

Ho Chi Minh's thought on Gender Equality in the Field of Politics in Vietnam

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Abstract--- *President Ho Chi Minh (1890 - 1969) is a hero of national liberation and an preeminent cultural Scholar of Vietnam. Throughout Ho Chi Minh's life, He always cared about human and human rights, especially He cared about the equal rights of women in the field of politics. Gender equality in the field of politics is the core of equality between men and women and is the leading goal of the cause of human liberation. This article clarifies the basis of the formation and contents of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on gender equality in the field of politics in Vietnam, of which emphasizing new and outstanding points in His thoughts. On that basis, the article states Vietnam's recent achievements in terms of gender equality in the field of politics when applying Ho Chi Minh's thought on this issue, it is internationally regarded as a highlight of gender equality that many countries need to refer to.*

Keywords--- *Gender Equality, Ho Chi Minh's Thought, Politics, Vietnam, Women.*

I. RATIONALE

The gender equality, which its core is gender equality in politics, is currently a top concern of each nation in particular and the international community in general. As early as 1955, the United Nations agreed on and adopted the Gender Action Program, gender mainstreaming at the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing (China). In 1979, the United Nations continued to approve the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the third millennium goal also aims to promote gender equality and empower women. The United Nations General Assembly has also decided to set many international holidays, many important events for the sake of gender equality and for the advancement of women. This shows the special priority of the international community on gender equality, including gender equality in the field of politics.

President Ho Chi Minh is the preeminent leader of the Vietnamese nation and a cultural well-known man on an international scale. Throughout his life, He has devoted and sacrificed for Vietnamese people and for a world of democracy, peace and progress. When he was still alive, Ho Chi Minh always cared for people, especially He devoted great love to women, especially Vietnamese women. For Ho Chi Minh, social revolution only really succeeds when the nation is liberated, the class is liberated and the people are liberated, of which women must be liberated and be equal to men. In gender equality, the gender equality in the field of politics is the core and only when the political equality exists, the gender equality is truly equal. Over the course of revolutionary activities, Ho Chi Minh has formed and developed His thought on gender equality in the field of politics in Vietnam. Applying Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics, the Communist Party and the State of Vietnam have many guidelines, policies and laws to implement the gender equality in politics, especially the introduction of the *2006 Law on Gender Equality*, and created a great opportunity to achieve equality between men and women. Currently, with the trend of international integration, Vietnam is implementing very well the gender equality in the

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field of politics. Vietnamese women have more and more conditions to play their roles well in participating in political relations within the country and international relations. The achievements of gender equality that Vietnam has achieved in recent years are highly appreciated internationally and Vietnam is considered as a highlight of gender equality in the field of politics. It is no coincidence that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) thinks that: “Ho Chi Minh has devoted his whole life to the cause of national liberation of the Vietnamese people, contributed to the common struggle of peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress and Ho Chi Minh's thoughts embody the aspirations of peoples who wish to affirm their cultural identity and desire to enhance mutual understanding among peoples”². Therefore, contents of Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics and the success of its application should be disseminated and shared with the international community, contributing to the development of women in the world and the common prosperity of humanity.

II. THE APPROACH OF THE ARTICLE ON GENDER EQUALITY

The gender equality is a notion with a great social significance. The history of social development also shows that true social progress cannot be made if a part of the population in society is treated unfairly or excluded. Therefore, one of the important criteria to assess a country's comprehensive development level is the state of gender equality in such country. Depending on the approach, there are currently many different interpretations of the notions of gender equality, including two noteworthy notions of gender equality stated by the two actors at the national and international level.

At the national level, the 2006 *Law on Gender Equality* of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam affirms: “The gender equality means that men and women have an equal position and role, are provided with conditions and opportunities to promote their capacities for the development of the community, the family and to benefit equally from the fruit of such development”³. This notion has most broadly and completely generalized the elements of gender equality between men and women on position and role; on development conditions and opportunities; on the enjoyment to the achieved fruit. The introduction of Vietnam's *Law on Gender Equality* is the legal basis for achieving the goal of equality between men and women for the advancement of society. Internationally, the 2002 UN Gender Briefing Report in Vietnam states that: “The gender equality is understood that women and men have the same conditions to bring out their full potential capacities, have the same opportunities to participate, contribute and equally enjoy the nation's development results in the political, economic, cultural and social aspects. The most important thing in gender equality is to bring about equal results for both women and men”⁴. Based on the reference to the two notions above, the author of this paper approaches the notion of gender equality to explore Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics, as follows: *The gender equality means that men and women have an equal position and role, are provided with conditions and opportunities to promote their capacities for the*

² Unesco. (1987). Records of the General Conference, 24th session, Paris, 20 October to 20 November 1987, Vol.1: RESOLUTIONS, *Resolution 24C/18.65 of UNESCO on the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of President Ho Chi Minh*, Paris.

³ National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2006). *Law on Gender Equality*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.1.

⁴ United Nations in Viet Nam (2002), *Summary report on gender situation*. visit http://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/vi/home/library/democratic_governance/gender-briefing-kit.html, p. 8.

development of the community, the family and to benefit equally from the fruit of such development and governed by reasonable policies and laws.

