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Employment Support for Rural Laborers in Ninh Binh Province in the Current Period

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Abstract

Creating jobs and improving incomes and quality of life for rural workers play an important role in the socio-economic development of Ninh Binh province. According to a report by the Ninh Binh Provincial Statistics Office in 2022, the labor force aged 15 and over in rural areas is 388175 people, accounting for 79.3% of the total labor force aged 15 and over of the whole province. On the other hand, in the current period, policy guidelines on land acquisition for socio-economic development have created employment challenges for rural workers in Ninh Binh province. This has created

pressure on the need for on-the-job training and job creation for rural laborers. Rural laborers are more likely to fall into unemployment because there are no jobs as the State reclaims agricultural land. Most rural workers are not trained, so their ability to enter the labor market is limited. Within the scope of this study, the article mentions some employment support solutions for rural workers in Ninh Binh province: strengthening vocational training; carrying out economic restructuring; creating conditions for rural workers to borrow production capital.

Keywords: Employment, Unemployment, Unemployed Labor, Rural, Vocational Training, Workforce

1. Introduction

According to the planning of Ninh Binh province from 2021 – 2030 and the vision to 2050, the average GDP growth rate (calculated at comparative prices in 2010) per year in the fields of industry and construction is achieved at 11.3% per year (the average increase in the industry is 13.4%); the service industry is 8.5% per year; The agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors are 1.7% per year. Ninh Binh province has also identified supporting industries and tourism services as key economic sectors in socio-economic development. To achieve these goals, besides resource solutions, infrastructure solutions are also the important factors, having a great influence on the socio-economic development strategy of Ninh Binh province. Accordingly, the area of agricultural production land will be recovered to serve the construction of industrial parks, industrial clusters, economies, urban areas, and the construction of public infrastructure works. According to the plan for 2030, the proportion of agricultural land is 91294.14 ha, accounting for 64.74% (down 8.16% compared to 2020); the proportion of non-agricultural land area is 47347 ha, accounting for 33.54% (up 28.98% compared to 2020). There is no more productive land due to the acquisition of agricultural land to serve the development of socio-economic sectors, which has caused unemployment and underemployment for laborers in rural areas. This has created great pressure for Ninh Binh province to create jobs for rural workers.

2. Current situation of rural labor in Ninh Binh province

According to data from the Ninh Binh Statistics Office, from 2018 to 2019, the labor force from 15-year-old in rural areas still accounts for a high proportion but tends to decrease over the years. In 2022, the proportion of the rural labor force of the whole province of Ninh Binh was 79.3%, down 3.1% compared to 2018. This result reflects the shifting workforce structure between rural and urban areas. Accordingly, workers are moving from rural areas to urban areas. This shift is fully in line with the socio-economic development goals of Ninh Binh province.

Although the proportion of the labor force aged 15 and over in rural areas of Ninh Binh province has decreased over the years, it still accounts for a large proportion, so it has put pressure on the demand for vocational training and on-the-job creation for rural workers. According to data from the Ninh Binh Statistics Office, the unemployment rate of the age-group labor force in rural areas in 2018 and 2019 was lower than that of urban areas. The reason is that rural workers migrate to cities to find work,

which has caused the unemployment rate in urban areas to increase. Laborers in rural areas are largely untrained, with low levels of education and expertise, so they face many difficulties in finding a job. Rural laborers find most of the untrained jobs in urban areas. Meanwhile, the demand for trained jobs in urban areas, industrial parks and industrial clusters of Ninh Binh province is very large, but they still cannot recruit workers. According to the Ninh Binh Provincial Statistics Office, in 2018, the proportion of the trained labor force aged 15 and over in rural areas was 21.9%. This rate over the following years has tended to increase but remains low.

