

CULTURAL POLICY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY: STRATEGIES FOR SAFEGUARDING MINORITY HERITAGE IN VIETNAM'S MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS

POLÍTICA CULTURAL E IDENTIDADE ÉTNICA: ESTRATÉGIAS PARA SALVAGUARDAR O PATRIMÔNIO DAS MINORIAS NAS REGIÕES MONTANHOSAS DO VIETNÃ

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Abstract

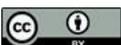
This study explores the viewpoints, policies, and implementation strategies of the Vietnamese Party and State in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities, with a particular focus on Quang Nam province. Ethnic minority cultures in Vietnam are deeply rooted in the nation's history and embody unique and diverse values. In the face of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, many traditional cultural elements are at risk of fading or disappearing. Quang Nam has actively implemented various programs, including Project 6, which links cultural preservation with community-based tourism. These initiatives involve restoring festivals, safeguarding languages and scripts, supporting traditional crafts, and building cultural infrastructure. The province has also promoted intangible heritage such as folk music, rituals, and indigenous knowledge, while enhancing the role of artisans and cultural officers. Despite notable achievements, challenges remain in policy consistency, resource allocation, and effective implementation. Moving forward, it is essential to refine cultural policies, strengthen coordination among stakeholders, and empower ethnic communities to sustainably preserve and promote their cultural heritage.

Keywords: Ethnic Minority. Heritage Preservation. Cultural Policy. Community-Based Tourism.

Resumo

Este estudo explora os pontos de vista, as políticas e as estratégias de implementação do Partido e do Estado vietnamita na preservação e promoção dos valores culturais tradicionais das minorias étnicas, com foco especial na província de Quang Nam. As culturas das minorias étnicas no Vietnã estão profundamente enraizadas na história da nação e incorporam valores únicos e diversos. Diante da globalização e da Quarta Revolução Industrial, muitos elementos culturais tradicionais correm o risco de se desvanecer ou desaparecer. Quang Nam tem implementado ativamente diversos programas, incluindo o Projeto 6, que vincula a preservação cultural ao turismo comunitário. Essas iniciativas envolvem a restauração de festivais, a proteção de línguas e escritas, o apoio a artesanatos tradicionais e a construção de infraestrutura cultural. A província também tem promovido o patrimônio imaterial, como música folclórica, rituais e saberes indígenas, ao mesmo tempo em que fortalece o papel de artesãos e agentes culturais. Apesar dos avanços notáveis, ainda existem desafios quanto à consistência das políticas, à alocação de recursos e à eficácia na implementação. Para o futuro, é essencial aprimorar as políticas culturais, fortalecer a coordenação entre os envolvidos e capacitar as comunidades étnicas para preservar e promover de forma sustentável seu patrimônio cultural.

Palavras-chave: *Minoria Étnica. Preservação Do Patrimônio. Política Cultural. Turismo Comunitário.*



1 INTRODUCTION

Since the initiation of the Đổi Mới (Renovation) reforms in 1986, the Party and State of Vietnam have consistently regarded culture as a vital front, advancing in parallel with economic, political, and social development. Throughout various periods, viewpoints, orientations, guidelines, and policies have been consistently issued to respect, preserve, and promote the cultural values of ethnic minorities, recognizing them as invaluable assets of the nation. Key documents such as the Resolution of the 5th Plenum of the 8th Central Committee, the Resolution of the 9th Plenum of the 11th Central Committee, and especially the Political Report of the 13th National Party Congress have affirmed the pivotal role of culture and people in the cause of national construction and defense.

However, in the context of globalization and deep international integration, the cultures of ethnic minorities are facing significant challenges. Cultural exchange, urbanization, and the impact of technology have led to the risk of fading traditional values such as language, script, attire, festivals, and more. In some cases, distortions and misunderstandings of ethnic cultural identities have emerged on social media platforms, negatively affecting communities.

Given this situation, researching the viewpoints, orientations, guidelines, and policies for preserving and promoting ethnic minority cultural values is not only an urgent task but also carries profound scientific and practical significance. This article aims to clarify how the Party and State of Vietnam have concretized these viewpoints into specific programs and action plans, assess the achievements and limitations in implementation, and propose feasible solutions to safeguard and promote these precious cultural values, thereby contributing to the development of an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity.

2 VIEWPOINTS, ORIENTATIONS, AND GUIDELINES OF THE PARTY ON THE PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF ETHNIC MINORITY CULTURAL VALUES

Vietnam is a country with nearly 3,000 years of history, having undergone countless changes and upheavals caused by both nature and human activity. Throughout

this journey, the nation has accumulated, created, and promoted many unique values and identities that form the soul of the Vietnamese people, while also absorbing and contributing to the shared culture of humanity (Nguyen Phu Trong, 2021). Since the beginning of the Renovation process in 1986, the Party has consistently emphasized the importance of culture, affirming that culture is the spiritual foundation of society and an intrinsic force for development. Within this framework, the culture of ethnic minorities is considered an essential component of Vietnamese culture, a precious asset that contributes to building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity.

Each ethnic group is an organic part of Vietnamese culture and a vital resource in the process of national construction, defense, development, and international integration. Over the years, the Party and State have maintained a consistent viewpoint of respecting cultural diversity and focusing on the preservation and promotion of ethnic cultural values. These values are recognized as valuable assets of society and essential conditions for building a unified national culture (Pham Van Duong, 2024). Therefore, the preservation and promotion of ethnic cultural values, including those of ethnic minorities, is a top priority. Caring for the culture of ethnic minorities is also a way to strengthen the spiritual foundation of society. Promoting these values requires the leadership of government authorities, active involvement of relevant agencies, and, crucially, the voluntary and responsible participation of ethnic minority communities themselves.

