

A Preliminary Study into the Accessibility of Pornography by Minors in Cambodia

Briefing Paper

**Child Welfare Group
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Executive Summary

In September 1999 a 7 year-old girl “Thany” was invited to play at her neighbor’s house by another girl, “Dara”. She was reluctant to go, and later it transpired that Dara’s 13-year-old brother had raped Thany on at least three occasions prior to this incident. With urging from her mother, Thany went with Dara to play. After playing for a while, Dara suggested they go to the pond to wash, and when they finished washing, Thany rushed to go home, but Dara called to her brother that Thany was getting away. The brother came and caught Thany, covered her mouth and dragged her to some near by palm trees, then told Dara to go and get a mat and three kramas (scarves). Then the boy called over two of his friends, aged 12 and 13. Once Dara laid out the mat, the three boys forced Thany to lie down on it and tied a scarf around her mouth, then tied her hands to the end of a piece of wood, which they laid across her chest. They tied her legs apart, then each boy proceeded to rape her, two times each. While this was going on Dara was sitting a short distance away watching and keeping look out. The boys then took Thany to the pond and raped her two more times each. Thany was traumatized by the ordeal and suffered injuries to her genital area (...)

On investigation it was discovered the three boys had been watching pornography at a local video bar, and it appears that they copied actions they had seen on video.¹

In part because of the case study above, and others like it, research was initiated in late 2002 on the availability of pornography to minors. This decision was also influenced by an increasing concern among the NGO community that the availability of pornography had appeared to increase, particularly in Phnom Penh. The study, sponsored and assisted by the Child Welfare Group (a networking organization of over 30 children’s NGOs), was coordinated by LICADHO, Mith Samlan/Friends and Tearfund in order to collect basic statistical data on the issue. The numbers give a picture of how widespread minors’ access to pornography is, as well as an indication of the types of pornography available to minors in Cambodia. Research on the access, availability, and types of pornography to minors took place over a two-week period in December of 2002. Initial interviews with male and female minors from the Children’s Committee (a group of minors working on children’s issues) and Mith Samlan/Friends provided initial insight into the ways minors themselves view pornography and sexual behavior. Anonymous surveys of minors and observation studies of locations selling and/or showing pornography were then conducted in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Kompong Cham and Kompong Som.

¹ LICADHO *Rape and Indecent Assault: Crimes in the Community* Case 24, p.42-43, February 2001

Researchers interviewed a total of 677 minors in Phnom Penh and the 3 target provinces. Minors taking part in the survey were asked by anonymous questionnaire if they have ever viewed or purchased pornography, and if so, where they gain access to it. The results suggest that pornography is easily accessed by minors in Cambodia, as 51% of all minors surveyed indicated they have viewed pornography. The numbers increased with age, and a clear gender influence was seen, with 61.7% of boys vs. 38.5% of girls indicating they have viewed some type of pornographic material. Age and gender also influenced purchasing patterns, as older males were the most likely to have purchased pornography. Minors in Phnom Penh are more than twice as likely as their peers in Kompong Som, Siem Reap and Kompong Cham to have both seen and bought pornography. This did not surprise researchers, as access to markets and all media is more limited in the provinces. It does raise the question of whether it is a trend that is likely to spread to the provinces in the coming years, as availability increases

A total of 236 location selling and/or showing pornography were surveyed in Phnom Penh and the 3 targeted provinces, including newsstands, coffee houses, video shops, market vendors and hidden “underground” pornography businesses. The research confirmed that pornography is widely available to children. Of the observed locations, 164 locations or 69.5% had pornography available, frequently in plain sight; in Phnom Penh, 49% of locations observed had pornography openly on display, and are therefore accessible to minors. In addition, fully one-third of Phnom Penh locations selling pornography were near a school. These same newsstands also sell minors their school supplies. There is no legislation specific to selling pornography to minors, and therefore no monitoring or penalties for those who do so. And while publicly showing pornographic content is illegal, more than 30% of the minors who have seen pornography did so in the public setting of a coffee shop. Frequently the television screens face inside shops or have curtains that can cover them if the shop is inspected by authorities, however, this rarely occurs. The second most commonplace for minors to view pornography is within the home, an issue that should be addressed in regards to adult supervision and awareness of the possible affects of pornography.

The types of pornography available particularly alarmed researchers. An extremely high percentage of pornography available in Phnom Penh was violent (35% of locations observed). While statistics varied between provinces, all had high instances of violent pornography. Perhaps and even more disturbing finding is the high incidence of child pornography available. While this research project did not specifically set out to uncover this issue, observations show that as many as 15% of vendors in Phnom Penh sell or show what appears to be child pornography. Statistics in Kompong Som are even higher. As child pornography is a photographic record of child abuse, is vital to address this issue due to impact on children who take part in the production of this material, as well as the

possible normalizing effect the videos might have on minors and adults who may view them as legitimising the sexual abuse of children.

