

The Political Economy of Human Trafficking and Human Insecurity in Asia: The Case of Japan, Thailand and India

Authors : Mohammed Bashir Uddin

Abstract : Human trafficking remains as a persistent problem in many parts of the world. It is considered by many countries as an issue of a threat to national security. Border enforcement to prevent trafficking has been the main incentive, which eventually causes human insecurity for vulnerable people, especially for women. This research argues that focus needs to be placed on the political economy of trafficking, hence on the supply and demand sides of trafficking from a broader socio-economic perspective. Trafficking is a global phenomenon with its contemporary origins in the international capitalist market system. This research investigates particularly the supply-demand nexus on the backdrop of globalization and its impact on human security. It argues that the nexus varies across the countries, particularly the demand side. While prostitution has been the sole focus of the demand side in all countries in Asia, the paper argues that organ trade, bonded labor, cheap and exploitable labor through false recruitment (male trafficking) and adoption are some of the rising demands that explore new trends of trafficking, which could be better explained through international political economy (IPE). Following a qualitative research method, the paper argues that although demands vary in destination countries, they are the byproducts of IPE which have different socio-economic impacts both on trafficked individuals and the states.

Keywords : globalization, human security, human trafficking, political economy

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