III. BASIS FOR THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS IN VIETNAM

Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics was formed and developed from the fine traditional values of the Vietnamese nation in the process of national construction and defense, in which Vietnamese women play an important role in contributing to these values, as Ho Chi Minh once affirmed: "The country of Vietnam is getting better and more beautiful thanks to the construction by our both young and old women"⁵. Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics also absorbed and inherited the ideas on gender equality of human culture, especially the ideological doctrines and trends: The universal theory of Confucius; the spirit of equality, the anti-discrimination of Buddhism; the ideas of human rights, civil rights, freedom, democracy, equality, charity of the French Founders are expressed in the Declaration of Human Rights and Civil Rights of the French Bourgeois Revolution (1789); the US ideas of freedom, equality and human rights are expressed in the Declaration of Independence (1776). In particular, Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field has inherited progressive views on gender equality by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. He quoted the words of Karl Marx and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin: "The Marxians said that: "Those who have known history know that it is impossible if you want to fix the society without the hand of women. See the thoughts and deeds of women, you will know how the society improves?". Lenin said that: "Revolutionary Party must teach women how to cook as well as how to do state affairs, so the revolution is considered successful"⁶.

Along with inheriting the human values of gender equality, Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics is also the result of His practical research and rich process of revolutionary activities. Ho Chi Minh summarized that for the early years of the 20th century only, women in the East had participated and made many achievements in the struggle for national liberation, such as: "Turkish women are involved in defending the country against Western imperialist aggression. Indian women rose up against British colonization. Chinese women joined the revolution in 1912. Korean women have been fighting for the country's independence. Japanese women have forced the government to repeal the law banning women from participating in political activities, etc."⁷. Ho Chi Minh took the history of the world to prove the great role of women in the revolution: "There were people in the French Revolution like Charlotte Corday, who stabbed to kill the violent Prime Minister, like Mrs. Louise Michel, who helped organize the Paris Commune. When the Russian revolution took place, women volunteered to serve in the army; after recounting revolutionary soldiers, 1,854 women died. Now that the Russian revolution has succeeded so quickly, stood so firmly, it is also because of the woman's best efforts. So in order for the successful world revolution, it is required to mobilize women workers and peasants in different countries"⁸. He appreciated the value of the Russian October Revolution in bringing equal rights to women: "It is because of this revolution that the basis of true freedom and real equality has been set for mankind. It is because of this revolution that the liberation of

⁵ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 7, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 340.

⁶ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 313.

⁷ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 14, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 310.

⁸ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 313.

women will be valuable and have full and complete meanings”⁹. During tramping about revolution through thick and thin, He also lived and fought together with intelligent, strong, resilient and indomitable female revolutionaries, such as: Mrs. Song Qingling - wife of the revolutionary Sun Zhongshan; Mrs. E. Nikolaeva in charge of the newspaper “Female workers” of Russia; Mrs. N.K.Krupskaiya - companion-in-arms, wife, close comrade of V.I.Lenin; Mrs. C. Nikolaeva - Editor-in-chief of the magazine “Female workers”... especially Clara Zetkin - a German woman revolutionary, who was brave, devoted to the struggle for humanity, and this initiated the founding of the International Women's Day (March 8). Through such revolutionary activity, He saw the great role of women in politics and this contributed to the formation of his thought on gender equality in the field of politics in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, French colonists invaded Vietnam in 1858. In June 1884, the Nguyen court signed the Patenôtre treaty, then France established its domination of Vietnam. Vietnamese people became slaves, oppressed, exploited, and the life was extremely hard. In order to be ease to rule, the French colonialists implemented a policy of cultural enslavement. As a result, out of 90% of Vietnam's illiterate population, 98% are women. Ho Chi Minh said that: “Under the colonial and feudal policy, our people were oppressed and exploited, then our women were more and more oppressed and exploited”¹⁰. Vietnamese women not only suffer from physical suffering but also suffer shame and mental suffering. In his work of *Judgment of the French Colonialism*, Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh) wrote a chapter (Chapter XI) to condemn the brutal infringement of basic human rights, the oppression, exploitation, injustice, and humiliation suffered by Vietnamese women. He wrote: “It is said that: “Colonialism is the robbery”. We would like to add: the rape and murder”¹¹. Ho Chi Minh found that, Indochinese people in general and Vietnamese people in particular, including women, who were mentally and physically “poisoned, gagged and imprisoned by the French colonialists, one might think that such herd of people would always be used to make sacrifices for the god of capital, that such herb of people do not live anymore, do not think anymore and are useless in the reform of society”¹². He insisted that: “No: Indochinese people do not die, Indochinese people still live, forever. The systematic poisoning of colonial capitalists cannot cripple the vitality, even cannot cripple revolutionary thought of Indochinese people... Behind the negative obedience, the Indochinese hide something that is boiling, screaming and will explode horribly when the opportunity comes”¹³. In fact, the August Revolution, implemented by the Vietnamese people, overthrew the monarchy for centuries, defeated the colonial chains for nearly 100 years, and brought the government back to the people. After successful resistance against French colonialists, Ho Chi Minh repeatedly reminded: “Today, our country is peaceful. We got the peace because there have been so many examples of struggle and heroic sacrifice of our people, our Party, including our women”¹⁴ and “from past to present, from South to North, from young to old, Vietnamese women are truly heroes”¹⁵. In the peace period, Vietnamese women have actively contributed to the construction, economic, cultural and social development. Ho Chi Minh commented: “Women participate more and more effectively in economic, political,

⁹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol.2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 7.

