

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

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**LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITY
COMMUNITIES IN THE BORDER REGIONS OF
VIETNAM'S NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES**

**SUMMARY OF THE PHD THESIS
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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for Choosing the Research Topic

Over nearly 40 years of renovation and more than 30 years of implementing the Platform for National Construction during the Transitional Period to Socialism (the 1991 Platform, supplemented and developed in 2011), the process of building a socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam by the people, of the people, and for the people under the leadership of the Communist Party has achieved many significant accomplishments. However, the construction of the socialist rule-of-law state in Vietnam still faces certain limitations and shortcomings, with some aspects not yet meeting the demands of national development, governance, and protection in the current context. At its 6th Plenary Session, the 13th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued Resolution No. 27-NQ/TW on November 9, 2022, on continuing to build and improve the socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam in the present period. The very first task and solution mentioned in Resolution 27 is to “Promote communication, dissemination, education, and raise awareness about the socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam,” including the directive to “Strengthen communication, dissemination, and legal education to enhance the awareness of officials, Party members, and the people regarding the Constitution and laws, the socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam, and the demands and tasks of continuing to build and improve the socialist rule-of-law state of Vietnam in the new phase.”

Legal education is regarded as the initial step in the process of law implementation and plays a crucial role in building a democratic rule-of-law society and strengthening the socialist legal system. The dissemination and education of legal knowledge among the population, especially for specific target groups such as residents in border areas.

The issuance of Resolution No. 66-NQ/TW dated April 30, 2025, by the Politburo holds particular significance as Vietnam enters a new stage of development, which requires the completion of the legal institutional framework to meet the demands of international integration, digital transformation, and the building of a socialist rule-of-law state. The Resolution clearly identifies law as a key instrument of national governance, thereby setting the direction for comprehensive reform in both the law-making and law-enforcement processes. This provides a solid political foundation for enhancing the effectiveness of legal dissemination and education-especially in specific areas such as border regions and remote and isolated localities-contributing to the protection of human rights, the maintenance of political stability and social order, and the promotion of sustainable development in the new era.

People living in border areas-regions regarded as the “protective fence” and “fortress” affirming national sovereignty and safeguarding the peace of the homeland-play a critical role. Strengthening communication and legal education efforts is essential to help local residents understand the Party’s viewpoints, the State’s policies and laws, citizens’ rights and obligations, as well as the fundamental values of the socialist regime. This process aims to provide knowledge, equip individuals with necessary skills, and reinforce public trust, enabling people to recognize their rights, understand their meaning and value, and know how to protect their own legal interests. As a result, individuals will develop a sense of legal obligation, gradually eliminate misconceptions, and voluntarily adjust their behavior to reduce legal violations stemming from ignorance; respect the dignity, rights, and freedoms of others; and become capable of identifying and resisting the hostile forces’ attempts to incite hatred, create division, and undermine national unity.

The Northwest region of Vietnam plays a crucial role in socio-economic development, national defense, and security, and is considered a strategic area and protective frontier of the country. This region is home to 42 ethnic groups, including 20 with populations of over 500 people, representing seven different language families. In recent years, legal education in the Northwest has achieved many notable results. However, the situation of legal violations due to a lack of legal awareness, along with high rates of social evils and drug-related crimes, remains prevalent. This reality necessitates that legal education in the Northwest be guided by objectives and solutions tailored to the region's specific characteristics, especially for border-area residents to raise legal consciousness and contribute to the construction of a socialist rule-of-law state.

Legal education is a topic that has garnered significant interest from both domestic and international scholars. However, there has yet to be a comprehensive and systematic study specifically focused on legal education for ethnic minority populations residing in the border areas of Vietnam’s Northwest region.

In addition, legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwest region still reveals many limitations, affecting the effectiveness and outreach of the law in the social life of remote and mountainous communities.

Firstly, the perception of some local Party committees and authorities regarding the role and significance of legal education for ethnic minorities remains insufficient. This results in a lack of leadership attention, inadequate resource investment, and the absence of comprehensive solutions for effective implementation. Moreover, the content of legal education is often dry, overly prescriptive, and not well-suited to the customs, cultural characteristics, and educational levels of specific ethnic minority groups. The shortage of bilingual materials, administrative-style delivery methods,

limited interaction, and the underutilization of village elders, community leaders, and other respected individuals in the community are also contributing factors that hinder the natural dissemination and effectiveness of legal education activities.

On the other hand, the number and quality of grassroots-level legal rapporteurs and propagandists remain limited, with many lacking professional expertise and pedagogical skills in legal education. Most have not received formal training and operate without adequate incentives or support mechanisms, resulting in low effectiveness of legal dissemination efforts. The coordination mechanism among sectors and levels of government in implementing legal education for ethnic minorities is often unclear, poorly integrated, and sometimes overlapping. Meanwhile, the vast and remote geographical area of the Northwestern border region, with difficult transportation, challenging economic conditions, dispersed ethnic minority populations, and uneven levels of education, poses significant obstacles to organizing legal education and dissemination activities effectively and cohesively.

These limitations have led to the reality that legal education activities in this region have not truly penetrated the community's daily life and have yet to fully promote the role of law as a tool for social regulation. As a result, the effectiveness of state governance, the maintenance of security and order, and the sustainable development of the Northwestern border areas are adversely affected. This situation calls for a fundamental transformation in both mindset and implementation approaches to legal education, ensuring they are tailored to the specific characteristics of ethnic minority communities.

