

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM SINCE REFORM

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to the UN definition, the youths are the people from 15 to 24 years old. In the world nowadays, there are about one billion young people, of whom, 85% are living in the developing countries and the number will be reached about 90% in the year 2020 in these countries. Particular in Asia, the proportion of young people counts for nearly 60%. According to the International Labor Organization's definition, the labor forces are the people aging from 15 and over who are participating in the economic activities. Therefore, it can be said that the young people are the important parts of the labor forces.

The young people who were from 15 to 24 years old participated in the economic activities count for 25.2% of the total labor forces (1999's Vietnam Census). Compared to the year 1990, young people participating in the economic activities have reduced 6% because of the increase enrollment at all levels of education. Although the unemployment rates was higher in the urban areas, the underemployment are more serious in rural areas. The 1999 survey on "Real situation of the employment of students at some Colleges and Universities" showed that 27.53% of the graduated students who did not have a job (Tran Khanh Duc, 2001).

Working as a basic human right has changed since the implementation of new economic policy in Vietnam, from planning centralization to decentralized administration. The state's activities have paid much attention to the human source's policy, making employments for laborers. Beside the state's roles in generating the jobs for new labors increasing each year, there were involvements of private enterprises as well as households (Nolwen Henaff and Jean-Yves Martin, 2001). These changes are creating advantages as well as difficulties for the groups of young people as new labors. In such conditions as today, under the impacts of the market economy, the issues are most concerned by youth that are jobs and incomes (Nguyen Van Trung, 1998).

The aim of this paper is to analyze the reality situation of youth's employments in rural areas, as well as young people's knowledge and attitudes towards the employment and also the affecting factors during the transformation of the economy. Based on that, we would like to focus on understanding about the relations among the youth's employment, the roles of the households and community development.

II. ABOUT THE STUDY

This paper was based on the data from study on “Youth and the Vietnamese Family” in 2003 which was conducted by the coordinated researchers of both the Institute of Sociology and the Population Council. The aims of this study were to understand the youth’s issues relating employment, education, marriage, and reproductive health in the process of social change and economic transformation since the Renovation (doi moi). The study was conducted in four intend selected communes based on their levels of development, in which, two were from the Red River delta in the North and two from the Mekong River delta in the South. In each place, we chose one commune in more development level where was having many opportunities for employment, developed infrastructure, various economic activities in the community development or the commune’s nearby area.

According to these criteria, Hoi Xa commune in Gia Lam district, Hanoi Capital in the North and Thanh Phu commune, Vinh Cuu district, Dong Nai province in the South were selected. Apart from that, there were also criteria for choosing two communes with less development, for example: the economy is mainly agriculture, migrants outwards the communes and less opportunities for growth. Therefore the two selected communes were Ham Tu in Khoai Chau district, Hung Yen province in the North and Son Dinh in Cho Lach district, Ben Tre province in the South.

The fieldworks were carried out in three rounds: the first one was begun from May 2003, the second from the end of July 2003 and the third from the end of October 2003. In addition, there were some in-depth interviews conducted in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City with some migrants who had emigrated from the four communes and then their destinations for stable living in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

During the first round, at each commune, 100 households were randomly selected from the household lists where there were young people aging from 15 to 29 living in. A structural questionnaire collecting information on the demographic characteristics, the living condition as well as the living standards of households. In these 100 households, 30 households were randomly chosen for collecting qualitative data by in-depth interviews, life history matrix to the young people in the age of 15 to 29, time use of all household members at five-year-old and above. There were also some interviews with the commune leaders, mass organizations, health service center, and schools. Beside that, we also carried out five focus group discussions: a group of commune leaders, a male and a female group in the age of 15 to 29. A male group and a female group who are parents of these young people. All of them who were not included in the 30 households selected for in-depth interviews.

The second round, we used the household questionnaire for collecting the supplement information and changes in these households during the time since the first round, life history matrix to the parents, and time use of the selected 30 households’ members in the first round.

The third round was value survey to the chosen households focused on some issues such as knowledge, attitudes and their perceptions about education, jobs, marriage, health care and risks in lives and migrations. In each household, there were two persons who would be selected for interviewing: in case the interviewee was a son, his father would be the next choice, or vice versa if the daughter was interviewed, her mother would be the follower. The total number of the respondents in the four communes were 365 of whom were young people aging from 15 to 29 and 347 were the parents. This was due to some potential respondents in parents generation who were absent during the fieldwork for some reasons.

