevant to state administration of education matters as provided for in the Law of Education 2005 (revised in 2009). However, having taken into consideration the characteristics of general education for ethnic minorities, the author concentrates on main issues that are closely relevant to general education for ethnic minorities.

4. Research questions and scientific hypotheses

4.1. Research questions:

The dissertation is aimed to answer the following research questions:

- *Research question 1:* What roles does state administration play in general education for ethnic minorities?

- *Research question 2:* How is state administration carried out over general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas?

- *Research question 3:* What can be done to improve the effectiveness of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas?

4.2. Scientific hypothesis

The dissertation is aimed to support the following scientific hypotheses:

- *Hypothesis 1:* State administration of general education for ethnic minorities deserves special cares for education and training in ethnic areas. It provides a basis for improving the quality of educational services for ethnic minorities.

Intended researching findings: Having defined concepts and clarified characteristics of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities, the dissertation demonstrates the significance of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities to regional development.

- *Hypothesis 2*: Vietnam can learn from other countries their best practices relevant to educational development for ethnic groups and apply these practices to its state administration of general education for ethnic minorities.

Intended researching findings: The dissertation seeks to learn best practices relevant to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities by means of studying realities in the practice of management, formulation and enforcement of policies of educational development for ethnic groups in some countries.

- *Hypothesis 3*: The practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas in Vietnam still sees many limitations. Ineffective state administration results in poor educational quality for the region in relation to regional potentials and other ethnic areas in the country.

Intended researching findings: Having studied realities in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas, the dissertation assesses good points and limitations in this regard, and provides explanations for causes of such limitations.

- *Hypothesis 4*: If complete sets of solutions are carried out on institutions, policies, organizational structures, human resources, investment management,..., effectiveness will be enhanced for state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

Intended researching findings: Having compared limitations and causes thereof in the practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas with strategies and goals for general educational development in the region in the coming time, the dissertation raises solutions to improving this practice.

5. Methodology and research method

5.1. Methodology

The dissertation adopts Marxist - Leninist methodology, Ho Chi Minh ideology, and policies by the Party and the State of Vietnam relevant to education and training for ethnic minorities in the renovation era.

5.2. Research method

Material study, sociology, and other supporting methods...

6. New contributions

6.1. In theoretical terms

(1) The dissertation has systematized and elucidated the theoretical basis for state administration of general education for ethnic minorities, and applied it to the practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas of Vietnam.

(2) The dissertation raises the concept of *state administration of general education for ethnic minorities*, and gives interpretation to the characteristics which have not been studied or should be improved of this practice.

(3) The dissertation summarizes and brings to light practices of state administration of education for ethnic minorities by some countries, whereby learning lessons which can be applied to Vietnam and northern mountainous areas of ethnic minorities.

6.2. In practical terms

(1) The dissertation has provided scientific and practical arguments to serve as a basis for proposals for the improvement of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas. These proposals combine renovated state administration with initiative and activity of localities and of training establishments, and social support for developing general education for ethnic minorities. Among these elements, state administration plays the key role.

(2) The dissertation has proposed solutions to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas. Accordingly, the emphasis is that responsibility is aligned with functions and duties of managerial entities from the central to local levels in a regional coordination mechanism.

(3) Researching findings from the dissertation can serve as references for research and lecture and are useful for educational managers.

7. Dissertation structure: The dissertation is structured into four chapters in addition to the Introduction, Conclusion, References, and Annexes

Chapter 1: Overview on research relevant to the dissertation topic.

Chapter 2: Scientific foundation for state administration of general education for ethnic minorities.

Chapter 3: Realities in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

Chapter 4: Direction and solutions to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

Chapter 1

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

State administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas appeals to a wide range of foreign and domestic scientists. Research works relevant to the dissertation topic are focused on the four categories as follows:

- Research into state administration of general education
- Research into general education for ethnic minorities
- Research into ethnic education by foreign countries
- Relevant research into northern mountainous areas

Having had a look at the research overview as described above, we can observe that:

In theoretical terms, the research works have brought to light some theoretical issues relevant to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities. In practical terms, the research works have discovered realities in education in ethnic areas nationwide, particularly in northern mountainous areas. In general, these works have provided valuable helps for the author to fulfill the dissertation. However, these works only touch upon some issues relevant to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas: (1) A majority of these works only refer to educational policies as applied to ethnic minorities ; (2) The perspective of state administration is studied, but in an indirect manner in these works; (3) Complete sets of solutions to state administration have been raised by none of these works in terms of institution, organizational structure, managerial staff, public finance management, and control regime as a measure to improve the managerial effectiveness.

