

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Reason for choosing the topic

Authors select issues “**Improving the living standard of people in Son La Province towards a sustainable way**” as a topic of doctoral dissertation specialized in Geography derived from the following reasons:

*First of all, theoretically:*

The living standard of towards a sustainable way is the problem of theory existing in Vietnam. This is the goal of development and is also the main content in human development strategy, socio-economic development strategy of every country as well as of the locality.

Hitherto, in general sustainable living standards have not been adequately studied, there are theoretical issues that have yet to be clarified. Such as: What is the concept of sustainable living standards?, when to have sustainable living standards and when the living standards are not sustainable; For a province in Vietnam, what is the factor affecting sustainable living standards? and what indicators reflect sustainable living standards? Etc. All of these issues need to be clarified.

*Secondly, practically:*

For Vietnam, The Government has introduced many specific policies and programs of action that contribute to improving the standard of living for the people. But the reality shows that: living standards in regions have increased but not sustainable. Although the rate of poor households decreased from 14,2% (in 2010) reduced to 5,8% (in 2016), but the re poverty rate is relatively large in the Northern Midlands and Mountains and the Central Highlands. Despite being a developing country, HDI in the world average, The rate of adult literacy and life expectancy is quite high. But, GDP per capita and living standards in our country are generally only at a low average level, there are clear differences between regions and within each region and province. So how to get the living standard of towards a sustainable way is the unanswered question.

For Son La – a mountainous province in the Northern Midlands and Mountainous area, Although there have been many attempts from local authorities and people to improve people's living standards but by 2016, the population living standard of the province is still low compared to the national average. The rate of multi-dimensional poor households is still up to 31.9%, ranked 3/4 of the province of the Northwest region, 5/14 provinces of Northern Midlands and Mountainous area and 5/63 provinces and cities nationwide [8]. The average per capita income per month in Son La province is very low, ranked 3/4 of the province of the Northwest region, 13/14 provinces of Northern Midlands and Mountainous area and 62/63 provinces and cities nationwide [66].

Large territory (ranked 3rd in the whole country), Diverse and complex terrain with three different economic sub-regions, There are 12 ethnic groups living together, so the conditions for socio-economic development and high living standards of Son La province also have differentiation. Besides, the proportion of the population migrating out of the province is still large. In recent years, many ethnic minority people have moved from the northern mountainous region to the Central Highlands,

Son La province alone, if in 2010 the number of migrants is about 21,920 (accounting for about 2.4% of the population) in 2016, there were still about 17,000 people (accounting for about 1.3% of the population). This situation has many reasons, But one of the main reasons is the low living standards of the people, and the difficult life. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the living standard of people in Son La Province towards a sustainable way.

Especially, until now, most of the criteria of high living standards in the sustainable direction of Son La province have not achieved as expected Compared to the Northern Midland and Mountainous area and the average of the country, it is still much inferior. Therefore, the problem of understanding the causes, giving recommendations for economic development and thereby improving the living standards of people in a sustainable way in Son La province is still a hot topic, it should be have a satisfactory answer.

## **2. The target and research tasks of the thesis**

### **2.1. Target**

Clarify the basic theoretical issues the living standard of people towards a sustainable way for a province in the perspective of Geography. Since then, propose solutions to improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province by 2025 in a scientific way.

### **2.2. Research tasks**

(1) Overview of domestic and foreign studies related to improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way.

(2) Develop a theoretical and practical basis for living standards of people towards a sustainable way to apply to the study of this issue in a province in Vietnam.

(3) Assessing the status of living standards of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province in the period of 2010 - 2016.

(4) Proposing solutions to improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province until 2025.

## **3. Object and scope research of the thesis**

### **3.1. Object**

The research object of the thesis is residential living standard and improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province.

### **3.2. Scope research**

The thesis particularly attaches special importance to the request to study according to the following important keywords: (i) improving the living standard; (ii) towards a sustainable way; (iii) Son La province.

*Contents:* thesis research both theoretical and practical, both current and future about improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province và solutions to improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way.

*About time:* research thesis in the period of 2010 - 2016 (2016 is a milestone for the author to update official data and there are many documents that are an important legal basis in terms of data of the thesis such as Results of the Vietnam Living Standards Survey 2016, Results of the 2016 rural, agricultural and fishery census); orientation to 2025.

*About space:* Thesis of studying the living standard of people towards a sustainable way for the whole territory of Son La province; studying the differentiation of living standards by sub-regions, by urban and rural, by the administrative units of the Province and consider the relationship in the Northern Midlands and Mountainous area.

#### **4. Approach perspective and research methods of the thesis**

##### ***4.1. Approach perspective***

The thesis is based on the following perspectives: system perspective views, synthesis perspective – territory, Historical perspective – outlook, perspective of sustainable development; perspective on the principle of cause and effect.

##### ***4.2. Research Methods***

The thesis has used some main research methods: method of statistical analysis, comparative method, policy analysis method, expert method, map method and GIS, evaluation method by scale, forecasting method, method of sociological investigation.

#### **5. New contributions in science of thesis**

##### ***5.1. Theoretically***

The thesis has clarified some theoretical issues about living standard of people towards a sustainable way (conception; factors affecting, evaluation criteria) is feasible and suitable to the conditions of assessing the living standard of people towards a sustainable way for the provincial level in Vietnam.

##### ***5.2. Practically***

The thesis has clarified the advantages and disadvantages affecting the living standard and improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province; Identify what can be done, not done, the cause of the limitations and weaknesses in the advanced process of living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province; identify targets, orientations and solutions to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province until 2025.

The research results of the thesis provide some important scientific basis for planning guidelines and policies and determining solutions improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province until 2025. At the same time, the thesis is also expected to become a good reference for scientific research and training agencies as well as reference materials for other localities when studying to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way.

#### **6. The structure of the thesis**

Including: introduction, overview, conclusions, list of references and annexes, the thesis consists of 4 chapters

Chapter 1. An overview of the research situation related to improving the living standard towards a sustainable way

Chapter 2. Rationale and practical experience about to improving the living standard towards a sustainable way

Chapter 3. Reality status of living standard towards a sustainable way in Son La province

Chapter 4. Solution improving the living standard towards a sustainable way in

Son La province.

## **Chapter 1.**

### **An overview of the research situation related to improving the living standard towards a sustainable way**

#### **1.1. Overview of the theory of living standard of people towards a sustainable way**

Some well-known foreign and domestic scholars have a common sense of living standards: Residential living standards refer to the level of wealth, comfort, physical goods and necessities available for a certain socio-economic class in a given geographical area, usually a country. Living standards are closely related to the quality of life. But the theoretical research on the living standard of people towards a sustainable way show the concept in an unspecific way and analyzing the nature of the living standard of people towards a sustainable way is incomplete. In particular, the issue of the living standard of people towards a sustainable way of a province has not been adequately studied.

#### **1.2. Overview of factors affecting the living standard of people towards a sustainable way**

Scholars consider factors in terms of natural conditions, production practices, income and consumption of the population mainly. They have not mentioned factors affecting the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in terms of the difference between the population classes, between sub-regions, between urban and rural areas of a province. In particular, in the current context, the impact of globalization and the industrial revolution 4.0 on economic development as well as living standard of people towards a sustainable way of each country, each locality is very large, but almost scholars have not studied in this respect.

