

Abstract

This dissertation is a study of subcontracting practices in the province of Khon Kaen in which fishing net factories employ villagers to repair nets. It describes the pattern of agents-subcontractors relationships and its implications on patterns of social relationships in the subcontractors' village.

The data presented were collected from Khok-Koo (pseudonym) village where subcontracted net repairing from net industrial factory in Khon Kaen province has been undertaken in the past 22 years. Anthropological field methods, especially participation observation and informal interviews, were used. Quantitative data were also collected through the use of questionnaires.

The outcome of the study is as follows:

1. Subcontracting for net repairing had specific characteristics that do not lead to the formation of subcontractors as a new group of industrial workers with specific economic and social relations. The subcontractors still maintain strong ties their kins and neighbour in their village community.

2. Subcontracting strongly promote social relationships within the village. The subcontractors receive cash income every two weeks and use it for their household consumption and children education, helping their closely-related kinsmen by lending their money without interest, accepting mortgaged farmland, making merits, and supporting village activities or household ceremonies. Because of the nature of net repairing activity, subcontractors are able to share their time with household chores and other forms of social interaction, especially helping their closely-related kinsmen and cooperate with each other for communal activities. At the same time, there are some interesting trends emerging: women who are subcontractors are better recognized as principal cash earners of the household (moneymakers) and able to play the role of decision-makers. Besides, their household chores and village activities were accordingly planned as to fit in with the subcontracting. Incomes subcontracting make it possible for daughters to be less dependent to their parents. Finally, higher education for children supported by subcontracting income may lead to social differentiation in the long run.