



# **THE NEW PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION**

**Study of the new practices of Prostitution after actions  
conducted by the royal government of Cambodia for  
elimination of the prostitution**

**In Phnom Penh**

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June 2005**

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is the sale of sexual services for money or other kinds of return, generally indiscriminately with many persons. A person selling sexual favors is a prostitute, a type of sex worker.

Prostitution is one consequence of sexual trafficking. Cambodia has been identified as a sending, receiving and transit country for human trafficking. At least 1,200 young women have been sold into the sex industry each year and about 20,000 victimized women and children have been forced to provide sexual services<sup>1</sup>. After actions by the government during the last few years, prostitution practices have been changed from being operating openly in brothel to more hidden locations.

### 1.1- Goal

The research is aimed to find out the new prostitution practice in Cambodia after actions conducted by the royal government of Cambodia for elimination of the prostitution.

### 1.2- Main Strategy

The main strategy of this research is interviewing those who are related to this issue such as prostitutes, beer promotion girls, massage girls, karaoke girls, hotel and guest house staffs, prostitution organizers and others.

This research was conducted during 12 days in Phnom Penh in many places like: Beer Gardens, Nightclubs, Snooker clubs, Massage Salons, Karaoke parlors, barbershops, Hidden Brothels and Street Prostitutions. (See the research places list attached-Appendix. 1)

## 2. FINDINGS

After researched, some information related to the new practices of prostitution was found as summarized below:

### 2.1- Beer Gardens

Beer garden is a popular place for those, adult and old man, who need the sex service recently. At first those girls are not serving sex service to the clients. They work as singer, beer promotion girl, hostess, waitress...etc. From day to day, as for their salary is too low to feed themselves, they serve sexual service for money of return.

These girls are not served sexual service openly. Customer needs to invite her join the meal or need to drink beer that she sells (for beer promotion girl). During that period of time, customers would say something to her. When the beer garden closes at around midnight, that girl will go out with customer to have sex intercourse. Generally, they go to the hotel or apartment or motel that client of prostitute commonly rents by the half or full night.

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<sup>1</sup> Said by Mr. Tuon Vicheth, Coalition Coordinator, during the debate on prostitution in Cambodia, Sunways Hotel, December 29, 2004.

These girls, singer, beer promotion girls, hostess, waitress, are have no mama-san<sup>2</sup>. So they no need to share their incomes. Difference functions of those girls subjected to difference price of the service. Below is the estimated price of service (*The price is not fixed. It may flexible according to relationship between customer and sexual service server for example permanence customers will not be charged when they become boy friends and girl friends*). The information of price here is getting by interviewing with each kind of them in their workplaces:

1- Singer: 20 \$ to 30 \$ per night.

2- Beer promotion girl, hostess, waitress: 10 \$ to 15 \$ per night.

These girls are not forced to sell their sexual service at all. They sell this service just for their more gains only, means they serve sexual service voluntarily.

## 2.2 Nightclubs

Nightclub is another place where customers can find the sexual service. Nightclub is open from 9:00 pm to over midnight. People no need to pay money for enter the nightclub even they do not buy anything such as soft drink, alcohol there. The nightclubs in Cambodia are divided into two difference styles. One is operating in classical style, where most of the clients are old people who aged around 35 years old, and another is operating in modern style, where all young people like to visit there.

There is nothing strange happened in the modern style nightclub as most of the young people are always visit there with their friends, boyfriends or girlfriends. But what we are focusing on right now is the classical style nightclub. In this kind of nightclub, many old men go there for pleasure together for finding sexual service. There is mama-san who is responsible for follow-up and monitoring those girls in that nightclub.

Each girl have to pay 1 \$ for nightclub and 1 \$ for mama-san as enter fee. When she sit in accompany with the customer she get 4 \$. The customer can have sex intercourse with her in exchange of 10 \$ per night. The act is performed in the room rented by the customer such as hotel, guest house, motel...