#### **1.3. Overview of assessing living standard of people towards a sustainable way**

Previous studies have used different indicators to measure living standards or a content of living standards. In particular, prominence is the dominant view of most of those studies: income index, spending is very important but is no longer unique to assess living standards. In general, studies assessing new living standards and living standard of people towards a sustainable way mainly stop at the national level but have not adequately mentioned the issue of assessing living standard of people towards a sustainable way for a province. At the same time, scholars have not evaluated living standard of people towards a sustainable way in the perspective of Geography for a province in Vietnam. The issue of living standard disparity between population strata, between urban and rural areas, among sub-regions in a province has not been studied.

#### **1.4. Overview of solutions to improve the living standard towards a sustainable way**

In general, scholars mainly mentioned solutions to improve people's living standards at the national level. In particular, it emphasizes the management role of the State, which is the right opinion and the thesis attaches great importance to that thought and opinion. However, they have not mentioned directly to solutions to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way. But according to the

principle of living standards of people who want to be sustainable, there are two important groups of solutions: (i) increase income; (ii) minimizing the difference between the population strata, between sub-regions, between urban and rural areas, and between ethnic groups.

### **Summary of Chapter 1**

Through the review of the research works, the author draws the following key observations:

1. The points can inherit for the thesis: (i) Thought, viewpoint on living standards of people according to sustainable requirements for the country, the view of new economic geography; (ii) Some factors affect people's living standards; (iii) Some contents assess residential living standards at the national level but can be applied to the provincial level; (iv) A number of indicators for assessing the living standards for the national level can be applied to the provincial level: per capita income, the rate of poor households, level of access to health and learning services, etc; (v) Some solutions to improve people's living standards (enhance the role of government, economic development associated with people's livelihoods, etc) can serve the research of the thesis.

2. The issues of the thesis need to go deep, research to clarify

Based on results of overview, the author determines that the thesis needs to study deeply, clarifying the following main issues: (i) Clarify the concept of improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way; (ii) On the synthesis point of view and innovative thinking, determination of factors affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way; (iii) Proposed criteria and indicator for assessing living standard of people towards a sustainable way; (iv) From the perspective of Geography, it is necessary to analyze the differentiation of living standard of people towards a sustainable way in terms of space; (v) Proposing necessary conditions to improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Rationale and practical experience about to improving the living standard towards a sustainable way**

#### **2.1. Rationale**

*2.1.1. The concept of improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way*

#### *Living standard of people towards a sustainable way*

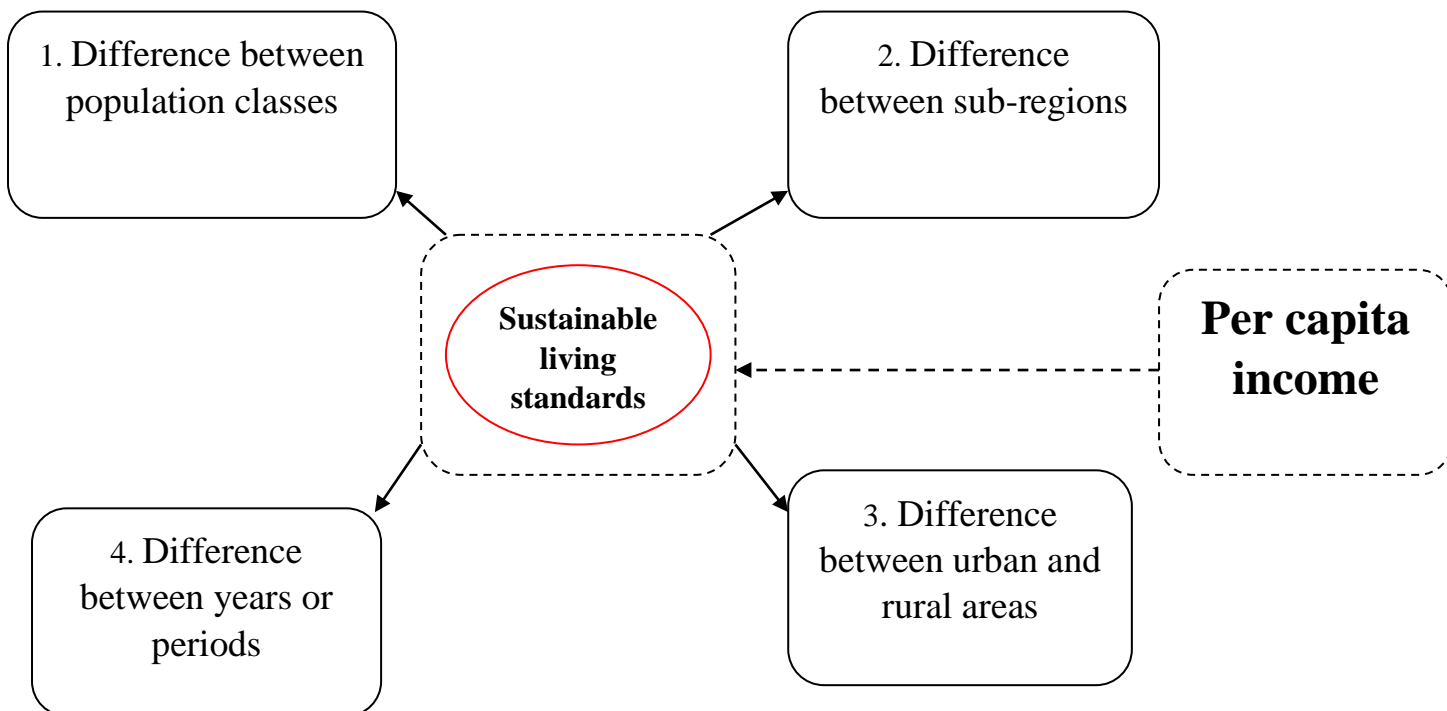
The living standard of people towards a sustainable way has the main function of living standards of people to pursue sustainable goals, in the process of pursuing it can be achieved from a low to medium level to a high level, etc. This means saying that the living standard of people towards a sustainable way means sustainable living standards in the development process. When it comes to sustainable living standards, it is the living standard of the people that has reached the level that the people are satisfied, reaching the level where the prosperous nation is towards.

The living standard of people towards a sustainable way is understood in two aspects as follows:

*The first aspect:* The sustainable living standard is the level achieved to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of the people always increasing and with a relatively stable increase, people are satisfied. Absolutely not as a living standard erratic or decline, causing instability.

*The second aspect:* The sustainable living standard is when the first aspect is achieved, together with the living standards of the regions as well as the stratas of the population are accepted by the people, there is no difference to the extent that it is detrimental to stable development.

Thus, *the living standard of people towards a sustainable way is the level of attainment of the physical or mental requirements of the people or of the community always increasing and increase in a relatively stable state, benefiting the socio-economic development.*



**Image 2.2. The content of sustainable living standards**

*(Source: author suggested)*

### ***The relationship between sustainable living standards and sustainable development***

Sustainable living standards are a consequence of sustainable development. In a way, sustainable living standards are considered as one of the important factors to ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

Sustainable development is an effective and environmentally friendly development. In other words, sustainable development is based on two basic factors: The first, development must be effective, but the effect of that development must increase constantly and in a steady state; secondly, in the development process must be environmentally friendly by using advanced technologies, developing advanced production organizations towards attaching importance to environmental protection and improving the living environment for people.