Researchers found that magazines containing soft pornography seem to be preferred by female minors, while male minors tend to chose pornographic videos. Hard pornography showing scenes of coercion, rape, bestiality and male dominance are often found on these videos.

It is importance to stated that no evidence exists which fully proves that watching pornography has a negative impact on sexual behavior. However, studies on social learning and the impact of the media in general indicate that everyone, but particularly minors, are influenced by information they receive from the media. In Cambodia, minors looking for answers regarding sexual behavior have very few places to turn, as sex remains a culturally taboo topic. There is limited sex education or conversation about sex within families. Sex education in schools is limited or non-existent. In the absence of this, this study indicates that minors have wide access to both watch and purchase pornography, and more importantly that the pornography is often of a particularly violent and/or abusive type including depictions of rape and child pornography.

The images minors are exposed to suggest strong links between violence and sexual activity. It is important to address this in terms of what possible consequences this may have on attitudes and behavior, especially since little to no alternative sources for information exist. It is also recommended that anyone concerned with children's development should engage in a debate on limiting minors' access to pornography, on the provision of alternative sources of sex education, and with whom the responsibility lies to protect children from information that could have potentially harmful consequences.

Methodology

An advisory group comprised of various member groups of the CWG discussed various methodological concerns, as well as the design for the research. Informal group discussions with minors in Phnom Penh sought to ascertain a preliminary understanding of young people's knowledge and attitudes towards pornography, which informed the development of the data collection tools. The findings from the group discussions are included in the analysis of the quantitative data presented below where relevant.

The study used the following definitions to describe different categories of pornography:

Pornography – Any form of communication that portrays sexual behavior in a manner that only intends to cause sexual excitement²

Hard pornography – Visual depiction³ of nude figures performing explicit sexual acts in order to cause sexual excitement, including or combined with violence, masochism, sadism, rape, coercion or force⁴

Soft pornography – Visual depiction of nude/semi-nude figures in order to cause sexual excitement

Minor – Anyone under the age of 18, unless majority is attained earlier

Volunteer researchers were trained and tested and administered an anonymous questionnaire to minors as well as conducted observational studies of vendors in the 4 research locations. Researchers also received training in reducing the influence of the researcher on the subject. For ethical reasons, the minors were not asked directly what type or types of pornography they have viewed or purchased. The researchers' main task was ensuring the minors were comfortable with the research topic, and that they did not feel coerced into providing specific answers. Knowing that it is impossible to eradicate the effect of the researcher, and allowing for social and cultural associations regarding pornography, it is believed that the findings provide a reasonable indication of the accessibility of pornography to minors.

² Advertisements, although often perceived as containing a sexual message in terms of poses, clothing or wording, is not included in this study, as sexual excitement is not the sole purposes of advertising.

³ While books and magazines can contain verbal pornography, it was decided for the purpose of this project only to consider visual images as hard pornography. Explicit in this context should mean graphic, detailed and direct images, particularly with regard to showing full genitals and full sex acts.

⁹ It should be noted that the type of pornography was determined by the illustration on the cover rather than on the contents, as only samples of the different types of pornography have been viewed by the researchers. This is particularly important with regard to homosexual content, as this is often included in the category of group sex pornography and soft pornography. This is also important regarding child pornography as some movie and magazine covers may show people over the age of 18 dressed to look younger.

Questionnaire Survey

The sample of minors included 677 boys and girls aged 11-17 from both rural and urban areas (Phnom Penh and the 3 target provinces), and included currently attending school and those who were not. The questionnaire was designed to be simple and easy to understand, using simple drawings as answer-options in order to avoid misunderstandings about meaning and definitions of pornography and to allow participation of children with limited literacy skills. Minors participating in the study were assured their answers would remain anonymous. This was vital to receive honest answers to questions, particularly because the subject matter is so personal in nature, and to overcome any social and cultural stigmas associated with knowledge of pornography.

Observation Study

The sample of vendors included a total of 236 locations including 81 newsstands, 68 coffee houses, 27 video shops, 38 underground businesses and 22 market vendors. Most observations were made in Phnom Penh (133) and the sample sizes in the other 3 provinces are so small (13 at the most) as to be statistically inconclusive. Because of this provincial findings are best considered anecdotal; to determine a more comprehensive view more observations should take place in the provinces.