¹⁰ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 14, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 310.

¹¹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 115.

¹² Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 1, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 40.

¹³ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 1, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 40.

¹⁴ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 510.

¹⁵ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 15, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 174.

cultural and social sectors”¹⁶. With the fine traditions of Vietnamese women over thousands of years of building and defending the country, Ho Chi Minh gave Vietnamese women 8 golden words: “Hero, indomitable, middle-hearted, courageous”. Vietnamese women are not only praised and honored by both Vietnam country and President Ho Chi Minh, but also internationally appreciated. During the study of the Vietnamese women's movement in 1968, the Secretary-General of the International Democratic Women's Union talked about Vietnamese women: “You are like soft reeds, but those are steel!”. The image of “steel reed” can be considered as a way to reflect the common character of Vietnamese women, a diverse and abundant character but has been stable since thousands of years of history, which is both gentle, good-natured, but also tough and resilient. From the historical reality of the world and the people of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh always wanted Vietnamese women to have equality on human rights and He formed an equal thought in the field of politics in Vietnam.

IV. HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON THE CONTENTS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS IN VIETNAM

When Ho Chi Minh was still alive, he always affirmed the great role of women. He strongly criticized the thought of “Male chauvinism”, condemned narrow-minded views, which disregards the role and position of women. He emphasized that, if under feudalism, women were constrained in the relationship of “Male chauvinism”, then in the semi-feudal colonial society, Vietnamese women are more severely despised, oppressed and exploited. Therefore, He said that: “It proves that we revolutionized for the sake of Annam women”¹⁷. From a proper awareness of the role of women and a deep sense of the suffering of women under semi-feudal colonial rule, He asserted that women are the “half” force for the success of social revolution and socialist construction and that can only be done by implementing gender equality in politics. In Ho Chi Minh's thought, the gender equality in the field of politics is expressed through the equality of civil rights and equality of leadership and management in the political system.

Firstly, the Gender Equality on Civil Rights in the Field of Politics

The issue of equality of civil rights between women and men has always received the attention of Ho Chi Minh. This proves that right from the establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the issue of equality in the field of politics in the view of civil rights has become an important content in the revolutionary ways to liberate the nation. In the first Political program of the Communist Party of Vietnamese (1930), Ho Chi Minh clearly defined the mission of the revolution not only to regain the independence for the nation, the land for poor farmers, large production for workers, democratic freedoms for the people, but also to “make equal rights of men and women”¹⁸. In the *Viet Minh Program* (1941), He insisted that, in terms of economy, politics, culture, “women are equal with men”¹⁹. After the successful August Revolution, in *Declaration of Independence* (1945), Ho Chi Minh declared to the world and the people of Vietnam: “All human beings are born with equal rights. The Creator gives them rights that no one can infringe on; among these rights, they have the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness”²⁰. After

¹⁶ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 14, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 310.

¹⁷ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 506.

¹⁸ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 3, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 22.

¹⁹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol.3, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 631.

²⁰ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 1.

the National Day (September 02, 1945), in the first meeting of the Government (September 03, 1945), Ho Chi Minh has set out 6 urgent tasks, including general election and constitutional establishment. The general election and constitutional establishment must come from the human factor and for the human being, the role and position of women must be respected. He said: “We must have a democratic constitution. I recommend that the Government organize the GENERAL ELECTION as soon as possible with universal suffrage. All male and female citizens aged 18 have the right to stand for election and to vote, regardless of wealth, religion, lineage, etc.”²¹. On June 01, 1946, for the first time in the history of Vietnam, women were allowed to hold a vote to directly vote for virtuous, talented people to represent themselves in the democratic government. This is also the first time, Vietnamese women have equal political rights with men when exercising their civil rights.

After the successful general election, Ho Chi Minh directed the drafting and promulgation of the Constitution. As the head of the drafting committee, Ho Chi Minh proposed to bring the issue of gender equality in the field of politics into the Constitution with the motto “Women have all rights like men”²². Article 9 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1946) clearly stated: “Women are equal to men in every respect”. Article 18 of the Constitution also stated: “All Vietnamese citizens aged 18 and over, regardless of men and women, have the right to vote, except for those who are insane and lose their rights. The candidates must have the right to vote, must be 21 years old or older, and must know how to read and write the national language”. For the first time in Vietnamese history, political equality between men and women has been recognized by the State laws. The women have a legal basis to ensure the freedom in their life. Speaking at the closing session of the second session, the First National Assembly (tenure 1946-1960), Ho Chi Minh said: “Such constitution declared an independent Vietnam to the world. The constitution declared to the world: Vietnamese women have been equal to men to enjoy all the freedoms of a citizen”²³. Equal rights were expanded and further developed in the 1959 Constitution. On February 27, 1957, in the *Opening speech of the first meeting of the Constitution Amendment Committee*, Ho Chi Minh proposed that the Constitution shall be amended so that the Constitution “must be a Constitution to ensure democratic freedoms for all classes of people, on the basis of the union of workers and peasants and led by the working class. It must really ensure equal rights between men and women and the national equality”²⁴. After amending the Constitution, the Article 24 of the 1959 Constitution stated that: “Women of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have equal rights to men in terms of political, economic, cultural, social and family activities”. On the way to organize People's Committees (villages, districts, provinces and cities), Ho Chi Minh also emphasized the equal rights between men and women in the field of politics: “The entire Vietnamese people (except for unpatriotic Vietnamese who are deprived of civil authority) aged 18 years or older, regardless of whether they are men or women, rich or poor, Viet Minh or not Viet Minh, everyone has the right to stand for election or to vote for these Committees”²⁵. This is the progressive thought of Ho Chi Minh that not all countries at that time, including the more developed countries in Vietnam, also got such view. The 1946 Constitution and 1959 Constitution were the first and