For this kind of prostitute, those girls are aged around 20 to 30 years of age. They first began this career by forced. Most of them are come from the provinces, poor provinces such are Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, Kamport, and Koh Kong. Most of their first came to Phnom Penh was swindled to work in the garment factories, but shortly after they arrived Phnom Penh, they was sole to the brothel owner and was forced to serve sexual service. From that time onward, they become prostitute and move from place to place every half or a year according to real situation of business.

## 2.3 Snooker Clubs

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<sup>2</sup> Organizer of prostitution are typically known as pimps (if male), madams (if female), and mama-sans (if female and Asian people).

There are many snooker clubs in Phnom Penh, the researching were done in the three snooker clubs. Snooker clubs are operates from 8 in the morning to 12 at night. The activity in this kind of entertainment place is a beautiful girl will accompany the customers during their playing.

Snooker club employs beautiful girls to responsible for snooker table service provider. Those girls are receive only 40\$ per month for their services. Therefore their living is depended on tips from the customers. The tips are ranged from 1\$ to 10\$. Most of them are not serve sexual service generally to the clients, but serve only to individual<sup>3</sup> who are always tips her with big amount of money. While she has sex intercourse with her clients, she always got more tip for her service from the client like 20\$ or 30\$ per night. The client can rend the room where reserved in the club for massage service which coast 10\$ per night in the same building.

This kind of girl is serving sexual service voluntarily. No one force them to do that, but they do it because for money. Most of them are aged from 18 to 25 years old.

#### **2.4 Massages Salons**

Massages salons is announce publicly to open from 8 the morning and close at 12 the night, but in exact, it is operate from 2 or 3 the afternoon to 2 or 3 the morning. There are about 60 massages girl in a club. Those girl are sitting in a glass room with the number sticks on her white thinly robe. The clients sit in front of the glass window and choose the massages girl. The clients need to pay the massages club 4 \$ per hour for massages service.

The service is served in a room for each client. While providing massages service, that girl tried to touch any where on the client's body to create sexual feeling. She will warmly welcome the client when he needs sexual service. The service fee is 20\$ or 30\$ according to agreement between massages girl and client.

For this income, if the massages girl did not has sex intercourse with the clients, she will get half of the massages service fee which equal 2 \$ per hour. However, incase she served sex service to client, all the massages service, 4 \$ will become club's money and she will get all her sex service fee from the client.

Most of the massages girls are come from the brothel. They are first sole to the brothel and served sexual service there. Than she comes to massages salon by a pimp, means they are force to serve sexual service at the first time and voluntarily serving after they become a prostitute. That pimp is hired by massages owner to find beautiful girl to work as massage girls in exchange for commission fee. Generally that pimp gets commission fee both, from massages owner 5\$ and prostitute 5\$ more.

#### **2.5 Karaoke Parlors**

Karaoke is a most popular place for both old men and youth to go for pleasure. Karaoke in Phnom Penh generally are served the clients include room (Parlor), karaoke operator and

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<sup>3</sup> The individual here is refer to the permanence client.

singer<sup>4</sup>. The karaoke charge only for karaoke parlor and drinks, but the girls who are sitting with the clients are generally get tips from their clients in amount of 1\$ to 5\$ for her sitting and singing.

Those girls are not forced to serve sexual services, but she serves voluntarily in purpose of getting money in exchange. It means that, it is not all the girls in karaoke parlors are serve sexual service but some serve and other no.

The service fee of that girl is not limited, but it depends on the agreement between a girl and her client during their singing in the room. It is generally 10\$ or 20\$. However, we could notice that the Karaoke owner is support prostitution by reserved rooms to rend for clients who are needs. The room rental fee is 5\$ per hour and 10\$ per three hour.

## 2.6 Barbershops

Barbershops are not considered as brothel where people could find sexual service before. However, there are some barbershops where serve the sexual service. All hair-cutters in the barbershop are female and most of them are Vietnamese. The hair cut service is coasts 5\$ for one person and the sexual service is 10\$ for a moment of service included room rental fee.

