

UDC 32

**THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION  
IN CADRE PERSONNEL WORK IN VIETNAM**

**Nguyen Van Giang**

*Assoc. Prof. Dr.,  
e-mail: vangiangxdd@yahoo.com,  
Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics,  
Hanoi, Vietnam*

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**Abstract.** Cadre personnel work is the “vital” stage in the building of the political system. In the past time, although the cadre personnel work in Vietnam has undergone some renovations and progress, it still has limitations and weaknesses. Negativities and corruption in cadre personnel work are still quite complicated. Realizing the dangers of corruption in this important field, the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam have been stepping up the fight against corruption in cadre personnel work.

**Keywords:** cadres; cadre personnel work; corruption; corruption in cadre personnel work; anti-corruption; power control.

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**The current situation of corruption in cadre personnel work**

Ho Chi Minh, the great leader of Vietnam, clearly pointed out: “Cadre is the root of all works” [4, p. 269]; “All works that succeed or fail are due to good or bad cadres” [4, p. 273]. Based on the theoretical instructions and practical experience, the Communist Party of Vietnam has affirmed that: Cadres are the decisive factor for the success or failure of the revolution; and cadre personnel work is the “vital” stage in the construction of the Party and the political system.

In the renovation period, the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam has always considered cadre personnel work as the most important and vital task, as a result, cadre personnel work has undergone many changes. Its processes have become stricter, more and more synchronous, open, transparent, scientific and democratic. The work of training and fostering with updated knowledge has been paid attention in order to be step by step associated with titles, planning and use of cadres. The rotation policy combined with the appointment of a number of non-local leading positions has achieved initial results... Renovations in cadre personnel work have contributed to the development of cadres at all levels and in

many aspects. The quality has been increasingly improved, gradually meeting the requirements of the process of accelerating industrialization and modernization of the country. The structure of age, gender, ethnicity, profession and field of work has become more balanced and reasonable; resources of planning staff are quite abundant, basically ensuring the transition between generations. Many cadres are very dynamic, creative, quickly adapt to the integration trend, and are able to work in an international environment.

Besides the renovations and progress, in the past time, the cadre personnel work still has many limitations and weaknesses, in which corruption is still quite complicated. The use of bribery for positions, power, planning, rotation, degrees, rewards, titles, and crimes..., including those in high-ranking cadres, has been slowly prevented and pushed back. The appointment of cadres who do not meet the criteria, or the appointment of family members, relatives, and “buddies” occurring in some places has brought about frustration in public opinion. In 2018, the Communist Party of Vietnam issued a resolution on focusing on building a contingent of cadres at all levels, especially at strategic level with sufficient capacity, morality and prestige, on a par with their

tasks, in which: The important task is to “effectively prevent and repel negativities and corruption in cadre personnel work”.

Corruption is the act committed by persons with positions and/or powers of abusing such positions and/or powers for self-seeking interests. Such interests could be material or spiritual benefit they could obtain through corruption. Cadre personnel work is work for people, therefore, corruption in cadre personnel work has characteristics of corruption in general, and characteristics of behavior and “self-interest” compared to corruption in other fields, especially in the economic field. If corruption in other fields is usually for the purpose of material and money gain, which are clearly defined by the law as acts constituting a crime, then corruption in cadre personnel work is often “power corruption”, “relationship corruption” for spiritual gain. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that one is corruption, and it is even more difficult to convict, prosecute, and bring to trial, such as cases of “the entire family are cadres, are officials”, “impure support”. The benefits they receive here are still material benefits after all, but they manifest as spiritual benefits. However, in essence, such acts and cases are corruption because they are all “taking advantage of their positions and powers for personal gain” to violate discipline, the state’s rules, causing harm to the cause of national construction and defense, so it must be fought and prevented.