When pornographic material was found in one of the observed locations researchers identified the type of content based on the cover illustration of the movies or magazines. Researchers also used the following definitions to identify different types of pornography found in the locations observed:

Soft Pornography – Non-explicit depiction of nude or semi-nude people in a sexual manner

Homosexual Pornography – Depiction sexual acts between people of the same gender⁵

Group Pornography – Depiction of sexual acts that include three or more people

Violent Pornography – Depiction of sadistic or masochistic acts (including beating, whipping or other forms of violence) or rape (forced or coerced sex)

Bestiality – Depiction of sexual acts with animals

Child Pornography – Depiction of sexual acts with or by any person below the age of 18 years old⁶

⁵ This type of pornography is often a part of soft as well as group sex pornography.

⁶ The actual age of a child cannot always be established from the video itself. If participants are dressed or advertised as minors, the pornography is included in the child sex category.

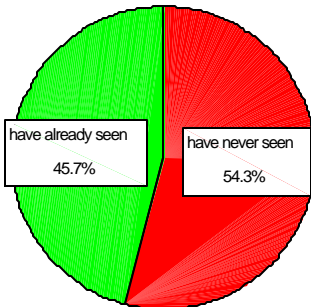
It should be noted that simple observation of video or magazine cannot accurately identify the content, and sometimes the covers are misleading or purposely misrepresent the content in order to entice the buyer. However because time and resources did not permit the actual viewing of all the titles observed, this approach provides at least an indication of the way pornography is marketed towards certain interests as well as the possible content

Questionnaire Findings

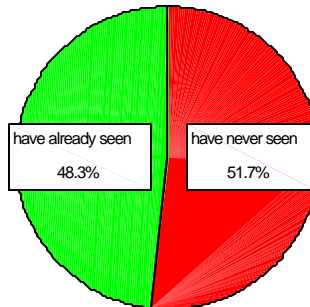
Children Who Have Viewed Pornography

By age and gender

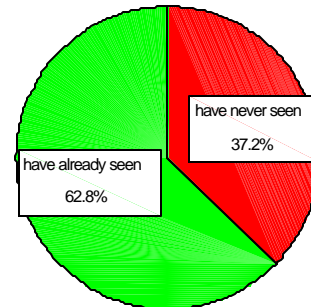
The youngest (11 to 13 years old)



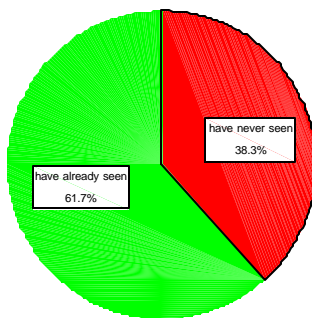
From 14 to 16 years old



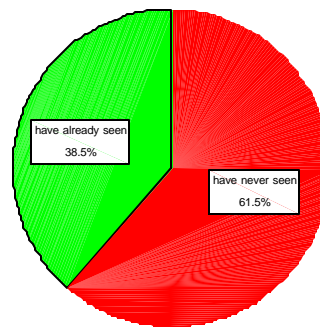
The oldest (17 years old)



Male



Female



The results clearly show an increase in the percentage of minors viewing pornography as they get older. As the pie chart indicates, 46% of minors between 11-13 year old had viewed pornography, while 48% of minors between 14-16 and 63% of 17 year olds had viewed pornography. The figures also showed an expected higher rate of males who have seen pornography (62%) than females (39%).

These findings corresponded with the preliminary group discussions. The first interview group maintained that boys are much more likely than girls to watch

pornography. All the boys in the second interview group mentioned an increase in the amount of pornography in the past five years. This could be due to their age, as they might not have been aware of pornography prior to adolescence. When asked how it made them feel to watch pornographic films, girls from the preliminary interview they say they initially get excited/aroused, but afterwards they realize that what takes place in the film is “bad for the girl.” All agreed that most men want to imitate what they see in the films, and some women do to. These comments correlate with the case study from LICADHO mentioned above, in which 3 boys claimed they copied what they had seen in a pornographic video by raping a young girl. Boys participating in the group discussions openly admitted that pornography entices them to carry out the sexual actions they have observed, and that many of these actions tend towards violence in nature.

