Situation Analysis:
Emerging Gender Issues in Viet Nam during Economic Integration

by
Mekong Economics

for
NCFAW-UNDP-RNE Project VIE-01-015

May 2004
FOREWORD

This research paper was produced for the NCFAW-UNDP-RNE project VIE-01-015 Support to the National Machinery for the Advancement of Women to Mainstream Gender in National Policy and Planning. The research contributes to Output 2.2: "Increased understanding of emerging gender issues" of the NCFAW-UNDP-RNE project. The project commissioned an International Gender Consultant and team of Vietnamese national researchers from Mekong Economics Ltd. to undertake the research. This research is a macro-level situation analysis of current research findings into the impact of economic integration on Vietnamese people, especially women. The findings of this paper will contribute towards NCFAW recommendations to ministries and government agencies. The report provides recommendations focusing on Vietnamese women, informs the process for empirical research, on the gender impact of economic integration in the footwear and garment industries in Viet Nam, to be conducted in the following months and includes a bibliography of the emerging gender issues in economic integration. All views and recommendations expressed in the report are the consultants' views, and are not necessarily views supported by NCFAW.
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- International Labour Organisation
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Ministry of Education and Training
- International Organisation for Migration
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Ministry of Planning and Investment
- UNICEF
- UNIFEM
- World Health Organisation
- World Bank
# Table of Contents

Foreword ............................................................................................................................... 1  
Acknowledgments .............................................................................................................. 2  
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................... 3  
List of Tables ..................................................................................................................... 5  
List of Figures ................................................................................................................... 5  
Abbreviations and Acronyms ........................................................................................... 6  
Executive Summary .......................................................................................................... 7  

## Economic Integration and Global Gender Issues .......................................................... 13  
  Understanding Integration .............................................................................................. 15  
  Developing Countries have not been “Left behind” .......................................................... 15  
  Costs and Benefits of Integration ................................................................................ 17  
  Gender and Integration ................................................................................................ 19  

### Chapter 1: Trade ............................................................................................................. 21  
  1.1 Trade Policy ................................................................................................................. 21  
  1.2 Informal Labour Sector ............................................................................................... 24  
  1.3 Cash Crop Economy ..................................................................................................... 25  
  1.4 Summary of Gender Issues ....................................................................................... 28  
  1.5 Looking Forward ....................................................................................................... 28  

### Chapter 2: Technology and Education ..................................................................... 30  
  2.1 Equal Education .......................................................................................................... 30  
  2.2 Vocational Education, Agricultural Extension and Training Opportunities ............... 32  
  2.3 Technology Transfer ................................................................................................... 33  
  2.4 Summary of Gender Issues ....................................................................................... 34  
  2.5 Looking Forward ....................................................................................................... 35  

### Chapter 3: Governance ............................................................................................... 37  
  3.1 National Structural Changes ..................................................................................... 37  
  3.2 Public Administration Reform and the Private Sector .................................................. 39  
  3.3 Civil Society and Mass-Organisations ...................................................................... 41  
  3.4 Summary of Gender Issues ....................................................................................... 42  
  3.5 Looking Forward ....................................................................................................... 43  

### Chapter 4: Mobility and Migration ........................................................................... 44  
  4.1 Industrialisation .......................................................................................................... 44  
  4.2 Education Mobility .................................................................................................... 46  
  4.3 People Trafficking ..................................................................................................... 47  
  4.4 Summary of Gender Issues ....................................................................................... 48  
  4.5 Looking Forward ....................................................................................................... 49
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The high growth economies of the 1990s (ranked by GDP per capita) .................. 16
Table 2: Structure of merchandise exports and leading exported items, 1991-2001. .......... 22
Table 3: International Coffee Organisation estimates of Vietnamese coffee production and exports ................................................................. 26
Table 4: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and education .................................................... 31
Table 5: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and governance .................................................. 38
Table 6: Number of Vietnamese people exported as labour in the period 1991-2003. ......... 44
Table 7: Male and female headed household average monthly income and living costs..... 52
Table 8: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and labour .......................................................... 53
Table 9: Changes in poverty by socio-economic characteristics ........................................... 58
Table 10: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and health ............................................................ 61

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The "causal story" of economic integration ............................................................. 14
Figure 2: Rice production in the past 5 years (Agroviet 2003) ............................................. 25
Figure 3: Poverty reduction by rural-urban disaggregation ................................................. 59
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAV</td>
<td>Action Aid Viet Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>Computer Aided Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>Computer Aided Manufacturing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoC</td>
<td>Code of Conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>EPZ</td>
<td>Export Processing Zones</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>Foreign Investment Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSO</td>
<td>General Statistical Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCMC</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immune-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICFTU</td>
<td>International Confederation of Free Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILSSA</td>
<td>Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IZ</td>
<td>Industrial Zones</td>
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<tr>
<td>JV</td>
<td>Joint Venture</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDC</td>
<td>Least Developed Country</td>
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<td>LEFASO</td>
<td>Leather and Footwear Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>Multi-Fibre Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOLISA</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>NCFAW</td>
<td>National Committee for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>OHS</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety</td>
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<td>OT</td>
<td>Over time</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Public Administration Reform</td>
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<td>RNE</td>
<td>Royal Netherlands Embassy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOE</td>
<td>State Owned Enterprise</td>
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<td>STI</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Infections</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VBLI</td>
<td>Viet Nam Business Link Initiatives</td>
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<td>VCCI</td>
<td>Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>VGCL</td>
<td>Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>VITAS</td>
<td>Viet Nam Textile Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>VND</td>
<td>Viet Nam Dong</td>
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<tr>
<td>VWU</td>
<td>Viet Nam Women's Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEIJC</td>
<td>Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background
This report provides a situation analysis summarising the essential findings from research into gender issues during economic integration. The report also revisits the existing gender issues and disparities between men and women in Viet Nam and investigates how these disparities may be reduced or widened with economic integration. Conscious of the lack of research coming out of Viet Nam specifically focused on gender impacts due to economic integration, the authors draw on international research to flag possible gender impacts and lessons learned from other countries, which may be relevant to Viet Nam. The issues presented in this document provide a useful starting point for policy makers, organisations and individuals working on gender and economic integration. The situation analysis further provides a comprehensive bibliography, a list of Internet sites, practical recommendations and focus areas requiring additional research.

Objectives
The overall objective of the research is to undertake a comprehensive literature search and review of all relevant research studies and reports addressing the impact of economic integration on Vietnamese people, especially women. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

1) Contribute knowledge and understanding on the disparities between men, women, and the critical gender issues in the economic integration, and

2) Highlight all issues and recommendations for macro-level policy attention in a synthesis report.

Findings
Economic integration has differential impacts on the men and women, boys and girls who comprise Vietnamese society. One way of viewing these differential impacts is through a comparative investigation of the changing gender roles and relations during economic integration.

Economic integration is a complex topic and its effects on a country can not be analysed using simplistic dichotomies such as good or bad, positive or negative. While economic integration empowers entrepreneurial women selling fabrics in HCMC's markets, other women and men have experienced integration through the loss of jobs in state-owned enterprises, with women being the first employees made redundant. For these men and women, the vulnerability that comes with being a merchant trader on the streets of Ha Noi - underemployment, and a decline in social class - are now part of their every day lives.

Economic integration has also improved the lives of many young men and women in the cities. Compared to their parents' generation, these youth experience higher standards of living, better education, more career options due to privatisation and increased diversity in the labour market and equal gender relations with their peers. However, young ethnic men and women living in rural areas may experience fewer life chances due to isolation, poverty, continuing poor levels of education and the need to migrate to cities to work in factories or as labourers. Therefore, issues of class, age, education, poverty and geography nuance the gender impacts of economic integration in Viet Nam.

With these issues at the fore, this report provides a macro understanding of Viet Nam's experiences of economic integration through the examination of six separate, yet
interconnected areas: trade, mobility, technology, poverty, governance and labour. Each area cuts across sectors including agriculture, health, education, law and politics while intertwining gender, ethnicity and the changing culture of Viet Nam as core themes throughout the report.

**Looking Forward**

This situation analysis reflects the issues facing men and women in Viet Nam during economic integration and the subsequent outcomes or effects on gender equality. As a practical measure, the report suggests recommendations for each section. Because the recommendations are based on secondary sources including research findings and literature and not primary research, the authors have drawn on recommendations that reflect the international agendas on improving gender equity, such as the first world conference for women Beijing +5 Platform for Action, CEDAW and those promoted by the ILO. However, where relevant the report also focuses on improvements and strategies that can be made by Viet Nam. Some are new while others build on national strategies including those developed by the NCFAW, ministries, mass-organisations and international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed at the UN Millennium Summit. Many of the recommendations reflect the lack of gender analysis, base line data and sex disaggregated data on the existing impacts of economic integration on men and women.

While the recommendations have been made for NCFAW to use as a guide, specific recommendations refer to ministries including MARD, MONRE and MPI. Where possible the researcher has identified the relevant ministries specifically.

**Trade**

1. Conduct gender research into the experiences of male and female workers in EPZs and State enterprises in Viet Nam.
2. Conduct research into the experiences of male and female workers engaged in different employment within the informal sector.
3. Develop policies that respond to the needs of, and provide support to, the primarily female labour force in factories and cash cropping.
4. Identify the impact of trade liberalisation and trade policies on small markets.
5. Ongoing gender analysis of the impacts trade expansion according to industry, sector and geographic/regional location.
6. Translate and disseminate gender-related documents to all stakeholder groups working on trade.
7. Incorporate baseline sex disaggregated data on the Vietnamese men and women working in areas of trade.
9. Empirical studies on the different roles of men and women during integration in focus areas, for example the coffee industry.
10. Organise gender equity events at trade fairs or industry gatherings to raise awareness and promote women in trade.
11. Involve women and incorporate gender analysis in the development of trade policy.
Technology and Education

12. Establish targets for increasing the number of ethnic minority teachers in Viet Nam, especially at secondary and tertiary levels.

13. Set targets for increasing the participation of women in disciplines where women comprise less than forty per cent.

14. Work with MARD and other ministries to provide extension services and farming technologies specifically targeted towards women’s agricultural needs, which are designed for and delivered to women.

15. Formulate a strategy to encourage and support women to become educated and employed in the field of science and technology.

16. Using the media and other communication technology to design and implement a propaganda campaign aiming to break stereotypes of roles and occupations for women and men.

17. Encourage more male teachers in primary school educational institutions.

18. Develop research projects and build into National Strategies and Plans on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS women's health issues, for example tuberculosis and reproductive health, as a way of highlighting the inequalities between men and women in Viet Nam in terms of e.g. access, utilisation and quality of services. Address issues of public and private health care services on gender. Address issues of use of pesticides and insecticides on women's (reproductive) health.

19. Working with MARD and other ministries to build upon MARD the action plan for gender to provide rural and poor women more opportunities to access and control technology and information.

20. Use ICT as a tool in reaching the third Millennium Development Goal on promoting gender equality and empowering women.

21. Develop IEC materials to change the cultural preference for male children.

22. Establish telecentres or other distance learning centres to facilitate men's and women's equal access to information and education.

23. Identify and provide appropriate technological support in areas that would practically reduce women's workloads in order to meet more practical needs, for example, access to drinking water, fuel and childcare centres.

24. Improve resources and curriculum to ensure that school books, classes and teachers behaviour challenge gender stereotypes and that teachers receive gender awareness training at teachers’ training colleges and in-service training.

25. Review educational policies to better promote girls' education and ensure that additional support is available for families with female children, through Parent Teacher Associations or national programmes in the context of the National Education for All (EFA) Plan.

26. Conduct a gender analysis of Internet and PC use among men and women in Viet Nam.
Governance

27. Conduct several small yet strategic research projects that will add to the empirical evidence on, and understanding of, the links between gender and good governance and capacity building of gender expertise and networking.

28. Continue to implement the international agendas working towards gender equality including CEDAW, Beijing +5 and the rights of the child ICPD" (International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, 1992, where reproductive health and -rights were agreed upon).

29. Support PACCOM to develop and update a database, which documents the efforts of INGOs, mass organisations and national machineries to meet the needs of women in integration.

30. Raise awareness of senior public servants to the relevance of gender issues in macroeconomics, economic integration, the need for gender responsive budgeting and web sites or "best practices".

31. Institutionalise the development and implementation of gender budgets within government ministries and agencies as part of the Public Expenditure Reforms.

32. Establish and enforce quotas for women's participation in all high-level decision making bodies and special committees including the National Assembly, People's Council and People's Committee.

33. Establish a system of rotating co-chairs in all People's Committees whereby women and men take turns.

34. Support the institution of an independent "ombudsperson" where people (men and women) can address their complaints and grievances in an objective and non-threatening manner.

Mobility and Migration

35. Raise awareness among civil society of the demand for short-term unskilled labour and inform men and women of the costs and benefits of this kind of employment.

36. Provide additional support and funding to national and international organisations that work towards regulating and protecting the rights of men and women who move between national and international borders, as legal or illegal migrants.

37. Design and conduct gender and migration awareness training in provincial areas for disadvantaged men and women who migrate within provinces or to cities.

38. Train policy makers on the relationship between migration trends, gender and economics in the Asia-Pacific region.

39. Train policy makers on gender responsive policy solutions that will meet different migration / poverty situations.

40. Identify and promote local and international migration options that alleviate poverty, particularly in rural areas.

41. Assess the relative importance of remittances from domestic and international sources as a means to alleviate poverty, particularly in local areas of origin of migration.
42. Disaggregate baseline statistics on local and international migration by sex, socio-economic circumstances and geography to develop a clear understanding of migrants.

43. Pilot new policies relevant to local and international migration, which are gender responsive in their design and implementation.

44. Develop information campaigns using the media and technologies such as the Internet to improve advocacy and to provide local migrants with a voice.

45. Develop partnerships with neighbouring countries and active cooperation with regional networks fighting trafficking women and children, such as GAATW (Global Alliance against Traffic in Women; Bangkok, Thailand). Through these partnerships share data on the movement of people and build a composite picture of population movement in the region.

46. Develop projects or interventions, which address and monitor migration and health concerns at regional, national and sub-national levels.

47. Promote and retain skills within Viet Nam through the establishment of bilateral and multilateral agreements related to foreign recruitment.

48. Establish programmes to better prepare people intending to migrate within or outside of Viet Nam, and their families, with basic skills, awareness of their rights and obligations in different economic and cultural contexts.

49. Work with NGOs and mass organisations to develop interventions for the families of those left behind, particularly spouses and children, with a view to collecting information on, and designing policies to support, those who may suffer materially and emotionally.

**Labour**

50. Publish and promote the NCFAW guide to gender mainstreaming terminology.

51. Publish a guide to the ILO standards for ministries, factories and mass organisations like the VWU at all levels (including central, provincial, district and commune).

52. Promote the establishment of networks and industry clubs for professional women and entrepreneurs.

53. Advocate to the government of Viet Nam including the Communist Party committees and People’s Committees to enforce the ILO standards and the Vietnamese labour laws.

54. Investigate the degree of control women, especially young single women, have over their earnings from participating in economic integration.

55. Monitor the application of the national and international labour codes at the local level with government officers and party members.

56. Investigate and reduce the gender gap in wages and salaries between men and women.

57. Review the social support system to enable women and men to balance work and family responsibilities, and build careers.

58. Support and promote the development of CSR (corporate social responsibility) projects and OHS (occupational health and safety) projects in factories or workplaces in Viet Nam.
59. Change the maternity leave laws so they recognise a man's role as a parent, and his right to paternity, or family leave.

60. Change maternity leave laws to incorporate the rights of contract workers and provide state compensation for loss of income during maternity leave.

61. Develop awareness programmes to prepare women to assert their rights and demand equal opportunities and wages in the workplace.

**Poverty**

62. Campaign to raise awareness and to enforce laws, which are aimed at ensuring women's access to credit, economic resources and entitlements to inheritances and land ownership.

63. Through the work of the CPRGS develop policies, which reflect and support the heterogeneity of the large number of poor households with low incomes, including some female headed households, ethnic minority groups, the aged and invalids.

64. Strengthen micro credit programs for rural and ethnic women through lender education programmes, clearer policies and financial management systems.

65. Work with MARD and MONRE to identify and promote roles for women farmers and ethnic women in managing natural resources, farming and natural disaster mitigation.

66. Develop gender responsive plans and budgets in government ministries, which focus on strengthening policies to assist women and give examples of already developed action plans.

67. Work with MARD, MONRE and VWU to ensure that women are involved in the review and improvement of policies on land users' rights certificates, agricultural extension projects, provisions of credit and household property.

68. Work with the VWU and MARD to increase the capacity of rural and ethnic women and their access to training to upgrade skills and participate in diversified economic activities in agriculture.

69. Increase the availability and accessibility of family planning options and information to young women and men.

70. Develop and IEC campaign on the important role that single and married women can play in reducing the transfer of HIV/AIDS and other STIs. The campaign should include information on the different modes of transmission including sex, IVDU and mother to child.
Families used their recent earnings from private enterprises, land-use sales, or a child working abroad, to replace tin-roofed shacks and backyard chicken coops with tall, pastel-coloured, concrete “villas”. A new class of urban consumers drove Honda motorbikes and filled their houses with large screen TVs and Japanese sound systems. Well-groomed businesswomen, in high-heels and fashionable jeans, sold imported goods from an endless procession of storefronts and market stalls throughout the city. Foreign investors built gleaming business hotels beside stark soviet-style apartment complexes, and the first tollway appeared, cutting through suburban rice paddies, speeding visitors to and from the airport.

(Pettus 2003:3-4)

The impact of international integration on an economy is a debated issue, and as noted above, while the benefits greatly exceed the costs, those costs are not inconsequential. To understand the impact on gender relations is even more complex. The problem in analysing this issue is that a causal relationship between international integration can be made with structural economic changes, and all of these can be analysed using a gender perspective. To avoid the situation analysis becoming an analysis of Viet Nam from a gender perspective, structure is required, through an examination of the causal relationships.

This report therefore finds its structure in Figure 1: The “causal story” of economic integration. While increased trade (the flow of goods, services, and information) is the immediate consequence of “opening up” (lower trade protection), this leads to the specialisation of economic production and an increase in the rate of technological change and economic development. Over time, these factors “push” structural changes in the economy, such changes are evident in the shifts in labour from rural to urban areas (or in Viet Nam the movement of migrant labour from rural to rural areas), and the changing nature of employment as more people enter formal employment in factories or elsewhere. With this change, the percentage of farmers and self-employed in the total workforce gradually falls. The nature of the government also changes with public administration to guarantee a more efficient and “business friendly” society. Governance structures move towards international norms of regulation, taxation and representation. Wealth is the outcome of this whole process, including a rapidly growing urban middle-class and lower levels of absolute poverty. However, those people who are not connected to these global markets are at risk of being “left behind”.

