



Domestic Violence in a Rapidly Growing Border Settlement

A Study of Two Villages in Poipet Commune, Banteay Meanchey Province



Analyzing Development Issues

Trainees (Round 15) and Team

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Cover drawing was supplied by the CWCC.

Abstract

This ADI study seeks to explore the prevalence, types and consequences of domestic violence in Poipet commune, Banteay Meanchey province. The research likewise attempts to identify risk factors and gender relations and roles associated with domestic violence, examine the social acceptance of spousal abuse, and assess the contributions of various individuals and agencies in response to the problem.

Compared with the national surveys previously undertaken in 1996 and 2000, the prevalence of domestic violence in the study area was high. Characteristics identified as major risk factors were a husband's frequent alcohol consumption, a husband's drug taking, and a husband's lack of education. With respect to gender relations the research revealed that women whose husbands manifested controlling behaviors were much more likely to experience abuse than women whose husbands did not manifest these behaviors. In large measure, domestic violence persisted because it was viewed as a private issue rather than as a public concern. Moreover, domestic violence was not seen as a crime committed by a husband perpetrator against a wife victim, but as the outcome of conflict between mutual protagonists. Given the multidimensional aspects of domestic violence successful interventions were observed to require responses on several levels.

Domestic Violence in a Rapidly Growing Border Settlement: A Study of Two Villages in Poipet Commune, Banteay Meanchey Province

Problem Statement

Over the past decade policy makers and development practitioners have come to an increasing awareness of the problem of domestic violence in Cambodia. In late 1994 a ground-breaking study entitled *Plates in a Basket Will Rattle* drew attention to the brutality of wife beating in the country.¹ A follow up study conducted in 1996 by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Project Against Domestic Violence reported that 16 per cent of the women interviewed had suffered domestic violence. Over half of the abused women surveyed sustained injuries; 52 per cent were hit by objects, 49 per cent were kicked, and 36 per cent were threatened with a knife or gun. A nationwide survey conducted in 2000 by the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Health revealed that 18 per cent of the married women interviewed had experienced spousal abuse.

Studies conducted on domestic violence in Cambodia over the past decade have helped to identify factors for women at risk. They have likewise stressed the importance of understanding gender roles and relations in analyzing the problem. Research too has pointed out that social attitudes allow violence against wives to persist and go unpunished. Astutely, studies have emphasized that successful interventions take cognizance of the cultural and social context in which the violent behavior occurs. This increased knowledge of domestic violence can now be applied to research in specific areas of the country where rapid economic and social change often erupts into various manifestations of conflict.

Poipet commune in Banteay Meanchey province is a rapidly growing settlement on the Thai border, which as an economic zone and casino haven provides numerous job opportunities for permanent and migrant workers. It likewise gives rise to problems such as inadequate security, land conflicts, insufficient provision of house lots and shelter, alcohol and drug use, gambling, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS. While Poipet holds promise for greater prosperity and the well-being of spouses, it also presents dangers leading to the deterioration of married life. The contradictions generated by the market-driven economy and the changing social environment of Poipet make it a compelling site for the study of domestic violence. Of note, the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC), a Cambodian NGO which raises awareness about domestic violence and addresses the diverse needs of abused women, conducts a major program in Poipet commune. This ADI study seeks to explore the prevalence, types and consequences of domestic violence

¹ Cathy Zimmerman, *Plates in a Basket Will Rattle: Domestic Violence in Cambodia*, (Phnom Penh: Asia Foundation/USAID, 1994).

in Poipet commune.² The research likewise attempts to identify risk factors and gender relations and roles associated with domestic violence, examine the social acceptance of spousal abuse, and assess the contributions of various individuals and agencies in response to the problem.

Research Objectives

- To explore the prevalence, types and consequences of domestic violence in the study area.
- To identify risk factors associated with domestic violence.
- To explore gender relations and roles associated with domestic violence.
- To examine the social acceptance of domestic violence.
- To assess the contributions of various individuals and agencies in response to the problem.

Key Questions

Prevalence, Types and Consequences of Domestic Violence

1. How prevalent is domestic violence against women in the study area? How often does it take place? How serious is it? 2. What forms does it take? For example, shaking, slapping, punching, hitting with objects, threatening or attacking with weapons? 3. What are the consequences of domestic violence against women? Physical injury? Long-term health problems? Loss of work? Separation or divorce? Affects on children? Avoidance by other villagers? 4. Are there any consequences for men who commit violence against their wives?

Risk Factors Associated with Domestic Violence

1. What are the background and household characteristics of women who experience domestic violence? For example, age, education, number of children, proximity of relatives, economic status, independent source of income? 2. What are the background and behavioral characteristics of their husbands? For example, education, occupation, time away from home, membership in the army or police, getting drunk, taking drugs, or gambling? 3. Are there spousal differences in age and education common to women who experience violence? 4. Are there factors related to Poipet as a rapidly growing border settlement, which contribute to domestic violence?

Gender Relations and Roles Associated with Domestic Violence

1. To what extent do gender relations and roles contribute to the problem? 2. How does marital decision making affect women's experience of violence? 3. Do attitudes justifying wife-beating exist? If so, are they of any consequence? 4. Do manifestations of husband's controlling behavior contribute to the incidence of violence?

² In this study the term domestic violence is used to describe the physical hurt inflicted by husbands against their wives. It is used interchangeably with the terms spousal violence and spousal abuse.

Social Acceptance of Domestic Violence

1. Is domestic violence considered a problem in the village? Why? Why not? 2. To what extent is domestic violence considered a private or a public issue? To what extent is it considered a human rights issue? 3. Are there circumstances or situations under which domestic violence is considered acceptable? What are these circumstances or situations? 4. What cultural and social factors underlie these attitudes?

Individual and Agency Responses to Domestic Violence

1. To what extent do women seek help after being physically hurt by their husbands? 2. Who do they turn to for help? Relatives, friends, neighbors, local authorities, police, NGOs? 3. How do these people and groups respond? What types of assistance do they provide? 4. Has anything been done to raise awareness and change attitudes about domestic violence in the villages? 5. To what extent do various agencies work together to address the problem? 6. What is the contribution of CWCC's approach? 7. What still needs to be done?

Research Methods

This Analyzing Development Issues (ADI) research was conducted by 19 ADI Round 15 trainees with assistance from 3 ADI facilitation team members. The field research was conducted from February 17-19, 2005 in the villages of Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean, Poipet commune, O'Chrou district, Banteay Meanchey province. The trainees were divided into two teams with each team responsible for gathering information in one of the two villages.

Two primary research methods were used: key informant interviews and a survey questionnaire. The key informant interviews were conducted with women in the two villages who had sought assistance from either CWCC or local authorities after being physically hurt by their husbands. Key informant interviews were also conducted with women currently living at CWCC's confidential shelter. In addition key informant interviews were conducted with local authorities, village volunteers, police, and CWCC staff. The survey questionnaire was conducted in the two villages with ever-married women 15 to 49 years of age chosen through purposive sampling. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic all interviews were conducted under strict privacy and confidentiality.

Review of National Survey Findings of 2000 on Domestic Violence

A recently published comparative study of domestic violence in nine developing countries included the case of Cambodia.³ The data for Cambodia was based on the national survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Ministry of Health in

³ Sunita Kishor and Kiersten Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence: A Multi-Country Study*, (Calverton, Maryland: ORC Macro, 2004).

2000. Questions on domestic violence were asked to 2,403 ever-married women from the ages of 15-49.

Prevalence

The national survey revealed that 18 per cent of the women interviewed suffered spousal violence and 15 per cent had been abused in the past 12 months. The most common types of abuse reported were slaps and arm-twisting (11 per cent) and pushing, shaking, and having something thrown at them (10 per cent). Only one percent of all the women interviewed reported violence by a husband during pregnancy. For 35 per cent of the abused women the violence started in the first two years of their marriage.

Conversely, 4 per cent of the women surveyed had beaten their husbands with the prevalence much higher among abused women. In all, 10 per cent of the women who had been abused themselves had abused their husbands, compared with 2 per cent of the women who had never been abused. This suggested that a large part of the reported violence by women against their husbands had occurred in relationships where violence had been used by both spouses.

According to the survey, the large majority (78 per cent) of women who experienced physical violence did not seek help. Those women who did seek help did so mainly from their own families and from friends and neighbors. Crucially, 37 per cent of the women who had experienced violence had suffered bruises and aches.

Risk Factors

According to the survey results, the more children a woman had the more likely she was to report having experienced violence. Indeed, 7 per cent of women with no children reported having experienced domestic violence, compared with 15 per cent of women with one or two children, 17 per cent of women with three or four children, and 22 per cent of women with five or more children.

By contrast, the more education a woman had, the less likely she was to report having experienced violence. Specifically, 21 per cent of women who had no education declared they had experienced violence, compared with 17 per cent of those with primary education, and 12 per cent of those with secondary or higher education.

Women whose husbands had higher levels of education similarly experienced lower rates of domestic violence. To illustrate, 25 per cent of women whose husbands had no education experienced spousal abuse, compared with 18 per cent whose husbands had primary education, and 12 per cent whose husbands had secondary or higher education. With respect to spousal educational differences, women were at highest risk of violence when both partners were uneducated.

Women from poorer households were also more likely to experienced domestic violence. For example, 24 per cent of women in the lowest wealth quintile suffered domestic abuse,

compared to 19 per cent in the second wealth quintile, 15 per cent in the middle quintile, and 14 per cent in both the fourth and the highest quintiles.

Perhaps not surprisingly, women who reported that their husbands came home drunk frequently were the most likely to report having experienced domestic violence. In the survey, about 11 to 13 per cent of women whose husbands never came home drunk (either because they did not drink alcohol or because they did not get drunk) reported having experienced violence, whereas almost half (49 per cent) of the women whose husbands came home drunk frequently reported spousal abuse.

Curiously, having a family history of domestic violence between one's parents increased the likelihood of experiencing violence oneself. Women who reported that their fathers had abused their mothers were more likely to have experienced violence than women who said that their fathers had not abused their mothers. In the survey, 30 per cent of women whose fathers beat their mothers had experienced violence, compared with 15 per cent among those who said that their fathers did not beat their mothers.

