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PHẠM MINH HẠC

# VIETNAM'S EDUCATION

THE CURRENT POSITION  
AND FUTURE PROSPECTS



THẾ GIỚI

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## PREFACE

Man appeared on the Vietnamese land at an early date. Traces of the *Homo Erectus* ape-man have been found in Lạng Sơn<sup>1</sup> and Nghệ An<sup>2</sup> in addition to the vestiges of the Sơn Vi culture in late paleolithic (about 23,000 to 10,000 years ago), Hòa Bình culture in neolithic (about 10,000 to 6,000 years ago), the bronze age (4,000 years ago), the Đông Sơn culture<sup>3</sup> and the Sa Huỳnh culture (about 2,900-2,700 years ago).

With the Đông Sơn culture, a primitive State made its appearance - the Văn Lang state of the Hùng Kings (from the ninth century to the first half of the third century B.C.). Subsequently it was renamed Âu Lạc, King An Dương Vương built his capital at the Cổ Loa citadel and reigned in the second half of the third century B.C.

From 179 B.C. to 938 A.D. Vietnam was under the rule of the Chinese feudals. National consciousness took shape at an early date. The aspiration for national independence found a manifestation in numerous insurrections such as those of ladies Trưng (40-43 A.D), Lady Triệu (248 A.D), Mai Thúc Loan (722 A.D), Phùng Hưng (766-791 A.D.). The victory won in 938 over the Nam Hán troops by the Vietnamese army and people under the leadership of Ngô Quyền was a brilliant milestone which put an end to China's millenary domination, restored our national independence.

1. 2. Names of North Vietnamese provinces

3. Đông Sơn culture: apex of the Red River civilization, skilfully made bronze artefacts have been found, the most outstanding one is the Đông Sơn bronze drum...

Vietnam could now promote its traditional values recognized by Chinese historians even in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (according to the "Brief History of Đại Việt", an anonymous book written around 1377-1388). Vietnam was regarded as a country endowed with the Vietnamese civilization (according to Amol Toynbee, an American historian). The traditional values which formed the culture and civilization of former Vietnam have flourished during the whole process of national construction and defence. Since the 11<sup>th</sup> century the Vietnamese people have had to wage repeated wars: against the Sung troops (1075-1077), the Yuan-Mongolians (in 1258, 1285 and 1288), the Ming (1414-1427), the Qing (1789), the French (1858-1945 then 1946-1954) the Americans (1954-1975), the war to defend the border (1979). These resistances managed to defend the national independence, prevent assimilation and develop the national culture.

In their age-old civilization, the Vietnamese people have always promoted their traditional thirst for knowledge and respect for teachers. In the folk literature, many proverbs and stories related to these traditions are found, for example "It is impossible to make a career without a teacher"; "To cross a river, you should build a bridge; to have your children well-versed in letters, you should love the teacher". And President Hồ Chí Minh's teaching: "We should grow trees for ten years' interests, and grow man for one hundred years' interests" has become a maxim.

A brilliant symbol of Vietnamese culture is the Việt script. After 17 centuries of the use of Chinese characters, the Việt people could come to create their own national system of writing called Nôm. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the assistance

of Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and French scholars, and particularly of Alexandre de Rhodes<sup>1</sup>, the *Quốc ngữ* (romanized Việt script) came into being. As from 1919 it was widely used in schools, especially primary ones. After 1945 the use of *Quốc ngữ* was generalized at all levels of education. Besides the Việt language, those of the 53 Vietnam-inhabited minority ethnic groups are preserved and developed, 11 among them have their own scripts.

The system of national and traditional values, especially the traditional passion for learning has always been the foundation and buttress for Vietnamese education which climaxed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the appearance of people's education - a comprehensive system of national education.

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1. A French missionary and scholar.

## **Chapter I**

# **SKETCHES FOR THE HISTORY OF VIETNAM'S EDUCATION SYSTEM**

### **1. Up to mid 19th century**

Researchers on the history of Vietnam's education system show that the Vietnamese nation has a tradition of learning. But throughout its over 3,000 years existing as a State, which includes nearly 1,200 years of foreign domination prior to 1945, education was subject to great hinderances.

In the period of Northern domination (111 B.C. to 938 A.D.), the Chinese rulers opened public schools and allowed the opening of private ones, mainly to train their children to become civil servants for the ruling apparatus. They sent to school descendants of nobles to make studies up to a certain level without any examination, then appointed them mandarins. In a subsequent stage, a number of upper - class Vietnamese children were allowed to attend Chinese schools. No document has been found on the education system in Vietnam of that period. It is only reported that this system was abolished under the Tang dynasty (618-907), and replaced

by a regime of examinations, a doctor degree was instituted, and outstanding Vietnamese students were sent to China to stand examinations. The education system in Vietnam at that time was modelled on the Chinese one; it included a primary level (below 15 years of age) and a college level (above 15 years of age); it was attended by a very small percentage of the population.

With the advent of national independence (in 938) and under the dynasties of Ngô, Đinh, anterior Lê (939-1009), education was carried out at private and pagoda schools, but it was not developed. It was only under the Lý dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> century) that the education at the Court concentrated in Thăng Long capital received greater attention. In 1076 Quốc Tử Giám was established to teach descendants of the royal family. In 1253, the Trần dynasty renamed this school "Quốc Tử Viện", princes and outstanding elements from the common people were enlisted to be trained to become feudal mandarins. In 1397, King Trần Thuận Tông issued a royal proclamation on the opening of public schools at district level. Under the Hồ dynasty (1400-1407), Hồ Quý Ly had "study houses" built in various districts.

Under the Lê dynasty (15<sup>th</sup> century), especially under King Lê Thánh Tông (1460-1497), the scale of schools was broadened to admit children of the common people. Generally speaking, in this period, there were two kinds of schools: Quốc Tử Giám in the capital city under the King's direct management, and a very small number of public schools at district and provincial level; the most common were private schools (managed by the people themselves) at village and communal level. The education system in nearly 10 centuries under feudal dynasties was confined to the training of feudal mandarins at all echelons.

Throughout this period, what the Kings did was to organise examinations, accordingly the education system in those nine centuries may be called one of examinations. In 1705, the first examination conferring a degree somewhat equivalent to present-day B.A. was organized; it was called *thi hương*. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a new level called *thi hội* came into existence, which conferred a degree somewhat equivalent to present-day M.A. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a new level called *thi đình* conferred the doctor degree, the highest laureate among doctors was called *Trạng nguyên* followed in this order by the degrees of *Thám hoa*, *Bảng nhãn*, and latter *Phó bảng*. At Văn Miếu (*Temple of Literature*), in Hanoi, there are 83 steles bearing inscription of the names of 1,036 doctors who were laureates of the examinations held from 1442 to 1779.

The contents of studies and examinations at all levels were in accordance with the Four Books (the Analects, Great Learning, Golden Mean, Mencius) and the Five Kinh (*Kinh thi*, *Kinh thư*, *Kinh dịch*, *Kinh lễ* and *Xuân Thu*) all written in Chinese characters.

## 2. From mid-19th century onwards

In the early stage of the colonial regime (second half of the 19th century), the French colonialists maintained in status quo the feudal Confucian education of the Nguyễn dynasty. It was only in 1917 that the first law on education was promulgated. Under this law, as from 1919 no school of Chinese character was to remain in existence, and all examinations (*thi hương*, *thi hội*, *thi đình*) were abolished. From that date, the education system was modelled on the



French one. Under this programme, in a few populous communes, primary schools were opened, which included the first grades of elementary education; a number of towns were endowed with primary schools comprising six grades; in some big cities there were junior secondary schools comprising four grades; only Hanoi, Huế and Saigon were endowed each with one senior secondary school, not counting a number of private ones.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the French colonial administration developed a number of specialized schools. In the first three decades, most of them were craft-teaching schools (for the training of workers) or secondary vocational schools (for the training of medium-level technicians). In 1908 a number of these schools were merged together and formed what was called university (*université*). Actually the first preparatory college courses on physics, chemistry and natural sciences, (subsequently called physics - chemistry - biology) came into existence in 1919. In 1923 a medical doctor training course began recruiting students; in 1941 a faculty of law and a school for the training of B.Sc were opened, followed in 1942 by a school for the training of agronomists. These schools constituted the Indochinese University. The number of attendants in the 1939 -1940 school year were only 582 in total.

Thus education in Vietnam under the French rule was built in accordance with the guiding idea, as stated by Governor General of Indochina Merlin in 1924, of "developing education horizontally, not vertically", that is to concentrate mainly on opening elementary schools which include the first three grades of primary education.

**Figure 1. General education in Vietnam in the 1941-1942 school year**

(According to the Indochinese statistical yearbook)

Education level	Public school		Private school	
	Number of schools	Number of pupils	Number of schools	Number of pupils
Senior secondary level	3	652	49	11,203
Junior secondary level	16	5,521	234	29,573
Primary level	503	58,629	906	48,675
Incomplete primary level	8775	486,362		
Total		551,164		89,451

This figure shows that the scale of education at that time was very small: it involved only 3% of the population (which was then about 22 million); it was mainly to train foremen, secretaries and small mandarins in the service of the colonial ruling apparatus.

### 3. The struggle against the obscurantist policy

The colonialists' opening of schools was designed to implement an education policy of enslavement and assimilation, in essence, an obscurantist policy. The invasion started in 1858, but the "teachers' mission" was mentioned only in 1886, and a total abolition of Chinese character school and the Sinologist examination regime was ordered by the Governor General of Indochina only in 1919.

In his famous work "*French Colonization on Trial*" written between 1921 and 1925, Nguyễn Ái Quốc dedicated Chapter II to the "Civilizer" and Chapter IX to "the Policy of

Obscurantism": "To keep people in ignorance and rule over them more easily, such is the preferred policy of our colonial rulers". The author described typical cases of repression and presentation of colonial people. He wrote: "When one is white, he is naturally a civilizer. And when one is a civilizer, he may indulge in savage actions and yet remain the most civilized man". In order to deceive French public opinion and to quietly exploit the aborigines, the sharks of civilization have not only empoisoned the Vietnamese people with alcohol and opium, but also practised a radical policy of obscurantism. In his petition to the French Parliament and the delegations to the Versailles Conference, Nguyễn Ái Quốc put forward eight claims of which the sixth one demanded for "freedom of study and the opening of technological and vocational schools for the aborigines in all provinces".

Subsequently in 1930, in an appeal issued on the occasion of the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party, Nguyễn Ái Quốc put forward the slogan: "to practise education for the whole people", that is to universalize education, to strongly condemn the policy of developing "horizontal" education, opening very few schools, mainly elementary ones. As a result, in 1945, over 95% of Vietnamese were illiterates, especially women and ethnic minority people. In the teaching content, the history of the Vietnamese nation was neglected. The Viet language was not held in high esteem and was regarded as a foreign language, textbooks did not mention Vietnam as a country, but spoke only of the five countries in French Indochina in an attempt to erase the national spirit among pupils and students.

Since the founding (in 1930) of the Indochinese Communist Party, the leading force in the August 1945 Revolution

and in the preparation for this Revolution, the struggle against the obscurantist policy has always been a content of the national liberation struggle, an objective to motivate the people to rise up in the fight for the independence of their Motherland. In this respect, the slogan at that time was: to abolish the enslaving and colonial education, to promote a national education; all the children of labourers are allowed to learn in their maternal language and to engage in vocational training until the age of 16.

In 1907, patriotic intellectuals opened the *Đông Kinh nghĩa thực* school with the stand of promoting studies in the national language and restoring industry, arousing patriotism and the national spirit among the youth. In the 1926-1935 period, the *Việt Nam thanh niên cách mạng đồng chí hội* (Vietnam Association of Youth Revolutionary Comrades)<sup>1</sup> opened many courses on national language for the labouring people and youth. In the 1930-1931 revolutionary upsurge, the fight against illiteracy was boosted. In 1938 the Association for the diffusion of the national language attracted tens of thousands of people combining literacy learning with the development of the struggle against colonialism for independence. The pressing requirements "School attendance for everybody", "Diffusion of education", "Fight against illiteracy" spurred the movement towards the victory of the August Revolution and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

1. A communist organization predecessor of the Indochinese Communist Party (now the Communist Party of Vietnam).

#### 4. From 1945 onwards

The six pressing tasks of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam put forward in September 1945 included two on education: one (the second task) spoke of education in a narrow sense, to fight against the obscurantist policy and against illiteracy; the other (the fourth task), to educate the people against the evil habits and customs inherited from the old regime, to turn the Vietnamese into a valiant, patriotic, labour-loving nation, worthy of an independent Vietnam.

Here attention is to be paid to an idea which is at the foundation of the future development of education. This guiding thought is to build an education which serves national development on the basis of a deep consciousness of the reactionary character of the obscurantist policy and of the need to overcome its long-standing harmful consequences, a point which President Hồ Chí Minh summed up into a truth: "an ignorant nation is a weak one"<sup>1</sup>.

Right after the regaining of independence, one of the most pressing tasks of the Government was to enable all people to read and write, to acquire knowledge, and to understand his or her rights and duties.

The education in independent Vietnam was a popular one designed to raise the intellectual standard, to turn the whole nation into a knowing, cultivated, civilized one. From now on, the raising of the people's intellectual standard became a

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1. Statement at the first meeting of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi on September 3, 1945.

national policy. The promotion of education became an integrated part of the revolutionary cause. The building of a national education system included:

- Popular education
- Basic education
- General education
- Specialized education
- Higher education

Education was developed with a markedly enlarged scale in comparison with the pre-August 1945 period. At that time, it was called "new democratic" or "people's democratic education", having a triple character: national, scientific, and mass.

Education has a *national character* because its content included teaching the national history, promotion of ardent patriotism of the nation; the national history must become a special subject and the national language, an instrument of the national ideology, the realities of the nation are the foundation of education which is designed to train the younger generation into effective servants of the nation. That is the basis of the entire content of education.

Education had a *scientific character* because it taught to students scientific and progressive notions, as opposed to dogmatism, promoted the critical spirit of pupils and students; teaching and learning was performed under the principle: to learn for the sake of deeds, to know for the sake of action, to

link education with the people's like, to achieve an harmonious development of personalities, especially the thirst for knowledge; and to use scientific education as an instrument for national liberation in the ideological field.

Education had a *mass character* because it was duty-bound to bring knowledge to the masses to bring the latter from illiteracy to literacy, to gradually popularize a determined level of education; for instance, to universalize first primary, the junior secondary education, etc., to bring scientific knowledge to the broad masses who are to apply it to life and production. So the mass character is synonym with the democratic character; it is to be achieved step by step. This is done precisely to achieve education as one of human fundamental rights. Inversely, the popularization of education creates a new motive force for the development of education itself, culture, science, economy and society.

In a word, the new democratic education, a priceless product of the August Revolution, is a democratic education of the people.

The people's education of that time set the raising of the intellectual standard as a primordial objective. For this reason, right after the conquest of independence, it was necessary to consider the liquidation of the heavy aftermath of the obscurantist policy pursued by the colonial regime: over 95% of the 22 million people were illiterate.

On September 8, 1945, the Government issued a decree on the establishment of the Popular Education Office, asserted that learning was compulsory and free in order to urgently

eradicate illiteracy because ignorance was one of the three enemies to be liquidated, namely poverty, ignorance and foreign aggression.

On October 4, 1945, President Hồ Chí Minh issued an appeal calling on the entire people to fight against the lack of education: the illiterates must regard learning as a right and an obligation; the literates are duty-bound to teach the illiterates; women must carry out study all the more, the youth must march in the van in this work. For the first time, there was in Vietnam a nationwide campaign against illiteracy. In the first year of this drive (September 8, 1945- August 8, 1946), 74,950 popular education classes were opened with 95,660 teachers and 2,520,000 pupils. Through this, 10 million people learned to read and write between 1946 and 1954.

With a view to gradually raising the level of education regarded as a criterium of development, and effectively furthering it, the work did not stop at the level of learning to read and write. From 1947 to 1948, popular classes for grown-ups were organized, including elementary popular classes to teach reading and writing, preparatory popular classes equivalent to the second grade of primary education, and 1st-cycle, 2nd-cycle complementary popular classes equivalent to the junior secondary education (four years). So education in Vietnam gradually advanced from raising the education level as the main target to training manpower and talents.

While carrying out the literacy campaign, the Government of the DRV (1945-1976) continued to develop general education, secondary vocational education and higher

education. It advocated reforming education into one of an independent country, training the young generation to become useful citizens, securing an all-round development of the capacity of pupils and students, effectively serving the cause of national liberation and socio-economic construction of independent Vietnam<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Phạm Minh Hạc: "The Education System in Vietnam", from the book "Higher Education in Vietnam". Singapore 1994.

## Chapter II

### THREE EDUCATION REFORMS

One day after the proclamation of independence (September 2, 1945), in his Letter to pupils on the occasion of the first new school year's day under the new regime, President Hồ Chí Minh pointed out the role of education in furthering the restoration of a newly independent country: "Whether the Vietnamese mountains and rivers will attain glory, and whether the Vietnamese land will gloriously stand on an equal footing with the powers in the five continents, this depends to a great extent on your studies". On the same day, at the first meeting of the Government, the President said: "An ignorant nation is a weak one. Therefore, I propose that a campaign against illiteracy be launched." In his view, lack of education was a dangerous enemy to the same extent as foreign invasion and poverty, and the raising of the people's intellectual standard was one of the pressing tasks of that period.

Along with the literacy campaign, the DRV Government carried on the development of primary, secondary and higher education, advocated the education reform into that of an

independent country, one that trains the young generation to become useful citizens, and fully develops the capabilities of pupils.

The Government advocated the building of a people's democratic education in the service of national construction and defence, which respects human dignity, tempers personality and develops talent. In the past half century, under the leadership of the Party, the National Assembly and the Government, teachers throughout the country along with the whole people implemented this policy, step by step, through three education reforms.

### **1. The first education reform**

Right in October 1945, the Government set up a Council of Consultants to study an education reform program. But because from September 1945 in the South, and from December 1946 in the North, the Vietnamese people had to wage a war of resistance against the French colonialists, it was only in July 1950 that the Council of Government approved the education reform project and decided to carry it out.

Under the project, the education system of the DRV was formally proclaimed that of the people, by the people and for the people.

- An education system bearing a national, scientific and mass character with the content as described above.

- Training objective: to educate the young generation to become citizens loyal to the Motherland, capable and morally good to serve the country.

- Education direction: study going along with action; theory being closely combined with practice.

- Content of general education: to concentrate on a number of subjects such as Vietnamese language, literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology; to introduce new subjects: news-policy, civics, production. There was no subject on foreign languages, music, painting, household work.

- The general school system included three cycles (nine years): first cycle, four years (from first to fourth grade), replacing the former six - year primary education; second cycle, three years (fifth - seventh grade), replacing the former four - year secondary education, first cycle; and third cycle, two years (eighth - ninth grade) replacing the former three-year secondary education, second cycle. Seven-year-old children began to be admitted into the first grade.

Besides the general school system, popular education, vocational education and higher education were also promoted.

- Popular education for adults included three levels: (1) elementary: four months of duration to erase illiteracy; (2) preparatory: four months of duration, equivalent to the second and third grades of the first cycle of general school; (3) complementary: eight months of duration, equivalent to the fifth grade, the first year of the second cycle of general school; and (4) secondary: 18 months of duration, equivalent to the eighth grade, the first year of the third cycle of general school.

- Vocational education included: (1) elementary vocational, teaching a trade to graduates of the fourth grade of an adult complementary class; (duration of course: 1-2 years);

(2) secondary vocational enlisting graduates of the seventh grade of general school or of secondary popular education to train them as medium-grade technicians (duration of course: 2-4 years).

- Higher education system included at that time: (1) Medical School; (2) Teachers' Training College; (3) Civil Servant Higher School reuniting graduates of the third cycle (ninth grade) or 9 + 2 years of preparatory studies for higher school. Duration of course: from two (teachers' training college) to six years (medical school).

## **2. The second education reform**

The 1950 reform of education was carried out in the liberated areas: Việt Bắc (Thái Nguyên, Tuyên Quang, Lạng Sơn, Cao Bằng, Hà Giang, Yên Bái), the North West (Sơn La, Lai Châu), the former Fourth Zone (Thanh Hoá, Nghệ An, Hà Tĩnh, Quảng Bình, Quảng Trị, Thừa Thiên), a part of the former Fifth Zone (Bình Định, Quảng Ngãi), a part of the guerrilla zone in the Red River Delta (Thái Bình, Nam Hà, Ninh Bình, Hưng Yên).

In the temporarily-occupied zone, the schools continued to teach according to the number of general school years from the primary to the secondary levels (12 years) with contents and programs remaining basically the same as prior to 1945.

Thus, up to the Liberation and the Restoration of peace in the North (1954), from the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel northward, there were two systems of general education: 9 years (in the liberated zone) and 12 years (in Hanoi and the temporarily-occupied zone). This situation required an urgent

unification of the two education systems. In May 1956, the Government approved the second draft education reform and entrusted its unfolding to the Ministry of Education. In August 1956, the Government promulgated "The General Education Policy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam".

- The objective of that education reform was "to train youths and children to become people developed in all respects, good citizens faithful to the Motherland, good labourers, and good, talented and virtuous cadres to develop the people's democratic regime in march to socialism, and to achieve national reunification on the basis of independence and democracy".

- The education direction was to link theory to practice, school to social life.

- The education content had a comprehensive character and included four aspects: ethics, intellectual knowledge, physical culture and aesthetics; ethics was to be taught on the basis of a systematic dispensing of knowledge.

- With regard to the education methods: they are to strengthen practical studies, to increase the time devoted to productive labour, to pay greater attention to the application of know how to life.

The general education system had its duration of from 9 to 10 years and included: first cycle: 4 years from the first to the fourth grade; second cycle: 3 years from the fifth to the seventh grade; third cycle: 3 years from the eighth to tenth grade. Children from the age of 7 were admitted into the first grade; subsequently as from 1974, children from the age of 6 were admitted into the first grade.

The number of lessons per week remained the same in the first cycle (17-19 lessons); in the second cycle, it was increased from 20 to 21 lessons and from 29 to 30 lessons in the third cycle.

### 3. The third education reform

With the great victory of Spring 1975<sup>1</sup>, Vietnam gained independence, unity and peace. At the threshold of a new period of national construction and defence, reassessing the past few decades of education development, we note that in spite of very significant achievements, education is still of low quality and not commensurate with the development of society, science and technology; it fails to meet the new requirements of the period of post-war reconstruction. The two zones, South and North (with the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel as a demarcation line) had two different systems of general education with a duration of 11 years in the North and 12 years in the South. For this reason, the Politbureau of the CPV Central Committee issued Decision N°14 (1979) on an education reform.

- Basic contents and objectives: to regard education as an important part of the ideological and cultural revolution, an important factor boosting the development of the economy, culture, science and technology. Education is a decisive factor in the training of talents and of new labourers with good moral quality, scientific and technological knowledge, technical qualification, good health...

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1. On April 30, 1975 the Vietnam People's Army liberated Saigon, victoriously ending the Vietnamese People's resistance war against US aggression for national salvation.

- The current reform of education lays down the task of caring for and educating the younger generation from childhood to maturity; gradually attracting all children at the proper age into kindergartens and infant classes, striving to enable the young generation from the age of 6 years to maturity to attend the whole program of senior secondary school (12 years). To universalize senior secondary school among workers, peasants and all labourers including ethnic minority people.

- To better implement the principles "study along with practice", "education combined with production", "school linked to society". Production in secondary schools bears the character of combined technologies.

In the vocational training schools and establishments of higher education, production is linked to vocational training, scientific research and experimentation.

- To reform the education structure, contents and methods.

This education reform started in 1981. Major achievements are as follows:

1. An integrated system of national education has been built, which includes all study levels: pre-school programs, and those for primary, secondary, higher education and post-graduate level. From now on, Vietnam actually has a people's national education.

2. Following many years of war-time education development, unified secondary education system of 12 years was achieved in the whole country (1993), comprising primary education: 5 years (grades 1-5), junior secondary education: 4 years



(grades 6-9), senior secondary education: 3 years (grades 10-12).

In the 1992-1993 school year, all senior secondary schools in the country were endowed with the 12th grade (in the past, only 11th grades existed in the North); for the first time, the graduation examinations for the senior secondary schools took place with a single set of tests at a single level.

For the first time vocational training schools and centers for technical labour and popular trade training were opened. There were now over 200 centers of this kind throughout the country, effectively serving technological education and vocational training. Thanks to this, for the first time, a number of schools are in a position to carry into effect the principle of combining education with productive labour.

3. A new program was worked out for grades 1 to 12 and a collection of new text books printed along a basis, modern and practical orientation: the contents about population and family, the environment, and vocational orientation were introduced for teaching in schools. Informatics was taught in many establishments of higher education and a number of senior secondary schools. From 1984 onwards, stress is laid on the development of general education with a universal character teaching in labour, technology, popular trades<sup>1</sup> to people.

In the 1981 -1982 school year, the new text books (called reformed books) were introduced into the first grade;

1. Phạm Văn Đồng. Speech delivered on the occasion of the Vietnam Teachers' Day, November 20, 1984, at Ba Đình Conference Hall, Hanoi.

subsequently, each year witnessed the putting to use of an additional book, and in the 1992 -1993 school year, the text books were replaced in the 12th grade. Then for the first time in several decades, in all general schools of the country, teaching was dispensed according to a single program and with a single set of text books. According to a general assessment, the set of text books of the education reform after a number of adjustments was more progressive than the old one and might be used until the year 2000.

4. For the first time, documents were made public on the education objectives and plans for the various education levels: infant classes (January 1990), junior secondary schools (March 1986), and senior secondary schools (March 1990). For the first time, legal documents were worked out on all school subjects, on the activities and management of schools, stipulating the education requirements that must be fulfilled by all pupils after each education level; the teaching contents, methods and plans for each level, the criteria for schools' material facilities and their management. All this is to achieve the targets of people's education in conformity with the principles of Vietnamese education asserted since 1960.

5. On August 12, 1991 the National Assembly of the SRV passed the Law on universalization of primary education and the Law on protection, education and care for children. In the course of the implementation of this education reform, the country was confronted with multiple difficulties and plunged into a crisis. Nevertheless, these Laws were passed and a number of objectives were adjusted, in the first place, the targets of primary education universalization, free healthcare for children from 0 to 6 years of age. The whole country was unfolding the program of eradicating illiteracy

and universalizing primary education according to the Jomtien Statement<sup>1</sup>.

In 1993, the following targets were set for late 1996: 1/3 of provinces, 2/3 of districts, and 3/4 of communes were to achieve the national criteria regarding illiteracy eradication and primary education universalization. To this date these objectives have been achieved in 27 out of the 61 provinces and cities, nearly 70% of districts and urban precincts, nearly 80% of the communes and urban wards; these figures include three mountainous provinces in the North (Tuyên Quang, Thái Nguyên, Hòa Bình) and one province in Tây Nguyên (Lâm Đồng).

6. To diversify the forms of training in establishments of higher education, in secondary vocational training schools, to expand the training scale, to resort to both state scholarships and contracts with receipts for the budget; to establish in-service training centres; to boost the training of post-graduates within the country. Eight private colleges have been established besides the public establishments of higher education. Those students who can afford to cater to their own sustenance and school fees may go abroad for studies.

7. Besides the maintenance of schools, classes and pupils at all education levels, great efforts have been made to ensure the quality of education and training with much

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1. Statement issued by the International Conference on Education for everybody held in Jomtien (Thailand) under the sponsorship of UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and WB.

attention being paid to excellent, capable pupils. For the first time (in 1987), a decision was taken to open in secondary schools a system of special classes on literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, foreign languages in provinces and cities throughout the country. A number of scholarships are granted to gifted pupils and students by social organizations, non-governmental organizations at home and abroad, and by overseas Vietnamese, etc. Almost all Vietnamese pupils taking part in international competitions on mathematics, physics, informatics, and the Russian language have won prizes. As regard mathematics in particular, nearly 80 prizes were won by the Vietnamese pupils in 16 contests (five pupils each time). In recent years, the average percentage of excellent pupils has increased from 3-5% to over 10%, and steady progress has been recorded in the quality of primary education.

