



Research Paper

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Legal Dissemination and Education in the Implementation of the Two-Tier Local Government Model in Vietnam

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Abstract

Legal dissemination and education play a crucial role in strengthening the rule of law and enhancing public governance. Amid administrative reforms and the shift to a two-tier local government model in Vietnam, the need to improve the effectiveness of legal dissemination has become increasingly pressing. This study examines the institutional framework, assesses the current implementation landscape, and addresses challenges arising from administrative transitions and global socio-economic changes. It highlights the essential role of local authorities in raising legal awareness among citizens and promoting adherence to legal standards. Based on policy analysis and practical observations, the study proposes targeted solutions to advance digital transformation in legal communication, improve institutional collaboration, and enhance the skills and capacity of grassroots officials. These recommendations aim to establish a more transparent, accountable, and citizen-centered local governance system in Vietnam.

Keywords: legal dissemination and education; local governance; two-tier local government; rule of law; Vietnam.

I. Introduction

Legal dissemination and education are integral to modern governance systems, playing a vital role in fostering public understanding of laws and regulations. By promoting legal compliance, securing social order, and enhancing trust in state institutions, these initiatives ensure that policies resonate deeply with society while addressing citizens' needs. Across diverse nations, legal education programs have emerged as effective conduits between statutory frameworks and everyday practices, ensuring grassroots implementation of governance efforts. In Vietnam, the significance of legal dissemination and education has been enshrined in national legislation and strategies. The introduction of the Law on Dissemination and Education of Law in 2012 marked a milestone in formalizing activities aimed at raising legal awareness nationwide. Since its adoption, numerous government-led programs and localized projects have been launched to facilitate broader access to legal knowledge and embed a robust legal culture within society. Vietnam has simultaneously undergone comprehensive administrative reforms to enhance the functionality and efficiency of its public administration system. Central to these efforts has been the restructuring of local government entities, guided by principles of streamlining operations and empowering decentralization. The governance framework outlined in the Law on Organization of Local Government 2015 has provided the necessary legal foundation for reorganizing administrative units and bolstering the autonomy of local authorities. A key reform—the transition to a two-tier local government model focusing on provincial and grassroots levels—aligns with global trends toward simplification of administrative hierarchies. Many nations have pursued this approach to reduce bureaucratic complexities and improve public service delivery. Nonetheless, such reforms bring challenges, particularly in ensuring that citizens fully comprehend legal provisions and administrative processes. Clear communication becomes vital for seamless implementation. Legal dissemination and education are indispensable in facilitating these governance reforms. When citizens are well-informed about laws and public policies, they become active participants in governance processes and demonstrate greater willingness to adhere to legal norms. Conversely, insufficient legal awareness can foster misunderstandings, inefficiencies in administration, and an increase in disputes over legal matters. Furthermore, the global landscape has grown increasingly complicated due to geopolitical shifts, economic volatility, and fluctuating energy markets, all exerting pressure on national governance structures. In this evolving scenario, effective legal communication is crucial to maintaining societal balance and enabling citizens to navigate changes in regulation.

II. Content

2.1. Institutional Framework for Legal Dissemination and Education in Vietnam

Vietnam's legal dissemination and education (LDE) system operates on a well-defined legal foundation, with the Law on Dissemination and Education of Law 2012 serving as its central pillar. This law outlines the responsibilities of state agencies at all administrative levels, from the national to the local, and promotes the active participation of socio-political entities, mass organizations, and community groups to enhance public understanding of the law. At the national level, the Ministry of Justice functions as the primary coordinating body, responsible for developing overarching strategies, providing technical guidance, and executing nationwide programs. At the provincial level, Provincial People's Committees and their associated Departments of Justice are tasked with drafting localized plans, managing financial resources, and overseeing implementation. The grassroots level, encompassing districts and communes under the two-tier governance structure, plays a vital role in conducting community-based legal educational activities. To ensure cohesive efforts at every tier, inter-sectoral coordination is facilitated through legal dissemination and education councils. In addition to the foundational law itself, the Vietnamese government has enacted various sub-law regulations, such as decrees and circulars, to standardize LDE methodologies across different platforms. These include community forums, educational workshops, free legal consultation services, media campaigns, printed materials, and a growing emphasis on digital tools. Recent advancements in digital transformation have garnered substantial momentum, with initiatives like e-government portals, mobile applications, online legal awareness campaigns on social media, and nationwide digital competitions on legal knowledge. These technological efforts have significantly expanded access to legal information, especially for citizens in remote or mountainous areas. Despite these institutional strengths, challenges remain. Issues such as overlapping duties among agencies, uneven regional capabilities in implementation, and inconsistent budget allocations persist. Overcoming these hurdles will require continued enhancements in inter-agency collaboration and improved mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating LDE activities to ensure their impact is both effective and equitable.