Based on the data from the third round study, this paper examine the youth's unemployment in four these communes and their attitudes towards for choosing job and working places, weather in the industry or agriculture, in or outside of their commune, private or state sector. It also to examine among the education, level of commune development and household income, which factors potential impacted on the youth's unemployment and their choices.

III. MAIN FINDINGS

1. The main jobs and the expectations of the young people in the rural areas

The question placed here for the respondents in order to understand the main jobs was the job counted for the largest daily routine due to the previous month before the study. For the current jobs of young people, we grouped these kinds of such jobs as: professional, managers, soldiers, policemen, services, businessmen, workers- these kinds of jobs were included inside and outside the state – owned companies, we called this group “Industry and Service sector”; farmers are included in one group; trading and doing service based on the households are “Business and Service” group; and people who doing another works as “other group”. The results revealed that 32% of the young people in the sample were without a job, 26% of them work in the “industry and service” sector inside and outside the state-owned companies; 22% of them doing farming; 8.5% doing small business and service; and 13% doing as other works. Therefore, it can be said that proportion of the young people doing a job in the “industry and service” in the state-owned or non-state companies was quite high, counted for 1/4 of the samples; about 1/3 of them doing farming work, small business and household service and these activities usually happened inside the commune; especially there were about 1/3 of whom were without jobs.

For understanding the attitudes of the youth towards different working places, we gave out some assumed questions on the rights of jobs choices. When being required to answer the questions about the choices where to work, inside or outside the commune, or both inside and outside the commune, according to the analyzed results it was shown that about half (1/2) of the respondents wanted to work inside the communes; 38% of

them desired to work outside the commune, and only 11% of them wanted to work both inside and outside the communes.

The most surprising thing is that when being asked to choose among the work in the agricultural sectors and one in the factory (in any industrial branches), there was the clear preference of escaping from the farming work. Only 13% of the respondents said that if they had a chance to choose they would like to work in the farming sector. Meanwhile, there were about 87% of them said that they desired to work in the factory. Two thirds of the respondents wanted to work in the state-owned companies. The most important thing was that about one fifth (1/5) of the respondents wanted to open their own business.

The results gave out some concerning questions. Why was about one third (1/3) of the respondents in the samples were without a job? While the focuses of the research places were the agricultural areas, what were the factors explaining for one fourth (1/4) of the respondents doing jobs in the industrial, non-agricultural sectors? What are the factors contributing to the explanations of desiring to work inside or outside the commune? Why the big amount of young people was did not want to do farming work? Why was the youth's attitude towards doing jobs in the state-owned companies so strong? Did the youths' evaluations for the modernization happening in Vietnam suggest something to the development? This below part used the logistic regression for explaining the factors which impacted on the employment and attitude of young people.

2. Factors explaining the unemployment of the young people

The variables that were contributed to explain for the unemployment of young include: the community development level; sex of the respondents; high education level of the respondents; group of young people aging from 15 to 19; households with high incomes; groups of young people age from 15 to 19 with high education level; households with low incomes in high community development levels. The results of logistic regression (table 1) showed that the level of community development, households with low incomes in the community developments were the significantly reduced factors explaining the unemployment situations of the rural youths nowadays. Community development is the definition including the signs on socio-economic development, in which creating jobs for the laborers are the most important criteria. Under the pressure of this development, members in households with low incomes could be available for jobs that households with high incomes did not want to do, or they could have more opportunities to find other better jobs. That led to the reduction in the rate of the unemployment of the young people in the high community development level.

However, it is the high education level and the influence of the age group from 15 to 19 that were the most significant explaining for the unemployment of the young people in the rural areas nowadays. The age groups 15-19 counted for more than 50% of the total samples, and the main reasons for the unemployment situation of the young people in the rural areas were the people in the school ages and they are still at the schooling.

Table 1: Factors explaining for the unemployment situations of the youths

Items	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Community development level	-.463	.163	.004	.629
Sex of the respondents	.197	.272	.470	1.217
Education attainment 10 th grade and above	.693	.333	.038	1.999
Age group from 15-15	3.261	.575	.000	26.065
Household annual income above 12 million VND per year	-.055	.392	.889	.947
Age 20-29 with education attainment 10 th grade and above	.794	.694	.252	2.212
Low incomes HHs in the commune with higher development level	-1.036	.517	.045	.355
Constant	-1.969	.784	.012	.140

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: commune, resex, reduca2, reyear1, income2, yeredu1, loinhcom. Significance levels: * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Source: Study on "Youth and Vietnamese Families"- Institute of Sociology & Pop Council, 2003

3. Factors explaining for the rate of the young people working in the industry and service sectors.

The most main characteristics of the communes in the study were the farming areas, agriculture, however, about one fourth (1/4) of the sample youths were doing jobs in the industry and service sectors. This is the quite high rate in the young people doing in the non-agricultural sector compared to the youths doing jobs in the agriculture in the samples. People with high educating levels, young people in the aging group from 20 to 29, or young people with low educating level in the aging group from 15 to 19, and community development levels were the reasons explaining for the high rate of young people working in the industrial branch and non- agricultural services. On the contrary, the female respondents, groups of households with low incomes were the factors reducing the abilities in working in the "Industry and service" sector.