In fact, corruption occurs in all stages of cadre personnel work, diversing from simple, blatant to sophisticated cases; from easy to see to vague between good and bad, right and wrong. Some types of corruption in cadre personnel work in Vietnam could be identified as follows:

- **“Bribery”**: This is the most obvious manifestation of corruption in cadre personnel work. “Bribery” includes taking bribes, offering bribes, brokering bribes in cadre personnel work, leading to a very nasty situation of “buying and selling positions”, disabling the correct guidelines, policies and

regulations in cadre personnel work; causing harm to public opinion internally and externally; damaging the contingent of cadres; losing the trust of the people and of the cadres themselves, causing unpredictable immediate and long-term consequences. In Duong Chi Dung case, Duong Chi Dung went from a business manager who was always losing money, but he kept getting promoted and was appointed as the Director of the Vietnam Maritime Administration, and eventually was arrested shortly after. Another case could be mentioned is the case of Trinh Xuan Thanh who went from a business manager with many shortcomings, serious mistakes, even breaking the law, but was recruited, planned, rotated, and appointed to a senior leadership official and was even rewarded with noble titles. The above-mentioned cases have shown that the “terrible” and slick briberies in cadre personnel work have been occurring from low to high level.

In all stages of cadre personnel work exist the phenomenon of “bribery” such as: bribes for personnel planning, education, rotation; bribes for votes, votes of confidence, bribes for appointment, nominating candidates; bribes for comments, reviews; offering bribes to raise ranks and wages; bribes for degree; medals... When the personnel planning is about to be supplemented..., they “bribe”; when there will be a course to study theory and foster human resources..., they “bribe”; when there is a vacant leadership position that needs to be appointed..., they “bribe”; when there is about to be a round of rotation and re-arrangement of cadres..., they “bribe”; when there is a contest to recruit leaders..., they “bribe”; when raising the ranks of cadres..., they “bribe”, etc. “Bribery” has become a custom, a tacit law that everyone knows but is afraid to say. If you want to be assigned or appointed to a “good” position despite the lack of standards and conditions for arrangement and appointment, it is understandable to “bribe”. However, this “rule” also applies to those having qualified

standards and conditions, although they do not want to “bribe”, in order to be assured (!!!). The evil of “bribery” has created and nurtured some opportunist cadres who are promoted by “offering bribes” with the very snobbish experience of “There is no hard work at all. The only fear is not having enough money”(!). This evil also makes a part of cadres not worry about doing well their duties and responsibilities, but only worry about “investing” in building “relationships” to “bribe” when needed.

- **Abuse of power:** This is an act committed by persons with responsibility and authority in cadre personnel work intentionally exceeding the limit of authority when performing duties in cadre personnel work for personal gain or motives. The manifestation of this behavior is the heads with authority to propose, mobilize, suggest, put pressure, “drive” the collective leadership towards their intentions, even intentionally decide or impose on cadre personnel work, paralyze the roles and responsibilities of the party committees, unable the principle of democratic centralism. This situation leads to the loss of democracy, authoritarianism, manipulation and self-manipulation of the heads in cadre personnel work. Through abusing power, they will perform the act of “selling the position” to those who give bribes or arrange and appoint relatives, acquaintances, and family members even though they do not meet the standard and conditions to hold leadership or managerial positions with many benefits. The case violating the principle of democratic centralism, working regulations, and decisions on cadre personnel work policies that are not in accordance with regulations and beyond the competence of heads of party organizations and authorities in Ca Mau, Ninh Binh, The Steering Committee of the Southwest region, Gia Lai, Binh Dinh, Quang Nam... are acts of abuse of power in cadre personnel work.

- **Abuse of position and authority:** This is an act of a competent person in cadre

personnel work using the position and power to violate regulations in cadre personnel work for personal gain. Manifestations of this type of power corruption are very diverse, from the use of soft power of leadership and management to impose influence, suggestions to favor their own family and relatives, leading to the situation of “the entire family are cadres and officials”, or using their positions and authority in exchange for the reception and arrangement of personnel between the two agencies and units for “mutual benefits”, even implicitly sharing among the leading cadres a number of recruitment and appointment slots so that everyone can gain “benefits” (!) This leads to inflation in hand-writing approval and ratification letters, and seeing all “grandchildren of the heads” in the office. (!).