How do we study this whole complex causal story? In this report we have highlighted six key features: Trade, Technology (as the causes of economic integration); Mobility, Governance and Labour (as symptomatic of the structural changes brought about by economic integration), and poverty reduction (as an outcome of economic integration). These six features are discussed in the following chapters. For each feature, or “aspect” of integration, we have surveyed the existing gender related literature about Viet Nam, and where necessary other countries, leading to a summary of policy-relevant recommendations. We need to emphasise that this is a synthesis exercise, or a form of literature review, and not an extensive piece of primary research. An important objective of the exercise was to summarise the extensive existing gender literature about Viet Nam as a base for future research. That future research begins with an empirical research project investigating emerging gender issues in the footwear and garment industry in Viet Nam, due to be completed in August 2004.

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1 The report was developed by the International Team Leader in a twenty-day period with various advisory inputs and research assistance.
Figure 1: The "causal story" of economic integration

The Dynamics of Economic Integration

Allows/facilitates:
- International Trade
- FDI/ODA
- Gains from Trade
- Technology Transfer
- Interactions Amongst People
- Investment Capital

Leading to:
- Pressure to be world competitive
- Pressures to specialise production
- Transfer of Ideas/Methods
- Cultural and Socio-political ideas/values
- Purchase consumer/technologies (information flows)

Causes economic structural change in:
- "Flexible" economy
- "Market-friendly" governance and public admin
- Mobile factors of production
- Labour relation/Conditions

Causes socio-political structural economic change in:
- Gender roles/Traditions
- Role of government in society & economy
- Civil society

Produces (outcomes):
- Increased average incomes
- Those "left behind"
- Changed income distribution
- Urbanisation & industrialisation

"TRADE" is the process that leads to "TECHNOLOGY" transformation, causing increased "MOBILITY" and "GOVERNANCE" and "LABOUR" structural change, with a "POVERTY" impact outcome; all with gender implications.
Understanding Integration

Recent years have witnessed an unprecedented debate on economic integration and globalisation. Recent financial crises ranging from Asia to Russia, the failure of the Trade Round in Seattle, hot debates at the UNCTAD-10 Conference in Bangkok, and the cancelled Cancun meeting have brought the discussion on globalisation to a new peak of rhetoric and passion.

Yet what is economic integration? Is it good or bad for human development? How does it affect the developing countries? Is it something new, or part of a longer historical process? Economic integration is a process of change. It is a process that increases economic and other interactions between countries due to persistently declining international transaction costs. It is typically defined by its consequences, but to understand the process we must look at the causes.

Two main forces are behind the rapid pace of economic integration. The first is rapid technological change that provides new means of transport and communication. Such advances have significantly reduced the costs and increased the speed of transporting goods and people, and of communication between people, thus effectively "shrinking" time and space. Greater sophistication in the international financial system has also reduced risks and transaction costs. The second driving force is the latest wave of liberalisation, which is steadily lowering all kinds of cross-border barriers, thereby facilitating the flow of goods, services, and ideas between nations.

Although this process of increased interactions amongst nations has been going on for centuries, after 1950 it became faster. Between 1950 and 1990, world trade increased an average of 5.8 per cent per year, compared to world output growth averaging 3.9 per cent (World Bank 1999a: 4). In the 1990s, however, the divergence became more marked. The traditional forces behind the steady rise in international transactions have been falling. A worldwide wave of trade and investment liberalisation is, however, another important factor behind globalisation in recent decades. In part this wave of trade has been spurred by the rejection of central planning and similar protectionist development models in many countries. The average tariff rate across all countries has fallen steadily from 40 per cent in 1940 to about 5 per cent in 1995 (Dicken 1998: 93). Economic integration is now also being driven by the dramatic rise in the quality, and declining cost of communications. Mobile phones, facsimile machines, and the Internet have introduced new communication choices. The worldwide number of Internet hosts increased from about 3 million in 1994 to over 50 million in 1999 (World Bank 1999a: 4). The increase in financial and capital flows across borders is both a cause and effect of this “information revolution”.

Thus, while economic integration may not be new, it is different: faster, and driven by new information-based technologies and liberalising reforms to exploit the comparative advantages of nations. It is also, arguably, becoming more inclusive. Integration and rapid growth are now features of China and India, where 32 per cent of the world’s people live.

Developing Countries have not been “Left behind”

As a group, developing countries have generally benefited from international trade and investment liberalisation and economic integration (perhaps with the exception of some African countries, partly due to HIV/AIDS epidemic). The world trade share of low-income countries, where 60 per cent of the world’s 5.9 billion people lived in 1998, increased marginally from 7.1 per cent in 1983 to 7.7 per cent in 1998 (Weitz and Lijane 1998). Of greater significance, is that during 1983-1998 the share of manufactures in total low-income country exports increased from 42 per cent to 75 per cent, suggesting a process of export-led industrialisation (ibid.). Economic integration has helped to finance this expansion in many developing countries. Total external resource flows to developing countries increased
from less than 1 per cent of GDP in the late 1980s to between 4.0 - 4.8 per cent during 1993-96 (ibid.).

More liberal and “open door” policies in many Asian countries have seen countries like Viet Nam surge ahead of most developing countries in recent decades. The “miracle” economies of Asia, while few in numbers and small in population, have shown that “catching up” within 40-50 years is possible, and all have done so through rapid integration into the world economy.

“Catching up”, however, requires GDP growth rates averaging over 6 per cent per annum. Table 1 shows most of the few countries that have been able to achieve such rates (and some who came close) during 1990-98. Important contributing factors to their success have been policies that encouraged higher-than-global rates of domestic saving and investment, and an “opening up” to world trade and investment. There are exceptions on all points, but generally, developing countries have only achieved high and sustained development by combining capacity building domestic policies, such as public administration reform or more specifically revisions of national labour codes, with “opening up”.

Table 1: The high growth economies of the 1990s (ranked by GDP per capita).

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<td>Ireland*</td>
<td>21,482</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore*</td>
<td>24,210</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea**</td>
<td>13,478</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>12,013</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile**</td>
<td>8,787</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia**</td>
<td>8137</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand***</td>
<td>5,456</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3,105</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World average</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*High-income economy, ** Upper-middle income economy, *** Lower-middle income economy, and the remainder are low-income economies (World Bank classifications).

Table 1 also shows some characteristics of “new globalisation”. First, the “winners” are spread throughout the world and not confined to one region. Second, the “winners” include both rich and poor countries, and most notably China and India. Moving from “self reliant” protectionism towards integration into the global economy, as indicated by the rising share of exports to GDP, explains much of their success in the 1990s.
Costs and Benefits of Integration

Integration may be regarded as a necessary but not sufficient condition for “catching up” to the human development levels of wealthier countries, but it also has its costs (see Box 1). In particular, while a country as a whole will gain, certain interest groups, especially the poor, will suffer from lower tariff rates, reduced non-tariff barriers, investment liberalisation, and overall increased competition. Moreover, integration and faster development imply faster rates of social and economic change. It is a process of enhanced “creative destruction”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1: The costs and benefits of economic integration from an economics perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits from trade liberalisation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short-term benefits due to better resource allocation based on comparative advantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economies of scale and product diversification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long-term (dynamic) gains through transfer of technology, knowledge and ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cost reductions due to learning-by doing, imitation, better access to markets, marketing channels, and cheap inputs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Efficiency gains through enhancing competition and removing rent seeking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits from financial liberalisation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short-term gains due to division of labour in providing new financial products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gains due to appropriate diversification of investments and new international investment opportunities; risk diversification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long-term gains due to competition in the financial markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New opportunities for external financing for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enforcing discipline for national policies: reducing inefficient investments, reinforce fiscal and monetary policy discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs and risks of trade and financial liberalisation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adjustment costs associated with restructuring the economy during the process of integration. For example, restructuring industries would be a cost of economic integration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disparities in income distribution may worsen if particular groups do not share in liberalisation benefits. This means that if there is already an income gap, this gap would widen with economic integration if the ‘losers’ are not compensated in some way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Temporary adverse impact on fiscal position due to tariff reduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Price and income instability from export markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Possible deteriorating terms of trade impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volatility of financial flows, especially short-term flows, increasing impact of international contagion and regional crises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Debt-dependency and aid-dependency risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduced autonomy in achieving macroeconomic targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The costs related to implementing policy reforms as a direct result of increased external pressure (eg. property rights, labour laws, and environmental regulations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The costs associated with meeting and maintaining international standards and practices to maximise efficiency gains (eg. accounting, valuation, Customs service, ISO ratings, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negative foreign social and cultural influences that reshape local habits and traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quicker environmental degradation (if no appropriate safeguards are in place).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the costs of integration for a country are in general far outweighed by the benefits, this is not true for all groups within that country. Most problems resulting from economic integration will be felt in the short-term. This is the main reason that steps towards “opening
up” are often hesitant and slow. When it does happen, however, liberalisation can bring
dramatic gains across the whole society with few exceptions, as happened in Viet Nam
under doi moi. The transitional costs, in terms of restructuring industries or coping with falling
tariff revenues, are only important in the short-run. The longer-run costs and consequences
are related to the new type of economy that has been created: it is now linked to the world.
Becoming linked to the global economy is the integration choice. It brings great benefits,
including the chance to “catch up”, but the main cost is in having to cope with an economy
that is changing faster, and one that is more susceptible to foreign influences: economic,
cultural and even ideological. While it is possible to draw a causal relationship between
cultural and ideological changes (including changes to gender relations) and economic
integration, it is more difficult to measure the impacts of such changes. Instead of advocating
for internationally reduced gender disparities with economic integration, this report addresses
both the possible positive and negative changes that may be associated with economic
integration.

The Asian financial crisis, which began in 1997, is probably the most obvious recent example
of the instability costs of globalisation. Those countries that had been steadily “catching up”
over the previous 30-40 years were the worst hit by the crisis. Those Asian economies that
escaped relatively unscathed were both particularly flexible and well-integrated (Taiwan,
Singapore), or were only weakly financially integrated (Viet Nam, Myanmar). Nevertheless,
the crisis-hit countries are bouncing back to pre-crisis rates of development, and with
stronger financial systems and improved corporate governance.² Such crises may indeed be
viewed as important to make tough policy reforms happen.

The world recession, that gained momentum in 2001, will slow global and therefore
Vietnamese rates of development. This cyclical event is temporary and does not constitute
an argument that the trend towards integration and convergence has changed. The
convergence trend, driven by ongoing falls in transaction costs, will ride over recessions and
maybe even wars during the next 50-100 years.

Concerns about the impact of global integration on national culture and society are generally
exaggerated. In many senses, doi moi has allowed a cultural revival in Viet Nam. A wealthier
economy and large numbers of foreign tourists have seen a revival in support for Vietnamese
architecture, music, traditions and religion. While a well-entrenched sense of culture and
nationalism is not going to be “blown away” by globalisation, it will certainly have an impact
on social change. Possible impacts as a result of economic integration and inevitable
urbanisation could be increased drug use, separation of families due to migration and
increased divorce rates.

Global integration does, however, bring with it a loss of political and economic policy
autonomy. When you join a team, you cannot play by your own rules. Abiding by the many
international rules and conventions, such as customs valuation or financial transaction
regulations, allows all countries to do business with each other more cheaply and efficiently.

More problematic is when market access becomes linked to particular policy reforms.
Bilateral and multilateral agreements may entail opening markets or making policy choices
that would not otherwise have happened. Typical instances involve tariff reductions, service
sector competition, labour and environmental regulations, and intellectual property rights.
These choices can prepare a country to engage more productively in the global marketplace,
but resistance by “losing” interest groups had precluded earlier reform. Viet Nam’s tariff
reduction obligations under the ASEAN Free Trade Area are an example where regional
cooperation is promoting “good policies”. Nevertheless, whether “good” or otherwise, the

² *Asia’s turnaround has been spectacular. The region’s emerging economies that were hit by the
1997-98 crisis grew three times as fast in 1999 as most analysts were forecasting only one year ago.
signing of such agreements is a sovereign choice by independent nations who assess that the benefits outweigh any costs.

**Gender and Integration**

As Viet Nam moves from a centrally planned system to a market-based economy, economic integration and liberalisation have definitely impacted on the lives of Vietnamese men and women, however, their contribution to the growth of the country should also be recognised.

Viet Nam's export-oriented production has played an important role in increasing employment for citizens. As globalisation and free trade occur, an increasing number of companies from industrialised countries are relocating manufacturing factories to less developed countries, like Viet Nam. In Viet Nam, companies can take advantage of low labour costs, newly created Industrial Parks, Industrial Zones and Export Processing Zones, all which encourage the export of manufactured goods from Viet Nam. The emphasis on export-oriented production has led to what Ghosh (1999) calls the “feminisation of employment” whereby women, not men, are deemed a more “productive” labour force because they are cheaper and more flexible to hire and fire. However, some advocates of women working in the manufacturing industry assert that women are more “nimble-fingered” than men, making women more physically “suitable” to manufacturing work. The majority of the labour force manufacturing textiles, clothing and footwear in Viet Nam is female. In Viet Nam, women account for 81 per cent of the labour force in the footwear industry and 82 per cent in the apparel industry (GSO 2000).

Vietnamese women are obtaining more jobs, particularly in factories, as the export production expands. However, there is also a “feminisation of unemployment” (Ghosh 1999) because women have flexible contracts and can be easily let go. With a large, unskilled female labour supply, there is always someone else willing to replace a factory worker. The volatility of globalisation and economic integration can have negative impacts on low-skilled male and female employees. Currently, Viet Nam's garment and footwear industries are booming, however, what will happen once the quotas on China's textiles and clothing are phased out by 2005? The membership of China to the WTO will speed up the already strong growth of exports in that massive country and some factories may relocate to China from Viet Nam. To some extent this will "crowd out" Viet Nam, particularly while Viet Nam awaits its own WTO membership, but it also increases Chinese demand for Vietnamese products. In the garments industry, of greater importance are the ramifications of the US trade restrictions on Viet Nam and the ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA). This should lead to a temporary loss of export orders going to Viet Nam during 2004-2006, but growth should resume thereafter on a level playing field. The long-term challenge will be for Vietnamese enterprises to "move up the value chain", and gain more value-added from production by direct exports.

If Viet Nam can compete with China in export production, impacts may be found in other areas. For example, there are different gender issues innate in the impacts globalisation has on technology or mobility. Similar to export production, technology can create jobs for women and increase their income; but it can also replace the unskilled, manual jobs. If the second is true, then unskilled women will probably be the first to lose their jobs since they do not have the education or skills to obtain technical jobs. The increase in the establishment of factories in the city has resulted in changes to the rural landscape of Viet Nam - families, farms and life choices. While young rural and men from ethnic minority groups may choose to migrate to the city as labourers, young women are also migrating hundreds of kilometres away from home to work in garment and footwear factories.

Viet Nam cannot isolate itself from economic integration and world trade. However, how does Viet Nam intend to prepare for the future? How will Viet Nam deal with the shocks of the world economy? How will Viet Nam support some of its disadvantaged groups – women, ethnic minorities and unskilled labourers – to integrate into the world economy? How will Viet
Nam help these groups to negotiate strategies that could ease the negative side effects of economic integration, such as labour laws, higher education and training or occupation diversification?

**Box 2: Definitions of Gender terms**

**Sex disaggregated data**: Quantitative statistical information on the differences between men and women, boys and girls for a particular issue or in a specific area. Looking data for individuals and breaking it down by the sex of the individuals (e.g. data of life expectancy, school enrolment, smoking prevalence divided by men and women). Sex-disaggregated data shows us if there is a difference in a given situation for women and men, girls and boys, but it doesn’t tell us why the difference exists.

**Gender equality**: Women and men’s similarities and differences are recognised and equally valued. Men and women enjoy equal status, recognition and consideration.

Women and men enjoy: 1) Equal conditions to realise their full potential and ambitions; 2) Equal opportunities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from society’s resources and development; 3) Equal freedoms and quality of life; and 4) Equal outcomes in all aspects of life.

**Gender division of labour**: This concept looks at the different tasks and responsibilities undertaken by either women or men: who does what, when, how, for how long, etc. and the social recognition of labour. The allocation of activities on the basis of sex is learned and clearly understood by all members of a given community/society.

The **triple role of women** The role of women includes the paid work that women do, and unpaid work such as the reproductive role as a mother, and the domestic roles, which are often a woman's responsibility. Productive work (production of goods and services for consumption by the household or for income), Reproductive work (bearing and rearing children, domestic work and maintenance of the household) and Community work (provision and maintenance of resources used by everyone – water, health care, education, leadership). Men tend to be more involved in Community and Productive work.
CHAPTER 1: TRADE

1.1 Trade Policy

Since 1986, the government of Viet Nam has been committed to an outward-oriented economic policy. This process of economic renovation, or *doi moi*, has resulted in the devolution of power from the State, to private and state owned enterprises (SOE) and an expanding acceptance of the role of foreign investment as fundamental to economic growth. According to Niimi et al (2002) other key factors in this approach include:

- Participation in regional and bilateral trading agreements;
- Rationalisation of the exchange rate;
- The replacement of many quantitative barriers (quotas) with tariffs;
- Reduction in, although maintenance of tariffs; and
- An increased openness to foreign investment, including the creation of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Industrial Zones (IZs).

By 2000, Viet Nam had developed trade agreements with 57 nations, normalised relations with the USA through the cessation of the eighteen-year trade embargo and developed a partnership with the EU. Viet Nam has also become a member of APEC and ASEAN, as well as a GATT observer nation. The impacts of these partnerships have been highly visible in the import and export quotas, the lowering of duty, and export taxes and a general move towards relaxing of trade barriers. The de-collectivisation of agriculture and the granting of land rights and property rights have further allowed individual farmers to enter the trade market. This, in turn, has led to a move away from subsistence farming and towards intensified agriculture and cash cropping.

While the trade reforms have enabled Viet Nam to integrate into the global economy, they have also assisted in boosting the domestic economy. The domestic impact of trade can be measured through a substantial reduction in the level of poverty (Haughton *et al* 1999, Justina and Litchfield 2002, Glewwe 2003). In the 1990s, despite the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997, Viet Nam experienced an annual average real growth in GDP of between 7 per cent and 8 per cent. Further, inflation dropped from 67.1 per cent in 1990 to 0.1 percent in 1999 (Niimi *et al* 2002). While changing the economic conditions in Viet Nam, trade liberalisation has also altered the profile of employment patterns and conditions, along with industry composition and focus.

Moving from protectionism towards integration into the global economy, as indicated by the rising share of exports to GDP, explains much of the above countries’ success in the 1990s, including Viet Nam’s success. Before *doi moi*, Viet Nam was a net importer of rice, however, by the end of the 1990s, Viet Nam became the world’s second largest rice exporter, after Thailand. Exploiting gains from trade has also seen Viet Nam progressively increase the quality, range and quantity of exports. From 1990-1998, exports grew at an average of 28 per cent, with trade equaling 76 per cent of the GDP in 1998. The increase in exports coincided with a shift away from the agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors towards manufacturing, handicrafts and the production of light-industrial goods. Textiles, clothing and footwear are now among Viet Nam’s leading export products. In 1998, Viet Nam’s textile and apparel sector accounted for 15.5 per cent, while the footwear industry accounted for 11 per cent of Viet Nam's total exports (see table 2). The only export greater than textiles, footwear and garments was crude oil. In 2003, textiles and garment exports maintained a high growth rate with a value of 3.6 billion USD (GSO 2003). This is an increase by 31.9 per cent since
2002. The implementation of the US-Viet Nam Bilateral Trade Agreement created this strong growth (ibid.). It should be noted that since May 2003, exports of textiles and garments to the US have been subject to the quota system under the Bilateral Textiles and Garments Agreement.