In the current context of globalization and international integration, cultural exchange and external influences have led to the gradual erosion and, in some cases, disappearance of certain elements of ethnic minority cultural identity. The risk of losing traditional cultural values among ethnic minority youth, such as folk festivals, customs, music, language, attire, cuisine, and traditional practices, is becoming increasingly evident. The implementation and evaluation of policies to preserve and promote traditional ethnic cultures remain limited. Moreover, misinterpretations and distortions of ethnic cultural identities and practices, especially on social media, have negatively impacted communities. Faced with these challenges, the Party and State must develop sound policies and legal frameworks that align with cultural goals and recognize the role of culture in societal development.

With a consistent viewpoint, the Party and State affirm that culture in general, and ethnic minority culture in particular, is a vital component and driving force of development. As Nguyen Phu Trong stated, culture is the soul of the nation, expressing

its identity. As long as culture exists, the nation exists (Nguyen Phu Trong, 2021). The goal of building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity has been emphasized in many Party Congress documents. The Resolution of the Fifth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee on building and developing an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity defines culture as the spiritual foundation of society, both a goal and a driving force for socio-economic development. It affirms that Vietnamese culture is unified yet diverse within the community of Vietnamese ethnic groups.

The Resolution of the Ninth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee on building and developing Vietnamese culture and people to meet the requirements of sustainable national development continues to affirm that culture must truly become a solid spiritual foundation of society and an intrinsic force ensuring sustainable development and national defense. It calls for building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity, unified in diversity, with ethnic, humanistic, democratic, and scientific characteristics. The resolution emphasizes preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, especially their languages, scripts, attire, and traditional festivals. It encourages embracing development opportunities and overcoming challenges to preserve and refine ethnic cultural identities.

Accordingly, the Party and State's viewpoints and orientations on preserving and promoting ethnic minority cultural values have been translated into specific programs and projects suited to practical needs. For example, the Resolution of the Fifth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee states that cultural heritage is an invaluable asset that binds ethnic communities, forms the core of national identity, and serves as a foundation for creating new values and cultural exchange. Great importance must be placed on preserving, inheriting, and promoting traditional cultural values, both scholarly and folk, revolutionary culture, including tangible and intangible heritage. The resolution also affirms that preserving and promoting the nation's fine cultural heritage to create new socialist cultural values that permeate society and individuals, becoming progressive and civilized habits and mindsets, is a revolutionary process that is difficult and complex, requiring time. In this endeavor, building must go hand in hand with fighting, with building as the main focus. Alongside preserving and developing valuable national heritage and absorbing global cultural essence, it is necessary to persistently combat outdated customs and negative behaviors, enhance cultural resilience, and resist any attempts to exploit culture for peaceful evolution. Therefore, policies for preserving and

promoting ethnic minority cultural values must be integrated into the broader framework of national development and approached with respect for ethnic cultural heritage.

In the Resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the Ninth Central Committee on ethnic affairs dated March 12, 2003, it was emphasized that comprehensive development in politics, economy, culture, society, and national defense and security must be promoted in ethnic and mountainous areas. Economic growth should be closely linked to addressing social issues and effectively implementing ethnic policies. Attention must be given to developing and nurturing human resources, building a contingent of ethnic minority officials, and preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values and identities of ethnic minorities as part of the unified development of the Vietnamese national community.

On July 27, 2011, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1270/QĐ-TTg approving the Project on "Preserving and Developing the Culture of Vietnam's Ethnic Minorities until 2020." This decision holds significant importance in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural identities of ethnic minorities in response to practical needs amid globalization. It places particular emphasis on preservation efforts in areas where ethnic cultures are at high risk of distortion, such as among very small ethnic groups lacking the means to protect their own culture, or in border regions, islands, and resettlement areas affected by hydropower projects.

The core tasks of the project were defined as follows:

Preserving the cultures of very small ethnic groups with populations under 10,000 and those in resettlement areas affected by hydropower projects, in close coordination with related programs and initiatives.

Building cultural life and cultural environments in ethnic minority areas, closely linking cultural development activities with socio-economic development tasks tailored to each region, ethnic group, and religion.

Recognizing the central role of cultural subjects and communities in inheriting and practicing culture, as they are key to preserving and promoting the traditional cultural heritage of ethnic minorities.

Valuing and implementing programs to preserve and promote traditional cultural values while building and developing new values in culture, literature, and the arts, with particular support for the development of ethnic minority languages and scripts.

Prioritizing investment in preserving and promoting traditional performing arts of ethnic minorities, collecting, restoring, and developing endangered traditional art forms.

Enhancing cultural preservation activities in combination with economic development programs, traditional handicrafts, community tourism, and poverty reduction efforts.

Developing and modernizing public information networks, improving the quality of cultural and informational products, and effectively utilizing radio and television tools suited to ethnic minority regions.

Building and improving the quality and effectiveness of community cultural institutions, ensuring that communities play an active role in organizing cultural activities and maximizing the impact of these institutions.

Strengthening cultural exchange activities at local, regional, and national levels.

Formulating policies to encourage research, collection, preservation, teaching, and promotion of intangible cultural heritage among Vietnam's ethnic minority communities.

Improving the institutional and cultural infrastructure system.

Issuing a set of indicators for the development of ethnic minority cultures in Vietnam.

Following this, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, in coordination with the Ministry of Planning and Investment, submitted to the Prime Minister Decision No. 936/QĐ-TTg dated June 30, 2017, approving the Target Program for Cultural Development for the period 2016 to 2020. Additionally, Conclusion No. 65-KL/TW dated October 30, 2019, issued by the Politburo, reaffirmed the continued implementation of Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW dated March 12, 2003, of the Ninth Central Committee on ethnic affairs in the new context. It emphasized improving cultural enjoyment for the people, investing in the construction of grassroots cultural institutions in each region and locality, paying attention to the restoration and preservation of historical and cultural relics, and effectively collecting, preserving, and promoting both tangible and intangible cultural values of ethnic minorities. It also highlighted the importance of empowering ethnic communities in building cultural life and eliminating outdated customs.