It can be observe that there do not appear to be in existence of any doctoral research works that have provided complete and full study on state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas. Such doctoral dissertations are supposed to set up theoretical foundation, assess the realities, and propose consistent and complete sets of solutions. None of these research works have related the characteristics of general education for ethnic minorities to that in northern mountainous areas in order to find out what deserve specific concerns in state administration in this field. That is why an in-depth study is needed to respond to all those requirements.

Having raised overview on research works, the author requires that the dissertation resolve following matters:

- Systematizing and clarifying the theoretical basis of state administration of education, general education, state administration of general education for ethnic minorities, and the role the state plays in developing general education for ethnic minorities. Studying determinants that have effects on state administration of general education for ethnic minorities; highlighting characteristics of general education for ethnic minorities in order to provide a basis for defining distinctive features of managerial method; and recommending solutions to improving the effectiveness of state administration.

- Analyzing the practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas and placing general education in the region within the national context and the context of other ethnic areas to highlight the characteristics.

- On the basis of specific assessment of the practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas, solutions are proposed for state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas with aims to improve the managerial effectiveness in terms of institution, organizational structure, human resource, financial mechanism, and control regime,...

Chapter 2

SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION FOR STATE ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES

2.1. General education for ethnic minorities and state administration of general education for ethnic minorities

2.1.1. Concept of general education for ethnic minorities

General education for ethnic minorities refers to education at primary and secondary levels within the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Given the approach adopted by the dissertation, ethnic areas are considered at provincial level while general education for ethnic minorities refers to general education characterized by specific target group, namely ethnic pupils.

2.1.2. State administration of general education for ethnic minorities

2.1.2.1. Concept of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities

According to the author, *state administration of general education for ethnic minorities refers to regular influence and regulation of the state by exercising state power over the practice of general education for ethnic minorities, on the basis of combining state administration by sector with state*

administration by territory to suit particular socio-economic conditions of ethnic areas, in which the forms, contents and quality of education are guaranteed in conformity with the goals of general education.

2.1.2.2. Characteristics in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities

a. With regard to managerial subject:

The subject of state administration is the state itself – a special subject and organization. In the field of general education for ethnic minorities, the specialty that the state assumes is demonstrated by its macro management by means of policies and laws to direct general education for ethnic minorities towards set goals. At the same time, the state also acts as the unique subject who personally provides educational services for ethnic minorities.

b. With regard to managerial targets

Managerial targets of state administration over ethnic education are the system of schools, training institutions, curricula, syllabi, teaching staff, officials and students in educational establishments in ethnic areas. They have are many distinctive forms such as boarding schools, semi-boarding school, multigrade classes, bilingual textbooks and curricula in both ethnic minority languages and Vietnamese..., requiring managerial and organizational methods to be specific to obtain effectiveness and efficiency.

c. With regard to managerial object:

Academic activities of general education for ethnic minorities undertaken by teachers and students assume all common features shared by other areas in the country. However, these activities are characterized by the fact that they are not simply the activities of delivering and acquiring knowledge but also the cultural and linguistic interaction and exchange, educational ramification for each grade, collective life,... Assessment of academic activities should, therefore, be conducted based on specific criteria as compared to common standards applied nationwide.

2.1.2.3. Determinants of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities

- The Party's viewpoints on ethnic affairs.
- Legal elements
- The state capacity of administration over general education for ethnic minorities
- Mode and method of state administration as applied to general education for ethnic minorities

- Distinctive features of natural, socio-economic and cultural conditions in ethnic areas
- National and local requirements for socio-economic development in the era of integration

2.2. Necessities of state administration over general education for ethnic minorities

2.2.1. To perform the functions of the state

The state assumes two main functions: governing and service. As for general education for ethnic minorities, by means of administration the state plays the role of a steersman, a motivator, a facilitator, a regulator,... through a series of management activities. As for service, the state itself delivers educational services, builds a system of educational establishments with priorities and support to provide guarantee for equal learning opportunities for ethnic children.

2.2.2. To guarantee the goal of enhancing people's intellectual level, human resource training and talent fostering in ethnic areas

Education plays an inherently important role significant to social development, namely enhancing people's intellectual level, human resource training and talent fostering. Therefore, state administration of general education for ethnic minorities further asserts this important goal.

2.2.3. To ensure social equity in education

Given the characteristics of general education for ethnic minorities, the state takes over the delivery and management of these educational services, administering them with special policies and priorities to ensure social equity to facilitate equal access to education opportunities by ethnic people.