2.2. Legal Dissemination Under the Two-Tier Local Government Model

The two-tier local government model—encompassing provincial and grassroots levels—was formalized under the Law on Organization of Local Government 2015 (as amended) as part of an extensive administrative reform effort. The model aims to streamline governance structures by reducing intermediate layers of administration and advancing decentralization. Within this framework, legal dissemination and education transcend basic outreach campaigns to emerge as a strategic tool for supporting policy implementation and improving local public service delivery. At the provincial level, authorities undertake macro-level responsibilities such as strategy development, resource allocation, and coordination of large-scale programs. Meanwhile, grassroots administrations—comprising entities like districts, provincial cities, towns, communes, wards, and townships—serve as the frontline interface with citizens. Their role involves organizing various community-based activities for legal education, assisting with administrative procedures, and providing immediate support to address local legal concerns. By removing intermediary layers of administration, the two-tier model enhances responsiveness and ensures that legal information and resources are tailored to meet local needs more efficiently. This framework also encourages embedding legal dissemination within other broader socio-economic initiatives such as rural development projects, administrative reform programs, digital transformation efforts, and small and medium-sized enterprise support schemes. By doing so, resources are optimized while providing targeted solutions to region-specific challenges. Nevertheless, shifting greater responsibilities onto grassroots-level institutions introduces new challenges. These include capacity gaps among local officials—particularly justice officers—as well as limitations in infrastructure and constrained financial resources. Without appropriate support mechanisms to address these issues, the effectiveness of grassroots legal dissemination may be compromised. This could result in disparities between national policies and their practical implementation at the local level. Strengthening the capacity of grassroots officials and ensuring consistent resource allocation will thus be vital to maximizing the effectiveness of LDE initiatives and promoting equitable implementation nationwide.

2.3 Challenges in Legal Dissemination Amid Current Global Dynamics

The global landscape since 2025 has continued to grow increasingly intricate and volatile, shaped by intertwined forces such as geopolitical tensions, economic instability, rapid digital advancements, and declining societal trust. These dynamics have given rise to significant challenges for legal dissemination and education (LDE) in Vietnam, necessitating timely and adaptive responses. First, shifting geopolitical landscapes and global economic uncertainty have heightened the demand for accessible legal information while complicating its timely and accurate delivery. Trade conflicts, the resurgence of protectionist policies—primarily through tariff barriers imposed by major economies—volatile energy and raw material prices, and widespread disruptions in global supply chains have affected Vietnam's highly open economy, which largely depends on exports and foreign direct investment (FDI). This situation has intensified the need for clear guidance on legal matters related to international