On July 27, 2011, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1270/QĐ-TTg approving the Project on "Preserving and Developing the Culture of Vietnam's Ethnic Minorities until 2020" with the aim of mobilizing the strength of the entire society to

develop ethnic culture. This contributes to making culture truly the spiritual foundation of society, both a goal and a driving force for socio-economic development, ensuring national defense and security, territorial integrity, and the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural identities of ethnic minorities in accordance with the actual conditions of each locality.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued Decision No. 4686/QĐ-BVHTTDL dated December 31, 2013, approving the Project to periodically organize "Festivals and Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Exchanges in Ethnic Minority Regions" at both regional and national levels for the period 2013 to 2020.

Resolution No. 33-NQ/TW dated June 9, 2014, of the Ninth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee focused on building and developing Vietnamese culture and people to meet the requirements of sustainable national development.

Decision No. 1719/QĐ-TTg dated October 14, 2021, approved the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the period 2021 to 2030, with Phase I from 2021 to 2025.

Decision No. 3965/QĐ-BVHTTDL dated November 16, 2015 approved the project titled "Program of activities, festivals, and cultural and artistic performances of ethnic groups at provincial, regional, and national levels for the period 2015 to 2020." This program is part of the broader project "Preserving and Developing the Culture of Vietnam's Ethnic Minorities until 2020" under Decision No. 1270/QĐ-TTg dated July 27, 2011 issued by the Prime Minister. Through this initiative, numerous cultural exchange activities have been organized nationwide, across regions, localities, and ethnic groups. Examples include annual ethnic cultural exchanges at the Vietnam National Village for Ethnic Culture and Tourism, cultural festivals of ethnic groups in the Northeast and Northwest regions, and festivals celebrating the cultures of the Mong, Cham, Khmer, Muong, Dao, Hoa, and Thai peoples. Large-scale events such as the Then singing and Tinh lute festivals of the Tay, Nung, and Thai ethnic groups have also been held. The quality and effectiveness of inventory, collection, preservation, exhibition, communication, and promotion of traditional cultural heritage of Vietnam's ethnic minorities have been significantly improved. Historical and cultural relics and scenic sites in ethnic minority areas have been documented and classified at national and special national levels. Vietnam has had several intangible cultural heritages recognized by

UNESCO, including the Space of Gong Culture in the Central Highlands (2008), the Then practice of the Tay, Nung, and Thai peoples (2019), and the Xoe Thai dance art (2022).

Decision No. 2493/QĐ-TTg dated December 22, 2016 approved the project on inventory, collection, preservation, exhibition, and communication of exemplary traditional cultural heritage of Vietnam's ethnic minorities for the period 2017 to 2020. The project aims to mobilize resources from across society to participate in preserving and developing ethnic culture, while fostering strong awareness and responsibility among the public, cultural subjects, and related organizations and individuals in protecting and promoting cultural heritage values.

Decision No. 936/QĐ-TTg dated June 30, 2017 approved the Target Program for Cultural Development for the period 2016 to 2020. The program includes goals to preserve and promote outstanding cultural heritage values of ethnic groups and to develop modern cultural works with national symbolic, political, historical, and traditional significance, contributing to the strategic goal of building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity.

Additionally, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued Decision No. 209/QĐ-BVHTTDL dated January 18, 2019 approving the project "Preserving Traditional Costumes of Vietnam's Ethnic Minorities in the Current Period." This project aims to preserve and promote traditional ethnic attire, fostering awareness and motivation among cultural subjects and local authorities to protect, promote, and incorporate traditional costumes more widely into daily life.

On July 15, 2021, the Government issued Decision No. 1230/QĐ-TTg approving the Program for Sustainable Preservation and Promotion of Vietnamese Cultural Heritage for the period 2021 to 2025. The program seeks to preserve and promote heritage values and nationally significant cultural works with political, cultural, historical, and traditional importance, contributing to the development of Vietnamese culture and people for the sustainable future of the nation. Accordingly, the traditional culture of ethnic minorities must be identified as a key preservation priority, especially intangible cultural heritage and historical relics associated with revolutionary and resistance movements in local areas.

In the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the period 2021 to 2030, Phase I from 2021 to 2025, under Decision No. 1719/QĐ-TTg dated October 14, 2021, the Government emphasized

the restoration, preservation, and promotion of traditional cultural values, the training and development of cultural personnel, and the provision of infrastructure and cultural equipment for ethnic minority and mountainous regions. The goal is to improve cultural access and enjoyment for ethnic communities, with priority given to very small ethnic groups.

The documents of the 13th National Party Congress reaffirmed the commitment to addressing disparities in development levels and cultural life across regions and social strata, with special attention to remote areas and ethnic minority communities. The Congress emphasized the need to awaken the aspiration for a prosperous and happy nation, the spirit of self-reliance, and the strength of national unity to build and defend the country. It highlighted the importance of human factors, identifying people as the center, subject, most important resource, and ultimate goal of development. Cultural values and the Vietnamese people are considered the foundation and intrinsic strength ensuring sustainable development. Mechanisms and policies must be established to promote dedication to the nation, and all policies of the Party and State must aim to improve the material and spiritual well-being and happiness of the people (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

It can be affirmed that the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority cultural values have been consistently upheld and implemented throughout all historical periods. In each specific phase of history, the Party has supplemented and refined its approach to preserving and promoting ethnic cultural values to meet practical needs and national development. The goal of building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity has been emphasized in many Party Congress documents. To achieve this goal, one of the key tasks is to preserve and promote the cultural values of ethnic minority communities.

The 13th National Party Congress emphasized the development perspective of awakening the aspiration for a prosperous and happy nation, the spirit of self-reliance, and the strength of national unity, identifying cultural values and the Vietnamese people as the foundation and intrinsic strength for sustainable development (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). It also stressed the need to address disparities in development levels and cultural life across regions and social strata, with special attention to remote areas and ethnic minority communities, and to support the development of ethnic minority culture and arts (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). Among the twelve major orientations for

national development during the period 2021 to 2030, the cultural development orientation clearly states the goal of building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity so that culture truly becomes an intrinsic strength and driving force for national development and defense.