8. In spite of economic difficulties, the State raised the education budget appropriations from 5-6% to 7-8%, then to 10.26%. The direction of State and the people, Central and local levels jointly catering to education was better implemented and the socialization of education recorded a significant progress. In addition to the Central budget, many localities (provinces, districts, communes) made contributions to the education budget; in many places, 50% of the primary education budget was contributed by the people and local budget.

9. Positive changes occurred in the understanding of the role of education in socio-economic development; the influence of the socio-economic crisis on education was grasped. There was a more correct appraisal of the weaknesses in education. The Sixth Congress of the

Communist Party of Vietnam put forward the line of renovating education.

Thus, new opportunities have been created for the development of education, along with big challenges.

1) On the basis of a new mode of thinking close to reality, we have gradually come to a correct understanding of the quality of education which has been concretized in various respects. However the quality of education and training is still poor and does not meet the requirements of socio-economic growth.

Most primary schools teach only 2-3 out of the 9 subjects (the Vietnamese language, mathematics...). In secondary education, gymnastics and sports, aesthetics are still neglected.

2) Voluntarism has been gradually overcome. The initial objective of universalizing secondary education (up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade) has been lowered to be more practical. Great efforts are to be made if the eradication of illiteracy and universalization of primary education are to be completed by the end of this decade. The percentage of attendance by children who have reached the age of going to junior and senior secondary school is still low. College students and qualified workers were in small number; there were very few vocational training schools. A rational structure has not yet been determined for the development of training.

3) Program, text books and study materials continued to be major pending issues. In comparison with the requirement of promoting personality and socio-economic development, the content of education and training is both

overloaded and deficient (some parts are too heavy). On the other hand, the program failed to teach many subjects essential for livelihood; many points failed to reflect to the required extent the progress of the scientific and technological revolution; informatics has not been adequately introduced into the school, especially secondary and higher education establishments.

4) One major shortcoming in the past period was lack of measures to reform the education method which is now the most conservative factor: the teacher reads, the pupil takes note; main reliance is on memory instead of thinking, study is made in a passive way. There was a serious shortage of school equipment to renovate the method of teaching and learning.

5) Although the role of material facilities with regard to the quality of education was viewed in a more and more practical, and sound way, the outlook lagged far behind the requirements, especially at the current time of economic crisis. There was a serious shortage of school buildings and teaching implements. For many classes, teaching was given in three shifts/day. Few schools met the criteria as to school hygiene (inadequate lighting, shortage of tables and benches appropriate for certain pupils' age). In some places, testing instruments were not used and maintained in a proper way.

6) Teachers encountered great difficulties in their life and had to engage in sidelines to get supplementary earnings. Teachers left their job by thousand each year. School were short of tens of thousands of primary education teachers. Secondary education, which formerly had teachers in excess of requirements, now began to feel a shortage.

There are a surplus of teachers of biology and history while those in a number of other subjects (manual labour, vocational orientation, music, painting...) are in shortage. In recent times, the improvement to teachers' professional standards has not been well carried out, many among them were unable to meet the requirements of teaching with new text books.

7) The State budget allocations for education were low. Receipts from other sources (NGO, community) were also limited. In many years, the budget distributions earmarked for education by the National Assembly and the Government failed to be fully realized.

8) Many shortcomings existed in the organization and the management of education in various links from planning, school network arrangement to apparatus organization, inspection, examination assessment, financial management and so fourth.

### Chapter III

## RENOVATION OF EDUCATION

The past ten years (1986 - 1997) hold a special position in the more than 50 years of people's power (1945 - 1997). That is a period of renovation formally initiated by the Communist Party of Vietnam at its VI<sup>th</sup> Congress (December 1986). The VII<sup>th</sup> Congress (April 1991) put forward a new Program and a Strategy of socio - economic stabilization and development until the year 2000, mapping out in broad lines the particular features of socialism in Vietnam designed to make the people rich, the country powerful, the society fair and civilized. The renovation line is expressed by the shift from the subsidy-based mechanism to the market oriented one, the development of an open multi-sector and socialist - oriented economy under State management. It has brought the country to a new development stage. This is a period of development of education along the renovation line (which may also be called a period of adjustment of the third education reform).

The renovation cause began with the renovation of the mode of thinking. In the same vein from the end of 1986 a renovation in the views on education surged up.

## 1. Renovation of thinking on education<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1. Imbalances (contradictions)

In the renovation current, education researchers and social forces undertook an analysis of the actual state of education. They reached the conclusion that besides great significant achievements, the education branch has to make clear to the whole society the imbalances (contradictions) which constitute hindrances to the development of education and require a gradual solution. At that time (in 1987), the following contradictions (imbalances) were pointed out:

a) Imbalance between the socio-economic development and the development of education; between the wish to serve a rapid growth of education and the low investment in this field; between the need to increase school attendance and the possibility of ensuring good quality for education; between the intention to universalize at once secondary general education in the whole country and the implementation conditions.

b) Imbalance between the socio - economic and the education structure, between the requirements of developing labour and the training structure, between training and utilization.

c) Within the branch organization as well as in teaching and learning activities, increasing imbalances have surged up and adversely affected the quality of education: imbalance between the requirement of all-round education and the

strength and structure of the contingent of teachers; between physical and intellectual development; between the teaching of theory and that of practice and experimentation; between pupils' knowledge and labour capabilities; between their comprehension and capacity of action.

### 1.2. The new approach

To resolve the contradictions step by step, a new approach to education is required in the first place.

a/ First, it is necessary to overcome the vision of education only as a part of the ideological - cultural revolution. As a matter of fact, education holds a position of paramount importance in national development. The education development strategy is a part of the strategy about man which holds a central position in the whole socio-economic strategy of the country wherein man is regarded as the objective and the motive force of socio - economic growth. Since 1991 education along with science and technology has been considered as a primordial State policy.

b/ Second, it is necessary to do away with the opinion regarding investment for education merely as a kind of welfare fund to which one may allocate at will any amount of money. Investment in education is investment in development, being the fundamental investment in the socio-economic strategy. Subsequently, especially as from 1991 and since the fourth Plenum of the Party Central Committee (1993) the view has become clearer and education is regarded as part of the socio - economic infrastructure.

Accordingly investment in education must be the same as that in communications and post and tele-communications. Stress has been laid on the joint creation of investment sources by the State and the people.

1. Phạm Minh Hạc, Contribution to the Renovation of Thinking about Education. Education Publishing House, Hanoi 1994.

c/ Third, the renovation of education must start from the school - the basic unit of the education system. The specific content of education (called at that time the "determination of the character of the general school"), has a concrete manifestation - the combination of study with production (to teach and learn general knowledge with knowhow, attitude towards labour). To prepare pupils for participation in production activities by teaching them some ordinary (common) trades and by introducing the career orientation services.

As pointed out by the Conference of Asian - Pacific education specialists in 1990, in the present time, every graduate of senior secondary education must have three laissez-passers: an academic laissez-passer (sufficient general knowledge), a vocational laissez-passer and an enterprise laissez-passer. The guidance on secondary schools in this direction was given in the decision by the Minister of Education on "The Objectives and Plans for Teaching in Junior Secondary Schools" issued in 1985, and on "The Objectives and Plans for Teaching in the Senior Secondary Schools" issued in 1990. These documents provided for the content of education comprising knowledge, knowhows and attitude. Curricula and textbooks are to be set up accordingly.

d/ Fourth, the whole process of renovation of the thinking on education must be stuck to the objective of education, namely, to shape and promote comprehensively personality, to train men full of patriotism and the socialist ideals, imbued with the fine traditions of the nation and the quintessence of human culture, endowed with good health, moral virtue and good qualification in one trade (although there may be really the subject of learning activities; the pupil along with the

teacher should be the subject of teaching and learning activities.

e/ Fifth, to lay particular stress on the decisive role of the teacher in the development of good education.

### *1.3. Guiding viewpoints on the development of education*

In line with the renovation of the thinking on education, the Vũng Tàu Conference held in summer 1987 put forward 10 guiding viewpoints:

- To clearly determine the role and position of education in socialist construction and national defence.

- Education is a cause of the masses; schools are instruments of the people's power.

- The education development plan is a part of the socio-economic plan: to maintain, consolidate, stabilize, develop education; to promote order and disciplines in teaching and learning, in schools and classes, and in the management of education.

- To ensure quality and effectiveness both on a short - term and a long - term basis, to take timely steps and go ahead of times.

- To secure development by regions, to achieve universalization and upgrading, on a massive scale and with vanguard units.

- To achieve comprehensive education, the pupil must be good one and engage in good learning.

- To adopt diversified flexible forms of schools and classes.

- The teacher must be really good one, carry out good teaching; schools and classes must be really good ones.

- To strengthen scientific research; to boost the application of scientific and technological progress and of advanced education experience.

- To renovate the management of education.

#### *1.4. Specific programs of action (1987 – 1990)*

In keeping with the above-mentioned guiding viewpoints, the general education branch has concentrated on the unfolding of specific programs of action:

- To preserve, stabilize, consolidate and develop education.

- To institutionalize the teaching objective and plan; to adjust the program; to improve the school books; to restore disciplines in teaching and learning, in schools and classes.

- To concentrate on leading "Grade 1, cycle 1". As from 1987, the "first cycle" school is separated from the junior secondary school, being called primary school; To universalize primary education (in 1990, the National Assembly put forward a national program for eradication of illiteracy and universalization of primary education; in 1991 the Ministry of Education advanced a program of education for everybody to be carried out in 1991 - 2000). To adjust some textbooks; to achieve step by step good primary education.

- To muster a significant force to unfold a "headway drive" by broadening selected classes, specialized classes, specialized schools (a specialized senior secondary school for

each province, a specialized junior secondary school for each district).

- To diversify, socialize and democratize education; particularly, the various forms of school and education management.

#### *1.5. Professional technical and vocational training schools and higher education establishments*

In summer 1987 (at the Nha Trang Conference), the higher and vocational education branch<sup>1</sup> advocated the creation of a new structure:

To create a rational investment structure for this system; to renovate its management mechanism; to improve the content and method of teaching and learning. This policy has been implemented with major measures as follows:

- To resolve a number of pressing issues in order to achieve stability in the branch;

- To strengthen the political and ideological education work;

- To reorganize the network of long-term concentrated training into one meeting the criterium of quality;

- To organize and broaden various forms of training;

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1. Prior to 1987, there were in Vietnam four services in charge of education: (1) Ministry of Education, (2) Ministry of Higher Education and Secondary Vocational Education, (3) Committee for the Protection of Mothers and Children (4) General Department of Vocational Training. As from January 1987 there were two ministries: Ministry of Education (1+3), Ministry of Higher Education, Secondary Vocational Education and Training (1+4). In April 1990, these services were merged into the Ministry of Education and Training.

- To continue to determine the specific training targets for each branch of study, to establish a new list of branches and trades for college training on a wide scale;

- To reform the training content in a "basic, modern and Vietnamese-like" direction. To undertake a pilot case of organizing training units. In a number of fields of college training, the training will be organized in two stages;

- Post-graduates will be trained mainly in the country;

- To standardize and synchronize the contingent of teaching cadres;

- To boost scientific research and production;

- To achieve a centralized management mechanism with a rational distribution of powers, to rearrange the school network, and to carry out a mechanism of contracts between schools and any party which has training requirements.

These policies have found concrete manifestations in three programs of the higher education and vocational training branch:

Program I: To reform the higher education and vocational training: to open various forms of school, to "soften" the training process, to create education units, to work out a mechanism of conversion.

Program II: To carry out scientific research and production, to improve the material and technological conditions of training.

Program III: To build a contingent of teachers and managerial officials.

## 2. A new landmark

2.1. The fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam was a new landmark in the development of education in Vietnam. It was the first Central Party Plenum in the history of the CPV to issue a specific Resolution "on the continued renovation of education and training" (1993) in accordance with four guiding viewpoints:

- Education and training constitute a primordial national policy, a motive force, a fundamental condition to ensure the achievement of the socio-economic objectives of national construction and defence. Investment in education is to be regarded as a main orientation of investment for development.

- The objective is to raise the people's intellectual standard, to train human resources, to foster talents, to train cultivated and highly qualified people. To broaden the scale while raising the quality and effectiveness of education, to link study with practice, capability with moral quality.

- To maintain close connections with the requirements of national development and the progressive trend of the times.

- To diversify the forms of training; to achieve social justice in education.

2.2. Regarding the objectives of education and training, the following three development objectives are clearly distinguished:

- The objective of macro-development: to raise the people's intellectual standard, to train human resources, to foster



talent, that is, to create an intellectual foundation, to prepare a new generation of labourers having a higher standard, with, at the head, a contingent of talented people, and to achieve social justice.

- The objective of micro-development of personality: people with a high intellectual development, who are physically strong, spiritually abundant, morally pure, and have great working ability and socio-political dynamism.

- Specific objectives of development: eradication of illiteracy, universalization of primary education, promotion of a new form of secondary education, expansion of college and post-graduate education, building of a system of high quality centres for education.

The viewpoints and objectives expounded above are based on three fundamental concepts as follows:

- *Human factor*: Among the factors of socio-economic development the human factor holds a central, determining position, especially at the present juncture when intelligence and moral quality have asserted their determining role to the point of being considered as a power above all others and a measure of all values.

- *Human development*: Although man and human society exist as natural entities, the human factor does not come into existence by itself, but has to be created; likewise, the central, determining role of the human factor is a creation of man. Therefore, the affirmation of the position and role of the human factor requires another concept - human development. After birth, man must be developed through education (in the broad sense of the word comprising self-education, school and extra-school education, regular

and irregular education, life-long education, an education achieved through his activities and his exchanges. Human development has become a more and more important criterium in the classification of countries in the world.

- *Human resources*: The human factor must be developed continuously, it is not only a resource in itself, but a source of resources (material, financial...). Human resources are the first fund which, along with the financial capital, engenders socio-economic development. "Along with the creation of material and financial resources and to bring them into play, the most important thing now is to increase the forces of the Vietnamese man and to create a new labour capability, much higher than in the past"<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. Results

Thanks to the renovation line which has brought the development of the country into a new period, and thanks to the education renovation policy, the education and training work has made progress in the past period (1987 - 1996). General assessments of these achievements and the subsequent work are done here. Data and tables on each cycle of education will be expounded in the following chapters.

#### *The achievements*

a/ Generally speaking, the disintegration of schools and classes, job quitting by teachers and class abandoning by pupils have been stopped. The education system has been consolidated and has begun to develop.

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1. "To continue to renovate education and training", Resolution of the fourth Plenum of the CPV Central Committee, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi, 1993.

b/ Literacy and post-literacy classes and primary schools have been opened in remote places, most "white points" with regard to education have been liquidated. Schools and classes are opened everywhere in diversified forms: family nurseries, private infant schools, all - day primary classes, evening class centres, vocational centres, flexible classes to universalize primary education, evening literacy classes, "B network"<sup>1</sup> classes in junior secondary and private and semi-private senior secondary schools, private colleges, open university, subject-oriented schools and specialized schools... All these establishments are included in a nationwide system of education institutionalized in Decree No 90/CP dated November 24, 1993. With the present education system and content, Vietnam actually has a fairly comprehensive popular education.

c/ The number of pupils has stopped declining and begun to increase. There is a marked reduction in the number of class-repeating pupils and of drop-outs.

**Figure 2. Percentage of repeaters and drop-outs**

	Repeaters (% of the total number of pupils)			Drop-outs ( % of total number of pupils)		
	1989-90	1992-93	1993-94	1989-90	1992-93	1993-94
Primary school	12.7	7.9	6.18	10.6	9.4	6.18
Junior secondary schools		2.6	3		16.1	2.52
Senior secondary schools		1.2	1.11		14.4	4.14

1. In the beginning, this network is intended for students who had to pay school fee.

Over the past five years (1991-1995) nearly 1.5 million illiterates attended classes; over 1 million school-age children who had not gone to school or who had abandoned study were admitted into schools.

d/ Education in ethnic minority areas has been developed. Studies of the education for these areas have been carried out, and a preliminary orientation has been defined with regard to children of Khmer, Cham, Hmong and other ethnic groups in mountainous areas. A system of new boarding schools for ethnic minority pupils has been built; in many places, they are the most beautiful buildings of the locality: 5 centrally-run schools, 38 provincial ones; a number of district schools have begun to be built, in a number of communes, there are half - boarding schools for children of ethnic minority groups. The number of ethnic pupils at boarding schools has increased five- to seven-fold.

e/ Socialization of education has enabled everybody to be involved in this work. This policy has been widely unfolded by the trade unions at various echelons of the education branch, in coordination with schools, education management boards and various branches under the leadership of the Party Committees and administrative bodies. Congresses on Education have been held in about 3/4 of the 11,000 communes all over the country and in various districts. Through these congresses, coordination has been strengthened between school, society (the Party, the administration, mass organizations, and various branches...) and family; the education environment has been markedly improved and favourable conditions created for the good education of children. The sense of co-responsibility between the contingent of teachers and other education forces has been

established. Thanks to the socialization of education, the school has become more democratic. In some communes or districts, people's contribution to education is equal to or greater than the funds earmarked for this purpose from the State budget.

f/ With regard to the quality of education, there is a continued polarization (some schools are very good, others are very bad. The gap between them is enlarging). However, on the whole, there is some improvement which is most clearly seen in primary education.

The percentage of fair and good pupils has increased from 3 - 5% to over 10 -12%. The successful participants in national competitions of good pupils are more numerous. Pupils have received prizes at international competitions at the same rate as before. There is a marked increase in the number of pupils who attend courses of foreign languages and informatics.

Much attention has been paid to moral education; discipline is observed much more strictly; on the whole, the school environment has remained healthy. It is noteworthy that now pupils and students are more dynamic, and get adapted to new developments more rapidly and creatively. These are the results of the renovation line, and also a part of the achievements recorded in 50 years of development of education and training. They are due to the efforts of teachers, the Party, the people and tens of millions of students.

However, many problems of education and training are still a matter of concern. National independence and socialism depend to a great extent on the results and effectiveness of education in the forthcoming years. In this

line of thought, outstanding concern is focused on ethical education and vocational training.

Broadly speaking, this is a concern about the objective and content of education, both at school and at home. Family education stands now a problem.

The scale of values in society, especially among the youth and students, is being upturned. Some people are speaking of a crisis, of individualist and pragmatic tendencies and rush for money<sup>1</sup>; Social ideals rank low in the scale of values. The problem is that at a time of major socio-economic changes, attention is not fully paid to the orientation of social values<sup>2</sup>. In addition, vocational education is not much developed, its content is backward; graduated pupils and students are not well-prepared enough to take up a profession, and do not meet the requirements of technological labour, especially in joint-ventures or foreign enterprises. This situation is likely to turn a part of the youth into people who only wish to earn a living as hired labourers and who will gradually become "a new type of slaves". To care for education today is to care for the future of the nation.

In an overall approach, the project on education and manpower VIE 89/022 sponsored by UNDP and carried out by UNESCO in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Training between 1991 and 1992<sup>3</sup> has reached a conclusion about the existence of seven hard problems:

1. Phạm Minh Hạc, Man as a Problem of the Renovation, Hanoi, 1994
2. Phạm Minh Hạc, To Orientate Social Values, to Strengthen Moral Education, Nhân Dân, April 20, 1996.
3. The author of this book has been appointed by the Government as manager of this project.

- The inadequacy of education and training with regard to society in the period of transition;

- Ineffective utilization of economic resources for education and training;

- Quantitative and qualitative decline in all cycles of learning;

- Weak liaison of technological and vocational training with production and employment;

- Inadequate supply of resources to college education, inappropriate network of college education, weak liaison between research, production and utilization;

- Weakness and difficulties of the contingent of teachers;

- Inappropriate system of organization, management and legislation in education and training;

Over the recent years, Vietnam has managed to overcome partly these shortcomings. It is advisable now to continue pondering over these seven conclusions;

Below, especially in Chapter XI, we will speak of the way to continue dealing with the hard problems which have been just mentioned.

## Chapter IV

### THE PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ITS MANAGEMENT

#### 1. The education system

##### *a/ Levels of education*

On November 24, 1993, the Vietnamese Prime Minister signed a Decree on the Vietnamese education system comprising all education establishments from creches to post-graduate level. Placed under unified state management, this system includes:

- "Young Shoot" education (pre-school education): creches and infant schools;

- Primary education;

- Secondary education: junior and senior secondary education;

- Vocational education: craft-teaching schools and secondary vocational schools;

- Higher education: colleges and universities;

- Post-graduate level: master's degree and doctor's degree.

*b/ School age and duration of courses at each grade*

The national education system gives now teaching to about 21 million people, (the population of the country is 76 million) including children from three months to 24 years of age and above.

- Kindergartens admit children from 3 to 36 months of age;
- Infant schools admit children from 36 to 72 months of age;
- Primary schools admit children from 6 years of age calculated according to the year of birth. Grade 1 is the first grade of primary education which comprises five grades (grades 1-5);
- Junior secondary schools admit children from the age of 11 and comprises four grades (grades 6-9)
- Senior secondary schools admit children from the age of 15 and comprises three grades (grades 10-12).

Gifted children may be admitted into primary or secondary schools before the specified age at the recommendation of a special council (set up by the head of the district education department).

- For craft-teaching, there are short-term courses (duration: 3-12 months) and long-term ones (duration: 1-2 years), secondary vocational schools (duration of study: 3-4 years). The minimum requirement for admission into the short-term courses is graduation from primary school, a long-term course: graduation from junior secondary school; and that for secondary vocational schools: graduation from junior secondary school. The duration of the courses of study is 3 years for vocational schools, 3 years for colleges, 4 to 6 years for universities.

The requirement for admission is graduation from secondary general, or secondary vocational school.

- To get the M.A. degree, the candidate should have graduated from a university; the duration of study is 2 years.
- For the doctor's degree, the duration of study is 3-4 years or more.

**2. Forms of schools and classes**

There are the following forms of school:

*a/ Public school:* organized and managed by the State which makes investments in its material facilities and provides for standing expenditures.

*b/ Semi-public school:* organized and managed by the State; the school enjoys financial autonomy, and are to see by themselves to all receipts and expenses.

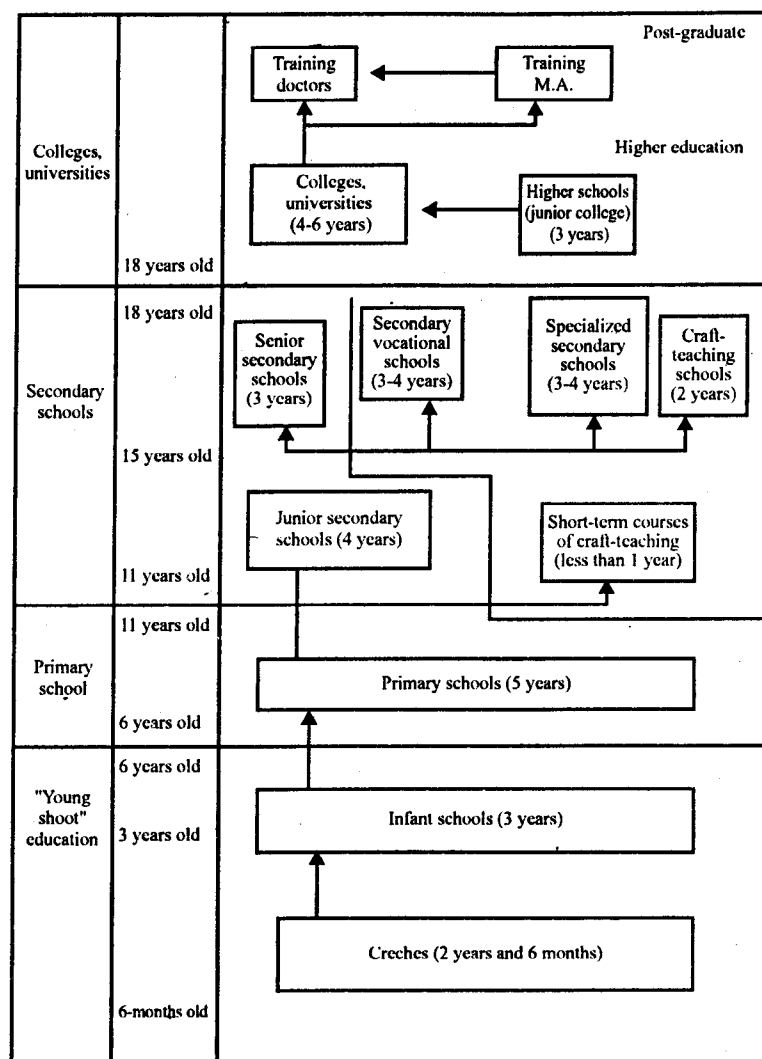
*c/ Community-founded school:* organized by social organizations having judicial personality; the social organizations are responsible for management, make investments in material facilities and see by themselves to all receipts and expenses.

The social organizations having judicial personality are allowed to open schools at all echelons if they meet the conditions stipulated by the State.

*d/ Private school:* organized and managed by individuals who make investments in material facilities and see by themselves to all receipts and expenses.

Individuals are allowed to open "young shoot", vocational and senior secondary schools and higher education establishments.

**Figure 3. Structure of the National Education System under Decree 90/CP dated November 24, 1993**



### *Number of schools in the country*

Schools are not necessarily to be organized separately, but may include several levels of study. For instance, some primary schools are organized separately (grades 1-5); others are included in junior secondary schools (grades 1-9); some junior secondary schools are organized separately (grades 6-9), others are included in senior secondary schools (grades 6-12); some senior secondary schools are organized separately (grades 10-12), others are included in establishments of higher education and so forth. Taking schools as units excluding nurseries, creches, infant classes), the Vietnamese national education system possesses a network of schools extending to the whole country and including:

- 5062 creches and 32,669 nurseries;
- 11,683 primary schools;
- 2,093 junior secondary schools (grades 1-9)
- 5,900 junior secondary schools (grades 6-9)
- 701 intergrade secondary schools (grades 6-12)
- 644 senior secondary schools (grades 10-12)
- 48 Central and provincial boarding secondary schools for ethnic minority pupils
- 170 district boarding secondary schools for ethnic minority pupils
- 7213 infant schools and 66, 890 infant classes
- 253 secondary vocational schools

- 320 centres for labour education, vocational orientation and craft-teaching

- 174 craft-teaching schools

- 46 junior colleges

- 55 universities and colleges (not counting the schools of the Army and of the Home Ministry): 2 National Universities, 3 regional universities, 38 colleges, 8 private colleges, 3 pre-college establishments for ethnic minority students.

### **3. The present management of education**

The management of education in Vietnam is assigned to different echelons as follows:

a/ The Central Committee and the Politbureau of the Communist Party of Vietnam decide the line and strategic orientation for education. For instance, in 1979 the IV<sup>th</sup> Political Bureau issued Resolution N°14 on the reform of education; in 1993, the VII<sup>th</sup> Party Central Committee issued Resolution N°4 on the "Continued renovation of education and training"; recently in December 1996, the VIII<sup>th</sup> Party Central Committee issued Resolution N°2 on the "strategic orientation of education development in the industrialization and modernization period and the immediate tasks until the year 2000".

b/ The National Assembly promulgates the laws on education. It also takes decisions on the budget and major programs. For instance, in 1990, it decided the program of eradication of illiteracy and universalization of primary education; in 1991 it promulgated the Law on the universalization of primary education; in April 1997, it heard a government report about the draft Law on education.

c/ The Government is responsible for the management of education. It issued resolutions and directives on specific policies to realize the Resolutions of the Party Central Committee and Politbureau, and the National Assembly, (for instance, the Decree on the organization, apparatus, functions and tasks of the Ministry of Education and Training or the Decree on the national education system, etc.). The Prime Minister issues decisions on the creation and disbandment of higher education establishments. In 1989, the Government set up the National Committee responsible for the implementation of the program of illiteracy eradication and universalization of primary education. The Committee included the representatives of 11 ministries, branches, and mass organizations (peasants' women's, youth). The Prime Minister set up the Council of Academic Degrees chaired by the Minister of Education and Training and responsible for awarding academic degrees (associate professor and professor) in the whole country; this Council includes some vice-ministers, the Deputy Director of the National Centre of Science and a number of scientists. It is entrusted with the tasks of management, coordination and consultation on macro-strategic issues relevant to education and training.

d/ The National Education Council established in 1997 is placed directly under the Prime Minister.

e/ There are inter-ministerial documents on education management: documents jointly issued by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Training; documents jointly issued by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Ministry of Education and Training;

documents jointly issued by the Government Organization Department and the Ministry of Education and Training; for instance, the inter-ministerial Circular issued by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Training on annual budget allocations; the inter-ministerial Circular issued by the Ministry of Education and Training and the Government Organization Department on the staffed of education and training personnel .

f/ The Ministry of Education and Training is the main body in charge of education and training in the whole country.

