

## การศึกษาแรงงานเด็กในงานประมงน้ำลึกและเด็กคัดเลือกปลา จังหวัดปัตตานี

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งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาสภาพชีวิตความเป็นอยู่ของแรงงานเด็กที่ทำงานเป็นลูกเรือประมงน้ำลึกและเด็กคัดเลือกปลาในจังหวัดปัตตานี ประเด็นหลักที่ศึกษาคือ สภาพการทำงานและความเป็นอยู่ รายได้และสวัสดิการ สุขภาพอนามัย และความคิดเห็นของเจ้าของเรือประมงน้ำลึกและเจ้าของธุรกิจคัดปลาต่อการจ้างแรงงานเด็ก

กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยแรงงานเด็กประมงน้ำลึก จำนวน 45 คน ซึ่งได้จากการสุ่มแบบบังเอิญจากเรือประมงที่เข้าเทียบท่า จำนวน 100 ลำ ในช่วงเดือนสิงหาคม 2543 ถึงเดือนมกราคม 2544 และแรงงานเด็กคัดเลือกปลา จำนวน 165 คน จากการสุ่มอย่างง่ายจากแรงงานเด็กคัดเลือกปลาทั้งหมด 300 คน การเก็บข้อมูลใช้แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบมีโครงสร้างและการอภิปรายแบบเจาะกลุ่ม การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้ค่าร้อยละ ประกอบข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพที่ได้จากการอภิปรายแบบเจาะกลุ่ม

ผลการวิจัยพบว่าแรงงานเด็กประมงน้ำลึกต้องทำงานในช่วงเวลากลางคืน มีรายได้ระหว่าง 700-3,000 บาท ต่อเดือน ไม่มีหลักประกันสุขภาพเมื่อยามเจ็บป่วยหรือประสบอุบัติเหตุ แรงงานเด็กคัดเลือกปลาส่วนใหญ่ก็ต้องทำงานในช่วงเวลากลางคืนเช่นกัน และต้องทำงานยาวนานติดต่อกัน 6-13 ชั่วโมง มีรายได้ประมาณ 1,000-3,000 บาท ต่อเดือน ไม่มีหลักประกันสุขภาพเมื่อยามเจ็บป่วยหรือประสบอุบัติเหตุจากการทำงาน นอกจากนี้ยังต้องทนสภาพแวดล้อมที่ไม่ดีในขณะที่ทำงานอีกด้วย

ข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับผู้ประกอบการคือ ควรปฏิบัติตามกฎหมายคุ้มครองแรงงาน เช่น การจดทะเบียนแรงงาน และจัดรายได้ สวัสดิการ และสภาพแวดล้อมในการทำงาน ส่วนหน่วยงานของรัฐนั้นควรสร้างความเข้าใจให้ผู้ประกอบการปฏิบัติตามกฎหมายคุ้มครองแรงงาน และจัดประสบการณ์ให้แรงงานเด็กมีโอกาสในการพัฒนาคุณภาพชีวิตของพวกเขาต่อไป

คำสำคัญ: แรงงานเด็ก, แรงงานเด็กคัดเลือกปลา, แรงงานเด็กประมงน้ำลึก

# A Study on Child Labor in Deep-sea Fishing and Fish-sorting Business in Pattani Province

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*The purpose of this study was to investigate the conditions of children working as crew on deep-sea fishing boats, and of fish-sorting girls in Pattani Province with respect to their working and living conditions, earnings and welfare, health care, as well as the opinions concerning child employment of the owners of deep-sea fishing boats and fish-sorting business.*

*The samples of this study were 45 child laborers, accidentally selected from those working on 100 deep-sea fishing boats at the Pattani harbor from August 2000 to January 2001, and 165 fish-sorters, randomly selected from 300 child laborers in fish-sorting business. In collecting the data, a structured interview schedule and the focus-group discussion technique were used.*

*It was found that deep-sea fishing child laborers were nighttime workers, and earned 700-3,000 baht per month without any health insurance for sickness or accident. Likewise, most fish-sorting child laborers were nighttime toilers for 6-13 consecutive hours, earned approximately 1,000-3,000 baht per month without any health insurance for sickness or work hazards, and had to endure bad work environment.*

*It was recommended that all business owners comply with Labor Protection Law. For instance, labor should be registered, and appropriate wages, welfare and work environment should be provided. Government agencies should encourage business owners to comply with Labor Protection Law. Training or other informative activities should be organized to educate child laborers as well as to improve their quality of life.*

**Keywords:** child labor, deep-sea fishing child laborers, fish-sorting child laborers

## Introduction

Pattani is a province in the lower South of Thailand, bordered on the east by the Gulf of Thailand. At the Pattani river mouth in Muang District, fishing boats of various sizes come to harbor. Here fish and other marine products are unloaded and sorted before being sent to industries or other places for sale. Each day the harbor is enlivened with large crowds, many of whom are fishing crew and fish-sorters. Among these workers, child laborers can be sighted.