Generally, when the client enters barbershop, the hair-cutter immediately welcomed warmly and provides haircut service. After finish hair-cutter, she massages for client and during this time she would asks the client whether he exhausted. "If so, I will give you a very good massages service in only 10\$" hair-cutter said. *Massages service* in the barbershop means *Sex Intercourse*.

## 2.7 Hidden Brothels

Even though royal government of Cambodia is intervening on elimination of prostitution in Cambodia, we still could find many brothels in some places of Phnom Penh city where action of prostitution still happen. Those brothels are now operation in the house with no prostitutes sit and call for clients like before, but just in a quiet house. There is only a man (pimp) in that house to welcome the clients. Immediately after welcome the guest, he, the pimp takes on his motor bike to carry girls who are kept out side to come that house for clients as needed.

This service caused the price of sexual service become doubled. It coast 5\$ for a moment of sexual intercourse service while it was only 2.5\$ for the same service in the past.

According to the sharing of interest with the pimp, those prostitutes are required to share half of their gains to the pimp in exchange to service of carrying her for clients and room rental fee.

## 2.8 Street Prostitutions

Street prostitution is prostitute solicits customers while waiting at the street corner or walking a long side a street.

Street prostitution has been existing long time in Cambodia, yet it still not eliminate even declared and actions to stop by the royal government of Cambodia. There are three main

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<sup>4</sup> Singer in Karaoke parlor is girls who are sitting in accompany with guests. She allows both sing with the guests and touching her body by guest.

locations of the street prostitution in Phnom Penh city. These three places are operating their business in the same procedure.

Street prostitution recently is exist with many girls stand along the street and leaded by a man called pimp. Up on the car or motor bike of the clients arrived at their standing place, that man runs to the car or motor bike and ask whether how many girls would the clients need. When the customers told the number of girls they need, the man will call the all girls who are standing near the corner of the street to come and stand in front of customers to let them make their choice.

The clients need to pay the money to the pimp before talking girls away. The price of the service is 15\$ per night incase clients come before midnight and only 10\$ per night if clients come late at night or after midnight. The girl must share to that man (pimp) 3\$ per a customer even she get 10\$ or 15\$.

Street prostitution also comes from brothel. They are same as massages girls that are forced sexual service.

### 3. OTHERS

These actions of prostitution are not only practiced in Phnom Penh, but also in others provinces, said of the hotel staffs, guest house staffs and prostitutes. According to answer from interviewing with 6 prostitutes in difference brothels in Phnom Penh, 4 of them just move from brothels in the provinces for nearly a month. Moreover, few staffs in difference hotels also said that they also move from working in the hotel in the province too. While they were working there, they always call to prostitute for the customers when they need and those staff were shared gains with the girls amount 2\$ for a calling. This service called call-girl prostitution or out-call prostitution.

Call-girl prostitution or out-call prostitution is prostitution which customer can call the agency to carry the prostitute to his place like hotel, guest house... etc<sup>5</sup>.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Actions of prostitution in Cambodia recently, has altered to more practice as a result of actions or interventions taken by the government with the contribution and support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. These actions of prostitution, for instance, have altered from brothels into massage salons, karaoke parlors or restaurants, beer gardens, nightclubs... which are difficult to follow-up and monitoring.

Among the interviewed girls, most of them were forced to be prostitutes at the first time and the rest were become prostitute voluntarily. For those who were forced to be prostitutes at the first time, most of them are not intend to change their career as they feel that they are used to the modern life and could not return back to do the farm in their home countries. They need

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<sup>5</sup> Prostitution - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, page 2 of 9.

to live in the city. Even though they have chance to change occupation, working in the city is their main purpose.

Meanwhile, those who are voluntarily to prostitutes are not intend change their working type as it can make a lot money in a short period of time.