\* The Ministry has an apparatus stipulated by the Prime Minister and including:

- The Office of the Ministry;
- General departments: Department of Finance Planning, Department of Organization and Personnel, Department of International Relations, Department of Science and Technology;
- Departments responsible for specific branches of study: Department of "Young Shoot" Education, Department of Primary Education, Department of Secondary Education, Department of Secondary Vocational Education and Craft-Teaching, Department of Permanent Education, Department of Higher Education, Department of Post-graduate Studies;

- Education inspection.

\* The Ministry of Education and Training assumes unified state management of the education system through the following functions:

- To issue directives, circulars, statutes, guiding instructions for the implementation of the related Laws and Ordinance of the National Assembly, the Degrees and Decisions of the Government;

- To work out annual and five-year plans of education development;

- To work out in conjunction with the ministries concerned annual education budgets for submission to the Government which in turn will submit them to the National Assembly for decision;

- To study the education science, especially its application in schools;

- To concretize objectives of education and training according to the timing and programs of all the education and training disciplines, to draft and put into circulation text books (mainly for the primary and secondary education, partly for college education, secondary vocational education and craft-training);

- To promulgate criteria on the training level, school buildings, and school equipment;

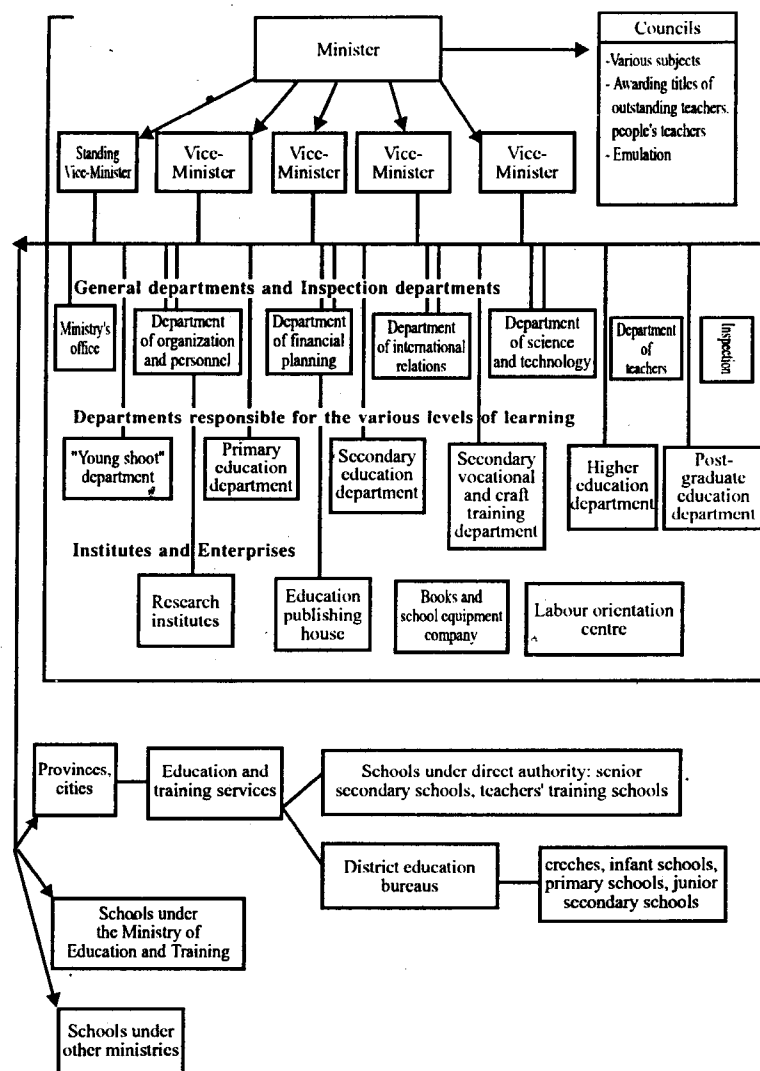
- To carry out control and valuation, to promulgate the rules on graduation examinations for various grades of learning and on the enrollment examinations of universities and colleges, to take a direct part in the organization of the graduation examinations for senior secondary education;

- To carry out education inspections;

- To maintain international relations in education and training.



**Figure 4. Scheme of the organization machinery of the Ministry of Education and Training**



### **Management of various levels of education**

- With regard to "young shoot", primary and secondary education, the Ministry of Education and Training confines itself to promulgating documents on objectives, plans of education and training, programs, handbooks, inspection, examinations.

- With regard to vocational and craft-teaching schools, the Ministry of Education and Training makes public the lists of crafts to be trained, the programs, the criteria for appraisal; It also carries out inspection work. In other fields such as personnel, finance, organization, etc. the schools are under the direct management of the provincial and district people's committees, enterprises, corporations, other ministries and localities.

- With regard to the establishments of higher education, the Ministry of Education and Training assumes only the direct management (as to personnel, financial and technical issues) of the teachers' training schools for music and painting, gymnastics and sports, technology. Other teachers' training schools are directly placed under provincial and municipal authorities.

- The Ministry of Education and Training directly assumes all-round management with regard to the following colleges and universities:

+ Two national universities in Hanoi and Hồ Chí Minh City.

+ Three regional universities in Thái Nguyên, Huế, Đà Nẵng.

+ A number of other colleges: Hanoi University of Technology, Hanoi National Economy College, Cần Thơ University, Hanoi University for Foreign Languages, Trade College, Hanoi Open University, Hồ Chí Minh City Open University...

+ International post-graduate schools (AIT CV, CFGV, SAV...).

The 25 remaining colleges are under the management of other ministries: for instance, the Hanoi Medical College is under the management of the Ministry of Health; the College of Culture and the Hanoi Conservatoire are under the management of the Ministry of Culture and Information; the Water Conservancy College is under the management of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; The College of Gymnastics and Sports is under the management of the General Department of Gymnastics and Sports.

### ***Financial and Personnel management***

The Ministry of Education and Training assumes the direct financial and personnel management of:

- The offices in the apparatus of the Ministry of Education and Training

- The schools under its direct authority

- The national programs (program of construction of boarding schools for ethnic minorities, program of upgrading the teacher training schools) and international cooperation programs (the WB program of primary education, the Japanese ODA programs...).

g. All teachers, associate professors and professors are members of the Vietnam education trade union which has organizations in all schools, districts, provinces, cities. The representatives of the trade union are members of various councils from schools to other echelons. Besides, there are children's organization, Hồ Chí Minh Pioneers' Organisation, Hồ Chí Minh Communist Youth Union and Communist Party of Vietnam.

## **Chapter V**

### **PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION**

(CRECHES INFANT SCHOOLS)

#### **1. Outlined history and present development of the problem**

Prior to 1945, under the French colonization, there was no pre-school education in Vietnam. In the whole country there was only a couple of charitable orphanages.

After the August Revolution, pre-school education developed, though amidst multiple difficulties. New social motive forces spurred up this growth: the permanent concern of the State for the education of children<sup>1</sup>, the juridical affirmation of equality between sexes, the steps taken to

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1. The viewpoints and policies on the protection, care and education for children are mentioned in many State documents, especially the Constitution (1946, 1980 and 1992), the Law on Marriage and Family (1959-1987) and the Ordinance of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on the protection, care for, and education of children (1979), and the Law on Protection, Care and Education for children (1991).

encourage and enable both urban and rural women to take part in production and social activities.

Right from the start, responsibility for organizing and managing infant schools admitting children from 3 to 6 years of age was entrusted to the Ministry of National Education.

Creches admitting children from 0 to 3 years of age were made at first the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Relief, and, a few years later, of the Vietnam Women's Union with the technical guidance of the Ministry of Health. In 1962, the Central Board for the Protection of Mothers and Children was set up with Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng as chairman. In 1971 this board was turned into the Commission for the Protection of Mothers and Children, a ministerial-rank body responsible for the training of nurses and crèche managers.

After the merger in 1987 of the Commission for the Protection of Mothers and Children into the Ministry of Education, the care for and education of pre-school-age children was unified into a single link - the "young shoot" education, the body entrusted with the direct management of this branch was the Department for the Protection and Education of Children under the Ministry of Education. In 1990 this Department became the "Young Shoot" Department in the Ministry of Education and Training. In 1989 the Government set up the Commission of Child Care, chaired by a deputy Prime Minister<sup>1</sup> and as from 1991 a minister was appointed chairman of the Commission.

1. When this Commission was set up, the author of this book in his capacity as Minister of Education was appointed vice-chairman.

Right in the years of the Vietnam-US war, the Prime Minister issued a Directive (August 12, 1966) which stated: "Greater attention is now being paid to the work of creches and infant schools in order to protect the life and health of children, and create favourable conditions for women to assume heavier and heavier tasks in the struggle against US aggression for nation salvation". In 1968-1969, the infant schools in the North were attended by 514,000 children (27.3% of those in the relevant age - bracket). In the South, after the liberation and reunification of the country in 1975, creches and infant schools began to be set up (figures 5a, 5b)<sup>1</sup>. To universalize primary education in the conditions of a limited budget, priority was given to infant classes for 5-year-old children.

Figure 5a. *Development of creches*

School year	Number of children	Number of nurses	Number of creches and nurseries
1971	561,123	72,142	37,314
1975	550,810	78,590	33,040
1980	1,246,473	167,820	46,763
1985	1,157,684	160,578	41,977
1986	1,127,831	157,964	40,597
1989-1990	633,919	101,246	13,348
1990-1991	545,987		

1. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education (1986) and the Ministry of Education and Training (1996).

**Figure 5b. Development of infant schools**

School year	School	Class	Pupil	Teacher
1986-1987	6,117	61,750	1,768,938	76,059
1987-1988	6,329	63,761	1,851,597	80,307
1988-1989	6,696	63,027	1,801,806	180,085
1989-1990	6,565	58,801	1,607,888	75,095
1990-1991	6,642	56,307	1,495,403	71,951
1991-1992	6,866	56,393	1,493,583	71,805
1992-1993	6,806	56,763	1,538,882	69,619
1993-1994	6,870	59,497	1,659,247	65,691
1994-1995	6,659	62,861	1,777,032	71,749
1995-1996	7,213	68,890	1,931,611	75,034

## 2. Tasks, objectives, programs of pre-school education

a/ In 1990, the Ministry of Education issued the document "Objectives and plans of pre-school education" stipulating that pre-school education had the task of:

- Securing an all-round development of the children below six years of age;
- Furnishing parents with scientific knowledge of children's education;
- Achieving a close cooperation with families in caring for and educating children.

## b/ Objectives of education

To shape in children the first elements of human personality:

- Good health, vivacity, harmonious and balanced physical growth;
- Affection, care and assistance for their close people (parents, friends, teachers...); sincerity, politeness, boldness, natural manners;
- Love for the beautiful, preservation of the beautiful, and wish to create beautiful things in their surroundings;
- Intelligence, thirst for knowledge, research and discovery, possession of elementary skills (observation, comparison, analysis, synthesis, deduction, etc.) required for studies in general schools; liking to go to school.

c/ Guiding principles for the elaboration of education programs and methods

"Young shoot" education must achieve the objective of promoting initial elements of the personality of a Vietnamese citizen, refrain from any imposition or constraint, show love for children and respect their personality, take the mother-daughter-like sentiments between nurses and children as a decisive factor.

To organize children's life and activities in keeping with the characteristics of each age bracket, to achieve a harmonious combination between care, maintenance and education so as to secure an all-round development of children.

To combine initial health care steps, to create overall

factors exercising an integrated effect on children's health, to grasp the direction of disease prevention and timely treatment for children, to achieve a rational regime of living nutrition for each age bracket.

To make all the teaching measures an integrated system to give impacts the all-round personality of children through light education forms, to regard contacts with things, toys and games as a fundamental way to promote children's personality.

The combine group education with individual education, especially with regard to small children.

To guide children to join the social reality of adults, national and world cultures.

To combine children's maintenance and education in creches and infant schools with care and education in family.

The contents of children's education in creches and infant schools include:

- Personal hygiene and care, environmental hygiene;
- Follow-up and protection of health, physical education;
- Education about movements and sensations;
- Development of language and approach to literature;
- Observation of the surroundings environment (natural and social);
- Musical education, rhythmic movements;
- Shaping of elementary symbols of mathematics;
- Moral education, shaping of personality features;

### 3. Forms of creches and infant schools

#### *a. Regular forms*

- Creches admit children from 3 to 36 months of age

The children are divided into groups according to the number of months of age and usually called according to the diet: 3-13-month-old group (flour-fed group), 13-18 month-old group (soup-fed group), 19-24-month-old group (wet-boiled rice-fed group), 25-36-month-old group (rice-fed group). In the feeding of 3-13-month-old children, importance continues to be attached to milk, especially the mother's milk.

Creches exist in many forms:

- + All-day creches: operating about 10 hours a day from the arrival of the children in the morning to their going home in the afternoon. The children take lunch and a nap in the creches.
- + Two-shift creches: morning and afternoon shifts; the parents take their children home at midday.
- + One-shift creches.
- + Season creches in rural areas, operating only at a particular time of year when the families have to concentrate on production.
- + Child-keeping groups admitting different age-brackets where there are few children (governmental offices, remote areas).

#### - Infant schools

Infant schools admit children from 3 to 5 years of age

Children are divided into groups according to their ages: small infant groups (3 years old), medium-age infant groups (4 years old), elder infant groups (5 years old).

Infant schools also have patterns similar to creches: those which operate all day, in two shifts, in one shift, according to labour shifts, or to seasons.

- Combined creches-infant schools

They attend to the education of children from 3 months to 5 years of age. The children are divided into groups in accordance with their ages like in creches and infant schools. The children are cared for and educated in keeping with the general stipulations for each age-bracket.

- Infant classes for 5-year-old children

These are classes reserved for 5-year-old children who have not attended infant groups for small and medium - age children. The purpose is to prepare the attenders for easy adaptation to future studies in form 1.

Infant classes for 5-year-old children may be organized separately or in an infant school according to a minimum program of 26 weeks (since 1990) or 36 weeks (since 1991) as stipulated by the Ministry of Education.

*b. Irregular forms*

+ Family child-keeping groups

These are child-keeping groups for children below 6 years of age, organized in a family according to a mode agreed upon between the child-minder and the family sending children there.

+ Infant groups attended by children from 3 to 5 years of

age who do not go to infant schools. Those groups are to make it possible for children to take part in guided activities, enlarge their mutual relations, spur their growth and prepare for their admission into comprehensive schools.

Depending on specific conditions, the infant groups may carry out permanent activities all the year round, twice a week, each time for no more than 2 hours; during the summer holidays of comprehensive school pupils (June, July, August), there may be a greater number of sittings. The content of education may include dances, songs, drawing, story-telling, poem - reciting, folk games, study games, romenades, excursions, games to get accustomed to the surroundings. This content is selected from the programs of caring for and educating children in infant schools.

+ Short-term infant classes for 5-year-old children

These classes, which have the same purpose as the infant classes for 5-year-old children mentioned above, are reserved for the children whose families do not want, or cannot afford to send them to school on a daily basis.

The classes operate two or three times a week; each sitting is not to exceed 150 minutes; the minimum number of sittings in 36.

#### **4. Other programs of care and education for children**

In addition to the above-mentioned program of child education in creches, infant classes and schools, other programs are being unfolded in society under the sponsorship of the Commission for the Protection of Children, acting in coordination with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Training, and other branches.

- The initial health care program: children are subject to periodical check-ups (one every six months), health follow-ups with growth diagrams, vaccination on a fixed date.

- The expanded program of vaccination against six diseases: scarlet fever, whooping cough, tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus and infantile paralysis.

- The program against malnutrition and the program of additional nutrition.

- The program against infection of the respiratory tract, the program to check diarrhoea, the program of prevention of the dry-eye disease due to lack of vitamin A, the program of prevention of goitre in mountainous areas...

- The program of clean water supply and environmental hygiene

- The mixed program to spur up children's growth combining in a comprehensive way various measures relevant to nutrition, health care, stimulation of the psychological and social development of children.

- The program of education of parents on scientific methods of educating children.

## **5. General observations on the development and quality of child education in creches and infant schools**

5.1. Creches and infant schools are most developed in towns and cities. However they cannot fully meet the needs of families as to the custody of children. There are usually more children in groups' custody than the stipulated number (occasionally, one and a half time more).

All major enterprises possess creches and infant schools for their day-time shift workers' children. Although difficulties are encountered here because children do not come on a continuing basis whenever their parents pass to a new shift. Mothers prefer to bring their children here because it is more convenient and less expensive (on account of the support extended by the enterprise's welfare fund).

The rural creches and infant schools in the delta area are fairly developed. But the number of children varies depending on the state of crops and the living standard of local peasants.

In mountainous areas and in the regions which have an autarkic economy, the network of creches and infant schools is not much developed.

In recent years, on account of multiple economic difficulties and as the economic renovation according to an adjusted market mechanism is only at an early stage while the subsidy-based administrative mechanism is being abolished, the number of creches and infant schools and of children attending them is declining. More particularly, there is a marked reduction in the sector of creches. However, the number of children attending creches and infant schools has increased.

In face of this situation, the Ministry of Education and Training advocates, on the one hand, the strengthening of the remaining creches and infant schools, and on the other, a diversification of the forms of organizations attending to the education of children. The purpose is to increase to the maximum, in spite of the difficulties, the number of children cared for, and educated in a scientific way. Irregular patterns are being tested and encouraged. In particular,

regular and short-term classes for 5-year-old infants have rapidly developed. They are attended by more than 700,000 infants, nearly half the number of children who attend other infant classes. The program of education for parents has also been rapidly broadened. According to the reports from 15 provinces where this work is being carried out, up to 1990, 180,000 fathers and mothers had been taught about the education of children.

5.2. With regard to quality, significant progress has been made in the education of children in the main creches and infant schools. Children enjoy periodic check-ups, great care is taken in the field of nutrition. The malnutrition rate has been markedly lowered (20-15%); in some places, it is kept at 5-7%. On the whole, children have an all-round development. They are at ease in entertainment activities. Generally speaking, creches and infant schools have made progress, but the work is encountering many difficulties.

The nutrition conditions are very poor, and as a result, the malnutrition rate is high (46%). In some places, the meals have declined in quality on account of the material difficulties encountered by families. In many creches and infant schools, the material facilities are very poor. Nurses and teachers lack adequate training. As a result, the program of care and education for children is not fully carried out. In some places, the hygiene conditions are poor: (rooms are humid, inadequately lit, clean water is in short supply).

The family child-keeping groups are of unequal quality. On the whole, the hygiene conditions are good. Children enjoy good care. But nurses lack the required scientific knowledge. Children are often let to play by themselves with a poor number of toys.

## 6. Prospects

The country is entering the industrialization and modernization period; it is a general wish to send children to creches and infant schools. In the State documents, increasing attention is given to pre-school education. The Resolution of the Second Plenum of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Party Central Committee clearly stipulated: to develop the "young shoot" education in accordance with the conditions and requirements of each area; until the year 2000, in view of the great difficulties confronting many areas, efforts are to be concentrated on making it possible for almost all 5-year-old children to attend infant classes in preparation for their entry into the first grade. Between 2000 and 2020, the target is to develop "young shoot" education for almost all children in the corresponding age-bracket.

In the content of education, care is to be taken to achieve a harmonious combination between breeding and education so as to secure an all-round development of children. In particular the anti-malnutrition program must be appropriately carried out so as to bring the malnutrition rate from the present figure of 46% down to 30%, then 20%, then 10%, and eventually to 0% (of course, except for the cases of disease subject to medical treatment). Secondly the expanded vaccination program must be well carried out in all places, especially in remote and mountainous areas, so as to reduce to a minimum the number of children affected by infantile diseases (tuberculosis, meningitis, scarlet fever, whooping cough...) to ensure a good physical growth of children, to gradually increase their average height and body weight.

In the content of education, it is necessary to guard against any tendency to introduce into infant schools the knowledge



of primary education . Appropriate methods are to be used to develop intelligence, especially to promote thirst for knowledge and scientific curiosity. Five-year-old children are to begin to get the habit of sitting down for study, listening to explanations and learning lessons. What is most important, "young shoot" schools (creches and infant schools) are to achieve coordination with families in cultivating in children humane sentiments - the foundation of personality - with concrete manifestations in a polite behaviour in family, towards teachers and friends. Particular care is to be taken to help children develop their language and thinking.

To increase the communication of knowledge about medicine, educational science and psychology to families and mothers to help them educate children with correct methods, achieve coordination with creches, infant classes and schools in this work, and create a healthy educational environment.

## Chapter VI

### LITERACY AND EDUCATION FOR EVERYBODY

After the victory of the August 1945 Revolution and the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, one of the major policies of the Vietnamese Party and State was to eradicate all the evils of the obscurantist policy pursued by the old regime and to raise the people's educational standards. President HỒ Chí Minh declared that illiteracy was an enemy as dangerous as famine. In his classification of dangers, famine came first, then illiteracy, followed by foreign aggression.

In Vietnam, there were movements for the diffusion of the national script then the popular education, which were part of permanent education. The three campaigns for the eradication of illiteracy, complementary education, and now education for everybody were carried out in the past half century and more.

#### 1. Prior to 1945

a/ Before the August Revolution, there was a fairly

buoyant movement for learning the national script (romanized). It started with the *Đông Kinh Nghĩa Thực* movement in 1907 which advocated the expansion of study in the national language at school, combined with the publication of progressive books and newspapers, the organization of libraries, lectures on the domestic and international situation and extra-school literacy discussion. This was done as a legal cover for an education drive to arouse patriotism, national pride, united spirit, aspirations for progress, opposition to backward customs and practices among populations.

b/ A new period of development of the literacy drive was marked by the establishment in 1938 of the Association for the diffusion of the national script under the sponsorship of the Bắc Kỳ (Tonkin) Communist Party Committee. Well known intellectuals were in charge of this Association. In 1939, a branch of the Association for the diffusion of the national script was set up in Trung Kỳ (Annam) with the active participation of then renowned intellectuals. The Association worked out a program and a method of teaching the national script or held talks to persuade people to make studies in Hanoi, Hải Phòng, Việt Trì... Subsequently, branches of the Association were set up in tens of provinces. In Nam Kỳ (Cochina), a number of progressive pupils were authorised to open in 1943 classes for the diffusion of the national script and to set up in 1944 the Nam Kỳ branch of the mentioned Association.

c/ Like the *Việt Nam thanh niên cách mạng đồng chí hội*<sup>1</sup> (Young Revolutionary Comrades Association) prior to 1930,

1. A Communist Organization, predecessor of the Indochinese Communist Party (presently, the Vietnam Communist Party).

in 1940, the Việt Minh Front<sup>1</sup> carried out the motto of organizing literacy classes wherever the Việt Minh movement extended its presence. "Those who had knowledge taught to those who had not; those who had much knowledge taught to those who had little". When the Việt Bắc liberated zone was established (April 1945), a fundamental task of the liberation committees was "to organize the struggle against illiteracy"

## 2. From 1945 to 1954

On September 8, 1945, the Vietnamese Government issued a Decree on the setting up of a popular teaching office and asserted that study was compulsory and free in order to diligently eradicate illiteracy.

On October 4, 1945, President Hồ Chí Minh issued an Appeal calling on the entire people to fight against illiteracy: illiterates must regard study as a right and an obligation, literates are duty-bound to teach illiterates; women must all the more study, the youth must march in the van in this work. The Appeal reads in part:

"To preserve independence, to make the people strong and the country rich, all Vietnamese must know about their rights and obligations and get knowledge to be able to take part in national construction; in the first place, they must know to read and write in the Vietnamese script".

The Appeal elicited a warm response from the whole people. A buoyant literacy campaign was launched all over the country. Popular education courses were opened everywhere.

1. A revolutionary movement pursuing the objective of liberating the Vietnamese nation from French colonial rule.

Millions of children and grown-ups seethingly learned; tens of thousands of literates eagerly joined the drive to teach illiterates.

At the end of 1946, the French colonialists started their war of aggression in the whole Vietnam. The literacy campaign encountered more difficulties, yet it continued to develop at the same pace as the resistance. From December 1946 to July 1954, a great achievement was recorded on the anti-illiteracy front: over 10 million people were recognized as having learned to read and write.

### 3. From 1954 to 1975

After 1954, a second campaign against illiteracy was launched all over North Vietnam (from the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel northward). At that time, the northern zone counted three million illiterates among the people from 12 to 50 years of age. The task of eradicating illiteracy was written down for the first time into the State plan. A 3-year program of fighting illiteracy was started (1956-1958). A Central Steering Committee was set up. By the end of 1958, all provinces and cities in the northern delta and midlands had completed the eradication of illiteracy among the people in the age-bracket of 12-50. In the Bắc Bộ Plain, 93% of the people of this age-bracket had become literates.

Subsequently the literacy drive in the North was concentrated on the mountainous area. After the completion of the 5-year plan (1961-1965), it recorded significant results in low mountain areas. During that period, 2.8 out of 3 million illiterates in the North were recognized as literates. In the liberated areas of South Vietnam the new education

system also developed. Popular literacy classes, complementary education schools, resistance teachers' schools and classes fruitfully operated in many places.

### 4. After 1975

In April 1975, South Vietnam was completely liberated. With the experience and assistance of the whole country, the literacy campaign in the southern provinces started with a buoyant élan as in the period following the seizure of power in August 1945. After three years of the third campaign for the eradication of illiteracy, 1,320,000 people out of nearly 1.5 million illiterates 12-50 years of age were recognized as having learned to read and write. All the 21 provinces and cities in the South completed in the main the literacy campaign.

Figure 6. Number of illiterates from 10 years of age upwards

(Unit: 1000 people)

	1979		1989	
	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate
Male	16,086 (90%)	1,620 (10%)	19,854 (93%)	1,537 (7%)
Female	15,816 (84%)	1,817 (16%)	20,512 (84%)	3,854 (16%)
Total	31,902 (85%)	5,437 (15%)	40,366 (88%)	5,391 (12%)

Source: Secretariat of the National Committee for the Eradication of Illiteracy and the Universalization of Primary Education (1990).

The current percentage of literates in Vietnam is 91%, a reverse situation to that in the colonial days. The number of illiterate adults has been markedly reduced (2,640,000 in 1993 in absolute figures; a 40% reduction).

With a view to raising step by step the level of education, regarded as a criterium of national development, and at the same time, effectively furthering the construction of the country, Vietnam did not stop at the level of the people knowing to read and write. In 1947-1948, the popular education service for grown-ups was built. It included: the elementary popular education (to learn reading and writing); the preparatory popular education (equivalent to the second form of primary education); the complementary popular education, first level, equivalent to primary education (four years); the complementary popular education, second level, equivalent to the first level of secondary education (four years). Thus education in Vietnam gradually progressed from the objective of raising the level of education to that of training manpower and talents. This was a new important advance in the promotion of national education.

## **5. Education for everybody**

5.1. With the great achievements recorded in the literacy campaign, the Vietnamese Communist Party and State continued to stand for a continuation of this work in order to fulfil the desire of Hồ Chí Minh which is also the wish of the people, namely "to ensure learning opportunities for everybody so that there will be no longer illiterates and that the Vietnamese people can become a nation with a high level of education. In this way, a new intellectual force, a

source of cultivated manpower capable of building a fine society, was to be created.

The Vietnamese Government decided to take part in the international year against illiteracy (1990) and to set up a National Committee for Illiteracy Eradication<sup>1</sup>, whose task was to organize the activities of the Decade for anti-illiteracy of universal education (1991-2000) with two main targets: to eradicate illiteracy and to universalize primary education.

The National Committee for Illiteracy Eradication, with the participation of 11 branches and mass organizations, leads a widespread network of guiding committees for the eradication of illiteracy and the universalization of primary education from provincial to district and communal echelon. Carrying on the traditions of people's education and complementary education, it has brought over the past two years the nationwide literacy campaign to a new stage and recorded encouraging initial results.