In a study on child labor in fishing industry in Pattani, Kalaya Nitiruangcharat et al. (1998)

found that child laborers on deep-sea fishing boats and in fish-sorting business received no welfare (no vacation or sick leave, and no health insurance) from their employers. Sometimes fish-sorting child laborers had to work for two days and two nights without rest, had to sleep on the sidewalks and gained access to no bathrooms. Deep-sea fishing child laborers were not in a better situation. They were confined to spaces on the boats and their unhealthy work environment was conducive to stress, aggression, quarrel, drug addiction and HIV infection. These findings,

coupled with personal experiences, have led the researcher to pursue further study on the plights of these laborers. The present study will be undertaken within the conceptual framework established by (1) the International Labor Organization (ILO)'s Conventions 138 and 182 with respect to minimum age requirements for work and the worst forms of child labor, and (2) Thailand's Labor Protection Act (1998) and Ministerial Order No.10 (1998) with respect to child labor and labor protection in fishing business. It is expected that those involving in fishing business and employing child labor will make use of the findings of this study to improve working conditions, standard of living, and quality of life of their employees.

### Objective

This study aimed to investigate the conditions of children working on deep-sea fishing boats, and in fish-sorting business in Pattani Province with respect to their working and living conditions, earnings and welfare, health care, as well as the opinions concerning child employment of the owners of deep-sea fishing boats and fish-sorting businesses.

### Scope of the Study

#### 1. Population and Samples

The population of this study were child laborers under the age of 18 who worked on deep-sea fishing boats or in fish-sorting business at the Pattani harbor from August 2000 to January 2001. The samples were 45 child laborers, accidentally selected from those working on 100 deep-sea fishing boats at the Pattani harbor from August 2000 to January 2001, and 165 fish-sorters, randomly selected from 300 child laborers in fish-sorting business.

#### 2. The variables in this study include:

2.1 Conditions of work and living: hours of work, forms of work, meals provided, accommodation, rest and leisure

2.2 Earnings and welfare: wages and welfare received

2.3 Health care and health insurance

2.4 Opinions of the owners of deep-sea fishing boats and fish-sorting businesses concerning child employment and child labor rights

### Definition of Terms

**Child laborers:** children under the age of 18 working in deep-sea fishing and fish-sorting businesses in Pattani from August 2000 to January 2001

**Deep-sea fishing child laborers:** children under the age of 18 working on deep-sea fishing boats harbored in Pattani from August 2000 to January 2001

**Fish-sorting child laborers:** children under the age of 18 working as fish-sorters in Pattani from August 2000 to January 2001

### Review of Literature

#### 1. Child Labor Situation in Thailand

([www.dlpw.go.th/situa\\_01.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/situa_01.html))

Premature entry into labor market of young children, unskilled child labor, abduction and exploitation of child workers are some problems often encountered by developing countries, especially when transforming from an agricultural society into an industrial society. Child labor can be mitigated and solved if sustained economic development and alleviation of poverty through appropriate social welfare are earnestly undertaken by the government.

For more than 4 decades, development in Thailand under the National Economic and Social Development Plan has widened the gap between urban and rural people and generated unfair income distribution. Parents from the countryside, together with their children, migrate to towns for employment. Some children leave their hometowns to seek urban employment so as to earn extra family incomes. In a world of competition, in order to maintain their businesses, many small enterprises resort to cheap child labor as a means to reduce capital investment. This practice, unfortunately, induces abuses and

the worst forms of child labor.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, entering into force by the United Nations in 1990, has committed national governments to protecting and ensuring the human rights of children. Since then campaigns against child labor have been prevalent. Child labor becomes an international issue when child labor exploitation is used as a trade barrier. Thailand was put in a difficult situation when big importing countries like the United States and EU pressed Thailand to improve labor standards, particularly child labor; otherwise tariff privileges as specified by Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) would not be granted. There was also a sanction on commodities produced by child workers under 15.