Gender Relations and Roles

Gender relations and roles may affect or be affected by the prevalence of violence against women in a given society. The survey considered several indicators of gender relations and roles. Among these were women's participation in various types of household decision-making, their acceptance of wife-beating by husbands, and controlling behaviors by husbands that could limit women's lives.

The survey findings demonstrated that rates of domestic violence tended to be lower for couples who shared responsibility for household decisions than for couples in which the husband or the wife made household decisions alone. However, the lower rates of violence for couples who had never experienced violence, compared with those who had, varied only slightly (from 2 to 11 per cent) on specific items of joint decision-making.

The survey likewise asked women whether they agreed that husbands were justified in beating their wives for various reasons.⁴ The women who agreed with the right of husbands to physically dominate their wives were hypothesized to be less empowered than women who disavowed these rights. In the study agreement for reasons justifying wife-beating was higher among women who had experienced violence than among those who had never experienced violence. At the same time the higher rates for specific reasons ranged from only 2 to 5 per cent. What were notable were the relatively high percentages of women in both groups who found reasons justifiable. In all 46 per cent of the women who had experienced violence, and 39 per cent of women who had never experienced violence, agreed with at least one of the reasons presented justifying a husband beating his wife.

⁴ The reasons were: 1) if she goes out without telling him; 2) if she neglects the children; 3) if she argues with him; 4) if she refuses to have sex with him; and 5) if she does not prepare the food properly or on time.

In addition, survey respondents were asked about husbands' behaviors which sought to circumscribe their lives. The expectation was that rates of violence would be higher for women whose husbands demonstrated controlling behaviors and that the rates would rise with the number of controlling behaviors manifested.

For each of the six types of behavior listed, rates of experienced violence were much higher for women who said that their husband manifested the behavior than for women who said he did not.⁵ Indeed, the experienced violence rates were from 25 to 37 per cent higher when a given behavior was displayed than when it was not. At the same time the likelihood of violence increased to a point with the number of controlling behaviors manifested by a husband. While the experience of violence was only 10 per cent per cent among women whose husbands did not manifest any of the six behaviors, it rose to 27 per cent among those who manifested one or two of the behaviors, and then to 49 per cent among women whose husbands manifested three to four of these behaviors.

The cross country study concluded that controlling behaviors manifested by husbands in Cambodia and in the other eight countries studied appeared to be far more important in increasing women's risk of experiencing violence than their lack of empowerment, as measured by indicators of decision-making and acceptance of gender-role norms.

Findings and Analysis of Domestic Violence in Poipet Commune

Prevalence and Types

Compared with the national surveys previously undertaken in 1996 and 2000, the prevalence of domestic violence in the Poipet study area was high. In all, 41 per cent of the women interviewed experienced domestic violence (Table 1). The incidence of abuse was practically identical in the two villages surveyed: 40 per cent in Prachea Thom and 42 per cent in Kbal Spean. The most common acts of violence reported were slaps and arm-twisting and pushing, shaking, and having something thrown at them. But punching, kicking, threatening with weapons, and physical hurt while pregnant were likewise all too prevalent. The fact that 29 per cent of the women had experienced violence in the past year meant that they were currently at risk of violence.

For the largest single group of abused women, the domestic violence experienced had started in the first two years of their marriage (35 per cent). For others, the abuse had started three to four years after marriage (22 per cent), five to nine years after marriage (16 per cent), and, surprisingly for many, 10 or more years after marriage (26 per cent).

In all, 43 per cent of the women that had experienced violence asserted that they had done something to physically hurt their husbands when their husbands were beating

⁵ The six controlling behaviors were: 1) the husband is jealous/angry if she talks to other men; 2) he frequently accuses her of being unfaithful; 3) he does not permit her to meet her girlfriends; 4) he limits her contact with her family; 5) he insists on knowing where she is all the time; and 6) he does not trust her with money.

them. This could be construed as violence committed in self-defense. However, 22 per cent of the abused women also acknowledged that they had done something to physically hurt their husbands even when their husbands were not in the act of beating them.

| Table 1. Experience of Domestic Violence Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old), Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| | Experienced domestic violence | | Experienced in last 12 months | |
| | # | % | # | % |
| Husband committed at least one form of domestic violence against respondent | 51 | 41% | 36 | 29% |
| Husband pushed, shook, or threw something at respondent | 32 | 26% | 21 | 17% |
| Husband slapped or twisted respondents arm | 32 | 26% | 22 | 18% |
| Husband punched respondent with his fist or with something that could hurt her | 25 | 20% | 16 | 13% |
| Husband kicked or dragged respondent | 19 | 15% | 15 | 12% |
| Husband threatened respondent with a knife, gun, or other weapon | 15 | 12% | 11 | 9% |
| Husband physically hurt respondent when she was pregnant | 15 | 12% | 11 | 9% |
| Husband physically forced respondent to have sexual intercourse with him even when she did not want to | 7 | 8% | 6 | 5% |
| Husband tried to strangle or burn respondent | 5 | 4% | 4 | 3% |
| Husband attacked respondent with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon | 5 | 4% | 2 | 2% |
| n=123 | | | | |

Consequences Reported by Abused Women

The most frequent consequences of domestic violence reported by abused women were physical harm and health problems. Of the 51 women claiming abuse, 61 per cent had suffered bruises and aches, 37 per cent in the past year alone. Similarly, 25 per cent of abused women had gone to a doctor or health center, 12 per cent just recently in the past year. Moreover, 16 per cent of women had sustained injuries or a broken bone, 8 per cent just in the past year. Despite these physical manifestations of violence, only 12 per cent (6 of 51) of the women reporting abuse declared that their husbands had been arrested and put in jail because of the violence committed against them.

Other consequences mentioned by the 51 abused women were that they had not socialized with other villagers (18 per cent), that their children were prevented from attending school (16 per cent), that they had been unable to work (14 per cent), and that they had been separated from their children (8 per cent), and that they had been less involved in community development activities (8 per cent).

The Story of Heng Sopheap

Heng Sopheap, now 35 years old, was born in Kompong Cham. She met and married her husband, Chim Sovanna, in Kompong Cham while he was stationed there with the army. Sovanna, now 36 years old, was originally from Prey Veng. The couple worked as farmers in Kompong Cham and raised a family of four children. However due to the lack of rice land available in her home province, Sopheap and Sovanna decided to migrate to Poipet commune in Banteay Meanchey province. After living in Poipet for some years, the couple was awarded a house and lot in the Prachea Thom resettlement area in 2000. Sovanna worked as a motor taxi driver and Sopheap stayed at home to care for the children.

Problems developed between the couple when Sovanna began to have an affair with Sopheap's first cousin who also lived in Poipet. When Sopheap confronted her husband about his extramarital relationship, he would get angry and start to beat her. Several beatings occurred until one day the violence escalated to a point where her husband almost strangled her to death. Fortunately, the neighbors intervened and saved her. Sopheap went to the police who in turn referred her to the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) in Poipet. Physically weak, emotionally devastated, and without a source of income, Sopheap was to spend more than six months in the CWCC shelter in Sisophon with her two younger children. Her husband was never arrested or jailed.

With legal assistance from CWCC, Sopheap filed for, and was granted, a divorce. However, the house and lot in Prochea Thom were awarded to her husband as were the custody of the two older children. Sopheap contested these decisions. The two older children, a boy 15 years old and a girl 13 years old, were presently living with her husband's mother in Prey Veng while the two younger children, a girl 9 years old and a boy 8 years old, lived with her and her sisters in a rented house in Prochea Thom. With sewing skills learned in the CWCC center and with sewing machines provided by CWCC, Sopheap and her sisters sewed garments for a Cambodian businessman who marketed the clothes in Thailand.

Chim Sovanna continued to live in the couple's resettlement house with Sopheap's now pregnant first cousin. When asked whether she would ever consider reconciliation with her husband if an opportunity arose, Sopheap indicated that she would. She said that it was difficult for her to live by herself. She had been able to support the children, including the two in Prey Veng, but they had just enough to survive. A husband would be able to help. But her husband was firm that he would not go back with her, so she was also determined that she would not go back with him.

Risk Factors Associated with Domestic Violence

The factors contributing to the occurrence of domestic violence are not well understood. By examining selected background characteristics of women and their husbands, and the households in which they live, one begins to identify variables that are associated with an increased risk of experiencing spousal violence.⁶ The research considered the characteristics and context of violence under aspects of the women's own background, spousal differences, household circumstances, and the husband's background and behavior.

⁶ This section draws on "Chapter 3, Risk Factors for the Experience of Domestic Violence," Kishor and Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence*.

Women's Background Characteristics

The rate of experienced violence for all of the women surveyed was shown above to be 41 per cent. But the question remained: what kinds of women were likely to fall into this group? Reviewing the background characteristics of the women who experienced violence helped to isolate some of the risk factors associated with spousal abuse (Table 2).

| Table 2. Background Characteristics of Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old), Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marital Status | Percentage of women experiencing domestic violence in each category (number against total) |
| Married only once | 39% (37 of 94) |
| Married more than once | 39% (9 of 23) |
| Widowed | 83% (5 of 6) |
| Current Age | |
| 15-19 | 100% (1 of 1) |
| 20-29 | 33% (10 of 30) |
| 30-39 | 50% (26 of 52) |
| 40-49 | 35% (14 of 40) |
| Age at Marriage | |
| 19 and less | 32% (14 of 43) |
| 20-24 | 52% (22 of 42) |
| 25 and over | 39% (15 of 38) |
| Number of Children Ever Born | |
| 0 | 44% (4 of 9) |
| 1-2 | 36% (16 of 44) |
| 3-4 | 53% (20 of 38) |
| 5 or more | 34% (11 of 32) |
| Education | |
| No education | 42% (20 of 47) |
| Primary | 43% (28 of 65) |
| Secondary or higher | 27% (3 of 11) |
| n=123 | |

It was thought that women married more than once or who were divorced or separated would report higher rates of violence than women married only once. Arguably, domestic violence could be an important reason for marriage dissolution. However, the survey showed that equal percentages of the women married more than once and married only once had experienced domestic violence. By comparison, being a widow (a term often synonymous with being divorced or separated) indicated a violent background. A large majority of the small sample of widows interviewed had experienced domestic violence.