- **Taking advantage of loopholes in mechanisms, policies and regulations:** This is the behavior of competent and responsible people in cadres' work taking advantage of loopholes in mechanisms, policies and regulations on cadre personnel work to perform wrong or incompatible things against the interests of the organization, the Party, the State and the people for their self-interest. It is obviously difficult to avoid loopholes and shortcomings in mechanisms, policies and regulations in general, and in staff work in particular. These cadres should have actively contributed to overcoming loopholes in mechanisms, policies and regulations as it is their responsibilities, but many responsible and competent officials take advantage of such loopholes to abuse, arrange and appoint cadres on purpose for personal gain.

Manifestations of this type of corruption are very diverse, such as the phenomenon of “every one in the office holds a leadership position”; or the “the last train” with mass rush appointments before the head retire; or case of “abundant deputies”; or arranging and appointing relatives to leadership positions by “taking a shortcut” so they can

be the heads of the district and provincial party committees without working experience as the head of Party cell. Due to specifying the number of deputies at the departmental level only, some places have taken this advantage to appoint deputies at divisional levels, making the whole division become leaders. The phenomenon of “the entire family are officials” is also a manifestation of taking advantage of loopholes in mechanisms, policies and regulations, because although the Law on Anti-corruption stipulates that the heads and deputies of state organizations must not allow their spouses, parents, children or siblings to hold positions of personnel management, accounting, treasurer or warehousekeeper in their organizations, but there is no regulation on prohibiting the heads from appointing their relatives to another leading position in their agency or unit.

Due to the lack of strict regulations on responsibilities and indicating when to stop signing decisions on personnel and cadres of leaders and managers before retiring or changing positions, some officials have taken this advantage to sign a series of decisions on recruitment, appointment, and mobilization of cadres before retirement or changing position like “the last train”, in which they appoint even cadres having problems and inadequate standard. When being discovered and questioned by the public, they explain that those personnel have been reviewed for a long time following the correct process and they signed in accordance with their authority, or they just signed on behalf of the leading team (!?). There are cases of ministerial leaders appointing nearly 60 departmental heads before retiring; or case of a general director of a state-owned enterprise signing an appointment decision for a series of officials and heads of affiliated units on the same day before retiring... Of course, everyone knows that behind that hurriedly departing “last train” are many hidden things, even bribery, “gift-receiving”, “thank you gifts” (?).

- *Deliberate wrongdoing*: This behavior is actually found in all above-mentioned types of corruption, but it also has its own characteristics. Manifestations of this form of corruption in cadre personnel work are people with authority and responsibility, but disregard the principle of democratic centralism and working regulations deciding on cadre personnel work policies that are not in accordance with regulations. This behavior leads to the recruitment and appointment of cadres not in accordance with the procedures and the guidelines, resolutions of the party organization. This includes cases of “speedy planning”, “speedy appointment”, “impure support”, appointment of heads and managers lacking conditions, standards, qualities, capacities, even appointing the driver as a head... Witnessing these unusual favors, everyone has the right to suspect nefarious things. The reality shows that most of the cases of deliberate wrongdoing are not only due to the authoritative and dominated leadership style of the heads, or family-benefit driven actions, but also the shadow of self-interest, intention, even the status of “putting their foot in their mouth”, and being driven by “rich men”...

Manifestations of intentional wrongdoings can also include acts of falsification in cadre personnel work, such as making fake documents and records; scholars, using fake degrees or making dishonest background declarations so as to be qualified for planning, appointment, and nomination of candidates. The cadres performing this all know that it is wrong but still intentionally do it in order to be recruited, arranged, appointed for their self-interest.

