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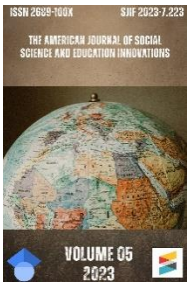

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Research Article

BRIEF HISTORY OF COMBODIA ON THEIR SOCIAL, CULTURES AND LIFELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

Cambodia, country on the Indochinese mainland of Southeast Asia. Cambodia is largely a land of plains and great rivers and lies amid important overland and river trade routes linking China to India and Southeast Asia. The influences of many Asian cultures, alongside those of France and the United States. The research vis focus on the Brief History of combodia On Their Social , Cultures and Lifelihood Activities. Cambodia became a small Buddhist kingdom dependent on the goodwill of its neighbors, Thailand and Vietnam, In the mid-19th century, conflict between these kingdoms spilled onto Cambodian soil, and Cambodia almost disappeared.

In 1863 the Cambodian king, fearful of Thai intentions, asked France to provide protection for his kingdom. France kept Cambodia from being swallowed up, but the protectorate developed into a full-scale colonial relationship that the king had not foreseen.

French rule lasted until the 1950s, and was less harsh than in neighboring Vietnam. The Khmer elite was treated well and French policies had a relatively light impact on the population, while improvements in infrastructure strengthened the economy and brought Cambodia to the edges of the developed world. France's greatest contribution to Cambodia was probably its restoration of the temples at Yasodharapura. French scholars deciphered Angkorean inscriptions and rebuilt many of the temples, providing Cambodians with a glorious, precisely dated past that had been largely forgotten.

After Cambodia gained its independence from France, it entered a short period of peace and prosperity which many older Khmer now look back on as a golden age. By the late 1960s, however, Cambodia was drawn inexorably into the Vietnam War. In 1975, Communist forces, known to the outside world as Khmer Rouge or Red Khmers, overthrew the

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pro-American regime that had seized power five years before. In the Khmer Rouge era that followed , at least 1.2 million Cambodians died of malnutrition, overwork, executions, and mistreated diseases as the Maoist-inspired regime sought to achieve total communism overnight. Responding to Cambodian attacks, Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979 and established a protectorate there that lasted for 10 years.

Under peace agreements signed in Paris in 1991, Cambodia came under United Nations protection for a time in preparation for general elections that were held in 1993. Since then, Cambodia has been a constitutional monarchy ruled by a coalition government that has accepted large infusions of foreign aid. In 1999 Cambodia became a member of ASEAN, and became for the first time, after centuries of isolation, a full-fledged member of the Southeast Asian community.

KEYWORDS

History, Brief, Cambodia, Lifelihood, Cultures, Activities.

INTRODUCTION

On the history is marked with periods of peace and of great calamity. From its early cities to the introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism, the great kingdom of Angkor, colonialism, and the Khmer Rouge, this essay tries to put its current rebuilding of civil society in context of its incredible history and the challenges it faces today.

When Communist insurgents known as the Khmer Rouge seized control of Cambodia in 1975, a spokesman claimed that in the process "2,000 years of history" had come to an end. What he meant was that the Khmer Rouge intended to break with the past and to overthrow Cambodia's social relationships. The spokesman was also boasting that Cambodia's recorded history stretched back for two millennia.

In fact, archaeological data has revealed that the area we now call "Cambodia" was inhabited by human beings at least 40,000 years ago. Cities developed along the coast in the centuries before and after the birth of Christ. Indian and Chinese pilgrims and traders passed through these cities, and for the first centuries of the Christian era sources for Cambodian history that survive are almost entirely written in Chinese. Elements of Indian culture, in the meantime, took root among Cambodia's elite, and by the 5th and 6th centuries several Hinduized kingdoms sprang up in southern Cambodia. We know about them from the remains of small religious monuments in brick, laterite and stone, from massive stone sculptures, and from inscriptions in Sanskrit and Cambodian, or Khmer. The earliest dated inscription comes from the 4th century CE.

In the late 8th century, a Khmer prince later crowned as Jayavarman II returned to Cambodia from "exile" in Java, and began to consolidate the kingdom. In 802, in a ceremony near the site we now call Angkor, north of Cambodia's Great Lake, he declared himself a universal monarch, and founded a dynasty that lasted until Angkor was abandoned in the 16th century.

In its heyday, Angkor was a powerful kingdom that dominated much of mainland Southeast Asia. Its

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capital, Yasodharapura, probably housed as many as a million people—most of them farmers—making it one of the most populous cities in the world. The city's temples, dedicated to the Buddha or to Hindu gods, are among the artistic wonders of the world. An image of the most famous of these, Angkor Wat, has appeared on every Cambodian flag (there have been five of them) since the country gained its independence from France in 1953.

In the 13th century, Cambodians converted en masse to Theravada Buddhism, the variant practiced by the Khmer today. State-sponsored Hinduism, and the temples inspired by that religion, lost their importance, but for many years the kingdom remained strong and prosperous, as the Chinese emissary Zhou da guan reported in 1296. Over the next 200 years, the empire shrank, as tributary states in what is now Thailand declared their independence and invaded Cambodian territory. By 1450 or so, the capital had shifted southward to the region of present-day Phnom Penh, where it has remained ever since.

Physical features

Mekong River

The Mekong River drains more than 313,000 square miles (810,000 square km) of land, stretching from the Plateau of Tibet to the South China Sea. Among Asian rivers, only the Yangtze and Ganges have larger minimum flows.

The contrast between the physical conditions that prevail above and below the Mekong's descent from the Yunnan highlands divide it into two major parts. The upper Mekong flows 1,215 miles (1,955 km) through a long, narrow valley comprising roughly one-fourth of the total area, cutting through the mountains and plateaus of southwestern China. The lower Mekong, below the point where it forms the border between Myanmar and Laos, is a stream 1,485 miles (2,390 km) in length draining the Khorat Plateau of northeastern Thailand, the western slopes of the Annamese Cordillera in Laos and Vietnam, and most of Cambodia, before reaching the sea through the distributary channels of its delta in southern Vietnam.

In its upper reaches, the Mekong rises in the Tibetan Plateau between the Salween and Yangtze rivers; the streambed has cut deeply into the rugged landscape through which it flows. Along its course between Myanmar and Laos, the Mekong drains about 8,000 square miles (21,000 square km) of territory in Myanmar, comprising rough and relatively inaccessible terrain. In its more gentle lower stretches, where for a considerable distance it constitutes the boundary between Laos and Thailand, the Mekong inspires both conflict and cooperation among Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The sources of the Mekong, including its principal headstream, the Za Qu River, rise at an elevation of more than 16,000 feet (4,900 metres) on the north slope of the Tanggula Mountains in Qinghai province. They flow southeast through the Qamdo (Chamdo) region of Tibet, where the Za Qu joins other headstreams to form the main stream, called the Lancang in Chinese. It descends south across the highlands of Yunnan, through which it carves a deep valley, to a point south of Jinghong, where it briefly marks the border between Myanmar and China. The river then bends southwest; over a reach of more than 125 miles (200 km) it forms the Myanmarese-Laotian border. Although two great roads cross it—the caravan route from the southeast to Lhasa and the road from Kunming to Myanmar—much of the river valley in the highlands of Tibet and Yunnan is remote and sparsely populated.