Table 2: Structure of merchandise exports and leading exported items, 1991-2001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining industry % of total exports</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing % of total exports</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural products % of total exports</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major exports (million dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>129*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashew nuts</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>546*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>337*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Products</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>1,479</td>
<td>1,216*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>119*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crude oil</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>1,346</td>
<td>1,423</td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>2,092</td>
<td>3,503</td>
<td>2,792*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles and clothes</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>1,503</td>
<td>1,351</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>1,893</td>
<td>1,707*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>1,002</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>1,527*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers and Electronics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>522*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: GSO (2002), IMF (2002a) and adapted from Vo Tri Thanh et al. (2001), Table 2.
Note: * For 2001, January-October only.

However, there is a negative side to trade liberalisation. While Viet Nam's bilateral trade agreement with the USA can be viewed as a stepping stone to Viet Nam's inclusion into the WTO, a critical analysis of the BTA (which does not cover textiles and textile products) argues that the USA will get wide market access to Viet Nam's financial, telecommunications, distribution, audio-visual, legal, accounting, engineering, computer, market research, construction, educational, health and tourism markets. Unable to keep up with the international competition, local Vietnamese competitors run the risk of being forced out of business (Chowdry 2002). Conversely, Cambodia's agreement with the USA on textile products demonstrates how a bi-lateral agreement can lead to success because the agreement upholds the Cambodian labour laws protecting workers, while increasing quotas and economic growth (ibid.).

While much has been written on Viet Nam's trade policy reforms there have been no gender responsive analyses (McCarty 1999, Institute of Economics and International Development Research Centre 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, Lord 2002, Do 2003). The relationship between trade policy and gender is complex. Typically, trade has been viewed as 'gender blind' or
‘gender neutral’ (Women and Gender Institute, International Gender and Trade Network 2000, Cagatay 2001, van Staveren 2002, Elias 2003). Until recently, both men and women have been viewed as part of a homogenous labour resource. However, trade policies may produce vastly different consequences for men and women. According to Cagatay (2001), gender inequalities in society mediate the relationship between trade policies on the one hand and the outcome of these policies in the other. Therefore, not only does the process and experience of trade liberalisation impact on gender inequalities, gender inequalities themselves may negatively influence trade performance, thus the very goal of trade liberalisation - economic growth - is defeated. Just as globalisation and economic integration is a complex issue, having differential impacts on people of different class, age, gender and ethnicity, so too is trade (Sarker and Niyogi De 2002).

Trade and gender issues exist at the policy level down to the sexual segregation of labour markets. International trade organisations have been criticised for fostering a patriarchal culture (Cagatay 2001, van Staveren 2002, Elias 2003, Shiva 2004). In Viet Nam, the transition from economic subsidies and social "gender equality" to the demands of a patriarchal, market-dependent household is challenging the culture of Vietnamese society and the traditional notions of masculinity and femininity (Pettus 2003:174). This patriarchal approach to trade does not consider the different ways that men and women negotiate their lives during economic integration. Instead, trade policy is developed and revised using a "one size fits all" philosophy. While it is true that male leaders often control the macroeconomics of trade at a policy level, women working as professionals, agriculturists, labourers and merchant traders directly engage with the policies in their working lives. People oriented and gender responsive trade policies reflect the needs of different groups within society, including women, but also the informal sector, ethnic minority people and small-scale farmers.

Further research and baseline data is necessary to assess the different ways in which men and women participate in, control and access, trade. Gender responsive analyses of gender are informed by the following themes:

- Men and women are affected differently by trade policies and performance, owing to their different locations and command over resources within the economy.
- Gender based inequalities impact differently on trade policy outcomes depending on the types of economy and sector, with the result that trade liberalisation policies may not yield expected results.
- Gender analysis is essential to the formulation of trade policies that enhance, rather than hinder, gender equality and human development (Cagatay 2001:3).
- Gender based analysis of the effects of economic integration needs to address whether trade reforms and the resulting patterns of trade work to ‘perpetuate, accentuate or erode existing gender inequalities’ (Cagatay 2001 19). Conducting a gender analysis of economic integration provides the base line data which makes it possible to demonstrate how gender inequities have a negative impact on economic reform and economic growth.

As Viet Nam becomes more integrated in the global economy these considerations should be held in mind when analysing and developing trade policies which ensure equal benefit for men and women. Through its membership in APEC, Viet Nam can benefit from the interesting analysis and work that APEC are doing in the area of women and trade and economics. NCFAW have assisted with the development of the Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC. The Framework institutionalises gender analysis in APEC, the collection of sex-disaggregated data and advocates for the participation of women in APEC.
1.2 Informal Labour Sector

In Viet Nam doi moi saw an increase in the number of citizens engaged in the informal sector (Vu and Tran 1999, Pettus 2003). The informal sector includes, "cottage-industry" productions (for example, handicrafts, broom manufacturing or even paper-making), postcard sellers and shoe shiners, food vendors and the many women and men who pepper the city streets selling their wares from baskets. There are no reliable statistics on the size of the informal sector in Viet Nam due to its disorganisation and the number of workers who are not enumerated in national statistics. Some workers travel to cities as casual workers but return to the village at night, while others migrate to the city as labourers.

Economic integration impacts on the existing workers in the informal sector through legitimating trade activities, however, in Viet Nam this sector is still viewed through a lens of social and Confucian traditions (Pettus 2003:144). Traditionally, the informal sector was considered to be an economic stopgap, providing a transitional or supplementary form of income (ibid.). Consequently, workers in the informal sector have traditionally been treated with suspicion and as subordinate to those citizens engaged in "official" forms of work (ibid.). A discussion of economic integration, gender and the informal sector is included in this report because economic integration - characterised by steep competition, transition, privatisation and capitalism - could dramatically effect the number of workers in the informal sector and their futures. Due to the formalisation of trade relations and the labour market both locally and internationally, the informal sector may thrive as an alternative option for the unemployed, underemployed or small business owner / operator. Internationally, an expansion of the informal sector has been forecast for China as they join the WTO (UNDP China 2003: 51). Women will be directly affected because they comprise the majority of workers in the informal sector, vulnerable to poor working conditions and little job security (ibid.).

In Viet Nam, men, women and children are engaged in discrete occupations within the informal sector. For example, men usually work as xe om or cyclo drivers (taxis), traders of hardware and certain foods, and labourers. Women work as seamstresses, neighbourhood merchant traders, selling food, fruit and vegetables, or as sex workers and domestic helpers (CAW and HomeNet 2001, Pettus 2003:144). Young girls are also employed as domestic help, but both boys and girls work as postcard or souvenir sellers, beggars and shoe shiners. This segregation of labour by age and sex often leads to the establishment of enclaves of informal workers in cities (Standing 1997:60).

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**Box 3: Mai’s story**

Mai is a 36-year-old street trader who sells rice porridge from her small kiosk. Her husband was a brick maker but when the work ran out he quickly descended into a cycle of unemployment and drunkenness. Since Mai retired from a factory job in 1990, she is struggling to subsist at the bottom end of the local economy. Even by working 12-hour days cooking and selling food she barely earns enough to support her family of four. At the end of each week she has to repay the debt to cover the cost of supplies. Mai has just enough to feed her children and pay her children's school fees. (Adapted from Pettus 2003:170)

Women working in the informal sector, who have been widowed, divorced, abandoned, or the wives of veterans or unemployed men are often the primary wage earners in their households (see box 3) (Pettus 2003:144). The uncertain nature of their income and the endurance required to continue working in the informal sector places them in a disadvantaged position during economic integration. However, although the informal sector can be analysed in terms of gender issues, the men, women and children who work as merchant traders all comprise a disadvantaged group. Workers in the informal sector currently experience poor working conditions, receive no support from unions or associations and no workplace benefits or leave (Standing 1997:59). With economic integration the situation facing informal workers could be worsened by the increasing economic burden placed on families who cannot compete with large private companies providing additional services and quality goods at competitive and fixed prices. This economic burden could
detrimentally affect the stability within the household, contributing to increasing levels of divorce and domestic violence (Pettus 2003:144). There is a need for further analysis into the experiences and rights of workers in the informal sector.

1.3 Cash Crop Economy

According to statistics, agriculture accounts for 63 per cent of employment in Viet Nam (FES 2003). Historically, women in Viet Nam have always worked in the agricultural sector and during the early years of the American War these women were considered the "labour heroines" of the country (Pettus 2003:44). They worked under government slogans such as, "our hearts may stop beating, but our machines will not stop running" (ibid.). Today women engaged in agriculture, work an average of up to 8 hours a day longer than their male counterparts (UN Viet Nam 2002a). When household maintenance and care giving is included in the equation, rural women average a 16-18 hour working day. As a consequence of long working hours, women are often severely physically overworked, especially those from rural areas, which may lead to ongoing health problems. Further, women enjoy less leisure time and time for learning experiences and training. Women from ethnic minority areas, in particular work in the agricultural sector. These women tend to have little time to devote to evening literacy classes even when they are available, and therefore remain isolated both geographically and socially. This inability for women to access education further perpetuates the cycle of women in unskilled or semi-skilled employment (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of gender inequities related to women's work issues). Female farmers are also less able to access credit and additional land for production (this issue is discussed in Chapter 3 Governance and Chapter 6 Poverty).

Afore mentioned gender issues associated with agriculture are further complicated as a result of cash cropping catalysed by economic integration. Economic integration may be characterised by an increase in FDI and ODA, however, more than half of the US$3.8 billion allocated for agriculture in 2002 was spent on growing forest products for wood and paper processing, promoting cash cropping and infrastructure development (MARD 2003). In Viet Nam there is a lack of money spent on agriculture as a source of livelihood or subsistence for small-scale farmers because of the small contribution agriculture makes to export turnover during economic integration (less than 10 per cent) (ibid.).

Economic integration has seen a shift away from subsistence farming and towards "industry crops" or cash crops. As seen in table 2, the key agricultural exports from Viet Nam during economic integration include rubber, cashew nuts, coffee, rice and marine products. By the end of 2002, the total land for growing rubber in Viet Nam reached 433,000 hectares resulting in Viet Nam becoming the fourth largest producer of rubber (Agroviet 2003). The statistics for commercial rice production (see Figure 2) demonstrate a similar trend, while seafood products are now the country's fourth largest export earner after crude oil, garment and footwear.

Figure 2: Rice production in the past 5 years (Agroviet 2003).
Coffee also became one of the most important export commodities of Viet Nam, returning export earnings ranging from US$400-600 million, providing between 6 per cent and 10 per cent of the national export revenues (ICARD and Oxfam 2002: 9).

Table 3: International Coffee Organisation estimates of Vietnamese coffee production and exports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Production (60 Kg bags)</th>
<th>Growth per cent</th>
<th>Total Exports (60 Kg bags)</th>
<th>Growth Percent</th>
<th>Production/Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>523 000</td>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>429 000</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>753 000</td>
<td>43.98</td>
<td>657 000</td>
<td>53.15</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1 040 000</td>
<td>38.11</td>
<td>942 000</td>
<td>43.38</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1 006 000</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>906 000</td>
<td>-3.82</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1 390 000</td>
<td>38.17</td>
<td>1 600 000</td>
<td>28.04</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1 308 000</td>
<td>-5.90</td>
<td>1 208 000</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2 340 000</td>
<td>78.90</td>
<td>2 090 000</td>
<td>73.01</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3 020 000</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>2 753 000</td>
<td>31.72</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3 532 000</td>
<td>16.95</td>
<td>3 365 000</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3 938 000</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td>3 688 000</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5 705 000</td>
<td>44.87</td>
<td>5 455 000</td>
<td>47.91</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>6 915 000</td>
<td>21.21</td>
<td>6 665 000</td>
<td>22.18</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>6 972 000</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>6 722 000</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>11 648 000</td>
<td>67.07</td>
<td>11 298 000</td>
<td>68.07</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14 775 000</td>
<td>26.85</td>
<td>14 275 000</td>
<td>26.35</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>12 600 000</td>
<td>-14.72</td>
<td>12 205 913</td>
<td>-14.49</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ICO 2002 (Jones 2002).

Although the high export statistics indicate a bright future for Viet Nam during economic integration, there are still problems - such as a need for modernising processing technology, farmers receiving low selling prices and the lack of access female farmers have to extension services and market information - plaguing the industry. The continued dependence on “industrial” crops or cash cropping and agriculture, further exposes Vietnamese farmers to the risk of wide fluctuation in international commodity prices, and to decreasing agricultural protectionism in wealthy markets who can meet tariffs and quotas3 (O’Neill, 2003).

The interrelationship between gender and cash cropping and economic integration is complex. The old issues related to women in agriculture in Viet Nam, as discussed earlier in this chapter remain, however, new issues such as women’s lack of access to technology and market information worsen the situation. On a positive note, economic integration has meant that in many cases women are earning more money. For some coffee producing families in the Central Highlands, coffee contributes as much as 80 or 95 per cent of the household income (ICARD and Oxfam 2002). Being a net coffee producer since the 1990s increased the probability of a household moving out of poverty by over eight hundred per cent (Thoburn

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3 An example of this was seen in the recent case of catfish exports to the USA.
and Jones 2002). In 1994, a survey of households in Dak Lak, found that the average income of coffee farmers was around US$225 per capita. This figure was 25 per cent higher than the national average at the time, and 50 per cent higher than rural average income. However, both the 1994 survey and both the VLSS occurred during the period of relatively buoyant global coffee prices.

Although increased income may be a benefit of cash cropping, it is not clear if women are working longer hours, if their work is more labour intensive or if they are asserting more control over resources and finances in the home. Lessons learned from China would indicate that industrialisation has meant more work for women, who continue to work longer hours than men, and in rural areas economic integration does not necessarily lead to women enjoying the benefits of increased incomes or have more decision making power (UNDP China 2003). It is also not clear how well families are adapting to their entry into a consumer society and if all families have access to food markets and a variety of food. According to a report by the FAO and UNDP if land is being used for cash crops, women could lose other sources of income generated from animal raising (2002: 11). International examples from South Asia describe how an increase in cash cropping has gone hand in hand with an increase in women's labour. Studies from Zimbabwe, Malaysia and Malawi all show that a correlation can be made between the shift to cash cropping and lower levels of nutrition (www.ifpri.org/themes/mp17/gender/news). This is due to families having to purchase foodstuffs as opposed to growing it. Often farmers can buy less food for the money they earn than they grew before and thus food is divided among family members based on entitlements. This usually means that men - who do heavy labour - are given more food than women and children.

Further, cash cropping has linked households to the global market, which has been experienced by Vietnamese farmers through the fluctuating market prices. The recent drop in coffee prices has caused negative consequences for a large number of coffee farmers in Vietnam, and the world over. The situation highlights the risk of increased vulnerability from trade liberalisation and globalisation as well as the benefits (Thoburn and Jones 2002). What is not clear is how well families cope with the dramatic drop in income and the stress associated with finding markets for their coffee. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some male farmers in communes in the Central Highlands turn to alcohol consumption during times of financial hardship while others may leave their homes in search of alternative incomes as construction workers in nearby towns. Other gender issues, which may arise as a response to the economic crisis include women's isolation, related stress and at worst, breakdowns within the family unit.

In some cases improved services and development in cash cropping areas are curbing the negative consequences of cash cropping. The domestic focus on cash cropping sometimes attracts international corporations interested in corporate social responsibility and meeting a "triple bottom line" or NGOs responding to changing situations. For example, GTZ Viet Nam and Helvetas are both working in with coffee farmers to improve infrastructure through the construction of childcare centres, roads and bridges, medical centres and the provision of safe and clean water. Women and children are often the direct beneficiaries of these projects, which aim to reduce the amount of time spent on domestic or household labour. The additional time women save on domestic duties is invested into increasing production. However, farmers in isolated areas are less likely to benefit from such projects further isolated them from services and opportunities.

While economic integration has meant the expansion of cash crops returning higher incomes and alleviating poverty, it has also been characterised by crises of overproduction, which in some areas intensifies the situation of poverty. Therefore, higher specialisation should be accompanied by more self-reliant strategies including crop diversification and the production of food crops for subsistence, the development of other non-agricultural income generating activities and the provision of market information equally to male and female farmers. Further, women should be supported to gain access to resources including land, technology
and credit (see Chapters 2 Technology and Education, 3 Governance and 5 Labour for a detailed discussion of these issues as they related to agriculture). All of these strategies can reduce the vulnerability of farmers introduced by the close connection with world markets and mitigate the negative impacts that economic integration will have on small scale farming households, and especially women. The discussion of how technology transfer can aid farmers during economic integration is further examined in chapter two. Chapter two also discusses the broader gender issues intrinsic to debates about education and economic integration.

1.4 Summary of Gender Issues

- Trade is often viewed as gender neutral or gender blind.
- Trade impacts on existing gender inequities in society, by challenging them or reinforcing them.
- Gender inequities in society can negatively impact on trade - ie. economic growth.
- International trade organisations have been criticised for being a patriarchal domain.
- Trade and gender issues exist at policy level down to the sexual segregation of labour markets.
- In Viet Nam traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are challenged because of the move from a social "gender equality" society to a patriarchal individualist market economy.
- The informal sector is a sex-segregated sector in Viet Nam.
- Men, women and children working in the informal sector form a disadvantaged group.
- Widowed, divorced and abandoned women working in the informal sector are often the primary wage earners in their households.
- Economic stress placed on workers in the informal sector may lead to family problems including domestic violence and divorce.
- In some cases women and children have directly benefited from improvements to infrastructure in cash cropping areas in Viet Nam.
- Isolated men and women, especially people from ethnic minority groups, involved in cash cropping are most vulnerable to fluctuations in the world markets.

1.5 Looking Forward

1. Conduct gender research into the experiences of male and female workers in EPZs and State enterprises in Viet Nam.
2. Conduct research into the experiences of male and female workers engaged in different employment within the informal sector.
3. Develop policies that respond to the needs of, and provide support to, the primarily female labour force in factories and cash cropping.
4. Identify the impact of trade liberalisation and trade policies on small markets.
5. Ongoing gender analysis of the impacts trade expansion according to industry, sector and geographic/regional location.
6. Translate and disseminate gender-related documents to all stakeholder groups working on trade.

7. Incorporate baseline sex disaggregated data on the Vietnamese men and women working in areas of trade.


9. Empirical studies on the different roles of men and women during integration in focus areas, for example the coffee industry.

