

# Salary Policies For Vietnamese Civil Servants In The Stage 1961 – 1974

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## **Abstract:**

*This is the fourth article in the series of articles on salary policies for Vietnamese civil servants from 1945 to the present. This article is about the salary policy of civil servants in the period 1961-1974. During 14 years of this period, Vietnam was still facing a fierce war against the US and overcoming the consequences of war. Therefore, the salary policy for civil servants had not much been changed and was mainly based on the salary reform policy issued by the Government in 1960.*

**Keywords:** Vietnam, civil servant, salary, minimum wage, allowances

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Salary policy is an important part of the socio-economic policy system. It does not only directly affect the lives of labourers but also affects production and business activities, productivity and work efficiency, economic growth, political and social stability. In particular, cadres, civil servants and public servants are working for state power agencies, they have a particularly important position and role in social development and management due to their specific labour characteristics. Therefore, the salary policy for officials, civil servants and public servants is one of the very basic policies of the country.

Since the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945 (Independence Day), the salary policy for civil servants and public employees has always been paid attention by the State. However, the war situation in Vietnam continued until April 30, 1975 when the North and South were unified. Therefore, the salary policy of civil servants also had some characteristics suitable to the country's situation in the period from February 9, 1945 to April 30, 1975.

This article will focus on presenting the salary policy for civil servants in the period 1961-1974. It is a continuation of the series of articles on Vietnam's civil servant salary policy from 1945 to the present. Published articles have mentioned civil servant salary policies for periods such as 1945-1950; 1951-1960; 2010-2019 (Le & Phan, 2019, 2022; Le Thi Thu Huyen et al., 2021).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHOD

Salary policy for cadres, civil servants and public servants through periods of development in Vietnam is one of the topics that Vietnamese and foreign researchers want to explore. Some research works on Vietnam's minimum wage have been published such as articles by Sakellariou, Vu Thi Nga, Luu Thi Lam, Nguyen Duc Thanh and colleagues (Lam, 2014; Nga, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2017; Sakellariou & Fang, 2014). Other research articles are about wage reform in Vietnam by authors Vu Thi Tam, Bui Thi Thuy Ngan, Tran Thi Minh Ngoc, and Vu Hoang Ngan (Bui, 2015; Ngoc, 2022; Vu, 2014; Vu Thi Tam, 2014). Authors such as Imbert and Nguyen Ngoc Duy Phuong write about Vietnam's salary policy in other aspects (Imbert, 2011; Phuong et al., 2018).

This article is written based on the method of synthesizing and describing historical documents and legal documents issued in the period 1961-1974. The qualitative approach is used to describe the characteristics of Vietnam's civil servant salary policy during this period.

## III. FINDINGS

### **The content of salary policies for Vietnamese civil servants from 1961 to 1974**

Since the Genève Agreement was signed on July 21, 1954, the French Army ended hostilities in Indochina, North Vietnam from the 17th parallel outward had been completely liberated, the South was still colonized by the US military. Since then, the country Vietnam Democratic Republic (in the North of Vietnam) began to build socialism, overcome the consequences of war, continue to provide aid and carry out a revolution to liberate the South. The State implemented the first five-year plan for the period 1961-1965 (Complete National

Congress documents, volume II 1960 - 1964, 1962) and gained outstanding achievements in politics, economics, and culture; initially built the material and technical basis for socialism. In the stage 1961-1974, North Vietnam had to fight against two destructive wars caused by the US Army, the first time in 1965-1968; and the second time in 1972-1973. At the same time, the government and people in the North performed a rearguard mission, accompanying the South against the US Army. By April 30, 1975, the South of Vietnam was completely liberated, the North and South were unified.

Due to the difficult situation of the resistance war against the US to save the country and difficulties in overcoming the consequences after the wars. Moreover, the economic conditions and infrastructure of the country at that time were still weak, so the salary policy for cadres, and civil servants in the period 1961-1974 was still maintained according to the salary reform policies that had been issued by the Government Council since 1960 (Loi, 2016). During this period, people who worked for state agencies were collectively called officials, workers and public employees. But in this article, the phrase “civil servant” will be used to ensure the consistency of the published article series about salary for Vietnamese civil servants.