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Below Myanmar, the river basin may be divided into six major sections on the basis of landforms, vegetation, and soils: the northern highlands, Khorat Plateau, eastern highlands, southern lowlands, southern highlands, and delta. Most of the vegetation in the lower basin is of the tropical broad-leaved variety, although the occurrence of individual species varies with latitude and topography.

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The northern highlands have highly folded ranges that reach elevations of about 9,000 feet (2,700 metres) above sea level, many with steep slopes. As far south as Vientiane, these dissected uplands (i.e., cut by erosion into hills and valleys) are covered with dense deciduous forest that has deteriorated as a result of frequent cutting and burning for shifting cultivation. The Mekong's important tributaries in this region include the Tha, the Ou, and the Ngum rivers, all draining northern Laos.

To the south of the east-west course of the river below Vientiane lies the Khorat Plateau, which embraces almost all of the Thai portion of the basin as well as the lower parts of the Mekong's Laotian tributaries. This is an area of gently rolling hills set amid relatively flat alluvial plains. Soils and deciduous vegetation on the hills are thin, and much of the original forest has been replaced by grassland as a result of grazing and repeated burning. The Songkhram River drains the northern part of the plateau and enters the Mekong above Tha Uthen in Thailand. The Mun River—one of the Mekong's most important tributaries—drains the majority of the plateau and joins the Mekong at Ban Dan, Thailand.

The eastern highlands form part of the Annamese Cordillera, from which streams drain west into the Mekong. Throughout most of the distance between Ky Son (Muong Sen) in northern Vietnam and Ban Hèt in southern Laos, the watershed forms the border between Vietnam to the east and Laos to the west. There is greater relief in the northern than the southern parts of the watershed, but the highlands in general are characterized by rapid streams that flow through narrow valleys before entering the lowlands bordering the Mekong. The Mekong's most important tributaries in this region are the Kading, the Bangfai, the Banghiang, and the Kong—which, with its affluent the San, drains a large area of southern Laos, central Vietnam, and eastern Cambodia. Forest degradation, which has resulted from lumbering, shifting cultivation, and grazing, is widespread in this region.

The southern lowlands border both sides of the Mekong below Pakxé (Pakse) in Laos. The Mekong enters Cambodia with a sudden plunge at Khone Falls. Between the falls and Krâchéh there are rapids interspersed with alluvial plains. Below Kâmpóng Cham the river's gradient becomes gentle, and it flows through wide stretches of alluvium in its floodplain. Near Phnom Penh a junction occurs between the Mekong and the Sab River, which connects it to the Tonle Sap, sometimes called the Great Lake. The direction of flow of the Sab River varies according to the season. During the peak flood season, when the level of the Mekong is high, waters flow through the Sab River to the lake, which then expands from a little more than 1,000 square miles (2,600 square km) to a maximum of about 4,000 square miles (10,400 square km). In the dry season when the floods subside, the Sab reverses its flow to drain southeastward into the

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Mekong. The Tonle Sap is a highly productive fishing ground.

The Dâmrei (Elephant) and Krâvanh (Cardamom) mountains in southwestern Cambodia constitute the southern highlands. Several streams flow from these uplands into the Tonle Sap.

The river divides into two branches below Phnom Penh: the Mekong proper and the Bassac (Basak). Below this point the delta spreads out to the sea. It has a total area of about 25,000 square miles (65,000 square km) and can be divided into three major sections. The upper section, above Chau Doc (Chau Phu), has strong natural levees (embankments built on either side of the river by accumulated deposits of silt) behind which are low, wide depressions. The middle section has some areas that are well drained, others that are poorly drained and swampy. Along the lower section, formed by the river mouths and by the area to the southwest, sediment carried down from the upper river is in the process of being deposited, and the flooding is less extreme than in the upper sections of the delta. The area north of the Ca Mau Peninsula is forested and swampy.

Livelihood clusters and their characteristics in Stung Treng 3.1 Identifying relevant livelihood clusters In order to gain a better understanding of different livelihood strategies of the rural farm households in the study area, the analysis of livelihood strategies was undertaken in two steps. In the first step a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to reduce the different input variables to major factors. In the second step a Cluster Analysis (CA) was performed to group households according to their livelihood inputs. To map the different input factors for livelihood strategies, variables capturing different input factors are used. Therewith, our approach differs from recent literature that uses income shares to identify livelihood strategies (Babulo et al., 2008; Sherbinin et al., 2008). It is considered as more advantageous since it is capable of describing the input allocation within livelihood activities (Nielsen et al., 2012). Based on the data collected, 31 variables2 are used, including labor, land, investment, and expenditure. Our data screening detects 18 outliers which have been excluded from the analysis, so that the sample size amounts to 582 observations. The PCA analysis results in eleven factors representing the main household livelihood activities. The Kaiser (K1) criterion which retains all factors with eigenvalues greater than one was used to determine the assignment of individual variables to the factors. Classification of livelihoods by cluster Cluster Absolute no. of households and (%) Main livelihood activities Cluster 1 122 (21) Small farmers engaged in low skilled agricultural employment who receive transfers Cluster 2 254 (44) Natural resource extractors Cluster 3 78 (13) Self-employed and cash crop farmers Cluster 4 78 (13) High skilled wage workers with cropping and livestock Cluster 5 50 (9) Non-agricultural low skilled wage laborers Total 582 (100)

calculation. In the second step the factors are used to identify the livelihood clusters based on Ward Linkage (Garson, 2012). The Calinski-Harabasz criterium and the Duda/Hart index (Alinovi et al., 2009) are applied as the stopping rule to determine an appropriate number of livelihood clusters. Accordingly, five different livelihood clusters are generated. For more information on PCA and CA see Costello and Osborne (2005). The classification into livelihood clusters is based on main livelihood activities performed by the household. Cluster 1 is comprised of 21% of the households. It is the group of small farmers who also participate in low skilled employment in agriculture (ploughing, sowing, watering, or weeding).

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This group also receives monetary transfers, either from relatives or from the government. Households in cluster 2 are mainly natural resource extractors engaged in fishing or logging. The high proportion of the surveyed households of this cluster (44%) indicates the importance of natural resources for rural livelihoods. Cluster 3 includes 78 households who are mainly self-employed, for example as retail shop owners or petty traders. They also invest more in cash crops, most notably cassava. Cluster 4 includes 78 households with at least one member working in a high skilled or permanently paid job (e.g. teacher, police officer). Those households invest more in crop production and livestock rearing.

livelihood activities and their determinants The agricultural sector plays a fundamental role in the livelihoods of rural Cambodians. For most, rice farming is the primary basis of food security and the main source of employment and income. But also other livelihood activities, especially natural resource extraction, are indispensable for many families in Stung Treng.