In 2020, the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic caused many difficulties for the production activities of enterprises in urban areas, industrial parks, and industrial clusters. Many workers fell into unemployment because businesses slashed jobs due to disrupted production activities. This has led to a portion of the workforce in urban areas moving back to rural areas as most of these workforces migrated from rural to urban areas before. This is the reason why the unemployment rate of the age-group labor force in rural areas increased from 1.38% (in 2020) to 1.5% (in 2021). In 2022, when the Covid-19 epidemic situation was controlled, Ninh Binh province applied many measures for socio-economic recovery, so production activities of enterprises gradually recovered, leading to an increase in job demand. Activities to support vocational training and job search for unemployed workers in rural areas were implemented synchronously, contributing to reducing the unemployment rate of the workforce in this region to 1.38% in 2022.

Table 1: The trained labor force aged 15 and over in Ninh Binh province by urban and rural areas (%)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1. Structure of labor force aged 15 and over in Ninh Binh province					
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Urban	17.5	18.1	18.7	20.6	20.7
Rural	82.5	81.9	81.3	79.4	79.3
2. Rate of trained labor force aged 15 and over					
General	27.2	28.9	30.2	31.7	31.8
Urban	52.4	52.8	51.3	55.7	55.8
Rural	21.9	23.7	25.3	25.5	25.5

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Ninh Binh province

Jobs of laborers in rural areas are mainly in sectors such as agricultural production, small trade, and local traditional occupations... These activities bring low and unstable incomes. From 2018 – 2021, the underemployment rate of the working-age labor force in rural areas was always higher than that of urban areas. The impact of the Covid -19 epidemic has caused the underemployment rate of the rural labor force to increase in 2020 and then gradually decrease in 2021. In 2022, the underemployment rate of rural laborers decreased sharply compared to 2021 by 1.06%. Rural workers working in the informal sector always account for over 70%. However, this rate tends to decrease over the years. This shows that the employment of rural workers is becoming stable and gradually shifting from the informal sector to the formal sector. The above results are because Ninh Binh province has directed departments and departments to synchronously implement solutions to support unemployed workers when the Covid-19 epidemic occurs: organizing job transaction sessions for laborers;

providing information about domestic and foreign labor markets to workers; creating conditions for laborers and employers to meet, interview face-to-face and sign labor contracts. Vocational training activities for rural workers of Ninh Binh province are also organized in many forms: training links between continuing education centers, colleges, vocational training schools and units and enterprises in and outside the province; fulfill commitments to create jobs and offtake products for rural workers when participating in short-term vocational training courses; mobilize capital sources from organizations and enterprises in the province for vocational training activities; expand vocational training for participants (free-agricultural laborers, workers belonging to poor households, households subject to land acquisition serving for building industrial clusters, laborers who change occupations, disabled workers.). The structure of training professions gradually adjusted in association with the needs of production and business and the needs of the labor market, such as mechanics, electronics, industrial sewing, etc. was included in the curriculum that not only contributes to rural economic restructuring but also makes it easier for workers to find jobs on their own after completing the course. Expanding beneficiaries of the National Employment Fund has contributed to creating jobs for people, especially in rural areas, creating opportunities for disadvantaged labor groups (the poor, disabled, people with land acquisition, etc.) to have the opportunity to borrow capital for production and business, creating jobs for themselves and other workers; supporting small and medium-sized enterprises to borrow capital for production development to create jobs for employees; and contributing to the restoration of traditional craft villages.

Table 2: Indicators reflect the employment status of the labor force aged 15 and above in Ninh Binh province by urban and rural areas

	2018	2019	2020	Y2021	2022
1. Employment rate					
General	1.35	0.52	1.37	1.34	1.32
Urban	1.87	2.73	1.30	0.78	1.10
Rural	1.23	0.02	1.38	1.50	1.38
2. Proportion of workers in informal employment					
General	76.49	74.78	73.24	69.26	65.32
Urban	56.86	55.82	55.47	48.39	44.27
Rural	80.82	78.87	77.33	74.69	70.81
3. Underemployment rate					
Urban	0.43	0.23	0.44	0.84	0.53
Rural	0.91	1.00	2.70	1.18	0.12

