

Some Barriers to Democratic Practical Process in the Provinces of Central Highlands of Vietnam

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Received January 16, 2018; Revised February 18, 2019; Accepted February 20, 2019

Abstract Implementing democracy in provinces of the Central Highlands with the guideline "citizen know, citizen discuss, citizen do, citizen check" which was concerned by the Central Highlands authorities achieved many encouraging results. The implementation process has really promoted the democratic rights of local people classes, contributed positively to the construction of the government, promoted the role of the Fatherland Front and the mass organizations; built many self-management models in residential communities, created a positive change in the awareness and working style of civil servants towards being closer to citizen, respecting citizen and being more responsible to people. However, there are still many weaknesses arising due to many both objective and subjective obstacle. The ownership of the citizens in many places and localities is still violated, and citizens are not allowed to discuss and comment on issues related to "national policies and social welfare". To find suitable solutions, promote the ownership role of the citizens in all activities, create consensus in society, equality between the Central Highlands ethnic groups, constantly strengthen the great unity of all ethnic groups in the area in the development process, it is necessary to examine to clarify some barriers to the quality and effectiveness of the grassroots democratic implementation in the provinces of the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

Keywords: *democracy, democratic practice, barriers, influential element, democratic practical process, ethnic minority, the central highlands, Vietnam*

Cite This Article: Do Van Duong, Le Duyen Ha, and Trinh Duc Thao, "Some Barriers to Democratic Practical Process in the Provinces of Central Highlands of Vietnam." *World Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2019): 10-17. doi: 10.12691/wjssh-5-1-2.

1. Introduction

In Vietnam in general and in the Central Highlands provinces in particular, there are many published works and articles which study the issues of democracy, law of democracy and the grassroots democratic implementation. Each author approach in different ways with different purposes of research. The writing named "*Consolidating the democratic forms for the strength of our State*" [[1]; 3-14], clarifies some starting points about democracy. At the same time, to define the sphere of responsibilities of state agencies to the citizens, the writing named "*Strengthening the legal basis of direct democracy in our country in the current period*" [[2]; 17-27], analyzed the legal nature of direct democracy. It plays a great role in the entire democratic life of the country. In another writing named "*The issue of building and perfecting the democratic law in our country*" [[3]; 35-39], the author analyzed and contributed to clarify the definition of grassroots democracy, citizens' direct democracy form and method in implementing the citizens' mastery. "*The law and democracy in the law governed state*" [[4]; 35- 40], the writing tries to clarify the dialectical relationship

between law and democracy in the law governed state, affirms that law and democracy is the legal political foundation of the law governed state. Especially, research activities related to democracy and democratic practice in the Central Highlands of Vietnam such as customary law and status and issues of *the implementation of grassroots democratic regulation in the Central Highlands* [[5]; 72-77], the author analyzed and clarified the role of traditional social institutions of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands, especially customary laws which have an impact on the social organization and management nowadays. The writing named "*Implementing the grassroots democratic regulation in relation to customary law in Kon Tum*" [[6]; 63-66] affirmed that the local authorities in Kon Tum province know how to promote positive elements in the customary law of local ethnic minorities, inherit, and apply them to the grassroots democratic implementation. In these two articles named "*Solutions to ensure the implementation of the commune grassroots democracy in ethnic minority areas in the Central Highlands provinces*" [7], and "*Experience of implementing democracy in the Central Highlands provinces*" [8], the authors focused on analyzing the real situation, drawing lessons learned and offered solutions to ensure the implementation of grassroots democratic law in the

Central Highlands. In general, the research of scientists at different levels and aspects has analyzed theoretical issues, clarified the relationship, nature, form, and important role of democracy and implementation of democracy in general and grassroots democracy in particular. Some works have been systematically studied of the significance, role, and importance of the current democratization and have found out the influential factors, solutions to improve the efficiency of implementation of the people's political power. However, for the Central Highlands provinces of Vietnam so far, there have not been many specific and systematic studies of grassroots democracy, especially the studies to find out barriers to democratic implementation process in the provinces of the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

Therefore, within the sphere of this writing, we focus on researching and clarifying some direct barriers to the practical process of democracy to come up with solutions contributing to ensure effective implementation of democratic values in reality in the Central Highlands provinces of Vietnam today.