As mentioned above, sustainable living standards have a close relationship

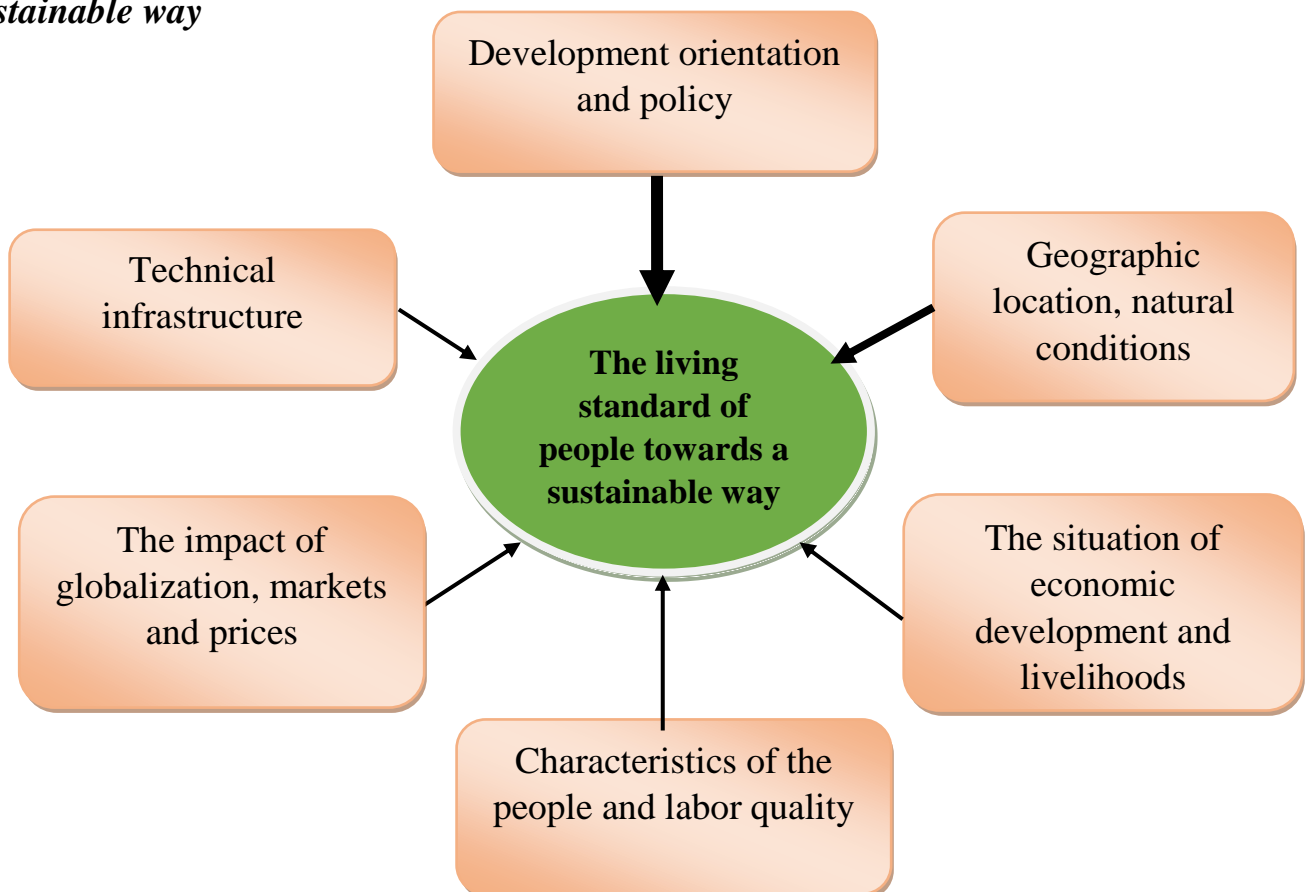
with sustainable development. It is a consequence of sustainable development, so sustainable development is a leading task of both national and local levels to get living standard of people towards a sustainable way.

***Improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way***

This is to improve the living standard of people from one level to another based on economic development. Improving people's living standards is to consider differences in living standards between two certain time periods: between the beginning of the year and the end of the year, between previous and next years, or between the first year and the last year of a period, etc.

Improving people's living standards is an activity for people but this is also a human-made activity, so it can be said that: State, local authorities, people decide this, in which the responsibility of the state and local authorities is the most important. This is the state, local authorities and people change the living standards in the direction of continuous increase, continuous progress, from year to year, from one period to another. Improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way is also a work that must go through a process, in which the level of living standards can achieve different levels: little improvement, more or more advanced in normal.

***2.1.2. Factors affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way***



**Image 2.3. Factors affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way**

*(Source: author suggested)*

***2.1.3. Necessary conditions to improving the living standard of people***

***towards a sustainable way***

*Residential income*

Living standards at a high level (associated with high per capita income), people are satisfied.

*Difference in population living standards*

The quadrilateral represents the difference that the people can accept and does not detrimental to the socio-economic development of the province (*Image 2.3*) that is: difference between population classes, difference between sub-regions, difference between urban and rural areas, difference between years or periods low and descending.

***2.1.4. Assessing the living standard of people towards a sustainable way for a province in Vietnam***

*2.1.4.1. Criteria for evaluating the living standard of people towards a sustainable way*

*a. Living standard increased (improved)*

Living standard must be increased (improved) in a stable state, whether or not between years; benefit for socio-economic development and people are satisfied.

*b. The disparity living standard between the study subjects*

That is the disparity in living standards: between urban and rural areas, between sub-regions, and between population strata. In Son La, the author will study more specificity of the province about the standard of living disparity between administrative units, between ethnic groups, between indigenous Thai communities and Thai settlers.

*2.1.4.2. Indicator for assessment of living standard of people towards a sustainable way.*

*a. Group of key indicators*

- \* Per capita income/month – The index of income disparities between years.
- \* The index of income disparities between different strata.
- \* The index of income disparities between ethnic groups living in the province.
- \* The index of income disparities between sub-regions.
- \* The index of income disparities between urban and rural.
- \* Percentage of education expenditure in total expenditure.

*b. Group of auxiliary indicators*

- \* The rate of poor households.
- \* Proportion of solid houses.
- \* Proportion of households using hygienic water sources.
- \* The index of income disparities between the province studied with surrounding provinces.

The above-mentioned indicators reflect living standard of people towards a sustainable way of a province will have to be compared to the average of the large region, with the average level of the whole country or compared to a province that has reached a high level of living standards to see the achieved level the living standard of the province studied (*Appendix 9*). In theory, such a comparison should be conducted, but in fact, depending on the data the author can get, the author will identify the object to compare with Son La province.



In addition to the above criteria in the condition that data sources allow authors can analyze more indicators to reflect more vividly the status of living standards such as: number of doctors per 10,000 people, proportion of adult literate, the number of years of schooling for people in school age, the amount of electricity consumed per person, number of people using clean water

## **2.2. Practical experience and lessons learned for improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province**

Practical experience to improve people's living standards and lessons learned from Vietnam, from the Northern Midlands and Mountainous area and Thai Nguyen province are shown in the following main points:

Must increase income per capita continuously; Need to increase proportion of solid houses and proportion of households using hygienic water sources.

Must be reduced the difference in income between different strata of population, between ethnic groups, between regions; Poverty reduction must be fast but sustainable. Need to change the expenditure structure in a positive way.

### **Summary of Chapter 2**

In Chapter 2, the author has clarified important theoretical issues about living standard and improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way, detail:

(i) The living standard of people towards a sustainable way has the main function of living standards of people to pursue sustainable goals, in the process of pursuing it can be achieved from a low to medium level to a high level, etc. This means saying that the living standard of people towards a sustainable way means sustainable living standards in the development process. When it comes to sustainable living standards, it is the living standard of the people that has reached the level that the people are satisfied, reaching the level where the prosperous nation is towards.