Based on the situation above, the doctoral candidate has selected the topic *"Legal education for ethnic minority communities in the border regions of Vietnam's northwestern provinces"* as the subject of their doctoral dissertation in law, within the field of Theory and History of State and Law.

2. Purpose and Research Tasks of the Dissertation

2.1. Purpose of the Research

The dissertation aims to comprehensively and systematically study the theoretical and practical issues related to legal education for ethnic minorities living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam today. Based on this foundation, the doctoral candidate seeks to propose objectives, viewpoints, and solutions for legal education tailored to this specific target group.

2.2. Research Tasks

- The dissertation provides an overview of previous research on legal education in general, and specifically on legal education for ethnic minorities living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam. The literature review highlights the achievements of prior studies and identifies issues that require further research in the future.

- To study and clarify the theoretical foundations of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border provinces, including definitions, characteristics, roles, and identification of factors influencing legal education for ethnic minority groups residing in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces.

- The dissertation conducts a study to clarify the practical foundations of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces, taking into account the region's natural characteristics, economic conditions, and cultural and social distinctiveness-especially the influence of both subjective and objective factors on the current state of legal education in the Northwest.

- Based on the identified theoretical and practical issues, the dissertation defines objectives, formulates key viewpoints, and proposes legal education solutions for ethnic minority groups living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces in the coming period.

3. Research Object and Scope of the Dissertation

3.1. Research Object

Based on the identified theoretical and practical issues, the dissertation defines objectives, formulates key viewpoints, and proposes legal education solutions for ethnic minority groups living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces in the coming period.

3.2. Scope of the research

- The scope of the dissertation is defined as follows: legal education (GDPL) for the general public is a broad issue; therefore, the dissertation focuses specifically on the theoretical and practical foundations of legal education for ethnic minority communities living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam (including the four border-sharing provinces: Sơn La, Điện Biên, Lai Châu, and Lào Cai).

- Regarding the timeframe, the dissertation examines legal education activities from 2017 to the present

4. Theoretical Basis and Research Methodology of the Dissertation

4.1. Theoretical Basis

This study is conducted based on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's Thought, as well as the Party's policies and viewpoints on the State, the law, and legal education in general, particularly legal education for specific target groups in Vietnam. In addition, the research is approached from the perspective of human rights theory, with emphasis on the following rights: the right to access information and the law; the right to education and lifelong learning; the right to participate in state and social governance; the right to equality before the law; and the right to legal protection.

4.2. Research Methods

The dissertation applies the logical-historical method to study Chapters 1, 2, and 3, with the aim of providing an overview of previous research, the theoretical foundation, and the current state of legal education in the Northwest region in recent years. In addition, the system-structural, inductive, and deductive methods are employed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Specifically, the research includes a sociological survey utilizing three types of questionnaires: an in-depth interview questionnaire, a study for legal propagandists, and a survey for residents.

The analytical-synthetic method is applied throughout the chapters, while the generalization and abstraction methods are used in Chapters 2 and 3. In addition, the dissertation employs the comparative legal method in Chapters 1 and 2, combined with document analysis, practical analysis, and methods of legal sociology in Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

5. New Scientific Contributions of the Dissertation

The dissertation is the first monographic study in Vietnam to conduct a comprehensive and systematic examination of legal education for ethnic minority communities living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces. This research introduces the following notable new contributions:

Firstly, the dissertation is the first to formulate the concept of “legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas,” based on a synthesis, inheritance, and development of existing theoretical perspectives, closely linked to the specific practical conditions of the region. The author defines this not merely as the dissemination and communication of legal content, but as a comprehensive process aimed at raising awareness, shaping legal consciousness, fostering legal skills, and enhancing the capacity of ethnic minorities in border regions to access the law-areas that are significantly influenced by cultural, social, linguistic, and national defense factors. This concept contributes to broadening the understanding and introducing a new approach in both research and implementation of legal education in highly specific and sensitive areas.

Secondly, the dissertation systematically analyzes, synthesizes, and processes practical data on the state of legal education in the four Northwestern border provinces: Điện Biên, Lai Châu, Lào Cai, and Sơn La. Through field surveys, document analysis, in-depth interviews, and qualitative assessment, the author presents a comprehensive picture of the current status of legal education in this region, clarifying achievements, challenges, obstacles, and identifying both objective and subjective causes. This is a significant contribution that provides a solid empirical foundation for proposing improvements in policies, models, and methods of organizing legal education in border areas.

Thirdly, the dissertation offers scientific forecasts on the trends of legal education in the new context, especially in light of digital transformation, deep international integration, and the requirements posed by recent guiding documents such as the 2025 Resolution No. 66-NQ/TW of the Politburo. The author argues that legal education will increasingly shift toward a learner-centered approach, integrating digital technologies while being embedded in socio-economic development programs, poverty reduction efforts, and border security maintenance. These analyses are not only of theoretical significance but also serve as a practical orientation for the upcoming phase.

Fourthly, based on the established theoretical and practical foundations, the dissertation proposes a system of feasible and sustainable solution groups aimed at improving the effectiveness of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwest region. In addition to general solutions applicable to legal education in border provinces, the dissertation also presents specific measures to enhance the effectiveness of legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwest border provinces, along with several policy recommendations. These proposals are not only concrete and suited to regional characteristics but also offer insights for further research and implementation of legal education in other ethnic minority areas across the country.

6. Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Dissertation

- This dissertation is the first scientific work in Vietnam to conduct a relatively comprehensive and systematic study on the theoretical and practical foundations of legal education for ethnic minorities living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces. This research contributes to the overall theoretical framework of legal education and provides a scientific basis for developing policies, laws, and implementation mechanisms for legal education tailored to specific target groups and geographic regions. It also serves as an important reference for policy-making and state management agencies in implementing legal education in the Northwest, as well as in other localities with similar socio-economic conditions.

