

"Missing Indigenous Women"
By: Margherita Maffii
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Abstract:

Indigenous communities of the Ratanakiri province have been affected by several changes during the last decades. Among them, the transition from self-subsistence swidden farming toward market-oriented productions and the increasing inflow of non-indigenous settlers in the area have had critical impacts on gender relations. Furthermore, development oriented activities targeting indigenous communities brought with them very partial conceptions, especially this of a weak, subjugated and socially inert indigenous woman.

Such an approach disregards these women's knowledge, skills and status. It thus fails to grasp the crucial role they play in their communities and families; ensuring food security, maintaining ancestral practices and managing the transition toward new agricultural practices under extreme threats and harsh constraints.

The aim of this paper is to make these women visible by showing the key role they play in the cohesion of their communities and the protection of local resources (primarily land).

Biodata:

Margherita Maffii is a Gender and Social researcher based in Cambodia. Her research subject is focused on gender as a social, economic and cultural variable, reflecting and reacting to societal changes, constantly reshaping and restructuring women's and men's relations, role and status. Her research with indigenous women has been supported by various organizations and has been made available by a series of publications over the years.