trade, labor, foreign investment, land management, social welfare, and environmentally sustainable development. However, rapid changes in international policies often render legal dissemination efforts outdated. Compounding this challenge is the necessity to consistently amend and supplement domestic laws to remain aligned with global shifts. Unfortunately, disseminating updated legal information to citizens in remote and mountainous regions continues to face significant hurdles due to underdeveloped communication infrastructure and limited capabilities among local officials. Second, the digital revolution and the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) have introduced both opportunities and risks for LDE. While social media and digital platforms provide an affordable and far-reaching means of disseminating legal information, they also facilitate the spread of misinformation, fake news, misinterpretations of legal principles, and even orchestrated disinformation campaigns. Disconcertingly, many individuals are exposed to skewed legal information via platforms like TikTok, Facebook, or private chat groups, leading to inadvertent legal violations or eroded trust in the state's legal framework. Additionally, a glaring digital divide persists. Individuals in urban areas and those with higher educational levels generally have better access to online legal resources. Conversely, rural populations, ethnic minorities, senior citizens, and vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities or migrant workers frequently lack both digital literacy and the necessary devices to bridge this gap. By 2025–2026, declining institutional trust and growing inequalities have exacerbated this digital disparity, further challenging efforts toward inclusive and effective LDE. Third, addressing a global decline in rule-of-law principles alongside increasing pressure on national governance structures poses a formidable challenge. Recent global reports paint a concerning picture of deteriorating rule of law indices across many countries by 2025. Trends such as heightened judicial overreach, diminishing civic space, and deepening inequality have emerged. Amid these external pressures, Vietnam has intensified its efforts to establish a socialist rule-of-law state while grappling with demands from both international stakeholders (e.g., compliance with new-generation FTAs that stress labor rights, environmental protection, and anti-corruption measures) and domestic constituents (e.g., calls for greater transparency and accountability in local governance under the two-tier system). Consequently, LDE must transcend mere information delivery to foster a culture of legal respect while countering extremism or distrust toward the legal system. Fourth, resource limitations and coordination inefficiencies have added strain within the framework of domestic administrative reforms. The two-tier local government model has expanded grassroots responsibilities but has not adequately addressed structural shortcomings. Many localities face shortages in trained LDE personnel, operational budgets, and essential infrastructure. Moreover, efforts to integrate legal dissemination into broader socio-economic programs—such as rural development initiatives, digital transformation strategies, or business support schemes—remain inconsistent and poorly coordinated. Traditional modes of dissemination often lack innovation and fail to engage younger audiences effectively—a demographic especially susceptible to misleading digital narratives. Fifth, cross-border challenges such as climate change, cybersecurity threats, and migration bring new dimensions to LDE. As climate change-driven natural disasters become more frequent and severe, coupled with public health concerns such as potential pandemics, Vietnam is encountering a mounting range of legal issues related to land rights, environmental protection, and labor migration. Simultaneously, the rise in cyberattacks and high-tech crimes necessitates widespread public dissemination of laws governing cybersecurity and personal data protection—fields still relatively unfamiliar to many citizens. In an era defined by globalization, it is crucial that LDE address not only Vietnam's domestic needs but also safeguard national interests from escalating external risks.

In summary, under current global conditions, legal dissemination and education in Vietnam faces systemic and multi-dimensional challenges: rising demand for information coupled with uneven access, risks of misinformation in the digital environment, and pressure to adapt to geopolitical and economic fluctuations. Without comprehensive and strong solutions, these challenges may reduce the effectiveness of administrative reform, undermine public trust, and hinder the process of building a rule-of-law state. Therefore, clearly identifying and overcoming these challenges is an urgent requirement so that LDE can truly become an important supporting tool for the two-tier local government model and the country's sustainable development.

2.4 Policy Recommendations

To improve the efficiency of legal dissemination and education under the two-tier local government model, attention should be given to the following key solutions: First, advance digital transformation comprehensively. Develop a centralized national legal information platform, design multilingual mobile applications, and integrate artificial intelligence to provide automated responses to common citizen queries. Simultaneously, enhance digital literacy for grassroots officials and the general public. Second, strengthen the capacity of legal dissemination personnel, particularly at the grassroots level. This includes organizing regular, intensive training programs focused on communication skills, updated legal knowledge, and strategies for community engagement. Establish a dedicated team of "community legal officers" in each commune and ward for greater outreach and effectiveness. Third, foster inter-sectoral coordination and social involvement. Establish robust coordination frameworks among the Ministry of Justice, relevant ministries and sectors, local governments, schools, businesses, and civil society organizations. Promote "community self-management in legal affairs" models to encourage active public participation. Fourth, enhance systems for monitoring, evaluation, and resource

allocation. Create performance indicators for legal dissemination and education at different administrative levels, increase funding for grassroots initiatives, and introduce support policies for disadvantaged regions. Additionally, capitalize on international best practices in legal dissemination within decentralized governance frameworks. The coordinated implementation of these recommendations will help improve the quality and impact of legal dissemination and education efforts, fully supporting the efficient functioning of the two-tier local government model.

III. Conclusion

Legal dissemination and education are fundamental to bolstering the socialist rule-of-law state, improving public governance, and strengthening trust in governmental institutions. As Vietnam advances administrative reforms and adopts the two-tier local government model, the importance of legal dissemination has grown increasingly significant and urgent. A comprehensive evaluation of Vietnam's institutional framework, implementation practices, integration with the two-tier model, and challenges shaped by global influences shows notable progress in the breadth and diversity of methods. Nonetheless, issues remain in areas such as inter-agency collaboration, grassroots implementation capabilities, digital disparities, and adapting to evolving global trends. To effectively overcome these challenges, it is vital to continue refining institutional systems, prioritize digital transformation, enhance the capacity of responsible personnel, and deepen community participation. These actions will ensure legal dissemination becomes a powerful bridge between state laws and citizens' daily lives, fostering a governance approach that is transparent, accountable, efficient, and genuinely attuned to societal needs.

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