The majority of the selected households possesses agricultural land with an average of 2.8 hectare (ha) and 2.5 plots per household – there is only one household in the sample which does not own any agricultural land.3 It is worth noting that for 52% of the plots there are no land documents, followed by 37% with only papers from local authority, and 4% with certificates (title) from the government. This shows that land security is still an issue in Stung Treng which may threaten households' livelihood strategies in the future. In addition, irrigated land accounts for only 12% and the remaining plots depend solely on rainfall. Approximately 85% of the households with agricultural land holding grow rice, field crops, garden crops, or permanent crops between March 2012 and April 2013. Of these, rice is the most important crop – it was planted on 43% of the total plots. Table 4-1 provides more detailed information on the rice sector. Cluster 4 seems to have the largest rice fields but the lowest rice productivity among the five clusters – their rice fields amount to 2.5 ha per household but rice productivity reaches only 1.87 tons per ha. On average, about 71% of total rice production has been used for own consumption while 6% has been used for seeds. About 25% of the households (or 110) sold rice directly after harvest, whereas 5% or 21 sold three months later. 10% of the households processed rice and another 10% gave it away as payment in kind for labor or machine rental.

What Currency is Used in Cambodia?

The currency of Cambodia is the Riel.

The official currency used in CaCambodia, country on the Indochinese mainland of Southeast Asia. Cambodia is largely a land of plains and great rivers and lies amid important overland and river trade routes linking China to India and Southeast Asia. The influences of many Asian cultures, alongside those of France and the United Statesmbodia is the Riel and is represented by the symbol ៛.

The international code for the Cambodian Riel is KHR. The Cambodian banknotes has 11 denominations: ៛50, ៛100, ៛200, ៛500, ៛1000, ៛2000, ៛5000, ៛10000, ៛20000, ៛50000 and ៛100000.

Cambodia has an unofficial dual currency system, the US dollars is accepted and used widely in Cambodia. The exchange rate of KHR to USD is pegged at 4000 Riel to 1 USD. For small purchases you normally receive Riel as change and for most purchases people us

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Climate and hydrology

The Mekong's flow comes chiefly from rainfall in its lower basin, which fluctuates seasonally with the monsoon winds. In April the flow is ordinarily at its lowest. In May or June—as the rain-bearing southerly monsoon winds arrive—the flow begins to increase, with an especially rapid increase in the eastern and northern highlands. The Mekong's highest water levels occur as early as August or September in the upper reaches and as late as October in the southern reaches. The northeasterly monsoon wind, beginning ordinarily in November in the southern areas, brings dry weather until May. During the long dry period, rice cultivation is impossible without irrigation, and the river's waters are vital to agricultural production.

Temperatures in the lower Mekong basin are uniformly warm throughout the year. Daily highs at Phnom Penh average 89 °F (32 °C), and lows average 74 °F (23 °C). In the upper basin, temperatures are moderated somewhat by altitude and generally are lower and exhibit more seasonal variation than those found farther south.

The mean annual flow of the river at Krâchéh in Cambodia is about 500,000 cubic feet (14,200 cubic metres) per second, which is about twice the flow of the Columbia River in North America. The recorded minimum at Krâchéh is about one-twelfth of the mean, and the annual peak flow about four times the mean. Below Krâchéh the peak flows diminish as the water spreads out into the distributary channels and backswamps.The recorded annual sediment load is highest at Pakxé, where it amounts to some 187 million tons; it is about half that amount at the Myanmarese border and about two-thirds that at Phnom Penh.

People Mekong River

A substantial majority of the people who live along the Mekong River are engaged in agriculture, and rice is the major crop. The heaviest population concentrations are in the delta and on the Khorat Plateau. The small urban population has been growing rapidly, chiefly through migration to the capital cities.

The peoples of the basin are diverse. Most residents of the uppermost Mekong Valley are Tibetan. South of the Tibetan Highlands, the peoples of the river basin fall into two broad cultural groupings. The hill peoples subsist mainly through shifting cultivation, and have traditionally formed small, kin-based social units, while the lowland peoples, who practice sedentary agriculture, have formed complex state societies. The hill peoples speak languages belonging to five different language families: Tibeto-Burman (including the Yi, Hani, and Lisu of Yunnan), Tai (including the Shan of Myanmar and the so-called Black Tai and Red Tai of Laos and Yunnan), Hmong-Mien (including the Hmong of Laos and Yunnan), Austronesian, and Mon-Khmer (including the diverse Montagnard peoples of Vietnam). The lowland peoples, however, form the majority of the population, and most belong to one of the dominant ethnic groups of the region's nations. These include the Han Chinese of Yunnan, whose language is distantly related to the Tibeto-Burman languages, the Lao of Laos and the Thai of Thailand, both speaking languages in the Tai family, and the Vietnamese of Vietnam and the Khmer of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand, both speaking Mon-Khmer languages. The Cham, a minority lowland people of Vietnam and Cambodia, speak an Austronesian language.

Economy of the Mekong River

Irrigation and flood control

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In the lower basin, flood control and water management offer major opportunities to increase economic productivity. Farmers practicing shifting cultivation on the uplands and the rice growers on the rain-fed lowlands are able, under normal conditions, to grow only one crop a year, taking advantage of wet-season precipitation. Half of the cultivated land is dependent upon some form of inundation by flood waters. Control of water, however, makes it possible to store water during the dry season and to use this water to produce a second or third crop. In addition, irrigation combined with flood control has improved the cultivable land by reducing the losses and delays caused by floodwaters pouring over the river's banks. Where storage facilities and the degree of downward slope are favourable, small-scale hydroelectric power facilities have been developed.

Much of this development work has been undertaken under the auspices of the Interim Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin (Mekong Committee), organized in 1957 by Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and South Vietnam. (After 1975 Vietnam replaced South Vietnam on the committee, and Cambodia ceased to participate, although Cambodia has resumed membership since 1991.) The committee has sponsored a series of preinvestment and general scientific investigations and has undertaken construction of a number of water projects. These projects include the multipurpose dam near Nam Phong in northeastern Thailand and the hydroelectric dam at Nam Ngum in Laos. The countries of the commission have continued to cooperate despite the political stresses produced by the war in Vietnam and its aftermath and have enlisted the assistance of other countries and international organizations.

Navigation

Khone Falls

There is an elaborate system of canals in the Vietnamese part of the delta. Smaller seagoing vessels can sail upstream as far as Phnom Penh, and vessels drawing almost 15 feet (5 metres) can reach Kâmpóng Cham during high water. Continuous water transport is blocked chiefly by the barriers of the Khone Falls and other falls between Sâmbor and Pakxé, and upstream uses of the river are limited to local traffic. Navigational conditions on the Mekong's main stream and on some of its tributaries also have been improved through the activities of the Mekong Committee.