Table 2: Factors explaining for the rate of the young people working in the industry and service sectors

Items	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Community development level	.849	.172	.000	2.336
Sex of the respondents	-.720	.320	.024	.487
Education attainment 10 th grade and above	1.298	.401	.001	3.661
Age group from 20-24	3.148	.462	.000	23.288
Age group from 25-29	3.469	.581	.000	32.089
HH annual income below 12 million VND	-.658	.338	.051	.518
Age group 15-19 and low education attainment	1.867	.694	.007	6.470
Constant	-5.831	.782	.000	.003

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: commune, resex, reduca2, reyear2, reyear3, income1, yeredu. Significance levels: * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Source: Study on "Youth and Vietnamese Families"- Institute of Sociology & Pop Council, 2003

4. Factors explaining the choices for doing jobs within the commune

There were two groups of factors that directed contrariwise to the opportunities of working in the communes. They were the people with low educating level living in the high develop communes, people doing jobs in “industry and service” sectors, those were the people having a tendency to work in the commune. On the other hand, those factors as: community development levels, people without jobs had the choice for jobs in the commune reduced. It meant that to the young people living in the high development commune levels, or people with no job the choices for choosing to work in the commune were reduced (model 1).

The most interested thing was that when including in the model the variables about the opinions of the respondents ‘expressing ideas on both advantages and disadvantages of choosing jobs in the communes, the people with low educating level living in the more development communities tented to work within the communes, however, these variables had no significance at all. It meant that, we could not conclude the influence of these factors on the jobs’ choices within the communes. Among the factors of the respondents’ ideas influenced the jobs’ choices working in the communes, the two significant factors explaining for the increase of these choices were “Work inside commune get higher income” and “Work inside commune have time to take care the family” (model 2).

Table 3: Factors explaining the youth’s choices for doing jobs within the commune

Items	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.
Community development level	-.527	.000	-.363	.005
Edu. under 10 th grade and live in high develop commune	.627	.041	.456	.165
Without job	-.483	.061	-.526	.054
Working “Indus. & servi”and live in high develop commune	.864	.008	.817	.019
HH annual income at 12 million VND and higher	.102	.665	-.032	.899
Work inside commune get higher income	-	-	.667	.001
Work inside commune have stable income	-	-	.052	.749
Work inside commune have to hard work	-	-	-.059	.726
Work inside commune requires many skills	-	-	.192	.253
Work inside commune get more risks	-	-	-.173	.325
Work inside commune was more respect by villagers	-	-	-.177	.186
Work inside commune have more social contacts	-	-	.236	.151
Work inside commune have time to take care the family	-	-	.433	.017
Constant	1.207	.000	-2.181	.014

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: comune, reducom1, renojob, rejobcom, income2, c41a, c42a, c43a, c44a, c45a, c46a, c47a, c48a.; Significance levels: * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001
Source: Study on “Youth and Vietnamese Families”- Institute of Sociology & Pop Council, 2003

5. Factors explaining the choices for jobs outside the communes.

“Community development levels”, “working outside the community and having stable incomes”, “having more chances to social contact”, were the significant factors that influenced to the choices for jobs outside the communes. However, young people with low educating level and living in the high develop communes were the factors influenced to the reduction in the abilities for choosing jobs outside the communes. The most important thing was that the influence of the factor “working in the industry and service sector” would reduce the chances for working outside the communes, and the factor “People without jobs” would increase the opportunities for choosing jobs outside the communes, however, the levels of influence of these variables were not significant.