Also in the 13th Congress (2021), the Party affirmed its policy on ethnic affairs and mass mobilization for the period 2021 to 2025. This includes ensuring equality, solidarity, respect, and mutual support among ethnic groups, effectively mobilizing, allocating, using, and managing resources for development, and creating fundamental changes in the economy, culture, and society of ethnic minority areas. It emphasizes the unique characteristics of each ethnic region in policy planning and implementation, and calls for mechanisms to promote the initiative, self-reliance, and resilience of ethnic minorities in socio-economic development and multidimensional, sustainable poverty reduction. The Party also prioritizes building a contingent of officials and reputable individuals in ethnic minority areas (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021).

Alongside the issuance of these documents, the Party and State recognize the special role of reputable individuals, village elders, community leaders, and artisans in preserving, transmitting, and promoting the distinctive cultural values of ethnic minorities. Therefore, regular meetings are held with village elders, community leaders, and reputable ethnic minority individuals. Titles such as People's Artisan and Meritorious Artisan are awarded to those who have made outstanding contributions to preserving and promoting intangible cultural heritage, including folk performing arts, social customs and beliefs, folk knowledge, folk literature, language and script, and traditional festivals.

3 POLICIES FOR THE PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF ETHNIC MINORITY CULTURAL VALUES

Traditional culture of ethnic minorities is recognized as a collection of material and spiritual values accumulated and preserved throughout the historical development of Vietnam. It is also considered an integral part of the national Vietnamese culture. With a conscious and respectful attitude toward the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, the Party and State have consistently affirmed the importance of cultural diversity and prioritized the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority cultural values, contributing to the development of an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity.

Accordingly, the policies for preserving and promoting ethnic minority cultural values focus on several key areas:

First, cultural management agencies must pay greater attention and issue appropriate policies to effectively preserve and promote both tangible and intangible cultural values of ethnic minority communities. The cultural heritage system of ethnic minorities is extremely rich and diverse, playing an essential role in shaping Vietnamese culture. Therefore, building, training, and developing a qualified cultural management workforce is a critical and necessary task. Local authorities must emphasize and enhance the role of Party committees, local governments, and cultural management agencies in guiding and mobilizing resources to implement programs, projects, and scientific initiatives for cultural preservation. It is also necessary to review and streamline the organizational structure, functions, and responsibilities of management agencies to improve the effectiveness of cultural preservation efforts. Recruitment of civil servants and public employees should prioritize those with proper training and expertise, and regular professional development should be provided to those working in ethnic affairs and cultural management.

To ensure the effectiveness of cultural preservation and promotion, policies must be continuously renewed and aligned with national and regional development strategies. These policies should reflect the comprehensive and specific characteristics of each ethnic group and locality. The Party's viewpoints and orientations must be translated into practical programs and projects that meet real-world needs. Legal documents and policies related to cultural work in ethnic minority areas should be reviewed, supplemented, and revised to support sustainable development while maximizing the potential and self-reliance of ethnic communities. Investment in grassroots cultural infrastructure should be prioritized, especially in areas with historical and cultural significance. Mechanisms and policies should be established to support and honor ethnic minority artisans, encouraging the transmission and dissemination of traditional cultural practices and strengthening the training of future cultural practitioners.

Preservation and promotion policies must be closely linked to national and regional development strategies, taking into account the unique characteristics of each ethnic group and locality. These policies should be clearly defined and implemented through specific programs and projects. Legal frameworks should be updated to ensure effective cultural management in ethnic minority areas, aiming for sustainable

development and integration into the broader national progress. Local governments and cultural agencies must play a leading role in implementing these policies, especially in remote and border areas, enabling communities to participate in cultural movements and public arts programs. Mechanisms should be improved to harmonize cultural preservation with socio-economic development, achieving the dual goal of safeguarding cultural values while leveraging their economic potential. Although this is a complex challenge for both the central and local governments, successfully addressing it will significantly contribute to the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority cultural benefits.

Resources in terms of personnel, materials, and funding must be allocated to develop and implement programs and plans for protecting intangible cultural heritage. Surveys, inventories, and documentation of intangible heritage should be conducted and submitted for recognition. Agencies, organizations, communities, and individuals should be encouraged and supported to engage in research, collection, documentation, and the application of scientific and technological advancements in heritage protection. Researchers should be actively involved in advising and proposing timely adjustments to policies to better suit local conditions and realities.

Specialized cultural agencies must develop policies for planning, training, and assigning formally educated ethnic minority individuals with high professional qualifications and strong dedication to cultural departments. This will create motivation and opportunities for them to contribute and fulfill the responsibilities entrusted by the Party and State. These individuals must also be equipped with knowledge of Party and State policies, as they are the true custodians of cultural heritage. In addition, local governments should support and honor People's Artisans and Meritorious Artisans from ethnic minority groups who play a vital role in preserving and promoting traditional cultural practices and training future generations. Each year, the Party and State organize meetings with village elders, community leaders, and respected ethnic minority figures, awarding honorary titles to artisans who have made outstanding contributions to preserving intangible cultural heritage. It is essential to recognize that the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage must also include the artisans themselves, as they are living embodiments of cultural treasures. Today, the number of highly skilled artisans in folk music and traditional crafts is very limited. These individuals are revered cultural figures who play a crucial role in passing down the essence of folk culture to future generations.

In the process of formulating policies for preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority communities, it is essential to clearly define cultural objectives and thoroughly assess cultural impacts before issuing related policies and legal documents. Continued efforts are needed to refine and develop policies that integrate cultural development into economic development and vice versa, ensuring that economic growth goes hand in hand with the preservation of ethnic cultural values (Hai Lien, 2022). However, attention must also be paid to creating suitable environments and spaces where ethnic minorities can engage in cultural activities, development, and creativity.

Second, cultural preservation and promotion must be closely linked to raising awareness among ethnic minority communities. The promotion of cultural values requires the continued leadership and coordination of government authorities, active involvement of relevant agencies, and especially the voluntary participation and sense of responsibility of ethnic minority individuals. The core issue in preserving and promoting ethnic minority cultural values lies in the awareness and responsibility of each individual, as they are the custodians and transmitters of their own cultural heritage. Therefore, local governments must implement various programs and activities to educate and raise awareness among ethnic communities about the importance of preserving and promoting cultural values, particularly language and script.