## **5.2. Achievement of equality between the two sexes in education**

The policy of education for everybody reserves great priority to the disadvantaged groups: children of ethnic minorities, handicapped children, orphans, and street children in order to increase equality and justice in learning opportunities and to contribute to the democratization of education.

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1. The author of this book is the Chairman of this Committee.

Particular attention is to be paid to the eradication of illiteracy and universalization of primary education among women and young girls. Important achievements have been recorded in this respect since Vietnam becoming independent. Many people have recognized that in the development process we have managed to do away partly with the inequality in education among various social strata, ethnic groups, localities and between the two sexes. During a long period, school boys and school girls were in equal numbers.

However, due to prolonged wars and other complex causes, the education branch is being confronted with great, acute challenges, among others, the relapse into illiteracy and inequality in education, including inequality between the two sexes. In the past few years, attention has not been duly paid to school girls, whose numbers have declined to a greater extent than those of school boys. Two thirds of illiterates are women. In general schools, the proportion of girls to boys is 49:51, and it is changing.

Drop-outs are mainly girls. Some people think that girls are to learn only to a small extent... These wrong views still persist among many people, especially in rural areas. Therefore it is right to emphasize the problem of eradicating illiteracy and universalizing primary education among girls. The market mechanism is threatening this equality, measures are required to check this process. It is extremely difficult to preserve the above achievements. How to gradually gain in the time to come equality in education between the two sexes and make a decisive contribution to

the achievement of socio-political equality? Several measures are required:

- In the first place, a broad social movement involving a mass participation must be aroused. On this subject, the National Committee for Illiteracy Eradication has held discussion with the Peasants' Association, Women's Union, Youth Union, Committee for Child protection, Fatherland Front and local authorities in order to take coordinated actions.

- A core must be built, which includes teachers, students, secondary general school pupils and even retired people.

- Better, more practical books for the eradication of illiteracy must be published. The existence of three books on this subject is good but insufficient. Many ordinary notions are not yet made known and have not entered the conscience of man. For instance, in rural areas, there are large houses, but they usually lack order. How to make people aware of this situation in order to change it?

The way of proceeding is usually inconsistent; perseverance is lacking; things are not done through to the end. At times, tens of thousands of people were motivated to study but later the drive was neglected.

## **6. The state of illiteracy in 1990 and the results achieved in illiteracy eradication between 1990 and 1996**

### *6.1. The state of illiteracy in 1990*

According to the survey of the education and training services, at the beginning of 1990, there were in the whole country 2,000,057 illiterates among people in the age-bracket

of 15-35, and 2,100,000 children from 6 to 14 years of age who did not go to school or who abandoned study in primary classes. This is a source to enlarge each year the ranks of illiterates.

Illiterates are concentrated in difficult socially and economically underdeveloped areas such as: mountainous provinces, Cửu Long (Mekong delta), coastal areas, islands. The mountainous provinces have 747,300 illiterates, accounting for about 38% of the total illiterates while their population represents only 14% of the people throughout the country. The Cửu Long has 650,639 illiterates, about 33% of the total of illiterates. Thus the number of illiterates in mountainous provinces and the Cửu Long delta account for over 70% of the total.

The number of illiterates continually increases year by year in both rural and urban areas, among men and women. This shows that as primary education has not been universalized, the additional source of illiterates cannot be checked. According to the survey of the education and training services, the number of children who did not attend school in 1990 was 2.1 million.

In spite of the development of primary education, on over 80% of school-age children are going to school, and over one million children do not attend school. In addition, nearly one million primary school pupils abandon study, right from the first and second form, although there has been over the recent years a marked decline in the number of dropouts and class-repeating pupils.

## *6.2. Causes of this situation*

- The areas where there are many illiterates are those characterized by socio-economic under-development, a scattered population, difficult communications, low living standards, shortage of books and newspapers.

- During a long period, the education and training services were slow in renovating their conceptions and styles of work. The endeavour to eradicate illiteracy was made independently of the universalization of primary education; as a result, the additional source of illiterates could not be checked; on the other hand, no continuation classes was organized for the new literates in order to consolidate the results achieved and prevent a relapse into illiteracy.

- Administrative echelons, branches, mass organizations, economic and social bodies did not show adequate concern and sense of responsibility; they failed to closely cooperate with the education services.

## *6.3. The results achieved (1990-1996)*

The positive steps mentioned above led to the following results in the 1990-1995 period: 1,723,320 illiterates attended classes, over 805,223 persons were recognized as having learned to read and write, the remainder had finished the first or second grade.

So far, 27 provinces and cities with 7,760 communes and wards out of a total of 10,219 have been recognized as reaching the national criteria of illiteracy eradication. They include three mountainous provinces, namely Tuyên Quang,

Hòa Bình, Thái Nguyên. The percentage of literates in the whole country increased from 88% in 1990 to 91% in 1996.

Every year, 220,000 to 280,000 people were motivated to attend literacy courses; 50 to 60% of this number became literates, and 60,000 to 100,000 persons attended post-literacy classes.

On the whole, the results achieved by Vietnam exceeded the norm set by the International Conference in Jomtien (Thailand) in March 1990, namely by the year 2000, 80% of school-age children will be attending primary schools, and half the number of illiterates in 1990 will have learned to read and write. Yet in mountainous and remote areas, the endeavour to eradicate illiteracy will have to be carried on<sup>1</sup>.

#### **7. Objectives of the illiteracy eradication campaign until the year 2000**

The objective to be reached from now to the year 2000 is to eradicate illiteracy for the people in the age-bracket of 15-35 in cities, provincial chieftowns, urban centres, the plains and the Midlands and in the 15 - 25 age-bracket for mountainous provinces, remote areas, the Cửu Long river delta, the fishermen's areas, and to bring down the illiteracy rate in other age brackets in order to secure the fulfilment by the year 2000 of the national norms with regard to the eradication of illiteracy and universalization of primary education.

<sup>1</sup>. According to a report of the National Committee for Illiteracy Eradication (March 1996).

At present, more than 80% of school-age children are attending school, and there remain over one million children who do not go to school, mainly in mountainous and remote areas, in the Cửu Long river delta and the fishermen's areas.

In these areas, there is a high rate of children who fail to get schooling, and adult illiterates also account for a high percentage in comparison with other regions. Although in the past period, nearly 1.8 million people have been motivated to attend literacy classes, the reduction in the number of illiterates is insignificant. There were 2,000,057 illiterates in 1990, and 1,406,624 in 1996. The reason lies in the inadequacy of the work to universalize primary education with, as a result, additional numbers of illiterates every year.

The number of illiterates has concentrated in mountainous provinces and in the Cửu Long river delta.

In mountainous provinces, only 1,403 out of 2,676 communes (52.4%) have fulfilled the national standard of illiteracy eradication.

In Nam Bộ, only 970 out of a total of 1,598 communes (over 60%) meet the standard. (The corresponding percentage in the whole country is over 75%).

A program of resolute action is required in the provinces where the number of communes meeting the standard is too low, such as: Kiên Giang (15/92), Sơn La (31/93), Lào Cai (32/180), Lai Châu (24/153), Hà Giang (41/180), Kon Tum (23/69).

Thirty four other provinces have failed to meet the standard. They have pledged to meet the national standard of eradicating illiteracy in the 1996-2000 period according to the following calendar:

1997: 9 provinces	1998: 13 provinces
Yên Bái Quảng Ninh Thanh Hóa Quảng Ngãi Bình Định Khánh Hòa Tây Ninh Vĩnh Long Bình Dương	Lạng Sơn Nghệ An Phú Yên Bình Thuận Đồng Nai Gia Lai Trà Vinh Đồng Tháp Long An Cần Thơ Bắc Cạn Bạc Liêu Cà Mau

1999: 4 provinces	2000: 8 provinces
Sơn La Đắk Lắk Kiên Giang Bình Phước	Kon Tum Sóc Trăng An Giang Lai Châu Cao Bằng Lào Cai Hà Giang Ninh Thuận

## 8. Complementary education (permanent education)

Right from the birth of the democratic republican regime, the Vietnamese Government headed by President Hồ Chí Minh gave its attention to the opening of schools and classes for peasants, workers and adults from other strata. A General Department of popular education was set up in 1946 with the function of organising classes called "popular primary classes" and "popular secondary classes" designed mainly for grown-up people, and, in a small part, for poor children.

Between 1948 and 1954, about 300,000 - 400,000 people in free areas followed these courses<sup>1</sup>.

After 1954, the branch of Popular Education was renamed Complementary Education and continued to serve grown-up people, in the first place those fighters of the Vietnam People's Army, administrative officials and mass organizations cadres who had a low level of education. The forms of teaching and learning included: concentrated schools, evening schools and classes, in-service courses. The levels of learning included: first level (primary education), second level (junior secondary education), third level (senior secondary education). In addition, there were courses on specific subjects (the Ministry of Education made public the program for 30 subjects): cultivation, animal husbandry, education on population, child rearing, bodily hygiene, environment, etc.

Particular mention must be made of the complementary schools for workers and peasants and the general schools for labourers established after 1954 and operating until the 60's and the 70's. Among them, there were a national complementary school for workers and peasants (1956), 21 provincial complementary schools for workers and peasants, 28 general schools for labourers at national and provincial echelons. Such schools were reserved for labourers making in-service studies, demobilized armymen, civil servants with a low level of education, workers, peasants and children of poor families having no possibility of study. These schools were attended in the 60's by about 270,000 pupils<sup>2</sup>, ranging from primary to secondary education, but

1, 2. Phạm Minh Hạc, (Editor-in-Chief): Fifty years (1945-1995) of Struggle against Ignorance. National Committee for Illiteracy Eradication. Hanoi 1997.



the duration was much shorter than that of the regular system (about half or less of the time) and only a number of disciplines were taught, for instance, mathematics, physics, chemistry (at the third level).

A number of students among them became later key leading cadres from local to central echelon. Up to 1960, 2,300 cadres of peasant and worker stock were admitted into the establishments of higher education; in subsequent years, tens of thousands of others were admitted to colleges and universities, which resulted in a marked increase of the percentage of students of peasant and worker stock. Between 1980 and 1995, the in-service education network at colleges and universities counted over 200,000 students; the in-service education network at secondary vocational schools counted over 100,000 students<sup>1</sup>.

As from the 60's, a system of learning by correspondence was instituted for higher education, which also called in-service education and placed under the Department of Permanent Education of the Ministry of Education and Training. It included in-service students who followed a full course of vocational secondary or higher education. Other in-service students followed short-term courses. At present, 82 universities and colleges and 92 secondary vocational schools are endowed with in-service training centres. Besides, there are 52 in-service training centres in various provinces and centrally-administered cities, 5 distant training centres, 72 applied informatics centres and over 200 foreign language centres<sup>2</sup>.

1, 2. Phạm Minh Hạc, op. cit.

The forms of study include: long and short-term courses, preparation for another education level, study to take a second college degree. Short-term training programs are usually devoted to special subjects, (foreign languages, and applied informatics). Of late, forms of distant teaching have been developed on various TV channels; a number of provinces and cities have instituted programs of foreign languages, preparation for entry and graduation examinations and a number of subjects on science, technology, environment, population and family.

**Figure 7. Number of students following in-service training classes and short-term courses of higher education in 1986-1996**

School year	Newly admitted students at in-service training system of higher education (A)	Scale of short-term training system of higher education (B)	In section B	
			Scale of in-service training of higher education	Scale of short-term training courses
1986-1987	6,782	30,677	28,503	2,174
1987-1988	5,641	35,535	27,157	8,385
1988-1989	4,837	36,255	31,766	4,489
1989-1990	7,609	42,839	38,842	3,997
1990-1991	18,745	47,103	37,867	9,236
1991-1992	21,869	58,923	38,974	17,949
1992-1993	25,791	96,165	58,537	37,628
1993-1994	39,126	116,246	85,113	31,133
1994-1995	27,312	213,430	96,285	117,145
1995-1996	53,168	231,181	135,653	95,528

**Figure 8. Number of students attending in-service secondary vocational courses in 1986-1996**

School year	New student	Training scale
1986-1987	3,229	10,393
1987-1988	5,789	14,066
1988-1989	10,035	19,808
1989-1990	10,491	23,650
1990-1991	4,770	16,237
1991-1992	5,833	17,389
1992-1993	6,587	21,532
1993-1994	3,628	26,407
1994-1995	13,484	33,353
1995-1996	12,988	34,607

During the past half - century, the Vietnamese State has constantly paid its attention to education and training: it has ensured permanent education for the people and the participation of every body in this work, even in war time. But as expounded above, the learning movement reached a climax at the triumph of the Revolution and at the end of the war. In the years to come, permanent education will be further developed with even richer forms of study. And President Hồ Chí Minh's wish will be realized, namely, all the ethnic groups on the Vietnamese territory will have a high level of education and life on an equal footing with other peoples of the world.

## Chapter VII

### PRIMARY EDUCATION

#### 1. The universalization of primary education

The universalization of primary education was a major policy of the Vietnamese State throughout the past 50 years and more. Right in 1945, the Government issued a Decree on the national education system in which primary education was regarded as a fundamental level extending for four years.

A program was worked out to make this level compulsory for all children from 7 to 13 years of age. However, the outbreak of war prevented its implementation. From 1950 primary education was called the first level.

In 1960 the third Congress of the Vietnam Labour Party (now Communist Party of Vietnam) made public a plan to universalize primary education in the northern delta and midlands inserted into the 1961-1965 five-year plan. Once again this was interrupted by war.

After the total liberation of the country (1975), the Vietnamese State again announced a plan to develop

primary education. In 1979 the Standing Committee of the National Assembly promulgated an Ordinance on the protection, care and education for children. Vietnam is the second country in the world and the first in Asia to sign the United Nations Convention in children's rights. In 1991 Vietnam promulgated the Law on the universalization of the first level of education and the Law on the protection and care for children, asserting the State's commitment to a compulsory and free primary education for all children and stipulating conditions to ensure children's exercise of their right to education.

In the past, schools of the first level were usually separate ones; only a few were merged into schools of the second level. In 1979, according to the Resolution on the third education reform, all schools were merged with those of the second level into what was called basic general schools. The purpose was to universalize basic general education (the ninth grade was the final one). In the late 80's and early 90's proceeding from the reality, the objectives of the third education reform were adjusted with priority being given to the first form of the first level. In 1989, the Ministry of Education decided to dissociate the first from the second level.

From 1993, the first level schools were again given their former name of primary schools. At present, most primary schools are separate ones, distinct from the second level (basic general schools).

## **2. The network of primary schools**

Under the motto "joint efforts should be made by the State and the people, from central to local level", the Vietnamese State together with the various social strata give the utmost care to the first level of education. A network of schools was

built. Schools of the first level or basic general schools (including both first and second levels) exist in all communes down to hamlets. In the cases of communes covering a wide area, school subdivisions were set up in hamlets to make it easier for small children to attend. There are now 11,683 primary schools and 2,093 basic general schools where primary schools are found.

## **3. Content of education**

Comprehensive study constituted the most important activity to develop primary school-age children's personality. This is to cultivate in pupils a need for and an interest in study and the collective life, and give shape to good feelings, knowledge, attitudes and habits. These are initial bases required for the gradual promotion of the ideals and ethics of the new Vietnamese man.

The quality of general education largely depends on the training results in primary schools. The content of primary education includes:

### *3.1. Education in the world outlook, ideology, politics, law, ethics and behaviour*

#### *a/ Education in the world outlook and social behaviour*

##### Knowledge

- To get elementary knowledge of nature, society and man as a first step for children to shape a scientific world outlook;
- To get elementary knowledge of the nation's traditions, the struggle for national foundation and defence;

- To understand the need for unity among all ethnic groups in the country and all nations in the world;

- To get elementary juridical knowledge;

- To understand pupils' internal rules, their rights and duties at school; the rules of collective life at school, at home, and in the commune (ward).

### Skills

- To sing the national anthem and salute the national flag correctly;

- To comply with the Statute of the Pioneer's Organization, pupils' internal rules and the regulations of the collective;

- To comply with the traffic law, the rules of public life; to protect common property; to avoid infringements on the laws.

### Attitude

- To try with passion to understand the natural environment and the renovation in the commune (ward);

- To have an interest in social activities conformable to the small age (to assist the families of fallen soldiers, war invalids, the families having rendered outstanding services to the revolution; to take part in the movement for "one thousand good deeds, etc.);

- To respect administrative authorities and bodies;

- To show disapproval of infringements on discipline, trouble-making actions, infringements on the laws, superstitions;

- To hate violators of the interests and prosperity of the State and the people;

- To hate aggressors, reactionaries and their lackeys, the enemies of national independence, social progress and world peace.

b/ Education in ethics and conduct

### Knowledge

- To have elementary knowledge of the value of labour, humanity, human characteristics and sentiments, code of conduct, a number of required rules of behaviour, politeness, solicitude, sincerity, courtesy;

- To understand the responsibility of each family member;

- To have elementary knowledge of friendship, the collective, the relationship among members of a village (street) commune (ward);

### Skills

- To behave with dignity, to refrain from any timidity and obsequiousness;

- To show concern and care for other members of the family (grand-parents, parents, brothers, sisters...), friends and everybody;

- To speak to and greet people courteously;

- To know how to organize and attend entertainment activities.

### Attitude

- To show love, respect and gratitude to Uncle Hồ, grand-

parents and the elders, to act after Uncle Hô's teachings;

- To show love, respect and gratitude to heroes, fallen soldiers, revolutionary fighters, labourers;

- To care for, and protect trees and useful animals;

- To entertain cordial relations with other members of the community;

- To show solidarity with children of other countries in the world;

- To keep one's promises; to endeavour to carry out one's tasks;

- To disapprove of the actions showing lack of culture, indiscipline, dishonesty;

### *3.2. Cultural and scientific education*

#### Knowledge

- To have elementary knowledge of the Vietnamese language in order to read, speak, write, communicate and express one's thoughts, feelings and deeds for other people to understand;

- To have elementary knowledge of mathematics, especially arithmetic;

- To have elementary knowledge of a number of natural phenomena, special features, growth conditions of vegetation and animals, the utility and harm of weather conditions with regard to vegetation, animals, human life and production;

- To have elementary knowledge of the surrounding environment;

- To have elementary knowledge of the forefathers' process of building and defending the country, of the cultural, working and fighting traditions of the nation and of the locality;

- To have elementary knowledge of the functions of the organs of the human body, of personal hygiene, school hygiene and environmental hygiene, health care and the development of the body according to age.

#### Skills

- To be able to read in an expressive way a piece of prose or poetry, which has been learned; to hear and understand common phrases and questions; to write legibly with correct spelling and grammar; to give clear (spoken or written) answers to questions, expound in a clear, intelligible way one's feelings and deeds;

- To master the four operations with natural and decimal numbers, mental arithmetic, calculation of the perimeters, area, volume of the figures already learnt; to solve mathematical problems with three or four operations;

- To be able to use school instruments, family utensils and labour instruments;

- To be able to observe and describe simple phenomena in laboratories and in nature;

- To be able to keep to a time-table and a regular mode of study;

- To keep clean the dwelling, learning, entertaining and working places.

### Attitude

- To show thirst for knowledge and diligence in study, modesty, sincerity; to learn from one's friends and give them assistance;

- To spare time and learning instruments; to keep the tables and benches in a good state; to refrain from causing damage to classrooms, walls, tables, benches...;

- To have a liking for cleaning and putting in order the dwelling, working and learning places and to protect the surrounding environment;

- To disapprove of the manifestations of indiscipline, waste of time, reliance on other people, insincerity.

### *3.3. Education in labour, overall techniques, vocational orientation*

#### Knowledge

- To have elementary knowledge of the value of labour with regard to human life, family and oneself;

- To have elementary knowledge of the properties and practical use of a number of ordinary materials: paper, cloth, bamboo, wood...

- To have elementary knowledge of the structure and manipulation of a number of ordinary instruments in life and production: knives, scissors, pincers, hammers, rulers, scales;

- To have elementary knowledge of labour safety.

### Skills

- To know how to undertake coordinated actions in collective labour; to preserve labour discipline, order, hygiene in working places; to maintain instruments; to spare materials; to ensure labour safety;

- To know how to make school implements and toys with simple instruments.

- To know to assembly a number of simple models;

- To know a number of jobs in handicrafts, cultivation, animal husbandry, vegetable, plant and flower growing;

- To know to arrange orderly study corners, and to work in self-service and to assist the family.

### Attitude

- To show diligence and self-consciousness in working to help oneself and the family;

- To have a liking for collective labour, manual work; to show a sense of discipline and responsibility;

- To respect labourers; to wish to become good labourers to enrich oneself, the family and the native land;

- To keep in good maintenance personal belongings and the instruments of the family and the school; to spare time and production materials;

- To disapprove of the destruction of trees, brutal treatment towards animals, the killing of birds and beasts, the infringement on labour discipline, the waste of public property and of time; to hate laziness and reliance on other people.

### 3.4. Physical education, and hygiene knowledge

- To have elementary knowledge of the usefulness of physical exercises and sports and the effects of the natural elements (water, air, light...) on the development of the human body;

- To have elementary knowledge of hygiene at school, nutrition, the body, the environment; to know how to prevent a number of common contagious diseases;

- To have elementary knowledge of lining up and health promoting exercises.

#### Skills

- To know the basic movements and gradually to carry them out with precision;

- To get a habit of doing physical exercises and putting to use the natural conditions to protect and develop one's health;

- To have a correct sitting at study time;

- To know how to comply with the rules of lining up;

- To know how to take part in entertainments and sport competitions.

#### Attitude

- To comply consciously with the rules of hygiene;

- To have a liking for sports and physical exercises; to show a group spirit in training and entertainments;

- To disapprove of the acts of indiscipline and crude deeds.

### 3.5. Aesthetic education

#### Knowledge

- To have elementary knowledge of the beautiful and its meaning for life.

#### Skills

- To develop the ability to observe and feel the beautiful in nature and man;

- To know to sing, to dance, to read in an expressive way, to tell stories, to draw, to mould...

- To know to dress adequately; to arrange study corners and dwelling place neatly;

- To keep clean notebooks; to write in a fine script;

- To know to collect and preserve souvenirs (photos, pictures...);

- To say good words; to have fine gestures.

#### Attitude

- To have a love for natural beauty, the people, and the native land, the country;

- To have a liking for fine gestures;

- To have a liking for painting, singing, dancing, toy-making; to embellish the living environment;

- To protect trees, parks, historical relics, cultural and artistic works;

- To hate bad actions with regard to nature and man.

#### 4. Teaching plan

The school year of the first level includes 33 weeks, Sunday and Thursday are days-off. A lesson lasts 30 minutes; a lesson of the Vietnamese language and mathematics from the second to the fifth grade and a lesson of discovery of nature and society in the fourth and fifth grades lasts 40 minutes.

Since 1986-1987 the linguistic lesson has been turned into one about the Viet language. General schools in ethnic minority areas have been directed at teaching two languages (the common language and the language of the ethnic group). To develop the subjects about nature and society as a substitute for the lessons about history and science (subsequently called getting to know about nature and society).

The teaching knowledge and skills of labour is carried out in one lesson/week in each form, the remaining hours are devoted to technical practice, production and vocational orientation. In primary classes, there are no extra lesson about labour as at the second level.

Collective activities are carried out by the groups of children's stars (5-children groups) and pioneers' which hold collective meetings for pupils' self-education and mutual education, to promote their sense and ability of mastery, dynamism, initiative and creativeness.

#### *Weekly number of lessons in primary education*

	Subject and activity	Grade				
		1	2	3	4	5
	<b>SUBJECTS</b>					
1	Vietnamese language	12	10	10	8	8
2	Mathematics	3	4	5	5	5
3	Ethics	1	1	1	1	1
4	Nature and Society	1	1	1	2	2
5	Labour	1	2	2	3	3
6	Arts (Fine art; Songs-music)	2	2	2	2	2
7	Physical education and Gymnastics	2	2	2	2	2
	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>					
8	Collective activity	1	1	1	1	1
9	Slute to the national flag every first day of the week	1	1	1	1	1
10	Mid-class relaxation, gymnastics	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
11	Meeting and discussion on a main subject	1	1	1	1	1
	Total: lesson/week	28.5	28.5	29.5	29.5	29.5

The teaching plan just expounded follows in the main Regulations N° 305 of the Education Minister signed on March 26, 1986. Subsequently, minor changes in the taught subjects took place in 1991: the art was divided into fine art and songs - music; the hygiene and gymnastics was divided into physical education and gymnastics. So the number of subjects increased from 7 to 9. Since the 1994-1995 school year, the Đà Lạt Conference on Primary Education has launched a movement for the teaching of all nine subjects,



and the Second Solution of the Party Central Committee (December 1996) stipulated that in the year 2000, all primary schools should teach all the nine subjects.

In reality, because of poor material facilities, shortage of teachers, impossibility of preparing enough textbooks in many schools, especially in those places where teaching is given in three shifts a day, only four subjects are being taught so far: the Vietnamese language, mathematics, ethics and nature and society. A number of schools have managed to teach a greater number of subjects, a few of them are teaching all the nine subjects.

## 5. School textbooks

According to the education objectives and teaching plan expounded above, a set of teaching programmes has been worked out and a set of primary textbooks and teachers' books published. There are at first books on the Vietnamese language and mathematics, then books on ethics, and then books on other subjects. This set of books called "reformed books" was introduced into schools in the 1981-1982 school year; each year book replacement is done for one grade, this means that after five years all primary classes will have new textbooks.

This is called a "cycle of book replacement". To this date, there have been three cycles, with minor amendments to each of them. The books now being taught in primary schools will remain in use until the year 2000.

## 6. Quantitative growth and qualitative development

### 6.1. Regular increase of the number of pupils

Figure 9. Number of primary school pupils (1986-1996)

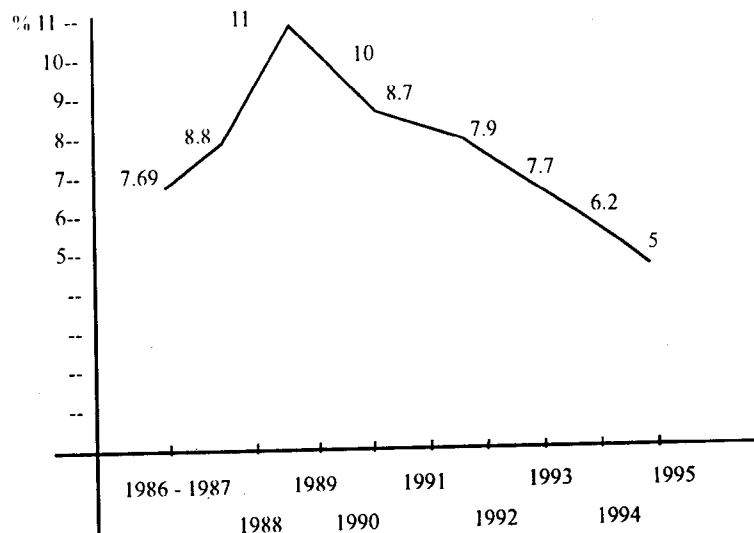
School year	Total	Including	
		Schoolgirls	New pupils
1986-1987	8,484,685	4,018,226	2,062,507
1987-1988	8,666,289	4,118,086	2,053,045
1988-1989	8,634,819	4,101,539	2,076,502
1989-1990	8,583,052	4,088,107	2,156,873
1990-1991	8,862,292	4,210,474	2,233,150
1991-1992	9,105,904	4,209,073	2,165,795
1992-1993	9,476,441	4,609,822	2,125,631
1993-1994	9,725,095	4,628,850	2,177,594
1994-1995	10,047,564	4,975,302	2,320,610
1995-1996	10,218,169	4,869,986	2,348,655

Source: Information Centre, Ministry of Education and Training (1996).