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Ninh Binh province

3. Solutions to support rural unemployed workers in Ninh Binh province in the current period

The development of supporting industries, tourism services, and specific agriculture in the locality is one of the top priorities for the socio-economic development of Ninh Binh province in the current period. The job demand for these industries is huge. The age-group labor force in rural areas of Ninh Binh province still accounts for a large proportion. Therefore, attracting these workers to work in supporting industries, tourism services in general and other economic sectors of Ninh Binh province will make an important contribution to job creation for the labor force in the province. This is also one of the important contents of the province's socio-economic development strategy. To settle

jobs for unemployed workers in rural areas, Ninh Binh province should have the following solutions:

▪ *Strengthening vocational training for rural workers*

For socio-economic development in rural areas and increased incomes for rural workers, vocational training is extremely important. It is necessary to consider the improvement of the qualifications of agricultural workers as a breakthrough point to remove difficulties in agricultural production. According to Plan No. 79/KH – People's Committee, dated April 20, 2022, the plan on agricultural vocational training for rural workers in Ninh Binh province in the period of 2022 – 2025, vocational training for rural workers should be in the direction of improving quality and efficiency to meet industrialization requirements, rural modernization; create favorable conditions for rural laborers to participate in training programs suitable to their education levels and local socio-economic conditions; strengthen vocational training for rural workers in association with post-training job creation in order to increase incomes and reduce poverty sustainably; carry out labor restructuring, contributing to the construction of new rural areas in the province.

To achieve the above objectives, vocational education institutions in the province need to focus on agricultural vocational training to improve the value of provincial key products and local key product groups associated with new rural construction under the model of "One commune one product"; focus on training and developing crops and livestock with comparative advantages and great and stable demand to serve the domestic market and export; training to improve the level of mechanization, high technology, synchronous automation from production to harvest, preservation and processing; application of information technology to digital transformation training for agricultural workers; carry out training according to the apprenticeship needs of rural workers, the needs of employers, cooperatives and labor market requirements; linking vocational training with local strategies, socio-economic development plans, and new rural construction plannings; establishments participating in vocational training must meet all conditions and be entitled to vocational education activities; failing to organize vocational training without forecasting the workplace and income level of the laborers after vocational training; vocational training for the right subjects, for the right purposes and with high efficiency. To meet the above requirements, the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs should direct job placement centers and vocational education institutions to well carry out the propaganda and counseling of agricultural apprenticeships and jobs for rural workers. Specifically:

Actively propagandize extensively about the Party's guidelines, the State's policies and laws on the role and significance of vocational training for socio-economic development, job creation, and income raising to rural workers to help them voluntarily, and actively participate in apprenticeships.

Annually, determine the contents of propaganda, consult on apprenticeship and employment for rural laborers, and assign specific assignments to provincial agencies and organizations for implementation.

Policies to support vocational training should meet the needs of laborers in different occupational groups, including laborers of working age who work in agriculture in commodity-producing areas restructuring the agricultural sector and building new rural areas; Laborers in cooperatives, farms, and enterprises located in planned areas of agricultural production that concentrate on key local products; laborers in craft villages shall participate in the development of craft villages, preserve the villages associated with cultural values and rural agriculture tourism; workers participating in the local OCOP development programs; digital transformation in agriculture; people have a demand for going to work abroad. In particular, poor workers and single women are prioritized for support in vocational training.

For the efficient vocational training activities, vocational training programs need to meet the actual needs of the labor market by taking advantage of strengths in the production of key local products and products with economic value associated with rural tourism development. Specifically, for the training profession, it is necessary to request vocational training institutions equip learners with skills in management, application of information technology, marketing management, finance, making production plans to meet domestic and export market requirements, and understanding of the output of products, such as traceability of products, safety certification, issuance of planting area codes, standards, regulations and circular economy models for effective use of agricultural by-products. Develop the management of agricultural supply chains from production, harvesting, preliminary processing, preservation, transportation, processing and consumption of products... and ensure that labor is close to the level of agricultural workers. Prioritize new occupations: online sales, trading in local agricultural products. Train occupations suitable to the agricultural development orientation and the people's demand for agricultural apprenticeship, the occupation "Director of agricultural cooperatives".