Although many ethnic minority languages and scripts have been officially recognized, their use remains limited. The preservation and promotion of these languages and scripts is a collective responsibility that requires the participation of the entire society. Across the country, several ethnic groups such as the Tay, Thai, Hoa, Khmer, Nung, Mong, Gia Rai, Ede, Bana, Xo Dang, Cham, Co Ho, and Mnong have preserved their own writing systems. As such, language education in ethnic minority areas plays a vital role.

Efforts must continue to mobilize all segments of society to recognize the significance of developing and preserving the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities, especially those with unique cultural traits. In addition, local governments should strengthen research and review policies and support mechanisms for teachers and students, as well as ensure adequate facilities and conditions for teaching and learning to promote cultural preservation in ethnic minority areas. The Ministry of Education and Training should also implement measures to expand and improve the quality of ethnic language instruction in schools.

Currently, six ethnic minority languages are officially taught in schools nationwide: Mong, Ede, Gia Rai, Bana, Cham, and Khmer, across 21 provinces and centrally governed cities. Each year, approximately 600 schools offer 4,500 classes with over 110,000 students learning ethnic minority languages. Notably, the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the period 2021 to 2030 will provide additional resources for preserving ethnic languages and scripts (Kim Anh, 2022). At present, 30 provinces have implemented ethnic language education in 700 schools, with eight language programs (Cham, Khmer, Gia Rai, Bana, Ede, Mong, Mnong, Thai) and six sets of ethnic language textbooks (Cham, Khmer, Gia Rai, Bana, Ede, Mong). Many localities have conducted surveys, compiled data, and collected ancient texts and scripts, publishing books in ethnic minority languages. These achievements serve as valuable lessons and foundations for further efforts in cultural preservation (Kieu Giang, 2021).

Local governments must also enhance training and capacity-building for officials responsible for managing ethnic minority cultural heritage to ensure effective administration, communication, and promotion of cultural values. These officials play a crucial role in guiding, organizing, and mobilizing community creativity alongside other resources to fulfill the mission of cultural preservation. To attract and retain talent in the fields of culture and arts, and to recognize and support dedicated cultural officials who contribute significantly to preserving and promoting traditional ethnic cultural values, the State continues to innovate its incentive policies. This includes creating favorable working environments and expanding opportunities for officials to participate in training programs both domestically and internationally to improve their skills and meet new demands (Nguyen Huy Phong, 2021).

The Voice of Vietnam and Vietnam Television should develop and implement more ethnic language broadcasting programs. These broadcasts must be scheduled appropriately in terms of timing and duration. Each news segment and thematic program must be produced in accordance with its intended purpose and format. Program content should reflect all aspects of life, including economy, culture, society, education, healthcare, and science, tailored to the needs of ethnic minority communities. These programs must ensure political relevance, timely and accurate information, and diverse, in-depth coverage of social issues, while aligning with the cultural life of each ethnic group (Tran Van Dung, 2021).

Local governments must also implement cultural heritage education programs for ethnic minority communities, especially targeting younger generations and focusing on intangible cultural heritage that has been officially recognized. Additionally, authorities should promote the role of families and communities in building healthy cultural environments and eliminating outdated customs and superstitions that conflict with national traditions and values.

Third, communication policies in ethnic minority areas must be further strengthened. Raising awareness about cultural preservation and management among ethnic minority communities, particularly the youth, is a vital and ongoing task. This helps foster pride, consciousness, and responsibility in preserving and promoting ethnic cultural values. Party committees and local governments must recognize that communication and awareness-raising are essential components of Party leadership at the grassroots level. In implementing communication efforts, authorities should consider the living conditions and psychological characteristics of local populations to develop appropriate strategies. The role of respected community members in communication should be emphasized.

Efforts should focus on preserving and developing the cultural identities of smaller ethnic groups such as Ro Mam, Cong, Meo, Pa Co, Phu La, La Ha, La Hu, Lo Lo, Chut, Co Lao, Bo Y, Si La, Pu Peo, and Brau. Communication activities must be integrated with cultural preservation efforts, selectively incorporating new cultural values while eliminating outdated practices. These efforts also serve to counteract attempts at “peaceful evolution” aimed at dividing ethnic unity and undermining the revolutionary cause of the Party and the people.

The Voice of Vietnam, Vietnam Television, local radio and television stations, and media agencies nationwide should actively expand coverage and improve the effectiveness of cultural programming and communication about the Party’s policies and guidelines on ethnic affairs. These programs should be broadcast in ethnic languages across all regions. Training and capacity-building for reporters and editors of ethnic language programs should be enhanced. Clearly, communication plays a crucial role in effectively educating ethnic minority communities about the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

Fourth, strengthening information and library work to preserve ancient documents and promote audiovisual activities, literary and artistic creation on ethnic minority themes

In the context of rapid globalization and the inheritance of achievements from the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is essential to enhance the application of information technology and consolidate resources to develop library networks and implement communication activities in ethnic minority areas. The collection, preservation, and digitization of works and products in ethnic minority languages are especially necessary. Accordingly, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1558/QĐ-TTg dated August 5, 2016, approving the project "Preserving and Promoting the Value of Literary and Artistic Works of Vietnam's Ethnic Minorities." Local authorities should continue implementing this project to research, collect, build documentation systems, create, publish, distribute, and promote literary and artistic works about Vietnam's ethnic minorities in printed books, e-books, 3D books, documentaries, thematic films, and digital library systems (Nguyen Thi Song Ha, 2023). It is important to organize and guide the development of document sets tailored to the characteristics of ethnic minority regions, and to encourage and support the collection, preservation, and digitization of works in ethnic languages. Capacity-building for reporters and editors of ethnic minority language radio and television programs should also be prioritized.