Study and exploration

A rich literature describing the upper and lower Mekong basins has existed for some time, but until the 1950s the river's resources were treated chiefly in local studies of navigational access to urban areas. Following the organization of the Mekong Committee, information on the river was consolidated, and in the late 1960s a bibliography and atlas were published. In the 1950s, surveys of the lower Mekong were carried out by the Bureau of Flood Control of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (later renamed the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and in the early 1960s a new program for integrated study took shape under the Mekong Committee.

Britannica Quiz

Water and its Varying Forms

Investigations undertaken have included basic mapping, hydrologic observations, flood forecasting, soil surveys, fisheries studies, health studies, engineering-feasibility studies, power-market surveys, and agricultural research and pilot farms. The

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engineering studies have provided reconnaissance appraisal of all the tributary basins and a more detailed examination of selected projects. The focus of Mekong development as a whole has shifted since the mid-1970s to planning comprehensive programs for agricultural and community development in areas where water supply was available, with each country working out its individual financial arrangements.

Countries of the World

Cambodia

Also known as: État du Cambodge, Democratic Kampuchea, Khmer Republic, Kingdom of Cambodia, People's Republic of Kampuchea, Preahreacheanachakr Kampuchea, Roat Kampuchea, Royaume de Cambodge, State of Cambodia.

The United Nations anti-drug agency is warning that the huge trade in illegal drugs such as methamphetamine from Southeast Asia's 'Golden Triangle' shows no signs of slowing down

Angkor Wat, Angkor, Cambodia.

Cambodia, country on the Indochinese mainland of Southeast Asia. Cambodia is largely a land of plains and great rivers and lies amid important overland and river trade routes linking China to India and Southeast Asia. The influences of many Asian cultures, alongside those of France and the United States, can be seen in the capital, Phnom Penh, one of a handful of urban centres in the largely rural country.

ABOUT CAMBODIA

flag of Cambodia

File: National anthem of Cambodia

Head Of Government: Prime Minister: Hun Sen

Capital: Phnom Penh

Population: (2023 est.) 16,493,000

Head Of State: King: Norodom Sihamoni

Form Of Government: constitutional monarchy with two legislative houses (Senate [621]; National Assembly [125])

Cambodia

For 2,000 years Cambodia's civilization absorbed influences from India and China and, in turn, transferred them to other Southeast Asian civilizations. From the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Funan and Chenla (1st–8th century) through the classical age of the Angkor period (9th–15th century), it held sway over territories that are now part of Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. The Khmer (Cambodian) empire reached its apex in the 12th century, a time marked by the construction of the massive temple complexes known as Angkor Wat and Bayon and the imperial capital of Angkor Thom. Following 400 years of decline, Cambodia became a French colony and during the 20th century experienced the turmoil of war, occupation by the Japanese, postwar independence, and political instability. Between 1975 and 1979 the country was devastated by the reign of the Khmer Rouge, a rural communist guerrilla movement. During the Khmer Rouge's period of power, at least 1.5 million Cambodians were killed or died, a monumental tragedy from which the country still suffers.

Cambodia began the process of recovery under the Vietnam-backed regime of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979–89), and in the 1990s it regained political autonomy, reestablished a constitutional government, and subsequently instituted free elections. The Cambodian economy has steadily

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improved, and the country seems to be living by the words of the Cambodian proverb, "Fear not the future, weep not for the past."

Who controls Cambodia now?

The current prime minister is Cambodian People's Party (CPP) member Hun Sen. He has held this position since the criticized 1998 election, one year after the CPP staged a bloody coup in Phnom Penh to overthrow elected Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh, president of the FUNCINPEC party.

Hun Sen

His Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen

Personal details

Born Hun Bunal 5 August 1952 Peam Kaoh Sna, Stung Trang, Kampong Cham, Cambodia, French Indochina

Political party Cambodian People's Party

Spouse Bun Rany (m. 1976)

58 more rows

About Cambodia Flag Cambodia is a country located in the southeastern part of the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia, it shares borders with Vietnam to the east, Laos in the northeast, Thailand in the west and northwest, and has a coastline at the Gulf of Thailand in the southwest.

With an area of 181,000 km² Cambodia is about half the size of Germany or slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Oklahoma.

Preah reachanachak Kampuchea is the official name of Cambodia, an elective constitutional kingdom, officially the Kingdom of Cambodia. It is also named Pra-Tehs Khmer, the land of the Khmer.

Cambodia has a population of estimated 16.5 million inhabitants (in 2019). Capital and largest city is Phnom Penh. Spoken languages are, predominantly Khmer (90%), a Mon–Khmer language, Vietnamese (5%), and Cham,

Land

Cambodia, about one-third the size of France and somewhat larger than the U.S. state of Missouri, is bordered to the west and northwest by Thailand, to the northeast by Laos, to the east and southeast by Vietnam, and to the southwest by the Gulf of Thailand. The country's maximum extent is about 280 miles (450 km) from north to south and 360 miles (580 km) from east to west.

Actual continental drift of plates. Thematic map.

Britannica Quiz

Geography Fun Facts

Relief

Cambodia. Physical features map. Includes locator.

Krâvanh Mountains

Cambodia's landscape is characterized by a low-lying central alluvial plain that is surrounded by uplands and low mountains and includes the Tonle Sap (Great Lake) and the upper reaches of the Mekong River delta. Extending outward from this central region are transitional plains, thinly forested and rising to elevations of about 650 feet (200 metres) above sea level. To the north the Cambodian plain abuts a sandstone escarpment, which forms a southward-facing cliff stretching more than 200 miles (320 km)

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from west to east and rising abruptly above the plan to heights of 600 to 1,800 feet (180 to 550 metres). This escarpment marks the southern limit of the Dangrek (Khmer: Dângrêk) Mountains. Flowing south through the country's eastern regions is the Mekong River. East of the Mekong the transitional plains gradually merge with the eastern highlands, a region of forested mountains and high plateaus that extend into Laos and Vietnam. In southwestern Cambodia two distinct upland blocks, the Krâvanh (Cardamom) Mountains and the Dâmrei (Elephant) Mountains, form another highland region that covers much of the land area between the Tonle Sap and the Gulf of Thailand. In this remote and largely uninhabited area, Mount Aôral, Cambodia's highest peak, rises to an elevation of 5,949 feet (1,813 metres). The southern coastal region adjoining the Gulf of Thailand is a narrow lowland strip, heavily wooded and sparsely populated, which is isolated from the central plain by the southwestern highlands.

