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KELLY GLENN SCHULZ: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROTECTION MECHANISMS FOR MIGRANT FISHERMEN FROM MYANMAR IN THAILAND: A CASE STUDY FROM SAMUT SAKHON PROVINCE. ADVISOR: PROF. SUPANG CHANTAVANICH, PH.D., CO-ADVISOR: RATCHADA JAYAGUPTA, PH.D., 142 PP.

The issue of trafficking in persons for the purposes of labor exploitation is a growing phenomenon amongst migrant workers from Myanmar who are working in Thailand's commercial fishing industry. Along with the development of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the opening up of cross-border trade and work flows, this problem can only be expected to continue grow so long as the root causes remain unaddressed.

Attempts have been made in order to understand the methods by which this form of human trafficking and exploitation takes place. However, little research has been done to understand the structural system of protection mechanisms that have been put in place to try and prevent these violations of human rights and security from occurring in the first place. This thesis project examines the various government and community-based protection mechanisms in Thailand by determining which mechanisms are most successful in upholding the fundamental labor and human rights of these migrant fishermen and which ones are in greatest need of correction.

This research project was able to uncover several new findings that shed light onto the specific situation of migrant fishermen in Samut Sakhon and the nature of the system of mechanisms that are available for their protection. It was found that the twenty-one migrant fishermen interviewed in this study faced human rights abuses and labor violations such as: not receiving the full payment of their wages, being physically and mentally abused through the use of threats as well as violence from their boat captains and employers, prevented from receiving access to medical treatment or to an appropriate compensation for that treatment, not being allowed to leave the fishing boats, being restricted to move around while on land, and being caught in situations of illegal debt bondage. A special case study of a lone migrant fisherman is used in order to reveal how the simple awareness of one's rights as a migrant worker in Thailand can lead to many years of successful protection from this kind of labor exploitation.

In addition, this paper also analyzes the perspectives of representatives from the Royal Thai Government, fishery associations, as well as from local NGOs and community-based organizations in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their provided protection mechanisms.

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