While younger women could be considered more susceptible to domestic violence due to their vulnerability, older women with a longer period of exposure could conceivably have sustained greater risk. Neither one of these patterns emerged from the data. Women

currently in their thirties were more likely to have experienced domestic violence than those in their twenties or forties. The only exception noted: one respondent under twenty had experienced violence.

Marriage at younger ages was seen to increase the risk of violence due to the woman's low status and lack of maturity. Inexplicably, the study indicated that women married in their teens suffered lower levels of abuse than those married at older ages. However, as expected, women married at the age of 25 and over experienced lower levels of violence than those married between the ages of 20 and 24.

Given the demands of raising children, it was hypothesized that an increase in a woman's number of children would consistently increase her risk of domestic violence.⁷ This trend was not borne out by the data. While the rate of experienced violence increased drastically from women with one or two children to women with three or four children, it then dropped sharply for women with five or more children. Moreover, rates of violence for women with no children were high.

Women with more education were assumed to experience less domestic violence, since they had more knowledge and resources to deal with a violent husband. The research demonstrated that this was true only for those women who had attended secondary or higher education. This small group of respondent experienced a decidedly lower rate of abuse.

Spousal Differences

Risk factors for women's vulnerability to domestic violence must also take into account differences between husbands and wives. When two people of different backgrounds come together in marriage, the union may create tensions that ultimately result in marital conflict. The study tried to identify spousal differences in age and education associated with the experience of domestic violence (Table 3).

A wife much younger than her husband could be deemed more prone to violence due to the power imbalances between the two. Conversely, a woman older than her husband could be regarded at risk for entering a marital arrangement that went against the norm. The data from this study presented no consistent pattern, although women who were both younger and closer to the age of their husbands experienced the least violence.

Women in relationships in which both spouses were educated were thought to suffer lower rates of violence. Similarly, woman of equal educational status with their husbands were seen to be more compatible with their partners and thus less disposed to violence. Research findings supported these views disclosing that spousal educational differences were a risk factor in situations where husbands had less education and where both

⁷ Some authors have argued that increased numbers of children in a household may be a result, rather than a cause, of domestic violence, since women who experience spousal abuse may be less able to control their own sexuality and fertility. See Kishor and Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence*.

spouses had none. Women in these circumstances suffered greater rates of violence than those where husbands had the same educational level or had more education.

| Table 3. Spousal Differences of Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old) and Their Husbands, Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Spousal Age Differences | Percentage of women experiencing domestic violence in each category (number against total) |
| Husband is | |
| Younger | 42% (17 of 40) |
| 0-4 years older | 37% (17 of 46) |
| 5-9 years older | 48% (13 of 27) |
| 10 years or more | 40% (4 of 10) |
| | |
| Spousal Educational Differences | |
| Husband has | |
| Less education | 67% (8 of 12) |
| Both have none | 50% (3 of 6) |
| Same education | 32% (11 of 34) |
| More education | 41% (24 of 58) |
| Don't know | 38% (5 of 13) |
| n=123 | |

Household Characteristics

The contexts in which women live likewise lend insight into her risk for domestic violence. The study examined several household characteristics associated with the experience of domestic violence (Table 4).

Given the demands on recent migrants to find work and shelter and to build social networks, it was speculated that the longer length of a woman's residence in Poipet would be positively associated with a diminished experience of violence. Indeed, the reverse was true. The survey revealed that women who had migrated to Poipet before 2000 had experienced a higher rate of abuse than those who had come since the new millennium.

Having one's own family members residing in Poipet was considered a moderating influence. It was thought that the proximity of a woman's own family members (mother, father, sister, or brother) would act as a deterrent to violence. However, women with their own family members living in the commune experienced slightly higher levels of violence than those with no resident family members.

Having one's husband's family members residing in Poipet was viewed more ambiguously. It was thought that the presence of the husband's family members could support the marital relationship or, alternatively, serve as an enabling factor for abuse. Women with their husband's family members living in the commune did experience slightly higher levels of violence than those with no husband family members nearby.

| Table 4. Household Characteristics of Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old), Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Length of woman's residence in Poipet | Percentage of women experiencing domestic violence in each category (number against total) |
| Migrated to Poipet before 2000 | 46% (38 of 82) |
| Migrated to Poipet since 2000 | 32% (13 of 41) |
| | |
| Family members of woman residing in Poipet | 44% (25 of 57) |
| | |
| Family members of woman's husband residing in Poipet | 46% (19 of 41) |
| | |
| Levels of Household Earnings | |
| 5,000 riels or less per day | 44% (14 of 32) |
| 5,001 riels – 10,000 riels per day | 44% (26 of 59) |
| More than 10,000 riels per day | 34% (11 of 32) |
| | |
| Woman Having Independent Source of Income | 44% (35 of 80) |
| n=123 | |

While poverty has generally been considered a significant risk factor for domestic violence, the nine country comparative study showed no consistent relationship between the risk of violence and the poverty-wealth status of the households in which the women resided. This noted, in most countries women in the highest wealth quintile were the least likely to report having experienced spousal abuse.⁸ The present study showed no differences in the rates of violence for woman in households earning 5,000 riels (US\$ 1.25) or less per day compared with woman in households earning from 5,001 to 10,000 riels per day. By contrast, women in households earning 10,000 riels or more per day did experience a markedly lower rate of violence.

Having an independent source of income was viewed equivocally. A woman with her own financial resources could exert more control over her life. Conversely, a woman with money could become the focus of a husband's attack for cash. The study pointed out that a woman having an independent source of income was associated with slightly increased levels of domestic violence.

Husband's Characteristics

Domestic violence against women cannot be understood thoroughly without an appreciation of the characteristics of the husband who inflicts the harm. The study explored selected background and behavioral characteristics of husbands associated with the experience of domestic violence (Table 5).

Women whose husbands had low education levels were thought to be more at risk for violence. In the survey women whose husbands had no education experienced decidedly higher rates of abuse. But contrary to expectation, the rates of violence for women whose

⁸ See Kishor and Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence*.

husbands had attended secondary or higher education were not lower than those of women whose husbands had attended only primary school.

| Table 5. Husband's Characteristics of Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old), Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Husband's Education | Percentage of women experiencing domestic violence in each category (number against total) |
| No education | 59% (10 of 17) |
| Primary | 38% (20 of 52) |
| Secondary or higher | 39% (16 of 41) |
| Don't know | 38% (5 of 13) |
| Husband's Work | |
| Agriculture | 37% (3 of 8) |
| Non-agricultural | 41% (44 of 107) |
| Has no work | 57% (4 of 7) |
| Absence of husband for more than one month due to work | 70% (12 of 17) |
| Ever Member of Army or Police | 49% (34 of 69) |
| Alcohol Use | |
| Doesn't drink | 21% (7 of 33) |
| Never gets drunk | 33% (2 of 6) |
| Gets drunk occasionally | 31% (15 of 49) |
| Gets drunk frequently | 77% (27 of 35) |
| Drug Use | |
| Never takes drugs | 38% (44 of 114) |
| Takes drugs | 78% (7 of 9) |
| Gambling | |
| Doesn't gamble | 40% (35 of 88) |
| Does gamble | 46% (16 of 35) |
| n=123 | |

Women with husbands engaged in agricultural work, which usually demanded family cooperation, were contemplated to experience less violence than women with husbands engaged in non-agricultural work. This was confirmed by the survey findings, although the predominance of non-agricultural work in Poipet made it difficult to make meaningful comparisons. Incidence of domestic violence was high for the small number of women whose husband's had no work.

Absence of husbands from the household for more than one month due to their work was thought to be a risk factor. This was indeed the case as 70 per cent of the women affected by their husband's absence experienced domestic violence.

Similarly, a husband's membership in the army or police was considered to be a risk factor. As expected, women whose husbands were ever in the army or police suffered a higher than average rate of domestic violence.

In the comparative study of nine developing countries women who reported that their husbands came home drunk frequently were the most likely to report having experienced violence. Of all the variables hypothesized to influence the likelihood of domestic violence in the multi-country research, a husband's habitual drunkenness had one of the strongest, most consistent relationships to abuse.⁹ The survey data from Poipet likewise conformed to this pattern. Women whose husbands got drunk frequently experienced a 77 per cent rate of violence. Clearly, a husband's routine drunkenness was as a major risk factor for women in the study area.

Similarly, a woman whose husband took drugs was seen to be in a high-risk situation. Once again this held true for the relatively small number of women affected. Overall, 78 per cent of women whose husbands took drugs suffered domestic violence.

Gambling was prevalent in the study area and was considered to be a potential risk factor. This was supported by the data. Women with husbands who gambled experienced a higher rate of violence than women whose husbands did not gamble.

Risk Factors Identified by Abused Women

The study also recorded risk factors identified by the abused women themselves. Of the 51 women surveyed who reported spousal violence, 59 per cent mentioned their husband's drinking as a reason for abuse, 27 per cent noted their husband's accusations of being unfaithful, and 25 per cent pointed to their husband's gambling. Furthermore, 18 per cent of the abused women cited their husband's having a second wife, while 12 per cent identified their refusal to give their husband money as a reason for violence. Moreover, 10 per cent of the abused women listed each of the following reasons: their not preparing food on time, their not taking care of the children properly, their refusal to have sex with their husband, and their husband taking drugs. Of note, while most of the reasons given concerned the behavior of husbands, some of the reasons offered pertained to the behavior of the women themselves.

⁹ See Kishor and Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence*.

The Story of Nhem Bunnary

Nhem Bunnary, now in her mid-thirties, was married at 15 years of age. Originally, from Battambang, her family had sold rice land to pay for health expenses, which left Bunnary and her husband, both illiterate, with few opportunities to earn money. So the couple moved to Poipet commune in Banteay Meanchey in the mid-1980s and worked as laborers or at any other jobs that became available. Early on the couple had earnings sufficient to support themselves and their children. But about five years ago Bunnary's husband, Chea Narin, started to drink heavily, take drugs and gamble and their fortunes reversed. Narin became excessively jealous and accused Bunnary of being unfaithful. Then the beatings started. She suffered head injuries that required stitches. She endured bruised eyes. She sustained leg contusions that prevented her from walking for two weeks. Due to the severity of her injuries the police detained and released her husband on three separate occasions. Bunnary lamented, "At times I reported him to the police, at times my sister reported him to the police, but somehow I was always still with him."