Drainage

Cambodia: Tonle Sap

The two dominant hydrological features of Cambodia are the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap. Rising in the Plateau of Tibet and emptying into the South China Sea, the Mekong enters Cambodia from Laos at the Khone Falls and flows generally southward to the border with Vietnam, a distance within Cambodia of approximately 315 miles (510 km). The Mekong is connected to the Tonle Sap by the Sab River. During the rainy season (mid-May to early October), the Mekong's enormous volume of water backs up into the Sab and flows up into the Tonle Sap 65 miles (105 km) to the northwest, expanding the lake's surface area from a dry-season minimum of 1,200 square miles (3,100 square km) to a rainy-season maximum of more than 3,000 square miles (7,800 square km). As the water level of the Mekong falls during the dry season, the process is reversed: water drains from the Tonle Sap back down into the Mekong, switching the direction of its flow. As a result of this annual phenomenon, the Tonle Sap is one of the world's richest sources of freshwater fish.

Soils

Most of Cambodia's soils are sandy and poor in nutrients. The so-called red-soil areas in the eastern part of the country, however, are suitable for commercial crops such as rubber and cotton. The annual flooding of the Mekong during the rainy season deposits a rich alluvial sediment that accounts for the fertility of the central plain and provides natural irrigation for rice cultivation.

Climate of Cambodia

Cambodia's climate is governed by the monsoon winds, which define two major seasons. From mid-May to early October, the strong prevailing winds of the southwest monsoon bring heavy rains and high humidity. From early November to mid-March, the lighter and drier winds of the northeast monsoon bring variable cloudiness, infrequent precipitation, and lower humidity. The weather between these seasons is transitional. Maximum temperatures are high throughout the year, ranging from about 82 to 83 °F (28 °C) in January, the coolest month, to about 95 °F (35 °C) in April. Annual precipitation varies considerably throughout the country, from more than 200 inches (5,000 mm) on the seaward slopes of the southwestern highlands to about 50–55 inches (1,270–1,400 mm) in the central lowland region. Three-fourths of the annual rainfall occurs during the months of the southwest monsoon.

Plant and animal life

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Although much of Cambodia is heavily forested, the central lowland region is covered with rice paddies, fields of dry crops such as corn (maize) and tobacco, tracts of tall grass and reeds, and thinly wooded areas. Savanna grassland predominates in the transitional plains, with the grasses reaching a height of 5 feet (1.5 metres). In the eastern highlands the high plateaus are covered with grasses and deciduous forests. Broad-leaved evergreen forests grow in the mountainous areas to the north, with trees 100 feet (30 metres) high emerging from thick undergrowths of vines, rattans, palms, bamboos, and assorted woody and herbaceous ground plants. In the southwestern highlands, open forests of pines are found at the higher elevations, while the rain-drenched seaward slopes are blanketed with virgin rainforests growing to heights of 150 feet (45 metres) or more. Vegetation along the coastal strip ranges from evergreen forests to nearly impenetrable mangroves.

red-legged douc

The northeastern forests of Cambodia—like the neighbouring areas of Laos and Vietnam—once sheltered large populations of wild animals such as elephants, wild oxen, rhinoceroses, and several species of deer, but the loss of forest cover, combined with warfare and unregulated hunting in the region, sharply reduced those numbers. Small populations of most of these species may still be found, along with some tigers, leopards, bears, and many small mammals. Among the more common birds are herons, cranes, grouse, pheasant, peafowl, pelicans, cormorants, egrets, and wild ducks. Four varieties of snakes are especially dangerous: the Indian cobra, the king cobra, the banded krait, and Russell's viper.

Cambodia: Ethnic composition

The Khmer (Cambodians) account for the vast majority of the population, producing a homogeneity unique in Southeast Asia that has encouraged a strong sense of national identity. Ethnic minorities include Chinese, Vietnamese, Muslim Cham-Malays, Laotians, and various indigenous peoples of the rural highlands.

The Khmer, who belong to the Mon-Khmer ethnolinguistic group, are concentrated in the lowland regions surrounding the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap, on the transitional plain, and along the coast. The product of centuries of intricate cultural and ethnic blending, the Khmer moved southward before 200 BCE into the fertile Mekong delta from the Khorat Plateau of what is now Thailand. They were exposed to successive waves of Indian influence and, in the 8th century CE, to Indo-Malayan influence, perhaps including immigration from Java. Immigrations of Tai peoples occurred from the 10th to the 15th century, of Vietnamese beginning in the 17th century, and of Chinese in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Among the ethnic minorities in Cambodia before 1975, the Chinese were the most important, for they controlled the country's economic life. They were shunted aside in the communist-led revolution of the 1970s and made to become ordinary peasants. Those who did not seek refuge abroad after 1975 and others who subsequently returned regained some of their former influence as urban centres were revived.

The Vietnamese minority occupied a somewhat lower status than the Chinese, and most of them fled or were repatriated to Vietnam after 1970. In the 1980s, however, a large number of Vietnamese migrants, many of them former residents of Cambodia, settled in the country. Centuries of mutual dislike and distrust have clouded Vietnamese-Khmer relations, and intermarriage has been infrequent.

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The most important minority in the early 21st century was the Cham-Malay group. Known in Cambodia as Khmer Islam or Western Cham, the Cham-Malay group also maintained a high degree of ethnic homogeneity and was discriminated against under the regime of Democratic Kampuchea. Receiving only slightly better treatment than the Khmer Islam during that period were the smaller communities of indigenous peoples. These communities, known collectively as Khmer Loeu ("Upland Khmer"), include the Katu, Mnong, Stieng, Jarai, and Rhadé, among others, and inhabit the sparsely populated northeastern provinces bordering Vietnam and Laos.

Religion in Cambodia

Buddhism is the state religion of Cambodia. Approximately 97% of Cambodia's population follows Theravada Buddhism, with Islam, Christianity, and tribal animism as well as Baha'i faith making up the bulk of the small remainder.[1][2] The wat (Buddhist monastery) and sangha (monkhood), together with essential Buddhist doctrines such as reincarnation and the accumulation of merit, are at the centre of religious life.

Religion in Cambodia (2019 World Factbook)[1]

Buddhism (97.1%)

Islam (2%)

Christianity (0.3%)

Other (0.5%)

According to The World Factbook in 2019, 97.1% of Cambodia's population was Buddhist, 2% Muslim, 0.3% Christian and 0.5% Other.[1]

According to the Pew Research Center in 2010, 96.9% of Cambodia's population was Buddhist, 2.0% Muslim, 0.4% Christian, and 0.7% folk religion and non religious.[3]

Nur ul-Ihsan Mosque in Phnom Penh, is the oldest mosque in Cambodia.

Muslim traders along the main trade-route between Western Asia through Āryāvarta were responsible for the introduction of Islam to Cambodia around 12th to 17th centuries CE.[6] The religion was then further spread by the Chams and finally consolidated by the expansion of the territories of converted rulers and their communities. The Chams have their own mosques. In 1962, there were about 100 mosques in the country. Nur ul-Ihsan Mosque in Phnom Penh is the oldest mosque in Cambodia, it was built in 1813, and is a relic of the history of Islam in Cambodia.[7]

Islam also flourished among Khmer people, in Kwan village, Kampong Speu, Muslims thrived with most of the converts from Buddhism. The propagator of Islam in the village is Abdul Amit, a Cham farmer.[8]

Languages

The Khmer language is one of the major tongues of the Mon-Khmer subfamily of the Austroasiatic language family and is spoken by nearly all people in Cambodia, including the Cham-Malay. Historically, a small number of people in Cambodia spoke Vietnamese and Chinese. The Katu, Mnong, and Stieng speak Mon-Khmer languages, while the Jarai and Rhadé speak languages of the Austronesian language family.