Promoting reading culture among ethnic minorities is being advanced through the community bookshelf project. The Library Department under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism coordinates with provincial departments in Yên Bái, Lào Cai, Lai Châu, Hà Giang, Hòa Bình, Cao Bằng, Tuyên Quang, Sơn La, Bắc Kạn, Bắc Giang, Phú Thọ, Nghệ An, and other relevant agencies to support the establishment of community bookshelves in ethnic minority and mountainous communes. This project aims to raise awareness among ethnic minorities about preserving and promoting ancient texts, literary and artistic creations.

Fifth, expanding cultural preservation models and developing new models suited to local realities

Expanding existing cultural preservation models and developing new ones tailored to local conditions will significantly contribute to the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority cultural values nationwide. It is necessary to diversify cultural preservation models for each village, hamlet, and community, which serve as grassroots areas for preserving and promoting traditional cultural values and building new cultural lifestyles. These efforts should emphasize the role of the people as creators and beneficiaries of culture, especially village elders, artisans, and intellectuals from ethnic

minority groups. Effective and high-quality implementation of cultural preservation models should be promoted, and successful models should be replicated. At the same time, new models should be introduced and adapted to local realities. Efforts should include integrating intangible cultural heritage education into schools, linking traditional craft development with tourism agencies, employment centers, and product distribution networks. Regional ethnic cultural festivals and national solidarity celebrations should continue to be organized.

Sixth, effectively implementing socio-economic development policies to ensure stable livelihoods in ethnic minority areas

Alongside economic development, the State and local governments must allocate sufficient resources for programs, projects, and scientific research on preserving ethnic minority cultural heritage and improving cultural management in these regions. Policies should support the restoration of traditional festivals and cultural products, honor and reward artisans and artists who contribute to cultural creation and transmission, and promote traditional arts and vocational skills. Support should be provided for distinctive cultural models and pilot initiatives in villages, as well as for preserving ethnic languages and scripts. To strengthen resources for cultural development, cultural activities should be socialized with active participation and oversight by state management agencies. During socio-economic development, attention must be paid to creating suitable environments and spaces for ethnic minorities to engage in cultural activities and creativity. The proactive role, responsibility, and critical thinking in implementing cultural policies should be encouraged. Researchers and cultural experts should be involved in advising and revising policies to better align with practical conditions.

Policy formulation and implementation for preserving and promoting ethnic minority cultural heritage must be grounded in reality, based on the potential, advantages, and unique characteristics of each region, locality, and ethnic group, and integrated into the overall national development strategy. Activities should focus on preserving and promoting representative and distinctive traditional cultural values in line with new conditions, ensuring harmony between preservation and promotion, and between preservation and development, especially sustainable cultural development in relation to socio-economic progress. The project "Preserving and Promoting the Traditional Cultural Identity of Ethnic Minorities in Connection with Tourism Development" under the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and

Mountainous Areas for the period 2021 to 2030 should be effectively implemented. This includes promoting tourism linked to cultural preservation, improving living standards, increasing the proportion of ethnic minority workers in tourism and services, and creating livelihoods that help reduce poverty. This approach also fosters community awareness in selecting, promoting, transmitting, and practicing distinctive cultural values. Furthermore, cultural development should be aligned with national identity and the essence of global culture, education, science, and technology. Cultural industries should be developed in connection with ethnic minority cultural products and services. Socio-economic development policies must continue to be effectively implemented to ensure stable livelihoods in ethnic minority areas.

To preserve and promote traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities, the cultural sector from central to local levels must make concerted efforts to integrate cultural identity with tourism development. In recent years, many localities have successfully leveraged local cultural values to create attractive tourism products. Several effective community-based tourism models have emerged, such as the Dao community in Nam Dam village (Quan Ba commune, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang province), the Thai community in Ban Men village (Thanh Nua commune, Dien Bien district, Dien Bien province), and Ban Ang village (Dong Sang commune, Moc Chau district, Son La province), as well as the Lu community in Tham village (Tam Duong district, Lai Chau province). Regional cooperation, inter-agency collaboration, and the application of science, technology, and media in tourism activities are increasingly emphasized to ensure effective cultural preservation and promotion. Implementing cultural preservation policies linked to tourism development has proven effective, helping to restore and promote distinctive cultural values across regions, create jobs, increase income, and support poverty reduction in ethnic minority and mountainous areas.

Seventh, continuing research and proposing recognition of ethnic minority cultural heritage

Currently, more than 150 intangible cultural heritages of ethnic minorities have been included in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, out of nearly 300 heritages nationwide. Through meaningful activities carried out in recent years, both tangible and intangible cultural heritages of ethnic minorities have been preserved, honored, and promoted. Patriotism and national pride have been strengthened, and the unity of the entire nation has been reinforced. Therefore, in the coming years, research

and proposals for the recognition of intangible cultural heritage of ethnic minorities should be further promoted and implemented. This work is of great significance in the current period, as it represents an optimal solution for preserving and promoting traditional cultural values. It is not only an act of respect and acknowledgment but also a means of educating awareness and attitudes toward safeguarding the cultural heritage of the nation.

4 PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL CULTURAL VALUES OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN QUANG NAM

The mountainous region of Quang Nam Province consists of nine districts: Tay Giang, Dong Giang, Nam Giang, Bac Tra My, Phuoc Son, Tien Phuoc, Hiep Duc, and Nong Son, accounting for over 70 percent of the province's total natural area. Quang Nam has a population of more than 1.495 million people representing 37 ethnic groups. Among them, the Kinh make up 91.1 percent, the Co Tu 3.2 percent, the Xo Dang 2.7 percent, and the Gie Trieng 1.3 percent, while the remaining 29 ethnic groups account for only 0.9 percent. Within these ethnic minorities are subgroups such as the Mo Nam, Ca Dong, and Xo Teng of the Xo Dang, and the Ve, Ta Rieng, and Bh'Noong of the Gie Trieng. These groups have experienced anthropological and cultural exchanges across various linguistic families and systems. The diversity of ethnic composition and continuous cultural integration have endowed this region with rich and distinctive cultural traits rooted in the communities of the Truong Son – Central Highlands area (Le Van Liem, 2024).