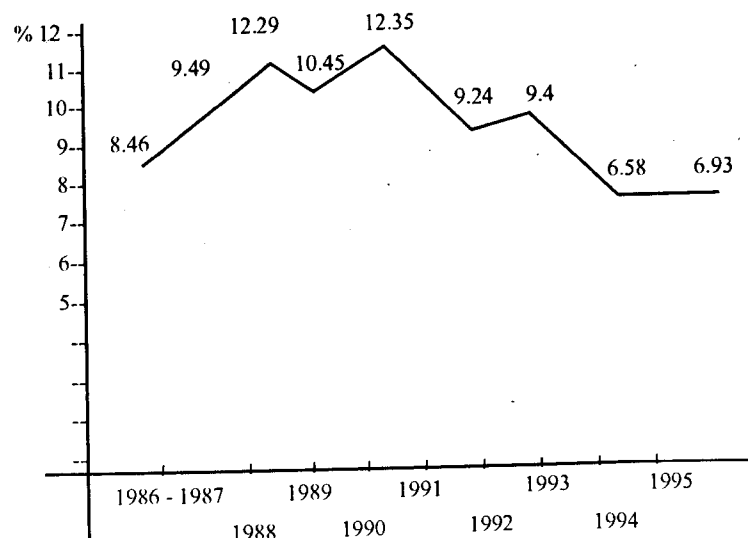
### 6.2. Gradual reduction of repeaters and drop-outs

School attendance was on the increase while the number of repeaters and drop-outs was gradually decreasing. However, there was a significant percentage (6.93% in the 1994-1995 school year) of over 11 year-old children who still attended primary schools (under the provisions of the Law on the universalization of primary education, children who reach the age of 14 years must have completed primary education). As a result, the percentage of pupils attending primary schools in comparison with the number of children in the equivalent age bracket (6-11 years) was usually more than 100%, and reached at times 103% or 104%.

**Figure 10a. Percentage of drop-outs**



**Figure 10b. Percentage of repeaters**



In the last few years, there has been a marked increase in the number of children attending the first grade. Some provinces and cities recorded the figure of 98-99%. However, in other provinces attendance was only 60-70%. On average, in the whole country school attendance represented about 80% of the total number of children in the corresponding age bracket. It is to be noted that in spite of some progress, the training effectiveness (i.e, the percentage of pupils who finish the fifth grade in comparison with the number of children who enter the first grade) is very low: 50% in the 1991-1992 school year, about 60% in the 1994-1995 period.

The teaching plan expounded above is designed for the schools with one class/day. In the past few years, especially after the Đà Nẵng Conference (1995) on the plan to organize two classes/day in all primary schools by the year 2010, a number of primary schools have organized teaching twice a day in all classes; other have organized teaching twice a day in a number of classes, in cities there is a number of half-boarding schools; in some places, there are study groups in family: one study session at school, and one in groups organized by some teachers at their homes. In the two -shift schools, the pupils, after learning their lessons and doing home tasks, may follow courses on foreign languages, informatics, household economy or complementary courses on mathematics and the Vietnamese language.

## 7. The quality of education

Thanks to the 1987 Decision to give priority to the first grade of primary school and the various steps taken to carry it out, which has received a warm welcome among teachers and

various social strata and localities, the quality of various aspects of primary education has been gradually improved.

After finishing the fifth grade, pupils may attend a graduation examination organized and valued by the provincial services of education and training; those who get the average mark or above receive a diploma of primary education. The percentage of candidates who pass the examination is usually 80% - 100%. The number of pupils who get fair marks has gradually increased (reaching nearly 50% in the 1995-1996 school year). The percentage of good pupils also increased from 1-2% to 4-5%, and from 5% to over 10% in some schools. National competitions of excellent pupils are held annually by the Department of Primary Education under the Ministry of Education and Training. The number of pupils attending the national competition is on the increase, and the number of the prize-winners also increases. In the 1995-1996 school year, 1990 pupils took part in the competition on mathematics (295 were prize-winners), and 491 others attended the competition on the Vietnamese language (431 were prize-winners). As from 1996-1997, competitions on mathematics and on the Vietnamese language were no longer held, replaced by those for the title "excellent pupil of primary school".

A topical social problem is being posed to primary school pupils: that of "extra-hour teaching and extra-hour learning". Such courses are spreading everywhere, especially in towns and cities. Pupils have to learn for too many hours: in classes, in private courses, in day time and in the evening. This may badly affect their development, both physical and mental. This also causes unnecessary expenses to their families. Efforts are being made to find comprehensive solutions to this situation from education science to socio-economic angle.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **SECONDARY EDUCATION**

#### **1. Name**

Secondary education comprises junior secondary and senior secondary education. Prior to 1950, junior secondary education was called secondary education; senior secondary education was called specialized secondary education with special branches. Between 1950 and 1979, junior secondary education was called second level education and senior secondary education, third level one. As from 1979 distinctions were drawn between basic general education comprising the first level (from grade 1 to 5) and the second level (from grade 6 to 9), and secondary general education commonly called general education, third level.

In 1993 the Prime Minister signed Decree N°90 on the education system in which general education includes primary education, junior secondary education and senior secondary education.

#### **2. Junior secondary education**

Junior secondary schools admit pupils 11 years of age and

upwards who have finished primary school. They comprise four grades (6-9)

### *2.1. Education contents<sup>1</sup>*

a/ World outlook, ideology-politics, law, ethics, rules of behaviour

#### *+ Education on world outlook*

#### Knowledge

- Elementary knowledge of the origin of the material world, the development of nature and society, the relationship between things and phenomena of the surrounding world. No religious teachings;

- Role and power of man in transforming nature, society and man.

#### Skills

- To carry out observations analysis preliminary generalization on surrounding things and phenomena;

- To have a scientific way of thinking.

#### Attitude

- To endeavour to understand surrounding things and phenomena, their development and changes;

- To have trust in science; to oppose superstitions.

#### *+ Education on ideology, politics and law*

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1. Basically, according to the document "Objectives and plans of training in junior general schools (Decision 305) signed by the Minister of Education on March 26, 1986.

#### Knowledge

- To have general notions of principal organizations in the political system, and of the organization of the local administration;

- To have general notions of national construction and defence;

- To understand the basic content of the Constitution and fundamental laws;

- To understand the role, tasks and traditions of the Youth Union and the Pioneers' Organization;

- To understand the position of Vietnam in the international community;

- To have knowledge about the main political - current events in the locality, the country and the world;

- To understand the issues relevant to population, population policy and family planning;

- To understand one's personal responsibility for one's deeds before law.

- To understand the policies of hostility to national independence, social progress and world peace.

#### Skills

- To read newspapers and listen to radio broadcasts;

- To know how to organize the activities of the Youth Union, the Pioneers' Organization and other collectives (groups, classes);

- To foster the habit of complying with laws, the school

statute, the rules of behaviour in public places, in family life, study, and labour discipline.

### Attitude

- To feel gratitude to the preceding generations and the people, and one's educators and fosterers;

- To feel proud of being a citizen of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

- To take a positive part in the activities of the Youth Union, the Pioneers' Organization and other collective activities at school and in the locality;

- To show a spirit of unity and national equality;

- To support other peoples' struggle for national independence, social progress and world peace;

- To live and work in accordance with law; to refrain from discipline infringement and law violation;

- To oppose racial discrimination.

+ Education on ethics and behaviour

### Knowledge

- To understand the cultural lifestyle;

- To understand the standards and values of social ethics, the relationship with society, other people and oneself (to show gratitude, politeness, respect and obedience to old people; to show tolerance to younger brothers and sisters...);

- To understand the national and revolutionary traditions: patriotism, humanism, solidarity, the traditions of the native land.

### Skills

- To comply with the rules of ethics; to have kindness and civilized behaviour; to adopt an attitude of unity, cordiality, friendship, generosity; to entertain correct relations and to have manners befitting an industrial society;

- To be able to listen to criticisms and to practise self-criticism.

### Attitude

- To live and work in a scientific way; to comply with laws;

- To show love for and pride in the native land; to wish to make it rich and beautiful;

- To feel deep gratitude to one's educators and fosterers;

- To keep promises; to accomplish any entrusted job;

- To respect personal dignity and the honour of the family, the class, the school, the locality and the motherland;

- To lead a plain, thrifty life; to show sincerity; to pursue needs conformable to the practical conditions of the family and the country;

- To be hardworking;

- To refrain from reliance on others, selfishness, deceit and brutal actions.

b/ Cultural and scientific education

### Knowledge

- To have comprehensive knowledge of the Vietnamese land, society and people;

- To have knowledge of the law-according relationship between the inorganic and organic world and the process of transformation of nature and society by man;

- To have knowledge of environment and environmental protection;

- To have knowledge about the relationship between the organism and the environment, nutrition, health care, physical training, prevention of diseases, labour safety, the protection of and improvement to the biosphere;

- To have elementary knowledge about the structural principles of a number of ordinary machines and labour instruments.

### Skills

- To know to listen, read, speak, write, observe, remember, take notes; to comprehend literary works; to be able to present the issues already studied; to be acquainted with the collection and study of documents;

- To be able to make calculations; to solve mathematical problems; to set up graphs, diagrams, statistics; to draw and use maps;

- To understand, read, speak, write in foreign languages which have been learned;

- To know to apply the notions, techniques, and specific methods drawn from the learnt subject to the resolution of the problems raised;

- To know to use and maintain measurement and experimentation instruments;

- To be able to study, test and assess study results by oneself.

- To be acquainted with scientific mode of thinking, observation, analysis, synthetic comparisons; to know to note down results and draw conclusions.

### Attitude

- To have confidence in the strength of science and of man in the conquest and transformation of nature, society and man;

- To show diligence, dynamism initiative, honesty, self-reliance in study; to comply with the disciplines of learning;

- Consciously to apply the acquired knowledge to life and productive labour;

- To consciously make efforts to broaden one's knowledge in a dynamic, independent and creative manner;

- To preserve, clean, embellish the environment; to fight against environmental pollution; to protect the flora and fauna;

- To oppose manifestations of indiscipline, copying, idleness, parasitism in learning.

c/ Education on labour, comprehensive technology, career orientation and preparation

### Knowledge

- To understand the value of labour;

- To be acquainted with a number of general principles of main production processes and economic organization and management;

- To have knowledge about a number of materials in common use and methods to process them by hand or with machines;

- To have knowledge about the structural principle and the operation of a number of labour instruments and mechanical equipment in production;

- To have knowledge about a number of technical measures in some production processes, a number of rules about labour protection and safety and some notions of production organization and management;

- To have general knowledge about the main occupations in society and in the locality, and some knowledge of the situation of the local economy; On this basis, to choose an appropriate trade.

### Skills

- To be acquainted with labour, especially learning labour, qualified labour, collective labour; to know to practise thrift, hygiene and labour safety.

- To know the use of a number of mechanical and electric household appliances.

- To be capable of carrying out an ordinary local craft which has been learnt;

- To know to organize labour in order to increase labour productivity.

### Attitude

- To have love for labour and to stand ready for work; to respect labourers and the fruits of labour; to have a correct attitude to manual labour;

- To work consciously with a high sense of discipline and great effectiveness;

- To oppose reliance on others, laziness, labour-shunning, negligent work, corruption, waste.

### d/ Physical and hygiene education

#### Knowledge

- To understand the general theory about a number of movements in gymnastics and physical exercises, to know a number of training methods to develop the body;

- To have basic knowledge about bodily hygiene, sex, environment, labour, nutrition; to know how to prevent and fight a number of common diseases.

#### Skills

- To know about basic movements of gymnastics and physical exercises, to train the body in keeping with the stipulated standards;

- To have knowledge about bodily hygiene, sex, study, work, entertainment and environment;

- To know how to comply with rules about lining up;

- To know about preventive measures against bombs and bullets and about first aid.

#### Attitude

- To have a liking for physical training and sports; to show a high sense of discipline and responsibility in training and in sport competition;

- To comply with the rules and stipulations in training and competitions;

- To take an eager part in sport events at school and in the locality;

- To be regularly involved in physical training to get increased strength for the sake of study, labour and national defence.

e/ Aesthetic education

### Knowledge

- To have a correct view on the beautiful and its meaning in life, labour and art.

### Skills

- To know to appreciate the value of literary works and to sense the beautiful in nature and life;

- To know to describe the beautiful and to express one's feelings about the beautiful in nature, society and man;

- To know to keep and embellish the school, the home, the study place...

### Attitude

- To keep in high esteem and to protect cultural and artistic works, the beautiful in nature and life;

- To make permanent endeavours to enrich one's knowledge and improve one's literary and artistic capacity;

- To take an eager part in cultural and artistic activities of the collective; to have a liking for creation;

- To oppose uncivilized acts and bad manners;

- To refrain from circulating and using reactionary, corrupt cultural and artistic items.

## 2.2. Teaching plan:

Number	Subject and activity	Grade			
		6	7	8	9
	<b>a/ Weekly subjects</b>	<b>Lesson</b>			
1	Vietnamese language	3	3	2	2
2	Literature	3	2	2	2
3	History	1	1	2	2
4	Geography	2	2	1	1
5	Civics	1	1	1	2
6	Mathematics	5	5	5	4
7	Physics	0	2	2	2
8	Chemistry	0	0	1	2
9	Biology	2	2	2	3
10	Art	2	2	2	0
11	Physical education - Military training	2	2	2	2
12	Foreign language	4	3	3	3
13	Technological labour	2	2	2	2
		(27)	(27)	(27)	(27)
14	Collective activities	1	1	1	1
15	Flag salute on the first day of the week	1	1	1	1
16	Mid-class recreation, physical education	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
	<b>b/ Monthly subjects</b>	<b>Session</b>			
17	Production labour combined with practise of technology	3	3	3	3
18	Vocational orientation	1	1	1	1
19	Discussion on specific topics	2	2	2	2
	Lessons/month ( 4 -5 lessons/ week)	(18)	(18)	(18)	(18)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
	<b>c/ Summer activities</b>	<b>Day</b>			
	Work in school or in a production establishment	4	4	12	12



### 2.3. Number of junior secondary school pupils

In comparison with the 1986-1987 school year, this number slightly increased in the following two years, then declined in four consecutive years (1988-1992). It again increased from 1993-1994, and recorded in the 1995-1996 school year an increase of more than one million over the figure for 1986-1987.

**Figure 11. Number of basic secondary school pupils**

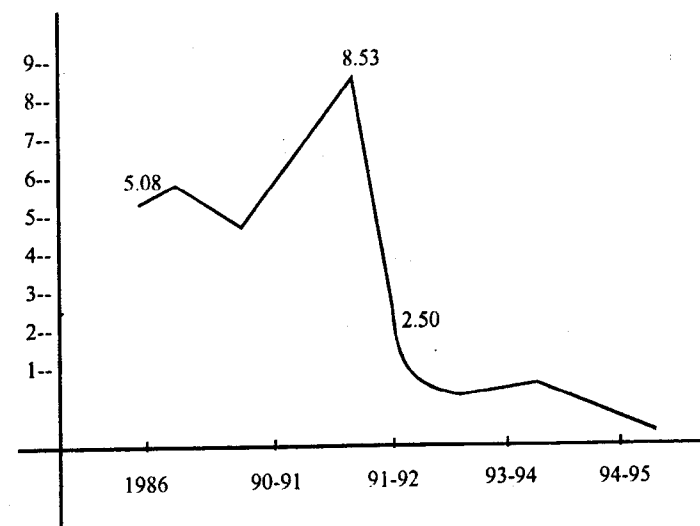
School year	Total	Including	
		Females	New recruits
1986-1987	3,264,520	1,576,397	1,012,387
1987-1988	3,291,344	1,617,759	1,066,259
1988-1989	3,037,775	1,566,034	944,093
1989-1990	2,758,871	1,389,757	927,561
1990-1991	2,708,067	1,357,953	882,340
1991-1992	2,633,268	1,181,939	842,242
1992-1993	2,813,992	1,295,483	934,929
1993-1994	3,101,483	1,428,803	1,080,884
1994-1995	3,678,734	1,806,710	1,314,323
1995-1996	4,312,074	2,016,094	1,476,130

Source: Education Information and Management Centre, Ministry of Education and Training (1996).

Number of schools: There are at present 7,993 basic general schools including 2,093 which comprise grades from 1 to 9; 5,900 junior secondary schools which comprise grades from 6 to 9, not counting the boarding secondary schools reserved for children of ethnic minority groups.

The number of class-repeating pupils and drop-outs at first increased, then declined, especially in the past three school years.

**Figure 12. Percentage of class-repeating pupils and drop-outs (%) in junior secondary schools**



The training effectiveness of the percentage of graduates from basic general schools (grade 9) in comparison with the pupils admitted into grade 6 is very low (about 50% in the whole country). In urban areas, almost all these pupils pursue their studies up to the grade 10 of senior secondary school; in difficult places, this percentage reaches 60-70%. The number of good pupils has gradually increased from 2-3% to 5-10%.

The revised textbooks were introduced in the 1986-1987 school year and will remain in use until the year 2000.

### 3. Senior secondary education

The schools of this level admit junior secondary school graduates from the age of 15.

### 3.1. Content of education<sup>1</sup>

a/ Education on the world outlook, ideology, politics, law, ethics and cultural behaviour

#### Knowledge

- To understand the scientific picture of the world, the law governing the development of nature, society and man;
- To understand pressing international issues (peace, ecology, population, food, HIV/AIDS...);
- To correctly understand the ideal and basic social values, the ideal of national independence, socialism, democracy, freedom, humanism, justice, peace, happiness; to achieve an all - round and harmonious development of the personality;
- To understand the renovation line and the major policies of the Party and the State;
- To understand the basic content of the Constitution and State laws, the citizen's rights and duties;
- To understand the history of national foundation and defence, the national and cultural identity, the fine traditions of the nation and of the revolution;
- To understand the ideals, principles, categories, humanistic and progressive virtues of mankind, of the nation, the ethical standards in human relations, the fine customs, the civilized and courteous behaviour.

1. Basically according to the document "Objectives and plan of senior secondary education" (Decision N° 329 signed by the Minister of Education on March 31, 1990).

#### Skills

- To recognize and hold in high esteem the true values of society, the community, the family and man, labour and nature;
- To know and correctly observe laws; to correctly exercise personal freedoms and correctly carry out the obligations towards society;
- To know to apply the principles and basic categories of ethics to analyzing and dealing with ethical cases, assessing one's own moral actions and those of surrounding people; to temper one's personality; to live and work in unity, cooperation, mutual respect and mutual assistance in the collective; to have cultural behaviour.

#### Attitude

- To support the new, the progressive; to do away with contra-scientific ways of thinking (idealistic, metaphysical, superstitious...); to be frank, honest; to respect the truth; to struggle for the truth; to hate lie;
- To defend the ideals and values of society, of the community, of the family and of oneself; to contribute to their creation; to turn them into personal objectives and aspirations in daily life;
- To respect and consciously observe the laws of the State, the discipline and order of society, the school and the other organizations; to strive to defend and carry out the citizen's rights; to fight all law violations, all manifestations of indiscipline, all negative phenomena in society;
- To promote patriotism, national pride, national spirit; to defend and promote the fine traditions of the nation; to respect the cultural identity of all nations;

- To make permanent efforts to temper oneself morally in study and labour, in friendship and love, in family, at school and in society;

- To live with lofty ideals and aspiration to pursue one's objectives and plans; to show will, energy and resolve to aim higher, optimism, a healthy behaviour; to foster the habit of conforming the deed to the word; to promote civilized and courteous behaviour; to hate the selfish and debauched way of life running after debased enjoyment and falling into social evils; to do away with discourteous, uncivilized, rude behaviour.

b/ Education on culture and science

### Knowledge

- To have systematic and basic knowledge about modern technology, nature, society and thinking. To have elementary notions about the economy and technology;

- To understand the basic content of national construction and defence;

- To acquire the basic elements of the scientific methodology of each subject and the experience in research and creation.

### Skills

- To grasp the basic operations of scientific thinking: to be capable of logic thinking and logic expression; to be able to note, reproduce, analyse, compare and sum up, generalize and apply the knowledge and method to resolve problems;

- To be able to learn by oneself and to perfect step by step one's fund of knowledge.

### Attitude

- To respect the discipline of study, to learn in a scientific way, with industriousness and self-consciousness;

- To bring knowledge into practice for the sake of effective activity;

- To willingly try to enrich one's knowledge; to make persistent efforts in study; to strive for unceasing progress; to stand ready to put one's knowledge to the service of society.

c/ Education on labour, overall technology, career orientation and preparation

### Knowledge

- To understand the role of production in creating the material and moral values in the process of social development; to understand the value of the profession in social and personal life;

- To have a preliminary comprehension of economic, social, and labour structures; the structure of trades, labour distribution in society;

- To know the main industrial process of a number of common trades, especially those practised in the locality;

- To understand the basic properties of common materials, simple labour instruments and a number of main machines in production and life;

- To have elementary knowledge of economic management, economic accounting, economic thinking;

- To have knowledge of vocational labour hygiene and the rules about labour safety.

### Skills

- To be accustomed to use correctly and keep in good maintenance the tools in common use at home and in the locality;
- To be able to make a rational use of ordinary materials;
- To be able to perform the industrial process of a common trade;
- To be able to repair simple labour instruments in use at home;
- To be able to perform simple technical work for household life;
- To be able to rationally organize the work, in the first place, studies;
- To be accustomed to the practice of hygiene and labour safety rules;
- To be able to apply simple scientific and technological advances to work.

### Attitude

- To love working; to hold in high esteem labourers and the products of labour;
- To be ready to work; to work honestly, with industriousness actively, consciously, creatively; to show a spirit of mutual assistance and cooperation in working after an industrial-like pattern. To hate laziness, reliance on others, waste, corruption;

- To show a competitive spirit in labour; to promote initiatives; to improve technology and achieve labour rationalization;

- To try consciously to spare materials, raw materials, time, human force, money;

- To show a high sense of submission to the organization discipline and responsibility in work.

d/ On physical constitutions, hygiene, national defence

### Knowledge

- To understand the methods of training; to develop physical constitutions (swiftness, strength, resistance, skill);

- To know the basic techniques of physical exercises and of some sports

- To have knowledge of personal hygiene, sex, family planning, environmental protection, disease prevention;

- To have some common military knowledge, national defence sports.

### Skills

- To know to undertake physical training according to the stipulated standards;

- To be able to adjust to the health conditions the activities related to life, study, work, entertainment;

- To know about the basic techniques of physical training and some sports;

- To be able to organize sport-training and competitions (at school, in the locality).

#### Attitude

- To show a high sense of health preservation and training in study, labour, life and combat;
- To feel a need to take part in entertainments at school, in the locality;
- To comply with the rules and stipulations in physical training and sport competitions;
- To have a high sense of environmental protection and preservation of public hygiene installations.

e/ On aesthetics

#### Knowledge

- To understand the beautiful in life and work, in nature and man, in literature and arts;
- To have elementary knowledge of the beautiful as expressed in literary and artistic works of the nation and the world.

#### Skills

- To be sensible to the manifestations of the beautiful in labour and life, in nature and man, in literature and arts;
- To be well-behaved to keep to the standards of a civilized way of life; to say good words, to have good manners;

- To be capable of accumulating impressions and knowledge of the beautiful in nature and life, in literature and arts;

- To be capable of appreciating and enjoying objects and phenomena having an aesthetic significance;

- To be capable of participating in some forms of literary and artistic activities (to write in prose, to compose poems, to draw sketches, to perform theatrical plays, to sing, to dance...).

#### Attitude

- To respect, love, preserve and create genuine, healthy, and civilized expressions of the beautiful;

- To strive to understand, enjoy and preserve the cultural and artistic legacy of the nation and of the world;

- To foster for oneself an aesthetic capacity; to feel a need to bring the beautiful into all fields of personal activity as well as in the surrounding bio-environment;

- To consciously foster healthy artistic tastes; to foster the ability to understand, appreciate and enjoy artistic values, and to cultivate for oneself the capacity of artistic activities (performance, creation);

- To take an uncompromising attitude in face of any manifestation of lack of culture and any anti-aesthetic action, and in face of any negative action in human and social life;

- To reject the use of negative, depraved, reactionary cultural or artistic items.

### 3.2. Teaching-learning plan of comprehensive senior secondary schools

Number	Subject Class	10	11	12
	<b>a/ Per week (lessons)</b>	<b>Lessons<sup>1</sup></b>		
1	Literature	2	2	2
2	Vietnamese Language	2	2	1
3	History	1	1	2
4	Geography	1	2	1
5	Civics	1	1.5	1.5
6	Mathematics	4	5	5
7	Physics	3	3	3
8	Chemistry	2	2	2
9	Biology	1	1	1
10	Foreign language	3	3	3
11	Technology	2	2	2
12	Gymnastics-defence exercise	2	2	2
13	Collective activity	1	1	1
14	Salute to the national flag at the first day of the week	1	1	1
	<b>b/ Per month</b>	<b>Sessions<sup>2</sup></b>		
15	Public utility or production work	3	3	3
16	Vocational orientation meeting	1	1	1
17	Meeting on specific subjects	2	2	2
	<b>Total of lessons</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>33.5</b>
	<b>c/ Per year</b>	<b>Days</b>		
18	Production or public utility work	12	18	

1. Lesson: 50 minutes

2. Session: 4 lessons

3.3. Senior secondary school attendance was gradually restored; it was only in 1994-1995 that the 1986-1987 figure of school attendance was nearly reached. As from the 1995 -1996 school year, it exceeded the 1985-1986 figure.

**Figure 13. Secondary school attendance (1985-1996)**

School year	Total	The figures include	
		Females	New recruits
1896-1987	917,593	428,220	332,046
1987-1988	926,420	435,320	319,395
1988-1989	843,541	391,435	270,841
1989-1990	691,487	320,642	208,122
1990-1991	527,925	249,039	136,485
1991-1992	522,735	233,761	235,391
1992-1993	576,722	248,221	259,142
1993-1994	724,381	308,649	289,739
1994-1995	863,000	386,272	358,890
1995-1996	1,019,480	457,793	418,705

Number of schools: there are at present 701 senior secondary schools which include junior secondary schools (from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and 644 senior secondary schools (from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade), not counting the boarding secondary schools for ethnic minorities in provinces.

**Figure 14a. The number of class-repeating pupils and drop-outs in senior secondary schools continuously decreased in the past years**

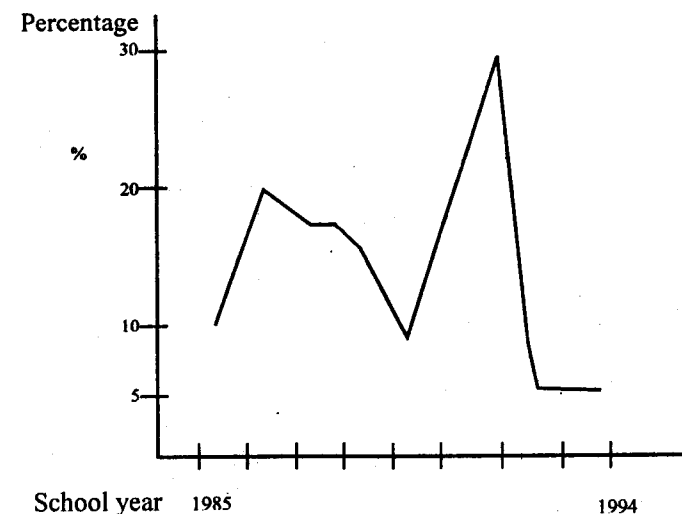
School year	Percentage (%)	
	Repeaters (%)	Drop-outs (%)
1985-1986	4.55	10.07
1986-1987	4.52	22.58
1987-1988	2.83	21.02
1988-1989	2.23	18.86
1989-1990	1.03	11.04
1990-1991	0.90	28.00
1991-1992	1.20	14.40
1992-1993	1.11	4.14
1993-1994	1.35	5.95

Source: Information Centre of the Ministry of Education and Training (1996).

The training effectiveness (percentage of senior secondary school graduates as against the number of pupils admitted into the tenth grade) was about 60-70%. This percentage greatly varied with schools and areas. It reached 100% in the schools for gifted pupils; it was usually higher in urban areas, in the Red River delta and in Northern Trung Bô than in other places. The number of excellent pupils was on the increase; the figure was 8-10% in many schools.

The revised textbooks began to replace the old ones in the 1993-1994 school year. The replacement has been completed in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

**Figure 14b. Number of drop-outs**



### 3.4. Subject-specialized senior secondary education<sup>1</sup>

In the senior secondary education, there is now, besides the comprehensive schools, a network of subject-specialized education: Natural Science Section (Section A), Natural Science - Technology Section (Section B) and Social Science Section (Section C). In the total attendance of subject-specialized schools, 60% of the pupils are in Section A, nearly 20% in Section B, over 20% in Section C. In this network, there is a distinction between the subjects, taught in the same way in the three sections; those taught in all sections but with

1. After "Subject-specialized Senior Secondary Education: Question and Answer" by Phạm Minh Hạc and Đinh Gia Phong. Ministry of Education and Training, Hanoi 1994.

different numbers of lessons per week, and particular subject which are taught in a greater number of lessons and in a more profound manner. Other activities such as collective activities, labour and ordinary crafts... are carried out in identical ways in all Sections. Thus, on the basis of comprehensive general education, first steps are being made to direct pupils to different trends so as to make it possible for the graduates from the 9th grade to carry on their studies in different vocational directions according to their ability and tendency as clearly shown in the last years of junior secondary education; in this way, pupils will be better prepared to enter vocational schools, specialized schools or higher education establishments (figure15).