Religion of Cambodia

Cambodia: Religious affiliation

Most ethnic Khmer are Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhists (i.e., belonging to the older and more traditional of the two great schools of Buddhism, the

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other school being Mahayana). Until 1975 Buddhism was officially recognized as the state religion of Cambodia.

Hear about the terror of the Khmer Rouge, their suppression of religion and the later revival of Wat Bo monasterySee all videos for this article

Under the Khmer Rouge, all religious practices were forbidden. The pro-Vietnamese communist regime that ruled Cambodia in the 1980s encouraged Buddhism in a limited way, and Theravada Buddhism was restored as Cambodia's state religion in 1993. Almost 20 years of neglect have been difficult to reverse, however, and the religion has not regained the popularity and prestige that it had before 1975. Nonetheless, the social and psychological characteristics often ascribed to the Khmer—individualism, conservatism, patience, gentleness, and lack of concern for material wealth—represent Buddhist ideals toward which Cambodians, especially in rural areas, continue to aspire. Buddhist precepts, however, do not permeate Cambodian education and ideology as strongly as they did before 1975.

Minority populations are not Theravada Buddhists. Khmer Loeu groups generally follow local religions, while ethnic Vietnamese and Chinese are eclectic, following Mahayana Buddhism and Daoism. Many Vietnamese are members of the Roman Catholic Church or of such syncretic Vietnamese religious movements as Cao Dai. The Cham minority is Muslim, generally of the Sunni branch. More recently, thousands have converted to Evangelical Protestantism, particularly urban Khmer.

Settlement patterns

Cambodia: Urban-rural

Cambodia has always been overwhelmingly a land of villages. Only a fraction of the total population has ever lived in a town of more than 10,000 inhabitants. Since the 1920s most of these urban dwellers have been concentrated in Phnom Penh, which is situated at the confluence of the Mekong, Basăk (Bassac), and Sab rivers. Some four-fifths of the population still live in rural areas, the remainder being classified as urban.

Brown globe on antique map. Brown world on vintage map. North America. Green globe. Hompepage blog 2009, history and society, geography and travel, explore discovery

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Countries & Their Features

Rural settlement

A traditional rural settlement on the bank of the Tonle Sap, Cambodia.

A traditional rural settlement on the bank of the Tonle Sap, Cambodia.

Until the mid-1970s the vast majority of Cambodia's people inhabited the central lowland region, where the rural village was second only to the family as the basic social unit. The typical Khmer family consisted of a married couple and their unmarried children. Both sons and daughters usually left the parental home after marriage to establish their own households. Most Cambodian villages in those days were made up of ethnically homogeneous people and had a population of fewer than 300 persons. The village (phum) was part of a commune or community (khum) with which it shared one or more Buddhist temples (wat), an elementary school, and several small shops. Cambodian villages usually developed in a linear pattern along waterways and roads, but houses were

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also often found on largely self-contained paddy farms. Houses in Cambodia were generally built on wooden pilings and had thatched roofs, walls of palm matting, and floors of woven bamboo strips resting on bamboo joists. Houses for the more-prosperous, while still on pilings, were built of wood and had tile or metal roofs.

There were a few large landowners in Cambodia until, under the rulers of Democratic Kampuchea, they were forced off their land and into collectives in 1975 and made to live as ordinary peasants; hardly any of these people reemerged after decollectivization in the 1980s. Before collectivization, villagers typically owned and worked enough land to provide for their families and generate small surpluses that could be converted into cash to buy additional goods or to pay taxes. Landholdings tended to be small in the crowded south-central regions of the country. During the 1960s the government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk was successful in colonizing frontier regions, especially in the northwest, with army veterans or poor farmers from more-crowded parts of the country. These programs, however, did not significantly alter Cambodian settlement patterns.

Throughout rural Cambodia, lifestyle was attuned to the agricultural cycle, which was based in large part on family-oriented subsistence farming. Family members were awake before dawn, and most of the day's work was accomplished before noon, although minor tasks were performed in the cool of the early evening. Electricity has always been rare in village areas, and country people were generally asleep soon after sunset. During the rice-growing season, all family members worked together in the fields, as the work of planting, transplanting, and harvesting had to be done quickly. Farmers had no access to agricultural machinery, and the work of several people was needed to grow enough rice to feed a family for a year. Because paddy farming required intensive labour, obligations would build up among families within a village during the agricultural season. Festivals and marriages, celebrated by a whole village, were usually held after the rice had been harvested and money had been obtained from selling the surplus grain.

Urban settlement

The urban areas of Cambodia emerged in their present form in the early 20th century, during the French colonial period, as commercial and administrative centres serving their surrounding rural regions. Most of them were located at the intersections of land or river routes and were relatively accessible to the areas they served. Phnom Penh (phnom means "hill"; Penh is a woman's name) is Cambodia's single metropolis, and its population fluctuations since the 1960s reflect the country's recent history. Before the outbreak of war in 1970, it held about 500,000 people, but its population by 1975, then swollen with refugees, numbered some 2,000,000. Phnom Penh was virtually abandoned during the Democratic Kampuchea period, but people began returning to the city in 1979. Its population has grown rapidly since then, exceeding its 1970 level by the late 1980s and surpassing 1,000,000 by the start of the 21st century. Other cities, such as Bătdâmbâng and Kâmpóng Cham, are considerably smaller than Phnom Penh.

Demographic trends

Cambodia: Age breakdown

Cambodia's first national census as an independent country, taken in 1962, reported a population of about 5,700,000. Subsequent population figures are exceedingly difficult to determine because of the enormous number of people who died or were displaced in the years after 1970. After some stability

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returned in the 1990s, a second national census, conducted in 1998, indicated that the population was double its 1962 level. In 2008 a third census put the population at nearly 13,400,000. Since that time, the country's population has continued to expand at a rate above the world average. As in many developing countries, children under age 15 constitute the largest group, nearly one-third of the population, while about three-fifths of the population is under 30. The age distribution is becoming more balanced as the country continues to recover from its losses under the Khmer Rouge regime.

The war and social revolution of the 1970s, and the country's subsequent political and economic disruption, also seriously affected the geographic distribution of Cambodia's population. Between 1975 and 1978, hundreds of thousands of urban people were forcibly moved into rural areas to cultivate rice and to dig and maintain extensive irrigation works. Following the upheaval, towns and cities began again to grow, and most have regained or surpassed their pre-1970 population levels. However, the unrest of the 1970s led more than 300,000 Cambodians to emigrate. Of these, more than half (some 179,000) went to the United States, more than 50,000 to France, and 45,000 to Australia. Several thousand Cham were resettled in Malaysia in the 1980s. An additional 300,000 people who had sought shelter in refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border in the 1980s were repatriated to Cambodia in 1993–94 under the provisions of a 1991 peace agreement between the Cambodian government and what had been its political opponents.