In 1960, the Third National Congress of the Vietnam Communist Party was convened, the Congress determined that our country's economy would develop completely in the direction of planning to suit the war situation at that time. All labour issues followed the State's direct plans and were implemented by administrative orders. Especially in the field of remuneration, due to the help of foreign experts in 1960, Vietnam implemented salary reform applicable to people working in the State sector, civil servants and officers. The salary system regulated salary levels and specific salary levels according to jobs, positions, and tasks associated with trained professional qualifications. The salary system was specified according to jobs, positions, and tasks associated with the trained professional qualifications. Payment time, form of payment, salary increase and other related issues were all determined by the State and depend on the State budget. In general, the salary of civil servants in this period included the main salary according to the salary scale and many allowances and subsidies, salaries were paid once or twice a month depending on the work characteristics of some government agencies (Joint Circular 13-TT/LB, 1961). A part of the total monthly salary of civil servants was also transferred by their State agencies to the family to encourage civil servants and their families to work hard (Inter-ministerial Circular 10-TT/LB-NH-BD-TC, 1965). At the stage 1961 to 1974, in addition to salaries, allowances, and subsidies, the State also provided total subsidies under the stamp regime, and even officials and civil servants were distributed houses and other rewards (Circular 28-TTg, 1963). The total number of people receiving State salaries at this time was about 1 million people (Chung, 2017).

### **Main salary**

In the period from 1961 to 1974, the main salary of civil servants was paid based on the 1960 salary policy. According to the Resolution of the Government Council in the meeting on April 26 and 27, 1960 on both salary regime advancement and salary increase in 1960, on February 1, 1961 the Government issued Decree 14-CP temporary regulations on the composition of the salary fund (Decree No.14-CP, 1961). Therefore, the main monthly salary of civil servants is paid according to the salary scales system and position salary levels that had been issued by the State since 1960 (Decree No.23-CP, 1960; Decree No.25-CP, 1960). These decrees set out three payrolls for cadres and civil servants in administrative and non-business agencies including:

- Table A: The payroll of leaders in the administrative apparatus from central to district levels, in the professional agencies and public service agencies;
- Table B: The payroll of positions of cadres; professional, technical and scientific officials;
- Table C: The payroll of positions of employees working in administrative and service tasks.

Each payroll had many salary scales, each salary scale included salary levels, each level corresponding to a certain salary amount instead of salary coefficient. Level 1 salary could vary between different occupations. The regulation of high or low wages must be based on technical complexity, working conditions and the different importance of occupations in the national economy. The regime of cadres and civil servants working in administrative and non-business agencies was carried out on the principle that the salary of leaders was higher than the salary of other officials and employees; the salary for the position requiring high technical and professional level was higher than the one for a position requiring simpler technical and professional level; the salary of officials in difficult and unhealthy conditions was higher than the salary of people working in normal conditions (Decree No.25-CP, 1960).

In addition to salaries by the salary scale, Decree 14 (Decree No.14-CP, 1961) also regulated salaries in some other cases such as civil servants who were sent to study, temporarily transferred to another work (Joint Circular 09-TT/LB, 1962), to perform State duties, temporarily stopped work due to natural disasters, broken machines,...(Circular 11-LD/TT, 1962).

In the stage 1961-1974, some specific professions had several legal documents specifying the way of salary classification. For example, Circular 36-TTg dated April 22, 1964 regulated the salary regime for the police sector (Circular No.36-TTg, 1964). Circular No. 01-TC/TCCB dated February 3, 1972 regulated salaries for

officials who graduated from the university specializing in finance, accounting, and banking (Circular 01-TC/TCCB, 1972). Joint Circular No.17-TT/LB dated September 17, 1968 provided guidance and regulations on organization and policies for the main teams working on irrigation and hydropower in mountainous regions. For example, commanding officials (captain, vice captain) who were key officials in the commune or workers, employees with high experience in the irrigation field would be paid according to the following salary payroll.

**Table 1.** Salary payroll for key position officials and employees in the irrigation field in 1968

Position	Monthly main salary (VND)			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Captain	48	53	58	63
Vice - captain	44	48	53	58

Source: (Inter-ministerial Circular No.17-TT/LB, 1968)

For the education sector, there were many documents regulating salaries for teachers, principals, and vice principals (Circular 03-BYT-TT, 1964; Circular 03-TTg, 1964). Those documents include: Decision 708/QD of the Ministry of Education dated September 10, 1962, which regulated the salary regime for unfully-qualified teachers at secondary and high schools (Decision 708/QD, 1962); Circular 4102-CD, which was issued by the Ministry of Education on September 18, 1962, guided the implementation of Decision 708-QD (Circular 4102-CD, 1962); Circular 20/TT of May 20, 1965 promulgated by the Ministry of Education on supplementing the salary ranking for some teachers in the education sector (Circular No. 20 / TT, 1965); Circular 01/TT which was enacted on 01/01/1967 about salary payment for principals and vice principals assigned to do research and professional direction at educational agencies at all levels (Circular 01-TT, 1967); Circular 38/TT which was issued on December 5, 1969 on guiding salary ranking for teachers graduating from the central kindergarten pedagogical school, (Circular 38/TT, 1969); Joint Circular 32-TT/LB, which was issued on November 21, 1972, guided salary rankings for students graduating from pedagogical universities training primary and secondary school teachers (Joint Circular 32-TT/LB, 1972); Circular 37/TT, which guided salary ranking for secondary school teachers graduating from 10+3 pedagogical school, was issued on November 14, 1974 (Circular 37/TT, 1974).