(ii) Determination of 6 factors group affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way (Development orientation and policy; Geographic location, natural conditions; The situation of economic development and livelihoods; Characteristics of the people and labor quality; The impact of globalization, markets and prices; Technical infrastructure) and specify 5 conditions to ensure a sustainable population living standard (high per capita income; difference between population classes, difference between sub-regions, difference between urban and rural areas, difference between years or periods low and descending).

(iii) Confirm 2 groups of criteria for assessing living standard towards a sustainable way (Group of key indicators consists of 6 indicators và Group of auxiliary indicators consists of 4 indicators).

(iv) Overview of some advanced living standard lessons from the whole country, the Northern Midlands and Mountainous area and Thai Nguyen province for Son La province to study.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Reality status of living standard towards a sustainable way in Son La province**

#### **3.1. Assessing factors affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province**

Son La is a province with a large territory in the Northern Midland and Mountainous Region, a diverse and complex terrain and climate, divided into three distinct sub-regions in terms of socio-economic development conditions. The province is located in the central position of the Northwest region, the locality converging almost full of unique features in the culture of typical ethnic groups, typical of the Northwest such as culture of ethnic Thai, Mong, Muong, La Ha, Lao, etc. There are 12 ethnic groups in Son La (out of 24 ethnic groups with a large population in the Northwest), Especially, Son La has the largest numbers ethnics residing in the Northwest with 41/50 ethnic groups. Moreover, Son La is also the province with the highest proportion of ethnic minority people in the North West with 83.9%.

Gross regional domestic product of Son La province ranks first among the four provinces in the Northwest sub-region but due to the large population so GRDP/person of Son La is still low, ranked second in the Northwest province (after Hoa Binh). Per capita income/month of Son La province is very low, ranked third in the North West Province, ranked 13/14 provinces of Northern Midlands and Mountains and 62/63 provinces and cities nationwide. The rate of poor households in Son La is still very high, ranking third in the North West Province, 5/14 provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains region and 5/63 provinces and cities nationwide [66]. Overall, the living standards of Son La province are low and there is a deep differentiation, this situation stems from 6 factors group affecting: Development orientation and policy; Geographic location, natural conditions; The situation of economic development and livelihoods; Characteristics of the people and labor quality; The impact of globalization, markets and prices; Technical infrastructure.

### **3.2. Reality status of living standard towards a sustainable way in Son La province in the period of 2010 - 2016**

#### ***3.2.1. Overall assessment of iving standard towards a sustainable way of province***

##### ***3.2.1.1. General comment***

The living standards of Son La province are generally low when compared to the average level of the Northern Midland and Mountainous regions and the whole country; when compared with Thai Nguyen (the province has the highest living standards in 14 provinces of the Northern Midlands and Mountains region), the difference is quite large.

*a. About GDP/person/year:* Although the GRDP of Son La province ranks first in the four provinces in the Northwest sub-region (VND 29,979.0 billion in 2016 - actual price), accounting for 38.2% of the sub-region, ranking fifth among 14 provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains region and 45/63 provinces and cities nationwide. However due to the large population, GRDP/person of Son La in 2016 ranked 2nd in the North West Province (after Hoa Binh), ranking 9th out of 14 provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains region and ranked 57/63 provinces and cities nationwide; and only 51% of the national average (48,576 thousand VND/year).

##### ***b. About per capita income/month of the whole province***

Per capita income/month of Son La province very low, equal to 63.5% of the

Northern Midland and Mountainous region, only 42.7% of Thai Nguyen province and 42.3% of the national average.

When ranking the average income per capita per month in Son La province compared to the provinces in the Northern Midland and Mountainous Region area, it shows: Son La has a very low average income per capita/month, ranking 13/14 provinces in the Region (only ranked on Dien Bien). Similarly, when compared with other localities in the country, Son La's average per capita income per month is also penultimate in the position of 62/63 provinces and cities.

*c. About the rate of poor households*

The rate of poor households in Son La is 2.8 times larger than that of Thai Nguyen, 1.4 times higher than the Northern Midlands and Mountains and 3.9 times higher than the national average.

The rate of poor households in Son La is still very high (31.9%), ranking third in the North West Province, 5/14 provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains region and 5/63 provinces and cities nationwide. Whether in terms of the Northwest sub-region or the Northern Midland and Mountainous Sub-region, Son La is in the largest poor region of the country. That means Son La province is in the poorest core of Vietnam. In consideration of 10 multidimensional poverty deficiency indicators in 2016 of Son La, it is found that in addition to the lack of health insurance and adult education, all remaining indicators of Son La are low more than the common ground of the whole country (*Appendix 31*).

Son La is also the province with the most difficult villages in the whole country with 1,708 villages (accounting for 8.5% of the whole country); in which, 300 villages in Region II, 1,408 villages in Region III [61]. In Son La, there is still a problem of grain shortage in some rural areas in 7 districts: Quynh Nhai, Thuan Chau, Muong La, Son La city, Moc Chau, Yen Chau, Mai Son with 5,520 households and 24,744 people [81].

*d. About some other supporting indicators*

The rate of expenditure on education in the total expenditure of the province is very low (3.7%), only 64.9% of the national average (5.7%), equal to 80.4% of Thai Nguyen (4.6%), nearly equal to the overall level of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area (3.8%).

The rate of households using hygienic water sources is 82.0%. This rate is 100.7% higher than the average of the Region and also higher than Thai Nguyen 103.5%. Song is lower than the national average, only 87.8% compared with the whole country.

By 2016, the rate of permanent houses in Son La province is 33.4%. This rate is lower than the average of the Northern Midland and Mountainous area (49%) and the national average (49.7%), less than half of Thai Nguyen province (70%). Besides, the proportion of semi-permanent houses accounts for a large proportion of 45.9%. The rate of unstable houses is still 12.8% and especially the rate of simple houses is 7.9%.

*e. Regarding the income gap between the research objects of Son La province*

The difference in income between the study subjects (strata of population, ethnic groups and territories) in Son La province tends to increase, leading to many socio-economic consequences, including the problem of free migration. In 2010, in Son La, the number of migrants leaving the Province was about 21,920 (about 2.4% of the

population), in 2016 there were still about 17,000 people (accounting for about 1.3% of the population). The main reason is due to low living standards of the people and difficult life.

Among the ethnic communities in Son La province, the Thai ethnic group is the largest with over 65,000 people (accounting for 53.9% of the population). In order to serve the construction of Son La hydropower plant, there were 12,584 households in Son La province belonging to three districts of Quynh Nhai, Muong La and Thuan Chau to visit resettlement sites, of which mainly Thai ethnic people (occupied 84.0%). Therefore, in the process of investigating the dissertation, the author also analyzed the differentiation of living standards according to indigenous Thai people and Thai people resettled.

### *3.2.1.2. Specific assessment*

#### *a. Success*

In the period of 2010 - 2016, the economy of Son La province has made important changes so the average per capita income per month has continuously increased over the years. The rate of poor households in Son La province tends to decrease. The rate of poor households (unidirectional) in Son La in 2016 is 20.0%, down 17.9% compared to 2010, an average reduction of nearly 3%/year. Speed decreases of the Northern Midlands and Mountains, Thai Nguyen and the whole country is 2.6% respectively; 2.0%; 1.4%.

