

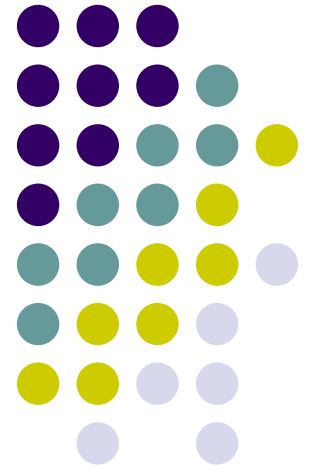


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**LICADHO**

CAMBODIAN LEAGUE FOR THE PROMOTION  
AND DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

# Women's Rights in Cambodia 2004



# Hurdles to Cambodian Women's Rights



- Implementation of CEDAW treaty obligations—  
Equality before the law.
- Violence against women—Domestic violence, rape,  
acid attacks.
- Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- Economic empowerment—employment and  
economic discrimination.

# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)



- Despite ratification in 1992 and verbal commitments, implementation remains scant.
- Grassroots NGOs have banded together to encourage a stronger commitment to women's rights. Goals include:
  - Reforming current legislation on domestic violence and trafficking.
  - Encouraging greater access to courts (i.e., legal justice rather than monetary compensation, reducing the costs of legal action).

# Obstacles to Women's Equality before the Law



- The judicial system is plagued by corruption and low professional standards.
- Key legal protections have yet to be passed.
- Existing laws are not effectively implemented and enforced.
- Women remain vulnerable in contractual affairs and title ownership.
- Women are unaware of their legal rights.

# Violence against Women— Domestic Violence



- Current law applies only to legally married couples.
- Shame, social pressure, and ineffective legal proceedings make reporting unappealing.
- There is an urgent need for counselors and shelters to assist victims, particularly rural women.



# Violence against Women— Rape



- Reporting of rape is low due to shame, fear, and out of court settlements. Reasons include:
  - Loss of virginity being regarded as the only evidence of rape.
  - Mistrust of the legal system
  - Prohibitive legal costs (including medical expenses and bribes)
- 60-70% of cases are settled out of court—leading to a culture of impunity for rape.

# Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation



- Police and other officials are deeply enmeshed in the trade.
- Traffickers can escape punishment through corrupt channels and intimidation.
- Ethnic Vietnamese victims face arrest and deportation.
- HIV/AIDS remains prevalent among Cambodian sex workers.

# Economic Obstacles to Women's Rights

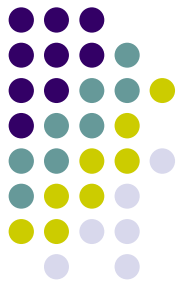


- More than 50% of rural women are illiterate.
  - Domestic violence and lack of education go hand in hand.
- Women earn 30% less than men for commensurate work.
  - Low wages push women to take second jobs as sex workers.
- Pregnancy-based discrimination remains rife.
- Rural women, especially widows, have tenuous land rights.





# Goals of LICADHO's Women's Rights Work



## Active Empowerment

- Freedom to attend schools.
- Freedom to receive quality health care.
- Freedom to choose a job.
- Freedom to choose a partner.

## Passive Empowerment

- Freedom from fear of physical and sexual violence.
- Freedom from discrimination and subservience.



The End

LICADHO, June 2004