The shift from senior secondary education to a system of subject-specialized secondary education is an orientation fairly common in all countries, although there are differences in the division into sections from one country to another. Vietnam has some experience regarding secondary education divided into different sections prior to 1950. In 1988-1990 pilot classes of subject-specialized secondary education were organized in the Hoàn Kiếm School (Hanoi) and the Lê Hồng Phong School (Nam Định). This renovation orientation in senior secondary education was put forward in Decision N°329 (1990) of the Ministry of Education, which was subsequently asserted in the fourth Resolution of the Seventh Party Central Committee (1993) and Decree N°90/CP (1993) of the Prime Minister. In implementation of the decisions set forth in these documents, pilot classes of general schools divided into special sections were organized as from the 1993-1994 school year in 15 schools in 7 provinces beginning from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. At present there are 214 such schools all over the country. As from 1996 there were batches of graduates from subject-specialized secondary schools. The graduates of this network as well as those of senior secondary schools

are awarded senior secondary school diplomas and entitled to apply for admission into post-secondary general schools. In the 1996 and 1997 examinations for admission into colleges and universities, there were two sets of subjects: one for graduates of comprehensive senior secondary schools and one for graduates of subject-specialized secondary schools.

**Figure 15. Teaching plan for subject-specialized secondary schools**

*(Applicable from the second term of the 1993-1994 school year)*

		Natural sciences - Section A		
	Class	10	11	12
Common activity	Salute to the national flag	1	1	1
	Collective activity in class	1	1	1
Common subject	Applied technology	3	3	3
	Informatics	2	1	1
	Civics	2	1	1
	Defence education	1	1	1
	Physical education	2	2	2
Crossed section subject	Literature - Vietnamese language	4	2	1
	History	1	1	0
	Geography	1	1	0
	Foreign language	3	3	3
	Technology	2	2	2
Main section subject	Mathematics	5	5	6
	Physics	3	3	4
	Chemistry	2	3	3
	Biology	2	2	3
	Optional subject	0	3	3
Total		35	35	35



Natural sciences-technology - Section B				
		10	11	12
Common activity	Salute to the national flag	1	1	1
	Collective activity in class	1	1	1
Common subject	Applied technology	3	3	3
	Informatics	2	1	1
	Civics	2	1	1
	Defence education	1	1	1
	Physical education	2	2	2
Crossed section discipline	Literature - Vietnamese language	4	2	1
	History	1	1	0
	Geography	1	1	0
	Foreign language	3	3	3
Main section subject	Mathematics	4	4	5
	Physics	2	3	3
	Chemistry	1	2	3
	Biology	2	2	2
	Technology	4	4	4
	Optional subject	0	3	3
Total		34	35	34

Social sciences - Section C				
	Class	10	11	12
Common activity	Salute to the national flag	1	1	1
	Collective activity in class	1	1	1
Common subject	Applied technology	3	3	3
	Informatics	2	1	1
	Civics	2	1	1
	Defence education	1	1	1
	Physical education	2	2	2
Crossed section subject	Mathematics	2	2	2
	Physics	1	1	0
	Chemistry	1	1	0
	Biology	1	1	0
	Technology	2	2	2
Main section discipline	Literature	2	2	3
	Vietnamese language	3	3	2
	History	2	2	3
	Geography	2	2	2
	Philosophy	1	1	2
	Foreign language	5	5	5
	Optional subject	0	3	3
Total		34	35	34

The transformation of senior secondary schools into subject-specialized ones is encountering difficulties. Firstly some people think that subject-specialized programs do not ensure all-round education. Secondly the special budget earmarked for this purpose has been cut and no money is available for the purchase of the equipment required for the teaching of specialized subjects, especially with regard to the natural science - technology section. Thirdly, at one time, mathematics and literature were made compulsory subjects for admission to any establishment of higher education; although this decision remained in existence only from August 1995 to March 1996 and was not applied in any examination, all pupils of subject-specialized secondary schools had to learn by themselves according to the requirements of the examinations for admission to colleges and universities. Fourthly, entering an establishment of higher education after three years of study in subject-specialized schools, the student had to follow a general university course during 1.5 year before entering a special vocational course. That is the reason why the Government is reconsidering this matter.

### 3.5. Special secondary general schools for gifted pupils

Under a decision of the Ministry of Education, as from 1987, education was developed in two directions: "comprehensive and spearhead schools". In all provinces there are at present senior secondary schools for gifted pupils. This form of school began to be introduced in 1965 and first established at the Hanoi University. Subsequently other schools were opened at Hanoi Teachers' Training College No 1 and in some cities like Hanoi and Nam Định (one in each).

The special senior secondary schools for gifted pupils recruit outstanding graduates of junior secondary schools who are to follow the common program of senior secondary schools (see the teaching and learning plan, item 3.2, chapter VIII). These pupils specialize in some subjects as mathematics, physics, literature, foreign languages, chemistry, biology, etc. At present, each school is following its own teaching program for these subjects. At the start (in 1965) there were only special classes in mathematics. Later on, there appeared special classes in physics. Then a special school was formed with a number of subjects, usually mathematics, physics, literature, foreign languages.

The pupils of special classes or special schools are actually excellent ones. In almost all these schools, 100% of the pupils pass the graduation examinations, and 70-80%, even 100% of the pupils are admitted into universities or colleges. Most prizes of the National Olympics in mathematics, physics, foreign languages... were awarded pupils of these establishments. The pupils of these schools constituted the core of the groups of secondary school pupils who attended international competitions in mathematics, physics, informatics, etc.

From 1974 to 1986, except for 1977, 1980 and 1981, Vietnam took part in international competitions in mathematics; out of 121 participants, 106 won prizes including 17 first prizes. In many years, the Vietnamese delegation ranked fifth or sixth among over 40 participating groups. From 1981 to 1996 with the exception of 1986 and 1989, Vietnam took part in 12 competitions in physics with 61 participants and 38 prize-winners including 2 first prizes and 7 second ones.

In 1989 the first international competition in informatics was organized for secondary school pupils. Vietnam took part in it and won a third prize. At all the subsequent competitions (1990-1996), Vietnamese participants were also present.

In 1992, a pupil won the first prize, another the second prize, and two other were awarded the third prize. In 7 international competitions in informatics; out of 31 Vietnamese participants, 24 were prize-winners.

In international competitions in chemistry, Vietnam took part only once in 1996 with four attenders, out of whom three were third prize-winners.

In 1996, four Vietnamese senior secondary school pupils took part in the international competition in biology, but won no prize. Vietnamese pupils also won many international Olympic competitions in Russian and French.

International education experts have a high appreciation of the learning and thinking capacity of Vietnamese pupils. But owing to a serious shortage of teaching and learning implements, especially modern testing instruments with regard to physics, chemistry, biology. Furthermore, as pupils have grown up in a country with agriculture being the main economy, their empirical thinking is still weak. The pupils of special secondary schools for gifted pupils usually pay too much attention to their specialized subject. In addition, these schools fail to combine the education in labour and in career orientation in an appropriate way.

**Figure 16. Results gained by the Vietnamese pupils at international competitions**

	Mathematics	Physics	Informatics	Chemistry	Biology
Years	1974-1996	1981-1996	1989-1996	1996	1996
Number of competitors	121	61	31	4	4
Number of prize winners	106	38	24	4	0
Number of first prize winners	17	2	1	0	0

## Chapter IX

### SECONDARY VOCATIONAL AND CRAFT-TEACHING SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Outlined history of the problem

Prior to August 1945 there were only four applied technology schools in the whole country. After 1945, during the resistance years until 1954, eight secondary vocational schools were set up in the free zones under the revolutionary power and in the Việt Bắc war zone. They were teachers' training, medical, pharmaceutical, communications and public works, fine arts, agro-forestry and foreign languages schools. In addition, there were a number of secondary vocational classes such as the Thuận Hóa Agronomists' class, the Trung Kỳ Judiciary Officials Class. In some establishments of higher education, secondary vocational classes were opened.

1. This Chapter is based on the Chapter VI of the book "Education in Vietnam" (in English) and "An Outlined of Education in Vietnam" (in Vietnamese) by Phạm Minh Hạc. Education Publishing House, Hanoi 1991, 1992.

Many craft-teaching courses on engineering, communications, water conservancy, chemical products were set up in production establishments.

In 1954, peace was restored in the North. The socio-economic rehabilitation work required the existence of numerous technicians and workers. The training work strongly developed. Many schools were established. In early 1965, there were 112 secondary vocational schools including 56 schools under local management. Over 30% of the pupils of the secondary vocational schools in the country were trained at these units. This brought the number of secondary vocational school pupils to 42,000 and that of trained branches to 82.

With regard to craft-teaching, in 1965 there were 200 schools and classes attended by 30,000 pupils. Other were trained on the job at various enterprises.

From 1965, the scale of secondary vocational training and craft-teaching expanded rapidly. In 1970 there were 213 such schools with about 124,000 pupils. As a result of this extremely rapid growth, the quality of training was low, especially with regard to practical experience and knowledge. A decision was taken to narrow down the training scale to fit in with the possibility of ensuring quality. The network of schools was rearranged, and in early 1975, there remained 186 schools attended by about 70,000 pupils; 94% of the figure were learning in long-term classes, the remaining belonged to short-term improvement courses.

With regard to craft-teaching, this was also a period of strong development. In 1970, there were 186 craft-teaching schools attended by 78,000 pupils.

In 1975, the anti-US resistance war ended in victory, the country was reunified. Vietnam entered a new stage of development on a nation-wide scale; the requirement for technicians and workers became pressing, and thus the training network was expanded. Along with the taking in charge of the schools in the South, many secondary vocational and craft-teaching schools were set up. In late 1985, there were 278 such schools with 121,000 pupils.

With regard to craft-teaching, after the reunification of the country, 26 schools were taken in charge and new schools opened in the Southern provinces where the number of such establishments amounted to 186 in 1979. That means the total number of such schools across the country reached 366; there were also about 1000 craft-teaching courses in various production establishments. In 1985 there remained 313 craft-teaching schools.

## **2. The current position**

Since 1985, the system of secondary vocational schools has become comparatively stable. In 1991, their number amounted to 270. This included 100 establishments under the management of various ministries and 170 local schools under provincial or municipal management. Six groups of schools were formed according to technical branches: industry; agriculture, forestry and fishery; economy; pedagogy; culture and art; medicine and gymnastics-sports. However, owing to local requirements, there are a number of inter-branch secondary vocational schools training pupils for several branches belonging to different groups (Figure 17a).

The secondary vocational schools under central and local management are training pupils in 96 branches according to a single list established by the training services of the Ministry of Education and Training.

The system of craft-teaching schools in this stage underwent many changes. On the one hand, in view of its too rapid formation in the previous period, it was distributed in an irrational way. Many schools had very poor material facilities and failed to ensure good training; as a result, they had to be disbanded or merged into other units. In 1990 there remained 242 schools in the whole country (119 under central and 123 under local management). These craft-teaching schools were divided into six groups: electricity, construction, engineering, agriculture-forestry-fishery, commerce-services, information and post-telecommunication (Figure 17b).

The craft-teaching schools are training pupils in 390 crafts according to a list established by the former General Department of Craft Teaching, now by the Ministry of Education and Training. This list is being revised by extending the scope of crafts and reducing their number.

In view of the need for young people and adolescents to learn general knowledge along with crafts, pilot secondary craft-teaching schools were organized at six craft-teaching establishments. These schools recruited graduates of junior secondary school who are provided with senior secondary education and trades learning.

Besides the regular network intended to train qualified workers, a short-term craft-training system (craft-teaching centres) was formed to afford universalized training to the youth, adolescents and labourers. In the whole country, there are now more than 200 such centres in various districts. In view of increasing requirements in this field, craft-teaching centres are expected to be strongly developed in the forthcoming period.

In addition to public craft-teaching units, private schools and classes have been opened in various localities and production units.

**Figure 17a. Vocational secondary schools (classified according to training groups)**

School year	Total	Classified according to training groups					
		Industry	Agriculture-Forestry-Fishery	Economy services	Training of infant school teachers	Health care - sports	Culture -Arts
1986-87	282	38	44	64	66	45	25
1987-88	269	39	41	60	58	47	24
1988-89	269	39	41	60	58	47	24
1989-90	270	30	42	57	53	46	26
1990-91	261	37	42	57	53	46	26
1991-92	265	38	31	58	57	47	24
1992-93	266	37	42	56	54	49	28
1993-94	272	35	35	60	62	48	32
1994-95	259	35	31	60	54	48	31
1995-96	253	37	30	65	51	48	33

**Figure 17b. Craft-teaching schools (classified according to training groups)**

School year	Total	Classified according to training groups					
		Industry	Agriculture-Forestry-Fishery	Construction	Mechanics Driving	Commerce Services	Other kinds
1986-87	296	73	22	63	37	37	38
1987-88	274	73	22	53	33	33	38
1988-89	274	73	22	53	33	33	38
1989-90	242	71	20	46	30	30	26
1990-91	232	71	16	44	27	27	25
1991-92	230	70	16	44	26	26	25
1992-93	198	68	18	35	29	29	8
1993-94	198	68	18	35	29	29	8
1994-95	177	68	21	23	23	23	9
1995-96	174	67	20	23	32	23	9

The number of pupils attending secondary vocational and craft-teaching schools has been increasing on a small scale and the number of pupils of craft-teaching schools has been continuously decreasing in the course of the 10 years of education renovation. This is a major imbalance in the training structure. It fails to meet the requirements of the industrialization of the country (Figure 18).

**Figure 18. Number of pupils of secondary vocational and craft-teaching schools**

School year	Secondary vocational school		Craft-teaching school	
	Total number of pupils	New recruits	Total number of pupils	New recruits
1986-87	52,984	47,198	119,783	52,854
1987-88	57,799	48,855	102,043	56,956
1988-89	55,227	39,220	118,083	70,055
1989-90	53,245	37,763	92,485	74,504
1990-91	51,194	41,111	105,083	71,388
1991-92	54,682	40,538	77,395	29,841
1992-93	49,474	37,575	78,956	35,893
1993-94	46,417	33,570	46,498	23,882
1994-95	66,685	44,435	62,614	34,000
1995-96	69,057	48,938	79,488	24,087

### 3. Training objectives and teaching plans of craft-teaching schools

#### 3.1. Craft-teaching schools

Craft-teaching schools represent the main form of regular craft training at present. They recruit pupils at two levels:

- Level of basic general education (9<sup>th</sup> grade); duration of training: 2 years for simple crafts and 3 years for complicated ones;

- Level of senior secondary education (12<sup>th</sup> grade); duration of training: 1 year for simple crafts and 2 years for complicated ones.

In the time to come, only graduates of basic general education are to be enrolled with regard to simple crafts.

After graduation, the pupils are issued attestations of qualified workers or qualified functional employees.

The craft-teaching schools aim at training qualified workers in the crafts mentioned on the list of crafts to be trained. Qualified workers are understood as people trained according to an integrated program in the fields of ethics, culture, technology and craftsmanship who are able to work in a position typical of the craft as required by society at each specific stage of socio-economic development.

For instance, a trainee electrician for an enterprise is required:

#### Knowledge

- To understand the main technological links in the production chain of this craft;

- To read and understand detailed sketches, assembly sketches and electric diagrams of not too complex machine-tools in keeping with the criterium for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade worker of the 7-graded scale.

- To understand the operational principle, use, and maintenance of common electricity meters. To have basic notions of electric materials of various kinds and their uses;

- To have basic notions of mechanics, the resistance of materials. To understand the use, operational principle and structure of the mechanisms of movement transmission and transformation currently found in machine-tools;

- To understand the principles of production organization and management of enterprises.

#### Skills and capabilities

- To assemble and repair lighting circuits and motion circuits for a workshop and carry out the processes of disassembling, maintenance and repair of a number of electric motors and generators with an output up to 20 KVA, transformers in daily use;

- To repair a number of electric implements (fuse carries, switch, plug, etc.) to make replacements when necessary;

- To do some jobs of a 4<sup>th</sup>-grade electrician (7-graded scale) when guided by a highly qualified worker;

The training content comprises four groups of knowledge: general notions of mathematics, natural and social sciences, basic technical notions common to the craft group, technical notions and skills of the trade.

The technical skills of the trade constitute the fundamental part of the training and usually account for 55-70% of its total duration.

The duration of the training program is distributed as follows:

General knowledge: 5-10% of the total duration

Basic techniques: 10-20%

Special techniques: 5-15%

Professional practice: 75-55%

It should be noted that 75 -80% of the training content regarding special techniques and professional practice are unified for the whole country. The remaining 20-25% may be applied in a flexible way depending on the concrete conditions of specific schools and enterprises.

#### *3.2. Secondary craft-teaching schools*

The secondary craft-teaching school is where the training process is carried out according to the principle of combining general education with the training in professional skills.

Secondary craft-teaching schools enrol graduates from basic general schools to teach them general knowledge combined with some crafts. Their graduates have the standard of qualified workers and an educational level equivalent to that of senior secondary education graduate. They are to be issued qualified worker certificates and graduation diplomas of senior secondary education. The learning duration is three years for simple trades and four years for complicated ones.

For example, the teaching plan of such a school for the complete formation of a repair electrician for an enterprise, is as follows:

#### **General subject**

- Vietnamese language and literature 250 lessons
- Mathematics: 450
- Physics: 280
- Chemistry: 170
- Foreign language: 200
- Politics: 120
- Physical education: 60

#### **Basic techniques**

- Technical drawing: 140
- Technical mechanics: 100
- Technical electricity: 60
- Electric materials: 75
- Metallurgical technology: 45
- Electric measurement: 60
- Production management: 40

#### **Special techniques**

- Repair of electric implements at an enterprise: 250

#### **Professional practice**

- Basic practice: 1,500 hours
- Production practice: 1,400

#### ***3.3. Craft-teaching courses at production and business establishments***

The craft-teaching course at a production and business establishment is a form of short-term craft-training. Each course usually lasts 3-6 months, designed to train unskilled technical labourers who work in auxiliary jobs or in simple crafts according to the requirements of this production unit. The teachers are technicians or highly skilled workers appointed for this purpose by the concerned units. The training usually take place at the very place of work.

#### **4. Training objectives and teaching plans in secondary vocational schools**

The objective of secondary vocational school is to train practical cadres who have technical or vocational standard in economics, education, culture, medicine, art...

Secondary vocational schools enrol pupils according to two standards:

- The branches which do not have high technical requirements recruit basic general school graduates and train them during 3-3.5 years; after graduation, the pupils have secondary technical qualifications and a level of education equivalent to senior secondary school graduates. The main purpose is to serve local requirements. The graduates are issued secondary vocational education diplomas.



- The branches which require sophisticated scientific technological and vocational standards recruit senior secondary education graduates who are to be trained during 2-3 years and issued a special secondary education certificate.

Secondary vocational schools may also enrol workers and professional personnel who have graduated from schools teaching the same crafts, and train them for one year to reach the vocational standard of secondary vocational school graduates.

To obtain the above-mentioned professional target, the training content of secondary vocational schools is divided into four groups: general knowledge, basic technical knowledge for the specific group of branches, special technical knowledge of the branch concerned, and practical professional skills. The structure of the knowledge groups in the training program of a secondary vocational school is similar to that of a craft-teaching school, however the proportion is different: the parts devoted to practical work in the training program of a specialized secondary school account for only 40-50% of the total duration of the training.

Specific structure of the training content in a secondary vocational school of a branch, for instance, the branch of "industrial and consumption electricity" which enrol graduates of senior secondary schools:

#### **General knowledge group**

- Politics: 125 lessons of 45 minutes each
- Foreign languages: 150

- Physical education: 60
- Military education: 192
- Economics, production organization: 96
- Mathematics: 49
- Informatics: 56

In case basic general education graduates are enrolled the latter have to make additional studies: 60 lessons of foreign language, 350 lessons of mathematics, 130 lessons of physics and 120 lessons of chemistry

#### **Group of basic technical knowledge**

- Technical mechanics: 112 lessons
- Technical drawing: 98
- Technical electricity: 168
- Electric motors: 162
- Electric measurements: 56
- Industrial electronics: 66
- Electric materials: 42
- Power security: 42

#### **Group of professional technical knowledge:**

- High voltage techniques: 42 lessons
- Electric grid: 114

- Relay protection and automatization in a power system:  
120

- Electric system at a power plant, a transformer station,  
and an industrial enterprise: 168

- Operation and repair of electric equipment: 90

- Electric equipment in an enterprise of industrial  
electricity: 108

### **Practice group**

- Fundamentals of cold metal working: 96

- Fundamentals of electricity: 96

- Installation of electric equipment: 96

- Wiring of electric motors: 192

- Installation of an electric network: 48

- Testing of electric motors and equipment: 96

- Visit and observation tour to an enterprise: 48

- Production: 192

- Internship before graduation: 384

## **Chapter X**

### **HIGHER EDUCATION**

(COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND POST-GRADUATE  
EDUCATION)

#### **1. Outlined history of the problem**

Quốc Tử Giám (on the compound of the Temple of Literature) opened in 1706 may be regarded as the first Vietnamese university. The Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy set up in 1902 is the first establishment of higher education opened in Hanoi. A number of other establishments of higher education founded in the 20's of this century were brought together in 1939 to form the Indochinese University installed in Hanoi, designed for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

During the anti-French resistance war (1946-1954), a number of establishments of higher education were evacuated from the capital city to the resistance zone to carry on training activities (the Faculty of Medicine, the Civil Engineering College, the Fine Arts College). From 1951 to 1954, three centres of higher education took shape: one in

Việt Bắc with the Faculty of Medicine, one in the former Fourth zone (Thanh Hóa) with a pre-university college, and a teachers' training college, and one in Nanning (China), called Central Learning Quarters comprising a Faculty of Fundamental Sciences and a Teachers' Training College school (on natural sciences)

These were the first establishments of higher education of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The teaching was done entirely in Vietnamese. In 1954, the three centres of higher education from the liberated (free) zone and from abroad were moved to Hanoi. Subsequently in 1956, several universities and colleges came into being: the University, Teachers' Training College, College of Politechnology, Medical College, College of Agriculture, College of Economics and Planning, and College of Fine Arts.

In spite of the need to support the struggle for the liberation of the Southern part of the country and for national reunification and to fight back the U.S. air war of destruction, the network of universities and colleges continued to develop. In the 1974 - 1975 school year, there were 30 establishments of higher education with 8,4000 teachers, 8.9% of whom were Ph.D Degree holders and 56,000 students 40% of whom were girls, and 77.2% were concentrated learners; the training was dispensed in 23 groups of branches and 184 branches.

In the southern area controlled by the pro-American administration, there were four public institutes (Saigon and Thủ Đức Colleges of Technology, Huế and Cần Thơ Universities) three community-founded colleges (Mỹ Tho, Nha Trang, Đà Nẵng) and 11 private colleges, mostly run by religious communities. The number of registered students reached 166,000.

After the reunification of the country, the establishments of higher education in the two zones, North and South, were re-structured in the 1975-1979 period to become a single system. From 1978 onwards, a series of short-term colleges (training duration: three years) were set up, mainly teachers' training colleges, opened in various provinces.

In the 1980-1981 school year, the national system of higher education comprised 85 universities and (senior) colleges with 17,300 teachers and 146,000 students, and 33 junior colleges; 24 of them were engaged in training teachers for junior secondary schools. This system made an important contribution to the training of technicians for the economic, cultural and social development of the country.

In the 1989-1990 school year, there were 105 establishments (not counting those belonging to the National Defence and Home Ministries) including 60 universities and 45 junior colleges. These may be divided into six groups as follows:

a/ Group of universities and teachers' training colleges: 17, including 4 universities (Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City, Huế, Đà Lạt Universities), 10 teachers' training colleges, 1 foreign language college, 2 colleges of law;

b/ Group of technological and industrial colleges: 11, including 3 universities of technology (Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City, Đà Nẵng), the colleges of water conservancy, mining and mineral resources, marine, industry, constructions, communications and transport, and 2 colleges of architecture;

c/ Group of agricultural and forestry colleges: 6, including 4 agricultural colleges (Hanoi, Huế, Hồ Chí Minh City, Việt Bắc), 1 forestry college, 1 college of aquaculture;

d/ Group of colleges of economics: 8, including 2 colleges

of economics (Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City), 1 college of trade, 1 college of foreign trade, 2 colleges of finance and 2 banking colleges (located in Hanoi and Hồ Chí Minh City);

e/ Group of colleges of medicine, pharmacy, sports and gymnastics: 8, including 5 medical colleges (Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City, Huế, Việt Bắc, Thái Bình), 1 college of pharmacy, 2 colleges of sports and gymnastics.

f/ Group of colleges of culture and arts: 8, including 2 conservatories (Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City conservatories), 3 colleges of arts (Hanoi, Hồ Chí Minh City, Huế), 1 college of industrial art, 1 college of theatre and movies, 1 college of culture);

g/ Besides the above six groups, there are two interbranch schools, mainly on agriculture, pedagogy, medicine: the Cần Thơ College for Western Nam Bộ; the Tây Nguyên College (installed in Buôn Ma Thuột) for the Western Highlands.

These universities and colleges are concentrated mainly in four centres: Hanoi (23), Hồ Chí Minh City (14), Huế - Đà Nẵng (7), Thái Nguyên (4).

## **2. Objective, content and method**

The objective of higher education is to train manpower with a high standard, specialists for all fields of national construction and defence.

Its content is designed to achieve the principle of modernization and development, inheritance and promotion of the national identity, integration with the world standard. The specific content of each training field is determined in keeping with the guidance of the Ministry of Education.

The establishments of higher education hold examinations to recruit graduates from senior secondary schools. The duration of study is 3 or 4 years for colleges and universities, and 6 years for medical colleges.

The teaching method in establishments of higher education consists in encouraging the student to study with initiative, to carry out research and experimentation under the guidance of the professor.

## **3. The present network of establishments of higher education**

The organization, structure and network of colleges and universities have been discussed for many years, especially in the last 5-7 years. As a legacy of history, the colleges and universities in the North follow the pattern of specialized branch schools (foreign trade, commerce, banking, finance and accountancy, etc.); those in the South, prior to 1975, followed the pattern of multi-branch schools (the Saigon, Huế institutes...); after 1975 they were gradually reformed according to the pattern of specialized-branch ones. The universities and colleges organized in this pattern were scattered and could not afford one another many-sided assistance, especially in the use of the teaching personnel and the utilization of material installations and laboratories. At the same time, suggested by the world experience in building and developing the higher education system, as from 1994 -1995, we re-arranged own system of higher education establishments as follows:

### *3.1. Establishment of two national universities*

- One in Hanoi comprising three colleges: the Hanoi University, Hanoi Teachers' Training College N°1, Hanoi

Foreign Language Teachers' Training College. It is called "Hanoi National University" (1994).

- One in Hồ Chí Minh City comprising nine colleges: Hồ Chí Minh City University, Hồ Chí Minh City College of Technology, Thủ Đức technical Teachers' Training College, Hồ Chí Minh City College of Agriculture and Forestry, Hồ Chí Minh City Teachers' Training College, Hồ Chí Minh City College of Economics, Hồ Chí Minh City College of Finance and Accountancy, Hồ Chí Minh City College of Architecture, Hồ Chí Minh City Branch of the Faculty of Law. It is called "Hồ Chí Minh City National University" (1995).

### *3.2. Establishment of three regional universities (1994)*

- Thái Nguyên University comprising 3 establishments of higher education (the Teachers' Training College, Faculty of Medicine, College of Industrial Technology) and the College of Mechanics and Electricity.

- Huế University comprising 5 establishments of higher education: the University, Teachers' Training College, College of Agriculture and Forestry, Faculty of Medicine, College of Arts.

- Đà Nẵng University comprising 3 establishments of higher education: the Teachers' Training College, School of Technology, School of Economics, a Foreign Language Centre and Nguyễn Văn Trỗi Workers' School.