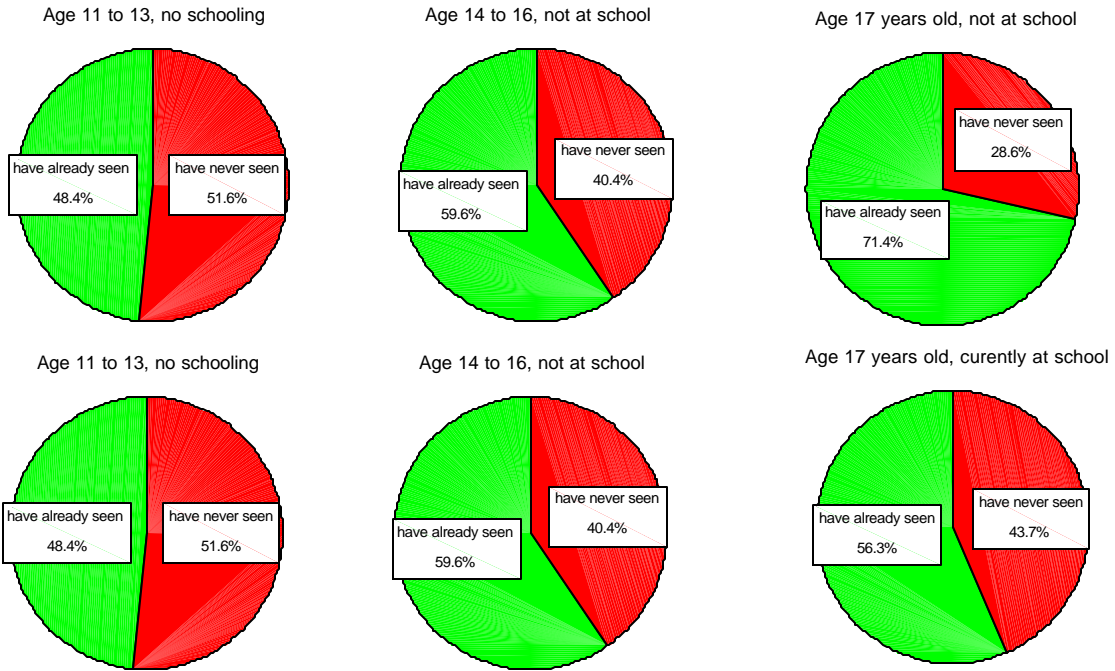
The boys from one interview group said that they enjoyed watching violence, and that most men do. When asked how it makes them feel, one boy replied, “We want to do what we see.” They are quick to say that they do not hurt women, but will use strong language and raise their voices to prostitutes after watching these films. They also said that they are sure that “Watching violent pornography makes men violent towards women and causes them to rape.” They are very relaxed about this, and do not seem to find anything wrong with violent pornography or even the consequences.

When asked about whether the boys think it is right to treat women the way they see in films, they all said that the “Women enjoy being hit, they want it and it heightens the women’s sexual pleasure.” They did not respond when asked if they think this is merely what the films want them to believe.⁷

Although this information must be taken as anecdotal, the fact that they talk openly about wanting to do what they see, and seem to have very few concerns about this type of negative sexual behavior, may be an indication of a desensitizing effect pornography and violent images have on attitudes and perceptions. It is also an illustration of the fact that minors use pornography as a means to obtain information about sex, an important fact when considering that this may be the only source for information for many young people.

⁷ Ibid.

By school status

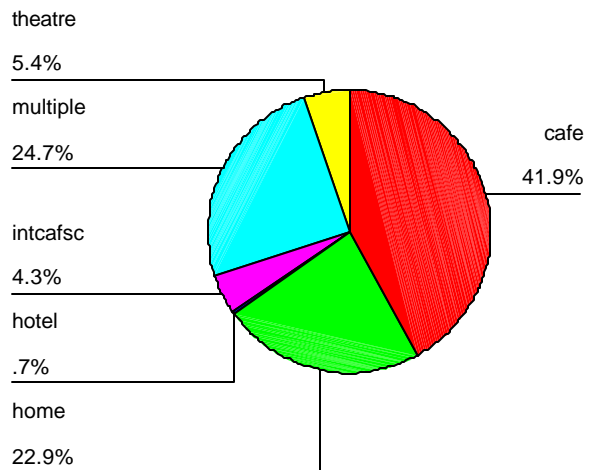


Surprisingly, the findings indicate that minors out of school are more likely to have viewed pornography than those in school. This may be due to the fact that out-of-school children (particularly the street children included in the sample) may be more likely to work and have the money and time available to do so. Street children in Phom Penh who participated in preliminary group discussions indicated they regularly watch pornography in coffee shops in the evenings, because “there is nothing else to do.”

By location

The two main locations for viewing pornography are coffee shops and at home. Indeed, among those who provided multiple answers, 85% mentioned coffee shops as one of those locations. Consequently, coffee shops account for 60% of the places where minors see pornography, with home being the second most common location.