The income gap between 20% of the highest income and 20% of the lowest income people ranks 8 out of 14 provinces in the Region, lower than the average of the Midlands and Mountains North and the whole country. However, the difference tends to increase even though the level is slower than the Northern Midlands and Mountains and the whole country. Indicators of the rate of spending on education in the total expenditure, the percentage of households using hygienic water sources, the rate of permanent houses, etc., have also changed in a positive direction.

#### *b. Restriction and the weakness*

The average income per capita / month of Son La province tends to increase gradually, but very low, equal to 63.5% of the Northern Midlands and Mountains, only 42.3% of the national average, ranked 13/14 provinces in the Region (only ranked on Dien Bien), ranked penultimate in the position of 62/63 provinces and cities in the country.

Although the percentage of poor households in Son La has decreased year by year but is not sustainable, the risk of falling back into poverty is high, the number of poor households arising every year is also large. The rate of poor households in Son La is very high, ranking fifth among 63 provinces and cities nationwide; The percentage of poor households, though decreasing year by year, is not sustainable, and the risk of re poverty is high. Son La is also the province with the most difficult villages in the country and there are still food shortage cases in some rural areas of 7/12 districts and cities of the province.

Regarding the expenditure structure of Son La province, when considering general expenditure data, it does not immediately reflect the reality of the province's living standards. Especially when going into the proportion of expenditures for life and spending on food, it is obvious that the very low level of living standard of the

province (the expenditure on food, especially for rice of all kinds is still very large). The rate of spending on education is low.

The rate of permanent houses in Son La province is far lower than the average in the Northern Midlands and Mountains and the national average, less than half of Thai Nguyen province and tends to decrease. Besides, the rate of simple houses is 7.9%.

### **3.2.2. Assess according to criteria and subjects of research**

#### *3.2.2.1. Group of key indicators*

##### *a. Per capita income/month*

According to the 2016 Living Standards Survey, Per capita income/month of Son La is 1,290 thousand VND, compared to 2010 (802 thousand dong), increasing 1.6 times, slower than the increase of the whole country (2.2 times). And compared to the national average and the Northern Midlands and Mountains, Son La's income is still very low (equal to 63.5% of the Northern Midlands and Mountains and only 42.7 % of Thai Nguyen province, 42.3% of the national average).

Income structure of Son La people also has positive changes towards industrialization and modernization, but the speed of transfer is still slow. However, Son La province should not continue to reduce the share of agriculture - forestry - fisheries, the work to be done is to apply high - tech agricultural advances to production to increase the value of this income. Therefore, along with increasing per capita income should changing people's income structure is also important in improving people's living standards.

##### *b. The index of income disparities between urban and rural*

The average income per capita per month in Son La province varies widely between urban and rural areas and the gap is increasing. Low income, undeveloped economy, high poverty rate are the difficulties that rural Son La province needs to overcome.

In urban areas, although spending 2.1 times more than rural areas, due to high income, the accumulation rate still reached nearly 1/3 of the income (30.5%), higher than the average level of the province 25.7%. In rural areas, although the expenditure is still lower than the average level of the whole province, the income is too low leading to a deficit and negative accumulation (-7.5%).

##### *c. The index of income disparities between sub-regions*

The author has studied the differentiation of living standards based on 3 sub-regions, namely: the area along the national highway 6, the area along Da river, the high-border area (*Appendix 35*).

The difference between the sub-region with the highest income (the area along the highway 6) and the lowest income sub-region (highland - border) in Son La province is quite large, especially this index tend to increase. Specifically, in 2010 this index was 8.7 times, to 2012 increased to 9.1 times, to 2014 was 9.6 times and in 2016 was 10.1 times. The average growth rate of the whole period is 2.52%/year.

Besides, the criteria of living standards of the three sub-regions clearly reflect the economic zoning in accordance with the division according to geographical characteristics and the status of economic development as well as the living standards of each region.

The development area - the area along Highway 6 is the main residence area of the Kinh and Thai people, the most developed economic region, so the indicators of living standards are of relatively good living standards. The developing region - along the Da river is a region with average development, the indicators of living standards are quite close to the average level of the province. In the underdeveloped region, the indicators are very negative, reflecting a very low standard of living, many households still fall into hunger.

*d. The index of income disparities between different strata*

In the period (2010 - 2016), the income per capita of the lowest income group increased 1.7 times, while the highest income group increased 1.8 times, so the income gap between the two groups increased and increase steadily. This increase (increasing by 0.4) is still slower than the increase of the whole country (increasing by 0.6), it shows that the difference is less severe than the national average. But this difference is tending to expand, contrary to sustainable requirements (the difference should be gradually reduced).

The average income per person per month and the revenue structure of the highest and lowest income groups are very different and very different. Revenues of group 5 are mostly from wages and salaries, while group 1 is mainly from agriculture, forestry and fisheries (*Appendix 36*).

*e. The index of income disparities between ethnic groups*

Per capita income per month also has a large differentiation among ethnic groups in Son La province. There are 8/12 ethnic groups in the province with average income per capita / month lower than the average of the province; In particular, the income of H'Mong, Xinh Mun and Kho Mu ethnic groups is only half of the average of the whole province, about 1/6 of the Kinh. Income disparity represents a different level of development among ethnic groups, which is also a difficult problem for Son La province in terms of security and great unity of the ethnic groups of the province. Besides, the income generation sources of ethnic groups are also very diverse.

*f. Percentage of education expenditure in total expenditure (%)*

Overall during the period the rate of spending on education in total expenditures increased. But this increase is not stable and the growth rate is very slow (the average growth rate of the whole period is 2.42%). In addition, education expenditure per person in urban areas in Son La in 2016 reached 6,782.1 thousand VND in 2016, 3.6 times higher than the provincial average.

*3.2.2.2. Group of auxiliary indicators*

*a. The rate of poor households*

According to the general trend of the whole country as well as the Northern Midlands and Mountains, the poverty rate in Son La province tends to decrease. The rate of poor households (unidirectional) in Son La in 2016 is 20.0%, down 17.9% compared to 2010, an average reduction of nearly 3%/year. The decrease rate of the Northern Midlands and Mountains, Thai Nguyen and the whole country is 2.6% respectively; 2.0%; 1.4%.

Considering the multi-dimensional poverty line, in 2016, the poverty rate decreased by 2.5% compared to 2015, but the proportion of near-poor households and the rate of poor households being ethnic minorities increased. As of 2016, Son La

province still has 5 districts in 62 poor districts entitled to fast and sustainable poverty reduction program according to Government Resolution 30a.

It is worrisome that the poverty rate of Son La has decreased year by year but not yet sustainable, the risk of falling back into re poverty is high. In 2016 alone, the province had 10,349 poor households (accounting for 11.9% of the total number of poor households) and 10,060 poor households (accounting for 11.5% of all poor households).

*b. Proportion of solid houses*

In 2010, the percentage of households with permanent houses in the whole province was 39.0% but by 2016, this number decreased to 33.4%, down 5.6%. Accordingly, the percentage of households with semi-permanent houses increased, from 2010 to 2016 increased by 4.6%. The percentage of households with other houses is unstable and simple houses also decreased but still at a high level, but separately from 2014 to 2016 increased by 2.9%.

*c. Proportion of households using hygienic water sources*

The percentage of households using hygienic water sources in Son La province is still low compared to the whole country, this rate also increases erratically. In 2010, this rate of the province reached 70.8%, in 2012 it increased to 86.7%, but in 2014 it decreased to only 63.5%.