²¹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 7.

²² Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 8, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 264.

²³ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 491.

²⁴ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 10, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 510.

²⁵ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 12.

important legal documents, which underpinned the realization of equality between men and women on civil rights in the field of politics in Vietnam.

Secondly, Gender Equality in Management and Leadership Activities in the Political System

In parallel with equality of civil rights, gender equality in the field of politics is also reflected in the management and leadership activities in the political system. When Ho Chi Minh was still alive, He believed in the ability of women to engage directly with men in the process of discussing, making decisions, making policies and orienting the country's development. He had great expectations for the advancement of women and enabled women to improve their position in the state apparatus. He said: "So far, our Vietnamese women have made many contributions to the revolution, our women are very respectable, our women have made a lot of advancement. However, the Government and Uncle also expect women to more and more improve. Currently, in the sectors, the number of women involved is small, the Party and Government are very welcome, willing to consider and assign important functions to women"²⁶. During each field trip in localities, He always paid attention to the number and percentage of female delegates and kindly invited women to the front row, encouraged women to speak their mind. Whenever female officials mature, He encouraged in time. He rejoiced at the increasing number of women involved in management and leadership. In March 1952, He sent letters to domestic and overseas Vietnamese women on the occasion of Hai Ba Trung's Anniversary and International Women's Day. In such letters, He stated the duties to be done of Vietnamese women to realize women's equality in terms of politics: "The main tasks of our women today are: to tighten the solidarity between the classes of women in the country, between Vietnamese women and women in other countries ..., to be eager to participate in the movement against embezzlement, waste and bureaucracy. To be eager to participate in the Government"²⁷. In August 1960, He assessed the results of the implementation of gender equality in the field of politics: "From the day our country was liberated to the present, all women have made clear progress in all aspects of politics, economy, culture and society. But one of the most significant progresses is the increasing participation of women in the government. During the French colonial period, our women could not participate in the government. But so far, more than 5,000 women are working in the central agencies, more than 16,000 women are working in the districts and communes and more than 330 women are working in the provinces, especially in this II National Assembly, there are 53 women deputies. Women need to learn and improve more. Currently, women already take heavy responsibilities such as judges, chief judges, directors, etc. The number of girls who went to school was small formerly, nowadays this number is increasing in high schools and universities, even overseas schools. This proves that our Party, Government and people attach great importance to the role of women and it is also a victory for our people"²⁸. Before leaving for eternity, Ho Chi Minh has left our entire nation a valuable *Will*, including a section dedicated to women. He has graciously advised: "In the anti-American career to save the country, our capable women are making a worthy contribution in combat and in production. The Party and the Government must have practical plans to retrain, promote and help more and more women in charge of all jobs, including leadership jobs. Women themselves must strive to rise. It was a revolution that brought real equality to

²⁶ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 511.

²⁷ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 7, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 340.

²⁸ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 639.

women”²⁹. According to Him, participation in management and leadership in the political system is an important condition for women to ensure their right to self-control and mastery of the country, is an important factor to make equal rights between men and women in the field of politics and others.

V. HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON THE WAY TO IMPLEMENT GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS IN VIETNAM

During his life, Ho Chi Minh has profound insights on how to implement gender equality in the field of politics. According to him, in order to realize gender equality in politics, it is necessary to understand the causes of inequality. Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the cause of inequality in the field of politics is due to the “Male chauvinism” conception of the feudal policy and from the nature of the semi-feudal colonial political regime imposed by the French on Vietnam. Therefore, he said that whenever the nation was liberated, women would be liberated. That path must go through revolution to liberate the people and establish the people's democracy policy. He insisted: “We make a revolution to fight for equality, men and women are equal in rights”³⁰ and “If women are not liberated, half the human race is not liberated. If women are not liberated, the establishment of socialism is only half completed”³¹.

After liberating women from oppression and exploitation, He instructed the Party committees and local authorities to pay attention to training and improving women, both motivate women to try and set criteria on qualifications when assigning work for women to actively strive. According to Ho Chi Minh, to make gender equality in the field of politics, it is necessary to have a reasonable assignment of work depending on the capabilities, personal circumstances and health of women. He said: “Our work is increasingly advanced, more demanding in terms of technology, science and culture, but our women's qualifications are still weak. That is a weak point. From now on, all levels of the Party and local authorities, when assigning work to women, must base on the qualifications of each person and need to actively help women more”³². In order to do that well, it is necessary to have a close and realistic supervision of management levels to promote the women's movement, bringing rights to women. He repeatedly reminded the Central Government agencies to pay attention to caring and retraining a team of female officers so that women can more and more participate in political activities.