locations for seeing pornography

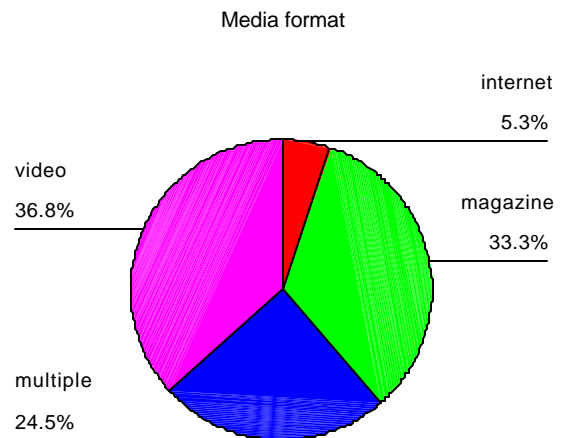


Boys from the second interview group agreed that the most likely place to watch pornography is in coffee shops, although they also mentioned hotels/guesthouses. Some coffee shops show pornography throughout the day. According to the interviewees, the customers are all male. They do not pay to watch the films but are simply have to buy coffee for 1000-1500 riel. They say that coffee shop owners are aware that what they do is illegal, and often have two TV's to disguise their activities, one that can be seen from the street showing "normal" films, and one showing pornography. Some shops have a curtain, which they can use to quickly cover the TV if police come by, or they simply change the channel with a remote control.

There is no minimum age for entering the coffee shops. Although the boys were between 13 and 17 years old they first time they saw the films themselves, they say it isn't unusual for children as young as 5 or 6 to be seen there. The boys explained that they go to watch these films at the coffee shops every evening, as they have nothing else to do, and if they can afford it they will visit a prostitute afterwards. They added that it is not possible to watch these films without having sex or masturbating afterwards, and that it isn't uncommon for men who cannot afford a prostitute to pick up a girl off the street and rape her. These girls seem to be described as "normal" girls, often school girls who are more open about their sexuality.

By Media Format

Videos and magazines were the most common media formats used by minors who had viewed pornography (38.6% and 33.3% respectively). The majority of those ticking multiple answers also selected these formats, making them equally major sources. Discussion group participants said that it is common for boys in Phnom Penh to read pornographic magazines, while they agree that it is less likely to happen in the provinces. They said it is available in the provinces in the markets if you live in one of the bigger towns, but mainly in the form of films.



5.3% of minors who had viewed pornography indicated they had viewed computer or internet-based pornography. This figure is similar to the 4.3% who indicated they had viewed pornography at an internet café. Although low, the actual number of Cambodian minors who have viewed electronic pornography may be higher considering the sample included minors in provincial areas where

computers and internet services are expensive or not yet available. In any case, the numbers are likely to increase as information technology becomes more common and therefore accessible to minors in Cambodia. During the research it was learned that CD-ROMs and even mobile phones are being used to distribute pornographic image files in Cambodia, and some minors reported they had seen pornographic pictures on the computers at private computer schools. These findings, and the use of the internet by pedophiles in locating and luring children, raise cause for concern and warrant preventative action.

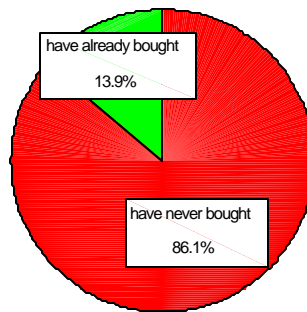
Children Who Have Purchased Pornography

By age and gender

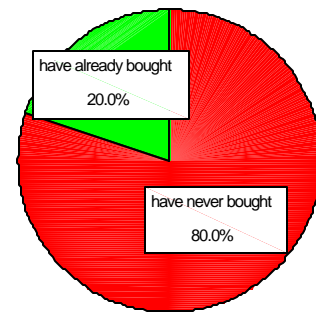
The youngest (11 to 13 years old)



From 14 to 16 years old

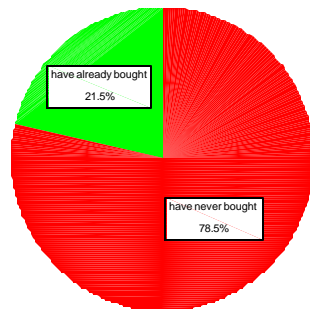


The oldest (17 years old)

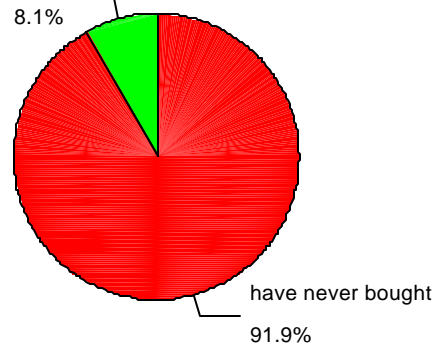


Female

Male



Female



The numbers clearly indicate that male minors are almost three times as likely to purchase pornography as female minors (21% as opposed to 8%.) The proportion of minors buying pornography material increased with age, as it did for those that had viewed it. 13.4% of 11-13 year olds had purchased pornography, while 13.9% of 14-16 year olds and 20% or 17 year olds surveyed had done so.

