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LE THI BACH YEN: REGIONAL INEQUALITY OF EDUCATION IN  
VIETNAM: RURAL-URBAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR POLICY AND  
PLANNING. THESIS ADVISORS: CHALONG BOONYANANTA, Ph.D.,  
THAWATCHAI CHAJIRACHAYAKUL, Ph.D., SIRICHAJ CHINATANGKUL,  
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Rural-urban inequality of education has recently become an important issue in Vietnam. The objective of this thesis is to find the major problems of the inequality in formal education and options for policy and planning to improve the situation. The thesis is designed as a documentary study using published data, documents, and findings of previous studies conducted in Vietnam and other countries in analyzing the country's situation, problems of rural-urban educational inequality and in formulating the policies to solve the problems.

The results of the study show that at the pre-primary education level there are large differences in the access rates and the teaching quality between the two regions, which may have been caused by the shortage of funds and wrong perception of the role of pre-school education. The solutions to these problems would be increasing the state budget for the rural areas, mobilizing the local communities' contribution, and raising awareness of the importance of pre-school education for the children.

The most serious problems of rural-urban educational inequality at the primary and secondary levels are the late starting age and high drop-out rate in the rural areas which could be the result mainly of factors such as unequal distribution of educational resources, high personal costs, and too much uniformity in the administration and curriculum. To alleviate these problems, measures such as balancing the budget between the two regions, reducing personal costs by mobilizing local resources, efficient use of the existing resources, and adapting the curriculum to the local needs can be taken.

At higher education level, the main problems are the great differences in enrollment rates and in the choice of fields of study between the rural and urban areas which may have been generated from the increasing competition to university and high costs. The situation can be improved by enhancing the teaching quality at the lower levels in the rural areas, a loan system, a network of open universities, and the introduction of admission quotas and new selection criteria.