10. Organise gender equity events at trade fairs or industry gatherings to raise awareness and promote women in trade.

11. Involve women and incorporate gender analysis in the development of trade policy.
2.1 Equal Education

Since Confucian times, education has been prized among Vietnamese people. Traditionally, education was seen as the right of boys and men; girls and women were not provided educational opportunities outside of being an obedient daughter, wife and mother (Barry 1996, Do 2000, UN Viet Nam 2002a, Pettus 2003). With the introduction of Viet Nam's socialist government, equal access to education was stated in the Vietnamese Constitution as a right of all Vietnamese people. During the early years of the doi moi reforms educational subsidies were removed. This resulted in a drop in enrolment rates and an increase in withdrawals from school. However, through educational campaigns and improvements to the educational system, by 1995 enrolments in educational institutions were high and continue to grow (Do 2000, UN Viet Nam 2002a). In 2001, the Prime Minister approved the 'National Education Development Strategic Plan' for 2001-2010. Comprising of two five-year education plans, this strategy is linked to Viet Nam’s wider socio-economic development strategy to 2010. The aim of this strategy is to bring Viet Nam’s education system to a level comparable to that of developed nations.

Economic integration impacts on education due to the changing labour market and increased competition. It is difficult to measure the effect that economic integration is having on education, and the relationship this has to gender, because since doi moi the government has been striving to improve education standards for girls in Viet Nam. Viet Nam has made impressive efforts in providing education to both men and women. The toll the Viet Nam American War had on the educational, emotional, psychological and professional experiences of men and women left a distance between the sexes, pervading all areas of Vietnamese society (Pettus 2003:74). Recently, this gap has been reduced when compared to other developing countries. Despite it low GDP, Viet Nam has achieved exceptionally high literacy rates (91 per cent for boys and 86 per cent for girls) (UN Viet Nam 2002a). There is almost one hundred per cent primary school enrolment, with comparatively low gender differences at that level. Participation levels at secondary education have also increased by 100 per cent over the last decade (Do 2000). The improvements in education in Viet Nam have also had positive influences on the social fabric of Vietnamese society.

Despite these achievement in education there are still gender inequalities facing the education sector which could worsen or improve as a result of economic integration. However, measuring the impact of economic integration on education and gender is problematic. Writing about gender, education and economic integration in India, Mukhopadhyay (2003) explains that the increase in number of girls attaining a higher education should not necessarily translate into the assumption that women are easing into the process of a free labour market. She explains that educating girls is sometimes seen as a preferred option for a family who do not find it acceptable to send their daughters to work in factories. Conversely girls are also being educated because it is necessary for their entry into the paid workforce - regardless of how junior the positions.

Viet Nam can learn from this lesson and should aim to address the existing gender and education issues conscious that these same issues could be exaggerated as a result of economic integration. The persistent gender and education issues in Viet Nam cited in the literature include:

1. The low rate of girls attending primary and lower secondary education in poor and ethnic minority areas.

2. Gender stereotyping in school textbooks.
3. Gender segregation of fields of study.

4. The low rate of girls attending primary and lower secondary education in poor and ethnic minority areas.

In a report for MOET, Do Thi Bich Loan (2000) calculated the rate of girls who had not attended primary school or lower secondary school at 16 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively. Comparatively, the rates for boys were much lower, 11 per cent and 20 per cent. Similarly, the gender gap in primary school enrolment is significantly greater in ethnic minority areas when compared to the rest of the country. Across the population, girls make up 70 per cent of all school withdrawals (CEDAW 2000, Do 2000). However, the gender gap (11 per cent) in education among ethnic minorities and rural areas can be explained by a child’s ability to contribute to the household income as they get older and finish primary school.

Children from ethnic or poor areas tend to come from the low-income families, with parents who themselves have no schooling. Parents of these children are therefore less likely to be able to provide their children counsel on the importance of education during economic integration. Although primary education in Viet Nam is free, the costs of items such as school uniforms and materials, as well as additional fees for the construction and maintenance of schools must be shouldered by families. International trends would also suggest that inevitably economic integration will lead to an increasing number of private education options which will prove to be a financial burden for families who can access such options, but also will widen the gap between education options for the rich and the poor.

Table 4: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>East Asia &amp; Pacific</th>
<th>Viet Nam</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy gender parity index in 2000</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio in 2000 (%)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2002 World Development Indicators; UNDP Human Development Report

What impact will this have on families who already favour education for boys over girls? (Table 4 compares the rates of female education across the region). A recent study also found that increasingly girl children face a double work burden when they reach school age because they must manage work both in the home and study. The report states that up to 20 per cent of a family’s income comes from children's work (Viet Nam News 20, April 2004). Haughton et al (2001) suggests that education for boys is favoured due to a perception that male children have better job prospects than equally educated daughters. On a positive note economic integration may spur an increase in education levels among girls and women as they attempt to escape a factory job and succeed in the new economic climate. However, will this in turn impact on the existing valuation of males over females in Viet Nam? This discrimination against females is evident in the preference for a boy child over a girl child in Viet Nam. Sixteen cities and provinces throughout the country report that 115 boys are born for every 100 girls, much higher than the natural ratio of 106/100 (Viet Nam News: 04 June, 2003). The ratio is as high as 128/100 in the Mekong Delta province of An Giang, 124/100 in
the neighbouring province of Tra Vinh and 120/100 in the northern province of Thai Binh (ibid.). In an attempt to ensure a balance between the sexes, the Vietnamese Government issued a new ordinance in mid-February 2003 banning the termination of pregnancies following the discovery of the sex of the foetus (ibid.).

While laws and policies pertaining to education in Viet Nam are not gender biased, to avoid widened disparities between men and women brought about by economic integration, there is a need for the development of education policies that promote the equal participation of girls at school. Education policies should aim to raise awareness of disparities between girls' and boys' education levels and provide financial or social support for families with female children.

1. Gender stereotyping in school textbooks

School textbooks in Viet Nam portray men and women in stereotypical "traditional" male and female roles exaggerating the sex-segregation of the roles that men and women actually fill in the community. Such stereotyping can limit the potential that male and female students have by naturalising gender differences and "suitable" roles as opposed to challenging them.

Teachers, as well as students, are affected by gender stereotyping. As outlined the NCFAW Situation Analysis (2000), gender stereotyping also influences the way teachers interact with students and the expectations they form regarding students' behaviours and school performance. With economic integration and the increase in industrialisation, it is easy for further gender stereotyping to occur in the labour market. Examples of this include the feminisation of certain industries such as light manufacturing and agriculture. However the increase in labour market diversity should create new opportunities for educated men and women which will assist in providing new gender role models nationally.

2. Gender segregation of fields of study.

A further ramification of gender stereotyping in textbooks and the media is the subsequent sex-segregation of occupational choices (Desai 2000, Franklin 2000, NCFAW 2000, UN Viet Nam 2002a). In the second Viet Nam Living Standards Survey of 2001, Desai (2000) notes that females are more likely to study culture, fine arts and linguistics, while males often study engineering, science and technology and electronics. Stereotypical personality traits of women and girls - hard working, emotional and dependent - are perceived as qualities which make them more suitable for occupations in fields such as heath care, education, farm work and other "nurturing" roles. Conversely, men are portrayed in the media, textbooks and society as independent, strong, rational beings, technically minded and suited to roles such as leaders, explorers and inventors (ibid.).

While we cannot accurately measure the impact economic integration has on education and gender, high levels of education for both sexes are associated with decreasing levels of physical and verbal abuse and economic growth through reduced corruption (World Bank Gender and Development Group 2003). Therefore, it can be assumed that economic integration will continue to have a positive impact on education for boys and girls. To ensure this, prevailing views of women as less career-oriented and less technically adept and the social valuation of men as leaders need to be challenged.

2.2 Vocational Education, Agricultural Extension and Training Opportunities

In rural areas there is a lack of suitable opportunities for men and women to access vocational and training services in rural areas. Between 1993 and 1998, the number of female farmers increased by almost one per cent each year (World Bank 1999a). Conversely, the number of men involved in agriculture subsided. Women play a dominant role in many areas of agricultural activity, such as cultivation, animal husbandry, agricultural processing and the sale of agricultural products (MARD 1998, World Bank 1999a, Desai
With the introduction of economic integration agriculture is becoming increasingly feminised. Men are finding other work as labourers or in heavy industry producing factories, while women are staying on the land and engaged in labour intensive agricultural activities (see Chapter 1 Trade for a more detailed discussion of this issue).

Although more women are working in agriculture than men, women do not have the same access to agricultural extension training as men (UN Viet Nam 2002a). Extension and agricultural services introduce new technologies, knowledge and information to enable farmers to make informed decisions about their production activities. These services play an essential role in the productivity of individual farms and, ultimately the country as a whole. Fyles et al (2001), in conjunction with the MARD, asserts that these services fail to adequately reach women because women lack time available to attend training due to their work in the home. Frequently, the training sessions are geared towards increasing the use of new seed varieties, new animal breeds or new technologies, however, few female-headed households have the resources or access to adult labour required to take advantage of these innovations. According to the FAO, agricultural technologies are often developed in response to the needs of commercial farmers - who are mostly men. Further, the tools that relieve women of unpaid drudgery are unlikely to prove as profitable as tools that replace their paid labour cultivating or processing crops for wealthier farmers. In keeping with prevailing Vietnamese views of men as the "decision makers", most extension courses are designed by men, for men with male facilitators. Training programmes often use male family members as intermediaries to pass on information to women. To ensure the adequate participation of women in extension services, it is important that such services are designed for, and delivered to and by women.

Economic integration means that additional technology may be required for agriculture and cash cropping in order to meet export demands and increase profit. Considering that there is a persistent gap between men's and women's access to agricultural technologies, it is expected that with economic integration this gap will widen unless addressed (see Chapter 1 Trade). It is necessary for women to be trained in using and managing control over farming technologies and that programmes be established to assist women in accessing often expensive equipment. At the same time persistent gender issues facing farmers, including access to drinking water, access to fuel and provisions for childcare centres need to be addressed before they escalate as a result of economic integration.

2.3 Technology Transfer

The past decade has seen an exponential increase in access to technology around the world. While recent technologies such as e-mail and the Internet have proved invaluable tools for networking, information exchange and dissemination and advocacy, television, radio and the telephone continue to have an impact on otherwise isolated communities (Mc Carty and Tran 2003). The development of many creative e-commerce initiatives has allowed local artisans and producers access to a global market. While the installation of telephones and electricity lines has meant increased information for isolated communities throughout Viet Nam. However, the digital divide between the developed and developing world is still growing due to a lack of resources, low levels of literacy and education and poverty (APC and CTO 2003).

Due to government reservations, regarding the content and potential negative impact, the Internet was not introduced into Viet Nam until 1997. The Vietnamese government is embracing technology as a means of developing the economy. By 2005, the government hopes to have 50,000 IT workers employed (Collett 2003). Within Viet Nam's ICT strategy, there is a strong emphasis towards creating an export software industry. Several ICT parks have been created in urban locations with low-cost, high-speed Internet facilities hoping to attract both local and foreign ICT companies. Chowdhury (2002) warns of insufficient
competition, a high rate of piracy and the lack of ICT-skilled labour as major obstacles to be overcome.

Since the introduction of the Internet in Viet Nam, the wealthy and urban sectors of Viet Nam have embraced the Internet enthusiastically. However, because only 20 per cent of Viet Nam's population live in urban areas, the influence of the Internet and related technologies is still quite low. This is not surprising considering that in 2001, only 21.5 per cent of poor Vietnamese people owned a television while none had a telephone (McCarty and Tran 2003:7). The number of Personal Computers (PCs) per head of population has been growing steadily since 1996. Nonetheless, as of 2001, there were still only 11.7 PCs per one thousand people (World Bank 2001). The number of Internet users is estimated to be much higher due to the number of Internet cafes. There is also a need for a gendered analysis of Internet and PC use among men and women in Viet Nam.

Despite the strong, yet recent push towards IT, women remain under represented at all levels of high-tech industry. Not only do women comprise a small minority of employees in the IT industry, their career paths are rarely equivalent to their male counterparts. Research by VCIT (1997), found that women comprise only 9.6 per cent of IT professionals employed in 30 IT firms in Ha Noi and HCMC, with only two of the 13 non-government IT firms employing women in senior positions.

Overall, the vast majority of women working in the software sector are employed as programmers rather than designers and less than one per cent of female hardware specialists (McDonald 1999). It has been suggested by Le Anh Pham Lobb (2001), that the low representation of women in IT industries is closely linked to gender stereotyping. Gender ‘myths’ such as women’s technical incompetence, their inability to cope with the demands of long working hours and their lack of critical mass also create employment barriers in IT industries.

However, during economic integration the relationship between gender and technology is also felt in the service industry. In particular, technological change has been revolutionising the garment manufacturing industry in Viet Nam. Although basic sewing operations in the assembly stages have remained largely the same, Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Manufacturing (CAM) have automated the pre-assembly stages. Post-assembly, too, has benefited from technologies, such as instant electronic transfer of sales data to distributors and manufacturers, leading to increased market responsiveness. All of these factors lead to an increased need for a flexible and reactive workforce (Delahanty 1999). Redressing the gender imbalance in the IT industry is one way that Viet Nam may be able to offer an alternative competitive edge in region: a skilled workforce familiar with the design and use of new technologies. Rather than importing and using technologies from other countries, the development of technologies within Viet Nam adds to economic activity on a number of positive levels.

Women constitute the majority of the world’s poor and, as such, are a group most at risk of being left behind in technological evolution. As information dynamics increase women, and older people without access to technology will find themselves further excluded. However, on-going education, training and skill development are essential if communities are to take full advantage of the technologies available (ibid). In particular, learning practices need to be made gender-responsive to enable men and women to develop their full potential (ibid).

2.4 Summary of Gender Issues

- Education for girls and women was not valued during Confucian times - a cultural influence that has lingered into modern times.

- Ethnic girls and girls in rural areas are still not attending primary and secondary school as often as boys are.
The gender gap in primary schools is greater in ethnic minority and rural areas. Girls account for 70 per cent of all withdrawals or drop outs.

There is a low percentage of girls studying science and technology.

School books do not challenge traditional gender roles.

There is a correlation between increasing levels of education and decreasing fertility rates.

There is a correlation between reinforcing traditional images and gender stereotyping in education through teachers' behaviour. A part of this "hidden curriculum" or "teaching styles" includes the way that teachers tend to answer questions from boys more than from girls, and ask girls to help clean the classroom after lessons.

There is a lack of non-stereotypical positive role models for girls and boys in Viet Nam.

Education laws and policies are gender neutral and therefore do not actively encourage the education of girls.

There is a correlation between increasing levels of education for both sexes and decreasing levels of abuse and violence in the home.

There is a lack of vocational opportunities for men and women in rural areas.

The number of women working in agriculture is increasing, while the number of men working in agriculture is decreasing.

Women working in agriculture lack access to education, training and extension services.

There is a lack of agricultural extension services designed for and conducted by women, for women.

The Viet Nam American War left an educational, psychological and professional gap between men and women.

The unequal access and control to technology is based on geography, economics, age and gender.

There is an increase in technology transfer for men and women and children in urban areas, including access to telecommunications and information exchange.

Women are under-represented in the IT industry in Viet Nam.

The replacement of unskilled labour with machines / computers.

Older women and men lack IT skills.

IT is changing the garment and footwear industry, which may have direct impacts on the young women working in the industry.

2.5 Looking Forward

12. Establish targets for increasing the number of ethnic minority teachers in Viet Nam, especially at secondary and tertiary levels.

13. Set targets for increasing the participation of women in disciplines where women comprise less than forty per cent.
14. Work with MARD and other ministries to provide extension services and farming technologies specifically targeted towards women’s agricultural needs, which are designed and delivered to and by women.

15. Formulate a strategy to encourage and support women to become educated and employed in the field of science and technology.

16. Using the media and other communication technology to design and implement a propaganda campaign aiming to break stereotypes of roles and occupations for women and men.

17. Encourage more male teachers in early childhood and primary schools institutions.

18. Develop research projects and build into National Strategies and Plans on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS women’s health issues, for example tuberculosis and reproductive health, as a way of highlighting the inequalities between men and women in Viet Nam in terms of e.g. access, utilisation and quality of services. Address issues of public and private health care services on gender. Address issues of use of pesticides and insecticides on women's (reproductive) health.

19. Working with MARD and other ministries to build upon MARD the action plan for gender to provide rural and poor women more opportunities to access and control technology and information.

20. Use ICT as a tool in reaching the third Millennium Development Goal on promoting gender equality and empowering women.

21. Develop IEC materials to change the cultural preference for male children.

22. Establish telecentres or other distance learning centres to facilitate men's and women's equal access to information and education.

23. Identify and provide appropriate technological support in areas that would practically reduce women's workloads in order to meet more practical needs, for example, access to drinking water, fuel and childcare centres.

24. Improve resources and curriculum to ensure that school books, classes and teachers behaviour challenge gender stereotypes and that teachers receive gender awareness training at teachers' training colleges and in-service training.

25. Review educational policies to better promote girls' education and ensure that additional support is available for families with female children, through Parent Teacher Associations or national programmes in the context of the National Education for All (EFA) Plan.

26. Conduct a gender analysis of Internet and PC use among men and women in Viet Nam.
3.1 National Structural Changes

"No country that wants to develop itself can ignore the prevailing integration trend. What matters is to choose a relevant integration road map."

(Nguyen Manh Cam, Deputy Prime Minister, former Foreign Minister, 12 June, 2000)

The process of state restructuring in Viet Nam has its origins in the doi moi policies initiated in 1986. These policies announced a major change in direction towards a ‘socialist market economy’. Following doi moi, economic integration has seen Viet Nam emerge as a mixed economy with increasingly open borders. In this changing Viet Nam there is a vibrant private sector of small and medium local enterprises, a state sector of large SOEs, and a foreign owned sector largely operating in part through partnerships with state enterprises. The latest Ten-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan endorsed by the Ninth Party Congress in April 2001 sets ambitious goals for poverty reduction and economic growth. It refers to the State’s ‘leading role in the economy’ and SOEs as the ‘leading actors’ in most key industry sectors, but also reaffirms the role of the market and the need for structural reforms.

The State’s role in the economy has been changing, both as a cause and a consequence of international integration. Governance structures are increasingly taking more international “market friendly” forms. In this section we survey main aspects of the changing role of the State, catalysed by economic integration, and the impacts on gender, starting with the Constitution, and then through an investigation of public administration reform (PAR) and the emerging private sector and civil society.

The Viet Nam Constitution promulgates the President as the Head of State. The President is selected from the members of the National Assembly, and has the power to submit bills to the National Assembly. While the President of Viet Nam, Tran Duc Luong is male, Viet Nam boasts a female Vice President, Truong My Hoa. The National Assembly is the highest state authority in Viet Nam. This system interacts intimately with the Communist Party of Viet Nam in the National decision-making and policy-making process of the country. Individuals who are 18 years and older have the right to vote, while individuals who are 21 years and older are eligible to run as candidates for an election. Since the 1946 Constitution women and men have been able to cast votes and stand for election. The first woman was elected into government in 1976 (www.capwip.org/readingroom/vietnam.pdf). Supporting women in governance has been a focus of the government since the Politburo Resolution 04-ND/TW 1993 which states that there should be an increase in women participating in the Party Committees and the government of Viet Nam. The VWU and the NCFAW have been instrumental in increasing women’s representation in politics. However, women's participation in the Party Committees is still low with an average of 10 per cent of women being actively involved (ibid.). See Table 4 for a comparison of women in government across the Asia Pacific region).