- The dissertation serves as a valuable reference for studying theoretical and practical issues related to legal education, especially legal education targeting specific regions and special population groups. Additionally, it can be used as instructional material for subjects such as Legal Education Practice, General Theory of State and Law, as well as in educational, training, and research institutions. At the same time, it is also a useful resource for training courses and professional development programs on legal education skills and practices.

7. Structure of the Dissertation:

Apart from the introduction, conclusion, list of references, and appendices, the main content of the dissertation consists of 4 chapters and 13 sections.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. RESEARCH SITUATION IN VIETNAM

1.1.1. Scientific studies on legal education

**Book:* Author Trần Viết Lưu (2012) with the book “*Phổ biến, giáo dục pháp luật cho học sinh trung học cơ sở và trung học phổ thông*”; uthor Lê Thị Phương Nga (2018) with the book “*Giáo dục pháp luật cho trẻ em ở Việt Nam hiện nay*”

**Project:* "Innovation and Enhancement of the Effectiveness of Legal Dissemination and Education in the Culture, Sports and Tourism Sector for the 2022-2026 Period."

** Research topics:* Nguyễn Thị Hoàng Lan & Nguyễn Mai Anh (2021); Lê Minh Sang, Lê Hoài Nam (2021); Nguyễn Thị Việt Anh (2015); Nguyễn Tuấn Việt (2015); Quách Thị Quế (2022); Phạm Ngọc Lan Anh et al (2023)

** Dissertation:* Dương Thị Thanh Mai (1996); Vũ Thị Thu Thủy (2013); Nguyễn Thu Hà (2020)

1.1.2. Scientific studies on legal education for specific social groups and localities.

1.1.2.1 Research studies on legal education for specific target groups.

**Book:* The book “Quản lý xung đột xã hội vùng tộc người thiểu số ở Việt Nam hiện nay ” of authors Phan Xuân Sơn, Nguyễn Thị Thanh Dung (2020)

**Research topics:* Ngô Văn Trù (2013); Nguyễn Thị Kim Nhung (2014); Ngô Quỳnh Hoa (2020); Lý Nam Hải (2020); Trần Thùy Linh (2021); Nguyễn Thị Hồng Mây và Trần Thu Trang (2021); Cao Thị Hồng Minh (2022); Bùi Văn An (2023)

** Dissertation:* Vũ Thị Hoài Thương (2008); Nguyễn Quốc Sửu (2010); Trần Thị Sáu (2012); Dương Thành Trung (2016); Lò Châu Thỏa (2020); Nguyễn Xuân Đạt (2020); Trịnh Thu Lan (2022); Nguyễn Tiến Phụng (2022).

1.1.2.2 Research studies on legal education in specific localities.

Tạ Thị Minh Thư (2021) and Lục Việt Dũng (2023) conducted studies on improving the quality of legal dissemination and education on human rights by local authorities in Vietnam's northern mountainous provinces.

In addition, several scientific studies have focused on legal education in specific localities, such as: the project “Assessment of the current situation and proposal of solutions to improve the effectiveness of legal dissemination and education among ethnic minorities in Lâm Đồng province during the 2010-2020 period” led by Bùi Trung Hưng; the project “Legal dissemination and education for ethnic minorities in Đắk Nông province” led by Dr. Trương Thông Tuấn; the

project “Research and proposal of specific solutions to enhance the effectiveness of legal dissemination and education for ethnic minorities in Quảng Trị province” by the Department of Justice of Quảng Trị province; the project “Strengthening legal education for the Khmer people in Bạc Liêu province” led by Dương Thành Trung; the project “Legal dissemination and education among the Khmer people in Sóc Trăng province - Current situation and solutions (2005-2010)” led by Trần Ngọc Lâm; and the project “Legal dissemination and education in Cần Thơ province: current situation and solutions” led by Phạm Văn Hiếu.

Dissertation: Đoàn Thị Thanh Huyền (2014); Dương Văn Đại (2014); Nguyễn Thị Tĩnh (2016); Nguyễn Thị Hải Yến (2022).

1.1.3 Research studies on the characteristics of the border areas in the Northwestern provinces.

**Book:* Phạm Thị Hoàng Hà (2021) is the chief author “of the book Đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số các tỉnh biên giới Tây Bắc với việc giữ vững chủ quyền an ninh quốc gia”.

**Research topics:* Phan Thị Thu Hà (2018); Lê Văn Nam (2020); Nguyễn Anh Thu (2021); Nguyễn Thị Thanh Bình and Vương Xuân Tình (2023); Lê Kim Bình (2019) conducted research on the highland ethnic cultures and their influence on patriotism, which in turn fosters a sense of responsibility for safeguarding Vietnam’s national sovereignty and border security in the context of globalization. Lê Minh Anh (2023) also contributed to this field

** Dissertation:* Tô Xuân Minh (2022); Vũ Quốc Nam và Nguyễn Tuấn Phong (2021)

1.2. RESEARCH SITUATION ABROAD

1.2.1 Some General Studies on Legal Education

Caroline Strevens (2016) researched the simulation of theory and practice in legal education; Steele and Taylor (2010) authored the work Legal Education in Asia; other notable scholars include Geo Quinot (2012), Edward Rubin (2012), Greenbaum (2012), Thornton (2014), and Guth & Ashford (2014), among others.