The above are multi-branch establishments of higher education. Some others though not called national or regional universities are the same by nature: the Cần Thơ University (Cửu Long Delta), Đà Lạt University (Lâm Đồng) and Tây Nguyên University (Buôn Ma Thuột).

3.3. The specialized colleges are usually training students in one branch or group of branches such as technology, agriculture, water conservancy... They are mostly concentrated in Hanoi, for instance, the College of Technology, the Faculty of Medicine, the College of Pharmacy, the College of National Economy, the College of Constructions, the College of Foreign Languages, the College of Foreign Trade, the Institute of International Relations. They are nearly 30 in number; some of them have just commemorated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1956 -1996).

A number of specialized colleges are established in other provinces: College of Forestry (Hà Tây), Maritime College (Hải Phòng), Thái Bình Medical College, Vinh Teachers' Training College (Nghệ An), Quy Nhơn Teachers' Training College (Bình Định)...

### *3.4. Other forms of universities and colleges*

- The Open Universities of Hồ Chí Minh City and Hanoi. They are semi-public schools (the installations belong to the State, the schools enjoy financial autonomy); most students attend concentrated courses: part of the courses is done in the mode of distance education.

- The community-founded colleges are schools sponsored by a social organization. They operate on the principle of self-management in financial matters and material facilities. The school management board decides school fees and salaries for teachers (most of them are lecturers and professors from public schools). There are at present nine Community-founded Colleges: four in Hanoi, one in Đà Nẵng, four in Hồ Chí Minh City; they are attended by about 15,000 students.

- The pre-college schools enrol senior secondary school graduates of ethnic minorities, of peasant families from remote areas, and beneficiaries of social policies. The one-year course of study enables them to attend the first year of higher education. There are at present three schools of this kind: one in Phú Thọ, one in Nha Trang and one in Hồ Chí Minh City.

The centre or unit of higher education is a kind of incomplete college set up by decision of the head of a branch, a province or a city or the director of a college. There are at present two such centres: one of the banking branch, one of Hồ Chí Minh City, and three units: one of the College of Communications, one of the College of Foreign Trade and one of the College of Culture.

- The branch management schools are those whose task is to train cadres for this branch itself. For instance, the management school intended to train heads and deputy heads of education bureaus as well as directors and deputy directors of secondary schools... The creation of these schools is decided by the Minister in charge of the corresponding branch.

3.5. There are now 43 higher schools (junior colleges) : 39 for the training of teachers, 3 for the training of medical workers, and one for the training of artists. Most of these schools are located in provinces and cities. Only a few of them are under the Central authority. (There are three schools for the training of kindergarten and infant school teachers, one for the training of music and painting teachers and one for the training of sportsmen and gymnasts). Many teachers' training colleges have been organized into multi-level ones training teachers for infant, primary and junior secondary schools.

Two community higher schools are operating on a trial basis: one in Thanh Hóa and one in Hòa Bình province.

3.6. In the management field, as expounded above, most universities and colleges are under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Training which directly manages the personnel and supplies part of the budget. The remaining schools - about 30<sup>1</sup> in number - belong to other ministries, for instance, the Hanoi Faculty of Medicine and the Hanoi Faculty of Pharmacy are under the Ministry of Public Health; the Hanoi College of Culture belongs to the Ministry of Culture and Information. The training schools of the National Defence Ministry and the Home Ministry are not included in the figure of about 100 colleges and universities.

#### 4. Number of students

4.1. The number of students has markedly increased over the past few years, thanks to the policy of socio-economic renovation and the renovation of education and training. The economic life has been improved. Employment requires from labourers academic degrees and higher training standards. The student enrolment is greater than the figures provided for in the State plan (this number is not subordinated to the State budget appropriation for scholarships). The form of in-service learning has been instituted. (College courses have been opened in localities where there is no establishment of higher education).

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1. Statistics about universities and colleges, 1995-1996. Education Information and Management Centre of the Ministry of Education and Training. Directory on Vietnam's Education and Training, Education Publishing House, 1995.

**Figure 19a. Number of students (1986-1996)**

School year	Total	New students
1986-1987	127,312	37,404
1987-1988	133,136	34,110
1988-1989	132,458	31,677
1989-1990	138,566	32,838
1990-1991	144,495	48,433
1991-1992	160,196	50,525
1992-1993	210,216	73,471
1993-1994	242,155	80,747
1994-1995	356,310	77,043
1995-1996	414,183	123,969

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

**Figure 19b. Breakdown of student enrolment**

	Total	University or college	Junior college
Concentrated long-term courses	414,183	354,583	59,600
Particular courses	173,080	140,235	32,845
Improvement courses	3,217	2,993	224
Enlarged courses	9,922	7,923	1,999
In-service courses	11,942	11,597	345
Junior college education courses organized in universities and colleges	1,355,651	129,998	5,653
Other courses	15,155	15,155	
	65,216	61,837	3,379

In the 1996-1997 school year, the student enrolment may be around 500,000, a notable progress achieved in the renovation period. The figure of 666 students per 10,000 inhabitants represents great progress: in 1988 there were only 200 students per 10,000 inhabitants. Yet it is a low index in comparison with own neighbouring countries and the world at large.

#### 4.2. Abroad-learning students

The number of students sent abroad by the Ministry of Education and Training either on a short- or a long-term basis with scholarships granted by foreign countries and a number of other organizations has been on the increase.

1991: 66 students

1992: 112

1993: 371

1994: 505

1995: 584

1996: 337

Total: 1975 students

Students have been sent to 40 countries: Australia (698 students) and Thailand (123 students) are countries receiving a large number of Vietnamese students. Russia, Ucraina and East-European countries (Czech and Slovakia, Hungary, Poland) have continued to accept Vietnamese students, although in greatly reduced numbers (200 students in all). Students in Japan: 69, in France: 47, in China: 14, in South Korea: 11, in Belgium: 11, in Canada: 10. The South-East

Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) has also begun to afford scholarships for Vietnam: 10 so far<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, it is a policy of the Government to encourage the families which can afford to send their children for study abroad. From 1992 to 1995, the number rose to 3458 persons, among whom the biggest numbers are in Russia (over 1000), Ukraine (454), the United State (321), Australia (140), Canada (76), China (70)<sup>2</sup>.

5. Discussion is going on about a number of pressing issues for the sake of continued renovation of training; for instance, the reorganization of the craft-training branch, the school network, the students structure (with regard to the taught trades, social background, ethnic groups, localities), the training achieved in two stages (the first stage is a 1.5-year-long stage of general studies with seven specialized branches: (1) mathematics, physics, (2) chemistry, (3) biology, (4) economics, enterprise and management, (5) social sciences, (6) humanities, (7) foreign language; the second stage lasts 2.5 years, the Medical Faculty alone is to last 3.5 years). Students must graduate from the general study university before they may be admitted to the second stage. The training content, especially as regards ethics, ideology, politics, practical work and management, is to be arranged so as to give greater autonomy to the education establishment.

## 6. Post-graduate education

Post-graduate education came into existence under a decision signed on May 24, 1976 by the Prime Minister.

1, 2. According to "The Actual State of Education and Training", Ministry of Education and Training, Hanoi December 1996.

Previously, post graduates were trained mainly in the former Soviet Union and East European countries. The total number of Ph.D degree (candidate doctor) and Doctor of Science degree holders up to 1990 was 4,500<sup>1</sup>, this figure includes 3,500 people graduated in the former Soviet Union.

Since 1976, post-graduate education has been organized in the former Soviet pattern, that is, there are degrees of candidate-doctor and doctor. University graduates stand an examination to become candidates for these titles who should carry out 3 or 4 years of study, pass a minimum examination (consisting usually in 4-5 subjects (basic theory in their specific branches, specialized subjects, foreign languages, informatics...) and present a thesis. By May 1977, a total of 3,715 persons successfully defended their candidate-doctor theses<sup>2</sup>. In the process of teaching and scientific research, the candidate-doctor selects for him/herself a subject to write a doctorate thesis during a few or sometimes 10 years, then present it to the National Council. So far most doctors of science have received their degrees in foreign countries; a small number have graduated at home. At present, there are about 8,000 candidate-doctors and doctors<sup>3</sup>.

After 1990, a post-graduate network came into being. From 1991 to 1996, 13,851 people attended this network. And beginning in 1997, the post-graduate network comprised courses for the M.A and for the doctor degree.

1. According to the Directory on Vietnam's Education and Training, Ministry of Education and Training, Education Publishing House, Hanoi 1995 (in English).

2. According to the statistics of the Post Graduation Department, Ministry of Education and Training (May 1997).

3. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Science, Industry and Environment, 1977.



This network is reserved for university graduates who meet the selection criteria. The studies are to last: for the M.A. degree: 2 years; for the doctor degree: 4 years (for university graduates; and 2 years for holders of the M.A. degree).

The objective of the training of M.A. and doctors is to train skilled specialists capable of independent creation in specialized activities and scientific research to meet the even higher requirements of national construction and defence.

The content of the training is to promote in students specialized knowledge and creative capacity to discover and resolve problems pertaining to their special domain, and thus to contribute to speed up the scientific, technological, cultural, artistic progress of the country.

## Chapter XI

### DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The objective of education is to instill knowledge, promote human personality, and on this basis, to raise the intellectual standard of people, train manpower and foster talents. In other words, the development of education is aimed at fostering man in the interests of socio-economic development. The closing years of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century mark the period of stepped up industrialization and modernization of the country to ensure the success of this cause, "the promotion of human resources must be taken as a fundamental factor of a rapid and sustainable development<sup>1</sup>.

#### 1. Human resources

To speak of human resources is to speak of their quantity, quality and management. Here mention will be made of a number of basic contents of the following three issues:

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1. Documents of the VIIIth National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi. 1996. p.85.

population and manpower, changes in the labour structure, training standard and structure; and macro-management of the development of manpower.

### *1.1. Population and manpower*

According to the figures of the UN Office for population and development, Vietnam's population was 74,730,736 in 1995 and 76,125,456 in 1996. According to the figures of the National Committee for Population and Family Planning<sup>1</sup>, the population of our country in 1995 was about 75 million; 49.6% of them were those from new borns to 19-year-olds and 45.5% are those in the age bracket of 20-59.

According to a forecast of the UN Office for population and development, in 1997 Vietnam's population was about 77 million.

The total manpower is estimated to reach 40,251,100 persons (males: 19,254,000; females: 20,297,100) out of whom 37,323,500 are working-age persons and 2,652,700 persons have exceeded the working-age, but are actually taking part in labour. It is forecast that in the year 2000 the total manpower in Vietnam may reach 48 million.

Up to July 1, 1995, there were 34,589,700 labourers<sup>2</sup> working in various branches of the national economy:

- Agriculture and forestry: 23,521,000 persons;
- Industry, communications, construction, post-telecommunications: 5,138,000 persons;

1. The author of this book was member of this Committee from 1990 to 1996.

2. General Department of Statistics. Report on the balance of labour in 1995.

- Other branches (education, health care, science...): 5,931,000 persons;

Labourers classified according to economic sectors:

- State economy: 3,024,200 persons;
- Non-State economy: 31,565,500 persons;

Labourers classified according to professional fields:

- Education and training: 872,000 persons;
- Health care, sports: 336,000 persons;
- State management: 246,900 persons;
- Science: 49,500 persons;

Population structure according to the habitation: rural areas - 80%, towns and cities - 20%

Percentage of the various economic branches in the GNP:

Agriculture: 28.7%; other branches: 71.3% (1995 figures)

### *1.2. Standards and training structure of the labour force*

At present only 12% of the total labour force have undergone training. This is a major problem in the socio-economic development plan, a big task for the training establishments all over the country.

Among those who have undergone training, the structure of education level is as follows: post-graduates - 0.3%, higher education graduates - 20.1%, secondary vocational education graduates - 35.8%, qualified workers - 43.8%. Taken together,

the labourers from secondary vocational education graduates upwards (A) account for nearly 60% of the total labour force, and workers (B) account for only more than 40%.

The number of workers being nearly equal to that of technicians represents a very irrational percentage. Among the technicians taken apart, a higher education graduate corresponds to 1.75 secondary vocational education graduate and 2.3 workers. Counting together the first two categories, we have a percentage of technicians in relation to workers (A/B) equal to 2.75/2.3

The proportion of students recruited to the technological group over the past five years (1990 - 1995) is as follows: for every student entering an establishment of higher education, 0.83 enters a secondary vocational education school, and 0.6 enters a craft-teaching school for the training of workers. A calculation similar to the above gives us a proportion between A/B equal to 1.8/0.6, that is, the total number of workers trained in these years equals 1/3 of the number of technicians trained in schools upwards of secondary vocational ones. In comparison with the 1991 - 1992 school year, the number of primary and secondary school pupils in the 1995-1996 school year recorded an increase of 1.25 times, and that of college students 2.7 times. However the number of secondary vocational school pupils was reduced by over 20%. A very big problem arose: the training structure of the contingent of technicians should be reconsidered at an early date. The following proportion has been suggested: higher education - 1, medium-level technicians - 4, workers - 14. Another proportion suggested: 1-5-10.

A major achievement of the people's education system over the past 50 years is the training of about 800,000 scientific and technological cadres of university and college standard. The branch structure of this contingent is as follows: pedagogy - 33.3%, technology - 25.5%, social sciences - 17%, medicine-pharmacy - 9.3%, agriculture - 8.1%, natural sciences - 6.8%. It is necessary to consider whether the branch structure in the training system meets the requirement of industrialization and modernization. For instance it is certainly irrational that in a fundamentally agricultural country with most labourers living in this sector, the number of cadres graduated from colleges of agriculture accounts for only 8.1%.

The branch structure of the contingent of candidate-doctors and doctors (about 10,000 persons) also poses a number of problems which make it necessary to readjust the training plan in the forthcoming period: science of nature: 33.77%, technology: 31.62% social sciences including economics, linguistics, pedagogy: 21.66%, agricultural science: 6.59%, medicine and pharmacy: 6.31%. The training structure must be reconsidered: structure with regard to standards (scale of various levels of learning), structure of technical branches, social structure of students, structure of localities (including ethnic groups), sex structure. At present there is a too low percentage of students of peasant family.

In a word, a correct training structure is a necessary condition for promoting the effectiveness of the training scale. The training structure must be close to the structure of manpower, and more generally, the social and economic structure. Only in this way education can effectively further the development of human resources.

## 2. Development of human resources

2.1. The development of human resources has a very broad content, but it is usually concentrated on the change of the division of labour structure, the resolution of the employment problem, the distribution of human resources, the retraining of labourers, the training of new ones, the technological policy, the macro-management of manpower. Hereunder are expounded a number of specific objectives in the development of human resources in Vietnam in the forthcoming years of industrialization and modernization.

There is at present a great requirement with regard to the retraining of workers and technicians. From sociological surveys, it appears that in many places, about one half of the workers need retraining, 90% of managers and 96% of other cadres have applied for attendance of skill-improving courses or retraining program must be worked out for the labourers in all branches, and a rapid reorganization must be carried out for an effective utilization of the existing technicians, scientific research institutes, universities and colleges in the direction of combining training with research, linking training and research with production, business and services. It is necessary to avoid a waste of "grey matter", to direct the follow of "grey matter" in the best way, the most beneficial one to the development of man and human resources, to bring into play the potentiality and talent of the whole nation, of each individual, especially of the contingent of labourers endowed with a high standard of technological knowledge in the interest of national development.

The level of education has a notable influence on the vocational standard and labour productivity. At present,

primary education has been universalized, and illiteracy eradicated in 27 provinces and cities; by the year 2000 this program will be completed on a nationwide scale; the number of people having the standard of the third grade of primary education (present criterium for a literate) will be raised to over 91% of the total of people 15-35 years of age; 80% - 90% of 6-14 primary education (fifth grade); 60% of 11-15 year-olds will have completed junior secondary education (ninth grade). After junior secondary education, to direct half of the total number of children into craft learning while the other half enter senior secondary education schools. Later on, gradually raise the percentage of children who enter the course of craft-learning; every year, one million persons will be drawn to craft-training courses or schools, the attendance of establishments of high learning will be increased by 1.5 time (present figure: 500,000). To do so that by the year 2000, the trained labourers will account for 22-15% of the total.

2.2. The organization of macro-management of the human resources is now a pressing problem. An office of research on man and human resources must be rapidly set up, and a National Council in charge of human resource development is required. Subsequently, a program of training and retraining will be unfolded, macro-policies of employment will be worked out, adjustments will be made to the training structure, labour structure, policies about science, technology, labour, wages. More specifically speaking, the selection and utilization of labour, the cadre policy, the specification of the tasks and attributions of each category of cadres should be done. We should strive to attract, utilize and motivate all labourers and all cadres in society to participate in the cause of national construction and defence.

The labour, wage and reward policy as a basis for implementing the principle of interest is a motive force of paramount importance in the mobilization of the labour force to develop the country along the socialist orientation. The creation of a motive force to stimulate the working and social activeness of labours. To instill in them dynamism, good will, aspiration for progress (ambition), and creativity is an extremely important problem in both the macro - and micro-management of human resources and of the labour force. Certainly, this includes the policies on wages, rewards, remuneration and human relations. However, account is to be taken not solely of the material interests, the moral interests are also of paramount importance. Consequently, patriotism, national pride, vocational passion and consciousness, confidence, freedom, democracy, social justice, etc. are very powerful motive forces which lead men to dynamism, application, dedication to our common cause, increased productivity, adaptation and creativity. That is precisely a guarantee for the development of man, the country, and mankind. To attend to and foster human resources is the most important part in the strategy towards man, the central task of education in Vietnam in the forthcoming years.

This is to create fundamental conditions for industrialization and modernization to make the people rich, the country strong, the society fair and civilized, and to ensure for everybody and every family welfare and happiness<sup>1</sup>.

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1. See Phạm Minh Hạc: Human resource - the decisive factor in the achievement of the objective for a rich people, a strong country, and a fair and civilized society, in the book: "Such is Vietnam", Part II. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi 1997.

## Chapter XII

### RESOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION: FINANCE AND TEACHERS

#### 1. Financial resources

##### *1.1. State budget*

Deeply aware of the role of education for the survival of the country, even in the war years, with various financial resources, the Government and the people (non-governmental organizations) managed to secure a minimum budget to develop education. Even in the period of socio-economic crisis, the Vietnamese State continued at its own initiative to "maintain, consolidate, stabilize and develop education", and to devote a significant percentage of the budget (5-9%) to education. The general trend was a continuous increase, year after year, of the budget appropriations for education. And after the country managed to get out of the socio-economic crisis, the investment in education has increased markedly, about 10%. It is expected to reach 15% of the total expenditures by the year 2000.

**Figure 20. Increasing trend of State budget appropriations for education**

Year	Percentage of appropriations for education in State budget
1990	8.90%
1991	8.89%
1992	9.23%
1993	7.62%
1994	9.82%
1995	10.45%
1996	10.14%
1997	10.28%

*Source: Department for Planning and Finance, Ministry of Education and Training (June 1997).*

This should be assessed as a great effort of the State. However, as the country is poor, the economy is not developed, the total State budget is small, and consequently the education budget is far from meeting the requirements: it is used in great part to cover the salaries of personnel and a small part (about 15-20%, less than 10% in some provinces) is earmarked for other expenditures including the purchase of school equipment.

Although the Government has made many efforts to increase the education budget, the expenditures per capita are still very low and meet only 27-65% of the requirements (Figure 21).

**Figure 21. Expenses per pupil per year**

*Column A: Expenses: (VND 1,000)*

*Column B: Level of meeting the requirement (%)*

Learning level	1993		1994		1995		1996	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Kindergarten	100	33	180	60	300	65	400	65
Infant school	50	33	80	53	120	60	140	60
Primary school	60	28	110	53	150	60	180	60
Junior secondary school	80	26	140	45	180	55	250	10
Senior secondary school	110	27	220	55	300	55	450	58

*Source: Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Education and Training (June 1997).*

### *1.2. National programs*

With a view to concentrating on the implementation of major objectives or resolving difficulties and important problems, the National Assembly and the Government has worked out a number of national programmes:

A. Program for primary education universalization and illiteracy eradication (since 1990) - annual appropriations: at first 4-5 billion dong, later 30 billion, still later 50 billion dong;

B. Program of support for education in mountainous and difficulty-stricken areas: at first 16 billion dong/year; subsequently over 100 billion dong/year after repeated increases.

C. Program of upgrading the material facilities, with, among other things, the supply of computers to a number of schools, and the construction of material facilities for teachers' training schools, a program which started two years ago. Taken together, these programmes reached over 200 billion dong in one certain year.

The above-mentioned programs have had marked effects. Programme A has helped enrol millions of people from 14-15 years of age upwards into literacy classes and open classes for over one million school-age drop-outs (6-14 years old) as expounded in Chapter VIII. Programme B has resulted in the construction of a host of boarding schools for ethnic minorities (4 schools under the central authority, 32 provincial and 160 district schools). Thanks to these schools, the number of ethnic minority groups (there are in Vietnam 53 ethnic minorities) has markedly increased and many of them have been in a position to finish senior secondary schools. This has helped create a source of ethnic minority students for vocational schools, colleges and universities. Program C has helped in the repair and upgrading of provincial schools and the construction of about 3,000 new classrooms for teachers' training schools, about 300 five-computer modules each for over 200 senior secondary general schools.

### *1.3. International and foreign-funded programs*

For a long time now, Vietnam has maintained broad cooperation with other countries and international organizations such as the World Bank, ADB, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, AUP ELF - UREF, etc. and a number of international schools and institutes such as the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and others.

Over the past ten years, the UNDF has supplied Vietnam over 10 projects on the teaching of the English language, informatics, and the upgrading of a number of vocational centres. Particular mention is to be made of the project on an overall survey of education and manpower. For years now, UNICEF has carried out many projects for education in Vietnam with a value estimated at about US\$ 2 million /year. This year is the third one of implementation of a primary education project carried out with a World Bank credit of US\$ 80 million. The World Bank is actively preparing and finalizing a project on higher education. The ADB is preparing a secondary education project. Since 1991, many Vietnamese researchers and teachers have attended training courses held by eight centres of SEAMEO. Vietnamese students have attended annual training courses and dozens of them have successfully defended Ph.D. theses at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). The same institute has set up the Vietnam-Switzerland Program located in Hồ Chí Minh City and the AIT Centre in Vietnam which enjoys the financial support of Finland (and subsequently Belgium also) and is seated in Hanoi.

Among the programs of cooperation with foreign countries, a particular mention is to be made of the scholarship program which has been spoken of in Chapter X. The former Soviet Union has trained for Vietnam many doctors, over 3,000 candidate-doctors, and over 50,000 engineers and M.A. graduates. The Hanoi University of Technology, the Hanoi College of Agriculture N<sup>o</sup>1 and a number of vocational schools have been built entirely with the investment by the former Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>. Australia, France, Germany, Japan, the

1. Directory. International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Education and Training, Hanoi 1995.

Netherlands, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Italia, Canada, the USA... have maintained good relations of cooperation with the Vietnam education service. Cooperation has been established with non- governmental organizations of the above countries. Netherlands' organizations and universities have undertaken about 20 projects with a value of about US\$ 6 million for the supply of laboratory equipment, the training of about 300 post-graduates and a few Ph.D; many scientists and professors from Netherlands have come to work and teach in Vietnam's universities and colleges. An Institute of Materials has been built with a value of a few million US\$. Since 1978, France has also undertaken about 20 projects of cooperation with Vietnam's education system to a value of US\$ 6 million; nearly 1000 Vietnamese students are following short - or long-term courses for training of post graduates and third-degree doctors; about 400 French experts are working or teaching in various Vietnamese schools and research institutes.

The ODA funds earmarked for Vietnam's education in the 1991-1995 fiscal year amounted to US\$ 105,303,000 and were distributed as follows: for primary education 6 -12% /year; secondary education - 1-30%/year; higher education - 10 -50%/year; management technology - 25-41%/year; irregular education - 4-10%/year; (Source: UNDP, 1995)<sup>1</sup>.

Since 1994, the Japanese Government has undertaken a project on the construction of primary schools in the areas

1. World Bank. Financial Study for Vietnam's Education. October 1996.

often subject to typhoons, expending each year between 14 and over US\$ 19 million. More than 100 schools have been built.

#### *1.4. Capital construction*

Capital construction is meant as building schools (which includes in a broad sense, tables and benches for pupils and teachers, fans, lamps, etc. or in a narrower sense, houses and classrooms). The responsibility for schools' capital construction is assigned as follows:

- Kindergartens, infant schools, primary schools, junior secondary schools: people and communal administrations;
- Senior secondary schools: district administrations;
- Provincial or municipal higher schools, craft-teaching, secondary vocational schools: provincial or municipal administrations;
- A number of craft-teaching and vocational schools under the management of various ministries: ministerial budget;

A number of central higher schools and all establishments of higher education: State budget for capital construction.

As expounded in Chapter IV, there are tens of thousands of primary and junior secondary schools, but only a few thousands of schools of other kinds.

Certainly, the costs for a primary or a junior secondary school cannot be compared to those for a school of another kind (for instance: a university or a college). But taken together, the amount contributed by the population for the



building of schools is very great and this reflects the people's traditional attachment to learning. The State budget appropriations for education including internal and external funds are increasing: 1991: 2.7%, 1997: 7.6% of the total State budget for capital construction (Figure 22).

**Figure 22. State appropriations for capital construction in education and training**

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total appropriations for capital construction (billion dong)	2135	6645	9530	9593	11.550	8736	9230
Appropriations for capital construction in education and training	58.2	101.3	175.0	278.0	400	578	708
Percentage (%)	2.7	1.5	1.8	2.8	3.5	5.9	7.6

*Source: Ministry of Planning and Investment (June 1997).*

Although the State, the Government and local administrations together with the people have made efforts to build schools, tens of thousands of classes have had so far to operate in 3 shifts/day. The number of school buildings in the category of not solid ones is rather big. There is a shortage of blackboards. Pupils' tables and benches not up to the standard still account for a great percentage. The expenditures made by populations and communal administrations on the construction of primary and basic general schools are bigger than the appropriations by the provincial and central administrations to build schools for other levels of learning.

### *1.5. School fees and other receipts*

#### *a/ School fees*

Since 1990-1991 school year, in accordance with a decision of the National Assembly, all primary school pupils have been exempted from school fees. Pupils of junior secondary education schools are required to pay fees equivalent to the price of 1kg of rice per month. Pupils of senior secondary schools have to pay fees equivalent to the price of 2 kg of rice per month, calculated according to the local prices at the time of collecting school fees. The school fees are collected for 9 -10 months a year. Poor pupils and pupils from families enjoying preferential policies of treatment (families having rendered outstanding services to the country, children of heroine mothers, fallen soldiers or war invalids) are entitled to fee-exemption or fee-reduction. In the whole country, the number of such pupils account for one third of the total number. Since 1987, in the senior secondary school, besides the pupils enrolled in keeping with the stipulations of the services of education and training (called the A system), various schools have enrolled a number of so called B system pupils who are required to pay higher school fees. Over the past years, the school fees collected have been left at the disposal of the schools concerned, partly to increase the teachers' incomes, and partly to purchase school equipment.

At the start, universities and colleges had also an A and a B system like senior secondary schools. Subsequently, beginning in 1993 -1994, these establishments have put into practice school fees applicable to all students. The fees are not the same in all schools; many of them collect fees

equivalent to the price of 20 kg of rice (about 50,000 dong). The amounts collected are left at the disposal of the school; they may be equal to or greater than the State budget appropriations for the school concerned.