Economy

Even before 1975, Cambodia's economy was one of the least-developed in Southeast Asia. It depended heavily on two major products—rice and rubber—and consequently was vulnerable to annual fluctuations caused by vagaries in the weather and world market prices. Agriculture dominated the economy, with most rural families engaged in rice cultivation. Although the tradition of landownership was strong, family landholdings were relatively small, and the rural population was largely self-sufficient. Two and a half acres (one hectare) of rice paddy provided for the needs of a family of five people, and supplementary requirements were traditionally satisfied by fishing, cultivating fruit and vegetables, and raising livestock. Famine was rare in Cambodia, but the self-sufficiency of the rural family produced a conservatism that resisted government efforts before 1975 to modernize the country's agricultural methods.

The pro-Vietnamese government that came to power in 1979 dismantled the collectivized agriculture that had been savagely imposed on a national scale by Democratic Kampuchea in 1975–79, but partial collectivization remained an ideal of the new regime, as it did in neighbouring Vietnam, in an attempt to improve efficiency. Voluntary cooperative groupings called krom samaki subsequently replaced collective farms in many areas, but the vast majority of Cambodian farming continued to be carried out by family units growing crops for subsistence and small surpluses for cash or barter. A law enacted in 1989 permitted Cambodians to buy and sell real estate for the first time. An immediate effect of the law was a speculative boom in urban areas and an increase in investment, particularly in Phnom Penh. In rural areas laws were also implemented that restored traditional rights of land tenure and inheritance.

In 1992–93, during a brief United Nations protectorate, the economies of Phnom Penh and Bătdâmbâng were fueled by foreign speculation in land and short-term, foreign-financed construction. Tourism became (and

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has remained) a major source of national revenue, but the rural economy has continued to be hampered by poor communications, bad weather, widespread poverty and disease, and often outdated and inefficient farming techniques. Although per capita income has been rising, it has remained among the world's lowest.

The country's external debt also increased sharply during the 1990s, and foreign aid continues to be a major source of revenue. Most of the international donors, the leader of which is Japan, have used aid to pressure the Cambodian government to carry out reforms aimed at promoting economic development and democratization. Donors have targeted funding at particular areas such as refugee repatriation and resettlement, education and training, health and sanitation, agriculture, and community development. Creditors have rescheduled and in some cases canceled repayment of loans, but they have also cut aid disbursements when they have disagreed with government policies or actions.

Agriculture, forestry, and fishing

Agriculture remains the most important sector of the Cambodian economy in terms of its share of the gross domestic product (GDP), and it employs the vast majority of the workforce. Rice is Cambodia's major crop, its principal food, and, in times of peace, its most important export commodity. Rice is grown on most of the country's total cultivated land area. The principal rice regions surround the Mekong and the Tonle Sap, with particularly intensive cultivation in Bătdâmbâng, Kâmpóng Cham, Takêv, and Prey Vêng provinces.

Cambodia traditionally has produced only one rice crop per year because it has lacked the extensive irrigation system needed for double-cropping. Under traditional patterns of agriculture, planting normally begins in July or August, and the harvest period extends from November to January. Where there is little irrigation, the amount of rainfall determines the size and quality of the crop.

The government of Democratic Kampuchea made great efforts to build irrigation systems throughout the country. The results occasionally were notable, and in a few parts of the country farmers were able to grow two or, more rarely, three crops of rice per year. In some cases the irrigation works were poorly conceived and hastily built, and they soon collapsed. Most of those that survived were abandoned after 1979. Another significant problem is that millions of land mines remain in Cambodian fields from the years of warfare; this has severely restricted the amount of land available for cultivation.

In addition to rice, other food products include cassava, corn (maize), sugarcane, soybeans, and coconuts. The principal fruit crops, all of which are consumed locally, include bananas, oranges, and mangoes, and are supplemented by a variety of other tropical fruits, including breadfruits, mangosteens, and papayas.

Cambodia: cattle

Cattle, particularly water buffalo, are used principally as draft animals in the rice paddies and fields. Hog production has also played a large role in agriculture. Efforts to replenish the number of livestock—depleted by years of war—have been hampered by uncertain social conditions and the prevalence of animal diseases.

About three-fourths of Cambodia was forested in 1970, but by the early 21st century that portion had decreased to roughly half, with Cambodia carrying one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. The

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provinces bordering Thailand and Vietnam continue to be logged by large companies to whom the government has granted concessions, as well as by smaller entrepreneurs, many of whom do not obtain official permits. Illegal logging is a persistent and serious problem despite efforts to curb it.

Fisheries are important in the domestic economy. Fish in its various forms—fresh, dried, smoked, and salted—constitutes the most important source of protein in the Cambodian diet, and subsistence fishing is part of every farmer's activity. The annual freshwater catch includes perch, carp, lungfish, and smelt. For larger-scale fishing, the government sells two-year leases to harvest segments of the Tonle Sap and inland rivers. Revenues from these sales have been significant at times, but the program has been fraught with corruption. Overfishing and environmental degradation around Tonle Sap have decreased the fish supply and driven up prices, and the sustainability of freshwater fisheries has become a matter of public concern.

Resources and power

Cambodia has few known mineral resources. Some limestone and phosphate deposits are found in Kâmpôt province, and precious stones are mined in Bătdâmbâng province. Cambodia's small quantities of iron and coal have not justified commercial exploitation. Most electric power is generated at thermal plants fired by imported oil. Hydroelectric generation from facilities along the Mekong and its tributaries is being rapidly expanded and provides the remainder of the country's electricity. Prospecting by foreign firms for petroleum and natural gas at offshore areas adjacent to sites being exploited by Vietnam has yielded sizeable deposits.

Manufacturing

Until the mid-1990s, industrial development in Cambodia remained at a low level, contributing a relatively small portion of the gross domestic product (GDP). Efforts had been made to build a modest industrial base suitable for domestic needs, and timber processing and rice milling, which were important before 1975, were revived in the 1980s. Toward the end of the 20th century, however, plants were established to produce soft drinks, paper, cigarettes, building materials, cement, and cotton textiles. Although Cambodia's industrial sector initially found it difficult to compete with mass-produced goods from the more economically developed countries of the region, those countries have invested heavily in Cambodian garment factories, and manufacturing has contributed an increasingly significant proportion of annual GDP.