2. Content

2.1. Geographical Element and Natural Condition of the Central Highlands Provinces of Vietnam

The Central Highlands which is located in southwestern Vietnam is the centre of the mountainous South Indochina region, and is limited in geographical coordinates from $11^{\circ}45'$ to $15^{\circ}27'$ (North latitude) and from $107^{\circ}12'$ to $108^{\circ}55'$ (East longitude). It includes 5 provincial administrative units: Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong and Lam Dong. It borders Quang Nam province in the North, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan provinces in the East, Dong Nai and Binh Phuoc provinces in the south and Attapeu provinces (Laos), Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri (Cambodia) in the West. The Central Highlands' natural area is $54,641 \text{ km}^2$, which make up 16.8% of Vietnam's area (seen in Figure 1) including Kon Tum province's area of

$9,689.6 \text{ km}^2$, Gia Lai province's area of $15,536.9 \text{ km}^2$, Dak Lak province's area of $13,125.4 \text{ km}^2$, Dak Nong province's area of $6,515.6 \text{ km}^2$, Lam Dong province's area of $9,773.5 \text{ km}^2$ [[9]; 16].

This is a rich land in natural resources for socio-economic development, with abundant red basalt soil area, which is very convenient for the development of a sustainable tropical agriculture. It also has a large natural forest area, many valuable metallic minerals such as peat, brown coal, bauxite, iron, tungsten, antimony, lead, zinc and so on. With the red basalt soil property area of nearly 2 million hectares (make up 74.25% of the total basalt soil of the country), at a height of about 500m to 600m above the sea level, the Central Highlands is very suitable for industrial crops such as coffee, cocoa, pepper, mulberry, cashew and rubber tree. However, it is located in both East and West of Truong Son, so the soil, terrain and climate are very diverse and harsh. There are many successive mountain ranges with the height of over 2,000 meters (Ngoc Linh peak which belongs to Ngoc Linh mountain range of Kon Tum province is 2,598 meters high and Chu Yang Sin in Dak Lak province is 2,445 meters high) [10]. The Central Highlands of Vietnam has a quite thick network of rivers and streams and many rapids. Due to natural geographical conditions, wide terrain, diverse hills, alternate plateaus and valleys, strong divided by the system of rivers, streams and many high mountain ranges, especially in the East of Truong Son range, it is extremely difficult to travel and exchange between regions, especially in remote, and border areas.

The factors of location and natural conditions have impacted, limited greatly to the quality and efficiency of democratic implementation in the Central Highlands. Due to the lack of road system and low quality of road, it is difficult to travel, especially in the rainy season. Many places from the district to commune, hamlet, village are divided. It takes all day to walk to commune administrative center unit. These difficulties have limited greatly to information mission, propaganda, dissemination and implementation of democratic regulations. Implementing senior's documents is slow and very difficult to follow, grasp the situation, check and supervise the implementation in time to the citizens.

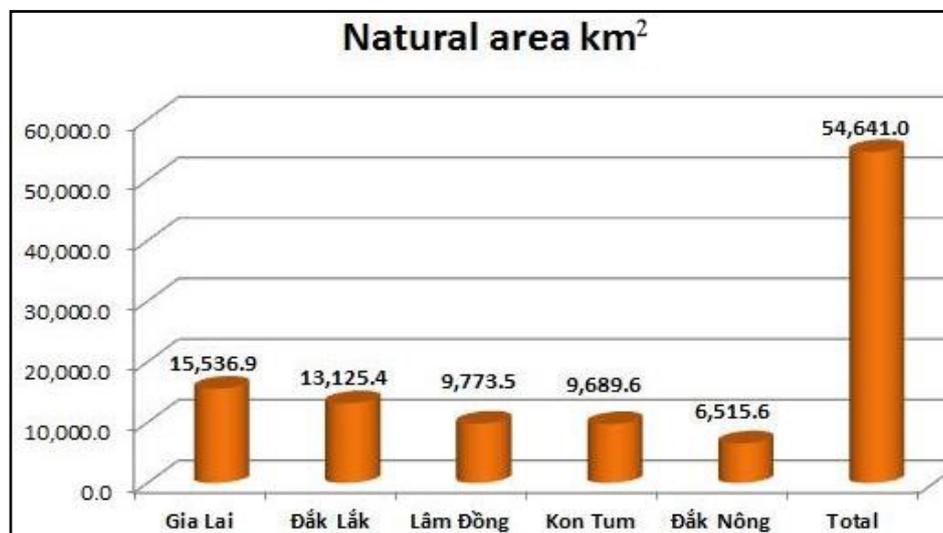


Figure 1. The land area of 5 provinces of the Central Highlands [[9]; 16]