Viet Nam has had five constitutions, adopted in 1946, 1959, 1980, 1992 and 2001, respectively, however, the 1992 constitution was geared to the era of renovation and dropped the revolutionary rhetoric of the 1980 constitution. The Communist Party was to operate within the framework of the law and the constitution. The government was charged with specific management functions under a Prime Minister with defined powers. The 2001 constitution also explicitly commits the state to protecting the “legitimate rights” of overseas Vietnamese (Viet Kieu). The 1992 constitution stipulated that, instead of a centrally run economy, Viet Nam would have a “multi-sector economy in accordance with the market, based on state management and socialist orientations”. Land was to be assigned to individuals on long leases. The autonomy of state enterprises was guaranteed. In short, the
“private capitalist economy” was given an explicit role. Foreign investors were granted ownership rights and given guarantees against nationalisation.

The 2001 constitution went further, specifying that all economic sectors are important components of the socialist-oriented market economy. It states that organisations and individuals of various economic sectors are permitted to engage in any business not prohibited by law and develop in an equal and competitive manner according to law. The new constitution stipulates that there should be no restrictions on the size of private-sector operations or the sectors in which they may operate.

The 1992 constitution enhanced the powers of the National Assembly (the legislature) as “the highest organ of State power”, and the 2001 constitution has given the National Assembly the power to hold votes of confidence in leaders that it elects (including government ministers). After the election for the 11th National Assembly in May 2002, just 27.3 per cent of the new deputies were women, 17 per cent came from ethnic minorities, and 10 per cent are not party members (down from 12 per cent in the outgoing National Assembly). The high number of women participating in government in Viet Nam, is a demonstration of Viet Nam's role as a leader in improving gender equality in the region. This is evident in Viet Nam's high ranking on the gender development index. Viet Nam ranks higher than many other countries boasting higher GDPs (UNDP HDR 2002). Viet Nam is at 89 while its neighbours receive a lower ranking, Cambodia 109 and Indonesia 94 (see Table 5 for other GDIs in the region). In terms of women in politics, Viet Nam ranks second in the Asia / Pacific region with 26 per cent women's participation in the national legislative (www.capwip.org/readingroom/vietnam.pdf). This high number is due to three prevailing reasons including policies which promote women in politics, an increase in women's education and capacity (and also a change in men's perceptions of women's capacity) and campaigns to increase women's participation in politics. It is expected that this number will increase due to the efforts being made through affirmative action and awareness raising of gender equality in the area of law, workplace practices and culture and the media. However, the number of women in other key decision making bodies in Vietnamese Party committees and People's Committees at all levels is notably and considerably low, approximately 6 per cent in People's Committees (NCFAW 2002b).

Table 5: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Comparisons of Gender Statistics</th>
<th>East Asia &amp; Pacific</th>
<th>Viet Nam</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in decision-making position (% at ministerial level):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seats in parliament held by women (% of total)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender development index in 2003 (rank)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2002 World Development Indicators; UNDP Human Development Report

The National Assembly, which until the late 1980s acted as little more than a rubber stamp, has become increasingly vocal and assertive, calling on ministers to account for their
performance and taking the initiative in amending proposed legislation, and its deliberations are widely reported in the press. In 2002, unusually high proportions of those elected (73 per cent) were new to the National Assembly. The new deputies are well educated, with 93 per cent said to have completed “tertiary education upward”. Perhaps most importantly, 25 per cent of the new deputies will be paid to serve full-time. This has increased public access to deputies, and raised the level of professionalism within the National Assembly.

3.2 Public Administration Reform and the Private Sector

While PAR had begun in Viet Nam in the early 1990s, PAR had received insufficient strategic direction and achieved limited overall impact until 2001. Following a review, five subject areas of PAR were identified: 1) political orientation for PAR; 2) institutional reform; 3) organisational restructuring; 4) human resource management; and 5) public finance management. The recommendations of the review were in large part endorsed by the Party, and a Government decision of September 2001 on a ‘Master Programme on Public Administration Reform for the Period 2001-2010’ and set out seven reform programmes:

1. Renovate the development, issuance and quality improvement of legal normative documents.

2. Roles, functions, organisational structures of the agencies in the administrative system.

3. Staff downsizing.

4. Quality improvement of the contingent of cadres and civil servants.

5. Salary reform.

6. Renovation of financial management mechanisms for administrative and public service delivery agencies.

7. Modernisation of the administrative system.

The scope and reach of the seven programmes does not capture all aspects of the extent to which the State of Viet Nam is being restructured. Some ministries including MARD have included gender equality as a key indicator in the PAR process. Particularly focussing on human resource development and equal working conditions and salaries, MARD is placing gender equality at the foreground of PAR. The establishment of CFAWs at ministry levels has been a fundamental step in maintaining this focus on gender and PAR. Further, the seven programmes do not include reforms to state owned enterprises (SOEs) nor do they include constitutional, political and judicial reforms.

The impact of reform within SOEs should not be overlooked. By the end 2005, the number of SOEs will decrease from the existing 4,704 to 2,924 (by 37.8 per cent) (MOLISA 2003). Of these enterprises, 1,847 will retain their legal entity status, while 37 will be formed by merging 109 enterprises (ibid.). The government will retain the controlling share in 35.6 per cent of the total number of SOEs, the majority of which are in key sectors, industries, areas and locations (ibid.). Reforms within SOEs have often meant the loss of jobs for Vietnamese men and women. According to Pettus women made up 60 per cent of the workers laid off between 1991 -1992 (2003: 142). Almost 35 per cent of female workers who retained their jobs received irregular or casual work (ibid.). Many female workers and cadres turned to private selling in order to supplement their husbands' diminishing state salaries and pensions" (ibid. 11).

Whether as a result of economic integration or doi moi, entrepreneurial activity in Viet Nam has increased dramatically. Most Vietnamese families have members directly engaged in some form of business activity. Despite institutional weaknesses and a policy bias against
the private sector, the private sector (especially the informal private sector) has generated
most recent employment growth and now accounts for 90 percent of total employment.

However, the share of the domestic private sector\(^4\) in total recorded economic output actually
declined during the 1990s\(^5\), as did its share of total investment. The State share of output
remained constant, but its share of investment increased. This reflected increasing State
budget expenditures with domestic revenue and ODA inflows increasing as a percentage of
GDP and rapid growth in the share of foreign invested enterprises.

Recent changes to the Constitution, the approval of a new Enterprise Law, simplification
of business licensing, easing of restrictions on private involvement in export trade, providing
domestic and foreign investors with similar incentives, relaxation of registration and minimal
capital requirements are all indicators of Government commitment to a more pro-businesses
strategy. The Enterprise Law was a major step in reducing barriers to private sector
development. The Law codified the rights of citizens to establish and operate private
businesses and to be protected from undue interference from government or other officials if
these businesses were operating legally. It also marked a major shift in reform processes
with the Government working with the business sector to address business constraints.
Related de-regulation further reduced barriers to entry and there was a rapid acceleration of
business registrations. The net result has been a dramatic acceleration in the number of
private business, with some 56,000 new enterprises being formally registered with a total
investment capital of VND100,000 billion (USD6.7 billion). However, the impact of these
changes is only just beginning to be reflected in the private share of industrial output and
investment.

While the Government issued a SME decree in November 2001 allowing SMEs to enjoy
preferential treatment policies, the decree did not acknowledge the number of women
engaged in SMEs and the impact that economic integration will have on their businesses.
Economic integration has the potential to discriminate against women engaged in SME
because women have less access to credit and information than their male competitors.
Women are also less likely to have land, which can be used as collateral to invest in
technologies and business related costs. It is predicted that if women are to compete with
other small businesses on an equal footing additional support should be provided for women
to become educated but also to enable them to find niche markets (FAO and UNDP 2002:
10). For a further discussion on women in business see Chapter 5 Labour).

Similarly, changes to the land laws in Viet Nam also impact differently on the lives of men
and women. Before land reform, individuals were assigned the right to use their lands up to
15 years, however, these rights were not tradeable. With the introduction of Land Law in
1993, Land User Rights Certificates (LURCs) allowed households the opportunity to
exchange, transfer, lease, inherit and mortgage their land. While these changes to the law
are expected to increase individual long-term investments through farming and business
development, once again the inequalities facing women and their limited access to land have
not been addressed. Women's access to land is dependent on their relationship with a man,
and when that relationship ends women may find it difficult to access or claim land (MARD
CFAW 2002:17). To clarify, the requirement that LURCs need to be reissued following any
changes to land ownership means that woman may lose rights to ancestral land through the
tradition of patri-local residence\(^6\), through divorce or separation, if a marriage is not
registered or when their husband dies (ibid.). The scarcity of land due to industrialisation and

\(4\) Domestic private sector includes households, cooperatives, private enterprises registered under the
enterprise law (private business, partnerships, limited liability companies and joint-stock companies),
and enterprises with mixed ownership. Households dominate domestic private sector output.

\(5\) Output shares of cooperative and households declined, while that of formal private enterprises
increased marginally.

\(6\) When a woman moves to her husband's home following marriage.
inevitable infrastructure development highlights the problem of land ownership for Vietnamese women. If women in rural areas lose their land they face losing their livelihood. In both rural and urban areas the loss of land also means the loss of assets and collateral to access to credit. The loss of land therefore makes women more vulnerable to the threat of poverty (see Chapter 6 Poverty for a more detailed discussion of this issue).

### 3.3 Civil Society and Mass-Organisations

Civil society may be referred to as ‘a political space where voluntary associations explicitly seek to shape the rules (in terms of specific policies, wider norms and deeper social structures) that govern one or the other aspect of social life’ (Scholte 2000b: 5). However, in the light of this concept, in Viet Nam the emergence of civil society has just started. Civil societies act as safety nets during economic integration. Some safety nets already put in place by the Vietnamese government include mass-organisations such as, the Viet Nam Women’s Union, Farmers’ Union, Youth Union, Viet Nam Fatherland Front and the Veterans' Union. These organisations protect the legitimate rights of members and provide support to those who suffer from financial and physical distress.

Other safety nets include the Decree 29/CP issued in May 1998 on the Regulation of the Exercise of Democracy in Communes offers a good legal framework for increasing community participation at the local level. The Vietnamese government is also developing some programs for legal dissemination and legal aid to citizens, and is integrating community participation approaches in a number of poverty and infrastructure programs (such as Program 133 and 135). Program 133 and Program 135 stand for the National Target Program (NTP) for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR) and the NTP for Socio-Economic Development in Communes with Extreme Difficulties. These two programs aim to work in a decentralised way to promote community participation. According to UNDP’s review in 1999 and 2000, however, it is indicated that most communities are not yet empowered to participate in decision-making, management and evaluation because the decision-making mainly occurs at provincial levels. Local people have little information on what they can expect with regard to program activities and benefits and on how they can monitor the program’s activities and make complaints. With the exception of the VWU, women and other disadvantaged groups are often not able to participate in community consultation meetings limiting the effectiveness of mass organisations as channels for information sharing and consultation.

The Viet Nam Women's Union has been successful in providing rural women access to credit when no other lending institutions could meet this need. The VWU was established in 1930 and today has 11 million members (NCFAW 2002b). Economic integration has also generated the necessary funds for the VWU to begin approaching complex issues of poverty and development in Viet Nam (Pettus 2003:83). International aid organisations have collaborated with the VWU to set up capital loan programmes, rotating credit schemes, local handicraft projects and gender equity training throughout the country (ibid.). The VWU have recently changed their priorities from theoretical approaches to gender equity, to providing practical support to wives and mothers on health, combating problems affecting families (including gambling, alcoholism and drug use) and gender equity through shared housework. The VWU are also conscious of the important role they play in the spiritual development of women and families in Viet Nam during a time of great economic and social change. Other mass-organisations such as the Veteran’s union, Fatherland Front and the Farmer’s Union are commonly viewed as male dominated institutions.

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7 The Decree is on the exercise of democracy and information transparency in communes as it relates to commune plans, budgets, expenditure reviews, and reviews of Commune People’s Councils’ and Committees’ activities. It distinguished between four levels of participation: information sharing, consultation, participation in decision making and monitoring/supervision.
It is anticipated that if the role of the VWU is to remain strong in the future, and if the role of other mass organisations is to improve, their services need to be more accessible to women and their children who have suffered losses as a result of economic integration. These groups include women who comprise disadvantaged groups due to their ethnicity, geographical locations, limited education or social class (see Chapter 6 Poverty for further discussion of these issues).

The Vietnamese government recently recognised the need to develop a legal and policy framework for associations and domestic NGOs who can support the government’s objectives of poverty reduction, decentralisation and improved governance. Decree 35/CP issued in 1992 on science and technology organisations, decree 177/CP in 1999 on Social Funds and Charity Funds, and the Law on Science and Technology in 2000 are the beginnings of such a framework.

During economic integration the role civil society groups play will become increasingly important. NGOs and mass organisations will play the role of advocates bargaining for rights on behalf of disadvantaged groups who may be left behind in the free market system. (See Chapter 1 Trade for a discussion of the vulnerability of workers in the informal sector, Chapter 4 Mobility for a discussion of people trafficked from Viet Nam, Chapter 5 Labour for a discussion of the unskilled workers who may lose their jobs during economic integration and Chapter 6 for a discussion of the poor and their increasing isolation as a result of economic integration).

The important role of over 2.6 million Vietnamese overseas Viet Kieu has been strengthened during economic integration, and seen many return to Viet Nam. Viet Nam's new Constitution approved in 2001 acknowledged the role played by Viet Kieu: the state is committed to protecting their legitimate rights and encouraging them to maintain close ties with their families and native land. An increasing number of Viet Kieu invests in Viet Nam by opening their own enterprises as well as investing through their relatives and friends. Inward remittances for 2001 were estimated at almost US$2 billion (McCarty and Tran 2003:30). Most of these remittances come from the USA, France, Canada and Australia. The increase from US$1.8 billion in 2000, to US$2 billion in 2002, was a direct result of the new rule which allows certain Viet Kieu to buy houses and gives preference to them for new investments (ibid.). While there may not be any obviously measurable gender and economic integration impacts of the return of the Viet Kieu to Viet Nam, they may have a role in bringing about changes to people's perceptions of the roles of men and women and other more subtle aspects of social change. This can be achieved through the active role of Viet Kieu women in business but also through increasing the incomes of disadvantaged Vietnamese men and women through remittances provided by Viet Kieu relatives.

To conclude, civil society organisations in Viet Nam are newly emerged and are still weak. Their relationship and connection with other civic associations abroad are rudimentary. An exception to this rule may include the role that Viet Nam has as a leader of gender equity within the region due to a high GDI and high number of women in politics. A number of civil society groups in Viet Nam still rely heavily on the government for subsidies or funding options.

3.4 Summary of Gender Issues

- There is a lack of reliable baseline data on the economic situation disaggregated by social status and gender.

- Public Administration Reform is a gender issue in that gender equality translates as good governance therefore gender indicators need to be developed and used to measure the progress in PAR.
Women in Viet Nam suffered disproportionately from the reforms through being laid off from state owned enterprises.

Cheap female labour is being used as a vehicle for industrialisation and economic development in developing countries.

Mass organisations tend to be male dominated and the VWU is often expected to manage all programmes that have women as the beneficiaries.

Disadvantaged groups cannot always access the services of the government and mass organisations. For example, poor female farmers sometimes face difficulty accessing Farmers' Union activities.

Gender equality is a key indicator for the PAR process.

Often women are not supported in positions of power through additional training opportunities.

3.5 Looking Forward

27. Conduct several small yet strategic research projects that will add to the empirical evidence on, and understanding of, the links between gender and good governance and capacity building of gender expertise and networking.

28. Continue to implement the international agendas working towards gender equality including CEDAW, Beijing +5 and the rights of the child ICPD" (International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, 1992, where reproductive health and rights were agreed upon).

29. Support PACCOM to develop and update a database, which documents the efforts of NGOs, mass organisations and national machineries to meet the needs of women in integration.

30. Raise awareness of senior public servants to the relevance of gender issues in macroeconomics, economic integration, the need for gender responsive budgeting and web sites or "best practices".

31. Institutionalise the development and implementation of gender budgets within government ministries and agencies as part of the Public Expenditure Reforms.

32. Establish and enforce quotas for women's participation in all high-level decision making bodies and special committees including the National Assembly, People's Council and People's Committee.

33. Establish a system of rotating co-chairs in all People's Committees whereby women and men take turns.

34. Support the institution of an independent "ombudsperson" where people (men and women) can address their complaints and grievances in an objective and non-threatening manner.
4.1 Industrialisation

Until the late 1980s, bureaucratic controls requiring residency permits and permission to travel restricted the internal and external mobility of Vietnamese people (Mc Carty and Tran 2003). In 1991, more than half a million soldiers returned to Viet Nam at the end of the war in Cambodia, many in search of work in the cities. Rural migrants fled overcrowded land plots in search of day work in the cities (Pettus 2003:4). Further, the market reforms associated with doi moi meant that farmers could freely sell or lease their land across district and provincial borders (ibid.).

While the mobility of Vietnamese people within Viet Nam has always been characterised by a massive influx of people moving from the village to the cities, external migration patterns have changed. The 1980s saw a considerable outward flow of workers to the former Soviet Union and Eastern European Bloc countries. Most of these 200,000 migrants had returned to Viet Nam by the 1990s (World Bank 2003). Since the 1980s, there has been a further stream of Vietnamese migrant labourers towards Laos PDR and Cambodia (World Bank 2003, IOM 2004). In 2003, labour exports from Viet Nam peaked with 67,000 labourers working within the region (see Table 6). The export of labour and experts earned an amount of foreign currency of approximately 1.2 to 1.5 billion USD for the country. Today Vietnamese people are working in more than 40 nations, mainly in North East Asia, South East Asia, Middle East and South Pacific regions. The number of Vietnamese workers and experts presently working abroad totals approximately 347,000, of this number approximately 35.5 per cent are skilled / experts (Nguyen Dinh Toan 2003).

Table 6: Number of Vietnamese people exported as labour in the period 1991-2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>12,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>21,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>3,960</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>9,320</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>36,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10,050</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>46,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>12,660</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>67,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>18,470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MPI (2003)

Labour migration into Viet Nam has been at a much lower rate, with approximately 10,000 foreigners from 42 different countries contributing to Viet Nam’s labour force (World Bank 2003). The majority of these expatriate workers represent citizens from other Asian countries including, China, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Japan (ibid.).