1.2.2 Research on legal education for specific target groups

Williams (2013) researched legal education for ethnic minorities; González (2014) studied women of color in legal education; Allen, Jackson, and Harris (2018) researched legal education for women.

1.3. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS RELATED TO THE TOPIC AND ISSUES THAT NEED FURTHER STUDY

1.3.1. Overview of Research Findings Related to the Topic

From the results of the reviewed research works mentioned above, several observations and evaluations can be drawn that serve as valuable references for the dissertation topic, as follows:

First, in terms of theory, the most significant contribution of these studies lies in shaping a theoretical framework for approaching, analyzing, and evaluating the effectiveness of legal education. This framework includes fundamental theoretical aspects such as concepts, objectives, subjects, target groups, content, forms, methods, and the essential factors.

Second, in terms of practice, the studies have been closely linked to the process of building and improving the legal system in connection with the implementation of laws and bringing legislation into everyday life. They analyze and assess the current needs of the population regarding legal education; the state of policy and legal implementation in legal education; as well as the enforcement of related guiding documents, proposals, and legal education programs at various ministries, sectors, and localities.

Third, the research works have skillfully applied general theoretical issues on legal education to the study and resolution of specific problems, closely associated with the characteristics of each locality or region (nationwide or specific areas, provinces, districts, communes...), target groups (ethnic minorities, pupils, students, juveniles, people with disabilities, the elderly, women, prisoners, civil servants, public employees...), and specific fields of activity, with varying scopes, scales, and levels, both in theory and in practice.

Through the overview of legal education studies, the author observes that although the theoretical model of legal education has been nearly completed by scholars and has been tested in practice with commendable results and significant contributions to certain theoretical and practical aspects of legal education-particularly regarding the quality of legal education, which can serve as valuable references for this dissertation-most existing scientific works only address general theoretical issues related to legal education. Many of these studies remain broad and generalized, covering various target groups across different social spheres. There has yet to be a study or project that specifically approaches and examines the theoretical and practical foundations of legal education for ethnic minorities living in the uniquely challenging terrain of the Northwestern border region. Moreover, over the past two decades, international studies on legal education for ethnic minorities have also been extremely limited.

Therefore, it is truly essential to continue conducting comprehensive and systematic research on the theoretical foundations-such as the concept, role, characteristics, particularities, content, forms, methods, and criteria for evaluating legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border provinces. These are specific functions and tasks within legal dissemination activities, including the promotion of the State Charter and public education on national defense-issues that have garnered focused attention from scholars and policymakers alike.

1.3.2. Issues to be Further Researched in the Dissertation Topic

Firstly, in terms of theory, the dissertation must continue to research and clarify the concept, characteristics, role, content, forms, and the conditions ensuring legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas... These are entirely new issues that have not yet been studied in any domestic or international research.

Secondly, in terms of practice, the dissertation needs to focus on objectively, comprehensively, and systematically analyzing and evaluating the influencing factors and the current situation of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces, and clarify the causes of both the achievements and limitations of legal education for ethnic minorities in these regions.

Thirdly, based on the theoretical and practical aspects of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces, the dissertation needs to elaborate on relevant viewpoints and propose solutions to ensure legal education for ethnic minorities in these regions of Vietnam in the coming period.

1.4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND QUESTIONS

1.4.1. Research Hypotheses

In Northwest Vietnam, there are four provinces-Lai Châu, Điện Biên, Sơn La, and Lào Cai-that share relatively long borders with China and Laos. Legal education for ethnic minorities living in these border areas is essential in helping them understand, implement, and apply the law in daily life, thereby reducing legal violations and significantly contributing to the promotion of great national unity in building, developing, and protecting the country.

However, at present, legal education activities in general-and particularly those targeting ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwest-still face many shortcomings and limitations. These efforts have yet to meet the goals and requirements set out by the Party and the State. Specific challenges include the content and forms of legal communication, the quality of legal propagators, among others.

Therefore, comprehensive solutions are needed regarding awareness, implementation, and necessary conditions for ensuring legal education. These should include standardizing content and innovating forms and methods of legal education to suit the unique characteristics of ethnic minorities in border areas, as well as aligning with the organizational structure and operations of local authorities and mass organizations.

Effectively addressing these issues will bring about positive changes in legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwest border areas in the coming time.

1.4.2. Question

Main Research Question:

Why and how should legal awareness be raised and legal education strengthened for ethnic minorities living in the border areas of Northwest Vietnam in the current context?

Specific Research Questions:

- What is the current situation (outcomes, bottlenecks, challenges, etc.) of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas?
- What are the required contents, forms, and methods of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas to suit the characteristics of the region?
- What are the breakthrough solutions to enhance and improve the effectiveness of legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of Northwest Vietnam in the current context?

Chapter 2

SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES ON LEGAL DISSEMINATION AND EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE BORDER AREAS OF NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES, VIETNAM

2.1. DEFINITION, CHARACTERISTICS, AND ROLES OF LEGAL EDUCATION

2.1.1. The Definition of Legal Education for Ethnic Minorities

*** The Definition of Legal Education**

Legal education is a purposeful and organized influence aimed at shaping knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through legal regulations, enabling citizens to voluntarily comply with and implement the law, and enhancing their legal awareness. Legal education is carried out through the teaching and learning of law in schools, to educate comprehensively developed Vietnamese individuals. It contributes to fostering civic consciousness, encouraging people to live and work according to the Constitution and laws, and meeting the human resource requirements for building a socialist rule-of-law state.