2.2. Barriers from Economic, Psychological and Traditional Cultural Factors of Ethnic Minorities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam

2.2.1. The Economic Influences

Democracy and economy are two issues which are closely related to each other. Economy facilitates to build democracy, but democracy also facilitates economic development. Professors (United States) Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi in their study *"What makes Democracies Endure"* assumed that *"Economic crises are one of the most common threats to stabilize democratic development, on the contrary, economic growth will always be conducive to the survival of democracy"* [11]. That the more economic develops, the higher labor productivity, and more developed and perfecting social infrastructure will ensure better implementation of civil rights and human rights. *"Economic development ensures the prospects of democracy. Economic development will create a middle class and create conditions for citizens to have higher education than before. That is a new suitable environment for democratization"* [12]; 73].

In fact, in the Central Highlands provinces over the past years, democratic implementation has facilitated fairer distribution of social welfare, which stimulates the economic development of this highland region. There has been great progress compared to previous years in many aspects, especially ensured the free-enterprise rights for individuals in the field of economic investment. In the past 5 years, security, social order and safety situation in the Central Highlands is basically stable, facilitating economic development. As a result, the annual GDP growth of the Central Highlands is quite good. Citizens' lives, especially in ethnic minority areas have improved. Just taking 2017 into consideration, *"The Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of the Central Highlands provinces reached over 165,472 billion VND, increasing 8.09%, of which, agriculture, forestry and fishery aspects increased 5%. Construction industry increased nearly 11%. Services increased nearly 10%. GRDP structure shifted to positive direction (reducing the proportion of agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors, increasing the industry, construction and service sectors). The average income per capita in the Central Highlands provinces in 2017 reached over 41.6 million VND, increasing by 5.02% compared to 2016"* [13].

When the economy develops, the material life and economic benefits of the citizens in the Central Highlands are ensured. They will be excited and believe in the economic development line and legal policies, executive management activities of the state government. In addition, with a strong economic source, the State has better conditions to invest in construction of material and technical facilities, improve citizens' lives, and contribute to ensure that the implementation of law regulations about democracy is more advantageous and effective. Investment in funding is also a good condition for training and fostering civil servants to deploy and implement successfully the law regulation on democracy. Moreover, thanks to economic development and improved living

standards, democratic actors are able to buy audiovisual means, update information to satisfy the need of increasingly diverse and rich legal news. This is a prerequisite for citizens to raise their awareness of observance and comply with the law of democracy.

However, the Central Highlands of Vietnam still has many difficulties until now. It has not attracted significant resources and investment like other regions and developed slowly. Economic development is still weak, which is not meritorious with inherent potential and advantage of development. Citizen's lives, especially in ethnic minority areas, is still starved of many aspects, and the poor and near-poor situation is still high. Potential and socio-economic development level is still low. Infrastructure is not synchronous, and quality of human resources is low. Economic development is not well-integrated with implementing social justice and strengthening the national great unity. The rich-poor gap between urban and rural areas, between residential areas is increasing. The reorganization of production which guarantees for the living space for villagers is still inadequate. *"The average income of 20% of the highest income households compared to 20% of low income households is 13 times apart, while the difference of the whole country is 8.9 times and that of Northwest of Vietnam is 1.7 times"* [14].

According to the results of the multi-dimensional poverty standard survey (2016-2020 period), the whole Central Highlands region has 90,599 households classified as near poor, of which, Dak Lak province makes up 8.28%, the highest rate with 34,884 households. In turn, Gia Lai province makes up 7.3%. Kon Tum province makes up 6.36%. Dak Nong province makes up 6.16%, and Lam Dong province makes up 5.12%. According to the above survey results, the number of poor households in the Central Highlands is 225,030 households, which makes up 17.14% of households in the whole region. The number of poor households in Dak Lak province ranked second (after Kon Tum) with 81,592 households, which makes up 19.37%. Next is Dak Nong province with 19.26% and Gia Lai with 19.17%. In Lam Dong province, the poverty rate is only 5.17% [15]; 13].