Within Viet Nam, a greater number of male workers migrate from rural areas to the cities. It is predicted that an increasing number of women migrate for rural to rural locations for work in factories. Because the dramatic rise in the number of factories is a recent phenomenon symptomatic of FDI and economic integration, there are no statistics available. Migrating men and women tend to find work in separate industries and employment sectors. As such, the lived experience of being a migrant worker can differ for men and women. Female migrants usually take jobs in the light industries, such as garment and footwear manufacturing, or as domestic help. These women fill the lower rungs of the labour force, often with little room for career advancement, isolation from families or support networks, and...
receive low pay. According to research conducted for Action Aid, 70 to 80 per cent of women working in the footwear industry are migrant labourers (Pham 2002: 3). Young single women working in factories expressed feelings of isolation and a fear that they may not be able to find marriage proposals while they are working in the cities (ibid. 13).

While migrant men often find work in the cities in their peer groups, such as construction teams, these men also form a disadvantaged group in society. Due to their dislocation from families and poverty, migrant men are at risk of drug addiction, gambling and the purchase of commercial sex (and with it exposure, to HIV/AIDS) (Pettus 2003:4). Like women, some young men are also at risk of becoming sex workers themselves, however, there is a lack of literature focusing on this area.

By necessity, rural–urban migration has a twofold effect, 1) on rural communities due to the outward flow of population and, 2) on urban communities due to the influx of workers. As illustrated in Ha and Ha’s (2001) investigation into female labour migration, these effects may be both positive and negative. In rural areas, the positive effects include poverty alleviation from remittances sent back to the village which lead to improving the living standards of family members who remain in the village. Population pressure in rural areas is also reduced, and an increase in income means that children have the opportunity to remain in school for longer. Similarly, migrants who move to cities have an opportunity to expand their own knowledge, skills and experience. It is not unusual for migrants to return to their home villages after saving some capital and acquiring new skills. By setting up their own businesses in their villages or communes, these returnees contribute to the diversification of rural economic sectors (Ha et al 2001). Nghiem, mentions the potential social and cultural benefits of being a female migrant labourers including, independence from families and traditional pressures associated with marriage and behaviour, and an escape from farm work (2003: 31).

There are, however, considerable negative ramifications, of migration as well. Most male and female migrants are of working age, which leads to a dearth of available labour in rural areas. Dang, Tacoli and Hoang (2003) hypothesise that migrants from rural areas are often higher educated, motivated and resourceful workers, which may lead to a lack of talent and leadership within the village. Migration from rural areas can also contribute to changes to the traditional family with grandparents raising children and shouldering increased workloads later in life.

Mobility due to economic integration is not only characterised by labour migration, migration resulting from land loss or acquisition is also an important factor (IOM 2004). Economic integration has increased the demand for land, which in turn has seen land prices in Viet Nam grow. Small-scale rice farmers are now able to sell land to private enterprises building warehouses and manufacturing plants on the outskirts of cities along the highways (see Chapter 3 Governance and Chapter 6 Poverty for further discussion on land in Viet Nam). While statistics on the patterns of these men and women's mobility are unavailable, it is predicted that they are moving within provinces and other rural areas. Similarly, the construction of new roads, natural disasters and agrarian reform has also meant the loss of ancestral land for millions of families in Viet Nam. Recent changes to the land law seek to monitor and control the reclamation of land for infrastructure projects and services. It has been estimated that approximately 50,000 hectares of agricultural land is being lost to industrialisation every year (Viet Nam News 12 May, 2004).

In urban areas, the influx of migrants has helped to stimulate the economy. The construction and service industries have grown in response to increased demand for housing and social services (ibid). However, the growth in the number of people in urban areas has resulted in pressure on housing, communications, sanitation and other infrastructures. Ha Noi, suffers from the highest population density in Viet Nam, with an average living space at 4 square meters per capita. Similarly, HCMC supports two and a half times the number of people it was designed to serve. Viet Nam can learn from other countries that face an increase in
social problems as a result of overcrowding due to populations flocking to cities to compete for economic opportunities. Writing about women and economic transition states that traditions of male dominance can be reasserted with greater force during times of crisis (Aslanbeigui, Pressman and Summerfield 1994: 6). Examples of this may include an increase in rates of domestic violence, reducing women's opportunities to services and education as a means of survival and positioning women into poorly paid and poorly protected employment.

Movement of people is not always permanent or semi-permanent. Tourism is also an important issue, replete with gender issues that may be escalated through economic integration. Vietnamese people are increasingly travelling within the region, while Viet Nam has become a favourite place to visit in the new millennium attracting backpackers and "suitcase" tourists alike. During the 1990s Viet Nam's tourism industry increased from 250000 to 2,140,000 visitors (World Bank 2002). Although these figures are still low when compared to Thailand (9,509,000 visitors in 1999) they are expected to continue to rise as Viet Nam recovers from the shock of the SARS virus, improves its infrastructure for tourists and develops human resources who can act as tour guides. However, traditional and new forms of tourism can have social and gender implications on a society (Williams 2002). In an effort to curb the burgeoning sex tourism industry, Viet Nam should gather lessons learned from neighbouring countries in the region. In 2000 the Mobility Research and Support Centre in HCMC conducted research into sex tourism in Viet Nam. This research found that most clients purchasing sex were domestic travellers, either Vietnamese or Asian men on vacation or travelling for business. With the increased mobility across borders and throughout the region due to economic integration the demand for sex workers and sex tourism opportunities may increase. Viet Nam needs to protect the workers who are already involved in the sex industry who through their informal employment contracts and are sometimes coerced into abusive situations where they are not protected by labour laws and therefore subject to poor working conditions and wages.

4.2 Education Mobility

Economic integration has been instrumental in changing the external economic environment in which households are operating. Writing about gender and economic integration in South Asia, Mukhopadhyay and Swapna: (2003) hypothesise that this change has occurred at a rapid pace and has therefore impacted on households and families differently. While some households may perceive the changes as positive, others may be struggling to adapt and adjust. As families and individuals negotiate new market roles for women and steep competition in a capitalist economy, many do not attain improvements in social class or status or greater empowerment. While old issues such as equal education continue to be a problem, new pressure to succeed and prosper can lead to steep competition between men and women as they attempt to gain specialised skills and educational levels necessary during economic integration. In turn persistent unequal power equations are reinforced and differences between the sexes, ethnic groups and also social classes are widened.

In Viet Nam there is an increase in the number of people migrating on short-term visas for purposes such as family visits, tourism or study. The most popular destinations for education are Europe, Canada, Singapore and Japan. Due to the lack of official data it is hard to determine how many of those who travel overseas to study return to Viet Nam with new knowledge and skills required to succeed during economic integration. There is also a lack of statistics available on the number of Vietnamese who migrate abroad for work in host countries. According to a UNDP Human Development Report, 'in a global market people with the right skills will naturally migrate to the high-tech, high-wage frontier, wherever it is' (2001). However, citing an example from India's Silicon Valley - the home of the IT industry in Bangalore, the report explains that if developing countries create the right conditions and suitable jobs through foreign investment they can retain or recapture local talent. Alternatively, Bulgaria, following the shift from a socialist to a capitalist market economy,
suffered great brain drain through the loss of researchers, scientists and doctors who left for better options in the USA and Europe (Chompalov 2000).

If the figures of the number of Vietnamese studying or working abroad were mapped, it would provide valuable information on the direction or flow of education, skills and other intellectual resources. Is Viet Nam suffering from the "brain drain" that afflicted developing nations such as India, Bulgaria, South Africa and the Philippines following economic integration? Alternatively, do the numbers of externally educated, returned Vietnamese balance out or even exceed the Vietnamese people who leave? Clearly, this is another area requiring further investigation and gender analysis. These statistics would also provide a clear indication of who is able to access scholarships and opportunities abroad. If the trends follow India or Bulgaria we can assume Viet Nam will lose IT professionals, doctors and scientists - all occupations with disproportionately high numbers of males working in them. So while it may be true that increases in FDI and ODA can lead to increases in opportunities, it is not clear whether or not women and men have equal access to these opportunities. Lessons learned from a study in South Africa shows women in that country are less likely to migrate for work due to cultural norms and gender roles (Dobson 2002). In Viet Nam this may also apply, however, if women are accessing these opportunities, how many are discontinuing their studies and coming back to Viet Nam early to fulfil more traditional female Vietnamese roles by becoming wives and mothers? Anecdotal evidence suggests that some young female scholars are nervous about becoming too successful which could mean that they have educated themselves out of the marriage market!

4.3 People Trafficking

The 1949 Convention for the Suppression on the Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of others was the first show of recognition and denouncement of trafficking by the international communities. More recent strategies against trafficking include the obligation of signatories to CEDAW and the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children. CEDAW addresses the appropriate measures to suppress all forms of female trafficking, while the 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Although Viet Nam was one of the first countries to ratify the CEDAW, Viet Nam has not signed the latter mentioned convention.

Box 4: Human Trafficking

| Trafficking refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practises similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. |

| (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime (article 3 (a))) |

Globally, human trafficking is a growing phenomenon (Brown 2000, Moreno-Fontes 2002, Anderson and O’Connell Davidson 2003). In Viet Nam, as elsewhere, the illegality of this industry makes it difficult to obtain reliable data. It is estimated by the United States Department of State that anywhere between 700,000 and 2 million people are trafficked around the world each year. It has been suggested that since 1990, at least ten thousand Vietnamese women and children have been sold, predominantly work in the burgeoning sex industry. Of the 55,000 individuals working in the Cambodian sex trade, it is believed that one third are under 18 years of age, and that most are Vietnamese nationals (UN Viet Nam 2002a). Cambodia, is also providing a reciprocal trade with Viet Nam through the trafficking of Cambodian children to work as prostitutes in HCMC (IOM 2003a).
Viet Nam is viewed as a source country for trafficking, both across national borders and within Viet Nam. As outlined in the UN Gender Briefing Kit (2002), there are three main trafficking routes from Viet Nam. The first is from northern Viet Nam to China. Most of the women and children trafficked along this route are sent to China for marriage. From southern Viet Nam, people are trafficked to Cambodia or further abroad (either via Cambodia, or directly). The majority of those trafficked along these routes find themselves in the sex trade.

While there is a strong correlation between human trafficking and the sex industry, trafficking is not limited to the sex industry. Forced marriage, adoption and labour exploitation (including begging, domestic and sweatshop labour among others) all contribute to the experiences and motivations for trafficking. Similarly, the face of a trafficked person is often female, however, boys and men are also trafficked. It is difficult to estimate the prevalence of the trafficking of boys, but a proportion of male sex workers across South East Asia are Vietnamese and may have been trafficked.

There is a growing body of literature on the experiences of trafficked people (Brown 2000, SRDC 2002, IOM 2002, 2003a, Anderson and O'Connell Davidson 2003). Trafficked people receive little or, more usually, no income and, those engaged in the sex trade are not permitted to refuse clients, work long hours and are often restricted from contacting friends and family. The negative health ramifications – both physical and mental – are also enormous. The incidence of sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, is high, although exact statistics are unavailable. As illustrated in Le Thi Quy's (2000) report on preventing the trafficking of women, the negative effects of trafficking include, a loss of face and civil liberties, sexual, physical and mental abuse, and even death. The disappearance of trafficked people places emotional and financial strain on families. The loss of a family member's potential income, as well as the high cost of trying to find their lost family member both lead to financial pressures. The emotional toll is experienced in a number of ways, least of all through the community perceptions of trafficked people, the difficulties involved in finding family members and the stigmatisation facing trafficked people when / if they return. Research has shown that support such as access to credit and training allows women greater economic activity and independence. UNCT (2000) assert that trafficking will not stop until the structural causes of gender inequality are addressed. Implicit in this is providing support to women and children who remain vulnerable to trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The relationship between people trafficking and poverty is complex. It is often assumed that women and children are forced into the illegal labour and sex industries through lack of alternative employment or income generating opportunities and poverty. However, research has shown that trafficked persons are not always the poorest and least educated in their communities. There are instances of relatively well-educated women being trafficked. These women may be aware of potentially higher incomes elsewhere and may seek the opportunity to increase their earnings. Conversely, not all poor communities lose residents to trafficking. As such, it has been suggested that it is relative, rather than absolute, poverty that amplifies the potential risk of people being trafficked (SRDC 2002, UN 2002, IOM and UN 2000, IOM 2002, 2003a). There is also a tendency to conceptualise people who have been trafficked under the paradigm of victimhood. Recent approaches to investigating trafficking position the human rights of trafficked people at the centre and attempt to dispel the myths that all trafficked people are victims or prostitutes (Brown 2000, IOM and UN 2000, IOM 2002).

4.4 Summary of Gender Issues

- There are a greater number of male migrant workers in Viet Nam.
- Work opportunities for men and women are sex segregated and difference in payments for men and women for the same work and career opportunities occur.
- Female migrant workers face isolation and fewer marriage options than their peers who remain in the village.
Male migrant workers are at risk of gambling, drugs and alcoholism.

Male and female migrant workers are at risk of HIV/AIDS and becoming involved in the commercial sex industry.

Mobility is changing the role of older Vietnamese men and women, some are becoming the primary care givers of their grandchildren.

Tourism can have gender implications on a society, for example women can fall into sex work and the number of sex tourists can also increase.

 Trafficking of men, women and children to, from and within Viet Nam is a growing problem.

Women are trafficked for marriage, the sex industry and other work.

Men are trafficked for positions within the sex industry and work.

Girls and boys are trafficked for work in the sex industry, as beggars, for adoption or marriage.

 Trafficking will not stop until structural causes such as gender inequality are addressed.

There is an increase in the incidence of Vietnamese men and women migrating overseas.

4.5  Looking Forward

35. Raise awareness among civil society of the demand for short-term unskilled labour and inform men and women of the costs and benefits of this kind of employment.

36. Provide additional support and funding to national and international organisations that work towards regulating and protecting the rights of men and women who move between national and international borders, as legal or illegal migrants.

37. Design and conduct gender and migration awareness training in provincial areas for disadvantaged men and women who migrate within provinces or to cities.

38. Train policy makers on the relationship between migration trends, gender and economics in the Asia-Pacific region.

39. Train policy makers on gender responsive policy solutions that will meet different migration / poverty situations.

40. Identify and promote local and international migration options that alleviate poverty, particularly in rural areas.

41. Assess the relative importance of remittances from domestic and international sources as a means to alleviate poverty, particularly in local areas of origin of migration.

42. Disaggregate baseline statistics on local and international migration by sex, socio-economic circumstances and geography to develop a clear understanding of migrants.

43. Pilot new policies relevant to local and international migration, which are gender responsive in their design and implementation.

44. Develop information campaigns using the media and technologies such as the Internet to improve advocacy and to provide local migrants with a voice.
45. Develop partnerships with neighbouring countries and active cooperation with regional networks fighting trafficking women and children, such as GAATW (Global Alliance against Traffic in Women; Bangkok, Thailand). Through these partnerships share data on the movement of people and build a composite picture of population movement in the region.

46. Develop projects or interventions, which address and monitor migration and health concerns at regional, national and sub-national levels.

47. Promote and retain skills within Viet Nam through the establishment of bilateral and multilateral agreements related to foreign recruitment.

48. Establish programmes to better prepare people intending to migrate within or outside of Viet Nam, and their families, with basic skills, awareness of their rights and obligations in different economic and cultural contexts.

49. Work with NGOs and mass organisations to develop interventions for the families of those left behind, particularly spouses and children, with a view to collecting information on, and designing policies to support, those who may suffer materially and emotionally.
CHAPTER 5: LABOUR

5.1 Labour Laws and Policies

As a mean of attracting foreign investment and compete in the global market, economic integration usually brings with it the need for countries to ratify and comply with international labour codes and conventions. Viet Nam has ratified several core International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, including C111: Discrimination – 1958 (ratified 1997), C100: Equal Remuneration - 1951 (ratified 1997), C138: Minimum Age – 1973 (ratified 2003) and C182: Worst Forms of Child Labour – 1999 (ratified in 2000). ILO Conventions not yet ratified include C87: Freedom of Association – 1948, C98: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining - 1949, C29: Forced Labour – 1930 and C105: Abolition of Forced Labour – 1957. All of these codes seek to protect workers vulnerable to a host of workplace problems and provide optimum working conditions. This is good news for uneducated men, and especially women, who due to traditions, which uphold subservience, may not be able to assert their rights in the workplace. Economic integration therefore has the potential to create an environment in which there is greater awareness of legal rights (UNDP China 2003:55).

In 1994, the Vietnamese government passed the Labour Code, regulating labour relationships. The Labour Code applies to all workers, organisations and individuals employing workers under a labour contract, including trainees, apprentices, domestic help and others as specified by the Code. The Export Processing Zones (EPZs), which employ large numbers of unskilled labour, are covered by the same laws.

While the Vietnamese Labour Code is supposed to apply to all workplaces throughout the country, it appears that EPZs and the closely related Industrial Zones (IZs) escape monitoring of the implementation of the labour code. Indeed, companies operating within IZs fall under the jurisdiction of a quasi-private Zone Authority, dominated by private foreign interest, providing them with unprecedented freedom from state regulation. Greenfield (1997) asserts, ‘in practice, only the disciplinary and repressive elements of the labour laws ...are used in the Zones’. He also suggests that maintaining industrial peace in these areas has fallen to local trade union federations and labour departments. This is achieved through the condemnation of strikes and by intervening to resolve disputes through closed-door negotiations with management. As the workers themselves are excluded from negotiations, their strike demands are rarely met. With only 10 per cent of workers within EPZs on permanent contracts, trade unions are impossible to set up (FES 2003).

The role of trade unions in Viet Nam are often restricted to paying visits to workers who are ill, newly married or have lost a family member or as the social club of an organisation arranging holidays and sporting events. Trade Unions in Viet Nam must be approved by the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), a Party-controlled organisation. While all unions are affiliated with the VGCL, many labour associations are not. At the same time, if an employer has more than ten permanent employees, the organisation or company must register a ‘labour regulation’ with the provincial labour office and must contact the local trade union executives about its activities. These requirements are frequently avoided by placing employees on temporary contracts. Employers within these zones, however, tend to ignore worker’s rights. It is estimated that 90 per cent of workers within EPZs are on temporary contracts, preventing them from forming Trade Unions and severely limiting their recourse to mediation and arbitration of disputes (FES) 2003).

Lack of trade union membership has a negative impact on the right to strike and collective bargaining. Cumbersome pre-strike procedures must be followed for strikes to be lawful, severely limiting the right to strike. Public servants are not permitted to strike, nor are others considered by the government as being important to the national economy and defence. Altogether, there are some 54 sectors constrained from striking (FES). Should labour
disputes arise, the first attempt to solve them is through direct negotiation. If conciliation is not reached through this means, then the case is handed over to the labour dispute settlement bodies. In the case of individual labour disputes, the Labour Conciliation Council/ labour conciliators will attempt to resolve the dispute. If they fail, the case will move to the People’s Court. Collective labour disputes will be settled via the Labour Arbitration Council at the provincial level or, in the case of failure, the People’s Court. There are no formal tripartite institutions in Viet Nam. The trade union (VGCL), representing workers and the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), representing employers, may be advised or consulted in the labour-policy making process, if required.