*** The Definition of Ethnic Minorities**

According to Clauses 2 and 3, Article 4 of Decree No. 05/2011/NĐ-CP: Ethnic minorities are those ethnic groups with a smaller population compared to the majority ethnic group within the territory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The majority ethnic group is the one whose population accounts for more than 50% of the country's total population, based on national census data. Accordingly,

ethnic minorities in Vietnam comprise 53 ethnic groups within the Vietnamese ethnic composition, excluding the Kinh people, who constitute the majority.

*** The Definition of border area**

The national border area is a specific part of the national territory adjacent to the national border, subject to a special regulatory regime prescribed by competent state authorities to protect the national border. Depending on the relationship with neighboring countries, geographical characteristics, and other specific conditions, the border area may be defined differently in terms of scope and regulations.

According to Article 6 of the 2003 Law on National Borders, the border area includes: The land border area comprises communes, wards, and towns whose administrative boundaries partially coincide with the national land border; The maritime border area extends from the national maritime border inward, beyond the administrative boundaries of coastal communes, wards, towns, and archipelagos; The aerial border area includes the airspace along the national border with a width of ten kilometers measured from the national border inward.

*** The Definition of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas**

Based on the concept of legal education and the specific characteristics of border areas mentioned above, the definition of *legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas* can be expanded as follows: *Legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas is a purposeful, organized, and planned process, carried out by legal education providers according to specific content, methods, and forms. This process is directed toward ethnic minorities living in border regions, aiming to shape and develop their system of legal knowledge and level of legal understanding. It also seeks to form positive legal emotions, habits, and behaviors through the law.*

2.1.2. Characteristics of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas

Legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas is a specific form of legal education; therefore, it also shares the common characteristics of legal education in general. These include:

Firstly, legal education is an activity to form the target audience's knowledge and understanding about the State and the law, as well as fostering emotions and behavioral habits that conform to legal regulations.

Secondly, legal education is an oriented activity aimed at adjusting the behavior of subjects according to the standards set by the law.

Thirdly, legal education is an organized activity, involving the influence of the legal education subject on the legal education recipient based on specific principles and requirements, using certain contents, forms, and methods

appropriate to the characteristics of the recipient, to achieve the goals set by the legal education subject.

Fourthly, legal education is a regular, continuous, and long-term activity, focused on the comprehensive education of legal knowledge and social norms in social life. It is a process that tightly combines professional and non-professional actors under the orientation of the State.

Fifthly, the recipient of legal education, as the direct recipient of legal information, is directly influenced by the legal education subject. Therefore, the capacity, legal knowledge level, and personal factors of the education subject directly affect the legal knowledge acquisition process of the recipients.

Finally, besides the intentional influence of legal education subjects on the recipients, another important aspect of legal education is the citizens' obligation to study and access legal knowledge, shown in the active, proactive, and self-disciplined attitude of each individual in improving their legal knowledge and applying it in their behaviors.

2.1.3. The Role of Legal Education for Ethnic Minorities in Border Areas

Firstly, legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas helps to concretize the Party's guidelines and the State's laws and policies, thereby contributing to the protection of national security, independence, and sovereignty.

Secondly, legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas contributes to raising legal awareness and understanding, thereby reducing violations of the law.

Thirdly, legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas plays a role in bringing laws into practical everyday life.

Fourthly, legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas helps to strengthen the socialist rule of law.

Finally, legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas contributes to preserving and promoting the nation's fine traditional cultural values, while helping to eliminate outdated and harmful customs.

2.2. CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS

2.2.1. Objectives and Principles of Legal Education for Ethnic Minorities in Border Areas

The primary objective of legal education is to help people enhance their legal awareness and understanding, gradually change outdated customs, and contribute to raising the awareness of ethnic minorities in border areas so that they increasingly trust in the leadership of the Party and local authorities. Step by step, this supports efforts to eradicate hunger and reduce poverty, improve material and spiritual living conditions, and strengthen the grassroots political system in highland and border communes.

Legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas must adhere to several fundamental principles to ensure effectiveness and suitability for local characteristics and target groups. These principles include: the principle of respecting cultural diversity; the principle of ensuring equality; the principle of linking with real-life practices; the principle of being easy to understand, remember, and apply; the principle of multi-stakeholder coordination; the principle of alignment with local conditions; the principle of sustainability and long-term orientation; and the principle of protecting national interests.

2.2.2. Subjects and target groups of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas.

*Subjects of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas.

The subjects of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas are open and quite diverse: legal education reporters, school teachers, local authorities, and grassroots-level civil servants, Border Guard forces, socio-political organizations, and respected individuals within the local community.

* The target groups of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas.

The target groups of legal education for ethnic minorities are specifically identified as follows: residents in ethnic minority areas; officials, public servants, and employees working within the ethnic affairs system from central to local levels; officials and public servants tasked with legal education and advocacy among ethnic minority communities; leaders of Party organizations, authorities, and mass organizations at the commune and village levels; village elders, village heads, respected individuals, religious dignitaries and officials in ethnic minority regions; enterprises, cooperatives, economic and social organizations operating in especially difficult areas. The subjects of legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas are open and quite diverse: legal education reporters, school teachers, local authorities, and grassroots-level civil servants, Border Guard forces, socio-political organizations, and respected individuals within the local community.