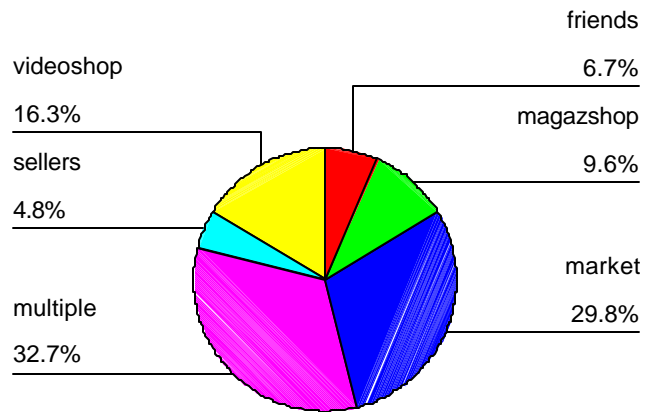
By School Attendance

School attendance appeared to have no influence on the purchase of pornography, as they did so in almost equal measure. 8% of in school minors had purchased pornography, and 7% of out of school minors had.

By Source

source for buying

Market sellers and Video/VCD shops were the most common sources of pornography for 29.8% and 16.3% of minors who had purchased them. Nearly 10% purchased from magazine sellers or newsstands, while 6.7% purchased and/or exchanged them from friends.

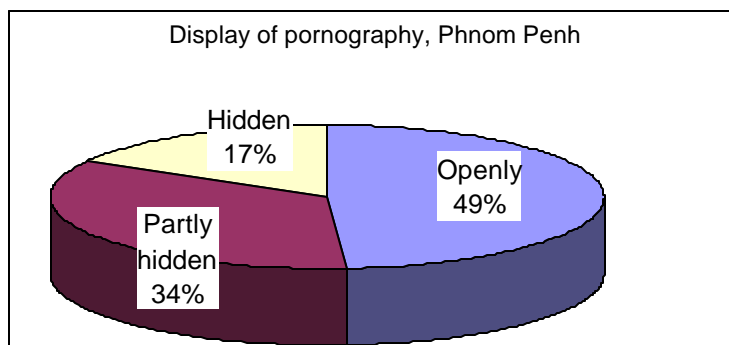


Children participating in group discussions said that the majority of minors who buy films watch them at home. They share or exchange them with their friends and, if watched together by a group, are cheaper than going to a coffee shop that shows pornography.

Observational Study Findings

Phnom Penh

65% of all locations observed in Phnom Penh either sold or showed pornography. Although observations in the city and the provinces were not taken at random and reflected the researchers' knowledge of where pornography was likely to be found, the number of locations (133 out of a total of 204) suggests that pornography is widely available in the capital many types of places. In addition, this figure refers to observations taken during the day does not reflect the activities of establishments showing pornography only at night, such as hotels and coffee shops (though some of the latter also show it during the day).



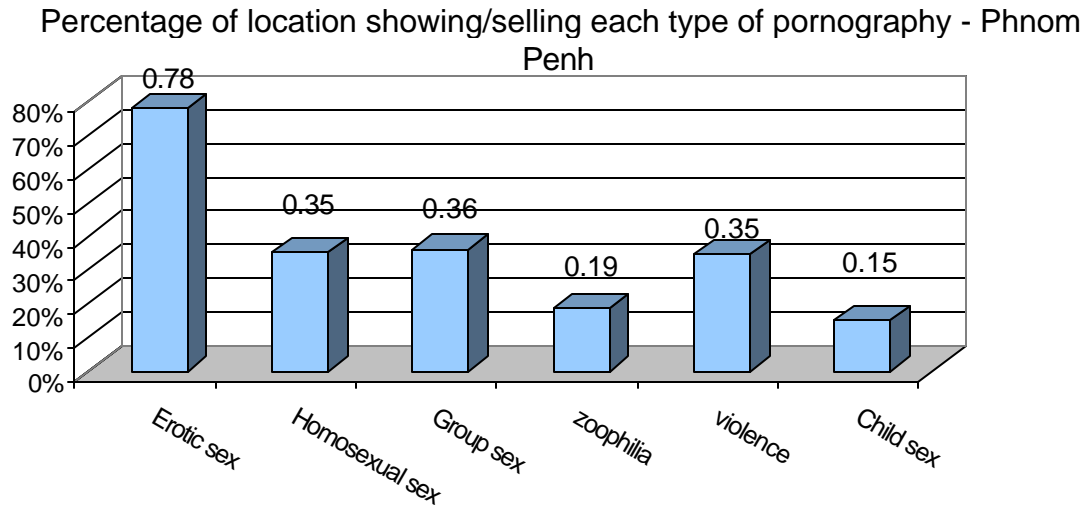
As seen in the above pie chart, 49% of locations found with pornography displayed or showed it openly, while 34% did so partially hidden. At 17% of locations, the researchers had to ask for pornography, as it was hidden from view. Market vendors often did this, and when asked for a “special movie” they will produce pornographic material contained in boxes or plastic bags. Those that display pornographic material partially hidden often do so at the back of their shops, where they can be easily found by adults and minors who are looking for them.