During the violence outbreaks of her husband, Bunnary escaped to the house of her mother. Neighbors also helped and put her in contact with the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) in Poipet. After one incident Bunnary sought refuge at the CWCC office in Poipet for one week. During her stay at CWCC husband and wife received counseling and education and Chea Narin committed to change his behavior. CWCC drew up a contract stipulating the conditions for reconciliation and both spouses thumb printed the agreement. Although the beatings stopped for a while, Narin still bullied and cursed Bunnary to get money for his drinking and drug taking. At one point during a serious quarrel the beating resumed and she left the children with relatives and went to work in Thailand for eight months as a domestic helper.

Returning to Poipet, Bunnary found work in the marketplace. But with her husband at home without work and no money the marital union deteriorated further. When Bunnary asked her husband for a separation, he threatened to kill her. Now living at the CWCC shelter in Sisophon with four of her six children, Bunnary was convinced that she would either be killed or would commit suicide if she remained with her husband any longer. "I don't care who will keep custody of the children," she said in despair, "I have decided to go to my mother's village in Takeo. He will not follow me there. I will be able to take care of the children and send them to school." Bunnary's determination to make a new life for herself and her children with or without a divorce showed visibly through her tears.

Gender Relations and Roles Associated with Domestic Violence

Following the comparative study of domestic violence in nine developing countries, this research considered several indicators of gender relations and roles as crucial to an understanding of domestic violence. Among these were women's participation in various types of household decision-making, their acceptance of wife-beating by husbands, and controlling behaviors by husbands that could limit women's lives.¹⁰

Decision-making

Participation in decisions about one's own needs, household needs, and the needs of children may be construed as an indicator of women's involvement with and command over their immediate surroundings. Women may be actively inhibited from participating in what transpires in their households through the controlling behavior of their spouses.

¹⁰ This section draws on "Chapter 4, Domestic Violence and Women's Empowerment," Kishor and Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence*.

Alternatively, women’s attempts to make decisions in spheres that transcend accepted norms may give rise to violence. Joint decision-making may be interpreted as a process that negotiates between either extreme and thus lowers the incidence of violence. The research showed that in most instances the experience of domestic violence was proportionally lower, sometimes considerably lower, for couples who made household decisions jointly than for couples in which the husband or the wife made household decisions alone (Table 6).

| Table 6. Attitudes About Decision Making Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old), Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| Who should make decisions about: | Wife alone | | Wife jointly with husband | | Husband alone | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| What Food to Cook Each Day | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 31 | 61% | 12 | 23% | 8 | 16% |
| Never experienced violence | 44 | 62% | 26 | 37% | 1 | 1% |
| Wife’s Health Care | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 23 | 45% | 15 | 29% | 13 | 25% |
| Never experienced violence | 13 | 18% | 46 | 65% | 12 | 17% |
| Treatment of Children’s Illnesses | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 25 | 50% | 18 | 36% | 7 | 14% |
| Never experienced violence | 21 | 30% | 43 | 61% | 6 | 8% |
| Visits to Family, Friends, or Relatives | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 10 | 20% | 27 | 53% | 14 | 27% |
| Never experienced violence | 4 | 6% | 58 | 83% | 8 | 11% |
| Making Large Household Purchases | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 11 | 21% | 28 | 55% | 12 | 23% |
| Never experienced violence | 11 | 16% | 52 | 74% | 7 | 10% |
| Having Another Child | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 17 | 34% | 22 | 44% | 11 | 8% |
| Never experienced violence | 17 | 24% | 46 | 65% | 8 | 11% |
| Contraception | | | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 20 | 41% | 22 | 45% | 7 | 14% |
| Never experienced violence | 22 | 33% | 34 | 51% | 11 | 16% |
| n=51 for ever experienced violence n=72 for never experienced violence Note: Not all respondents answered each question. | | | | | | |

Justification for Violence

The study also asked questions about women’s attitudes toward wife-beating. These questions examined women’s acceptance of norms that grant men power over women and subordinate the rights of women to those of men. One hypothesis considered was that women who accepted the role of wives as subordinate to husbands would be less subject to violence because they conformed to traditional role expectations. However, the study found no evidence that women who agreed with the justification of husbands to beat their wives experienced lower rates of violence. For all the reasons asked, rates of spousal violence were higher, in some instances much higher, among women who agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife (Table 7). Explaining this from an alternative

view, it could be hypothesized that the experience of violence had inculcated into the abused women an acceptance of these norms.

| Table 7. Prevalence of Violence Among Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old) Who Agree and Disagree about Husbands Hurting their Wives, Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| A husband is justified in physically hurting his wife: | Agree | | Disagree | |
| | Number | Percentage of women among total who agreed | Number | Percentage of women among total who disagreed |
| If she goes out without telling him | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 37 | 45.7% | 14 | 33.3% |
| Never experienced violence | 44 | 54.3% | 28 | 66.7% |
| Total | 81 | 100% | 42 | 100% |
| If she neglects the children | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 37 | 48.0% | 14 | 30.4% |
| Never experienced violence | 40 | 52.0% | 32 | 69.6% |
| Total | 77 | 100% | 46 | 100% |
| If she argues with him or answers back | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 23 | 46.0% | 28 | 38.4% |
| Never experienced violence | 27 | 54.0% | 45 | 61.6% |
| Total | 50 | 100% | 73 | 100% |
| If she refuses to have sex with him | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 13 | 48.1% | 38 | 39.6% |
| Never experienced violence | 14 | 51.9% | 58 | 60.4% |
| Total | 27 | 100% | 96 | 100% |
| If she does not prepare the food | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 34 | 47.2% | 17 | 33.3% |
| Never experienced violence | 38 | 52.8% | 34 | 66.7% |
| Total | 72 | 100% | 51 | 100% |
| If she talks with other men and he suspects she is unfaithful | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 8 | 42.1% | 43 | 41.3% |
| Never experienced violence | 11 | 57.9% | 61 | 58.7% |
| Total | 19 | 100% | 104 | 100% |
| If she has vices (gambling, drinking, taking drugs) | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 48 | 44.0% | 3 | 21.4% |
| Never experienced violence | 61 | 56.0% | 11 | 78.6% |
| Total | 109 | 100% | 14 | 100% |
| Agrees with at least one reason | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 50 | 42.4% | 1 | 20.0% |
| Never experienced violence | 68 | 57.6% | 4 | 80.0% |
| Total | 118 | 100% | 5 | 100% |
| n=123 for total respondents n=51 for ever experienced violence n=72 for never experienced violence | | | | |

The study likewise explored whether agreement with the different reasons justifying a husband beating his wife varied by women's experience of violence. In all instances agreement was higher among women who had experienced violence than among those

who had never experienced violence (Table 8). Moreover, it was quite remarkable to find such high percentages of both groups in the study area who found some reasons for wife-beating justifiable.

| Table 8. Extent of Agreement of Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old) Whether Experienced or Never Experienced Violence about Husbands Hurting their Wives, Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Reason justifying a husband beating his wife | Agree | |
| | Number | Percentage |
| If she goes out without telling him | | |
| Experienced violence | 37 | 72% |
| Never experienced violence | 44 | 61% |
| If she neglects the children | | |
| Experienced violence | 37 | 72% |
| Never experienced violence | 40 | 56% |
| If she argues with him/answers back | | |
| Experienced violence | 23 | 45% |
| Never experienced violence | 27 | 37% |
| If she refuses to have sex with him | | |
| Experienced violence | 13 | 25% |
| Never experienced violence | 14 | 19% |
| If she does not prepare the food | | |
| Experienced violence | 34 | 67% |
| Never experienced violence | 38 | 53% |
| If she talks with other men and he suspects she is unfaithful | | |
| Experienced violence | 8 | 16% |
| Never experienced violence | 11 | 15% |
| If she has vices (gambling, drinking, taking drugs) | | |
| Experienced violence | 48 | 94% |
| Never experienced violence | 61 | 85% |
| Agree with at least one reason | | |
| Experienced violence | 50 | 98% |
| Never experienced violence | 68 | 94% |
| n=51 for ever experienced violence n=72 for never experienced violence | | |

Husbands' Controlling Behavior

Husbands' subjugation of wives lies at the core of domestic violence. In the study, women were asked about the incidence of their husband's behaviors which sought to control their interactions with other people or limit their sphere of activity. The expectation was that rates of violence would be higher for women whose husbands demonstrated these controlling behaviors. For each type of behavior inquired about, rates of experienced violence were higher - for five types considerably higher - for women who said that their husband manifested the behavior than for women who said he did not (Table 9).

It was further hypothesized that the rates of violence would rise with the number of controlling behaviors manifested. In the research the likelihood of violence increased to a point with the number of controlling behaviors displayed by a husband. While the

experience of violence was 19 per cent among women whose husbands did not manifest any of the six behaviors, it rose to 45 per cent among those who manifested one or two of the behaviors, and then to 76 per cent among women whose husbands manifested three to four of these behaviors.

| Table 9. Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old) Whether Experienced or Never Experienced Violence by Husband's Controlling Behavior, Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| | Yes | | No | |
| | Number | Percentage of women among total who responded affirmatively | Number | Percentage of women among total who responded negatively |
| Frequently gets angry with her about small matters | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 16 | 66.7% | 35 | 35.3% |
| Never experienced violence | 8 | 33.3% | 64 | 64.6% |
| Total | 24 | 100% | 99 | 99.9% |
| Jealous or angry if she talks to other men | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 23 | 57.5% | 28 | 33.7% |
| Never experienced violence | 17 | 42.5% | 55 | 66.3% |
| Total | 40 | 100% | 83 | 100% |
| Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 19 | 79.2% | 32 | 32.3% |
| Never experienced violence | 5 | 20.8 | 67 | 67.7% |
| Total | 24 | 100% | 99 | 100% |
| Limits her contact with her family | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 11 | 68.7 | 40 | 37.4% |
| Never experienced violence | 5 | 31.3% | 67 | 62.6% |
| Total | 16 | 100% | 107 | 100% |
| Insists on knowing where she is at all time | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 20 | 66.7% | 31 | 33.3% |
| Never experienced violence | 10 | 33.3% | 62 | 66.7% |
| Total | 30 | 100% | 93 | 100% |
| Does not trust her with money | | | | |
| Experienced violence | 13 | 44.8 | 38 | 40.4% |
| Never experienced violence | 16 | 55.2% | 56 | 59.6% |
| Total | 29 | 100% | 94 | 100% |
| n=123 for total respondents n=51 for ever experienced violence n=72 for never experienced violence | | | | |

