

Court Says Pornography Harms Women

The Supreme Court of Canada recently ruled that although the nation's criminal obscenity law infringed on the freedom of expression, it was legitimate to outlaw pornography that was harmful to women. In a unanimous decision, the court also redefined obscenity as sexually explicit material that involves violence or degradation.

The court acknowledged that women and children are usually the subjects of pornography, but it said that materials that degrade men would also be covered by the law.

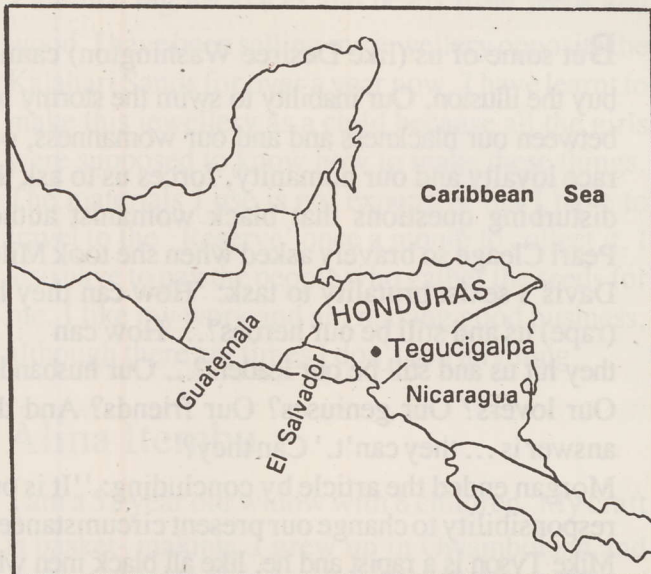
The Canadian decision still allows individual prosecutors to decide which materials violate humanity and meet the test of 'undue sexual

exploitation'. But the court recognised the difficulty of deciding which pornographic materials meet the test.

In its decision it offered new guidelines: "The portrayal of sex coupled with violence will almost always constitute the undue exploitation of sex," it said. It added that explicit sexual material that was non-violent could be prosecuted if it was degrading or dehumanizing. "Degrading or dehumanizing materials place women (and sometimes men) in positions of subordination, servile submission or humiliation," the court said. "They run against the principles of equality and dignity of all human beings."

(Excerpt *The New York Times*, 28/02/92)

Glimpse the Reality of Honduran Women



- * Population - 4.2 million
- * 50,3% of population are women
- * Birthrate - 5.6 children per woman
- * Children under the age of 15 account for 46,8% of the population

Rapid urban growth in recent years has spawned various social problems, including unemployment, lack of adequate housing and basic services, all of which affect women most severely.

The migration of predominantly young women from rural to urban areas, because of a lack of farmland and employment, has resulted in a dramatic increase in numbers of urban women. Of persons concentrated in urban areas, 53% are women.

One of every four women in Honduras above the age of 12 years is the primary, and often sole breadwinner in her family. Honduras has an extreme high child labour rate; second only to Brazil in the world.

Honduras has a high illiteracy rate of 81% (42% women and 39% men). At primary school level, more girls than boys are registered, but at secondary

The women of Honduras, a small country in Central America, has started their own publication with the name *Entre Amigas* (Spanish for Between Women Friends). Sister Namibia wishes to express our solidarity with women in this country.