2.2.4. To facilitate cultural preservation and development in ethnic areas

By designing and integrating the unique traditional culture of ethnic minorities into extracurricular and academic programs, state administration of education in ethnic areas has facilitated, in the most sustainable manner, the preservation and promotion of cultural values in the population.

2.3. Contents of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities

2.3.1. Formulating and implementing strategies, planning and plans for educational development in ethnic areas

To develop general education for ethnic minorities, the state formulates its "vision" by formulating and implementing strategies, planning and plans for education in ethnic areas. Roadmap to the future is that such strategies, planning and plan will be translated into reality on the basis of reconciling realities with

expectations and harmonizing educational goals and other socio-economic development goals, with the affordability of the management system being taken into account,...

2.3.2. Formulating and enforcing regulatory legal documents and policies for general education for ethnic minorities

The system of regulatory legal documents and policies for general education for ethnic minorities serves as a legal framework within which the practice of state administration and other participants operate. These include regulations and norms that exhibit priorities, influence and support afforded by the state to academic activities by teachers and students in these areas.

2.3.3. Organizational structure of state administration over general education for ethnic minorities

Upon definition and division of responsibilities, tasks and duties among different levels and organs of state administration, the subjects can have their management and coordination tasks facilitated to obtain the highest effectiveness. Given the characteristics of general education for ethnic minorities, the state plays the main role to respond to management requirements.

2.3.4. Managing, training and retraining school teachers and managers of education in ethnic areas

To develop general education for ethnic minorities, both managing and teaching staff are required to acquire good capacity to perform their duties. This regulation is enforced as early as the stage of recruitment until stages of employment, training... so that they are more adaptive to the changing society.

2.3.5. Managing and utilizing resources to develop general education for ethnic minorities

To gear the huge resources from national and local budgets and social mobilization towards academic activities in ethnic areas, due attention should be paid to financial management in order to avoid wastefulness, losses and misuse and at the same time to be flexible and relevant to the reality.

2.3.6. Managing, organizing and operating educational establishments, especially educational establishments dedicated to ethnic areas

In addition to high schools, it is necessary to establish, operate and maintain the system of ethnic boarding schools, and transform and establish the model of ethnic semi-boarding schools, especially multigrade classes, on-site classes, school stations... in order to establish an environment appropriate for education in ethnic areas.

2.3.7. Managing specific curricula and contents, teaching ethnic languages and Vietnamese for high school students in ethnic areas

Specific contents should be added to education in ethnic areas, such as teaching Vietnamese and ethnic languages, vocational guidance, integrating ethnic culture and collective activities into training contents... to facilitate students' acquisition of and access to knowledge delivered at school. At the same time, it can be used as a way to preserve ethnic languages and cultural identity to be passed from one generation to the next.

2.3.8. Organizing and managing to ensure education quality, verifying education quality in ethnic areas

For general education for ethnic minorities, it is necessary to find a suitable way to ensure and verify education quality to make this activity more realistic, enabling managing agencies and educational institutions to have more precise judgment of realities to make the right solutions for improvement.

2.3.9. Inspecting, controlling and handling violations against the law on general education for ethnic minorities

First, inspection and control serve as a basis to assess the relevance of policies and management methods, and to rate the effectiveness and efficiency of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities.

Secondly, it helps to detect typical models for commendation and faults for timely treatment.

2.4. Best practices learnt from some countries relevant to educational management in ethnic areas

Having studied the practices of China, Australia and Malaysia in the management of education for ethnic minorities, the author finds that the governments have actively afforded educational services and cares to ethnic minorities in a series of their preferential policies to be implemented in a scheduled roadmap. Following practices and lessons of success can be learnt and adapted to be applied to Vietnam.

First, defining the goal of preferential policies afforded to education for ethnic minorities.

Secondly, defining conditionality in the provisions of law.

Thirdly, coordination among partners and social mobilization in educational management for ethnic minorities.

Fourthly, strengthening the participation and representation of ethnic minorities in the formulation and enforcement of education policies applied to them.

Fifthly, developing school system dedicated to ethnic students.

Sixthly, integrating cultural activities, traditions and customs to help preserve cultural identity of ethnic minorities.

Chapter 3

REALITIES IN STATE ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS.