Social Acceptance of Domestic Violence

Awareness of Domestic Violence

A large majority of the respondents interviewed were generally aware of the prevalence of domestic violence in society. Overall, 75 per cent of the 123 ever-married women surveyed thought that domestic violence was a problem in Cambodia and 78 per cent that it was a problem in the village. The reasons given for the occurrence of the problem in the village by all the respondents were similar to the reasons given by the smaller subset

of abused women for their own personal experience of violence (Table 10). Once again, the reasons given by the entire sample for spousal violence included both the behavior of husbands and wives.

| Table 10. Reasons Why Ever-Married Women (15-49 years old) Think That Husbands in the Village Physically Hurt Their Wives, Prachea Thom and Kbal Spean Villages, Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent |
| Husbands drink alcohol | 107 | 87% |
| Husbands gamble | 55 | 45% |
| Husbands take drugs | 42 | 34% |
| Husbands have second wives | 42 | 34% |
| Husbands' families encourages them to be violent | 22 | 18% |
| Wives have vices (gambling, drinking, drugs) | 37 | 30% |
| Wives have sexual relationships with other men | 32 | 26% |
| Wives do not prepare food on time | 30 | 24% |
| Wives refuse to give money to husbands | 29 | 24% |
| Wives do not take care of children properly | 24 | 19% |
| Wives refuse to have sexual intercourse with husbands | 12 | 10% |
| n=123 | | |

Moreover, respondents realized that domestic violence had consequences for the women involved. Delineating the outcomes of domestic violence, 83 per cent of the entire sample mentioned that the women incurred health problems, 50 per cent that their children were prevented from attending school, 40 per cent that women were unable to work, 34 per cent that women were separated from their children, 28 per cent that women had not socialized with other villagers, and 20 per cent that women were less involved in community development activities.

Exposure to sources of awareness about domestic violence differed. Most respondents had heard about the subject from media. Far fewer had attended a meeting or training on the topic. Overall, 67 per cent of 121 respondents had heard programs or discussions on radio, TV or drama, or read newspaper articles that dealt with problems of domestic violence. By comparison, only 27 per cent of 120 respondents had participated in a meeting or training that discussed domestic violence.

Understanding Cultural and Social Attitudes

While progress had been made in recognizing domestic violence as a social issue, an in-depth understanding of the problem was far from complete. This resulted primarily from the observation, reflected in the literature, that cultural and social norms, and social institutions legitimized and perpetuated violence against women in Cambodian society. To elucidate, the *Plates in a Basket will Rattle* study cogently noted that batterers felt free to beat their wives with impunity; that women feared the shame of being without a husband; that wife-battering was considered an internal family matter by the courts, police and local authorities; and that arrest was not based on an act of assault but on

injury.¹¹ Understanding attitudes, which underlie the social acceptance of domestic violence, comprise a necessary first step in redressing the problem.

Rebecca Surtees argues that an understanding of marriage in Cambodian society and the meaning this holds for women is crucial for deconstructing domestic violence.¹² Surtees points out that being a wife and a mother are important indicators of status within Cambodian culture. Women are entrusted with the care of children, held responsible for the household welfare and economy, and charged with supporting the success of their husbands. That is why even in situations of spousal violence, Cambodian women are reluctant to leave their marriages. Separation or divorce disenfranchises women of their privileged role as wife, limits their access to social power, and diminishes their overall status. Divorced women suffer social discrimination and economic hardships such as labor shortages and divestment of land ownership. This raises questions about intervention strategies that favor divorce over reconciliation.

Surtees likewise explores the disabling consequences of viewing domestic violence in Cambodia as a private issue rather than a public concern.¹³ First, she asserts, it implies domestic violence can be understood in isolation, outside of the social and political context in which it takes place. In this way it is minimized and marginalized and treated apart from other manifestations of social violence, which are condemned by society. Second, viewing domestic violence as a private affair allows society to ignore the gendered and sexual nature of the violence. Women suffer domestic violence because they are the intimate partners of their husbands. Sexual relations, sanctioned as taking place within the private domain, introduce a different set of social dynamics and allowances in terms of violence. Third, regarding domestic violence as something private calls into question the state's legitimate duty and obligation to intervene.

Liz Giles provides further insight by exploring aspects of masculine identity associated with the social acceptance of domestic violence in Cambodia.¹⁴ The notion of hierarchical positioning is salient. Giles explains that individuals interact on the basis of their relative status to one another and that those with power have the right to assert their authority and dominant position through various means over those within their patronage who do not give them proper respect or due. Men who do not occupy positions of wealth and power and who are prone to unacceptable behavior such as habitual drunkenness are limited in their ability to generate respect. Still they need to find ways of positioning themselves in the social hierarchy and violence and controlling behaviors over their wives are one of the few ways open to them. Giles contends that some men abuse their wives for real or perceived transgressions against them or their children, as a means of establishing respect.

¹¹ Zimmerman, *Plates in a Basket Will Rattle*.

¹² Rebecca Surtees, "Negotiating Violence and Non-Violence in Cambodian Marriages," *Gender and Development*, Volume 11, Number 2, July 2003.

¹³ Surtees, "Negotiating Violence and Non-Violence in Cambodian Marriages."

¹⁴ Liz Giles, *Men Against Violence Toward Women: Evaluation of Phase One and Presentation of Emerging Issues and Themes*, (Phnom Penh: Project Against Domestic Violence, February 2004).

Seen from this vantage point, the abuser tends to blame the victim alone or claim dual responsibility for his acts of violence. Hierarchical relationships between spouses define expectations of behavior and wives who step outside the boundaries of acceptable conduct may be accused of fermenting violence. As such domestic violence is not viewed as a crime committed by a husband perpetrator against a wife victim, but as the outcome of conflict between mutual protagonists. Rarely are husbands blamed solely for violence. Either the husband is thought to be responding to some failure on the part of his wife, or the wife is thought to have reacted angrily to something he did, which, in turn, led the husband to reply with violence.¹⁵ As the woman Commune Councilor in Poipet, who was actively involved in the anti-violence network, told us, “I do not blame men totally for the violence. Some wives curse their husbands harshly and the husbands lose patience with them.” Echoing these sentiments the deputy police inspector in Poipet reasoned, “I do not fault the husbands completely for the violence. Some women are intolerable.”

Understanding domestic violence within the context of relationships and the behavior that governs those relationships has implications for a human rights approach to the problem. A rights-based approach defines violence by its very nature as the violation of one person’s rights by another. As such it focuses on the individual act of violence and the impact it has on the victim. By comparison, prevailing attitudes in Cambodia perceive violence as a result of interactive behavior within a social hierarchy. In this context the focus shifts to what the violence says about the victim, the reasons for the abuse, the place of the parties within the hierarchy, the norms of acceptable behavior for both parties, and the actual behavior manifested in the given situation. A rights-based approach to spousal abuse must then challenge the boundaries which permit behavior to fall under acceptable rather than unacceptable violence.¹⁶ This involves mobilizing community disapproval and intervention against domestic violence.

Individual and Agency Responses

Responses of Abused Women

Reassuringly, 53 per cent of the 51 women who reported spousal abuse in the survey sought help to prevent or stop their husband from physically hurting them. Many women (31 per cent) turned to their friends and neighbors for help. Women (16 per cent) too sought assistance from their own families, and in equal measure (12 per cent) from their husband’s family, village and commune officials, and NGOs. Only a few women (6 per cent) sought help from the police. Meanwhile, the fact that 47 per cent of the abused women did not seek help was a source of concern.

Key informant interviews with women receiving assistance for abuse attested to the multiple strategies used to resist violent husbands. Initially most women relied on neighbors and their own parents to provide temporary shelter in the aftermath of violent outbursts. Once the violence escalated women often filed complaints with village chiefs

¹⁵ Giles, *Men Against Violence Toward Women*.

¹⁶ Giles, *Men Against Violence Toward Women*.

and police against their spouses. The anti-violence network established in the two study villages by the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) enabled many women to receive immediate assistance including refuge in the CWCC shelters. Once safe, women were able to pursue longer-term solutions to their marital problems. These included the provision of legal assistance to prepare reconciliation contracts or, alternatively, divorce proceedings.

Responses of Local Authorities and Police

As mentioned above, only 12 per cent (6 of 51) of the abused women surveyed reported that their husbands had been arrested and put in jail because of the violence committed against them. Domestic violence was still very much seen as an internal family matter and local authorities and police were reluctant to intervene. Local commune and village authorities in Poipet reported that husbands were arrested and jailed only in cases of serious injury to their wives. In instances of drug use husbands were usually held for two to three days. Other offenders were invited to the village office or police station where the authorities would take steps to reconcile them with their wives.

The Poipet deputy police inspector confirmed these findings. He stated that he detained husbands who committed violent acts for about 12 hours during which time he would show them posters on domestic violence and educate them on proper behavior towards their wives. His practice was not to handcuff them or put them in jail but to try to reconcile them with their wives. Sometimes as punishment they were tasked to cut the grass around the station. The deputy inspector admitted that there were few serious cases that actually went to court. Of note, local authorities and police both acknowledged the contribution of CWCC's anti-violence network and both often referred abused wives to CWCC.

Responses of National Government

Aside from the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs which has been instrumental in making the issue of domestic violence more visible, the principal response of the national government has been to formulate legislation. This has been a long and tiring process with the initial law drafted in 2001 denounced later in parliamentary debate for threatening to revolutionize Khmer culture. Just recently, on 18 March 2005, the Council of Ministers updated the draft law known as The Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims. The draft law still has to be approved by the National Assembly.

The draft law in its present version has some strong features. Domestic violence covers physical abuses even in instances where weapons are not used and victims are not wounded. Domestic violence also includes torture and cruel acts which cause mental, psychological, emotional, and intellectual harm. Local authorities acting in the absence of Ministry of Women's Affairs officials can intervene to suppress and prevent domestic violence and protect victims. Victims can likewise file complaints to provincial and municipal courts to issue protection orders. Ministries and state institutions are charged

to educate citizens on non-violent and peaceful means to solve conflicts, and to disseminate measures to prevent domestic violence and protect victims.