A large part of local ethnic minority still lacks productive land and residential land. It is also the cause of deforestation, disputes, and instability. Land management, mineral exploitation and forest protection are still inadequate, negative and harmful to the environment. Currently, there are still more than 23,500 ethnic minority households who have emigrated to the Central Highlands freely (not planned) and have not been put into planning areas to stabilize their lives. Specifically, Dak Nong province has 10,947 households. Dak Lak has 5,762 households. Lam Dong has 3,725. Kon Tum has 2,400 households, and the lowest is Gia Lai province with 689 households [16]; 199]. *Poverty and income inequality put many risks to political security and social order and safety in the Central Highlands. It has a significant influence on the environment for investment, business and economic development, and gradually, it affects disadvantageously social development in the Central Highlands, including the rights relating to people.*

The mentioned difficulties in terms of economic conditions in the Central Highlands provinces have significantly affected not only the sentimental ideology of

civil servants and citizens of ethnic groups in the Central Highlands provinces, but also the quality of the daily lives of ethnic minorities. They impact directly on the right awareness of the position, meaning, importance of implementing the rights "citizens know, citizens discuss, citizens decide", the civil rights and human rights. The stability and economic development of the Central Highlands are the basis for building and strengthening the great national unity, especially the solidarity between Vietnamese people and local ethnic minorities. Therefore, there must be correct views, guidelines, policies and solutions to invest in production development, improve the lives of citizens when solving specific practical issues. The study "*What makes Democracies Endure*", Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi also pointed out that "*in fact, many developed economies have contributed to help democracy be able to survive and develop sustainably compared to underdeveloped economic countries*" [17].

2.2.2. Psychology and Traditional Culture of Ethnic Minorities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam

Democracy and the implementation of democracy in practice are influenced by many factors, including cultural and social factors. Implementing the law democratic regulation well will contribute to make the lives of people in villages and quarters stable, united and consensus. The wholesome and clean social and cultural environment ensures social security and security for citizen's life. The society which meets the requirements of education, culture, information, fitness, sports, health, health care, population mission, labor, employment, poverty - alleviation movement and so on will reflect the development level of the commune. A rich society will have a favorable impact on the process of democratizing social life.

Ownership and self-determination of the citizens in the field of culture express concentratedly on improving intellectual levels, building a wholesome cultural and spiritual life at the grassroots level, strengthening solidarity in the community, educating traditional morality, culture, as well as raising political awareness for the citizens. These are conditions and solid foundations to continue promoting citizens' democratic rights and building a strong state apparatus. Besides, the educational level, the level of social and political issues understanding of the citizens is also one of the conditions ensuring the process of implementing democracy in the Central Highlands because democracy is a manifestation of political and cultural level and is closely related to the intellectual and cultural level in general.

The Central Highlands is a land of diverse culture and rich in identity of many ethnic groups in the great family of Vietnamese ethnic groups. *The Central Highlands' culture is very rich, diverse, inherent in hamlets, villages, typical customary law and special festivals in the high mountain and thick jungle. The traditional festivals in the Central Highlands represent conception of people, becoming fun festivals with the participation of all communities, even other clans or neighboring villages, such as the river wharf festival, the new meal ceremony, the wedding ceremony for young people, the longevity*

ceremony, the grave-leaving ceremony, and so on. Each festival is a general original case which is typical for the traditional cultural life of the Central Highlands ethnic minorities and milpa civilization" [18].

Cultural factors have an important influence on educating the young generation, forming the relationship between people and people, between people and nature, contributing to create tolerant quality and honest behavior, solidarity and solid community. These are positive factors which need to be studied and acquired in the process of developing and implementing democracy in the Central Highlands provinces. These factors also require a guarantee of building a stable and developed multi-ethnic solid community, which is one of the important goals that the operation of the state government at the grassroots level aims at, to ensure the implementation of ownership for the citizens in all aspects of social life.