- *Harassment in cadre personnel work*: This behavior is present in both leading cadres and advising staff on cadre personnel work. Due to the laxity and lack of specificity in the regulations on decentralization of personnel management, leaders and managers can arbitrarily stipulate the decentralization of personnel management under their management. As a

result, a number of heads and managers take over the management of staff and personnel into their own hands in the style of “damming up the shore to catch fish”. Some consultants and assistants are assigned to monitor the area, help leaders, organize staff management, and even professional staff in agencies and organizations also take advantage of their job positions to cause harm and harass, accept gifts, even take bribes, make prices, broker bribes in the form of “helping”.

The above-mentioned problems are some manifestations of corruption in cadres work in Vietnam today. Through the major cases that have been investigated and handled recently, it has been shown that corruption in cadre personnel work is becoming increasingly complex and serious in scope, nature and consequences. If there is no strong and resolute measure to prevent corruption in cadre personnel work, it will damage the entire cadres and destroy a key stage in building Vietnam's political system.

### **Solutions**

Preventing corruption in cadre personnel work in Vietnam requires many synchronous solutions, in which the following need to be promoted:

*Firstly, continuing to promote propaganda and education among cadres and party members; mobilizing the entire people to participate in Party building and anti-corruption; upholding the role of exemplary leaders.* Raising awareness, political and moral quality and responsibility for corruption and anti-corruption in cadre personnel work for the heads of party committees, authorities, the Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, economic organizations of the State and staff advisory committee on cadre personnel work, so as to properly and well perform the functions and duties of cadres' work. Focusing on propaganda and education, upholding the responsibility of setting an example of leading cadres and managers, first of all the heads in cadre personnel work in the spirit of

the Regulations of the Communist Party of Vietnam on setting an example of cadres and party members, especially key officials at all levels. Each head and manager needs to constantly cultivate, train, manage, and control themselves against power ambitions and temptations for material benefits.

*Secondly, continuing to review, supplement, correct and promulgate regulations on cadre personnel work which are missing, insufficient, or have loopholes.* It is necessary to focus on reviewing, detecting, adjusting, supplementing and amending regulations on personnel work that are no longer appropriate or difficult to implement, easily exploited for personal gain; promulgating new regulations and organizing strict, serious and effective implementation. Recently, many regulations on personnel work have been reviewed, supplemented, corrected and issued such as regulations on the process of planning and appointment of cadres; regulations on staff rotation and evaluation. However, these regulations only deal with loopholes that are heavily exploited or causing frustration to meet immediate requirements, so it is necessary to continue studying to perfect these regulations, especially regulations on assessment, recruitment, election, appointment and management of cadres; on declaration of assets of officials...

*Thirdly, to strongly renovate the cadre personnel work in the direction of increasing decentralization of cadre management for direct management and use; increasing authority over cadre personnel work for the heads as well as increasing their responsibility and tight supervision of power.* Strict regulations and implementation must be imposed on staff work processes. The responsibilities of collectives and individuals in cadre personnel work must be clearly defined. It is necessary to strictly control power in cadre personnel work on the principle that all power must be controlled by mechanism; authority must be bound by responsibility. Regulations on cadre

personnel work must be adjusted to clearly define the authority and responsibility of the heads in the assessment, selection, introduction, arrangement, using process. The appointment of cadres must in the direction of attaching importance to the evaluation and opinion of the heads for the deputy; attaching great importance to the assessment of the heads to the leaders of the affiliated units. The authority and responsibility of the head in all other stages of cadre personnel work, in planning, rotation, appointment, dismissal, reward and discipline of cadres must be researched and clearly defined.

*Fourthly, to urgently build a mechanism to tightly control power in cadre personnel work.* To fight against corruption in cadre personnel work, it is necessary to strictly control power in cadre personnel work. Controlling power in cadres' work requires a multi-dimensional control mechanism: institutional control combined with control by morals and responsibility; internal control of the organization combined with external control of people and society; control of higher levels over lower ones combined with lower levels taking control over the higher ones; control within the Party synchronized with the control of each organization in the political system; in every organization of society; organizational control promotes individual employee self-control; the control of the specialized agency over the control of power in conjunction with the non-specialist agency; the control of the authority combined with the control of the press and public opinion. In 2019, the Communist Party of Vietnam issued regulations on controlling power in cadre personnel work and against buying positions and power with specific regulations and strict sanctions for violators. This is a very necessary legal basis to contribute to controlling power in cadre personnel work and fighting against buying positions and power.