During his life, Ho Chi Minh often goes to field trips to check the implementation of gender equality in politics at training and retraining classes and localities from provinces to communes in the country for timely guidance. When visiting Ha Giang Province (27/3/1961), He said: “Under the feudal colonial policy, women were tortured, no right to speak. Today, under democracy, our province has 400 women in government, and there will be more in the future”³³. Whenever attending conferences, political classes, He always notices what percentage of women participate. Therefore, He criticized any locality, which has a narrow mindset, has not and does not pay attention to women, does not appreciate the ability of women, does not retrain women. When talking to Thanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee, He asked: “How many women members in the provincial party committee? Why aren't there any

²⁹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 15, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 617.

³⁰ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 15, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 260.

³¹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 300.

³² Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 639-640.

³³ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 13, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 94.

comrades here? Women do a lot but when going to Central, there are no women! This proves that you still value men above women, need to actively repair”³⁴. When visiting the training course for district leaders, He saw only a few female officials. He frankly criticized: “That is a shortcoming for so few female officials. The class leaders are not interested in retaining female officials. This is also a common shortcoming in the Party. Many people still underestimate the ability of women, or have narrow prejudice. It is wrong”³⁵. He indicated: “Currently, many women participate in leadership at the grassroots level. Many people work very well. There is even a woman who is the head of the village cooperative. She is not only energetic but also doing well. Women in cooperatives often have the advantages: less embezzlement, waste, no binge, less bossy as some male officials”³⁶. Therefore, He desires localities leaders to really repair the prejudice and narrowness for women. When visiting and talking with people and officials of Dai Nghia commune, Ho Chi Minh criticized the commune leaders for not caring and helping women. He said: “The number of female party members in Dai Nghia commune is less, with only 2 comrades. So you still value men above women. Perhaps there are only two female official in the whole commune, who deserve to serve the Party”³⁷. From the field trip results, he requested: “The leaders have to go closer and more practical, then the women's movement will be wider and stronger”³⁸ and “Party committees and governments must provide training and assistance to further enhance the status of women”³⁹. In particular, in order to implement gender equality in the field of politics and ensure the rights of women, Ho Chi Minh emphasized that each ruling party should have a specialized organization on women. He said: “Every communist party must have a Ministry of Women”⁴⁰. In particular, the Ministry of Women has an important role, directly to women. The Ministry of Women and Women's Unions should “encourage all women to take part in social and cultural activities, such as education, hunger prevention, hunger elimination, sanitation, child protection, etc.”⁴¹. Doing this will help women to be more confident and enthusiastic in participating in social activities, constantly asserting the value of themselves deserve to be the true owner of the country. This is a practical and meaningful activity of the Women's Union. It can be seen that Ho Chi Minh is not only devoted to women but also very concerned about women from the smallest things, to bring benefits and equality to women in the field of politics.

With a dialectical point of view, Ho Chi Minh not only requires the Party, the State, and mass organizations to create conditions for women to develop, but He also emphasized that the deciding factor of equality in the field of politics is in women themselves. Whenever having the opportunity to talk to women, He always encourages women to confidently prove their abilities: “The superiors did promote female officials but this has not been brave, which means they still did not respect women's intelligence and talent. So what women have to do is to show people that women are good, at that time, if the superiors do not improve, others will improve”⁴². He told that: “Women themselves must fight for their strength and independence to keep their rights”⁴³. For nearly 100 years, the country of

³⁴ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 15, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 525.

³⁵ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 15, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 275.

³⁶ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 15, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 275.

³⁷ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 13, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 209.

³⁸ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 7, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 340.

³⁹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 13, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 560.

⁴⁰ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 2, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 314.

⁴¹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 9, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 365.

⁴² Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 10, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 537.

⁴³ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 13, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 524.

Vietnam was colonized by the French colonialists and Japanese imperialists, and the Vietnamese people were nearly 100% illiterate. Therefore, after reading the *Declaration of Independence*, Ho Chi Minh advocated to “eliminate the hunger”, “removal illiteracy”. He encouraged women to strive to study towards equality with men, so that women could participate and effectively implement the right to participate in politics. He emphasized that in order to be able to participate in political activities, all people must study and “especially women, women have been restrained for a long time, it's time for women to try to catch up with men, to be worthy of being a domestic member, to have the right to vote and to stand for election”⁴⁴. He pointed out that the Party and the Government are very welcome, willing to promote and give women important responsibilities, but women themselves must strive to study politics, culture and technology, to raise the patriotism, enthusiastically emulate the nation-building, build the family, and must closely unite, in order to “fight to unify the country and keep world peace”⁴⁵ and “keep up with women of other countries, contribute more in building socialism”⁴⁶. Perhaps, among political activists in the world, few of them have mentioned the equal rights of women and persevered in the actual struggle for women's equal rights and few thinkers strongly affirmed the role of women across national borders to contribute to humanity like that. Because of that, It was no coincidence that the Soviet journalist Oxip Mandenxtam has felt when meeting him: “A culture that can be seen from **Nguyen Ai Quoc**, is not European culture, but perhaps a future culture”⁴⁷.