Compared with previous years, employment of minors aged 15-17 considerably decreases. The Social Security Office reported that in July 2000 there were about 55,000 child workers while in March 1998 there were 230,000 and in December 1998 there were approximately 125,000 child laborers. Partly the decrease is due to active campaigns to prevent and eliminate child labor. Parents, legal guardians, and children are being informed of children's rights law and services government and private sectors are providing for children. Occupational skills training has been organized for children before they enter labor market. Volunteers for labor protection and child labor elimination in each village are recruited. Government agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Social Welfare grant more scholarships to students.

To comply with the standards of ILO and its national educational policy, Thailand has enforced the Labor Protection Act (1998), restricting the minimum age requirement for work from 13 to 15. Minors are thus barred from entering labor market until the age of 15. Employment of children also decreased because many entrepreneurs were out of business due to the economic downfall.

In Thailand most child workers are in Bangkok and neighboring areas. They are em-

ployed to make garments, bags, footwear and ornaments; do lapidary works; fix cars and motorcycles, or work at gas stations or in restaurants. Data from the Department of Social Welfare and Labor Protection shows that 85 % of child labor are between 15 and 17 years old. Probably because mature and physically strong laborers are needed in the production processes, no child labor is found in large businesses.

## 2. Problems Encountered by Child Workers in Thailand ([www.dlpw.go.th/situa\\_01\\_01.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/situa_01_01.html))

1) Lack of Education and Occupational Skills: Most child laborers are poor and uneducated. Chances for these children to get further education or occupational skills training are very slim.

2) Poor Quality of Life: Most children are toiling for longer hours than ordinary children can endure. They earn little income, stay and work in unhealthy environment. In addition, the meals provided by employers are unwholesome for growing children.

3) Work Hazards: Dangers are induced by child workers' lack of skills and longer hours of work, coupled with employers' inattention of safety.

4) Adjustment Problem: Growing children are suffering from emotional and physical changes. Their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development.

5) Exploitation of Child Labor

## 3. The Convention on the Rights of the Child ([www.dlpw.go.th/law\\_02.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/law_02.html))

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights-civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. This Convention recognizes the need to extend particular care to the child, as has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959, and recognized in the Universal Decla-

ration of Human Rights of 1948 concerning the welfare of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the UN General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. It entered into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49.

The Convention has 3 main parts and covers 54 articles, ([www.dlpw.go.th/law\\_02.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/law_02.html)) Part I (articles 1-41) deals with the principles and the rights children are entitled to. Part II (articles 42-45) concerns the principles and provisions of the Convention the ratifying countries have to comply with. Part III (articles 46-54) specifies procedures, provisions and enforcement of the Convention.

In Part I, 6 principles can be identified. ([www.dlpw.go.th/law\\_02.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/law_02.html))

1) General principle as specified in articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 30, 38, and 41. This principle ensures that the child is given protection and care as is necessary for his/her well-being. It also recognizes the child's right to life; his or her economic, social, educational and cultural rights; the right to freedom of expression, and freedom of association. To avoid negative impacts of the enforcement of the Convention, article 41 states that "Nothing in the present Convention shall affect any provisions which are more conducive to the realization of the rights of the child and which may be contained in (a) the law of a State party or (b) international law in force for that State."

2) Protection of life, freedom and safety as specified in articles 19, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 39. This principle recognizes the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation; from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse; from the use of children in illicit production and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; and from all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare. In addition, the Convention states that the State party shall take all appropriate mea-

asures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of any form of aforementioned exploitation and abuse.

3) Provision of Social Welfare as specified in articles 17, 24, 26, 28, 29, and 31. This principle recognizes the right of the child to have access to information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child; the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health; the right to education directed to the development of the child's personality, to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, and to the development of respect for the natural environment; and the right to rest and leisure as well as to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

4) Protection of civil rights as specified in articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 18 and 27. This is to protect the rights of a child as a citizen of the State. Such rights include the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents or legal guardians. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting such rights, the State shall render assistance to parents and legal guardians.

5) Protection of the child committing offences as specified in articles 37 and 40. This principle recognizes the right of the child alleged as having infringed the penal law to be treated with humanity and respect for dignity of the human person. The child will be treated differently from the adult. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law, shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. In addition, capital punishment or life imprisonment without possibility of release shall not be imposed for offences committed by children below 18.