On June 6, 1974, the Government Council issued a Resolution of 137-CP on the salary, social insurance, and collective welfare for workers and State employees in two years 1974-1975, which added some salary allowances to some industries; supplemented the salary table of the position of scientific researchers, university teachers, technical staff relied on classification of positions and specific criteria for each type of official (Resolution No.137-CP, 1974).

Furthermore, the salary rank increase for civil servants and state officials was also stipulated in some Directive and Circular. For example, the Directive 25-TTg/CN dated February 27, 1968 of the Prime Minister promulgated the regime of regular salary-level promotion for officials and employees in 1968; Directive 29-TTg/CN of March 27, 1969 of the Prime Minister on the regime of raising salary levels in 1969 for State officials and employees (Directive 29-TTg/CN, 1969); Circular 10 TC/TT guiding Directive No. 96/TTg on the implementation of upgrading salary levels in 1974 for State officials and employees (Circular No. 10 TC/TT, 1974).

### ***Allowances and subsidies***

In the period 1961- 1974, civil servants received a lot of allowances and subsidies. These allowances and subsidies could be set at a specific amount of money or a percentage of the current main salary.

Types of allowances for civil servants at that time were as follows:

1. Allowances for night-time, overtime, extra shift work in normal working days, on days off, on holidays; additional allowances for those who take regular leave but did not take time off, just kept staying at work (Circular 06-LD-TT, 1964; Circular 13/TT, 1963; Circular 387-VH-TT, 1962; Decree No.14-CP, 1961).
2. Allowance for vocational training in production (Decree No.14-CP, 1961)
3. Responsibility allowances for team leaders (Decree No.14-CP, 1961)
4. Seniority allowance in fields prescribed by the State (Circular 05/TTg, 1963; Decree No.14-CP, 1961).
5. Mobility allowance for officials, and workers who often went on business (Circular 18-TL/TT, 1968; Decree No.14-CP, 1961; Inter-ministerial Circular 04-TT/LB, 1962).
6. Allowances for talented officials in technical and scientific fields (Decree No.14-CP, 1961).
7. Regional allowance; allowances for special areas (Decree No.14-CP, 1961). The distinction between one region and another was demonstrated through the following factors: - Bad climatic conditions; - Difficult living conditions and expensive prices; - Remote and isolated working conditions. Based on the above factors, localities were divided into 7 areas with 7 allowance levels: 40%, 25%, 20%, 15%, 12%, 10%, 6%. In

important project areas where labourers were scarce, the State set temporary living allowances to encourage employees to come to serve the projects.

8. Monthly or daily allowances for workers and employees during their apprenticeship or internship period who had not been officially recruited to the Government agencies or enterprise's payroll (Decree No.14-CP, 1961).
9. Allowances for officials, workers, and civil servants working at construction sites, working in border areas and remote islands working in areas with tuberculosis, leprosy, etc., or going on business on ships,... (Decree No.14-CP, 1961; Joint Circular 23-LB/TT, 1966)
10. Allowance for obsolescence of personal vehicles such as bicycles and motorbikes,... used for going on business. The allowance was 0.02 VND/km to 0.045 VND/km (Circular 290-TC/TVHC-1, 1962).
11. Allowances for officials working in commune-level administrative committees. These are monthly allowances of 20-25VND/month; medical examination and treatment allowance; an allowance for attending conferences and participating in training classes; an allowance for a business-trip fee;...(Circular 30-NV, 1964; Circular 51-TTg, 1962; Circular 85-TTg-NC, 1964; Inter-ministerial Circular 18-TT/LB, 1965; Joint Circular 33-TT-LB, 1962)
12. Other allowances such as leader-position allowance; allowance for business trip fees; and allowance for hazardous work; allowance for drinking water 0.2VND/person/month; living allowance (at least 24 VND/month or 95% main salary) for civil servants sent to study (Circular 10-LD-TT-, 1964; Circular 11-LD-TT, 1964; Joint Circular 09-TC-HC-VX, 1963; Joint Circular 17-TT/LB, 1972; Resolution No.137-CP, 1974); an allowance of 3.6 VND to buy fabric at the supplied price (Circular 15-TC/HCVX, 1971).