5.2 Wages and Working Conditions

Approximately, 86.4 per cent of Vietnamese adults of working age participate in the labour force (UN Viet Nam 2002a). There is almost no difference between the rates of economic activity for men and women, at 86.8 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. As women are obligated to retire at 55 and men at 60, the employment figures do not include women in the 55 - 60 years age bracket, even though many older women may work part time or casually in the informal sector. The official unemployment rates for women increased from 7.0 per cent in 2002 to 7.2 per cent in 2003 (MOLISA 2003). This figure is 1.4 percentage points higher than the national average level (ibid.). The average hourly salary for women in Viet Nam is still only around 80 per cent that of their male counterparts- or 2,266 dong for women and 2,900 dong for men (UN 2002) (see Table 7 for a comparison of women’s salaries across the Asia Pacific region). However, this salary level has improved since the 1993 figure where women’s average income was only 67 per cent of men’s.

Table 6 demonstrates that generally female-headed households work longer hours and therefore have a higher average monthly income than male-headed households (FAO and UNDP 2002: 3, 21). Furthermore, although female-headed households spend more when compared with male headed household, female headed households are left with a greater sum of residual income (104.61 thousand dong compared with 84.04 thousand dong). Women also tend, in general, to put more of their earnings towards household expenditures and childcare, health cost etc. and less for herself or for purchases including a TV or motorbike. It should be noted that the category of female headed household is problematic when analysing gender in Viet Nam, because 33 per cent have males present in the household and the category precludes any investigation of whether males or females have decision making power within the home.

Table 7: Male and female headed household average monthly income and living costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit=1000 dong / person</th>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly income</td>
<td>333.27</td>
<td>447.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly living costs</td>
<td>249.23</td>
<td>342.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VLSS (2003)

Recent studies show that rural women in Viet Nam work an average of 16 and 18 hours a day – up to 8 hours a day longer than their male counterparts (UN Viet Nam 2002a). In both rural and urban areas, women face the ‘triple work burden’ of paid employment, and unpaid employment such as their important reproductive roles as wives and mothers. Various studies have shown that women from wealthier households are able to supplement their loss of reproductive labour time through services such as prepared food and private tuition for their children among others. For poorer households, however, juggling a triple work role may mean an inevitable decline in the quality of upbringing their children receive, as well as ongoing health ramifications for all family members, especially mothers. Evidence from China suggests that following economic integration, men become more engaged in the market competition and have less time to devote to domestic responsibilities in the home and community, thereby increasing women and children’s responsibilities (UNDP China 2003: 55).
The labour code in Viet Nam includes maternity leave and special provisions for pregnant women and new mothers, such as changing to lighter duties and reducing the amount of overtime worked by pregnant women (Qi, Taylor and Frost 2003). (See Table 8 for a comparison of maternity leave laws in Viet Nam and neighbouring countries.) However, it should be noted that women on short-term contracts, women in the informal sector and women entrepreneurs cannot benefit from these provisions. Similarly, it should also be noted that the Vietnamese labour code does not recognise men’s roles in parenting through the provision of paternity or family leave.

### Table 8: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and labour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Comparisons of Gender Statistics</th>
<th>East Asia &amp; Pacific</th>
<th>Viet Nam</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternity leave benefits in 1998 (% of wages paid in covered period)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force gender parity index:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated earned income in 2001 (PPP US$) Male</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2,447</td>
<td>4,825</td>
<td>4,070</td>
<td>3,893</td>
<td>35,061</td>
<td>11,845</td>
<td>7,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated earned income in 2001 (PPP US$) Female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,696</td>
<td>3,169</td>
<td>1,531</td>
<td>1,987</td>
<td>15,617</td>
<td>5,557</td>
<td>4,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of female income to male income</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2002 World Development Indicators; UNDP Human Development Report*

#### Box 5: Rights for women in the Vietnamese labour code

Employers are prohibited from employing women to work underground in mines, to work in water (diving), and in jobs classified as hard or dangerous work (Article 111 [Clause 3]).

During menstruation or while breast-feeding children under 12-months of age, female workers are entitled to breaks of 30 and 60 minutes every day with full pay (Article 114 [Clause 1]).

It is prohibited to arrange for female workers who have been pregnant for seven months or who are breast-feeding a child under 12-months to work extended hours or to work night shift (Article 115 [Clause 1]). Upon reaching their seventh month of pregnancy female workers should be transferred to lighter work, or should have their working hours reduced by one hour but no wage deducted (Article 115 [Clause 2]).

Pregnant workers shall have the right to unilaterally terminate the employment contract without liability for compensation when a doctor's certificate states that continued employment would adversely affect the foetus (Article 112).

The past few decades have seen a re-location of labour intensive industries from developed countries to developing countries. Increases in off-shore production often mean increased labour opportunities for women, and with that the feminisation of light-manufacturing industries which are require an unskilled labour force. The employment opportunities provided by these industries, such as garment and footwear manufacturing, may well play a role in poverty alleviation. For example, the footwear industry in Viet Nam has employed 400000 labourers (Pham 2002:7). However, as highlighted by Frynas (2001), in many developing countries observance of labour rights may be less than vigorous even with the
added pressure that comes with international trade agreements to conform to codes of conduct and international standards. Frynas also points out that workers are often excluded from the profit division structure of the company (ibid.). For example, women may receive a minimum salary all year round regardless of fluctuations in the company's profit (Pham 2002:16). Comparisons between women's and men's work in the industrial sector in China demonstrate that jobs typically performed by women are more time consuming than men's work, with women having to work longer hours and more overtime (UNDP China 2003: 63).

There is a glut of information on the working conditions of female factory workers around the world (Delahanty 1999, CAW and HomeNet 2001, CARE and AusAID 2003a, 2003b, Clean Clothes Campaign 2003, ICFTU 2003, Loveband 2003, Weekley 2003, WICEJ 2003, OXFAM 2004). The findings from these reports tend to provide a litany of examples of poor working conditions, long working hours, unrealistic deadlines and production targets and repeated infringements of ILO standards. There is strong evidence from countries such as China, Bangladesh and the Philippines that women work under appalling conditions (Loveband 2003, Weekley 2003, WICEJ 2003). The worst examples include women being locked in their work places, resulting in death or injury in the case of fire and restricting or banning toilet breaks, leading to kidney, bladder and urinary tract problems. Further, women may be asked to give assurances not to become pregnant for the duration of their contract, and proof of this may be demanded prior to signing a contract. If a woman should fall pregnant, she may be expected to work for the duration of her pregnancy, and then prior to the birth of her baby be laid off. In extreme cases, the consequences of working long hours in poor working conditions may include miscarriage or premature birth. For those women who are fired immediately upon becoming pregnant, the result is often sudden loss of income, coupled with crippling debt to their previous employer due to recruitment fees or illegal docking of wages for various breaches.

There is little documentation on the situation of female factory workers in Viet Nam (Thomas 2001, Pham 2002 and Nghiem 2003). According to Pham (2002), workers in the footwear industry in Viet Nam work 12-14 hours per day consecutively for periods up to one month. The salaries of workers are low with some workers in SOEs having to work 50 per cent more hours for the minimum wage (ibid. 4). Often workers are expected to work overtime at short notice and cannot prepare for this, which can lead to illness or hunger at work (ibid. 16). Further, Pham's research into the footwear industry in Viet Nam also found that occupational health and safety standards in factories were low, with women in certain factories having to purchase or make their own protective clothing (ibid. 20). It is anticipated that the forthcoming empirical research into the gender issues facing factory workers in Viet Nam will shed further light on this situation (UNDP-NCFAW-RNE Project VIE-01-015). Although parallels may be drawn between working conditions in Vietnamese factories and the rest of the world, Viet Nam's entry to the global market coincided with a push for SOEs, private enterprises and foreign joint ventures to demonstrate corporate social responsibility. In Viet Nam, a commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) is visible in initiatives of government ministries such as MOLISA, international agencies including ILO and UNDP, and the work of INGOs such as Action Aid and Care International. These initiatives focus on adherence to labour codes, improving working conditions and the establishment of programmes and activities aimed at workers rights. Thomas (2001) provides a detailed account of how Viet Nam's commitment to CSR has improved workers' rights in the Nike factory in HCMC. Nike is the largest single private employer in Viet Nam, employing more than 30 000 workers - mostly young women in their twenties (ibid. 14).

While there is a growing focus on working condition in state owned and large private enterprises in Viet Nam, perhaps the worse conditions exist in the small family run sweatshops. Local sweatshops and family businesses, making shoes, handicrafts and even garments, are often poorly ventilated with little light. In an effort to make a profit, family members including children often work around the clock in poor conditions because the entrepreneurs are unaware of occupational health and safety (OHS) standards (Thomas 2001, Nghiem 2003).
5.3 Specialisation, Education and Skills

In the early 1980s, following the Viet Nam American War, many Vietnamese soldiers returned to their homes less skilled than their wives (Pettus 2003:75). While men were away at war, women became educated and developed successful careers in offices and business. Since that time, Vietnamese women have continued to develop their own careers. While most women find a balance between the roles of producer and reproducer, the experiences of Viet Nam's career women are not always positive. Vietnamese women are facing the same difficulties facing women all over the world. These difficulties include, but are not excluded to, equal opportunities within the workplace (for example, to attend training and exposure tours), breaking through the glass ceiling and gaining acceptance from male friends, family and colleagues. These issues are compounded by the Confucian belief, which still pervade Vietnamese society, that young women have little authority, are always considered as younger and are less experienced than their male colleagues. Of course in certain sectors and in working environments where women are well represented in management, young women are supported and provided with other female mentors.

According to the VCCI about 31 per cent of the 70,000 registered small and medium sized enterprises in Viet Nam are owned by women (Boonchuey 2002). Despite the high number, women engaged in business in Viet Nam, like women in business around the world, still face disadvantages in terms of access to credit, technology and business networks (UNIFEM 1996, D'Cunha 2001, Boonchuey 2002, Giles 2003). Therefore, projects of several institutes and organisations such as Institute of Social Studies (ISS, The Hague) and Maastricht School of Management together with Vietnamese Women's Union aim to support female entrepreneurship development.

It should also be noted that statistically women in the rural areas are still lagging behind men, especially in terms of education and skilled employment. In 2003, the number of people with professional qualifications in Viet Nam was 8,844,000, representing 21 per cent of the total labor force, a 9.7 per cent increase since 2002 (MOLISA 2003). Across five indicators of gender equality - skilled labour, employment, education, life expectancy and human development - women are only better than men in terms of life expectancy (National Centre for Social Science and Humanities (2001:54), in Mc Carty and Tran 2003:26). Women live to be approximately 72.2 years while men only 67.1 (WHO 2004).

While economic integration offers increased opportunities for skilled and educated Vietnamese men and women, rural and unskilled people are facing unprecedented underemployment and insecurities regarding their futures. It is estimated that over half the adult work force work less than 2000 hours a year. Underemployment is a problem for men, however, it is not a useful category of analysis when applied to women due to the heavy burden of their reproductive and domestic labour (Evans 1997:29). According to Pettus (2003), in her study of economic reform in a peripheral neighbourhood of Ha Noi, men's underemployment has become endemic in some areas of Viet Nam. She states that male underemployment has contributed to high rates of alcoholism, gambling and drug addiction (ibid. 23). Underemployment has other consequences for young unskilled men in Vietnamese society, including their options for marriage and starting a family. Vietnamese culture upholds marriage for young men once they are financially secure and have their own homes. Similarly, there is a dominant ideology that men are the family "bread winners" expected to support the family (Standing 1997:60). For many young unskilled men, marriage options are dramatically reduced, as a direct result of unemployment and financial insecurity.

Despite similar rates of employment for men and women in Viet Nam, there is still a definite segmentation of the labour force according to gender. In rural areas, 80 per cent of jobs are in agriculture, leading to limited occupational choice and thus fewer gender-oriented discrepancies. In urban areas, however, there is a marked divergence between male and female employment patterns. Men tend to dominate industries such as mining, metal work and heavy industry. Conversely, women are overwhelmingly represented in light industry,
such as garment and textile manufacture, social services and sales. Even within these female dominated industries, however, men still fill a disproportionate number of higher positions.

It is true, not only in Viet Nam but also globally, that there is low economic value accorded to work that is done primarily by women. Even when women manage to move into more traditionally male dominated industries, such as information and communication, they tend to find themselves in ‘electronic sweatshops’: working highly stressful, low paid jobs (Elias 2003). Elias emphasises that a consequence of economic integration is often the feminisation of particular industries and the utilisation of traditional gender stereotypes of women as supplementary income earners, suitable for monotonous work which justifies poor wages and a lack of career advancement (ibid.). There is also a perception that women are a passive and flexible workforce, content with low wages while unwilling to press for labour and human rights. However, it is hoped that the pressure asserted on Viet Nam internationally to comply with international standards and codes of conduct will assist women becoming aware of their rights in the workplace.

5.4 Summary of Gender Issues

- Men and women in Viet Nam participate equally in the labour force.
- The mandatory retirement age for women is 55 years, while men retire at 60 years.
- Women in Viet Nam have a higher life expectancy than men (72.2 and 67.1 respectively).
- Sexual division of labour and the wage gap between men and women, particularly in urban areas.
- Even within female dominated industries men fill a greater number of higher positions.
- Women are seen as comprising a passive and flexible workforce who are willing to work for low wages in poor working conditions, and dominate the informal sector and contract work.
- Female-headed households work longer hours and earn more money than male-headed households. Women also spend more money on the household and less on individual wants and needs.
- Women work longer hours than men.
- The labour code in Viet Nam does not recognise paternity leave or family leave for men.
- Women working in the informal labour force or contract workers do not receive maternity leave or other benefits and rights outlined in the Viet Nam labour code.
- Male-dominated enclaves at work and in leadership assist in strengthening the "male breadwinner" ideologies (Standing 1997:60).
- Women working in light industry may receive minimum salary but are excluded from the profit division structure of the organisation.
- Women typically work in light industry or the agricultural sector, while men typically work in heavy industry in Viet Nam.
- Veterans returned from the war less skilled than their wives.
- Career women in Viet Nam face issues such as the glass ceiling and lack of equal opportunities in the workforce.
The Confucian legacy, which asserts that young women have little authority, still prevails in male dominated workplaces in Viet Nam.

Women in business have limited access to credit, technology and business networks.

In rural areas women lag behind men in terms of skilled labour, employment, education and human development.

Underemployment is an issue facing men in Viet Nam.

Male underemployment can lead to decreased marriage options, psychological problems and financial insecurity.

There is a dominant ideology that men are "bread winners".

5.5 Looking Forward

50. Publish and promote the NCFAW guide to gender mainstreaming terminology.

51. Publish a guide to the ILO standards for ministries, factories and mass organisations like the VWU at all levels (including central, provincial, district and commune).

52. Promote the establishment of networks and industry clubs for professional women and entrepreneurs.

53. Advocate to the government of Viet Nam including the Communist Party committees and People’s Committees to enforce the ILO standards and the Vietnamese labour laws.

54. Investigate the degree of control women, especially young single women, have over their earnings from participating in economic integration.

55. Monitor the application of the national and international labour codes at the local level with government officers and party members.

56. Investigate and reduce the gender gap in wages and salaries between men and women.

57. Review the social support system to enable women and men to balance work and family responsibilities, and build careers.

58. Support and promote the development of CSR (corporate social responsibility) projects and OHS (occupational health and safety) projects in factories or workplaces in Viet Nam.

59. Change the maternity leave laws so they recognise a man’s role as a parent, and his right to paternity, or family leave.

60. Change maternity leave laws to incorporate the rights of contract workers and provide state compensation for loss of income during maternity leave.

61. Develop awareness programmes to prepare women to assert their rights and demand equal opportunities and wages in the workplace.
CHAPTER 6: POVERTY

6.1 Poverty Studies in Viet Nam

The three most recent Viet Nam Living Standards Surveys have all reported a general downward trend in poverty in Viet Nam. Viet Nam has dramatically reduced poverty levels from well over 60 per cent in 1990 to some 32 per cent in recent years (see Table 9). Food Poverty Rates have also been reduced from over 30 per cent in 1990 to approximately 15 per cent in 2000. This trend is not surprising considering the promises of economic integration all include increased GDP and decreases in levels of poverty. However, the decreases in rates of poverty have not been uniform across Vietnamese society (Thoburn et al 2002).

In urban areas, poverty decreased by 73.5 per cent in 1993-2002 while the reduction in poverty was less than 50 per cent in the rural areas (UNCT 2002). The growing gap between urban and rural areas is one of the main causes of the increasing differentiation between the rich and the poor in Viet Nam. According to the Millennium Development Goals Report, nearly 90 per cent of the poor live in the rural areas in Viet Nam (UNDP Viet Nam 2002b). The majority of the poor are farmers with low levels of education, and limited access to land, capital, technology, information and social services. As a consequence, poor farmers - usually women - are also more vulnerable to natural disasters which regularly occur in Viet Nam (UNCT 2002). With economic integration what will happen to these disadvantaged groups?

Table 9: Changes in poverty by socio-economic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Viet Nam</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>-50.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>-73.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>44.85</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>-46.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Uplands</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>58.59</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>-51.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red River Delta</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>28.66</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>-64.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>48.09</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>-40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>35.21</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>-49.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>-67.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mekong River Delta</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>36.92</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>-50.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The distinction between poverty in the urban and rural areas is depicted in Figure 3.
The Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Programme (135), the comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women in Viet Nam by 2005 and the Millennium Development Goals all provide key strategies for the Vietnamese Government to reduce poverty and promote social and gender equity. Vu, Tran and Tran (2003) report that important gender issues are incorporated into the CPRGS especially in the areas of agriculture and rural development, education and health care. To some extent, the policies and measures in these areas have met the immediate needs of poor women. The medium and longer-term prospects of policies supporting women include land titling, training, overcoming gender stereotypes in textbooks, reproductive health care and family planning (Vu et al 2003). The CPRGS has not integrated gender issues in the discussions of the reform of SOEs, culture and information, financial policies, legal support, PAR, environmental protection, resource allocation for economic growth and poverty reduction (ibid).

All of these issues that have not yet been met by the CPRGS are fundamental to debates about the relationship between gender, economic reform and poverty because economic integration has increased the social stratification of Vietnamese society, resulting in some people becoming "winners" while others are losers. For those households who already have capital to invest in production or have enough labour, economic expansion provides new and increased job opportunities. This, in turn, leads to increased income generation, leading to greater capital available for investment in production. Conversely, households without the initial capital to invest, or households where women are the main income earners, do not have the capacity to benefit as greatly from the new opportunities available. Not only are there greater disparities between the "haves" and the "have nots", recent years have seen the emergence of growing middle class: a section of society with increasing leisure time and disposable income. There has been little documentation of this emerging phenomenon. Intuitively, however, it appears that access to this increased leisure time and spending power may be disproportionately available to men. It is important to monitor the emergence of the middle class to ensure that such access is equal to men and women.