### Appendix 1

List of the places where the research was conducted

1. **Beer garden:** 4 places
  - Yang Goo Restaurant & Beer Garden
  - Suon Bopha Restaurant & Beer Garden
  - Reatrei Rik Reay Beer Garden and
  - Sabay Reatrei Beer Garden
  
2. **Nightclub:** 4 places
  - Chaktomuk Restaurant & Nightclub
  - Moharsal Nightclub
  - Pacific Kiss Music Restaurant and
  - Hawaii Music Restaurant
  
3. **Snooker club:** 3 places
  - Paris snooker club
  - China Nanjing snooker club
  - Hong Kong Snooker club
  
4. **Massages salon:** 2 places
  - Paris massages salon
  - Sok San Massage salon
  
5. **Karaoke club:** 4 places
  - Highway Karaoke
  - Kim Sun Light Karaoke
  - Phnom luer Phnom Karaoke and
  - XO karaoke club
  
6. **Barbershop:** 2 places-Around Central Market
  
  
7. **Hidden Brothel:** 2 locations
  - Wat Koh: 3 places
  - Phsar Toach: 3 places
  
8. **Street Prostitution:** 3 locations-6 people
  - Trasak Paem Street: 2 people
  - Near Chook Tip Restaurant: 2 people and
  - Along the riverbank: 2 people

**Appendix 2**  
Service, Gains and Situation board

<b>Kind of Places</b>	<b>Service Serving</b>	<b>Gains/night (Average)</b>	<b>Gains Sharing (%)</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>Other</b>
Beer Garden	Generally	15 \$	No	Voluntarily	
Nightclub	Generally	12 \$	33%	Force	
Snooker club	Individually	25 \$	No	Voluntarily	
Massages salon	Generally	25 \$	18%	Force	
Karaoke parlor	Individually	15 \$	No	Voluntarily	
Barbershop	Generally	10 \$	No information	No Information	A moment only
Hidden Brothel	Generally	5 \$	50%	Force	
Street prostitution	Generally	12.5 \$	24%	Force	

## PUBLICATIONS

- 001 *Project Document (English and Khmer)*
- 002 *Project Document: Appendix Activities Program 2003- 2004 (English + Khmer)*
- 003 *Draft Minimum Standards for Shelters, 2003 by Sim Souyoung: One-year Shelter Group Discussions during 2002, compiled in one report as draft recommendations (English and Khmer).*
- 004 *Exchange Visits Child Rehabilitation Centres, 2003 by Amanda McLoughlin: visits to 13 child rehabilitation centers (English and Khmer)*
- 005 *Minimum Standards for Residential Child Care, 2003 by Sim Souyoung (Khmer with English summary).*
- 006 *Sold like Chickens: Trafficked Cambodian Girls Speak Out, 2003 by Sandy Hudd (English and Khmer)*
- 007 *Training Manual Investigation for NGO Staff, 2003 by Im Vuthy (Khmer + English)*
- 008 *Lobby & Advocacy: Principles and Methods, 2003 by A. Gehrels and J. Vijghen (Khmer and English)*
- 009 *Project Document Overview: Activity Program 2004 - 2006 (English + Khmer)*
- 010 *Annual Report 2003 COSECAM*
- 011 *Child Recovery Centre – Intentions versus Realities, John Vijghen (English)*
- 012 *Tricked by the Trade – Trafficked Cambodian Girls Speak Out, May 2004 by Diane Lawrance (English and Khmer)*
- 013 *Result of Workshops in 10 Provinces on the National Plan against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation June - July 2004 (Khmer)*
- 014 *Results & Summary of Recommendations of the National Conference on Effective Strategies to Eliminate Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia 25 – 27 August 2004 (Khmer)*
- 015 *Job and Business Search for Young Women, Sept. 2004, B. Dongelmans et al.*
- 016 *Cambodian Commodity Chain Analysis Study, Volume 1: Comparative Industry Assessments, February 2005, Emerging Markets Consultants (English)*
- 017 *Cambodian Commodity Chain Analysis Study, Volume 2: Job Facilitation Program Recommendations, February 2005, Emerging Markets Consultants (English)*
- 018 *Overview Activity Program 2005, May 2005 (English and Khmer) - brochure*
- 019 *Training Needs Assessment for NGO staff, May 2005, Khun Sithon*
- 020 *Annual Report 2004 COSECAM*

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