Community cohesion through resistance, daily life, festivals, and spiritual practices has created cultural values that are rich, diverse, unique, and deeply marked by the land and people of Quang Nam. Throughout its history, the ethnic minority communities in the mountainous areas of Quang Nam have cultivated cultural values that reflect their distinct identities and contribute to the province's rich cultural heritage.

In addition to ethnic diversity, favorable natural conditions have made this region highly potential for economic and tourism development. The mountainous areas of Quang Nam hold strategic importance in socio-economic development and national defense. With vast natural landscapes, long-standing ethnic minority settlements, low population density, and location along key transportation corridors, the region benefits from a temperate climate, fertile land, abundant rivers and streams, lush vegetation, and valuable

forest products and medicinal herbs such as cinnamon, agarwood, and amomum. These resources present significant opportunities for tourism development, attracting visitors interested in revolutionary traditions and the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in Quang Nam.

The cultural heritage of ethnic minorities is closely tied to their natural living environment, characterized by complex terrain, rugged mountains, narrow valleys, and difficult transportation. The region lies in a humid tropical monsoon climate with high humidity and harsh weather conditions. These factors have shaped cultural expressions such as traditional crafts, clothing, music, gong and drum performances, musical instruments, festivals, customs, and rituals.

However, under the influence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, some cultural forms of ethnic minorities in mountainous areas have undergone changes and are at risk of fading. This calls for specific policies to preserve and promote cultural heritage so that culture becomes a driving force for local economic development. Over time, due to both objective and subjective factors, the cultural identity of ethnic minorities has gradually diminished. Many cultural heritages face the threat of extinction. Languages and scripts, which are unique forms of traditional ethnic culture, have been narrowed and forgotten. Traditional houses such as the Guol and Rong have disappeared or been restored in altered forms. Traditional clothing, cuisine, festivals, and folk arts have either been lost or distorted. Notably, artisan generations skilled in brocade weaving, wood carving, folk performance, and indigenous knowledge are becoming increasingly scarce.

Throughout history, the traditional culture of ethnic minorities has been a valuable heritage contributing to the richness, diversity, and unity of Vietnamese culture. In the modern context, preserving and promoting ethnic cultural identity is an urgent task for sustainable national development. Resolution No. 33-NQ/TW of the Ninth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee emphasizes the need to build and develop Vietnamese culture and people to meet the demands of sustainable development. It outlines orientations for cultural and human development, setting goals and tasks to build a comprehensive Vietnamese identity, a healthy cultural environment, and cultural integration with politics and economics. It also promotes international cultural exchange and selective absorption of global cultural values.

Over the years, Quang Nam has consistently prioritized the preservation and promotion of cultural values as a key task. The documents of the 21st Provincial Party

Congress clearly state: “Preserve and promote folk literature, public arts, and the tangible and intangible cultural values of ethnic communities in the province.”

Based on these resolutions, the Provincial People’s Committee has issued various plans and programs to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in Quang Nam. These include Plan No. 524/KH-UBND dated February 29, 2012, for inventorying intangible cultural heritage; Plan No. 658/KH-UBND dated February 29, 2012, approving the cultural development strategy for 2012–2020; and the plan to preserve and develop the representative cultural heritage of ethnic minorities (Co Tu, Gie Trieng, Xo Dang, and Cor) in the province until 2020.

This preservation plan is divided into two phases:

Phase 1 (2013–2015): The goal was to remove ethnic minority cultures from the endangered status requiring urgent protection and begin promoting representative cultural heritage. Between 50 and 60 percent of ethnic minority villages were to have cultural houses (Guol or community centers) with autonomous programming. Similarly, 50 to 60 percent of cultural officers in ethnic minority areas were to be trained local ethnic personnel. Each district with ethnic minorities was supported to develop at least one traditional craft. The cultural heritage of the four ethnic groups in the province was inventoried, and a cultural development index was to be completed by 2020.

Phase 2 (2016–2020): The province continued to enhance the exploitation and preservation of distinctive cultural values and promote the role of cultural heritage in building and developing ethnic minority culture. The number of villages with autonomous cultural houses increased to 70–80 percent. Between 70 and 90 percent of cultural officers in ethnic minority areas were trained local ethnic personnel. Districts with ethnic minorities were supported to develop at least two traditional crafts and promote folk music, dance, or distinctive tourism activities contributing to socio-economic development (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2013).

In recent years, Quang Nam has implemented numerous policies to preserve and promote traditional cultural heritage among ethnic minority communities, notably through Project 6 titled “Preserving and Promoting the Fine Traditional Cultural Values of Ethnic Minorities in Association with Tourism Development in Quang Nam province, 2021–2025.” The project aims to restore, preserve, and promote traditional cultural values, train and develop cultural personnel, and provide infrastructure and equipment for cultural activities in ethnic minority areas. These efforts are intended to enhance cultural

access for local communities while fostering community-based tourism, contributing to job creation and income generation.

To effectively implement Project 6, the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Quang Nam has issued various directives. By 2025, the province aims to conduct surveys, inventories, and documentation of traditional cultural heritage such as clothing, household items, and musical instruments of ethnic minorities. The project also includes training programs to teach tangible cultural heritage, professional development for commune-level cultural officers, and support for ethnic minority artisans to transmit and teach traditional cultural practices to younger generations.

The project also focuses on restoring and preserving traditional festivals and endangered cultural heritage. It promotes the development of cultural models such as experiential learning, cultural lifestyle programs, and heritage-tourism integration. Support is provided for folk culture clubs and traditional performing arts teams in ethnic minority villages, mountainous areas, and resettlement zones. Investments are made in developing key tourism destinations, promoting traditional cultural values, and researching tourism potential. Distinctive tourism products are being developed for six mountainous districts in Quang Nam.