While there is an emerging middle class, the limited access that poor people have to resources such as credit remains a concern. At present, most Vietnamese people obtain credit through the informal sector, with women accessing less formal loans then men. Women make up one third of all funds borrowers, and of those only 18 per cent access loans through government banks. A little under a third of all male borrowers obtain credit through the formal sector. Using private moneylenders involves higher interest rates and for women often reflects the lack of collateral-based lending. Only 27 per cent of women’s loans require collateral, compared with 41 per cent, of loans accessed by men. It is suggested that women’s lack of collateral is related to their frequent absence from land user’s rights certificates (UN Viet Nam 2002a) (see Chapter 3 Governance for a further discussion of this issue).
Land ownership presents specific issues for women in Viet Nam during economic integration. In 1993, the proclamation of the Land Law, pertaining to the personal transfer of land resulted in major implications for gender equity (UN Viet Nam 2002a). Although the Land Law does not, itself, discriminate against women, knowledge of these laws is not widespread in rural areas. In particular, people in ethnic minority areas tend to follow traditional practices. Thus, while women are clearly granted equal rights in the Constitution, Civil Code and in the Law on Marriage and Family, women are still frequently considered dependent on their family or family-in-law for access to land through male members. Land is allocated according to labour age, with people of working age receiving the full allocation. This category of land allocation discriminates against women who retire at 55 years, while men retire at 60 years. Retired women can only access half of the land allocation that their male peers receive. Nguyen Nhat Tuyen (1999) explains that female-headed households also tend to receive less land due to the lack of labourers they have available to them. In fact, female-operated farms cultivate an average of 54 per cent of the land area cultivated by male-operated farms (ibid.). This lack of land further translates into less diversified economic activities in agriculture and greater dependence on subsistence farming versus cash cropping. Such limited diversification may have profound negative effects on food security and agricultural development (see Chapter 1 Trade for a more detailed discussion on the effects of economic integration on agriculture and gender and Chapter 3 Governance for further discussion of land).

6.2 Social Services and Rural-Urban Development

Viet Nam spends approximately 10 per cent of the budget, nearly as much as is spent on education and health combined, on pensions and social relief (World Bank 1996). Unfortunately, these expenditures are often not targeted to the poor with more than 80 per cent of the budget being spent on social security for government workers (ibid.). The poorest of the poor only benefit from 7 per cent of expenditures on pension and disability payments, while the richest people in Viet Nam benefit from almost 40 per cent of government expenditures on social transfers (ibid.). During economic integration there is increased pressure placed on NGOs and civil society organisations to act as safety nets - to provide social services that may have been cut or reduced by the State (see Chapter 3 Governance for a discussion of the changing role of civil society organisations during economic integration).

Decreases in levels of poverty and increases in material wealth brought about by a free market system both lead to improvements in public health and longevity (Ostergaard 1997, Pettus 2003:12). Ironically, they can also lead to the ailments of an affluent society, such as increased pollution and traffic accidents. According to NCFAW (2002b) males aged 15-49 years account for more than 50 per cent of persons injured from traffic accidents. Other affluent diseases are emerging in Viet Nam include, anorexia, obesity and heart disease (Bennet-Jones 2000). Nghiem (2002), in her study of female garment factory workers in HCMC argues that through their employment and independence from life in the village, young women are engaging with Western images of beauty and fashion, which in some instances is causing eating disorders and the desire to lose weight.

Poverty, however, is still the world's most serious carrier of ill health (Ostergaard 1997:113). A host of health issues including infant mortality, maternal mortality, malnutrition, parasites, anaemia and diarrhoea thrive in situations of poverty (ibid.) (See Table 10 for a comparison of health issues and gender across the region. Many of these can also compound psychological and sociological problems such as a lack of family planning, depression and low self-esteem. The link between standard health indicators and economic reforms, like education indicators, is indirect at best. This is because health care is constantly improving in developing countries long before the introduction of economic integration. Therefore it is difficult to ascribe changes to health to economic policy, and even more difficult to differentiate the impact on gender (Mukhopadhyay 2003).
Reform-related policies resulting from economic integration which may have some direct effect on health are basically those that result in greater privatisation of health services, the institution of "user fees" and a reduction in the role of the State in the provision of health care. While these measures will negatively impact on the poorer sections of society, they are not yet an issue for Viet Nam. However, using the case of India as an example, Viet Nam should prepare for the shocks that health care reforms brought about by economic integration may have. In India an increase in the costs associated with health care was correlated with an increase in women's work to earn money for doctor's visits and medication but also an increase in the domestic responsibilities women have in caring for the sick at home (ibid.). The poor and linguistically or geographically isolated groups are most at risk of suffering from a privatised health system.

Table 10: Viet Nam in the region - Gender and health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Comparisons of Gender Statistics</th>
<th>Viet Nam</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female population (% of total) in 2000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth in 2000 (male)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth in 2000 (female)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women receiving prenatal care in 1996</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality ratio in 1985-2001 (per 100,000 live births)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2002 World Development Indicators; UNDP Human Development Report

Although reductions in poverty in Viet Nam have been a catalyst for increasing the flow of information and awareness of health issues, men's health issues are becoming an important problem. According to UNDP Viet Nam up to 70 per cent of Vietnamese men smoke, while less that 4 per cent of women smoke (2002a: 44). These men are at risk of a host of smoking related diseases later in life. Further, although the awareness of HIV/AIDS is increasing in Viet Nam, men comprise 85 per cent of the HIV infected population (NCFAW 2002b). These statistics indicate HIV is a "male disease", however, because condom use among Vietnamese men and women is low, and because of women's inability to negotiate safer sex and protect themselves from gender based violence, financial dependence on men and women's lack of education, the numbers of HIV infected women and children will increase. During economic integration and the increased movement of people there is potential for HIV/AIDS infection rates to increase. To prevent this increase there needs to be more HIV awareness programmes for the wider community. Women and girls, especially, need to be educated and prepared to protect themselves against infection.

6.3 Reproduction to Production

The link between poverty and reproduction is complex, while poverty can lead to high birth rates, it is also the cause of high birth rates. Poor families are feeling increased economic
pressure, such as the move towards a consumer society and away from subsistence farming, and changes in the household composition from extended families to nuclear families. With increasing economic pressure due to the burden of a user-pays society men and women are adapting new strategies to survive. For women, one such strategy has been family planning - having fewer children. In Viet Nam, there have been two formal family planning campaigns, the two-child policy and a contraception campaign promoting the insertion of IUDs in women. According to the UNDP Viet Nam, 38.5 per cent of married women in Viet Nam use IUD for birth control (2002a: 45). This is by far the most common method of contraception, with 24.7 per cent using no contraception at all and 19.2 per cent using traditional methods (ibid.). The reason for the high use of IUDs among Vietnamese women can be traced to a government campaign promoting IUDs as one family planning choice. Other choices were not promoted as widely, however, the complications facing some women who use IUDs have meant an increase in money spent on health care and medication, fertility problems and low productivity due to taking time of due to illness or infection. The voluntary two-child policy which was introduced in 1988 (but officially abandoned in 2003), advised parents to have two children spaced three to five years apart, has proved to be highly effective especially in urban areas. Although the two-child policy has not been very successful in rural areas, the impact it has had on people in the city is believed to be high.

Limiting the number of children per family has resulted in a decrease in child mortality rates and maternal mortality rates. However, the abortion rate in Viet Nam continues to be the highest in the world, with 2.5 abortions per woman (Gammeltoft 2002:484). More than 30 per cent of these abortions are performed on unmarried women (ibid.). A recent study of teenage sexual practices by Gammeltoft, found that young Vietnamese men and women are taking sexual risks despite the fact that unwanted pregnancy and abortion are feared, through routinely engaging in unprotected sex (ibid.). While the high abortion rate can be analysed as a response to the low contraception use, it can also be viewed as a response to the cultural preference for male children, especially among poor families. With the opening up of Viet Nam and economic integration economic pressure could mean an increase in abortion rates unless more family planning options are made available to men and women. Women may also need to assert more control over the reproductive bodies to secure employment contracts or in cases where no maternity benefits are paid. Economic pressure brought about by the free market system will also mean that families need to allocate more money per child for education and health care, and therefore will need to adopt more reliable family planning practises.

6.4 Summary of Gender Issues

- During economic integration levels of poverty across the board are reduced but inequities grow.
- Poverty is the world most serious carrier of ill health (Ostergaard 1997:113)
- The CPRGS has not integrated gender issues in the discussions of the reform of State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs), culture and information, financial policies, legal support, Public Administration Reform (PAR), environmental protection, resource allocation for economic growth and poverty reduction.
- Women are less likely than men to access credit through formal avenues due to a lack of collateral.
- Although the land laws in Viet Nam do not discriminate against women, many women's names do not appear on the land user certificates.
- Female-headed households tend to receive less land due to the lack of labourers they have available to them.
Widowed and retired women are discriminated against in the allocation of land - they only receive half the land that male-headed households receive.

Economic integration can lead to the introduction of diseases of affluence.

Middle class men face greater risks of traffic accidents than women.

Middle class women face diseases of an affluent society including anorexia.

IUDs are the most common method of contraception used in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam's two-child policy was officially stopped in 2003.

Young men and women are not using contraception but are participating in high-risk sexual activities.

In general young men are not using condoms.

Condom use is very low in Viet Nam.

There is a preference for a male child in Viet Nam.

Abortion in Viet Nam is legal.

Viet Nam has the highest abortion rate in the world, 2.5 abortions per woman.

Thirty per cent of all abortions are performed on unmarried young women.

There is a growing awareness of health issues typically associated with men because of lifestyle behaviours including smoking, alcohol consumption and motorbike accidents. But men need to take more serious their responsibility in reproductive health. For this purpose men must be more effectively targeted for family planning and reproductive health campaigns and services.

Negotiating power in sexual relationships is unequal between men and women resulting in unwanted pregnancies, high level of abortions and at times sexual abuse of women.

The incidence of poverty, measured by access to land and income through formal employment, is highest among ethnic minorities and female-headed households.

Husbands often assert rights over women's labour especially in terms of decision-making power and control over resources.

6.5 Looking forward

62. Campaign to raise awareness and to enforce laws, which are aimed at ensuring women's access to credit, economic resources and entitlements to inheritances and land ownership.

63. Through the work of the CPRGS develop policies, which reflect and support the heterogeneity of the large number of poor households with low incomes, including some female headed households, ethnic minority groups, the aged and invalids.

64. Strengthen micro credit programs for rural and ethnic women through lender education programmes, clearer policies and financial management systems.

65. Work with MARD and MONRE to identify and promote roles for women farmers and ethnic women in managing natural resources, farming and natural disaster mitigation.
66. Develop gender responsive plans and budgets in government ministries, which focus on strengthening policies to assist women and give examples of already developed action plans.

67. Work with MARD, MONRE and VWU to ensure that women are involved in the review and improvement of policies on land users' rights certificates, agricultural extension projects, provisions of credit and household property.

68. Work with the VWU and MARD to increase the capacity of rural and ethnic women and their access to training to upgrade skills and participate in diversified economic activities in agriculture.

69. Increase the availability and accessibility of family planning options and information to young women and men.

70. Develop and IEC campaign on the important role that single and married women can play in reducing the transfer of HIV/AIDS and other STIs. The campaign should include information on the different modes of transmission including sex, IVDU and mother to child.
CONCLUSION

"Women with babes in arms who beg from passing tourists...In nearby streets, the magazine Tien phong (Pioneer) reports on forthcoming beauty contests sponsored by foreign firms such as Kodak, Singapore Airlines and Samsung. ... remnant billboards of socialist propaganda promoting the country's progress display faded images of female farm workers standing behind a male factory worker".

(Fahey 1998:227-8)

This is a portrait of the early days of economic integration painted by Fahey. Since the early 1990s, economic integration in Viet Nam has been characterised by dramatic changes to trade agreements and laws, an increase in technology, a national push by the government to modernise Viet Nam. With these changes saw the mobilisation of Vietnamese people throughout the country and abroad, changes to the labour force and reductions in poverty. As demonstrated in this report, all of these factors impact on the gender relations and roles of Vietnamese men and women in sometimes obvious or subtle (and harder to measure) ways. However, Vietnamese gender, cultural practices and norms have also played a significant role in shaping economic integration in Viet Nam.

This report demonstrated that analyses of economic integration benefit from an investigation of gender, but should also be situated within the context of issues such as class, ethnicity, age and geography. All of these factors have an impact on, and shape men's, women's and children's experiences of economic integration.

Chapter 1 provides a summary of the gender issues associated with the removal of trade tariffs and partnerships with international trade organisations. The first issue relates to the patriarchal nature of international trade organisations, which stands in stark contrast to Viet Nam's socialist ideology based on gender equality. This shift can impact on the access and control women have to the development and review of trade policies. With such limited access and control over policies comes the risk of women being disenfranchised through trade policies which do not specifically meet their needs, whether they be as merchant traders or workers within the formal sector. The informal sector was also discussed as comprising disadvantaged men who lack support and security both under a collective market and an individualist market system. Gender issues related to cash cropping and economic integration were also discussed in Chapter 1. It was argued that while women, children and ethnic groups are receiving direct benefits such as increased incomes, these same groups are also exposed to the world market fluctuations and in extreme cases may suffer from depleted levels of nutrition and access to a variety of foods. These issues were discussed behind a backdrop of the negative implications that unequal trade policies can have on economic growth - the very purpose of encouraging trade.

Chapter 2 discusses technology transfer as being a direct product of trade reform. The relationship between gender, education, IT and vocational education and training were all investigated under the umbrella of technology transfer as a result of economic integration. While economic integration has had a positive impact on the amount of information being exchanged in both urban and rural sectors of Viet Nam, accurate sex disaggregated statistics are not available on the use of technologies among men and women. However, using statistics on education levels, cultural stereotyping of "suitable" roles for boys and girls, and the lack of women employed in the IT industry, the report warns of Vietnamese women being left behind in the technological revolution. While women form a disadvantaged group, older and rural women who lack access to training opportunities are particularly at risk of being left behind. Although older women and rural women are the backbone of Viet Nam's rice farming industry, they are the group who lack access to agricultural training options. Reasons posed for women's lack of educational opportunities include their triple work role, lack of land ownership and lack of available labour on their farms. But these reasons do not justify that
women farmers are not adequately reached. Moreover agricultural extension workers are mostly men. For various reasons they do not seem to be capable to organise training based on needs and timing of training that suit women agricultural workers, who need to combine outside work with multiple household and child caring tasks. The authors of the report suggest that Viet Nam could use the computerisation of the textile and garment industry to provide a competitive edge to manufacturing in the region, and as an opportunity to build the skills of a largely female, unskilled, labour force.

Chapter 3 focuses on the changes to governance in Viet Nam as they pertain to economic integration and gender. Issues such as public administration reform, banking reform and the closure of state owned enterprises are all discussed in the context of the impact they have on men and women's lives. While women have faced mass redundancies through economic reform, the creation of new positions in EPZs and IZs did see a "feminisation" of the manufacturing industry with women being employed as cheap, flexible labour. The discussion then addresses the increasingly important role of mass organisations and civil society in Viet Nam. The role of the VWU, is discussed in the context of the development and integration of Viet Nam. Through tracing the history of the VWU the authors demonstrate that once this organisation focused on providing ideological advice to women, today it provides women practical advice and training on micro-enterprise, hygiene, family planning and even gender equity. However, the question still arises on the presence of informal women's networks in Viet Nam and the unmet needs of women who, for one reason or the other, do not have access to the services of VWU.

Chapter 4 investigates the increase in the mobility of Vietnamese people, both within and external to Viet Nam. Economic integration has triggered a loosening of migration restrictions and a massive influx of people from rural areas to the cities. The report addresses the effect that the exodus of people from villages is having on the family unit and the marriageability of men and women. Comparing the patterns of male and female mobility, the report suggests that while most labour migrants are men, the majority of people who are trafficked are women. Migrant groups, men, women and children can all be considered as a disadvantaged group in society. Male migrants, in particular, are subject to drug abuse, gambling and purchasing sex from commercial sex workers. These risks can further expose men to HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Using evidence from returned trafficked people, it was uncovered that women are exposed to isolation, physical and mental abuse. The perception of trafficked people and labour migrants as prostitutes or victims was challenged in the report with evidence that many migrants are relatively well educated and not as poor as their peers who may not be trafficked.

Chapter 5 describes the gender issues surrounding labour and economic integration. While men and women in Viet Nam both contribute to the paid labour force, their experiences are contrasted by the number of hours they work, the type of work they do and the amount of remuneration they receive. In Viet Nam, women's work is characterised as either agricultural or low skilled and poorly paid, while men's work is often valued and better paid. The earlier retirement age for women and the lack of paternity leave were highlighted as two inequities that exist in the legislation pertaining to men and women's work in Viet Nam. Chapter 5 also discussed the emergence of career or "business women" in Viet Nam and the recurrent problems they face when negotiating their way through a male-centred domain. Underemployment was discussed as an immediate gender issue facing men during economic integration. While underemployment first emerged as an issue following the Viet Nam American War, today economic reforms and lay offs have meant that many men are left with part time or casual work. The effect of male underemployment on the social and psychological wellbeing of the community was also addressed. Underemployment was not used to describe women's experiences in the labour force because their unpaid work provides a considerable contribution to a household.

Chapter 6 addresses the gendered impacts of poverty and poverty reduction during economic integration. While women are engaged in most farming activity in Viet Nam,
ironically they are also the poor. The explanations provided in the report for women's poverty include, women's lack of control over resources (and limited access to knowledge and information) and women's role as the reproducer and producer. Through a discussion of health indicators, the report highlights that being poor and geographically, ethnically or linguistically isolated during economic integration further exposes women and their children to a host of illnesses stemming from malnutrition, parasites and anaemia. Conversely, the emerging middle class in Viet Nam should take cues from other countries in the region and the health risks associated with being affluent, including traffic accidents, heart disease, obesity and anorexia. Dramatic reductions in poverty since economic integration have also meant improvements to infrastructure and a growing awareness of the importance of family planning. Rich and poor women are using family planning as a strategy to ease the economic pressure of a free market system but men do not take their responsibility for reproductive health, however, women, by virtue of being the child bearer, have to. In a changing society a Vietnam young people are most at risk, and young women most vulnerable, for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS related problems.

The report highlights the need for further investigation into the feminisation of the labour force in Viet Nam. In particular, there is a need to research all of these six issues within a single case study. It is hoped that the forthcoming empirical research into the experiences of factory workers in the garment and footwear industry will provide a more detailed analysis of emerging gender issues in Viet Nam during economic integration.
English Language References


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Vietnamese Language References


[Tran, T.Q. (1999). Gender Basic Concepts and Gender Issues in Viet Nam. Ha Noi: Centre for Gender, Environment and Sustainable Development (GENDCEN)].


Newspaper Articles


**Audio Recordings**


**List of Internet Sites**

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www.agroviet.gov.vn
www.aidworkers.net
www.apcwomen.org/gem/index.htm
www.asia-migrants.org
www.aworc.org
www.brass.cf.ac.uk
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