2.2.3. Content and Forms of Legal Education for Ethnic Minorities in Border Areas

* The content of legal education for citizens in general and for ethnic minorities in border areas in particular:

The content of legal education for citizens is stipulated in Article 10, Section 1, Chapter II of the Law on Dissemination and Education of the Law No. 14/2012/QH13 issued by the National Assembly. Accordingly, the content of legal education for citizens in general includes three main components:

Content 1: Provisions of the Constitution and legal normative documents, with a focus on laws relating to civil, criminal, and administrative matters;

marriage and family; gender equality; land; construction; environmental protection; labor; education; healthcare; national defense; security; traffic; the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens; the authority and responsibilities of state agencies, officials, and civil servants; as well as newly promulgated legal normative documents.

Content 2: International treaties to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a member, and international agreements.

Content 3: Awareness of respecting and complying with the law; the sense of protecting the law; the benefits of law compliance; and exemplary individuals and good deeds in the implementation of the law.

Regarding the content of legal dissemination and education: Disseminate the Constitution, laws, and legal normative documents related to ethnic minority areas, with a focus on content that is suitable to the practical conditions of border regions.

Regarding the content of propaganda on ethnic affairs and policies: Promote and mobilize ethnic minority people to implement the Party's guidelines and the State's laws and policies on ethnic affairs, ethnic policies, and national unity. Emphasize raising awareness about ethnic policies to build the people's trust in the leadership of the Party and the State, thereby encouraging them to work with peace of mind, engage in production, contribute to socio-economic development, poverty reduction, national defense and security, and political stability in ethnic minority areas.

* The Forms of Legal Education for Ethnic Minorities in Border Areas.

Article 11, Section 1, Chapter II of the Law on Dissemination and Education of the Law No. 14/2012/QH13, issued by the National Assembly, stipulates the forms of legal education.

2.3. CONDITIONS FOR ENSURING LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS

First, the legal assurance condition refers to the level of completeness of the legal system.

Second, the resource assurance condition, reflected in the degree of socialization of legal education activities for ethnic minority communities.

Third, the political assurance condition, referring to the consensus and determination of the entire political system.

Fourth, factors related to the qualities and competencies of those involved in conducting legal education for ethnic minorities.

Fifth, the condition of ensuring material resources and means for legal education plays an extremely important role.

2.4. LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS IN SOME COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD AND LESSONS FOR LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS IN VIETNAM

2.4.1. Experiences from some countries around the world

China, Indonesia, the United States, and Japan

2.4.2. Lessons learned for legal education for ethnic minorities in border areas in Vietnam

Use appropriate language and media channels.

Provide training for community leaders and respected individuals.

Organize flexible forms of legal education.

Incorporate legal knowledge into school curricula.

Establish mechanisms for legal support for ethnic minorities.

Chapter 3

FACTORS INFLUENCING AND THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

3.1. FACTORS AFFECTING LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS OF THE NORTHWESTERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

3.1.1. Natural, Economic, and Social Characteristics of the Border Areas in the Northwestern Provinces

3.1.1.1. Geographical Location

The Northwestern border provinces are located in the northwest region of Vietnam, covering the territories of four provinces: Điện Biên, Lai Châu, Lào Cai, and Sơn La. To the north, they border China; to the east, they border Hà Giang, Tuyên Quang, and Phú Thọ provinces; to the west, they border Laos; and to the south, they border Hòa Bình and Thanh Hóa provinces.

3.1.1.2. Area and Topography

The northwestern border provinces have a total natural area of 39,097.3 square kilometers, accounting for 11.78% of the country's total area. The topography of these provinces is rugged and mountainous, featuring many high mountain ranges that run in a northwest-southeast direction.

3.1.1.3. Economic, Cultural, and Social Conditions

The mountainous Northwestern provinces are home to more than 20 ethnic groups, with ethnic minorities accounting for over 70% of the population. This region has a large territorial area within the country, rich in natural resources, and holds a geographically unique position, as it borders both China and Laos.

3.1.1.4. National Defense and Security

The Northwest is a mountainous and border region with a large population of ethnic minorities. It holds a strategically vital position in terms of national defense, security, and foreign affairs. As the "protective shield" of the nation, it has great potential and strengths in developing agriculture, forestry, hydropower, mining, tourism, and border trade economy.

3.1.2 Situation among Ethnic Minorities in the Border Areas of Northwest Vietnam

The basic characteristics of the settlement culture of highland ethnic minorities in Vietnam include a culture of shifting cultivation and migration, a dispersed and decentralized population distribution.

In addition to these general cultural traits, due to their distance from centers of power and the central government, highland ethnic societies are significantly influenced by other ethnic cultural factors such as customs, traditions, and customary laws. Influential figures in these communities include village elders, village chiefs, clan leaders, shamans, spiritual healers, and religious dignitaries.

3.1.3. Overview of the Legal Education Situation for People in the Border Areas of the Northwestern Provinces, Vietnam

In the Northwestern border provinces, “*đường li*” (village chiefs, village elders, and respected individuals in the community) hold significant influence over the social life and beliefs of ethnic minority people. In many cases, their words carry more weight than legal regulations. This represents an informal yet potentially effective channel for legal education, if appropriately utilized.

The Northwestern provinces are home to more than 20 ethnic groups, each of which has its customary law system. These customary laws are often regarded as “traditional laws” that help resolve disputes within the community and address violations based on moral norms and cultural traditions. For example, the Hmong and Thai people practice forms of “*phạt vạ*” (compensation or ritual penalties) in cases of civil disputes or marriages that do not conform to customary practices.

The Northwestern border region, which shares borders with China and Laos, is characterized by rugged terrain, sparse population, scattered settlements, and difficult travel conditions. This area frequently experiences legal violations such as illegal border crossings, smuggling, human trafficking, drug possession and transportation, and unauthorized religious proselytizing.