6) Protection of deprived children as specified in articles 20, 21, 22, 23. This is to protect and assist a child deprived of his or her family environment, a child seeking refugee status or considered a refugee, and a mentally or

physically disabled child. These children are entitled to appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the Convention.

**Employment Not Accessible to Children under 18:** ([www.dlpw.go.th/law\\_01\\_06.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/law_01_06.html))

- 1) Metal melting, casting or shaping
- 2) Metal molding
- 3) works involving excess heat, frozenness, vibration, noise and light that might be hazardous to health
- 4) hazardous chemical works
- 5) toxic microbiological works
- 6) works involving toxic, explosive and flammable objects, except work at gas stations
- 7) operation of a crane or tippel
- 8) operation of an electric or motor saw
- 9) works carried underground, underwater, in a cave, a tunnel or a crater
- 10) radioactive works
- 11) cleaning of the machine while in operation
- 12) Works carried on a scaffold 10 meters or over above the ground
- 13) other works as specified by ministerial orders

**Workplaces Not Accessible to Children Under 18:** ([www.dlpw.go.th/law\\_01\\_07.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/law_01_07.html))

- 1) slaughterhouses
- 2) gambling houses
- 3) dance halls
- 4) places where food, liquor and other kinds of drinks are served by waiters or waitresses, or where lodging and massage are serviced.
- 5) Other places as specified by ministerial orders

**Hours of Employment Not Accessible to Children Under 18:** ([www.dlpw.go.th/law\\_01\\_08.html](http://www.dlpw.go.th/law_01_08.html))

- 1) No overtime employment or employment during holidays are accessible to children under 18 since such employment would be hazardous to their health.

2) Child employment from 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. is not permitted unless permission is granted by the Director of the Labor Department or those whom authority is vested. However, certain jobs have to be carried out from 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. and therefore special permission must be requested.

3) Legally, employers may assign child actors/actresses, movie stars, or performers to act or perform from 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m., provided that ample rest is granted. However, child actors are at present paid on the basis of works accomplished, not for their services (i.e., hire of work, not hire of services). Therefore, child actors are not protected by Labor Law.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Data Collection

An in-depth interview was used in data collection. Trained research assistants collected the data, using a structured interview schedule designed by the researcher. Included in the interview were the following headings:

- 1.1 Basic information on child labor: gender, age and nationality
- 1.2 Working and living conditions
- 1.3 Earnings and welfare
- 1.4 Health care

In addition to the interview, exhibitions and training on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection, drugs addiction and suppression were organized. Mobile medical services were arranged for child labor at the harbor. Some child workers attending the exhibitions and training were selected for focus-group discussion.

### 2. Data Analysis

Percentages were used in data analysis. Qualitative data drawn from interview and focus-group discussion were used in describing the findings.

## Research Findings

### 1. Deep-sea Fishing Child Laborers

45 child laborers were accidentally selected from those working on 100 deep-sea fishing boats harbored in Pattani from August

2000 to January 2001.

### 1.1 Basic Information

1.1.1 53.33% of deep-sea fishing child laborers were Thai, 33.33% Cambodians and 13.33 % were Burmese.

1.1.2 55.56% of Thai laborers were from provinces in the Northeast such as Khon Kaen, Nong Khai, Sisaket, Sakon Nakhon, Udon Thani, Nong Bua Lamphu, and Buriram. The rest (44.44%) were from provinces in the South such as Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.

1.1.3 All deep-sea fishing child laborers were male.

1.1.4 82.22% of deep-sea fishing child laborers were between 15 and 17 years of age; 17.78 % were between 12 and 14 years of age.

1.1.5 71.77% of these laborers spoke Thai fluently; 24.44% could speak, read and write Thai; only 4.44% could not speak, read and write Thai.

1.1.6 64.44% of these laborers received no education; 26.66% completed primary education Grade 6; and 48.89% completed Grade 4.

### 1.2 Working and Living Conditions

For each trip, deep-sea fishing crew spent 10-15 days at sea, sometimes a month. They were working from 6.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. and spent the day resting. The crew were provided with three free meals a day by their employers.

### 1.3 Earnings and Welfare

Deep-sea fishing child laborers earned 700-3,000 baht a month. 31.11% of the labor earned 800 baht a month; 26.67% 3,000 baht a month; and 22.22% earned 1,000 baht a month. Three meals a day, drinking water and household remedies were provided while the crew were on board.