3.1. Overview on northern mountainous areas of ethnic minorities

The northern mountainous region is composed of 14 provinces: Điện Biên, Lai Châu, Sơn La, Hòa Bình, Lào Cai, Yên Bái (in the northwest); Phú Thọ, Hà Giang, Tuyên Quang, Cao Bằng, Lạng Sơn, Bắc Cạn, Thái Nguyên, Bắc Giang (in the northeast). Given the topographic features of this region with stretched borders with China and Laos, this region is regarded as a strategic area with special significance in socio-economic terms, and in terms of national defense and security, and external relation. These natural socio-economic conditions have both positive and negative effects on educational development as well as on the management of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

3.2. Realities of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

3.2.1. With respect to educational scale

The educational scale of the region has changed and significantly improved to respond to a certain extent to academic requirements. However, the scale is has not satisfied requirements for development. For example, classrooms and facilities are deficient and limited. The transformation and establishment of ethnic boarding school is delayed. The teaching staff is both deficient and weak..., falling short of requirements for good academic conditions for students.

3.2.2. With respect to educational quality

Although some signs of improvement can be observed, educational quality is still low, which is not relevant to the potential and requirements for integration: high rates of poorly performing students, alarming repeat rates, unsustainable universalization of education at various levels, high illiteracy rates with some provinces seeing the highest rates of this kind in the nation.

3.3. Realities in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

3.3.1. Formulating and implementing strategies and plans for educational development in northern mountainous areas of ethnic minorities

Particularly for education for ethnic minorities, MOET issued Direction for educational development for ethnic minorities for the period 2008- 2020, specifying goals and contents for education in ethnic areas, including northern mountainous areas of ethnic minorities. Having taken into account regional characteristics, the Prime Minister issued Decision 1379/ QĐ-TTg dated 12/8/2013 on developing education, training and vocational training for the midland region, the northern mountainous region and districts west of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An Provinces for the period 2013- 2020, specifying goals and solutions relevant to regional characteristics and educational and management realities in the region.

3.3.2. Formulating and enforcing the system of legal documents and policies for development of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

The system of policies for general education for ethnic minorities is large in size and abundant in contents. It is enforced in a relatively consistent and comprehensive manner thanks to vigorous command from the center, the active educational management by the region and the local initiatives. However, policy enforcement still sees some inadequacies as follows:

First, sustainability has not been ensured for some policies.

Secondly, the consistency between the central and local levels and the coordination among central agencies and among localities in the enforcement of policies are not so satisfactory.

Thirdly, policies enforcement in some localities is still too rigid and inflexible to be relevant to regional and demographic characteristics.

Fourthly, some policies still contain inadequate contents...

3.3.3. Organizational structure for the management of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

The organizational structure for managing education in ethnic areas lies within the organizational structure of state administration of education and training from the center (Bureau of Education for Ethnic Minorities - MOET) to local levels (14 DOETs in the regional provinces), expressed in terms of responsibilities of concerned agencies.

However, the organizational structure of state administration over education for ethnic minorities is not complete. Only six out of 14 DOETs have established their Sub-departments of Education for Ethnic Minorities as management hubs

(including Yên Bái, Lào Cai, Bắc Cạn, Hà Giang, Cao Bằng, Hòa Bình). The other eight provinces assign their personnel to undertake part-time jobs as management hubs, resulting in ineffective and unsmooth management. The coordination and information between the Ministry – Departments – Sub-DOETs and ethnic training instructions is not so smooth.

3.3.4. Managing, training and retraining the teaching and managing staff of education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

In addition to some achievements such as planning for developing the teaching and managing staff, training policies to upgrade teachers, caring for on-the-job HRD,... there still exist inadequacies in HRD and HRM for general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas. This practice has resulted in administrative staff to manage education for ethnic minorities being both deficient in quantity and weak in quality, failing to respond to requirements for managing tasks.

3.3.5. Managing resources for developing general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

With strict management, the utilization and management of state budget as well as strengthened social mobilization have yielded initial fruit. However, some limitations are still seen.

First, resources allocation falls short of demand for developing the network of schools and facilities;

Secondly, remuneration regime for teaching and managing staff is not motivative enough;

Thirdly, inadequacies still exist in some aspects: the composition of budget allocation is not adequate; project management mechanism at central and local levels are not appropriate, with inefficient utilization of budget being seen elsewhere...

3.3.6. Managing the organization and operation of educational establishments, especially educational establishments dedicated to northern mountainous areas of ethnic minorities

Provinces have built a relatively complete system of school facilities to serve ethnic students, particularly the system of dedicated schools such as ethnic boarding schools and ethnic semi-boarding schools.