However, recently, due to the impact of urbanization and the destruction and oblivion of people, many traditional cultural values have been disappeared. Many backward customs have a chance to raise, and many good traditional cultural values disappear gradually. The gradual loss of cultural values has contributed to the rapid penetration of unofficial religions. In addition to the trick of using material benefits to bribe and implicate the extremist elements to take advantage of religion, they also instigate citizens to suppress traditional festivals, stop using gongs, drinking wine and performing the community dance and songs. The backward unsound customs have created many difficulties in propagating and implementing the legal regulations on democracy, especially in ethnic minority areas and believers in religious areas.

2.3. Barriers from Population Characteristics, Educational Level In Provinces in the Central Highlands of Vietnam

The Central Highlands now is an actual land with many characteristics and nuances of many ethnic groups, many localities in the country. At the same time, it is also the place which has the fastest population growth and changes in population structure in the country. One of the main reasons is the free and long-lasting emigration in many years, which still happens complicatedly until now. Free migration has caused rapid changes in the structure and composition of the population in the Central Highlands. In 1976, the population of the Central Highlands of Vietnam was 1,225,000 people, including 18 ethnic groups, of which, local ethnic minorities made up 69.7% (853,820 people). But at the end of 2015, the region's population reached 5,607,900 people (in Figure 2), with an average population density of 103 people/km [19]. Diverse ethnic groups have been a common phenomenon in the Central Highlands so far, the Central Highlands has enough 54 ethnic groups living together. People of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands live together with Kinh people in villages of 707 communes, wards and towns, belonging to 57 districts, towns and cities [[20]; 7]. This is the result of the natural and mechanical population growth process of local residents and residents emigrating to the Central Highlands.

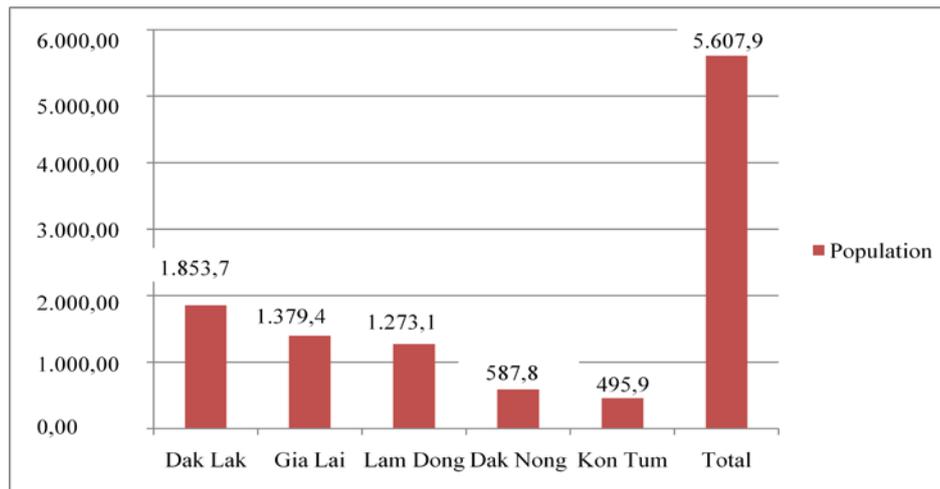


Figure 2. Population of provinces of the Central Highlands in 2015 (Source: General Statistics Office [19])

Therefore, it has led to a big change in the distribution of population and ethnic groups in the whole region. The nature of alternate residence is increasing, especially the favorable places for living. This is a unique feature of the Central Highlands which is different from other regions in Vietnam. The spontaneous migration in the Central Highlands also leads to many consequences on security, social order and safety, ecological environment of the whole region. The population factor has a significant impact on strengthening the construction and implementation of democracy in the Central Highlands provinces. This feature requires that governments at all levels always need to be quick-witted to operate, know how to resolve quickly and effectively when conflicts and ethnic conflicts occur in their localities, build solidarity, equality and truly respect and help each other to grow together among peoples. It can be said that this is an indispensable important requirement for civil servants working in the Central Highlands provinces of Vietnam.