Disturbingly, minors were found buying, watching or browsing pornography in 47% of all the locations found selling or showing pornography. As with the provinces, the vast majority of minors observed were male, and while most were between 15 and 17 year old, minors as young as thirteen were seen in a few locations. No locations showed signs of refusing entry to minors. Some observers note that certain places appear to cater to students, based on the age of the customers.

Number of locations showing or selling pornography and their proximity to schools

	Phnom Penh	Kompong Som	Kampong Cham	Siem Reap
Total locations observed	204	13	9	10
Total selling or showing pornography	133	12	9	10
Total close to a school	44	8	0	1
Percentage close to a school	33	67	0	10

As indicated by the chart above, 33% of all locations in Phnom Penh found selling or showing pornography were in the vicinity of a school. This was particularly true of newsstands, where children purchase school materials such as notebooks and pens. Most of the magazines sold at newsstands are categorized as soft pornography, however they are displayed openly and can be seen from a distance. Some newsstands also sell VCD's, although these were only shown upon request.



As the bar graph illustrates, the majority of locations selling or showing pornography were found to have soft pornography (78%, labeled as “erotic” in the chart), with group, homosexual and violent pornography being found at approximately one-third of locations (35-36% each). Bestiality depicting women performing sexual acts with animals, was found in 24% of the locations. Most disturbingly, 15% of locations surveyed showed child pornography, some with titles such as “Child Love” and “Under 15”.⁸

Kompong Som

Pornography was found in 12 out of 13 places observed, with nine of these selling or showing both hard and soft pornography. The most common format

⁸ Some locations carry more than one type of pornography, which is reflected in the percentages adding up to more than 100%.

was VCD's, while most newsstands only carried pornographic books or magazines.

Minors were watching, buying or browsing pornography in 12 of 13 observed locations. Researchers estimated their ages as between 11 and 17 years; 75% were male.

Most coffee shops in Kompong Som show pornography, though most do so discreetly by having the screen facing inwards. Minors often frequent them. Some openly show pornography and minor watch from the door if they do not have 1000 riel to pay for a coffee. Minors were observed buying and browsing pornography in the market.

As the sample size of locations observed in Kompong Som and the other 2 provinces was too small to be statistically significant, percentages of locations selling various types of pornography cannot not be given. However, among the locations observed the most commonly found types were homosexual, group and violent pornography. As in Phnom Penh, bestiality and child pornography followed.

Kompong Cham

Pornography was found in all 9 places observed, with 5 of these selling or showing only hard pornography. Male minors averaging 15 years in age were observed at all locations. None of the locations were near a school attended by minors.

Coffee shops in Kompong Cham show pornographic movies daily. Minors are often observed accompanying adults to watch pornography. Many market vendors display their pornographic movies along side music videos and feature films, without discriminating who can access them.

By type, Kompong Cham researchers found soft pornography to be most common in the locations surveyed, followed by group and homosexual pornography. Violent and bestiality were next, while no child pornography was found. As in the other provinces surveyed, the sample is too small to be of any statistical significance, and only give an indication of what types of pornography may be found in these locations.

Siem Reap

All 10 locations observed in Siem Reap showed or sold pornography. 50% had only hard pornography, and 50% carried soft pornography. 70% carried VHS or VCD movies, however most material was displayed either partially hidden or completely hidden. Only one location observed was close to a school. Male minors between the ages of 15 and 17 were seen to be browsing, purchasing or watching pornography at all locations.

Coffee shops have regular showings of pornography at specific times of the day. Some only show the films customers bring themselves. At newsstands anyone can look through pornographic magazines in advance of purchase. They are displayed openly.

By type, researchers found homosexual and group pornography in the vast majority of the locations observed. Violent pornography and bestiality were also extremely common, with soft pornography slightly less available. Child pornography was not found in any locations.

General Notes On Accessibility, Availability And Types Of Pornography

Pornography is consistently available and accessible to minors in all locations surveyed. Furthermore, coffee shops and newsstands show and display pornography in such a way that minors can easily access it. Indeed, in Phnom Penh researchers saw minors dealing with pornography in about half of the locations observed.

While numbers varied widely for the types of pornography available in each provincial capitol, in all locations violent sex appeared frequently. Boys participating in group discussions said that while they have all seen bestiality, more than 50% of the films have violence linked to sex – being violence described as rape, hitting and treating women badly. They were also asked if all violence is male against female, and the majority agreed that violence is related to men hurting women.