However, many problems are still faced, resulting in ineffective management of dedicated schools. For example, impediments are still confronted in the transformation of primary and lower secondary schools into ethnic boarding schools; there have been no suitable planning for the network and scale of ethnic

boarding schools in some localities, resulting in failure to respond to the demand for educational improvement and construction of national standard schools. With around 250 schools dedicated to ethnic students (which constitutes a very small portion of regional schools), the academic environment is not really suitable for ethnic children.

3.3.7. Managing specific curricula and contents, and teaching ethnic languages and Vietnamese in general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

Provinces have promoted the teaching of Vietnamese to ethnic students and the teaching of ethnic languages to high school students and staff in the region. They have also delivered specific academic contents properly. However, some problems are still observed:

First, ethnic languages are not taught to ethnic students in northern mountainous areas as much as they are in other ethnic areas due to population distribution and natural conditions.

Secondly, educational universalization and anti-illiteracy programs are neither certain nor sustainable enough, with the highest illiteracy rates in the country being seen here.

3.3.8. Managing the quality of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

Despite several efforts made to improve the quality of general education, quality is still the weakest point in education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas as compared to the regional average. Quality management and verification of general education in the region are still limited and faced impediments.

First, general education quality in the region is still low as compared to the national average level.

Secondly, the repeat rates and drop-out rates are higher in ethnic areas than the national average level.

3.3.9. Inspecting, controlling and handling violations against the law on general education for ethnic minorities

Although provinces have made great efforts to strengthen and improve the effectiveness and quality of inspection, control and handling of violations, some shortcomings still remain: in some provinces, inspectorate is understaffed without inspectors acquiring financial specialty; low rates of pedagogical inspection; formalistic inspecting operation, the role of which is not fully played to ensure educational quality.

3.4. Assessment of realities in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

3.4.1. Achievements

Following achievements are noted in the performance of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas: increasingly consistent system of plans, planning and policies for educational development has been formed and run synchronously. State administrative machinery and management personnel in this field have taken shape and settled gradually. The management of characteristic aspects begins to be formed into order and discipline. Growing attention and care are being paid to the management and mobilization of resources for education. Educational inspection and control have been strengthened, resulting in positive changes in general education quality in the region.

3.4.2. Limitations

Inadequacies and inconsistency are still observed in the implementation of policies and legislations on general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas. There exist several problems in the organizational structure in education, especially the management hubs for educational management in ethnic areas. Educational managing staff is both insufficient in quantity and weak in quality, resulting in the failure to respond to requirements for management tasks. The system of dedicated schools has not been developed to such an extent that can meet the demand in practice. Specific curricula have not been delivered to ethnic children so well. Inspection and control activities have not taken full effect. As a result, the quality of general education in northern mountainous areas is still low as compared to the national average level.

3.4.3. Causes of limitation in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities

3.4.3.1. Objective causes

- Geographical location, natural conditions, harsh and unfavorable climate... have put the regional teaching and learning activities at disadvantage.
- Poor and incomplete infrastructure has failed to fully meet the learning needs of students and teaching activities of teachers.
- The major impediment is the very difficult socio-economic life of the majority of the population, with the highest poverty rate in the country, resulting in unequal access to learning opportunities as well as cultural and spiritual resources; widened gap in educational quality between the region and the national average.

- Low educational level and limited people's perception have precluded children from going to school.

- Barriers imposed by outdated customs and cultural traditions such as child marriage, shifting cultivation and nomadic life,... have caused low class attendance, dropout, repetition, illiteracy..., which are often higher than the national average.

- Language barrier is imposed by the fact that few teachers are local or ethnic people. Language barrier and lack of understanding of psycho-physiological aspects of ethnic pupils have precluded teachers from acquiring a suitable teaching method, resulting in their limited teaching quality

3.4.3.2. Subjective causes

- The state's thinking of and management over general education for ethnic minorities are irrational: formalism and craze for achievements are still rooted; loose management occurs in several stages and localities; the mindset of reliance and dependence is quite severe; curricula and textbooks are inadequate; too much theoretical knowledge are delivered, with some knowledge being even strange to ethnic students, retarding their knowledge acquisition.

- Adequate attention has not been paid to state administration over ethnic education. The formation of the apparatus and staff for ethnic education is delayed. Many localities respond to management circumstances in a reactive manner because of their limited staff and organization.

- The mechanism of coordination and information between various management levels is still poor and unsmooth, without close tracking: between central and local levels, superiors and subordinates, horizontal coordination, coordination through focal hubs. Information on ethnic education has neither been organized properly nor disseminated smoothly and continuously.

