

At present, the clothing industry in Bình Định employs some 2,000 workers but its companies are facing an increasing shortage of labor that affects badly their business plans and performance.

In the past few years, the clothing industry in Bình Định was considered as a source of new jobs for female

shortage, clothing industry had to lower the standards for recruitment. The factory stops demanding skills or education and requires only good health. In addition, some factories also pay apprentices. For example, Bình Định Garment Factory pays apprentices VND400,000 for the first month, 300,000 for the second and 200,000

factory got no sub-contract work. Bình Định clothing workers usually get VND450,000 per month when the business goes well and only 300,000 when there is no contract. They usually have to work overtime and very hard for their meager income. To meet the deadline, they have to work 12 hours per day and be extremely focused on their jobs. Such a working condition makes more and more laborers leave the industry.

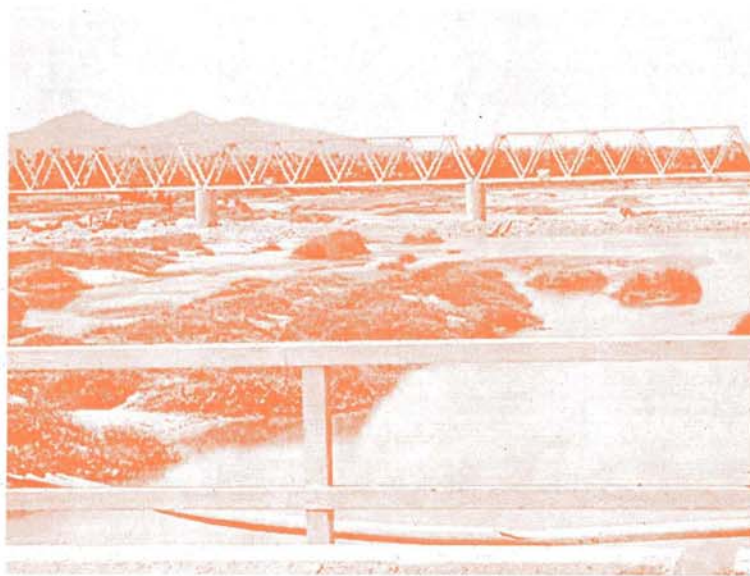
To retain workers, companies should increase the wage and improve the working conditions. This requires replacement of machine and equipment in order to cut the production cost. However, most Bình Định-based factories lack necessary funds and they could not sell their goods directly to foreign buyers because of their small scale. In the coming years, it will be hard for them to overcome these obstacles.

Ms. Nguyễn Thị Việt Hoa, Vice-Director of Bình Định Service of Industry said, "From 2000 on, the provincial government increased investment in the clothing industry in order to create more new jobs, which helped many factories come into being." At present, the industry could produce two million units per year, twice as much as its capacity in 2000. However, this development is due to increases in the size of workforce while the technology and productivity saw no improvement. Most laborers are peasants who look for jobs when they couldn't do farming. Their have no training and their productivity is low, so they could get high wage while skilled ones look for better opportunities in big cities and other industries.

When local factories couldn't invest in new technology and machines because of the shortage of capital, they could only pay attention to training courses for local laborers, thereby making them loyal to the factory and earn better pay due to good skills. This solution, however, also requires great efforts from the factories and support from the provincial government ■

Shortage of Labor in Bình Định Clothing Industry

by NGUYỄN TRẦN THANH NHẬT



laborers but now they seem less interested in such jobs. An Nhơn is a district with an abundant supply of female laborers but clothing factories there meet with difficulties in recruiting new laborers. Đinh Công Trứ, Director of the An Nhơn Garment Factory said, "There are 13 production lines in my factory but only nine of them with some 270 workers are in operation now. In recent months, many workers have left for other jobs." Most female laborers like to work in other factories processing wood, cashew nut and incense because they can get better pay and more stable employment.

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for the third. But these measures failed to produce good results. Lê Dân, Vice-Director of the Factory said, "At present, we need some 500 laborers to fill places left by leavers. After a month we put ads in mass media, only 50 laborers came for interview."

The main reason is the low income from the clothing industry. Most factories apply the piece-work system and they act as sub-contractors to foreign companies. When the price of sub-contract work didn't rise and the production cost increased because of rises in the fuel price, the wage was cut. In addition, workers only get some subsidies or allowance when the