Local governments have organized various ethnic minority activities at the district level, including festivals, cultural exchanges, and competitions to preserve traditional sports and folk games. One practical initiative is the establishment of community bookshelves, preservation of traditional cultural villages, restoration of national heritage sites, construction of village cultural houses, and provision of equipment for cultural facilities in ethnic minority villages.

For intangible cultural heritage, Project 6 emphasizes the preservation and promotion of languages, scripts, folk literature, performing arts (including music, dance, singing, theater, and other folk forms), social customs (such as customary laws, village regulations, ethical standards, rituals, and traditions), traditional festivals, handicrafts, and indigenous knowledge. Key activities include surveys, data collection, and documentation; hiring researchers and consultants; producing scientific reports and organizing academic conferences; purchasing materials, tools, and publications; designing software for endangered cultural forms; and developing preservation methods for ethnic sports.

The project also includes staging and reenactment of intangible cultural heritage, including setting up performance spaces, renting costumes, props, musical instruments, and ceremonial items. Documentary films are produced to support preservation efforts, and communication campaigns are launched to promote ethnic minority cultural values.

Beneficiary districts have developed and implemented programs aligned with Project 6. For example:

Tay Giang District has upgraded the traditional Co Tu village and the cultural-tourism villages of Porning (Lang commune) and Ta Lang (Bha Lêê commune), and provided drum and gong sets to villages in 10 communes.

Dong Giang District has invested in tourism infrastructure in Aréh - Đhờng village, organized training in traditional brocade weaving and the Tan tung da dá dance of the Co Tu people, and equipped cultural teams with gongs.

Nam Giang District has provided sound systems and gongs to residential areas, restored the New Rice Festival of the Ta Rieng people in Đắc Tôi commune, and revived the Co Tu wedding ceremony in Tà Bhing commune.

Tra My District has restored the Water Trough Worship Ceremony of the Ca Dong people in Lang Lê village (Tra Don commune) and Măng Gry village (Tra Vinh commune), and supported traditional costumes for the Ca Dong, Xo Dang, and Mnung ethnic groups.

Clearly, the implementation of Project 6 in Quang Nam has been a meaningful effort to concretize the Party's directives and the State's policies and laws regarding the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority cultural heritage in connection with local tourism development. It has effectively mobilized resources from the government, society, and communities to preserve and promote the fine traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities in mountainous districts. These efforts have strengthened national unity, especially among younger generations, through healthy cultural and artistic activities rooted in their ethnic traditions (Ngoc Thi, 2024).

Moreover, the teaching of folk songs and dances, restoration of festivals, and revival of customs have enabled ethnic communities to showcase and promote the beauty and uniqueness of their traditional cultures. This contributes to the realization of the Party's and State's policies on cultural preservation and promotion.

In addition to Project 6, Quang Nam has issued other decisions to support ethnic minority cultural preservation, such as Decision No. 1196/QĐ-UBND, linked to the

National Target Program for New Rural Development and the movement “All People Unite to Build Cultural Life.” These policies prioritize investment in cultural and sports infrastructure for disadvantaged communes, mountainous areas, and ethnic minority regions, aiming for sustainable development and empowering ethnic communities.

The preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in Quang Nam has helped safeguard the “spiritual essence” of heritage through the continuation of folk festivals, performing arts, traditional crafts, rituals, folk music and dance, sculpture, decorative motifs, and cuisine. In the context of modernization, integration, and globalization, the province has directed localities to organize activities such as the Mountainous Cultural and Sports Festival every four years and the Ethnic Minority Sports Competition every two years. These events not only revive cultural vitality but also drive heritage preservation and promotion.

Thanks to the province’s efforts, over 80 percent of ethnic minority villages in Quang Nam now have traditional houses for community activities. Mountainous districts such as Dong Giang, Nam Giang, and Tay Giang, home to large Co Tu populations, have successfully revived traditional crafts like brocade weaving and bamboo and rattan handicrafts, forming community-based tourism villages (Nguyen Thi Song Ha, 2022).

It can be said that effective cultural preservation and promotion have significantly contributed to socio-economic development and enriched the spiritual life of ethnic minorities. These policies have helped maintain self-governance, cultural identity, and community cohesion. With strong leadership, financial investment, and practical policies, the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities in Quang Nam continue to be preserved and promoted, contributing to the overall development of mountainous districts and the province as a whole.

5 CONCLUSION

The culture of Vietnam’s ethnic minorities has been shaped and enriched over thousands of years of national formation and defense, embodying many distinctive and unique values. Faced with the reality that traditional ethnic minority cultures are undergoing significant changes and are at risk of disappearing, the Party and the State have, in recent years, introduced numerous guidelines and policies aimed at cultural development. Among these are policies focused on preserving and promoting the cultural

values of ethnic minorities, contributing to the construction of an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity.

Thanks to timely policies and legal documents, significant progress has been made in preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority communities. The effective implementation of policies that link cultural preservation with sustainable economic development has yielded substantial results. These efforts have not only safeguarded the unique cultural identities of ethnic groups in mountainous regions across the country but also created jobs, increased incomes, and helped reduce poverty in ethnic minority and mountainous areas.

It can be affirmed that the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority cultural values have always been a priority for the Party and the State. These efforts have contributed to the revitalization, dissemination, restoration, and enhancement of cultural values within ethnic minority communities.

Alongside the attention from the Party and the State, the government of Quang Nam has introduced various measures and policies to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities across its nine mountainous districts. In recent years, the province has paid close attention to issuing policies that safeguard and promote the fine traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities in these areas. This has enabled the cultural sector at both provincial and district levels to effectively implement the guidelines and policies under the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas, significantly improving cultural access for local residents.

Despite the achievements, the cultural policy system for ethnic minorities nationwide, and in Quang Nam in particular, remains inconsistent and not fully aligned with the specific characteristics of ethnic minority and mountainous regions or the pace of socio-economic development. Policy implementation has been slow and has yet to fully penetrate the daily lives of the people. Human and material resources remain limited and inefficiently utilized, while incentive policies are still inadequate, failing to fully harness the talent and dedication of cultural managers and ethnic minority folk artisans.

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Both authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

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