At the same time the draft law has some serious weaknesses. One provision excludes from domestic violence, acts which teach and educate spouses to follow Khmer ways of good living and customs. While these acts must be in accordance with United Nations Conventions on Human Rights, the provision has the potential to consider the punishment of wives by their husbands as acceptable behavior. One article also excludes from criminal prosecution offenses considered as severe misdemeanors or petty crimes. Only acts of domestic violence considered as criminal offences are punishable and those under the penal law in effect. This article too enlarges the scope for contraventions.

Response of Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre

The Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) was founded as a Cambodian NGO in 1997. The CWCC program in Banteay Meanchey was begun in 1999. CWCC has five goals: 1) To empower women to make their own decisions and take control of their lives; 2) To monitor, investigate and report on all forms of violence against women; 3) To raise awareness about issues related to violence against women in Cambodia; 4) To encourage government bodies to hold perpetrators accountable and to eliminate all forms of violence against women; and 5) To promote gender equality, and respect for women's rights, including the right to life.

An external evaluation conducted in late 2002 observed: "One of [CWCC's] strong points lies in its two-pronged strategy: the provision of immediate and direct services to clients who are victims of violence and its high profile advocacy work for policy reforms. CWCC's direct work with victims, who come mostly from poor and depressed communities, makes the organization highly credible in advocating for policy changes and makes it an important bridge between the grassroots and policy-makers."¹⁷ CWCC's direct service program includes shelter, counseling, medical assistance, 24-hour security, clothing, toiletries, bedding, nutritional meals, social activities, daily exercise classes, access to vocational training, arts and drama activities, cooking, children's activities, group education sessions, hygiene and HIV/AIDS education, and follow-up.

Multiple strategy approaches to gender-based violence like those implemented by CWCC have been endorsed by a recent review of the literature on gender-based violence conducted for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The author highlights the contributions of four approaches, including behavior change communication (BCC), community mobilization, service provision and policy:¹⁸

Addressing gender-based violence requires a coordinated response that promotes change on a number of different levels. Consequently, one approach should not be

¹⁷ Alberto R. Cacayan and Thida C. Khus, with Klaus Mueller-Reimann, *Evaluation Report: The Cambodia Women's Crisis Centre*, Phnom Penh, 13 November 2002.

¹⁸ Alessandra Guedes, *Addressing Gender-Based Violence from the Productive Health/HIV Sector: A Literature Review and Analysis*, (Washington, D.C.: The Population Technical Assistance Project, May 2004).

viewed as necessarily better than another; instead, they should work in a complementary fashion. BCC and community mobilization initiatives, for example, can challenge prevailing beliefs and norms that contribute to the acceptability and perpetuation of gender-based violence and can contribute to shifting gender-based violence from a private matter to one that merits public attention and intervention. Furthermore, community mobilization strategies can reduce a community's tolerance to violence and create an environment where perpetrators fear the consequences of their actions. Health service delivery programs can accomplish the key task of providing for the needs of victims and their children. Although only as good as their implementation, policies can serve to make gender-based violence a legitimate public health and human rights issue, can help provide resources for interventions, and can work to hold accountable those who perpetrate violence, whether individuals or states.

In 2004 CWCC provided shelter to 237 women and children in drop-in centers in Banteay Meanchey province. In addition CWCC supplied legal counseling to 45 women in the province registered as new cases, and filed 20 cases in court of which 4 resulted in divorce and 14 were settled outside of court with CWCC mediation. Of the 178 women and children who resided temporarily at the shelters in Banteay Meanchey during the year, 81 received counseling, 56 attended literacy classes, 34 studied vocational training, and 19 were sent to public schools. In 2004 CWCC conducted 9 community meetings in Banteay Meanchay with 224 participants as part of their reintegration program for women who had experienced domestic violence. The meetings educated community leaders and neighbors about the prevention of domestic violence and enlisted their support in helping the returning women remain safe.

Moreover, as part of its community organizing activities to strengthen established networks CWCC convened 21 training courses in the province during the year for 122 local authorities, 123 police, and 274 village leaders. In Banteay Meanchay CWCC had likewise mobilized 69 volunteers, comprised of trained local authorities, police, and village leaders, to act as community trainers and contact persons for women experiencing violence. In 2004 these volunteers conducted 50 community trainings in the province with 1,601 villagers. Certainly, the accomplishments CWCC's Banteay Meanchey program over the past year were impressive. At the same time the magnitude of the domestic violence problem in Poipet commune, where CWCC concentrated much of its provincial community work, attested to the need for a scaled up effort by government agencies, NGOs, and donors alike.

Perhaps even more important than the quantifiable measures of assistance reported by CWCC, the innovative approaches implemented by the NGO were instructive. Mention has already been made of the volunteer network of local authorities, police and village leaders mobilized at the community level to raise awareness about spousal violence and to respond to specific acts of spousal abuse. CWCC had also developed an alternative to the largely ineffective, and often counterproductive, state-administered process of marriage reconciliation. Similar to the state mediation process, CWCC negotiates a contract between the marriage couple in which the husband commits to cease violence if

the wife returns to the marriage. However, unlike the state negotiated agreement that is not binding or enforced, the CWCC contract is a legal document, which includes conditions of return, and provides for legal and financial settlements for the wife, should the violence continue and the couple separate. This means that if husbands breach the conditions of the CWCC contract, the wife holds a legally binding document which will be crucial when filing a complaint for divorce in court. The CWCC marriage reconciliation process enables the wife to return home, while setting her own conditions for return.¹⁹

CWCC approaches domestic violence as a gender and human rights issue, while incorporating sensitivity to cultural and social norms and practices. By acknowledging and accommodating local culture, this rights-based approach takes cognizance of deeply rooted values while at the same time challenging and recasting notions of acceptable behavior.²⁰

Viewpoints of Women Surveyed Related to Responses

When asked who should, and who actually did, help abused women in the village, the 123 women surveyed pointed mainly to friends and neighbors, local officials, NGOs (specifically CWCC), and the women’s own family (Table 11). Except for the category of friends and neighbors large discrepancies existed in views about ideal (who should help) and real assistance (who actually did help). This again pointed to the need to scale up responses to domestic violence. Notably, 40 per cent of the women interviewed had been approached for help by women in the village experiencing domestic violence.

| Table 11. Ever Married Women (15-47 years old) Views on Who Should and Actually Helped Women in Village Physically Hurt by Their Husbands Poipet Commune, February 2005 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| | Who should help | | Who actually helped | |
| | # | % | # | # |
| Friends/Neighbors | 81 | 66% | 80 | 65% |
| Village/commune officials | 86 | 70% | 56 | 45% |
| NGO (CWCC) | 71 | 58% | 43 | 35% |
| Woman’s own family (mother, father, sister, brother) | 59 | 48% | 36 | 29% |
| Police | 50 | 41% | 23 | 19% |
| In-laws (husband’s family) | 21 | 17% | 11 | 9% |
| Doctor/health center | 17 | 14% | 4 | 3% |
| Lawyer/courts | 18 | 15% | 1 | 1% |
| Monks/archa | 4 | 3% | 2 | 2% |
| n=123 | | | | |

Generally, the survey respondents preferred spousal reconciliation as an option to divorce. Of the 123 women interviewed, 67 per cent thought that women physically hurt

¹⁹ See Surtees, “Negotiating Violence and Non-Violence in Cambodian Marriages.”

²⁰ The Project Against Domestic Violence (PADV), a Cambodian NGO established in 1995 as a resource, information and training agency, likewise employs a rights-based approach sensitive to cultural and social norms. See Surtees, “Negotiating Violence and Non-Violence in Cambodian Marriages.”

by their husbands should try to reconcile, 27 per cent thought that they should divorce, and 6 per cent did not know what they should do. Proportionally less women who had experienced domestic violence themselves (61 per cent) thought that women should try to reconcile than those who had no personal experience of domestic abuse (71 per cent). At the same time proportionally more women who had experienced domestic violence themselves (33 per cent) thought that women should divorce than those who had not experienced domestic violence (22 per cent).

Conclusions

The emergence of Poipet commune as an important transport point in and out of Thailand increased economic activity on both sides of the border and acted as a magnet luring thousands of Cambodians to the area in search of improved livelihoods. While the rise of Poipet as an economic zone and casino resort brought prosperity to some, it left others marginalized and frustrated unable to access the wealth generated around them. Moreover, the unbridled growth of the commune exacerbated tensions and conflict which at times erupted into violence. To poignantly illustrate: on 21 March 2005, just one month after the fieldwork for this research was completed, five people were killed and four injured when more than 100 armed military and police opened fire with AK-47 rifles and forcibly evicted 218 families from a disputed area of land in Kbal Spean village.²¹ Studies on violence against women suggest that in regions of war, political violence or instability, the rate of abuse of women increases.²² Not surprisingly, the 41 per cent rate of domestic violence delineated in this study was considerably higher than the rates delineated in previous surveys.²³

Like the much broader surveys conducted on domestic violence in 1996 and 2000 this study identified risk factors associated with spousal abuse. Generally, the findings from the various studies were consistent with one another. One risk factor common to all was a husband's frequent alcohol consumption. While a husband's excessive drinking could not be taken to be the cause of the abuse, it did appear to be an enabling condition that was strongly related to a woman's risk of violence. In the Poipet study a husband's drug taking was similarly identified as an enabling circumstance. Poverty too was associated with a woman's experience of abuse, although it was recognized that the association was not entirely one directional. Poverty often precipitated violence, while violence likewise contributed to poverty. Other characteristics identified as risk factors in the present study were that the husband had no education, the husband had less education than his wife, the

²¹ See *The Cambodia Daily*, March 22, 24, and 29, 2005, and the *Phnom Penh Post*, March 25 –April 7, 2005.

²² See Erin Nelson and Cathy Zimmerman, *Household Survey on Domestic Violence in Cambodia* (Phnom Penh: Ministry of Women's Affairs and Project Against Domestic Violence, 1996).