### 1.4 Health Care

From the interview, it was found that no life or accident insurance was arranged for child employees. At sea, when the crew were ill or had an accident, they resorted to first-aid and household remedies. However, it was found

that 86.67% of the labor had never been ill. Common illness included having a common cold, and having rotting hands and fingers. Accident on board included injury caused by the striking of otter boards and fishing gear.

### 2. Fish-sorting Child Laborers

Through simple random sampling, 165 fish-sorters out of 300 fish-sorting child laborers at the Pattani harbor were selected.

#### 2.1 Basic Information

All fish-sorting laborers were Thai girls residing in Pattani, aged 10-17. 61.41% of the workers were 15-17 years old. 87.5% could speak, read and write Thai while 7% could not speak, read and write Thai. 62.07% of fish-sorters completed primary education Grade 6. About 5% received no education. Most fish-sorters commuted from home to the harbor; only 5.8% stayed with their employers at the harbor.

#### 2.2 Working and Living Conditions

Each day fish-sorters did not spend the same amount of time working, depending on the quantity of marine catch and number of workers involved. Usually they worked for 6-13 hours a day and at least 3 hours was spent each day. The time of work was not certain depending on when the boats came ashore. However, most workers started working from 6.00 p.m. onward.

#### 2.3 Earnings and Welfare

42.93% of fish-sorting child workers earned about 1,000-2,000 baht a month. The maximum earnings was 3,500 baht a month. This was rather rare (less than 2%). Child workers residing in the village had to spend 25-50 baht per day for bus fares from home to the harbor. Few workers were given accommodations by employers, and only 35.81% of employers provided fish-sorters with drinking water while working.

#### 2.4 Health Care

From the interview, it was learned that 2/3 of these fish-sorters had never had accident from work. Accidents encountered included slip and fall, and being pricked by fish scales and fins. No cure at all was provided by employers.

### 3. Employers of Child Labor

Owners of deep-sea fishing boats and

fish-sorting business were interviewed for their opinions concerning child employment and children's rights.

### **3.1 Opinions of the Owners of Deep-sea Fishing Boats**

Deep-sea fishery requires workers with stamina, strength and endurance. Thus, male labor is preferred. It was found that adult labor was preferred to child labor because child workers were rather weak, less experienced and careless. However, child labor and adult labor were treated on the same par with respect to work assigned, wages and welfare.

It was found that child labor was not preferred because employers did not want to deal with police officers and authorities from Labor Department. Owners of these fishing boats admitted that they were not aware of the rights child labor was entitled to.

### **3.2 Opinions of the Owners of Fish-sorting Business**

75% of the employers preferred adult labor. They reasoned that adult workers were more patient and experienced and worked faster than children. However, some employers preferred child labor because young workers were active, swift and rather obedient. Fish-sorting employers treated child labor and adult labor alike with respect to work assigned, earning or welfare. Some employers paid special attention to child labor's safety and acquaintances of the opposite sex. None of these employers were aware of the rights child labor was entitled to.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Gender and Type of Work**

It was found that all deep-sea child laborers were male while all fish-sorting child laborers were female. Apparently, sex segregation is in operation for these two types of work. Fish-sorting requires no special skills nor physical strength. It is not a risky undertaking and seems suitable for females. Deep-sea fishing, on the other hand, is a risky work which demands strength and practical fishing skills. Males are thus more eligible.

However, no matter what type of work they are engaged in, these child laborers should be well taken care of by foremen and business owners alike.

### **2. Age and Educational Attainment of Child Labor, and Labor Law**

It was found that deep-sea child laborers were between 12 and 17 years of age; 18% of whom were under 15. Fish-sorting child laborers were between 10 and 17 years of age; 39% of whom were under 15. This employment is against Labor Protection Act (1998), Article 44, which prohibits employment of children under 15; and also against the ILO's Convention 138, which restricts the minimum working age at 15. In addition, the Convention 138 specifies that children are allowed to get access to employment when they are beyond the required age of compulsory education. However, in this present research it was found that 64% of deep-sea child workers and 5% of fish-sorting child workers did not complete the required schooling at all.

The Ministerial Order No. 10 (1998) in accordance with item 4 of Labor Protection Act (1998) prohibits employment of a child under 16 for marine work; provided that the child is over 15 and his parent or guardian is also working on the same boat, or that his parent or guardian has given a written consent, employment is allowed. It should be noted that violation of labor law is pervasive in fishing business. Almost half of the deep-sea fishing child laborers were Cambodians or Burmese. Most of them were not registered labor.