- The practices of inspection, control and handling of violations against legislation on general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas are performed in a formalistic manner. Sanctions on violations are not severe enough to take full deterrent effect. That is why these practices have not played their full role in enhancing the effectiveness of management.

Chapter 4

DIRECTION AND SOLUTIONS TO STATE ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS.

4.1. Viewpoint, direction and mission for development

4.1.1. The Party's viewpoint on education in ethnic areas

The Party and the State pay special attention to the development of education in ethnic areas. Document of the Tenth Party Congress raised the viewpoints: *"The State increases and focuses investment on the national objectives and program for educational development, affords support to ethnic minorities, inhabitants in remote and border areas and islands "*. It is considered as one of the key tasks of the political system.

State administration over general education for ethnic minorities deserves attention and needs renovating and improving to serve educational development for ethnic minorities. Therefore, Resolution of the 8th Conference of the 11th Central Party Executive Committee on radical and comprehensive renovation of education and training has pointed out: *"radical and comprehensive renovation of education and training,... renewal of the leadership of the Party and the State's management downwards to the administration of training and educational establishments "*.

Therefore, the Party has adhered to the viewpoint that special attention and priorities should be afforded to education in ethnic areas whereas education in these areas should be placed in the context of comprehensive educational reform as an integral part to Vietnam education.

4.1.2. Direction and mission of educational development for ethnic minorities up to 2020

4.1.2.1. Direction for educational development for ethnic minorities in the period 2008-2020

Developing and improving the system of training institutions, educational programs and human resources; allocating budget to education in ethnic areas; gradually raising educational quality...

4.1.2.2. Mission for general education for ethnic minorities in the period 2008-2020

- Developing the network of high schools at various levels, especially ethnic boarding schools, ethnic semi-boarding schools,...

- Renewing teaching methods; raising students' quality in all fields; enhancing Vietnamese proficiency for ethnic students; maintaining specific cultural education in schools.

- Ensuring working and teaching conditions for officials, teachers and students; affording supporting policies to teachers and learners.

4.1.2.3. Goal and mission for general education in northern mountainous areas (according to Decision 1379/QĐ-TTg dated 12.8.2013 by the Prime

Minister on educational and training development and vocational training for the midland region and northern mountainous region for the period 2013- 2020

4.2. Some solutions to improving state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

4.2.1. Set of solutions relevant to the improvement of institutions, policies, laws, strategies and plans for developing general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

4.2.1.1. Objectives of solutions

4.2.1.2. Contents of solutions

*Solution 1: Reviewing and evaluating the implementation of educational institutions and policies for northern mountainous areas of ethnic minorities

- Systematizing educational policies as applied to ethnic minorities, proposing new policies to be issued and outdated regulations to be revised or annulled

- Integrating other policies relevant to educational policies as applied to ethnic minorities: poverty reduction policies, policies for developing infrastructure, culture and health care, human resource policies... These policies should be integrated into an integral system to ensure the relevancy of policies and that the policies will act to give active support to and compliment educational policies in such a way that beneficiaries are provided for consistently to avoid overlapping provisions.

* Solution 2. Improving the practice of making, enacting and enforcing policies and plans for ethnic education as a step towards the formation of a realistic and consistent system of educational policies and plans.

* Solution 3. Renewing some policies in the direction: Specifying some targets, responsibility regime, commitment to priorities in ethnic education, applying preferential policies to defined users, renewing the contents and curricula of specific education...

* Solution 4. Improving the coordination regime between various agencies in the formulation and enforcement of policies by upholding and dividing responsibilities among agencies.

4.2.2. Set of solutions relevant to strengthening the organizational structure of state administration over ethnic education in northern mountainous region

4.2.2.1. Objectives of solutions

4.2.2.2. Contents of solutions

* Solution 1: For the central level

Centralizing power and improving the capacity of macro management for the Bureau of Education for Ethnic Minorities (MOET) in the field of ethnic education. Strengthening the relation and coordination between the Bureau and other relevant agencies and ensuring a smooth educational information system from the center to local levels;

* Solution 2. For local levels

First, improving the management apparatus for ethnic education at DOETs by officially providing for a management hub (establishing Sub-department of Education for Ethnic Minorities, merging this section with other offices) so that each DOET has its own management hub which is officially held responsible for ethnic education in the locality. At district level, one leader of the Sub-DOET should be assigned to give guidance to ethnic education and one specialist officials to take charge of ethnic education.