²³ The authors of the 1996 survey acknowledge that areas of the country characterized by unstable conditions would demonstrate higher levels of spousal abuse. See Nelson and Zimmerman, *Household Survey on Domestic Violence in Cambodia*.

husband was away from home at work for more than one month, the husband was at one time a member of the army or police, and the husband gambled.²⁴

While individual risk factors increased the likelihood of women experiencing violence, cultural and social norms, and social institutions played a decisive role in legitimizing and perpetuating the violence. With respect to gender relations and roles the research revealed that in most instances the experience of domestic violence was proportionally lower for couples who made household decisions jointly than for couples in which the husband or the wife made household decisions alone. The study also showed that women who had experienced violence were more likely to justify reasons for wife beating than those who had never experienced violence. More crucially, women whose husbands manifested controlling behaviors were much more likely to experience abuse than women whose husbands did not manifest these behaviors. Furthermore, the likelihood of women experiencing violence increased to a point with the number of controlling behaviors displayed by a husband.

With regard to the social acceptance of domestic violence, several points were emphasized. Women preferred staying in difficult marriages to divorce due to the importance placed on being a wife and mother in Cambodian society. Domestic violence persisted in society because it was viewed as a private issue rather than as a public concern. Within the context of hierarchical positioning, which defined acceptable boundaries of behavior, domestic violence was not seen as a crime committed by a husband perpetrator against a wife victim, but as the outcome of conflict between mutual protagonists. Husbands alone were rarely blamed for violence, and infrequently arrested and jailed. Without social censure, husbands were able to commit acts of violence with impunity.

As delineated in this study, successful interventions require multiple responses on several levels. Direct assistance to abused women is critical as well as establishing community networks that include local authorities and police. Involvement of men in education programs is likewise crucial and often overlooked. Sensitivity to cultural and social norms and practices allows prevailing attitudes to be challenged in a more effective manner. A rights-based approach can recast the boundaries which permit behavior to fall under acceptable rather than unacceptable violence. Mobilizing community disapproval against domestic violence lowers tolerance and promotes greater accountability among husbands for their behavior. Advocacy for the passing and implementation of the domestic violence law provides stronger redress for abused women, including the arrest of violators. Recognizing domestic violence as a major development issue reflecting broader manifestations of social domination and oppression calls for the scaling up of interventions by the government and the wider NGO community, particularly in volatile areas of the country.

²⁴ In the 2000 national survey women with more children were more likely to report having experienced violence. Similarly, having a family history of domestic violence between one's parents increased the likelihood of experiencing violence oneself. In 1996 survey women no longer living in the same house or village as their parents were more likely to report abuse. The current study was unable to demonstrate any of these findings with certitude.

**Appendix 1. Ever-Married Women's Questionnaire
(Women 15-49 years old)**

Name of interviewer: _____
[Do not ask name of married woman interviewed]

Date of Interview: _____
Checked by: _____

Introduction: My name is _____. I am participating in a course on Analyzing Development Issues. I would like to ask you questions about some important aspects of woman's life. I know that some of these questions are very personal. However, your answers are crucial for helping to understand the condition of women in Poipet. Let me assure you that your answers are completely confidential and will not be told to anyone.

BACKGROUND [Note to interviewer: Circle the number that corresponds to the answer of the question asked. Circle only *one* answer per question unless otherwise indicated.]

1. Number of interview _____ [Leave blank. ADI team will fill in later.]

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 2. Name of village | Brochea Thom | 1 |
| | Kbal Spean (Prey Prich) | 2 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 3. Current civil status of woman interviewed | | |
| | Married | 1 |
| | Separated/Divorced | 2 |
| | Widow | 3 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 4. Number of times woman was married | | |
| | Once | 1 |
| | Twice | 2 |
| | Three or more times | 3 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---|
| 5. Age of woman interviewed | | |
| | 15 - 19 years | 1 |
| write age _____ | 20 – 24 years | 2 |
| | 25 – 29 years | 3 |
| | 30 – 34 years | 4 |
| | 35 – 39 years | 5 |
| | 40 - 44 years | 6 |
| | 45 – 49 years | 7 |

6. Age of woman's husband
write age _____

[Do not ask respondent. Compute after interview is completed]

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Husband is younger | 1 |
| Wife is 0-4 years younger | 2 |
| Wife is 5-9 years younger | 3 |
| Wife is 10-14 years younger | 4 |
| Wife is 15 or more years younger | 5 |

7. Age of woman at the time of (last) marriage

write age _____

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Less than 15 years | 1 |
| 15 – 19 years | 2 |
| 20 – 24 years | 3 |
| 25 or more years | 4 |

8. Number of children ever born to woman

write number of children _____

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| 0 children | 1 |
| 1-2 children | 2 |
| 3-4 children | 3 |
| 5 or more children | 4 |

9. Woman's educational attainment

write last grade completed _____

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| No education | 1 |
| No education/literacy class | 2 |
| Primary education | 3 |
| Secondary or higher | 4 |

10. Woman's husband's educational attainment

write last grade completed _____

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| No education | 1 |
| No education/literacy class | 2 |
| Primary education | 3 |
| Secondary or higher | 4 |
| Don't know | 96 |

[Do not ask respondent. Compute after interview is completed.]

11. Difference in educational attainment of husband and wife

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Wife has more education | 1 |
| Both have no education | 2 |
| Both have same education (either primary or secondary) | 3 |
| Husband has more education | 4 |
| Don't know | 96 |

12. Year woman first came to live in Poipet

write year _____

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Before 1998 | 1 |
| 1998 – 1999 | 2 |
| 2000 – 2001 | 3 |
| 2002 – 2005 | 4 |

13. Woman's previous province/city of residence

write name of province/city _____

14. Major reason why woman came to Poipet [Circle only one number]

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---|
| More earning opportunities for husband | 1 |
| More earning opportunities for wife | 2 |
| More earning opportunities for both husband and wife | 3 |

15. Do any members of your own family (mother, father, sister(s), brother(s)) also live in Poipet commune?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

16. Do any members of your husband's family (mother, father, sister(s), brother(s)) also live in Poipet commune?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

17. Do you have an independent source of income from your husband?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

18. Work status of woman's husband

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Nonagricultural | 1 |
| Agricultural | 2 |
| Has no work | 3 |

19. Work of husband takes him away from the household for more than one month at a time

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

20. How the woman estimates the daily income earning of her household?

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| 0 - 5000 riels | 1 |
| 5001 – 10,000 riels | 2 |
| 10,001 – 20,000 riels | 3 |
| More than 20,000 riels | 4 |

HUSBAND'S BEHAVIOR

Introduction: When two people marry or live together, they share both good and bad moments. In your relationship with your husband do the following happen frequently, only sometimes, or never? [Circle only one number per question.]

| | Frequently | Sometimes | Never |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| 21a. He usually spends his free time with you? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21b. He consults you on different household matters? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21c. He is affectionate with you? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21d. He respects you and your wishes? | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21e. He gets angry with you about small matters? | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Introduction: Now, I am going to ask about some situations which happen to some women. Please tell me if these apply to your relationship with your husband?

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| 22a. He is jealous or angry if you talk to other men? | 1 | 2 | 96 |
| 22b. He frequently accuses you of being unfaithful? | 1 | 2 | 96 |
| 22c. He tries to limit your contact with your family? | 1 | 2 | 96 |
| 22d. He insists on knowing where you are at all time? | 1 | 2 | 96 |
| 22e. He does not trust you with any money? | 1 | 2 | 96 |

23a. Does your husband drink alcohol?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 96 |

23b. If yes, How often does he get drunk: very often, only sometimes, or never?

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Gets drunk very often | 1 |
| Gets drunk only sometimes | 2 |
| Never gets drunk | 3 |
| Not applicable | 98 |

24a. Does your husband take drugs?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

24b. If yes, How often does he take drugs: very often, only sometimes, or never?

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Takes drugs very often | 1 |
| Takes drugs only sometimes | 2 |
| Never takes drugs | 3 |
| Not applicable | 98 |

25a. Does your husband gamble?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

25b. If yes, How often does he lose large sums of money: very often, only sometimes, or never?

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Loses large sums of money very often | 1 |
| Loses large sums of money only sometimes | 2 |
| Never loses large sums of money | 3 |
| Not applicable | 98 |

26. Was your husband ever in the army or police?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 96 |

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Introduction: Now if you will permit me, I need to ask some more questions about your relationship with your husband? Does your husband ever:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 27a1. Push you, shake you, or throw something at you? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27a2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27b1. Slap you or twist your arm? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27b2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27c1. Punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27c2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27d1. Kick you or drag you? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27d2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27e1. Try to strangle you or burn you? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27e2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27f1. Threaten you with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27f2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27g1. Attack you with a knife, gun, or other type of weapon? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27g2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |
| 27h1. Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to? | Yes 1 No 2 | 27h2. Number of times in last 12 months _____ Not applicable 98 |

27i1. Physically hurt you when you were pregnant?

Yes 1

No 2

27i2.

Number of times in last 12 months _____

Not applicable 98

[Do not ask respondent. Answer after interview is completed.]

27j1. If the respondent answered "Yes" to any of the questions from 27a1 to 27i1 circle 1 for yes. If not, circle 2 for no.

Yes 1

No 2

[Do not ask respondent. Answer after interview is completed.]

27j2. If the respondent experienced any acts of physical violence in the last 12 months i.e. answered positively to any of the questions from 27a2 to 27i2 circle 1 for yes. If not, circle 2 for no.

Yes 1

No 2

(If answer to 27j1 and 27j2 are "no" skip to question 41 on section of "Awareness on Domestic Violence)

28. How long after you first got married to your husband did any of these things first happen to you?

Number of years after first got married _____

29. What do you think are the reasons why your husband physically hurt you? [Circle all that apply.]

- a. Husband drinks alcohol
- b. Husband takes drugs
- c. Husband gambles
- d. Husband has second wife
- e. Husband's family encourages him to be violent
- f. You did not prepare food on time
- g. You did not care for children properly
- h. You refused to give money to husbands
- i. You refused to have sexual intercourse
- j. He accused you of having sexual relationship with other men
- k. He accused you of having vices (gambling, drinking, drugs)

30. How has domestic violence affected you? [Circle all that apply.]

- a. Have suffered health problems
- b. Have been unable to work
- c. Have been separated from children
- d. Have not socialized with other villagers
- e. Have been less involved in community development activities
- f. Have been avoided by other villagers

31. Has your experience of domestic violence prevented your children from attending school?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

32. Was your husband arrested and put in jail because of the violence he committed against you?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Did the following ever happen because of something your husband did to you?