As mentioned above, 39% of fish-sorting child workers were under 15 years of age. These fish-sorters were supplied by labor agents. Because the owners of fishing business did not treat these fish-sorters as their permanent employees, they did not feel obliged to comply with labor law.

### **3. Working and Living Conditions**

Deep-sea fishing child laborers worked at night while fish-sorting child laborers had to work both day and night. Usually fish-sorters started work after midnight because fishing boats



came ashore at midnight. This practice is against Labor Protection Act (1998), Article 47, which prohibits children under 18 to work from 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. By Article 46, it is required that child workers be entitled to 1-hour break after having worked for 4 hours. In reality, these children are not entitled to any rest.

Besides having to work at night, fish-sorters had to endure the horrid smell of the fish. Having no alternative, they had to endure all work conditions including health hazards. Their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development. These children are deprived of the simple joys of childhood, relegated instead to a life of drudgery.

#### **4. Earnings and Welfare**

Deep-sea fishing laborers and fish-sorting laborers earned approximately 1,000-2,000 baht a month. While fishing laborers were provided with 3 free meals a day on board, fish-sorters had to buy their own meals, spend 15-20 baht a day for commuting, and 2 baht for each time they used the restroom. Thus, fishing laborers had more savings than fish-sorters. In addition, fishing laborers would receive a nice sum of money after working with their employers for a year. Fish-sorters, however, were allowed to take home 1-3 kilograms of fish each time they came to work. The fish would be sold by some to people in their villages.

Obviously, these child laborers earned very little but had to risk their lives working in the sea, toiling the whole night, or being in health-threatening environments, especially among horrid and decayed marine animals.

#### **5. Health Care**

It was found that none of the deep-sea fishing laborers were ill in the previous year. A few of them had accidents while working. Some were apparently drunk and were smokers. Drinking may induce these young workers to visit brothels where they would risk their lives getting AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases, and smoking could easily lead them to drug addiction.

Some fish-sorting laborers suffered from headaches after working for long hours amid the stench of fish. Some workers developed ulcer. Water seeping through torn rubber gloves and boots bit the workers' hands and feet and made them rot.

Employers often provided household remedies for minor illness treatment. If illness was severe, deep-sea fishing workers would be rushed to hospital. In contrast, fish-sorting workers received no welfare from their employers. They had to take care of their own health and medical bills. However, no life or accident insurance was provided for these two groups of labor.

#### **6. Opinions about Child Employment**

Most employers claimed that they preferred adult labor because adults were more efficient than children. Besides, they did not have to deal with police officers and labor authorities if they did not hire child labor.

Adult workers sometimes brought along their children or relatives to work on fishing boats and employers unwillingly had to hire them. Fish-sorting labor, on the other hand, was supplied by agents living in the village. Usually, acquaintances of the agents were recruited. Unaware of Labor Protection Law, these agents also supplied child labor. Because employers and employees were not legally bound, employers tended to ignore or overlook Labor Protection Law.

#### **Suggestions**

##### **1. Suggestions for entrepreneurs**

Owners of fish-sorting business and fishing boats, as well as those in the Pattani Fishery Association should be familiar with children's rights and Labor Protection Act (1998), and should:

1.1 Employ only children over 15 and those finishing compulsory education

1.2 Not assign children to work from midnight to six a.m. After 4 consecutive hours, children should have one hour break.

1.3 Legally register their laborers so that they would be able to get access to social welfare provided by the State.

1.4 Provide healthy and safe work environment: The harbor compound should be clean, smell-free and not slippery.

1.5 Provide conveniences for laborers: accommodations while waiting for the boats to harbor, restrooms for workers, and first-aids kits for workers at the harbor

## 2. Suggestions for government and private sector agencies

Government agencies such as Provincial Office of Labor, Office of Public Health, Police Station, Office of Non-formal Education, and other NGOs should:

2.1 Encourage and supervise fishery entrepreneurs to strictly comply with Labor Protection and Social Security Laws.

2.2 Organize training on work hazards prevention, health care, dangers and effects of drugs, and prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases for child workers.

2.3 Provide non-formal education, occupational training and occupational skills development for child laborers as well as Thai language teaching for foreign laborers.

2.4 Organize forums for owners of fishing boats and fish-sorting business, representatives of fishery association to discuss their problems and solutions.

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