The limited educational level is also a major obstacle to the process of implementing democratization of people's lives in mountainous areas in general and in the Central Highlands in particular. The educational level is also the barrier to the implementation of the guideline "people know, people discuss, people do, people examine, people decide and people enjoy." When the government sets programs, plans, and regulations which exceed the capacity of the people, it is unavoidable that it is difficult to be implemented in practice. If people do not have the capacity and ability to grasp, understand their rights, evaluate the operation of public agencies which are democratic or not, they even cannot fight to protect their rights, or check and supervise the activities of public authorities. Direct democracy cannot be guaranteed if the intellectual level is low.

In fact, the intellectual level of a group of the rural population, especially in the ethnic minority areas in provinces of the Central Highlands is still low. They are not able to clearly differentiate true, false, rights and responsibilities, leading to misleading behavior. Due to uneven intellectual level and low awareness, the ability to acquire the policy on implementing democratic rights and self-determination of the people is limited, which expressed in two tendencies: democratic indifference or democratic abuse. It is proved in practice that only when

people are self-aware of their rights and obligations, voluntarily participate in state affairs, social work, act as intellectual citizens, they will have conditions to implement the law on democracy and democracy at the grassroots level. In society, low-educated citizens often stay out of politics and are more likely to be subjects for tricks and ruses of opportunistic political forces. This has been clearly defined by Ho Chi Minh: "The higher education level of people will promote the economic recovery and democratic development. It is necessary to enhance the intellectual level of people to build our country into a peaceful, united, independent, democratic and wealthy country" [21].

At present, in the deep-lying, remote and ethnic minority areas, the education level of the citizens is low. The rate of illiterate citizens who are lacking of information is still high. Their knowledge about law, production, life, culture, health care, environmental protection is still low. Production customs and consumption are underdeveloped. The majority of ethnic minorities who gather in remote areas, border areas face many difficulties in their lives, and understand law and socio-economy superficially. There are many unsound customs and habits dominantly affecting the spiritual life of the citizens. Some have reached advanced levels of production, but there are still new parts which just passed the rudimentary cultivation phase. Therefore, if we do not actively improve the intellectual level, do not make citizens access to new lifestyles, national and mass culture, it is impossible to change the physical and spiritual life of the ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands. The low level of education is heavily influenced by customary laws, which makes the implementation of democracy in these areas face many difficulties and obstructs the effectiveness of the implementation of civil rights, self-determination of citizens. Citizens will hardly have the opportunity to implement democratic rights, fight against negative phenomena, corruption, citizen harassment, and protect the legal and legitimate benefits of the State, collectives and individuals. *Thomas Meyer and Nicole Breyer* in the book "*Die Zukunft Sozialen Demokratie*" affirmed that "*Basic civil and political rights must be complemented by social and economic rights to create dignified living conditions for everyone*" [22].

2.4. Ethnic and Religious Factor and the Obstruction of Discontented, Negative, and Opportunistic Elements

The Central Highlands is currently the most diverse specific area of ethnic component, including 47/54 ethnic groups living and residing. Local ethnic minorities make up 25.5%; Vietnamese people make up 66.9%, and other ethnic minorities make up 7.6% [[23]; 92]. The diversity of ethnic component and the interweavement of residence among ethnic groups in the Central Highlands are quite clear feature. The uncontrolled emigration in the Central Highlands has contributed to increase commune, hamlet, and village units, complicate administrative management and social order, and lead to many consequences such as deforesting, trading land to dispute the living profit, disrupting the cultural space and the survival space of local ethnic minorities, disrupting socio-economic development plans of the provinces. Moreover, many other social evils such as poverty, illiteracy, theft, gamble, and drug emerged, which made ethnic relationship here very complicated. It is also a reason which contributed to limit the implementation of democratic rights of people in the Central Highlands in recent years.

Due to the rapid population change, there are hardly any communes in the Central Highlands where a pure singular ethnic group resides. This interweavement of residence is quite common not only at the grassroots level but also at the hamlet and village levels. This feature requires the government to always operate quick-witted, know how to resolve quickly and effectively when ethnic conflicts occur in their localities, build solidarity and real equality, and respect and help each other to make progress among ethnic groups. It's safe to say that this is an important requirement which is indispensable to the officials and civil servants in provinces of the Central Highlands, Vietnam.