Types of pornography depicting violence and abuse may normalize unhealthy sexual behaviors and reinforce negative stereotypes about sexuality. Female minors are taught that they must not want sex, and that rape is a normal way for a woman to be introduced to sex. She is supposed to submit and enjoy rape. Violent and rape pornography similarly teach male minors that sex should be initiated with violence and that his violent behavior will sexually arouse his partner. The high accessibility and availability of child pornography teaches minors that sexual abuse of children is equally acceptable.

Considering there are few other outlets for sex education these depictions of sexual stereotypes are extremely dangerous teachers. They might help to explain the prevalence of violent crime, including sexual assault and rape, among young people.

Legal Framework

While the researchers were unable to find legislation which banned the marketing of pornographic magazines, internet or computer-based media, some legal action has been taken to address the issue of videos. In addition to a 1997 directive by Prime Minister Hun Sen who ordered cable television providers to stop broadcasting pornography, several sub-decrees exist which, among other things,

provide a clear legal basis for the suppression of pornographic videos in Cambodia. The most recent of these is Sub-Decree 63, dated 4 September, 2000, on the Management and Monitoring of Video and Films and the Suppression of Video and Film Crime. In order to implement this, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MOCFA) has established Inter-Ministerial Committees for the Suppression of Video and Film Crime at the provincial level across the country. Consisting of the Ministries of Culture and Fine Arts, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Women's and Veterans Affairs, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Justice, several committees have taken action to address pornographic videos. These have included the seizure of pornographic videos and related equipment as well as the closure of coffee shops and other establishments showing pornography. While the creation and actions of the committees is commendable, the findings of this research show that pornography is a flourishing and largely unregulated industry. Representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts have stated that the implementation of legislation depends on the skill of law enforcers, and point to the difficulty of banning such hidden activities which are, in some cases, backed by high-ranking officials. While acknowledging the reality of these difficulties, concerted action should be taken to overcome them and strengthen the efforts of the committees and other responsible parties to prevent the availability and access of pornography by minors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The intent of this research project was to assess the accessibility of pornography to minors in Cambodia and, to this end, gain an initial understanding of how widespread pornography is. The findings suggest that minors have a high access to pornography and more importantly that pornography is widely available and frequently of a violent nature. The findings also indicate that minors are confronted with pornography in public settings like newsstands close to school, and in coffee shops without restrictions on entry.

Minors looking for answers about sexual behavior have very few places to turn in Cambodia. Sex remains a social taboo, infrequently discussed within families or within the education system. While some might consider pornography to be an educational tool if presented in the right manner, it is hard to imagine scenes depicting rape as normal sexual behavior, or that bestiality, child sex, and other violent, non-consensual behavior can provide healthy models for sexuality.

Throughout the research, as well as in the report, it has been emphasized that the study and its findings are not concerned with taking a moral stance against pornography. Inconclusive evidence exists about the effects of pornography, with some research suggesting there may be positive as well as negative effects. One recommendation of this report is that qualitative research be conducted in order to understand better the sexual attitudes of minors and to what extent they receive adequate information.

A further recommendation is that organizations provide sex education, in order to provide a more balanced view of sexual behavior than is presently available in Cambodia. This recommendation extends to the national education system, which has the responsibility to provide minors with adequate information.

As the findings suggest, many minors watch pornography at home. It is important to raise the issue of parental supervision. This requires an increased awareness by parents of the issues surrounding pornography, violence and sex education. Media campaigns addressing parents and minors in relevant language, and in a manner that does not attempt to patronize or alienate them is a possible forum for information free from embarrassment. Radio programs, anonymous phone in shows, and articles in popular magazines could accomplish this goal.

In line with article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children should be protected from harmful information, this report recommends that Cambodian law be reviewed and strengthened in regards to pornography, beginning with a clear definition and restrictions on its access by minors. The production and sale of child pornography should also be clearly addressed, as it is within the Draft Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. As laws are useless without effective implementation, efforts should be made to consistently enforce new as well as existing laws such as the prohibition of public showing of pornographic videos.

A further legal recommendation is that a serious effort be made to prosecute sex offenders. It is important that it is unacceptable to sexually violate anyone. By sending the message that rape and sexual assault of any kind is an offence it might be possible to counteract the messages learned from violent pornography that violence and rape are normal, acceptable sexual practices. In line with this, it is further recommended that serious efforts must be made to eradicate child pornography. People either producing, selling, possessing or showing child pornography must be consistently and without exception punished according to specific legislation such as provided by the Draft Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. While the effects of pornography might not be proven as yet, it is certain that both the short and long term affects on a child being forced to take part in sexual actions are detrimental and horrific.

In conclusion, this research project should be viewed as an attempt to address a very sensitive topic, and highlight the need for debate. It should be considered the starting point of a process that will hopefully lead to better understanding of how minors acquire sexual knowledge, and a more balanced provision of information that will protect children from potential harm.