

# FACTSHEET

## SEPARATE WAYS

A study of attitudes towards separation, divorce and women's rights in Cambodia.

# 1. TO DIVORCE, OR NOT TO DIVORCE: DRIVERS & BARRIERS

## REASONS WOMEN PURSUE DIVORCE (‘DRIVERS’)

### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

For women in Cambodia, the first common driver of divorce shared by participants in this study was intimate partner violence (IPV) (often including a combination of physical, psychological, sexual, and/or financial abuse), while "falling out of love" is perceived to be the main reason for men to pursue divorce.

#### Physical abuse:

Multiple testimonies describing an ex-husband's physical abuse, especially when jealous or otherwise dissatisfied:

*Notably, these types of physical violence, as reported by participants, ranged from assaults that left them with bruised arms (DW2), to “pushing and slapping” (DW13), and worst of all the severity of violence that resulted in the loss of an unborn baby through miscarriage on another (DW6).*

### Psychological abuse:

Indeed, controlling behaviour was a prominent theme in the data

*“My ex-husband wouldn't allow me to decide on anything. He even set a curfew... [and] I couldn't buy new clothes or jewellery” (DW6).*

### Financial abuse:

*“[The divorce was] because he didn't help with our problems. For example, I had to pay off our **debt** alone and he refused to share the burden. So why would I still be with him? If I have to solve each problem alone, isn't it better to just live alone? That was what I thought.” (DW19).*

### Sexual violence:

Spousal rape also featured in the data among multiple respondents as a driver for divorce.

*“He forcibly raped me on our wedding night... Unfortunately, I got pregnant from that rape, so I had no choice but to stay with him... I got more scared, and believed that I had no way out... I tolerated it for a long time until I got physically sick and wanted to stay away from him” (CW4).*