Secondly, decentralization and empowerment to the locality to enhance local proactive management.

Thirdly, strengthening the coordination between units, agencies and localities in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas to ensure smooth, effective and efficient operation.

Fourthly, promoting the information between various levels, sectors, agencies and units concerned.

4.2.3. Set of solutions relevant to HRD for state administration of education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

4.2.3.1. Objectives of solutions

4.2.3.2. Contents of solutions

* Solution 1. Formulating plans and planning for developing personnel working in the field of ethnic education

Plans and planning for HRD for state administration over education in general and ethnic education in particular should be built on the national scale and in northern mountainous areas.

* Solution 2. Standardization of the teaching and managing staff in education in ethnic areas

Standardization of the educational managing staff complies with the Law on Civil servants in 2008; Standardization of teachers complies with Decision No. 14/2007/QĐ-BĐGDĐT dated May 4, 2007; professional standards for high school teacher are provided in Circular 30/2009/BGDĐT dated October 22, 2009 by MOET in three aspects (1) upholding the political and ideological qualities and ethics training, (2) standardizing the professional qualifications through training

and retraining of teachers and educational managers, (3) training to improve pedagogical skills for teachers.

* Solution 3. Focusing on training and retraining of teachers and educational staff in ethnic areas

First, formulating and improving the legal framework for training and retraining of officials in education in ethnic areas. Consistent standards should be defined to be applied to officials, enrolment, curricula, materials,...

Secondly, building plans for training and retraining high school teachers and educational managers in regional localities.

Thirdly, developing educational managing staff which is sufficient in quantity, qualified in speciality, and rational in structure, with a reasonable ratio of ethnic people. Effective staffing job: Selecting qualified staff with management capacity and experience, and understanding of the educational sector; promoting training to enhance legal knowledge, administrative and state management skills, educational management skills, and ethnographical knowledge; focusing on involving community in educational affairs

* Solution 4. Taking advantage of and making full use of local human resources

First, developing a teaching and managing staff which is sufficient in quantity and rational in structure. The motto “ethnic groups are taught by their respective teachers” by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly should be adhered to; giving priorities to enrolling nominated students from ethnic boarding schools in teachers’ training college, and relating training to employment;

Secondly, involving the border guard forces as “Teachers in blue” in border provinces.

Thirdly, effectively implementing supporting and incentive policies and entitlement; adopting measures to socialize teachers and educational managers into ethnic areas so that they are settled to be able to adhere to ethnic educational development.

4.2.4. Set of solutions relevant to resources mobilization and management to serve the development of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

4.2.4.1. Objectives of solutions

4.2.4.2. Contents of solutions

* Solution 1. Mobilizing resources for ethnic education

First, state budget: increasing annual state budget allocation to ethnic education; at the earliest time possible, approving the project of remuneration reform as applied to teachers and educational managers, including those in ethnic areas so that wages can support their life; central and local budgets are used in combination on some key projects.

Secondly, extra-budgetary resources: promoting the mobilization of extra-budgetary fund for ethnic education by means of social mobilization of domestic and foreign fund.

* Solution 2. Enhancing the effective management of resources for developing general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

First, strengthening the coordination between concerned agencies, levels and sectors to recommend, launch and control preferential projects and programs for socio-economic development and ethnic education in order to release the full strength, enhance the effectiveness and avoid the overlapping.

Secondly, central budget allocation to localities: full allocation should be made to mountainous areas based on real construction prices;

Thirdly, concentrating resources on strengthening ethnic boarding schools according to the planning in order to respond to local demand for training of ethnic officials; caring for public accommodation.

4.2.5. Set of solutions relevant to raising the awareness of developing general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas

4.2.5.1. Objectives of solutions

4.2.5.2. Contents of solutions

* Solution 1. Promoting and upholding the role of various subjects in the dissemination and provision of information.

First, promoting and carrying out regular communication about the teaching and learning of ethnic education, about general ethnic education policies by central and local authorities in order to enhance people's awareness.

Secondly, promoting the role of various communicators such as party executive committees, authorities, mass organizations, social organizations, teachers (especially ethnic minority teachers), students, military officials, unionists (Women's Union, Veterans' Union, Youth Union)....

* Solution 2. Diversifying the forms of communication, dissemination and legal education.

First, a variety of communicative forms should be made available. For example, communication issues are integrated into cultural activities of ethnic people. Communication issues should be made specific, understandable and

applicable. Communication job should be carried out in a persistent and serious manner.