With experience over many years of practical activities, Ho Chi Minh strongly believes that the liberation of women will be successful, because Vietnamese women “have a tradition of hard work and valor, the determination to learn, they bound to succeed”⁴⁸. This is a progressive thought, Ho Chi Minh erased the narrow-minded conception of semi-feudal colonial society, at the same time intensify the democratic spirit of socialist society, ensuring for all people, especially women have access to the achievements of the revolution to help women develop themselves and contribute themselves to the progress of the country and the common prosperity of the world. In order to promote women's political equality, Ho Chi Minh encouraged and showed women how to strive. He said: “Women also have some disadvantages such as being confused, low self-esteem, lack of confidence in their own abilities; on the other hand, women also face difficulties in family and children. If they want to solve difficulties, they should not rely on the Party, the Government but must be determined to study, promote initiatives, believe in their abilities, raise the collective spirit, unite to help each other to solve all difficulties for women in the work of government”⁴⁹. He recommended: “Women must improve their ownership spirit, try to study and strive; have to eradicate conservative and inferiority thought; have to develop willpower, independence... In this way, the equality will achieve 100%”⁵⁰. According to Him, only when women actively strive to rise, then political rights truly exist because it is a women's revolution in itself. Besides, He said that In order for women to be truly equal in the field of politics, they must free their labor from the affairs of the family. He often said that “Public cafeterias should be organized to free women from the kitchens”⁵¹. With the mandate of being a wife and mother, women are always attached to the work such as

⁴⁴ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 4, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 41.

⁴⁵ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 508.

⁴⁶ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 507.

⁴⁷ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 1, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 461.

⁴⁸ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 13, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 59.

⁴⁹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 640.

⁵⁰ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 14, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 313.

⁵¹ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 13, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 60.

giving birth, taking care of, educating children, taking care of their families... overloading them with the time and energy to be able to fulfill both tasks. Ho Chi Minh pointed out that “women also face difficulties in family and children”⁵², so women always have to try many times more than men if they want to have the same results in work and social position as men. Therefore, in order to help women harmonize housework and social work, in order to have more time to participate in political activities, it is necessary to organize public canteen and daycare centers, kindergartens. In this way, women can reduce the burden of housework and taking care of children, focus time and energy on political activities. With the attention of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese women are becoming more and more equal with men in political life that has never been achieved before. Women have the right to vote, stand for election, participate in activities in unions, participate in the State apparatus, participate in leadership and management. At the Women's “Five good things” Festival Congress (April 30, 1964), He appreciated gender equality in politics and said that: “From the beginning, our Party and State have implemented policies for women that are equal to men. For example: In the Second National Assembly, of 362 Northern deputies, there were 49 women. In the 3rd National Assembly general election, of 447 people who were nominated, there were 85 women. First results in Hanoi, of the 36 women elected to the National Assembly, there are 5 women deputies”⁵³ and he confirmed that: “So, under the good policy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, women really owned the State”⁵⁴. Those results are vivid proof of implementation of Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics when President Ho Chi Minh was still alive and led the Vietnamese revolution.

VI. ACHIEVEMENTS ON APPLYING HO CHI MINH’S THOUGHT ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS IN VIETNAM

Throughout his life, Ho Chi Minh paid attention and reminded the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State and Vietnam's socio-political organizations to create conditions for women to participate in the field of politics. Thoroughly understanding his thoughts, organizations in the political system in Vietnam always consider gender equality in the field of politics as a big policy and determined to implement. A highlight of the implementation of gender equality in the field of politics is the gender equality issue in politics always expressed in documents of all the congresses of the Communist Party of Vietnam from the establishment of the Party to the completion of the legal framework and policies on gender equality. As early as 1946, in the first Constitution of Vietnam, the goal of gender equality in politics was recognized. Then, in the amendments and supplements to the Constitution, the guarantee of gender equality in the field of politics is clearly stipulated. The Constitutions after Ho Chi Minh's death also all expressed gender equality in politics. The current constitution (2013) stipulates that “male and female citizens are equal in all aspects. The State has a policy of ensuring gender equality and opportunities” and “gender discrimination is prohibited” (Clause 1 and Clause 3 of Article 26). On the basis of the Constitution, Vietnam has developed and issued legal documents expressing the principles of gender equality in general and political equality in particular, such as: Law on Gender Equality (2006), Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (2007), Law on Marriage and Family (2014), Law on Prevention and Combat of Trafficking in Persons (2012), Labor Code

⁵² Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 12, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 640

⁵³ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 14, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 310.

⁵⁴ Ho Chi Minh. (2011). *Full Collection*, Vol. 14, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 310.

(2012), Employment Law (2013). In addition, Vietnam also issued the National Strategy on gender equality for the term 2011-2020 with the goal of raising awareness, closing gender gaps and raising the status of women; actively implementing international and regional initiatives to promote the protection of women's rights and against women discrimination. On March 31, 2016, The Prime Minister of Vietnam has issued Decision No. 515/QĐ-TTg approving the Project on implementation of measures to ensure gender equality for female officials, civil servants and public employees in the term 2016-2020...