In this context, legal education cannot remain at a general level of dissemination but must focus on specific areas of law, such as national border regulations, immigration and emigration laws, drug-related crimes, marriage and family law, anti-human trafficking measures, and the Vietnam Border Guard Law.

At the same time, coordination must be strengthened among border guard forces, commune authorities, and mass organizations to implement models such as "Legal Market Days," "Community Security Self-Management Teams," or integrating legal education into community activities.

From the distinctive features in culture, geography, and economy, legal education for people living in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces has its unique characteristics, influenced by the cultural factors and customary practices of each ethnic group. These specific aspects are presented as follows:

First, regarding the content: Legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwest is placed in harmony with education on cultural identity, customs and traditions, patriotism, and national pride. The content is tailored to the cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities in border regions, where the spirit of patriotism and the defense of national sovereignty and territory are highly valued.

Second, regarding the target audience: Legal education targets a diverse group of ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwest provinces, with variations in cognitive levels and differences in culture, customs, and traditions.

Third, regarding the educators: In addition to the general entities responsible for legal education, legal education for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwest must be closely associated with the important roles of border guards and respected community figures.

Fourth, regarding methods and forms: Besides the general forms and methods of legal education, there must be specific approaches tailored to the local living conditions, customs, cultural characteristics, and language abilities of the target audience.

3.2. CURRENT SITUATION OF LEGAL EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE IN THE NORTHWESTERN BORDER AREAS

3.2.1 Achieved Results

3.2.1.1. State Management of Legal Education

State management plays an important role in social life, particularly in the field of legal education: (i) Regulating social relations toward established goals: State management influences social relations to align them with the set objectives. These objectives are reflected in the Party's policies, guidelines, and the laws of the State; (ii) Protecting national interests: State management in legal education contributes to safeguarding national interests and countering actions that infringe upon the nation's security and sovereignty; (iii) Protecting the legal rights and interests of citizens: State management helps ensure the protection of citizens'

lawful rights and interests, creating conditions for people to live in a just and democratic society.

3.2.1.2. Legal education subjects in the Northwest are consolidated, improved, and quality is improved.

The team of legal education and propaganda reporters has consistently received attention and support, with their numbers steadily increasing. At the same time, the quality of this team has also been continuously enhanced.

3.2.1.3. target groups of legal education

For ethnic minorities living in border areas, legal awareness among the population has seen positive changes.

For ethnic minority students, the integration of legal education content into subjects and extracurricular activities in schools located in ethnic minority areas has been increasingly implemented more systematically and consistently.

For ethnic minority women in border communes, many women have actively participated in community activities, raised their voices and status within their families, and proactively encouraged their relatives to comply with the law and build a cultural lifestyle in residential areas.

For ethnic minority officials and civil servants in border communes, training and capacity-building on legal knowledge and communication skills for legal dissemination have received more attention and investment than before.

3.2.1.4. Legal education content

The content of legal education and dissemination in the Northwest region is highly diverse. It primarily focuses on providing legal information in connection with the promotion and dissemination of the Constitution's provisions, thoroughly communicating the content and spirit of newly enacted laws, regimes, policies, and newly issued, amended, supplemented, or replaced regulations. It also emphasizes prohibited acts and corresponding sanctions; the rights and obligations of individuals and organizations; the importance of respecting and complying with the law; the awareness of protecting the law; the benefits of law compliance; and examples of good people and good deeds in law enforcement.

3.2.1.5. Forms of legal education

Legal dissemination through mass media (such as newspapers, radio, and television) is considered the most effective method due to its accessibility, well-scripted and content-rich programming, the inclusion of ethnic minority languages, and direct audio-visual communication. As a result, it has been highly rated by surveyed residents.

Meanwhile, the establishment of legal bookcases at the commune People's Committees or village/hamlet/community cultural houses is a relatively new and

creative approach. However, its effectiveness has not been highly rated (only 28.6%) due to the specific characteristics of the region, including differences in educational levels and languages among residents. These factors make the bookcases less accessible to the majority of people, which limits their impact.

3.2.1.6 Reasons

Subjective reasons: The team of propagandists and legal educators has a good understanding of local culture; Active participation of border guard forces; Strong coordination between different levels of government and social organizations.

Objective reasons: Favorable geographical conditions; An effective local communication system; Supportive policies from the Party and the State.

3.2.2. Limitations, shortcomings and reasons

3.2.2.1 Limitations, shortcomings

In reality, the implementation of legal education activities for ethnic minorities in recent years has faced numerous difficulties and obstacles, revealing several limitations, specifically as follows:

Some Party committees and local authorities have not truly taken the initiative in directing and organizing the implementation of legal education for ethnic minorities; some localities have yet to pay sufficient attention to the work or to meet the actual needs and aspirations of the people.

The content of legal education for people living in border areas remains generic, abstract, and difficult to understand. It mainly conveys what legal educators possess, rather than focusing on equipping citizens with the legal knowledge they need. There is also a lack of emphasis on providing skills to search for legal information and apply legal knowledge in daily life.

The quantity and quality of human resources involved in legal education in ethnic minority and mountainous regions do not meet practical needs. There is a shortage of legal educators who can speak ethnic minority languages, especially those with skills, expertise, and understanding of the culture and living habits of ethnic communities.

Resources for organizing and implementing legal education programs, projects, and initiatives for ethnic minorities remain limited.

In some areas, legal education content does not match the real needs of ethnic minorities; the forms of legal education are not diverse or engaging; effective and widely impactful models that encourage people to proactively seek out legal knowledge have yet to be replicated.