Finance

Cambodia's commercial banking system was established in 1989–90. It is headed by the National Bank of Cambodia, which functions as the central bank and issues the national currency, the riel. The Foreign Trade Bank, originally established to manage commercial relations with other communist countries, facilitates the financing of the country's commercial activities. Most other banks are either foreign-owned or joint ventures with a foreign partner; the first of these ventures was established in 1992 between the central bank and the Siam Commercial Bank. Foreign bank branches are concentrated in Phnom Penh. The remaining banks are small, private entities, many of which are suspected of engaging in money laundering in connection with regional drug trafficking.

The banking system actually plays only a minor role in public or private finance. Most of the population has little contact with banks, preferring instead to put their limited savings into gold or U.S. dollars. Rather than use the credit services offered by banks, small-scale

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business owners and farmers borrow from relatives, business associations, shopkeepers, or other nonfinancial entities and are often charged exorbitant interest rates.

The government has encouraged foreign investment, particularly through legislation providing tax incentives for foreigners, which has increased capital flow into the country. Hotel construction has intensified, as has foreign investment in the garment industry. Investor confidence, however, has continued to be restrained because of concerns about political instability.

Trade of Cambodia

Cambodia: Major import sources

Cambodia: Major export destinations

Cambodia's trading pattern has changed dramatically since the mid-1980s, when the Soviet Union virtually dominated Cambodia's trade. The country's main import sources now are China, the United States, Thailand, Vietnam, and Hong Kong. Most exports go to the United States, Hong Kong, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Goods are freely smuggled between Cambodia and Thailand, and large volumes of Cambodian imports are undocumented and untaxed. Consequently, trade figures are difficult to interpret. This understood, major retained imports include investment-related products, petroleum products, and durable consumer goods. Until the late 1990s, reexport of imported goods such as cigarettes, motor vehicles, electronics, and gold accounted for the bulk of Cambodia's external trade. Since then garments have eclipsed all other commodities to constitute the bulk of Cambodia's exports. Sawn timber, logs, and rubber, once central to Cambodia's economy, continue to be exported—legitimately—in small quantities.

The success of free trading zones established at the ports of Kâmpôt and Krŏng Kaôh Kŏng in the late 1980s for trade with Thailand and Singapore led to the expansion and legalization of cross-border trade with Thailand. In 1999 Cambodia became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and in 2004 the country joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). Both initiatives required implementing reciprocal tariff reductions and other trade legislation, some of which have posed a perennial challenge to the national budget. The country has long had chronic balance-of-trade deficits.

Services

Cambodia: Angkor Wat

The most important service activity in Cambodia is associated with tourism, which is one of the major sources of overseas investment and the fastest-growing segment of the economy. Tourism has become an important source of revenue and foreign exchange and has helped mitigate the effects of large trade deficits. Much of this investment goes into constructing hotels, developing resorts, and enhancing facilities serving tourists visiting Angkor Wat and Phnom Penh. The number of tourists has been increasing and diversifying. While the first visitors were primarily from socialist countries, Japan, and other parts of Asia, many tourists now arrive from France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other areas predominantly in Europe and North America.

Labour and taxation

Most Cambodians in the workforce are still engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Foreign

investment is essential to job creation in Cambodia. Concerns among foreign investors about political instability and corruption have resulted in limited

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foreign capital inflows and only slow improvements in job opportunities. An additional obstacle to foreign investment and job creation has been the country's lack of a trained and experienced labour force possessing the desired producti

ve skills. Despite these problems, the new garment factories around Phnom Penh have become an important source of manufacturing employment, especially for women. The proportion of women in the labour force—more than half of the total—is one of the largest in the world, an imbalance created in part by the massive destruction of men during the period of Khmer Rouge rule. By law, women are guaranteed equal rights, but traditional views of the proper role of women have prevented women from entering senior management positions in business.

A 1992 law permitted the formation of labour unions. The three main labour federations are the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, the Cambodian Union Federation, and the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The unions have been ineffective largely because the government has determined public-sector wages, and private-sector employers have set wages based on market conditions, unrestrained by union activities. Wages are usually so low that most workers hold more than one job.

The most-important sources of tax revenue in Cambodia have been consumption taxes and customs duties. In 1993 all tax collection and government spending was centralized and placed under the control of the Ministry of Finance, replacing the previous system that allowed individual ministries to assess taxes and spend the resulting revenues. Tax collection subsequently became more effective, and tax revenues increased. During that period new tax policies, instituted to encourage domestic and international investment, provided for lower corporate taxes, tax exemptions of up to eight years for companies in industrial sectors assigned priority status by the government, no taxes on reinvested profits, and tax exemptions on imported capital equipment intended for export-oriented production.

Central Market (Phnom Penh)

The Central Market (Khmer: ផ្សារធំថ្មី, Phsar Thum Thmei; meaning "New Grand Market") is a market and an art deco landmark in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. The bright yellow building completed in 1937 has a 26-metre high central dome, with four tall arch-roofed arms branching out diagonally across the block, creating vast hallways housing countless stalls and a variety of goods. Initially designed by city architect Jean Desbois, construction works were supervised by French architect Louis Chauchon. When it first opened in 1937, it was said to be the biggest market in Asia; today it still operates as a market.

CONCLUSION

The overall objective of this discussion paper is to advance the knowledge on social , cultures , rural livelihoods activities of Cambodia. Lifelihood province in Cambodia which is characterized by a relatively high incidence of poverty and food insecurity. Since diversification of livelihoods has been found to improve living standards and raise livelihood security, it is important to identify constraints and opportunities for households to diversify (Ellis 1998, 2000). Ecker and Diao (2011) asked for more research to identify social , cultures and livelihood groups in Cambodia in order to better understand the major drivers of hunger and malnutrition and to determine the role of agriculture in reducing vulnerability to poverty. Since no up-to-date studies are available from Cambodia in general, and from Stung Treng in specific, we take up

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this task. We consider such a livelihood analysis also as a first step helping to explore the width of our comprehensive data set from a representative survey of 600 households in Stung Treng. Based on the results, further research which digs deeper into the many selected aspects of rural livelihoods is being suggested. The first more detailed research objective was to identify and describe rural livelihood strategies for different household clusters in Stung Treng. households into five clusters which differ according to their major livelihood strategies. Despite the fact that nearly all households are engaged in some form of subsistence farming the richer clusters build on self-employment and higher-skilled wage employment. In contrast the middle income cluster mainly depends on natural resources (fish and firewood) while the poorer two clusters are engaged in lower-skilled wage employment. The incidence of poverty is widespread but differences between the clusters are clearly visible. Even the better-off households have consumption poverty headcount ratios of between 37 to 50% at the PPP $1.25 line. At the PPP $2 line, these ratios rise to considerable 77%, respectively. This shows the high vulnerability of even relatively rich households to fall into poverty. For households from the poorest clusters the poverty headcount ratio amounts to even 70% for income poverty and 80% for consumption poverty at the PPP $1.25 line. Overall, these figures underline the severity of poverty across the clusters in Stung Treng. Especially the households depending to a large extent on natural resource extraction are characterized by a high incidence of poverty and high vulnerability.

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