#### b/ Other receipts

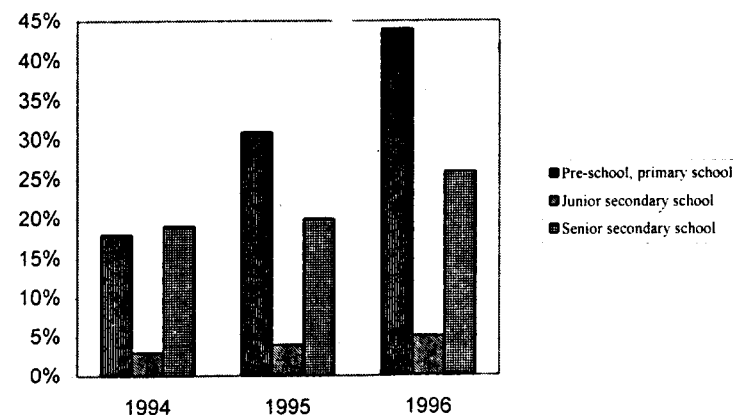
As the budget appropriations for education are limited, and meet only 26 to 65% of the requirements of the school activities, almost all schools, availing themselves of the "market mechanism", have created in the past years many kinds of receipts from students. Among other things, mention must be made, in the first place, of the funds raised for the construction and protection of schools, the funds of the association of students' parents, and others. All these funds are raised and expended by the schools themselves. This state of affairs is not approved by most people because it creates a burden for poor families, and in some cases, compel students to quit studies due to lack of money to make contributions. This kind of "self-management of finance" has affected the prestige of teachers and schools. Under the Government's Directives, the education management echelons are taking step to deal with the situation by laying down formal stipulations on the collection of contributions, the utilization of the money collected, and public announcement to the students' parents and the teachers of the school.

Over the recent years, a movement has launched to set up at central and local level various funds to encourage good or poor pupils, especially poor but good pupils. A number of Overseas Vietnamese and foreign companies having made investment in Vietnam have granted rewards or scholarships to outstanding pupils or students.

#### c/ People-founded schools

Since 1990, the Vietnamese Government has allowed the creation of people-founded schools at all levels. Many people-founded schools and family nurseries have been opened. They were frequented in 1994 by nearly 20% of children in the appropriate age bracket, in 1995 by 30%, in 1996 by over 40%. In primary education, the number of people-founded schools is insignificant: less than 1%. The situation is the same in junior secondary education: about 5% (1996). In senior secondary education, the number of people-founded schools has been increasing from over 10% (1994) to 20% (1995) and 25% (1996) (Figure 23)

**Figure 23. Percentage of private school pupils in comparison with the total enrolment according to the level of learning**



Source: Ministry of Education and Training<sup>1</sup>

1. Quoted after the World Bank: Financial Study for Vietnam's Education. October 1996, p.35.

For higher education in particular, there are now 9 schools with a very small student attendance (in some schools: less than 1000 students; in others: about 3000). There are two open universities: one in Hanoi and one in Hồ Chí Minh City; they bear to a great extent a people-founded character; they are attended by about 50,000 students. Thus the financial picture of education is very complex, it has not been fully reflected in any work. Some people think that the State budget appropriations for education (for figures made public each year) account for about 2-3% of the GNP. In comparison with some other countries, the percentage of budget appropriations in the GNP is not low. However, because the economy is not developed, the annual appropriations for education and training are far from meeting the requirements of the education and training work: there is a serious shortage of school buildings and of teaching and learning facilities. This is a rather big contradiction, and also a challenge for the country at the present time.

## 2. Teachers

2.1. The teachers contingent is a determining factor in the development of education and training. The Vietnamese people, Party and Government have always highly valued the merits of teachers and schools in the education of the younger generation. In the renovation years, the tradition of respect for teachers has been maintained and developed. Since 1984, the 20<sup>th</sup> of November has been instituted as the "Vietnam Teachers' Day", and has become a festive day of the whole people. The honorific titles of "Outstanding Teacher" or "People's Teacher" have been conferred on a number of teachers. The Minister of Education and Training has

offered meritorious teachers the badge "For the cause of education and training". At present the contingent of teachers and education managers accounts for a great number in the rank of civil servants. While the administrative officials total 196,000 and personnel of research establishments is 52,000 in number, there are nearly 800,000 teachers and education managers. In particular, the teaching personnel of the establishments of higher education total 34,117 persons including 221 professors, 1,024 associate professors, 226 doctors, 2784 Ph.D, 1459 M.A.

**Figure 24. Number of teachers in the 1995-1996 school year**

Branch	Total	Including		Teacher/ class
		Females	Meeting the standard (%)	
Primary education	298,407	224,955	70.72	0.96
Junior secondary education	154,416	106,953	83.88	1.48
Senior secondary education	39,398	19,663	93.31	1.81
Vocational schools	5,562	12,645	51.8	
Specialized secondary schools	9,720	4,171	78.7	
Higher education	34,117	7,145		

*Source: Information Centre on Education management, Ministry of Education and Training, 1996.*

## 2.2. The training is to achieve the following standards

- Teachers of infant schools and kindergartens: 12+1; graduates of senior secondary schools (12<sup>th</sup> grade) and one year of study in a teachers' training secondary school;

- Teachers of primary schools: 12+2; graduates of senior secondary schools (12<sup>th</sup> grade) and two years of study in a teachers' training secondary school;

- Teachers of junior secondary schools: 12+3; graduates of senior secondary schools (12<sup>th</sup> grade) and three years of study in a teachers' training higher school.

- Teacher of senior secondary schools: 12+4; graduates of senior secondary schools (12<sup>th</sup> grade) and four years of study in a teachers' training college.

The teachers failing to meet the standards include many categories: kindergarten teachers who have not carried out studies in any training class or school; primary school teachers (especially in mountainous and remote areas) who, after completing primary school, have studied at a teachers' training school for one or two years (or who have become first - grade teacher after a three-month training and who have carried out studies in summer courses of some teachers' training school to reach the standard of 12+2); a few junior secondary school teachers, especially in mountainous and remote areas, who have only the 9+1 or 9+2 standard (ninth grade of junior secondary school + 2 years of study at a teachers' training school), etc.

In addition to the categories of "teachers fulfilling or not fulfilling the standard requirements", there are "above-standard" ones: kindergarten or infant school teachers,

primary education teachers, junior secondary school teachers having graduated from a teachers' training college (at a teachers' training college, there is an infant-school and a primary school faculty).

All teaching personnel attends refresher courses. (standing improvement programs; programs to enable teachers to reach or to surpass the standard requirements, etc.)

2.3. There are at present many burning problems in the field of training, improving, employing and remunerating teachers; there is a shortage of over 120,000 primary education, secondary vocational and junior secondary school teachers; many teachers are not up to the required standards; in universities and colleges, post-graduate teachers are in small number; refresher courses have not been organized in a widespread way, the teaching method has become too backward. The teachers' training colleges need strengthened material facilities; teachers' salaries are still very low; few good pupils want to enter teachers' training colleges. The teaching science, especially the method to teach specific subjects, have not developed, and fail to meet the requirement of raising the quality of the training in teachers' training colleges and that of education in secondary schools, etc.

## **Chapter XIII**

### **STRATEGIC ORIENTATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION AND DRAFT LAW ON EDUCATION**

#### **A. STRATEGIC ORIENTATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>**

##### **1. Achievements**

Since the August 1945 Revolution, Vietnam's education has overcome many difficulties and trials, developed in a continuous way, and recorded important achievements. The country and the people are proud of their education, of the nationwide system of schools which has given rise to several generations of men, promoters of the cause of national independence and unity, who have undertaken the renovation

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1. This section is based on the document "On the strategic orientation for the development of education and training in the period of industrialization and modernization and the tasks up to the year 2000. Resolution of the Second Plenum of the VIIIth Central Committee, December 1996. Here, "Education" is used to mean "education and training".

of the country and pursued the objective of making the people rich, the country strong, the society fair, civilized, and of building socialism. At present various schools have enrolled 20 million pupils and students.

Many international organizations and foreign friends have highly appreciated the results of the development of education in Vietnam. In its report "Financial Study for Vietnam's Education" (October 1996), the World Bank wrote: "...Vietnam has an impressive record on education, even in comparison with other economies which have higher incomes"<sup>1</sup>.

In its report "Education in Vietnam: Trends of Development and Differences" (May 1996) made in coordination with Vietnam's General Department of Statistics, UNFPA wrote: "Education in Vietnam has long been regarded as crucial for the successful building of a prosperous and strong country... Obviously the Government has been very successful in equipping the great majority of the population with the most fundamental knowledge of education"<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. Weaknesses (difficulties, challenges)**

It is an overall assessment that "education and training in Vietnam is fraught with weaknesses and deficiencies with regard to its scale, structure, and especially quality and effectiveness and fails to meet the ever higher manpower requirements of socio-economic renovation, national construction and defence, industrialization and modernization along a socialist orientation. In other words, the cause of

1. World Bank: Financial Study on Vietnam's Education. October 1996 p.9.

2. Education in Vietnam. Statistics Publishing House. Hanoi 1996. p.48.

education and training is facing a great contradiction between the requirement of quick development in scale and that of higher quality. Particularly speaking, the development of education is being confronted with the following difficulties and challenges:

2.1. Firstly, about the quality of education and training. Education and training mean the formation and development of man's personality and capacity to live and work, in particular, the quality of moral, civic, political education, the preparation for the younger generation to enter the labour world and life, and to have their own career orientation as well as the training in professional ability. In these respects, education fails to meet the requirements of society.

2.2. Second, about the conditions to achieve good education and training, namely:

- Teachers' remuneration;
- Textbooks and teaching materials;
- Infrastructural installations of schools;
- Teaching equipment;
- The system of teachers' training schools; ...

All these conditions are still too insufficient.

2.3. Third, about the education environment. In many places, it is not truly healthy and positive: there is no close combination of education at school, education in family and education in society to create unity in the orientation, content and method among the education forces.

2.4. The internal and external effectiveness is low: the percentage of graduates at all levels of education in comparison with the number of pupils or students admitted into schools of various kinds is low; their practical capabilities, ability to live, work and get adapted to the community, the country and the times are still weak.

2.5. Most primary school pupils fail to study all the nine subjects. This adversely affects the all-round development of the pupils in the age bracket of 6-11, an age very important for the formation of their personality.

2.6. Most senior secondary school pupils (17 years old) pursue the sole target of entering university; they fail to achieve a good career orientation and to make preparations for entry into a life of labour.

2.7. The system of secondary vocational and craft - teaching schools is not developed, its scale is small and its quality, low.

2.8. The number of students is very small, the structure presents many irrational features. There are many problems with the quality of teaching and learning. The education dispenses do not meet to a great extent the requirements of society.

### **3. Strategic objectives**

3.1. Overall objectives: to achieve an all-round education (moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic) at all levels of learning. To attach the utmost importance to political and ideological education, to promote students' personality, ability to think creatively and practical capabilities.

To carry on the promotion of an education system bearing popular, national and modern characters. On the basis of promoting the students' personality, to achieve the task of raising the level of education, training human resources, and fostering talents.

On the basis of adjusting the structure of training, to increase the scale, raise the quality and effectiveness of the training in vocational and craft-teaching schools, and in the establishments of higher education.

3.2. By the year 2000, to ensure that almost all five-year -old children attend infant schools, subsequently to pass to younger children than those in the age brackets, infant classes and kindergartens.

3.3. By the year 2000 to complete the eradication of illiteracy among grown-up people in accordance with the program of education for every body, to develop permanent education.

3.4. To achieve the universalization of primary education in the whole country (in 2000), of junior secondary education (in 2010), and of senior secondary education (in 2020).

3.5. Most primary school pupils are to learn nine subjects (in 2000); all primary schools are to operate in 2 parts of the day (in 2010).

3.6. By the year 2000, a percentage of 60% of children 11-15 years of age is to finish junior secondary school, 40% of children 15-18 years of age is to finish senior secondary school; to achieve a gradual division of the graduates from senior secondary education into two parts: to ensure that one

half will enter vocational schools or specialized secondary schools and the other half will enter establishments of higher education; to enlarge the scale of craft-learning in all forms so as to ensure that 20-25% of labourers may undergo training.

3.7. On the basis of a readjustment of the training scale in the establishments of higher education, to ensure a balance among the various branches and trades, professional standards, sexes, ethnic groups, regions (rural and urban areas, ethnic minority groups); the scale in 2000 will be 1.5 times that of 1995; later on, the scale will be gradually increased to reach the level of the developed countries in the region. Particular attention is to be paid to the quality of the training, to concentrate on ethical education and skills.

3.8. To open appropriate schools and courses to train key cadres of worker or peasant stock, elite workers, and children of families entitled to preferential policies of treatment.

3.9. To strengthen the development of education in ethnic minority regions, in mountainous and remote areas.

#### **4. Guiding thoughts in the development of education and training in the period of industrialization and modernization**

4.1. The fundamental tasks and objectives of education are to foster men and generations deeply attached to the ideal of national independence and socialism, morally pure and clear, imbued with a staunch will to build and defend the Motherland, to industrialize and modernize the country; to preserve and promote the cultural values of the nation, capable of assimilating the quintessences of human culture,

promoting the potentialities of the Vietnamese nation and man, endowed with a community spirit and a will to bring into play personal dynamism, to master scientific knowledge and modern technology, to have a creative thinking, a good practical capability, an industrial style of work, a high sense of organization and discipline; a good health, and to be the successors in socialist construction, both "red" and "specialist" in keeping with Uncle Hô's teachings.

To maintain the socialist objective in the content and method of education and training, in various policies, especially in the policy of social justice. To promote the positive influence and limit the negative effects of the market mechanism with regard to education and training. To oppose the "commercialization" trend, to prevent the trend to depoliticize education and training. Not to propagate religion in schools.

4.2. To really regard education and training as a primordial state policy. To deeply realize that education and training along with science and technology constitute a factor which determines economic growth and social development, that to invest in education and training is to invest for development. To carry out policies favouring education and training, especially as regards investment and remuneration. To take strong steps to develop education.

4.3. Education and training represent a cause of the entire Party, State and people. Everybody should learn in a regular pattern, and for the whole life. To criticize laziness in learning. Everybody is to cater for education. Party committees and organizations, administration at all echelons, mass organizations, economic and social bodies, families and individuals are duty-bound to actively contribute to the development of education and training, with their intellectual, human,



material and financial resources. To combine education at school, at home and in society; to create a healthy education environment everywhere, in each community, and each collective.

4.4. The development of education and training is linked to the requirements of socio-economic development, to scientific and technological progress and the consolidation of national defence and security. To attach equal importance to broadening its scale, raising its quality and promoting its effectiveness. To combine education with productive labour and scientific research, to link theory with practice, study with action; to link school with family and society.

4.5. To achieve social justice in education and training. To create conditions for everybody to pursue studies. The poor should be helped by the State and the community in their studies. To make it possible for good students to develop their talent.

4.6. To preserve the nucleus role of public schools while diversifying the forms of education and training on the basis of a unified State management with regard to the content of teaching, rules for learning and programs, examinations, diplomas, the criteria of teachers; to make it possible for everybody to choose a way of learning in accordance with his or her requirements and circumstances. To develop semi-public and community schools wherever possible, to open step by step private schools in a number of learning levels: infant schools, senior secondary schools (third level), specialized secondary schools, craft-teaching schools, universities and colleges. To broaden the forms of non-concentrated training and distant training, to mobilized step by step the forms of education.

## 5. Solutions

5.1. To increase resources for education and training: the investment for education and training is taken from the sources of standing expenditures and development appropriations in the State budget. To gradually increase the percentage of budget appropriations for education and training to reach 15% in the year 2000 and higher figures in subsequent years. The State budget plays the major role in the total resources for education and training. To actively strive to mobilize resources outside the budget. To establish a State education fund, a learning encouragement fund, a training credit fund. Various enterprises are to make investment in training and retraining. Specialized and vocational schools, craft-teaching schools and establishments of higher education are allowed to set up production and scientific services establishments conformable to their respective branch of training.

5.2. To build a contingent of teachers; to motivate teachers and students to teach or to learn: to make concentrated investment in the upgradation of teachers' training schools with some being the core. To put into effect a policy to attract good students into the pedagogical branch. To rapidly secure a sufficient number of teachers, to raise the percentage of teachers meeting the required standards: to achieve in the year 2000 the figures of 50% for secondary school teachers and 30% for college teachers. To secure a sufficient number of teachers for the following subjects: ethics, politics, technology, vocational orientation, aesthetics, sports. To put into practice policies which reflect the high esteem of society for teachers; to improve their living condition (teachers' salaries rank highest in the scale of administrative salaries; they are supplemented with various subsidies).

To translate into practice a policy of remuneration in keeping with the value of the manpower which has been trained; to hold talents in high esteem; to encourage all people, especially the youth to study with passion for their own future and for the future of the country.

To promote the learning movement to encourage people to study on a permanent basis; to consolidate the post-literacy study movement, evening classes, distant education.

5.3. To carry on the renovation of the content and method of education and training; to strengthen the material facilities of schools; to amend and promulgate the documents on the objectives and plans of education and training in each level of learning. To review and renovate the programs, textbooks and teaching - learning documents. To work out with a high sense of urgency programs for various subjects, textbook beyond the year 2000 in the direction of putting to use the latest progress of science and technology, strengthening the practical capability, the capacity to live and to practise a trade. To strengthen civic, ideological and moral education and the study of the Marxist - Leninist philosophy and Hồ Chí Minh thought. The education in the nation's traditional values and the revolutionary traditions is a content permeating all the school subjects and activities and the education environment. The traditional values of the various ethnic groups living on the Vietnamese land which ensure the survival of the Motherland have always linked together the national to the humanist character, and constitute a continuous current of national consciousness. In essence, the traditional is always present in the modern which is a new stratum in the development of the traditional. If there is any kind of a contradiction between the traditional and modern, education must be a bridge linking the traditional to the

modern as a vein in the human body to resolve the so-called "contradiction" between generations.

The mission of education lies precisely there: to foster generations, modern civilized men who have a cultural personality impregnated with the national identity.

The system of Vietnam's traditional values is very rich, full of vitality which has been recognized by history and respected by the contemporary world. Following are its prominent features:

a/ Patriotism (loyalty to the country, piety to the people), national spirit and national pride. The Vietnamese people have built and defended the country and are now showing a high will of self-reliance, independence, sovereignty, integration without merging, self-development.

b/ Unity and community spirit (family - village - country), gallantry, undauntedness, creating the ideal of the epoch "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom". This spirit has for many times, brought together the whole nation to wipe away the shame of loss of independence and to strive with one mind to do away with poverty and backwardness as former Party General Secretary Đỗ Mười put it at the Party Congress of the Hanoi Teachers' Training College in April 1996.

c/ Tradition of kindness and humanism, piety, dedication, willingness to undertake the construction of a fair society in which all families are happy and man is liberated.

d/ Tradition of love for study, respect for the teacher. This ensures a fundamental factor to highlight the level of education, to hold talents in high esteem, to build up a people's

education system aiming at a high level of knowledge. This makes it possible for our nation to live on an equal footing with our friends.

This is precisely the foundation of education in general terms, and more particularly of the promotion of humanity-intelligence - valiance.

In order to foster education in the country, it is necessary to assert this system of values, and on this basis, to promote social values in the direction of fostering man who is imbued with (a) the national identity and the essence of human culture; (b) humanity, community attachment, piety, loyalty, fidelity ...; (c) a scientific way of thinking, high vocational qualification and professional conscience; (d) readiness to fulfil their duty to the Motherland and the community, living and working in conformity with law.

The values of the national and the revolutionary traditions constitute an education content which pervades the teaching of all subjects at all learning levels, in all education activities of all schools, especially the teaching of the national language, national history, national literature and national geography, the Hồ Chí Minh thought and ethics, and Marxism - Leninism. To carry out a good education work relevant to the values of the national and revolutionary traditions among children and to turn this code of conduct into a valuable asset and strength of each person, each family, each locality and of the whole country in the endeavour to overcome all trials and threats. We should make the best use of the opportunities created by the renovation and open-door policy and multilateral integration into the region and the world to carry out the fundamental task of

education, namely the training of younger generations which are to go on with preserving national independence and successfully building socialism.

5.4. To renovate education management: to bring education into the overall plan of socio-economic development of the whole country and of each locality. To build up close relations between the State body for the management of education and training and the body responsible for the management of manpower and employment. To redetermine the functions and tasks of the education management bodies which are to work out and finalize policies and mechanisms on education and training, to promulgate documents laying down the objectives and plans for education and training, the programs, textbooks, teaching and learning materials, criteria (knowledge criteria of each learning level, national criteria of a school, criteria with regard to school buildings and teaching equipment), to assess the quality of the various levels of learning and examinations, to train and foster the contingent of teachers and inspectors.

The management of education is to concentrate on the development and finalization of the system of national education, to bring the guiding viewpoints on education and training into life, into schools and various social strata.

5.5. The achievement of social justice in education is a challenge to be overcome, one of the guiding thoughts in the strategy to develop education and training in the forthcoming years. It is also the wish of all social strata and our social development objective.

Everybody approves the line of economic growth linked to social development with the basic idea of achieving social

justice in an ever better way. When speaking of social justice, it is necessary to speak of social justice in education. To achieve social justice in education is to ensure for everybody the possibility for study, to universalize education, to raise the level of education, to make it possible for all hamlets and streets in all parts of the country to apply step by step and to various extent the relevant technologies to achieve industrialization, and gradually to have a civilized life. Social justice in education is an important content in the approach considering education as a primordial state policy, the infrastructure of both society and the economy; to make an appropriate step-ahead of the socio-economic development, to create a fundamental internal strength of a whole nation, of each community and each person, to cause the country to develop along the socialist orientation through education and training, science and technology. In this spirit, the Second Plenum of the Party Central Committee made the following assessment: "Social justice has not been well achieved in education. The children of poor families encounter many difficulties when they want to pursue higher studies. In universities and colleges, the percentage of students from poor families, those of workers or peasants, especially peasants of remote localities and ethnic minority areas has been declining". Specifically speaking, a review of the situation of education in this respect points to the following:

1/ Illiterates are concentrated in mountainous and remote areas in the Cửu Long (Mekong) river delta.

2/ A very low percentage of children 6-11 years of age attend school in a number of places in western Nam Bộ, it is only 50% in some provinces, while the figure exceeds 95% in some provinces and cities, the average in the whole country is about 70-80%.

3/ The higher the grade, the smaller the number of school-girls. Among illiterates, the number of females is double that of males.

4/ A number of poor peasant families have not adequately complied with the population and family planning policy, the percentage of illiterates and drop-outs in this group is very high.

5/ In rural areas, especially in remote ones, the number of good teachers is becoming smaller and smaller. Generally speaking, the teaching conditions are not so good as in urban areas, most grades with three shifts/day are concentrated here (there are over 20,000 classes of this kind in the whole country). Textbooks exist in insufficient number. Pupils' study time, both at school and at home, is shorter than in urban areas and in the regions having good learning traditions.

6/ In a number of establishments of higher education, there is a marked decline in the percentage of students of rural origin.

7/ In rural areas, especially in remote ones, pupils do not enjoy a comprehensive education.

8/ Information conditions at district and communal level, although much better than in the past, are still subject to many limitations; few publications are reaching the families in rural areas and difficult regions.

9/ The number of good and excellent pupils in rural areas are increasing at a lower pace than in other places; the number of winners at national and international competitions are also concentrated in urban areas.

Social justice in education is indeed a challenge to be overcome at any cost in the years to come. Conditions must

be created to make it possible for everybody to reach a general standard.

The poor should receive the assistance of the State and the community to carry out study. Conditions should be created for good pupils to develop their talent. To universalize primary education all over the country; most primary school pupils are to learn all the nine subjects provided for in the program. To eradicate illiteracy among people 15-35 years of age; to narrow the extent of illiteracy in other age brackets with particular attention being paid to mountainous, remote and difficult places, so that all provinces reach the national criteria of eradicating illiteracy and universalizing primary education before entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

With regard to the steps to be taken, it is necessary to stress the following points:

a/ To create sources of investment for education in which the State, from the central to the local echelon, plays the leading role. The investment should be drawn from development appropriations and standing expenditures. Investment in education is investment in the promotion of man - the determining factor of the development of the country.

b/ The guiding idea of developing education according to regions must be grasped: to adopt appropriate policies, to increase investment in difficult areas, revolutionary and resistance bases, to take appropriate steps for each locality, etc.

c/ Each locality (province, district, commune) must adopt appropriate policies in the framework of the Government's

provisions. The experience of the past few years shows that for those regions, which, in spite of great difficulties and low receipts, managed to eradicate illiteracy and to universalize primary education and to ensure a strong development of education, a good local policy was a decisive factor.

d/ An education work must be undertaken to bring into play our traditional thirst for study, to give rise to a study movement among all people, all households, all socio-political organizations and all production and business establishments, under the leadership of the Party (as in the period immediately after 1945 and after 1975). Everybody should be educated and get involved in the education work. To achieve a good combination of the education work at school, in family and in society, to create a healthy education environment.

6. The education and training branch must take the initiative in improving the management work and take the required steps to organize good teaching, good study, assessment, examinations, enrolment, etc. to fight negative manifestations, to take an active part in the achievement of social justice in education.

## B. THE DRAFT LAW ON EDUCATION

In August 1991, the National Assembly adopted the Law on the Universalization of Primary Education. That was Vietnam's first law on education. Over the past six years, this law gradually entered into life and made an important contribution to the promotion of universalized primary education. This created a new basis to enter one of the various directions to renovate the education thinking and to realize the necessity of promulgating additional laws on

the other levels of learning and other education activities in the interest of an even stronger development of education and training. The question is education laws on each learning level should be laid down, for instance, laws on primary education, secondary education, higher education, teachers and the education system, etc., together with a common code on all the learning levels, on the national education system, and on major problems of education. After discussion, taking into consideration the experience in the implementation of the Law on the Universalization of Primary Education, and with reference to the experiences of foreign countries, the National Assembly Standing Committee decided to draft a law on education.

In 1996, the Law Drafting Committee set up to this effect completed the necessary documents. At the X<sup>th</sup> session of the IX<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (in April-May 1997), the National Assembly Standing Committee submitted to the deputies the Draft Law on Education. The deputies began the examination and discussion over this draft. In the forthcoming period, the Standing Committee will consult people, especially teachers and scientists, and will amend and finalize the draft which is expected to be submitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the X<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (around the second trimester of 1998).

The Draft Law on Education comprises 5 parts, 17 chapters, 156 articles. The five parts are: 1) General provisions, 2) The system of national education, 3) The organization of education activities, 4) The management of education, 5) Dealing with violations and implementation provisions. The Draft expresses the ideas of education fixed in the Constitution (1992), and especially in the Resolution on "the strategic orientation for the development of education

and training" in the period of industrialization and modernization and the tasks up to the year 2000" adopted by the Second Plenum of the VIII<sup>th</sup> Party Central Committee (December 1996). This is the thought which regards education as a primordial state policy; education is the cause of the State and of the whole people; investment in education is an investment in development; study is a right and a duty of the citizen; to promote a popular, national, scientific and modern education system along the socialist orientation, to take Marxism-Leninism and the Hồ Chí Minh's thought as an ideological foundation; to foster talents and hold them in high esteem; to show esteem and respect to the teacher's profession; to carry out education activities in accordance with the principle: education is to be combined with productive labour and scientific research, theory is to be linked to practice, study is to go along with action, education at school is to be combined with education in family and education in society, etc.

With "the strategic orientation for the development of education and training" laid down by the Party Central Committee in December 1996, the Government's strategy for the development of education and training expected to be finalized in 1997 and the Law on Education to be adopted by the National Assembly in 1998 will be a new milestone in the history of the development of Vietnam's education. This is certain to flourish and effectively further the industrialization and modernization course, transforming Vietnam into a rich country, with a strong people, a fair and civilized society. This country will, together with the whole mankind, enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century - the century of a learning society with a peaceful, tolerant culture, developed

technologies (especially in the field of informatics, electronics, tele-communications) where everybody may have chances for steady growth. The motto "the development of each person is develop" will be carried out. Furthermore, various nations can preserve their cultural identity and take part in the trend of globalization, getting involved in competition, association and cooperation. All this is to create a new human civilization.

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**Chịu trách nhiệm xuất bản**

**MAI LÝ QUẢNG**

**Biên tập:** VŨNGỌC HOAN  
**Trình bày bìa:** NGÔ XUÂN KHÔI  
**Sửa bản in:** CHU HỒNG THẮNG

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phạm Minh Hạc was born in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 1935. He graduated at the Psychology Department, Moscow University of Lomonosov, in 1962, where he became D.Sc in general psychology in 1971. He was granted the title of professor of psychology in 1984. He was appointed Minister of Education (1987-1990) and First Vice-Minister of Education and Training (1990-1996). Currently, Phạm Minh Hạc is the First Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee for Science and Education, President of the Vietnam Psycho-pedagogical Association and Chairman of the National Commission for Literacy.

He is the author of numerous research works and books published in Vietnamese and foreign languages.