Until 2016, the rate of households using hygienic water sources of the whole province is 82.0%. Percentage of households using urban clean water is 94.9%, while in Son La rural area, this target is only 60.5%. In terms of ethnicity, the Tay and Hoa ethnic groups have 100% of households using clean water sources and 100% of these households have tap water. H'Mong ethnic group has a very low rate, only reaching 33.5%; In particular, it is worth noting that up to 10.3% of households in the H'Mong ethnic group use water from unprotected dug wells. In terms of income groups, group 5 has 100% of households using hygienic water sources. Meanwhile, this rate of group 1 only reached 60.7% [70].

*d. The index of income disparities between Son La province with surrounding provinces*

Thus, compared to the three provinces in the same Northwest sub-region, the average income per capita per month of Son La province is at the average level, currently in 2016, ranked 3/4 of the Northwestern province. Although the income level of Son La province has increased steadily, but the difference index can clearly see the increase in income of Son La province slower than the neighboring provinces, the ranking ranking of income is getting lower and lower (Appendix 19). When compared with Thai Nguyen (the province with the highest average income per capita / month in the Northern Midlands and Mountains), it is clear that the difference in income and the level of income gap is getting bigger and bigger.

*3.2.2.3. Aggregate assessment*

After analyzing and studying the aspects of population living standards in Son La province, the author has selected 6 criteria for evaluating the standard of living standards in a sustainable manner according to the administrative units of Son La province. that is: 1- Per capita income/month; 2 - Income gap between 20% of the highest income people compared to 20% of the lowest income people; 3. Proportion

of poor households; 4- Percentage of education expenditure in total expenditure; 5- Proportion of solid houses; 6- Proportion of households using hygienic water sources. The indicators are divided into 5 levels which are high, quite high, average, quite low, low.

When assessing the general criteria of population living standards in 2016 by province, it shows a clear differentiation of living standards, namely:

Living standards of low-income groups are Van Ho and Sop Cop districts. These are the two poorest districts of the province, the majority of communes in the district of the border highlands; Transportation is still difficult, especially in the rainy season in Sop Cop, frequent landslides causing traffic jams. The rate of poor households is high, furthermore, the people of these two districts is mainly ethnic minorities such as Lao, La Ha, Kho Mu, Dao, H'Mong, Khang ... low educational level, so the living standard of people is still in the low group.

The four districts with average living standards in the middle are Moc Chau, Yen Chau, Phu Yen and Quynh Nhai and four districts with relatively low living standards are Thuan Chau, Song Ma, Muong La and Bac Yen districts. These are districts with great potentials for agriculture, tourism and handicraft industries. But there are many highland border communes, communal infrastructure has not developed, especially the transport system. Districts are home to many ethnic minorities, life is very difficult as H'Mong, Xinh Mun, Muong, Thai.

The living standard is high and quite high in the province, including Son La and Mai Son. These localities are located along Highway 6, mainly inhabited by Kinh, Thai and Hoa people; The average income per capita/month is quite good, there are many conditions for health care as well as investment for children to study and improve the intellectual standard. Here are the economic and political centers of the province, focusing on many economic sectors, so it has conditions to attract investment; The relatively complete infrastructure is a socio-economic development condition, improving the living standards of people.

**Table 3.25. Synthesis some evaluation criteria about living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province**

	2010	2012	2014	2016	Average growth rate 2010-2016 (%)
1. Per capita income/month (thousand dong)	802	1.020	1.178	1.290	8,24
	Income gap index between the first year and the end of the period: 1,6 (times)				
2. The per capita income difference between 20% the highest group and 20% the lowest group (times)	6,8	7,0	7,1	7,2	0,96
3. The difference between the ethnicity with the highest income and the ethnicity has the lowest income (times)	4,9	5,1	5,4	5,5	1,94
4. Income gap index between	1,9	2,3	2,9	3,2	9,07



urban and rural areas (times)					
5. The difference between the sub-region with the highest income and the sub-region has the lowest income (times)	8,7	9,1	9,6	10,1	2,52
6. The proportion spent on education (%)	2,1	2,6	2,9	3,7	2,42
7. The rate of single-dimensional poor households (%)	37,9	32,0	25,5	20,0	-10,10
8. The proportion of solid houses (%)	39,0	27,4	39,9	33,4	-2,55
9. The proportion of households using hygienic water sources (%)	70,8	86,7	63,5	82,0	2,48
10. The income gap index of Son La province with Thai Nguyen province (times)	0,7	0,6	0,5	0,4	-8,91

*(Source: author synthesizes from the research of the thesis)*

Living standard of Son La province has a lot of progress, but not commensurate with the potential of the province.

The sustainable living standard is the level achieved to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of the people always increasing and with a relatively stable increase, people are satisfied. Absolutely not as a living standard erratic or decline, causing instability. Accordingly, the targets achieve the improvement in a positive direction and demonstrate sustainability. Detail: Per capita income/month, proportion of solid houses, proportion of households using hygienic water sources need to increase in a relatively stable way; Indicators on income disparities and the poverty rate need reduce relatively stable; expenditure structure needs to change in the direction of increasing the proportion of spending on food, drink and smoking (besides that, the proportion of spending on meat, fish, fruits, education and enjoyment of art and culture also needs to increase proportion). In Son La, per capita income/month has increased steadily, the accumulation rate has increased. But the share of expenditure is still too large, most households do not have accumulated to turn around production development or have provisions to prevent natural disasters and sickness. Therefore, many families if there are sick people or suffer from natural disasters are led to the situation of serious deterioration of living standards, falling into poverty. In addition, the proportion of households with permanent houses, the percentage of households using clean water sources, and expenditure structure, especially the proportion of expenditures on education changes unstable.

Consider the second aspect: the sustainable living standard is when the first aspect is achieved, together with the living standards of the regions as well as the stratas of the population are accepted by the people, there is no difference to the extent that it is detrimental to stable development. When analyzing the comparative

indicators of living standards in the period of 2010 - 2016 of Son La, it is found that the differences are increased both between territories as well as between different classes and communities. In particular, the biggest and deepest increase in disparity is the difference between urban and rural areas. In fact, many countries in the world, if the income gap is greater than 9%, will lead to economic and political struggle even though the per capita income of the average population is high. For mountainous provinces like Son La - where income is very low, this is really a big challenge and difficult to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way.

Thus, in both aspects of sustainable living standards, the living standard of Son La province is not satisfactory. Indicators of change are not stable, not yet according to sustainable requirements; The standard of living between the sub-regions as well as the strata of population has a big difference, many places in the province (the residence areas of 100% of ethnic minorities in the high mountains of Thuan Chau, Van Ho, etc) has potential of political and social instability to the point that it is detrimental to stable development. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze to see clearly the causes of the limitations and weaknesses in creating the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province.

### ***3.2.3. Causes of limitations and weaknesses for the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province***

#### *3.2.3.1. Economic development level*

The level of economic development in Son La province is limited, labor productivity is not high. Most of rural mountainous areas of Son La mainly economic structure is developing agriculture and forestry with very low productivity, very difficult to translate. The number of extremely difficult villages also accounts for 55.9% of the total number of villages in the province (*Appendix 55*).

#### *3.2.3.2. Price, market*

With a large territory, the terrain is divided, so communes and villages in Son La are distributed scatteredly, mainly far from the center, transportation is difficult, so the price of goods in Son La is very expensive, the Trade with outside markets is underdeveloped.

