

Abstract

The objective of the research “From Forced to Wage Labour in Thailand” is to study the origin, evolution and change of the serfdom and slavery to a wage system in Thailand. This is a qualitative study based on an analysis of documents, evidence and historical information on labor, involving a conceptual and systematic approach to data collection in all aspects. The findings are presented in an analytical form of description as follows:

The findings are processed through a conceptual framework of the study, showing proof of change against the background of the serfdom and slavery in Thai society that historically went back to its ancient kingdom. Each period might see some differences in terms of the control of workforce. The serfdom and slavery underwent a series of changes in the course of time and in the presence of a more universal civilization that influenced the way of life of the people. The change was gradual and was not marked by violence as seen in Western society that resulted in loss of life of the people. Political circumstances, economic and social prosperity, and arrival of imperialism were factors that helped to prepare people in the society to embrace impending changes. Such evolution and pressures lent force to the change from the forced labor system relying on serfs and slaves to the wage system based on payments as practiced today.

The study suggests that a historical study of labor is an important matter leading to an understanding of the past as guidelines for planning for future targets. The findings recommend that Thailand should attach importance to manpower planning and wage administration because these two aspects are essential to national security. Moreover wages are also vital to the employment system and the subsistence of workers. In fact, employers want to pay low wages. Sometimes, some types of workers have no opportunity to learn about information on work equality and equity for various reasons. These reasons include little education, and illegal entry of migrant workers from certain countries. Whatever the reasons may be, the government should pay more

attention to the problems of unfair wage payment in Thai society and ensure fair treatment to every worker in the wage system.