On the basis of applying Ho Chi Minh's thought and the promulgated documents on gender equality in the field of politics, for many years, The Vietnamese Party and State have made many breakthroughs and achieved many important achievements in terms of gender equality in politics. Currently, Vietnamese women have their own political organization, the Vietnam Women's Union. The proportion of women represented in Vietnam's legislature always ranks among the highest in the region in particular and in the world in general, and this rate is increasing. In the last 2 terms, the proportion of women participating in the 13th National Assembly (2011-2016) reached 24.4%, putting Vietnam in the group of countries with the highest proportion of female National Assembly deputies in the region and the world (ranked 43rd of 143 countries in the world and 2nd in ASEAN). Women hold many key leadership positions of the country such as Vice Presidents, Vice Chairmans of the National Assembly, Ministers; 14/30 Ministries or government-attached agencies have a Deputy Minister as a female. In many localities, many women play a key role at all levels and sectors, contributing to solving important issues⁵⁵. Thoroughly grasp the spirit of the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam: "Improve the qualifications of all aspects and material and spiritual life of women; implement gender equality well, create conditions for women to develop their talents"⁵⁶ then the results of the election for the 14th National Assembly deputies and People's Councils at all levels for the term 2016-2021 are as follows: The percentage of female deputies in the 14th National Assembly is 26.72%, an increase of 2.62% compared to the previous term. The percentage of female deputies of the People's Council for the term 2016-2021 at the provincial level reached 26.54% (increased by 1.37%); at the district level reached 27.85% (increased by 3.23%); at the commune level reached 26.59% (increased by 4.88%). Regarding the percentage of key female leaders of People's Committees at all levels: 17/289 people at the provincial level, accounting for 6%; 230/2,377 people at the district level, accounting for 10%; 2,834/26,044 people at the commune level, accounting for 11%⁵⁷. In many localities, the percentage of women elected exceeded the expectation: Deputies of the Ho Chi Minh City People's Council, the percentage of women elected reaches 43%; Deputies of the People's Council of Cau Giay District - Hanoi City, the percentage of women elected reaches nearly 45%⁵⁸.

Currently, Vietnam has a female National Assembly chairman, a female Vice President; many ministers, secretaries, chairpersons of People's Committees and People's Councils from provincial to communal levels are female. The percentage of female key leaders at agencies of the Party, State, socio-political organizations reaches

⁵⁵ Ministry of Home Affairs. (2020). *Gender equality in Vietnam: Achievements and challenges*, visit <https://www.moha.gov.vn/congtaccanbonu/binhdanggioi/binh-dang-gioi-o-viet-nam-thanh-tuu-va-thach-thuc-36243.html>, on 21/5/2020.

⁵⁶ Communist Party of Vietnam. (2016), *Document of the 12th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 163

⁵⁷ The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2018). *Report No. 377/BC-CP, dated 12/9/2018 of the Government on the implementation of the National Goal on gender equality in 2017*.

⁵⁸ Truong Thi Diep. (2018). *Gender equality in Vietnam, achievements and challenges in the current period*, visit <http://laodongxahoi.net/binh-dang-gioi-o-viet-nam-thanh-tuu-va-thach-thuc-trong-giai-doan-hien-nay-1310941.html>, on 21/5/2020.

30% or more (statistics at state agencies at central and local levels). At the central level, of the 1,200 state agencies in ministries and agencies, about 30% are female officials, civil servants and employees, of which 640 agencies have female key leaders (accounting for 53%); 375/989 agencies, units (equivalent to 38%) at the provincial level; 1,571/2,606 agencies, units (equivalent to 60%) at the district level; 1,600/3,375 agencies, units, equivalent to 48% at the commune level⁵⁹. Although the indicators on the percentage of women participating in managerial and leadership positions have not met the requirements of the Strategy, however, the proportion of women participating in the 14th National Assembly reached 26.8%, 19% higher than Asia and 21% higher than the global average⁶⁰. The National Assembly of Viet Nam has established a group of female parliamentarians over the last three terms and has worked effectively in promoting gender equality. All female members of the National Assembly are members of the group and are very active in addressing gender equality in all the main activities of the National Assembly, including legislative, oversight, etc.

With the efforts and success of the implementation of gender equality in politics in Vietnam recognized internationally: According to the 2010 ranking of the United Nations in the index of gender inequality, Vietnam was ranked 58th of 136 countries (the nearer the 0 rank, the higher the equality); in 2012, Vietnam's gender equality index was ranked 47th of 187 countries. According to the 2013 Millennium Development Goals Report (MDG 2013), The goal of equality between men and women and empowering women is one of three millennium goals that Vietnam achieved before 2015. In 2016, according to the evaluation of the World Economic Forum, "Vietnam was ranked 65th of 144 countries in terms of gender gap index (up 18 ranks compared to 2015)"⁶¹. In the 2016 Human Development Report, titled "Human Development for Everyone", published by the United Nations Development Program in Hanoi on 26/4/2017, Vietnam with a gender inequality index of 0.337, was ranked 71st of 195 countries and territories, continue to rank among the three countries with the best rankings corresponding to the lowest inequality index among ASEAN countries. In 2017, according to the World Economic Forum, Vietnam is ranked 97th of 144 countries in the proportion of women participating in politics. In 2019, the gender development index at 1.003 put Vietnam in the top of the 5 groups of 166 countries worldwide, was ranked 68th of 162 countries in the gender development index. It is especially praiseworthy that the proportion of women in parliament has helped Vietnam to be among the top 1/3 of the world in this proportion⁶².