#### *3.2.3.3. Characteristics of the people*

Son La has a large population, a high natural population growth, so a large family size while a low level of economic development leads to a very difficult living standard for people to improve. Ethnic structure in Son La is diverse, but there is a big gap in the development level.

In particular, the awareness of the people of Son La province in production and consumption, determined to develop commodity production, the sense of inferiority and the need to improve people's living standards, etc. are still poor; The number of people suffering from social evils is still very large (*Appendix 56*). These issues have greatly influenced the current status of living standards.

Through practical research in Son La, it shows that high education level will bring better income and vice versa. Low educational level will affect labor motivation and social development. People only take safety in terms of food purposes, lack of dynamism and market access, so income is low. The majority of people in rural areas only focus on cultivating gardens combined with livestock and poultry breeding. With

the current revenue situation but through interviews, the majority of farmers still have no sense of getting rich. Poverty and lack of knowledge have limited their needs and they are temporarily content with existing life. Therefore, in addition to state and local support, each household itself needs to rise up to raise the income level, thereby gradually improving living standards. The accumulation rate compared to income is too low because in Son La ethnic communities, especially in remote areas where there are still many customs (in weddings, funerals ...), many people in the region do not have a mind accumulation, refocusing on the support ...

#### *3.2.3.4. Policy and the leadership of local government*

Some policies are overlapping and overlapping on objects, contents, locations, etc (such as Program 135, Program 30a, New rural construction, etc, all have policies to support production and support investment infrastructure for communes in poor districts), making it difficult to direct and organize implementation in localities, causing resource dispersion, reducing the effectiveness of programs.

Information, propaganda of policies, policies and mechanisms for the implementation of central support programs have not been widely and fully disseminated to people, especially in remote areas far. This limits the level of participation and supervision of people and communities, limiting the ability of people to participate and mobilize resources.

The quality of advisory work is still limited, the coordination between different levels of authorities and departments of the province is not tight and synchronous. The specialized agencies of the province have not done well the inspection and promotion of the process of implementing socio-economic development and support programs, etc.

#### *3.2.3.5. Some other causes*

Most of the territory of the province is in the highlands, remote areas, and natural conditions are very difficult. In the recent period, Son La province often suffers from many natural disasters which cause serious economic and human losses, causing many places of people's living standards to be seriously reduced.

Infrastructure is not synchronized, there are many difficulties and weaknesses, especially roads in remote, border and highland communes.

In summary, recognizing the limitations and weaknesses in creating a living standard of people towards a sustainable way as well as pointing out the causes of these limitations and weaknesses will be an important basis for working suppose to develop practical solutions to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way for Son La province in the next period.

### **Summary of Chapter 3**

The results of chapter 3 show that:

(i) Son La is a province where development factors such as population, ethnicity, quality of labor resources, geographical location, natural conditions, ... allow for the development of a general economy to improve the living standards of the population and improving the standard of living in a sustainable way. Among these factors, local authorities, businesses and people; potentials and strengths of economic development hold the leading position for upgrading people's life.

(ii) The state has policies to support Son La, Son La provincial government has

determined to attract investment to develop the economy, so the economy of Son La has a relatively clear shift, income of people residence increased over the years; The socio-economic aspect in urban and rural areas has made better progress than before. Therefore, in fact, the living standards of all strata and regions are raised. But compared to the national average and compared to many provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains, Son La's living standard is still low. At the same time, due to difficult development conditions of highland and border communes, a large part of Son La's population left.

(iii) While living standards have improved, the income gap between the highest 20% and the lowest 20% as well as the income gap between urban and rural areas, between sub-regions and between administrative units is similar. big deal; potential uncertainties due to the movement of population and labor flows to the province's development are quite clear.

(iv) Among many causes leading to limitations and weaknesses in improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way, it is necessary to mention the main reasons such as weakness in management of local authorities; limited economic development is not commensurate with potential; people's livelihoods, especially those of people in remote areas have not been clearly shaped; The awareness of the rising people is limited, people are lacking information on economic development, have not found the direction to develop goods production and consumption products.

#### **Chapter 4.**

#### **Solution improving the living standard towards a sustainable way in Son La province.**

#### **4.1. Viewpoints, objectives and orientations to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province**

##### ***4.1.1. Viewpoints***

According to the author to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way, follow the following points: (i) improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in both immediate and long-term reasonably; (ii) The enhancement of the living standard of people towards a sustainable way must be based on both income increase and improvement of the expenditure structure in the direction of improving people; (iii) the living standard of people towards a sustainable way must be considered a requirement and also a socio-economic development goal of Son La province; (iv) There is no uniform economic development between districts but there is a need to develop focus; (v) Sustainable development based on a focus on improving people's knowledge and creating livelihood assets.

Son La Province should aim to exploit and promote all resources, potentials, strengths in human resources, land, water resources and other resources through appropriate mechanisms and policies to implement restructuring investment, innovation growth model to create a breakthrough in socio-economic development to improve people's living standards.

##### ***4.1.2. Objectives***

The material life of the people is increasingly improved, per capita income is quite good in the region, the gap is increasingly shortened compared to the national

average.

#### **4.1.3. Orientations**

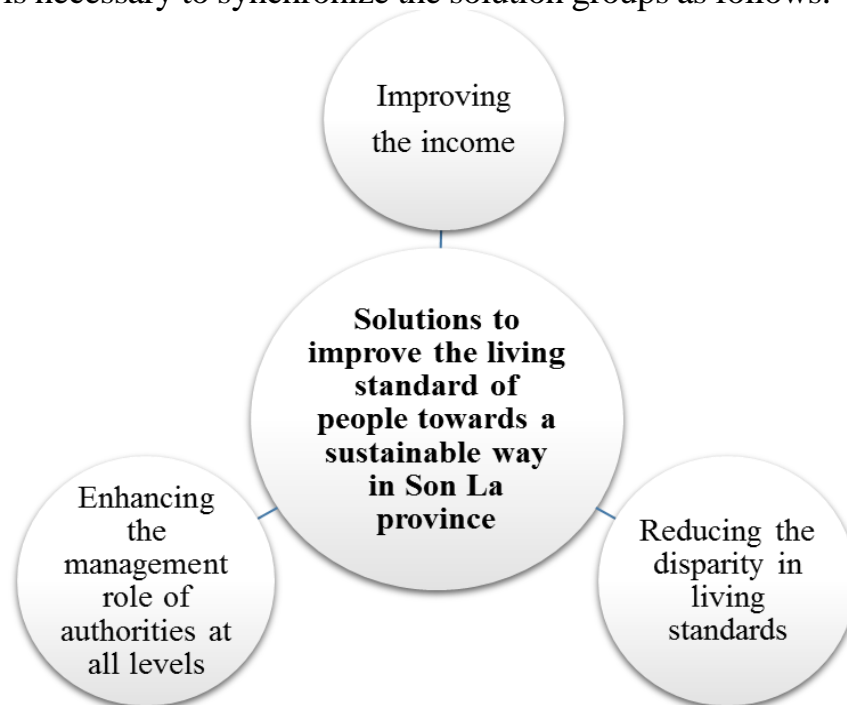
Regarding economic development to improve income and living standards

Regarding poverty reduction and infrastructure development

Regarding spatial orientation development organizations to reduce inequality.

#### **4.2. Major solutions to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province manner until 2025**

In order to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province, it is necessary to synchronize the solution groups as follows:



**Image 4.1. Groups of solutions to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province to 2025**

*(Source: author suggested)*

To improve the income need: improve the quality of the population, develop high quality human resources; build geographical indications for commodity products; have policies to prioritize high-tech agricultural application; replication of effective livelihood models; improve the level of economic development; promoting potentials and advantages of natural conditions.