There are currently 4 major religions operating normally in the Central Highlands including Catholicism, Buddhism, Protestantism and Cao Dai, with a total of over 1,753,761 believers (make up 34.7% of the population), nearly 3,500 dignitaries - priests, about 840 places of worship of different kinds of religions [[24], p.3-6]. Among these religions, Catholic, Buddhism and Cao Dai have existed for a long time, while Protestantism has only recently developed in recent years and especially in ethnic minority areas.

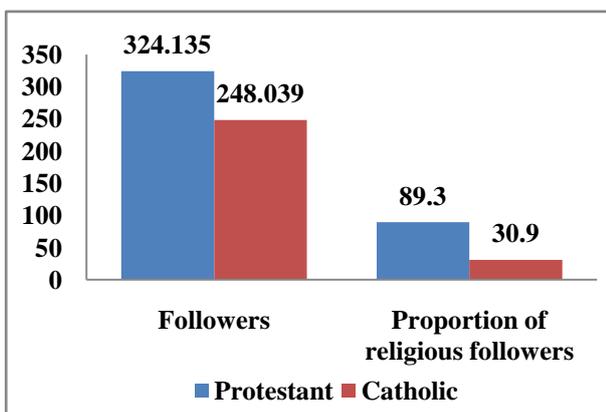


Figure 3. Protestant and Catholic ethnic minority believers [24]

Over the past few years, the number of religious believers has increased rapidly according to the population growth rate. It is remarkable that believers who belong to ethnic minorities increased rapidly, mainly Catholic and Protestant believers. We can see specification in this chart (Figure 3).

In addition, there are some other religions which have been recognized, but have small numbers of believers such as Bahai and Hoa Hao Buddhism. The level of influence in ethnic minority areas is increasing, while the implementation of policies and state management in religion has not been effectively. The essential problems in religious mission are the public work and the implementation of grassroots democracy, but the leadership and organization of mass movements in the religious areas are weak. This is also specific feature which requires the cadres and civil servants to be always vigilant over ruses to separate the great national unity, have the capability, a firm stuff, and keen intelligence to be both resolute and clever in solving works when a "burning issues" happen.

Besides, in the area of the Central Highlands provinces, due to diverse population and wide and complex terrains, the dissatisfied, and opportunistic components, even criminals always find many ways to make political and social situation instable in order to cause disunity among ethnic communities in the Central Highlands. It impacts negatively on the socio-economic situation, causing many difficulties for production and people's life and obstructing the quality of democratic implementation, especially in ethnic minority areas, border areas.

In some areas, there is still a potential risk of democracy, socio-politics, national defense and security instability, especially in the operation base of the authorities, mass organizations, the capacity of implementing democracy is still weak. This specific element requires authorities, Front and mass organizations in the Central Highlands provinces of Vietnam to have positive and strong solutions to implement democracy on both breadth and depth for this strategic importance area.

2.5. Barriers from Qualification, Leadership and Management Ability of the Central Highlands Civil Servants

Because mountainous areas in the Central Highlands have many specific characteristics which are different from those in the other mountainous areas in terms of natural, economic, cultural and social conditions, especially the cadres at the grassroots level. Cadres working at establishment of the Central Highlands provinces are formed from various sources, mainly from the practical movement at the grassroots. The grassroots level government in the Central Highlands has basically strengthened, consolidated and elevated in quality. The whole region has more than 22,464 commune officials receiving salaries, of which ethnic minority officials make up 30.02%. Commune civil servants qualified in culture make up more than 83%, and 59.10% of them have university, college and professional high school qualification [[25]; 69]. This is a great effort of the Central Highlands authorities in training cadres to undertake assigned tasks' demands.