Some kinds of subsidies:

1. Subsidy of 8 to 30 VND for families of officials in difficulty (Circular 02-TT/LB, 1961)
2. Subsidies for families of warriors, families of military persons, and officials being missing or dead. These subsidies were from 9VND to 30VND/month (Joint Circular 38-TT-LB, 1962).
3. Subsidy for occupational accident (Circular 62LN-VC, 1962)
4. Severance subsidy (Circular 06 TC/HCVX, 1974; Circular 10-NV, 1964; Circular 17-LD-TT, 1964; Circular 22-NV, 1969)
5. Other subsidies such as burial subsidies and living allowance for the families of dead officials (Circular 08-NV, 1964); subsidies for officials' children (Circular 15-TT/3a, 1965); subsidies for officials injured or dead while on military duty (Circular 08-TC/HCVX, 1972; Circular 32-TT/3a, 1965); transportation subsidy for officials in cases of medical examination, treatment, vacation, and resignation to return to their hometown (Circular 206-TT/HCVX, 1969); evacuation subsidy (Circular 08-TC/HCVX, 1972); subsidy for families of officials on long-term business trips to war zone C (Circular 02-TC/TDT/P1, 1972).

### **Minimum wage**

During the period 1961-1974, the minimum wage was implemented according to regulations issued in 1960, which was regulated to be 27.30 VND per month (Decree No.25-CP, 1960). The minimum wage of 27.3 VND in 1960 was equal to 27,300 VND in 1958 because the monetary policy changed in 1959, 1000 VND of old money was exchanged for 1 VND of new money (Decree No.095-TTg, 1959).

Labour legal documents during that time no longer mentioned and regulated the minimum wage, but the State directly limited it by specifically regulating salary levels in occupations or fields. In every working field, there was the lowest salary, which was the State agency's starting salary paid to officials corresponding to jobs requiring the lowest labour level, the lowest qualifications and the lightest labour intensity, which was called the first level salary. Level 1 service staff had a salary of 27.3 VND, level 1 light industrial engineers had a salary of 70 VND, and those holding positions equivalent to ministers had a salary of 192 VND (Hiep, 2018). For teachers at all levels, the starting salary can be 45 VND, 50 VND, 55 VND or 60 VND depending on the school level (Joint Circular 32-TT/LB, 1972).

### **Evaluation of salary policies for Vietnamese civil servants in the stage 1961-1974**

During the period 1961-1974, Vietnam implemented a centralized economic mechanism, state civil servants were subsidized with many things for life needs, and the salary policy for civil servants also had characteristics suitable for the country's situation at that time.

This 1961-1974 period consists of 14 years, these are the main points of salary policies for civil servants and other officials:

- The main salary still followed the salary scale that had been issued since the 1960 salary reform policy. Civil servants and other officials in different occupation fields would have their legal documents regulating salary scales and payrolls. At each salary level, an amount of money would be specified; the salary level increase was completely decided by the state.

- The minimum wage was understood as the first level salary of the salary scale and payrolls in occupations, usually equal to or higher than the level of 27.3 VND prescribed in 1960.

- Besides the main salary, civil servants also received many allowances and subsidies appropriate to the country's situation at that period. Many subsidies and allowances were not only paid directly to civil servants but also paid to their families.

- The salary regime ensured fairness, paying special attention to the principle that leaders' salaries must be higher than employees' salaries. When assigning salaries to officials and civil servants in the administrative and non-business sectors, it must be mainly based on position, but at the same time must consider the actual ability and level of task completion of each person. When calculating salaries for officials and civil servants in professional fields such as teachers, doctors, pharmacists, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, midwives, nurses... and interpreters, it must mainly be based on position and professional seniority, each person's actual ability and level of task completion, not necessarily based only on seniority to determine salary.

By implementing this salary policy, civil servants could rest assured that they could work with peace of mind and participate in military tasks when mobilized.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Because the war situation in the South was still fierce during the period 1961-1974, the army and people of North Vietnam both built, developed the economy and supported the resistance war to unify the country. The subsidy regime set by the state was completely suitable for the country's situation during that period. In addition, the salary policy for civil servants was also very reasonable and had the unique characteristics of each occupation and profession field. Although the 1961-1974 wage policy was mainly implemented according to the reformed wage regime since 1960, many subsidies and allowances were added to ensure the lives of civil servants and their families, contributing to encouraging everyone to strive to promote production and work.

The salary, social insurance, and collective welfare regimes of State officials, workers, and employees has been issued and amended by the Government since 1960. But due to the war situation, there had been no economic conditions to improve salary in the period 1961-1974. By the end of 1974, the salary policy had unreasonable points such as average nature, subsidy regime, and lack of effect in encouraging production in the new situation. In the 2-year economic, cultural recovery and development plan for 1974 - 1975, our economic and financial capabilities did not allow for comprehensive and fundamental salary improvements, but could only be improved one step. That was improving the salary regime for the heaviest labour and most complex technical labour as set out in the Resolution of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Party Central Committee in the tasks and directions for economic recovery and development in the North for two years 1974 - 1975. In the following stages, civil servant salary policy continued to be reformed.

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