In order to reduce the disparity in living standards, it is necessary to implement a macroeconomic policy solution; implement solutions to reduce the disparity in living standards by territories; implement solutions to improve living standards for ethnic minorities in Son La province; implement solutions for developing technical infrastructure in a synchronous and modern way.

To enhance the management role of the authorities at all levels, it is necessary to: improve the orientation of economic development; improve the quality of human resources management.

#### **4.3. Assessing the ability to achieve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way until 2025**

##### **4.3.1. General evaluation**

If successful implementation of orientations and solutions as proposed and recommended, although the preliminary calculation also shows that the living standards in Son La province will improve significantly. Indicators of income, housing, water use ... have all improved, changing expenditure structure (spending more on fish, meat, learning, entertainment, ...). At the same time, the rate of poor households and the number of poor people decreased significantly, the difference in living standards will be reduced.

At the same time, when the living standards have improved, the indicators comparing living standard differences between sub-regions as well as the population classes have been reduced, accepted by the people, not detrimental to stable development.

#### **4.3.2. Specific evaluation**

The author predicts achievable indicators of living standards in Son La province as follows:

##### *4.3.2.1. The first aspect*

The average per capita income per month in Son La province in 2016 ranked the last in the position of 62/63 provinces and cities directly under the Central Government in the whole country. But if Son La province makes full use of and exploits two key strengths: developing high-tech agriculture and tourism, by 2025, the province's per capita income is projected to triple. Along with that, increasing per capita income is the most important basis to increase the accumulation rate compared to income. According to calculations, by 2025, the rate of poor households in Son La will decrease by more than half compared to the present. But poverty reduction should go hand in hand with solutions to help people escape poverty sustainably; thoroughly eliminating hunger, reducing the number of particularly difficult villages and raising the rate of spending on education, the percentage of households with permanent houses and the percentage of households using hygienic water sources.

##### *4.3.2.2. The second aspect*

In order to ensure that living standard of people towards a sustainable way, when the society has achieved the targets in the first aspect, we need to take into account the second aspect, which is to reduce the disparity in living standards among sub-regions as well as in all strata and gradually reduce the proportion of spending in total income to increase the accumulation rate. For a mountainous province, living standards are dominated by many factors such as Son La, reducing the disparity to be accepted by the people is a very difficult requirement. However, if there is too big a difference in living standards, it will be detrimental to stable development. Therefore, the issue of reducing the gap in living standards is always an urgent requirement for Son La province.

### **Summary of Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 points out some important points as follows:

(i) On the basis of inheriting reports on socio-economic development planning to 2020 of Son La province, the author proposed the socio-economic development targets of Son La province to 2025: population, economic growth, economic structure, key products, ... of the province, of urban, rural and sub-regions.

(ii) Proposing orientations to improve people's living standards to 2025 of the

province, urban and rural areas, sub-regions, etc.

(iii) Proposing three main solutions group to improve the living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province to 2025: (1) increase residential income in a relatively stable way; (2) minimizing income disparities between population classes, between urban and rural areas, and between sub-regions; (3) promote the role of government at all levels with economic development, increase income and minimize the difference between the research subjects.

(iv) Through the research process of the thesis, the author request:

The State should renew the statistics on living standards of people according to the criteria mentioned in Chapter 2 in theory and analyzed in chapter 3, chapter 4; There is a need to guide the annual assessment of sustainable living standards for localities at provincial and district levels.

The Son La provincial government should pay due attention to improve living standard of people towards a sustainable way. At the same time, with the guidance on the development of commodity production, guiding the organization of production, expanding links, and building sustainable livelihood models, it is necessary to promote the propagation of the significance of living standard of people towards a sustainable way. Every year, it is necessary to organize the assessment of living standard of people towards a sustainable way in the province. In addition, Son La provincial authorities need specific policies and solutions to improve living standard of people towards a sustainable way in the province.

## **CONCLUDE**

After reviewing the theoretical basis and practical experience of improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way, combined with the information gathered from the field, the thesis has focused on analyzing the problem of improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way of Son La province and has achieved the set objectives, that is:

1) Through an overview of research works, the author draws the main observations: Regarding the points that can be inherited for the thesis (Thought, viewpoint on living standards of people according to sustainable requirements for the country; Some factors affect people's living standards; Some contents assess residential living standards at the national level but can be applied to the provincial level; A number of indicators for assessing the living standards for the national level can be applied to the provincial level; Some solutions to improve people's living standards can serve the research of the thesis); On the issues of the thesis, it is necessary to go deep, research to clarify (Clarify the concept of improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way; Determination of factors affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way; Proposed criteria and indicator for assessing living standard of people towards a sustainable way; Proposing necessary conditions to improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way).

2) Based on the results of the overview, analyze practical experience on improving people's living standards, the author has clarified important theoretical issues: living standard and improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way. Detail: (i) the concept of improving the living standard of people

towards a sustainable way; (ii) Determination of 6 factors group affecting improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way and specify 5 conditions to ensure a sustainable population living standard; (iii) Confirm 2 groups of criteria for assessing living standard towards a sustainable way (Group of key indicators consists of 6 indicators và Group of auxiliary indicators consists of 4 indicators).

3) Through the analysis of factors affecting living standard of people towards a sustainable way and the status of living standard of people towards a sustainable way in Son La province in the period of 2010 - 2016, shows:

(i) Son La is a province where development factors such as population, ethnicity, quality of labor resources, geographical location, natural conditions, ... allow for the development of a general economy to improve the living standards of the population and improving the standard of living in a sustainable way. Among these factors, local authorities, businesses and people; potentials and strengths of economic development hold the leading position for upgrading people's life.

(ii) The state has policies to support Son La, Son La provincial government has determined to attract investment to develop the economy, so the economy of Son La has a relatively clear shift, income of people residence increased over the years; The socio-economic aspect in urban and rural areas has made better progress than before. Therefore, in fact, the living standards of all strata and regions are raised. But compared to the national average and compared to many provinces in the Northern Midlands and Mountains, Son La's living standard is still low. While living standards have improved, the income gap between the highest 20% and the lowest 20% as well as the income gap between urban and rural areas, between sub-regions and between administrative units is similar. big deal; potential uncertainties due to the movement of population and labor flows to the province's development are quite clear.

(iii) Among many causes leading to limitations and weaknesses in improving the living standard of people towards a sustainable way, it is necessary to mention the main reasons such as weakness in management of local authorities; limited economic development is not commensurate with potential; people's livelihoods, especially those of people in remote areas have not been clearly shaped, etc.

4) Based on the socio-economic development orientation of the province, from the analyzed situation, the thesis has proposed solutions to improve living standard of people towards a sustainable way in accordance with the actual situation of the province. Cần tập trung chủ yếu vào một số giải pháp như: (i) increase residential income in a relatively stable way; (ii) minimizing income disparities between population classes, between urban and rural areas, and between sub-regions; (iii) promote the role of government at all levels with economic development, increase income and minimize the difference between the research subjects.

5) The thesis has been studied seriously and meticulously by the author, but due to data limitations, the author has not yet fully evaluated some aspects reflecting sustainable living standards such as expenditure structure and number school year of people, etc. If the author continues to perform other works in the direction of this research or other authors if studying in this direction, there should be more specific investigations and assessments on the expenditure structure, the level of education, the progress in the intellectual level of the population, etc.