Table 4: Factors explaining the choices for jobs outside the communes

Items	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Community development level	.399	.120	.001	1.491
Edu. under 10 th grade and live in high develop commune	-.709	.325	.029	.492
Without job	.379	.263	.150	1.460
Working “Indus. & servi”and live in high develop commune	-.568	.344	.099	.566
Work outside commune get higher income	.077	.148	.603	1.080
Work outside commune have stable income	.353	.160	.027	1.423
Work outside commune have to hard work	-.264	.162	.102	.768
Work outside commune requires many skills	-.019	.145	.895	.981
Work outside commune get more risks	-.013	.134	.923	.987
Work outside commune was more respect by villagers	.050	.136	.712	1.051
Work outside commune have more social contacts	.322	.163	.049	1.380
Work outside commune have time to take care the family	.143	.095	.131	1.154
Constant	-3.438	.901	.000	.032

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: comune, reducom1, renojob, rejobcom, c41b, c42b, c43b, c44b, c45b, c46b, c47b, c48b. Significance levels: * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

Source: *Study on “Youth and Vietnamese Families”- Institute of Sociology & Pop Council, 2003.*

6. Factors explaining for young people choosing jobs in the factory (in an industrial branch).

The noteworthy is that the jobs’ characteristics of the respondents did not signify in explaining the rate of people choosing to work in the factories higher than the people working in the “industry and service sector”. The significant explaining factors that increase the chances working in the factories of the young people were “The community development level” and “Stable incomes”. On the other hand, the factors that reduced the opportunities for working in the factories were “acquainted work”, “having time to look after the family and children”. It can be explained that a large amount of young people when choosing to work in the factory they chose to work in other sectors. Otherwise, when choosing to work in the factory, they did not think that they had enough chances to take care of the family and the children because of the working hours.

Table 5: Factors explaining for young people choosing jobs in the factory (in an industrial branch)

Items	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Community development level	1.468	.369	.000	4.342
Education attainment	-.232	.651	.722	.793
HH annual income at 12 million VND and higher	-.543	.576	.346	.581
No job	.588	1.001	.557	1.801
Working as farmer	-1.113	1.007	.269	.329
Doing business and service	1.537	1.249	.218	4.649
Working as other job	-.387	1.102	.725	.679
Age of respondent	-.010	.341	.976	.990
Get acquainted to this work	-1.169	.217	.000	.311
Have time to look after the family and children	-.933	.223	.000	.393
Have stable income	.905	.284	.001	2.472
Constant	.781	1.656	.637	2.183

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: comune, reduca, income2, renojob, rejob2, rejob3, rejob4, yeare, c64b, c66b, c69b. Significance levels: * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001
 Source: Study on "Youth and Vietnamese Families"- Institute of Sociology & Pop Council, 2003.

7. Factors explaining for youth's perception "working in the state sector is the best"

The factors explaining the perception that "working in the state- owned company is the best" were that "community development levels", "education level", "less risks". Among these factors, the people without having a jobs had the same opinions, however, it was not the statistical data. Meanwhile, the influences of the factors "being female", or the perception that "working in the state-owned company having higher incomes" or "easier to find a job" were on the contrary, but these factors did not have the statistical meaning.

Table 6: Factors explaining for youth's perception "working in the state is the best"

Items	B	S.E.	Sig.	Exp(B)
Community development level	.430	.138	.002	1.538
Sex of respondent	-.461	.253	.069	.631
Education attainment	.630	.281	.025	1.878
No job & live in high develop commune	.524	.430	.223	1.689
Working in the factory get less risk	3.118	.545	.000	22.604
Working in the factory get higher income	-.486	.345	.159	.615
Easier to find job in the factory	-.785	.637	.218	.456
Constant	-1.767	.495	.000	.171

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: comune, reduca, nojobco, norisk, hincom, easwork.
 Significance levels: * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001
 Source: Study on "Youth and Vietnamese Families"- Institute of Sociology & Pop Council, 2003.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The process of social changes, economic transformations resulted in the rapid economic growth in the recent decades in Vietnam. The structural changes has declined the proportion of agricultural contribution in GDP and the increase one in industrial and service sectors had also been affected by these changes. Vietnamese economy has been changing towards modernization and integration process, however, Vietnam has to face with many difficulties especially shortage of jobs for the young people (UN in Vietnam, 2003).

Analyzing the employment situation of the youths in the rural areas as well as their knowledge and attitudes towards employment, the impacts of socio-economic changes can be seen. *“Entering the 90s decades, the speed of economic growth has been improved, needs for jobs were increased and pressures for jobs therefore had been reduced”* (Vo Dai Luoc, 2001). The different development levels in those research communes had strongly influenced to the employment in the households living in these communes and also to the young people as a social group. The rate of unemployment among the youth in poor commune was higher than the ones of rich communes. Apart from that, because of the availability of jobs offered, the levels of community development led to the needs for labor. The higher amount of jobs, whether came from the improvement that flourished more new jobs such as investing in the international and domestic industrial areas, enlarging of private business and service or some other people had more chances to find better jobs in different places.

