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ANNE ANUCHANAN SONGDEI: CAMBODIAN CHILD BEGGARS IN
THAILAND: A CASE STUDY OF RIGHTS AND NEEDS BASED
APPROACHES IN LEGISLATION AND IMPLEMENTATION. ADVISOR:
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This research aims to determine the extent that Thailand's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008) protects the rights of Cambodian child beggars as outlined in human rights conventions. This was done by assessing the level of policy coherence between Thailand's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008) and other related policies, by assessing the practicality of the guidelines used for screening victims of trafficking by Thai officials, and by assessing whether Thai officials' attitudes towards Cambodian child beggars affected whether the rights-based approach or the needs-based approach was followed in practice.

This research found that there was strong policy coherence between Thailand's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008) and other related policies, such as the Child Protection Act (2003), the Labor Protection Act (2008), and the Domestic Violence Victim Protection Act (2007). Despite this fact, there existed large policy incoherence between Thailand's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008) and the Beggar Control Act (1941) and Immigration Act (1979). The lack of policy coherence between Thailand's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008) and the two latter Acts was found to deeply affect whether Thai officials followed the rights-based approach or the needs-based approach when dealing with Cambodian child beggars. This was because some saw the Cambodian child beggars as victims of trafficking, while others saw them as voluntary migrants, illegal migrants, or both. This in turn made for a subjective screening process and affected whether Cambodian child beggars were taken under Thai custody at all. From interviews with Cambodian child beggars, it was found that although Thai officials do not follow the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2008) for every Cambodian child beggar in this study, this may be a more practical approach so that the immediate needs of the majority of these Cambodian child beggars are met. Nonetheless, this raises concerns over how to more effectively address the structural causes of the child begging problem.

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