Following Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics, Vietnamese women not only participate in domestic political activities but also participate in international political duties. Implementing the United Nations Resolution on Women, peace and security, over the past 5 years, Vietnam has sent 3 female officers to participate in the peacekeeping activities on an individual basis and 20 female soldiers in the 2nd Military Field Hospital squadron, 15% higher than the recommended rate set by the United Nations, which is strongly recognized by the United Nations. The female soldiers have been and are successfully completing the assigned tasks. In

⁵⁹ The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2018). *Report No. 377/BC-CP dated 12/9/2018 of the Government on the implementation of the National Goal on gender equality in 2017.*

⁶⁰ The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2018). *Report No. 377/BC-CP dated 12/9/2018 of the Government on the implementation of the National Goal on gender equality in 2017.*

⁶¹ The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. (2017). *The summary report on the Government's implementation of national gender equality goals dated 17/10/2017.*

⁶² United Nations in Vietnam (2019). 2019 Human Development Report. Visit <https://vietnam.un.org/vi/27782-viet-nam-dat-duoc-nhieu-tien-bo-trong-phat-trien-con-nguoi-voi-muc-do-bat-binh-dang-tang-cham>, on 26/5/2020.

particular, Major Do Thi Hang Nga, the first female officer of Vietnam to join the blue beret force, has been assessed by the United Nations to be exceptionally excellent in her mission (this award is only awarded to 2% of individuals in the blue beret force)⁶³.

With the above data, it shows that, compared to the world, Vietnam has made quite a good progress in implementing gender equality and increasing women's political participation. Vietnam is considered as one of the fastest countries in closing the gender gap in the past 20 years. With this achievement, The United Nations considers Vietnam as a bright spot in achieving millennium goals and one of the countries with high gender equality achievements and is ranked among the countries with the best gender equality achievements in Southeast Asia. However, like many other countries, Vietnam is facing difficulties and challenges in achieving its goals for the advancement of women. Currently, in order to continue achieving the gender equality strategic goals set by the United Nations, Vietnam is determined to further strengthen the implementation of the laws on gender equality and empowerment to women; develop economy associated with social progress, eliminate hunger and alleviate poverty; and better ensure the rights of women and girls. Vietnam will continue to increase awareness of gender equality, change attitudes and thought about gender, which are prejudices in society; promote international cooperation in addressing gender equality issues, including gender equality in politics.

VII. CONCLUSION

Currently, gender equality in the field of politics is an important goal that Vietnam as well as other countries in the world are aiming for and is one of the criteria to evaluate the development of each country. In order to achieve gender equality in politics in Vietnam, the Party and State of Vietnam must apply Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics. Because, Ho Chi Minh's thought on this issue shows a deep humanity and great political significance to people in general and to women in particular. These ideas have been and will continue to pave the way for the cause of liberating women and people in the context of the contemporary world. Director of UNESCO in Asia-Pacific region, emphasized that: "Few historical figures have been part of the legend since they were alive and Ho Chi Minh is one of them obviously. He will be remembered not only as the liberator for the Homeland and the people colonized, but also a modern philosopher who has brought a new perspective and hope to those who are struggling uncompromisingly to remove injustice and inequality from the earth."⁶⁴.

Applying Ho Chi Minh's thought on gender equality in the field of politics, Vietnam has brought great achievements recognized and appreciated by the international community. However, besides the clear and undeniable results, there are still certain shortcomings and limitations. However, with the view that gender equality in politics is one of Vietnam's development goals, Vietnam has been and will continue to implement gender equality. Of course, in order to achieve this goal, it is required to experience a long process and the participation of the entire political system, especially women is necessary. Vietnamese women must continue to improve the qualifications of all aspects and the material and spiritual life of women, increasingly recognizing their honor and

⁶³ Duong Ngoc. (2020). Touched for the ao dai preserving the peace in Africa, visit <https://nld.com.vn/thoi-su/xuc-dong-nhung-ta-ao-dai-gin-giu-hoa-binh-o-chau-phi-2020012710285042.htm>, on 26/5/2020.

⁶⁴ UNESCO and Vietnam Committee for Social Sciences. (1990). *International Workshop "President Ho Chi Minh - Hero of national liberation, Great cultural Scholar"*. Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 22.

their roles and responsibilities, incessantly studying and practicing to strive to improve the political level, professional capacity and all aspects of life, in order to successfully fulfill its tasks. Vietnamese women must prove that they are not only gentle mothers who are keeping the family happy, but also talented leaders with high positions in Party and State agencies from grassroots to Central levels and it is higher that they participate in political organizations in the region and around the world, worthy of the attention and trust of President Ho Chi Minh./.

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- [14] Ho Chi Minh. (2011). Full Collection, Vol. 15, *National Political Publishing House, Hanoi*, p. 174.
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