Vietnam is trying to renovate the Party's inspection agency and the State's inspection agency to establish a strong power control

agency in general and in cadre personnel work in particular.

*Fifthly, being democratic, open, transparent, creating a healthy competition mechanism in personnel work, especially in the stages of recruitment, evaluation, planning, mobilization, appointment, rotation, reward and discipline for officials.* Democracy, publicity and transparency are very important to prevent and combat corruption in cadre personnel work. Standards for titles, positions of leadership and management of agencies in the political system must be clearly defined with specific quantification to create publicity and transparency for supervision and inspection. The way of evaluation, appointment, election and introduction of election must be strongly renovated in the direction of true democracy. During the appointment, election, and nomination of the election, it is necessary to implement the mandatory regime with at least two candidates for each position. A mechanism must be developed in which people must be responsible for introducing the appointment of cadres. If the referral is correct, there will be a reward system, and vice versa, if the referral is wrong, the responsibility must be considered. Implementing the introduction and appointment of staff in writing and stipulating the responsibility for the person they introduce.

*Sixthly, to strengthen the inspection and supervision of cadres and cadres' work; promptly and strictly handle the deliberate wrongdoings and abuses of authority in cadres personnel work.* Regulations of the Party and State on inspection, supervision, inspection and handling of violations must be synchronized in order to strictly control power and strictly implement. It is necessary to implement the mode of superior inspecting and supervising the subordinates; internal inspection and supervision; supervision from the bottom up, cross supervision between agencies and organizations, supervision of the masses.

Given that the cadre personnel work is a key stage in Party building and under the current negative corruption situation, it is necessary to focus on the inspection and supervision of cadre personnel work. The entire cadre personnel work from the central to grassroots levels must be reviewed, especially where there are signs of violations. It is necessary to detect, examine, investigate, promptly and strictly handle negative and corrupt cases in cadre personnel work; abusing power to commit wrongdoings in cadre personnel work or selling positions or power. Canceling and withdrawing incorrect decisions on cadre personnel work, at the same time, strictly handling wrongful organizations and individuals, there is no exception for strong deterrence. During the five years from 2016–2020, the Communist Party of Vietnam has disciplined more than 110 senior leaders, in which many cases showed signs of corruption in cadre personnel work; have canceled and revoked many incorrect decisions on cadre personnel work.

It is necessary to put the fight against corruption in the cadre personnel work in the context of accelerating the fight against corruption; renewing personnel policies, directly attaching responsibility to the interests of the leader in the performance of staffing duties.

The decisive factor is the high political determination of the leaders of the ruling party and the State, which is reflected in the concentrated and drastic direction, there is no exception in the fight against corruption, especially the investigation of corruption cases in the work of cadres.

### **Conclusion**

Corruption in cadre personnel work in Vietnam is still quite complicated. Corruption in cadres work occurs at all stages of cadre personnel work and in many ways from simple, blatant to sophisticated; from obvious

to vague between good and bad, right and wrong and are causing a lot of frustration in public opinion, which is a big challenge for the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam. Preventing corruption in cadre personnel work in Vietnam requires many synchronous solutions, in which it is necessary to focus on the following solutions: reviewing, supplementing, correcting and promulgating regulations on staff work that are missing, insufficient and have loopholes; strongly renovating cadre personnel work in the direction of strengthening the decentralization of cadre management for direct management and use; increasing authority over cadre personnel work for the head goes hand in hand with increasing responsibility and closely monitoring power; urgently building a strict power control mechanism in cadre personnel work; strengthening inspection and supervision of cadres and cadres' work; promptly and strictly handling wrongdoings and abuses of power in cadres' work.

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