4.2.6. Set of solutions relevant to strengthening the inspection and control over general education for ethnic minorities

4.2.6.1. Objectives of solutions

4.2.6.2. Contents of solutions

* Solution 1: Carrying out inspection and control in a serious and constant manner.

Inspection and control should be carried out in a constant and thorough manner on a wide scale; periodical inspection is complemented by unusual inspection to ensure the objectivity, completeness, transparency and relevancy.

* Solution 2. Relating inspection and control to reward and sanction.

* Solution 3. Strengthening the coordination in the practice of inspection and control: between the central and local levels, between administrative and specialist inspection.

4.3. Surveying the necessity and conditions for implementing solutions

4.3.1. Surveying the necessity of solutions

Survey findings show that solutions are very necessary. This is driven by expectations and requirements for enhancing managerial effectiveness in general education for ethnic minorities by specific means.

4.3.2. Conditions for implementing solutions

4.3.2.1. Institutions

4.3.2.4. Physical resources

4.3.2.2. Information

4.3.2.5. Coordination regime

4.3.2.3. Human resources

4.4. Some recommendations and matters introduced to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in Vietnam

4.4.1. Recommendation

4.4.1.1. To the government and line ministries concerned

- At the earliest time, improving the policy system relevant to education in ethnic areas to facilitate management by functional agencies and localities.

- MOET: studying and proposing more policies specific to ethnic students, teachers, and managers of ethnic education in the northern mountainous region, and at the same time, giving guidance to the policy implementation;

- MOHA: coordinating with MOET, MOLISA, line ministries concerned to propose policy issuance as applied to teachers, educational managers and various school models.

4.4.1.2. For provincial People's Committees in the region

- Making land available to general education establishments as stipulated, especially to dedicated schools;
- Giving priorities to the use of local resources; actively formulating specific policies relevant to local context;
- Finalizing the planning for school network which is relevant to local context and requirements for educational development for ethnic minorities in the period 2008- 2020 by MOET.

4.4.1.3. For the Steering Committee of Northwest Region

The Steering Committee of Northwest Region coordinates with MOET, line ministries concerned and localities to give guidance, supervision and control to the achievement of goals for educational development for ethnic minorities, and goals for educational development of the region in accordance with Decision 1379/QĐ-TTg dated 12.8.2013 on developing education, training and vocational training for the midland region, the northern mountainous region and districts west of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An Provinces for the period 2013- 2020.

4.4.2. Matters introduced to state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in Vietnam

- State administration of general education for ethnic minorities should be viewed in a general context of ethnic work.
- State administration of general education for ethnic minorities should take into account the natural and socio-economic characteristics of the region.
- General education for ethnic minorities is integral to the national education. Therefore, both completeness and characteristics should be taken into account so as to ensure the harmony between the general and the specific.
- Management of general education for ethnic minorities is exposed to many challenges, namely problems inherent in the market economy.
- Management of general education for ethnic minorities both guarantees the gradual improvement of people's intellectual level and training of good quality human resources.
- Management and development of general education for ethnic minorities are based on the coordination between the center and locality.
- Each educational establishment in ethnic areas is built into an educational, cultural and scientific center of the locality, asserting the key role that education plays in national development.

CONCLUSION

Upon considering research findings from the dissertation, some conclusions can be made as follows:

The practice of state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas has recorded notable achievements in all aspects, ranging from sectoral development strategies to the complete and increasingly improved system of policies. The organizational structure becomes gradually settled. The management of characteristic aspects, such as educational contents, curricula, textbooks, ethnic languages teaching, management of dedicated schools..., begins to be formed into order and discipline, bringing about positive changes in the quality of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas.

However, significant limitations still exist in practice and can be observed in many aspects. State administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas still sees shortcomings to be concerned, such as low educational quality as compared to the national average. It is even lower than other ethnic areas. Sustainable fruit has not been yielded. High level of effective management has not been observed. Localities have not acted actively and proactively at times. Formalism is still observed in these localities, resulting in outcomes achieved being not relevant to the potentials and requirements in practice.

These limitations that exist in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas derive from many sources: natural obstacles such as disadvantaged geographical location, underdeveloped socio-economic conditions; and human and managerial inadequacies.

In order to promote the effectiveness in state administration of general education for ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas, it is necessary to apply all six sets of solutions in a synchronous and constant manner in all aspects. However, more emphasis should be placed on improving institutions, organizational structures, and quality of educational human resources as well as on enhancing investment. By doing so, we can raise the educational quality in the region and improve the living conditions of ethnic minorities, whereby contributing to regional and national socio-economic development.

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