Legal knowledge contests in the form of dramatized performances or live broadcasts on radio and television are still very limited.

The target groups of legal education in border areas are diverse, with varying educational levels. A portion of ethnic minorities cannot speak the national language or are illiterate, and live in remote mountainous regions, which creates significant challenges for legal education work.

Funding for legal education remains insufficient, and the socialization (mobilizing society's participation) of legal education has not yet been effectively implemented.

3.2.2.2 Reasons

Table 3.1. Causes of limitations in the dissemination and education of law to ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border area

Content	%
Party committees and authorities at all levels have not paid attention to the dissemination of legal education to ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border areas.	21
Government authorities and functional agencies have not closely directed the dissemination of legal education to ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border area.	18
The team of reporters and propagandists is not active and has poor expertise in disseminating legal education to ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border area.	16
Ethnic minorities have not actively participated in legal dissemination and education campaigns.	58
Language disagreement	24
The legal content is still numerous and complicated.	21
Total	100

Source: Author compiled from survey

Chapter 4

VIEWPOINTS AND SOLUTIONS TO ENSURE LEGAL EDUCATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN BORDER AREAS OF NORTHWEST PROVINCES, VIETNAM

4.1. FORECASTING THE SITUATION OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE NEW CONTEXT

Both domestic and international contexts play a crucial role in shaping perspectives and proposing solutions to ensure legal education for ethnic minorities living in the border areas of the Northwest provinces of Vietnam.

The Northwest region possesses distinctive characteristics in terms of economy, society, culture, ethnicity, and geography. These features require that legal education be implemented in ways that are appropriate to the local people's educational level, language, and customs. Moreover, challenges such as legal violations, smuggling, drug-related crimes, and spontaneous migration urgently demand innovation and increased effectiveness in legal education efforts.

Vietnam is currently facing numerous new challenges and opportunities, necessitating a comprehensive renewal in the development and enforcement of the legal system. In response, the Political Bureau issued Resolution No. 66-NQ/TW dated April 30, 2025, to meet the demands of national development in the new era.

4.2. VIEWPOINTS

4.2.1. Thoroughly grasping the Party's guidelines, policies, and the State's laws on strengthening legal education and legal awareness for ethnic minorities in the border provinces of the Northwest region.

4.2.2. Legal education must be placed within the overall framework of solutions aimed at improving people's intellectual standards, while simultaneously promoting the renewal of curricula, content, methods, and approaches to legal education, dissemination, and communication for ethnic minorities in general and particularly in the Northwestern border areas.

4.2.3. Legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border provinces must be aligned with local characteristics.

4.2.4. Legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwest must be focused, targeted, engaging, and must strongly promote all available resources and the creativity of the community, while mobilizing all potential and social resources to meet national development requirements.

4.3. SOLUTIONS

4.3.1. General Solutions for Legal Education in Border Provinces

Strengthening coordination among relevant authorities is crucial.

Training and capacity-building for legal communicators and legal education officers.

Developing legal communication materials tailored to local cultural and linguistic characteristics.

Utilizing information technology in legal education efforts.

Organizing direct communication sessions within communities.

Improving infrastructure and physical conditions.

It is necessary to provide proper policies and incentives for legal communicators and educators, including allowances, regular training, and legal knowledge updates, and to allocate specific budgets for each approved project, program, or plan.

Enhancing inspection, supervision, and evaluation of the effectiveness of legal education programs.

4.3.2 Specific solutions to improve the effectiveness of legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border provinces

4.3.2.1 Broadly and effectively implement programs and plans for the enforcement of the Law on Legal Dissemination and Education and its guiding documents in the Northwestern provinces.

4.3.2.2 Innovate state management of legal education and improve the legal framework on legal education.

4.3.2.3 Renovate the content, curriculum, methods, and approaches of legal education for ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border provinces.

4.3.2.4 Enhance the capacity, qualifications, and legal education skills of legal reporters and communicators in the Northwestern border areas.

4.3.2.5 Strengthen focused and prioritized investment in training and capacity building for legal education officers and communicators at the village and hamlet level; improve the material and logistical conditions to support legal education for ethnic people in the Northwestern border provinces.

4.3.3 Some recommendations

For the Secretariat

For the National Assembly, the Government.

CONCLUDE

To strengthen legal education activities for ethnic minorities in the border areas of the Northwestern provinces of Vietnam, it is essential to thoroughly grasp the Party's viewpoints, strictly implement legal regulations, and innovate the forms and methods of legal education for ethnic minorities. These efforts must align with the factors affecting legal education work among ethnic minorities in the border regions of the Northwest; simultaneously, it is crucial to leverage cultural resources and promote the role of grassroots legal communicators in coordinating with competent agencies and organizations involved in legal education for ethnic communities.

To ensure legal education activities for ethnic minorities in the Northwestern border areas are truly effective and overcome current limitations and difficulties, local Party committees and authorities-especially provincial People's Committees-should take full advantage of central leadership, focus on consolidating the organizational apparatus for legal education in general and for ethnic minorities in particular. Additionally, it is necessary to improve the existing content and curriculum of legal education for ethnic minorities, and to develop a legal education framework tailored to the actual conditions of the Northwestern border region.

Furthermore, it is vital to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the conditions ensuring legal education for ethnic minorities, gradually shifting from a "push" model to a "pull" model in current legal education efforts in the Northwestern border provinces.

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S SCIENTIFIC WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

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3. Quach Thi Hong Ngan (2025), “Legal Aid Work for Ethnic Minorities in the Border Areas of Lao Cai Province,” available at <https://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/>, ISSN 2734-9071.