33a1. You had bruises and aches?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

33a2.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Number of times in last 12 months | _____ |
| Not applicable | 98 |

33b1. You had an injury or a broken bone?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

33b2.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Number of times in last 12 months | _____ |
| Not applicable | 98 |

33c1. You went to the doctor or health center as a result of something your husband did to you?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

33c2.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Number of times in last 12 months | _____ |
| Not applicable | 98 |

If respondent was physically hurt by husband:

34. Have you ever tried to get help to prevent or stop your husband from physically hurting you?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

35. From whom have you sought help? (Yes to question #34) [Circle all that apply.]

- a. Own Family (mother, father, sister, brother)
- b. In-laws (husband family)
- c. Friends/Neighbors
- d. Village/commune officials
- e. Police
- f. Doctor/health center
- g. Lawyer/courts
- h. Monks/archa
- i. NGO (CWCC)

36. What is the main reason you have never sought help? (No to question #34) [Circle only one.]

- Don't know who to go to 1
- No use 2
- Part of life 3
- Afraid of divorce/desertion 4
- Afraid of further beatings 5
- Afraid of getting person beating
you into trouble 6
- Embarrassed 7
- Don't want to disgrace family 8

37. Have you ever hit, slapped, kicked or done anything else to physically hurt your husband at times when he was beating or physically hurting you?

- Yes 1
- No 2

38. Have you ever hit, slapped, kicked or done anything else to physically hurt your husband at times when he was *not already* beating or physically hurting you?

- Yes 1
- No 2

39. As far as you know, did your father-in-law ever beat your mother-in-law?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 96

40. As far as you know, did your own father ever beat your own mother?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't know 96

AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN VILLAGE

41. From reports on radio, TV and newspapers do you think that domestic violence (husbands physically hurting wives) is a problem in Cambodia?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 96 |

42. Do you think that domestic violence (husbands physically hurting wives) is a problem in this village?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 96 |

43. Aside from your own personal situation: Are you aware of any households in the village where husbands have physically hurt their wives?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't know | 96 |

44. What do you think are the reasons why husbands in these households physically hurt their wives? [Circle all that apply.]

- a. Husbands drink alcohol
- b. Husbands take drugs
- c. Husbands gamble
- d. Husbands have second wife
- e. Husbands' families encourage them to be violent
- f. Wives do not prepare food on time
- g. Wives do not care for children properly
- h. Wives refuse to give money to husbands
- i. Wives refuse to have sexual intercourse
- j. Wives have sexual relations with other men
- k. Wives have vices (gambling, drinking, drugs)

45. How has domestic violence affected women in the village physical hurt by their husbands? [Circle all that apply.]

- a. Women suffer health problems
- b. Women are unable to work
- c. Women are separated from their children
- d. Women do not socialize with other villagers
- e. Women are less involved in community development activities
- f. Women are avoided by other villagers

46. Has domestic violence prevented children in the village from attending school?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't Know | 96 |

47. Have husbands in the village who committed violence against their wives been arrested and put in jail?

| | |
|------------|----|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |
| Don't Know | 96 |

48. Who do you think should help women in the village physically hurt by their husbands? (Circle all that apply?)

- a. Woman's own family
- b. In-laws
- c. Friends/Neighbors
- d. Village/commune authorities
- e. Police
- f. Doctor/health center
- g. Lawyers/courts
- h. Monks/Archa
- i. NGO/CWCC

49. Who have *actually* helped women in the village physically hurt by their husbands? (Circle all that apply?)

- a. Woman's own family
- b. In-laws
- c. Friends/Neighbors
- d. Village/commune authorities
- e. Police
- f. Doctor/health center
- g. Lawyers/courts
- h. Monks/Archa
- i. NGO/CWCC

50. Has any woman in the village who was physically hurt by her husband approached you for help?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

51. Are you aware of the NGO Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC)?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

52. Have you ever participated in a meeting or training that discussed domestic violence?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

53. Have you ever heard programs or discussions on radio, TV or drama, or read newspaper articles that deal with problem of domestic violence?

| | |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

ATTITUDES ABOUT WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONMAKING

Introduction. I would now like to ask your opinion about who should make different types of decisions in the household. For instance:

54. Who should make decisions about what food to cook each day?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

55. Who should make decisions about the wife's health care?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

56. Who should make decisions regarding children's illnesses?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

57. Who should make decisions about visits to family, friends, or relatives?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

58. Who should make decisions about making large household purchases?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

59. Who should make decisions about having another child?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

60. Who should make decisions about contraception?

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Wife alone | 1 |
| Wife jointly with husband | 2 |
| Husband alone | 3 |
| Someone else | 4 |

ATTITUDES ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Introduction: Husbands give various reasons for physically hurting their wives. I want to ask you whether you agree or disagree with the following reasons that are often given for wife beating.

A husband is justified in physically hurting his wife:

| | Agree | Disagree |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------|
| 61a. If she goes out without telling him | 1 | 2 |
| 61b. If she neglects the children | 1 | 2 |
| 61c. If she argues with him or answers him back | 1 | 2 |
| 61d. If she refuses to have sex with him | 1 | 2 |
| 61e. If she does not prepare the food | 1 | 2 |
| 61f. If she talks with other men and he suspects she is unfaithful | 1 | 2 |
| 61g. If she has vices (gambling, drinking, taking drugs) | 1 | 2 |

62. When women in the village are physically hurt by their husbands/partners do you think that they should try to reconcile or divorce?

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| They should try to reconcile | 1 |
| They should divorce | 2 |
| Don't know | 96 |

**Appendix 2. Guide Questions for Key Informant Interviews
with Women who have been
Physically Hurt by their Husbands**

Name of interviewer: _____

Date of Interview: _____

[Do not ask name of married woman interviewed]

Checked by: _____

Introduction: My name is _____. I am participating in a course on Analyzing Development Issues. I would like to ask you questions about some important aspects of woman's life. I know that some of these questions are very personal. However, your answers are crucial for helping to understand the condition of women in Poipet. Let me assure you that your answers are completely confidential and will not be told to anyone.

Background

Could you tell me a something about your background? How old are you now? How long have you been married? How many children do you have? Is this your first marriage? Have you completed any formal education? What grade did you complete? What grade did your husband complete? When did you first come to Poipet? What were the reasons why you came here? Do you own your own house and lot in Poipet? Are any of your family members living here (mother, father, sister, or brother)? Are any of the family members of your husband living here? Are you still living with your husband? What is his work? Does your husband's work take him away from the household for more than one month at a time? Are you working? What is your work? Does your work take you away from the household for more than one month at a time? How would you describe your household? As better off, medium, poor, or very poor?

Personal Experience of Domestic Violence

When did the problems with your husband begin? When did the situation become violent? Could you describe how your husband physically hurt you? How frequent was it? How serious was it? What do you think were the reasons why your husband hurt you? Did it have something to do with his behavior? For example, did he drink? Take drugs? Gamble? Did he have another woman? Was he ever in the army? Was he short-tempered? Was he jealous? Did he accuse you of being unfaithful? Did he accuse you of not giving him money? When he hurt you, did you ever fight back? Did your living in Poipet have anything to do with the problems that arose between you and your husband? Explain?

Consequences of Domestic Violence

What has happened to you as a result of the physical violence you have suffered? Did you suffer bruises and aches? Did you have an injury or broken bone? Did you have to go to the doctor or health center? Do you spend any time at the CWCC drop in center? How long? Did you spend any time at the CWCC confidential shelter? How long? Have you suffered any long-term health problems? Were you unable to work or earn money? Were you separated from your children? Were there any long-term effects on your children? Were there any effects on your relations with friends and neighbors in the village? Were there any consequences for your husband? For example, Was he questioned by the police? Was he arrested and put in jail?

Response to Domestic Violence

How long after your husband physically hurt you did you first begin to seek help? Who did you go to for help? Family members? In-laws? Neighbors and friends? Local authorities, police, or NGOs? How were they able to help you? Are they still providing help to you at this time? What kind of help? How often do they visit you? What decisions have you made regarding your long-term relationship with your husband? Have you decided to reconcile with him? Under what conditions? Have you signed a written contract with him? Have you decided to separate or divorce him? Has he decided to divorce you? Have you gone to court? What are the consequences of your decision for the well-being of your family, your children, your property, your economic livelihood? What advice would you give other women who have suffered violence from their husbands?

Appendix 3. ADI Trainee and Team Researchers

ADI Trainee Researchers (Round 15)

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|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nou Bunnary | Star Kampuchea |
| Thang Tola | Violence Against Women and Children of Cambodia (VAWCC) |
| Thav Kimsan | Cambodian League for the promotion and Defense of Human Rights (Licadho) |
| Sin Ly Pao | Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) |
| Touch Setha | Cambodian League for the promotion and Defense of Human Rights (Licadho) |
| Ket Noeun | Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) |
| Yeap Ly | Ponleu Kumar |
| Touch Chiva | Legal Aid of Cambodia (LAC) |
| Moung Mearedey | Cambodian Women's Crisis Center (CWCC) |
| Chuon Sartre | Violence Against Women and Children of Cambodia (VAWCC) |
| Prak Kea | Lutheran World Federation (LWF) |
| Lay Pek Try | Lutheran World Federation (LWF) |
| Tep Thavrin | Lutheran World Federation (LWF) |
| Ok Kamsan | Lutheran World Federation (LWF) |
| Thong Thavrin | Aphivat Strey (AS) |
| Komol Sovila | AMARA |
| Dy Chhunly | Ponleu Kumar |
| Phuong Dara | Cambodia Protection Right of Women and Children Association (CPRWCA) |
| Chhan Tola | New Humanity |

ADI Team Researchers

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|---------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Ang Sopha | Cooperation Committee for Cambodia/ADI Project |
| Il Oeur | Cooperation Committee for Cambodia/ADI Project |
| John McAndrew | Cooperation Committee for Cambodia/ADI Project |