

**THE ROLE OF TRADE UNION IN VIETNAM IN PROTECTING  
WORKERS' RIGHTS**

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M.A. (HUMAN RIGHTS)

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**ABSTRACT**

This research identifies the role of Vietnam Trade Unions in protecting workers' rights, especially for those who are working in the private sector. The thesis analyzes Trade Union workers' rights in the context of economic globalization. The study used a qualitative methodology of in-depth interviews of two targeted groups: union officials and workers, alongside some textual analysis and non-participatory observation methodology. The fieldwork was mostly conducted in Hanoi.

Major findings are that although workers' rights are affirmed in the laws and policies of Vietnam, and Vietnamese Trade Unions are considered to be an important actor in protecting workers' rights under international labor standards, such commitments have been under implemented in practice, especially in private sectors where violations are more prevalent. Policies of the State to encourage the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of Transnational Corporations (TNCs) in Vietnam have not made much progress in terms of promoting workers' rights, despite the increasing amount of FDI. The thesis details threats to workers rights: uncertain job security; an increasing division in the workforce evidenced in widening gaps between highly skilled workers and low skilled workers; low wages not increasing at the same rate as the rapid rising price index in urban areas; poor housing; overloaded working hours in poor working conditions; limited or weak collective agreements; obstacles to the right strike; weak enforcement of labor laws; weak monitoring of labor inspectors; poor professional capacity of the labour officials; and finally corruption, which is a serious problems in Vietnam are a major causes of human rights of the Vietnamese workers in private sector.

Protecting workers' rights, especially rights of the workers in the private sector is the major task of Vietnam Trade Union in the context of a globalized Vietnam. The Vietnamese Trade Union's response to the shift of workforce in Vietnam from public sector to private sectors, and Vietnam's economic integration should be to maintain international labor standards. However, the role of Vietnam Trade Union at all levels in response to workers' rights, especially in private sectors remains weak in terms of both limited representation and ineffective activities.

**KEY WORDS:** VIETNAMESE TRADE UNION / WORKERS' RIGHTS/  
ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION / VIETNAM PRIVATE SECTOR/  
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