However, the level of legal knowledge of officials in the Central Highland which hasn't met the demands in the new situation, is low in general. With the current level of education, argument, profession and specialty of cadres at the grassroots level, meeting the demands of implementing grassroots democracy will have many difficulties, as well as influence directly on the quality and effectiveness of democratic implementation. A group of cadres still perceives inadequately and incorrectly the democratic law. Besides, the situation of obstructing the implementation of people's democratic rights still happens, and the people's direct democratic rights are violated. In some places, cadres and civil servants still make light of or avoid people's urgent matters. They are irresponsible, and do not want to implement. If implementing, they highly consider the forms, and work perfunctory. There are still many contents "*people know, people discuss, people do, people supervise*", which are not specifically implemented such as the implementation of compensation and ground clearance, budget revenues and expenditures, land project, new rural construction movement, and the implementation of project. Therefore, the quality of implementing the democratic law in the provinces of the Central Highlands is still not high. There are still some irresponsible officials who ignored and let the extremist elements lead and encourage the ethnic minorities to protest and go against the people's interests. Some officials at the grassroots level in the Central Highlands follow the working time arbitrarily. They go to the office when they like and stay at home and go to the field when they do not like. This problem is worthy to be currently concerned in the Central Highlands. With the current level of education, argument, profession and specialty of cadres at the grassroots level, meeting the demands of implementing grassroots democracy will cope up with many difficulties. Therefore, enhancing qualifications, leadership, management and administration ability for cadres and civil servants in the current period plays an important role for the implementation of democracy at the local areas in Central Highlands in the following years.

2.6. Barriers from Policies and Regimes for Civil Servants

Policies and regimes are one of the conditions to ensure cadres' operation and one of the motivators encouraging civil servants to be relieved, excited to work and study, and contribute to lead and enhance quality and effectiveness of professional work, leadership and management. Therefore, implementing well the policies and regimes will be a condition to promote the construction deployment and practice of grassroots democracy.

Although there has been a priority interest in civil servants' policies for ethnic minority areas in the Central Highlands, there are still many limitations. For example, the recruitment policies of civil servants still apply the common regime for all civil servants. The arrangement of professional work is not reasonable, inconsistent with the capacity, profession, specialty, leadership and management ability of the civil servants in ethnic minority areas. The land priority policies which create conditions for civil servants, especially ethnic minority civil servants to

stabilize long-term working and living have been implemented with many limitations.

The unreasonable impacts of these policies and regimes on civil servants are barriers which affect directly the quality of democracy practice in the Central Highlands, fail to develop their capacity, arise negativities, reduce enthusiasm for work, and be lacking in striving to complete successfully the assigned tasks of civil servants. Now, a group of civil servants face many difficulties in their lives, especially ethnic minority civil servants. Therefore, the issue of policies and regimes for grassroots civil servants in the Central Highlands needs to be concerned.

Firstly, there must be a priority for civil servants working in poor areas. We should not apply a common policy for all civil servants in different areas, which is not reasonable.

Secondly, there should be a certain financial support for the grassroots civil servants working in ethnic minority areas and border areas, which creates better conditions for them to feel secure to work and learn, have a strong attachment to villages and hamlets, and strive to become good and dedicated cadres for citizen

Thirdly, it would be better to pay attention to the arrangement of professional work in order to be suitable to the capacity, professional ability, leadership and management ability of the grassroots civil servants. It is no use disposing wrongly their trained occupations, causing difficulties for them in their work when they are on duty.

Fourthly: There should be a reasonable land policy which creates conditions for grassroots public servants, especially ethnic minority civil servants to stabilize their long-term life. Therefore, they have opportunities to strive for their work, bring their enthusiasms and abilities to be wholehearted with the assigned work, actively implement the grassroots democratic forms, contribute to build a clean and strong government which operate effectively and reduce bureaucracy, administrative orders, raise awareness and responsibility to serve the people. It is exactly what Harold Hongju Koh, a law Professor at Yale University (USA) wrote in the book named "The right to democracy, towards a community of democracy": "*The goal of democratic construction not only stop at political behaviors but also makes democracy be a directional element for every human behavior in society*" [26].

3. Conclusion

Analyzing in detail the barriers to the implementation process of democracy in the provinces of the Central Highlands of Vietnam, we found that there are three groups of barriers which strongly influence the implementation process of grassroots democracy including *barriers from economic, psychological and traditional cultural elements of ethnic groups in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, barriers from population characteristics, educational level and barriers from qualification, leadership and management ability of civil servants in the Central Highlands*. Thus, the existence of weaknesses and slow economic development, the problem of free emigration, backward habits, weak capacities and slow transition of

people as well as civil servants in the bureaucracy is one of the biggest and most direct barriers to the entire process of democratization in provinces of the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

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