Vocational education institutions need to perform in well the fostering and development of vocational training teachers, and updating knowledge for staff involved in agricultural vocational training. The fostering contents should focus on improving pedagogical skills, updating guidelines, orientations and knowledge of agricultural production for teaching staff, artisans, workers and extension workers at all levels participating in agricultural vocational training. Organize skills training courses (TOT) for lecturers and extension workers at all levels on enrollment, class organization and face-to-face and online training methods suitable to all conditions...

Establish vocational training links with enterprises and organizations in Ninh Binh province to associate practicality meeting the requirements of the labor market.

Vocational education institutions paid great attention to the mobilization of social resources to invest in the development of vocational education activities. Accordingly, vocational education institutions actively mobilize tens of billions of VND from many other capital sources to invest in strengthening training

conditions for other occupations; expand the training occupations, especially focusing on their occupations with strengths and building brands and prestige for the establishment; focus on investing in conditions for vocational training in the direction of synchronous focus, initially applying digital transformation in vocational training activities.

In order to strengthen cooperation between vocational education institutions in the province and enterprises in training and employing technical labor, Provincial People's Committees should encourage competent organizations, individuals and enterprises to participate in vocational education activities in the forms of: enterprises participating in the development of training programs; arranging staff and experts to teach at vocational education institutions; participating in the evaluation and organization of graduation examinations at vocational education institutions; receiving and guiding learners to practice at enterprises; receiving teachers of vocational education institutions for visits, practice and internships; providing information on training needs, recruitment of post-graduate learners at vocational education institutions.

- *Carry out economic restructuring, select training occupations according to the needs of the labor market.* Based on the Party's guidelines, the People's Committee of Ninh Binh province should adopt timely policies to promote socio-economic development and create more job opportunities for rural workers. Localities need to have policies to attract domestic and foreign investors to expand production and develop infrastructure, and take advantage of local strengths for economic development, including agriculture, handicrafts, trade and services, which will play a great role in creating jobs and increasing incomes for rural workers. Localities in the province need to promote exchanges, and learn from each other in agricultural production activities, and strengthen links with traditional craft villages in vocational training and product consumption.
- *Support rural workers to obtain production loans* Capital is a factor that has a great influence on the income of rural laborers in localities. Granting capital for the production and business development of farmer households is essential. Ninh Binh province needs specific and practical policies to help farmers easily access the most preferential capital sources, such as preferential credit policies. Raising unsecured loan levels; incentive policies for the development of applying hi-tech in agriculture, model of agricultural linkage and value chain; policies to reduce lending interest rates when people buy insurance in agriculture. Simplifying loan procedures and processes, diversifying loan products, etc to create conditions for rural workers to access credit capital.
- *Increase the application of science, technology in production* Ninh Binh province should direct localities to carry out support activities: organizing seminars, training sessions to share experiences in transferring and applying scientific and technical advances to agricultural production... to create conditions for rural workers to access new scientific and technological advances. Organize training courses for rural workers

on agricultural production models suitable to the climatic conditions, soil and production practices of each locality, thereby changing people's thinking and methods of organizing production.

4. Conclusion

Ninh Binh is one of the provinces whose economy mainly relies on agriculture; the starting point of the economy is low, the population density is high; exploiting potential resources is limited; the change in labor structure between urban and rural areas creates large unemployment and underemployment rate of rural workers. Meanwhile, workers in rural areas account for a large proportion of the total labor force of Ninh Binh province. Therefore, creating jobs for rural workers is one of the most important strategic tasks. Ninh Binh province needs to have specific and synchronous solutions for supporting job creation for workers in rural areas to improve the efficiency of job creation for this target group, actively contributing to socio-economic development and building Ninh Binh province as a modern industrial province as planned.

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