The impact of education level to the jobs of the young people (the attained education and current enrollment) was very clear. When there was a significant amount of rural youths who are unemployment, but most of whom are current enrollments, this was the good sign of the future labor quality. In the modernization and economic development tendency, the requirement for trained and skillful laborers was resulted when there were technological changes. The high education level of the young people is the factor that explains for the high rate of young people working in the “Industry and service sectors”.

Our research results had also shown the combination impact of the community development different factors, the living standard of the households and the education levels of the young people on their employment situations. The youths live in the household with low incomes or living in the more development communities are easier looking for jobs, or those young people with low education level living in the more developed communities who were difficult to find a job outside their commune, but now felt it more better because they themselves could find a jobs inside of their commune thanks to the enlargement of the working opportunities as we mentioned before. *“Private economy has been strongly growth since 1986 up to now, under the household based economy, has contributed to create more jobs. In the rural areas, it is the family – based economy that plays the most important roles, and there were also many types of*

voluntary cooperation managing business in the collective ways. However, underemployments for young people in the rural areas were huge and difficult problems” (Nguyen Huu Dung and Tran Huu Trung, 2001).

The places where young people want to work were under the influences of the community development levels, their current jobs, the education level, and also on the basis of some advantages like: nearby place of work, incomes, risks level, and other needs in the family. The present jobs of the young people had different impacts on choosing to work inside or outside the communes. *“Nearly 60% of the young people age from 15 and above are now looking for jobs while having ones. Therefore the applicants for jobs are varied: young people who are new labor entering the market economy, people in the age labor having jobs but do not feel satisfy with their current jobs, the emigrants”* (Nolwen Henaff and Jean-Yes Martin, 2001). Due to the differences in the development levels, people working in the “industry and service sectors” in the communes where there are or near the investing and developing industrial zones tended to work inside the communes. That was obvious because being near the working lot was an advantage. On the other hand, the incomes from this sector was higher than other jobs in the same communes. *“Low incomes and unstable jobs were the two main reasons of the transferring labor, especially on career and geography”* (Nolwen Henaff and Jean-Yes Martin, 2001). Moreover, “having time to take care of the family” is also the important needs when choosing to work inside the commune, which did not happen to the young people in the poor areas.

On the contrary, the unemployed, as we analyzed before, most of them were at the age of schooling so that the high education factor can push them to find a better job in another working area. Or the unemployed young in the poor communes tended to find jobs in other places outside their communes but they had to face with many risks, or had to take the jobs with very low incomes. The main factor explaining for the large part of the young people desired to work in the factory was “stable incomes”. This is the most important thing that led to satisfy with their jobs of the people working in the “industry and service sector”, they did not want to change to another job or geographical places as we mentioned before. Moreover, “stable incomes” was also the factor that attracted more young people in the rural areas who were working in other sectors but having lower incomes.

In the economic changing tendency, other economic components beside the state one played the very important roles in the growth of economy, generating job. However, the attitude from the young people still strongly oriented towards “working in the state-owned company”. This was because of the decisive role of the government not only in the right human resources policies but also in the developing programs and creating jobs. Nevertheless, improvement in industry was from the investment of the government mainly focused on the important projects, high technologies, less labor attraction. During the technological changes, privatization reordering state-owned companies would lead to the increasing redundant in the number of labors. Not only the

people who were looking for jobs found that “working in the state-owned company is the best ” but also the redundant people had to agree this statement.

The impact of some factors related to employment for young people there also appeared the gender issues. Females always found it difficult in training, job movements compared to males. In the market economy, the chances of looking for jobs for the females are more and more difficult. Besides, the abilities of easily losing jobs are higher therefore in order to have a job, the females have to do simple work and get low incomes (Nguyen Huu Trung and Tran Huu Trung, 2001). Improving the education, strengthen the human resources of the young people in the rural areas in order to industrialize and modernize combined with using labor and creating jobs for the youths are the main aims of our policies. *“Creating jobs for the young people, having incomes, and gradually improving the living standard - These are the socioeconomic issues that are now affecting to every young people”* (Ho Duc Viet, 1997).

Economic growth today, especially the industrial development, has to serve the two purposes: the first one is to satisfy the requirement of the modern industry having ability to effective integration; the second one is to create jobs for the laborers, especially the young people at the labor ages. Economic growth is necessary to the development of the society and it guarantees the social equality also indispensable. A stable working policy for the young people is the one which is not only economic growth aiming at creating more “stable incomes” jobs for the youths but also improving the income levels, reducing the gender inequality, and consolidating the values of family.

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