

Marriage Decision-making Autonomy – Pakistan

Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18

Having a say in choosing their husband is less common amongst women who were underage when they first got married.

Every married women in their twenties reported greater autonomy in choosing their husbands,



83% of 20-24-year-olds and 82% of 25-29-year-olds reporting they had a say in choosing their husbands

Having a say in choosing their husband is less common amongst women who were underage when they first got married.



67%

In 2017-18, of the women who were less than 15 years old at the time of their first marriage, 67% said that they had a say in choosing their husband.

Education level has a positive correlation with likelihood of women to have marriage decision-making autonomy.



92%

Women who attained higher education make up the largest proportion by education level who had a say in who they marry, at 92%.



7 in 10 women belonging to the lowest wealth quintile reported having a say in choosing their husband, while nearly 9 in 10 of those in the highest quintile report the same.

More women in rural areas (84.7%) reported having input in choosing their spouse than those in urban areas (78%).



KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

88.9%



PUNJAB

85.9%



SINDH

74.9%



BALUCHISTAN

67%

Province-wise, a greater proportion of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (88.9%) and Punjab (85.9%) reported having a say in choosing their husband. This was followed by Sindh (74.9%) and Balochistan (67%) with the lowest proportions.

PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey

Having a say in choosing their husband was less common amongst women who were underage when they first got married – Marriage Decision-making Autonomy – Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18

Islamabad, 20th September, 2023

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at Marriage Decision-Making Autonomy, i.e., the percentage of women who had a say in choosing their husbands, among women aged 15-49 years, during 2017-18. This data is part of a publication called the 'Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey'.

The current edition looks at data from Pakistan DHS 2017-18 (which can be found [HERE](#))

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: "The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as PSLM, Labour Force Survey, and Economic Survey reports as well as National Census Reports and Election Commission Data sets. The current series is using the Pakistan Demographic Survey, an annual compilation which seldom has data points not covered in many other reports. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan."

What data points this current edition covers:

This series aims to present the important learnings from the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey for policy makers, the public, as well as for marketers in an easy and understandable way. In particular, this edition looks at Marriage Decision-making Autonomy as reported in PDHS 2017-18. This indicator can have socio-cultural implications and provide insight into one aspect of women's self-determination ability in Pakistan. The series' main aim is to provide data. Implications of these data points for development sector as well as wider socio-political ramifications is something we would like to trigger in relevant circles.

Today's topic is “**Marriage Decision-making Autonomy**” from table 4.5 PDHS 2017-18 – Percentage of women who had a say in choosing their husband

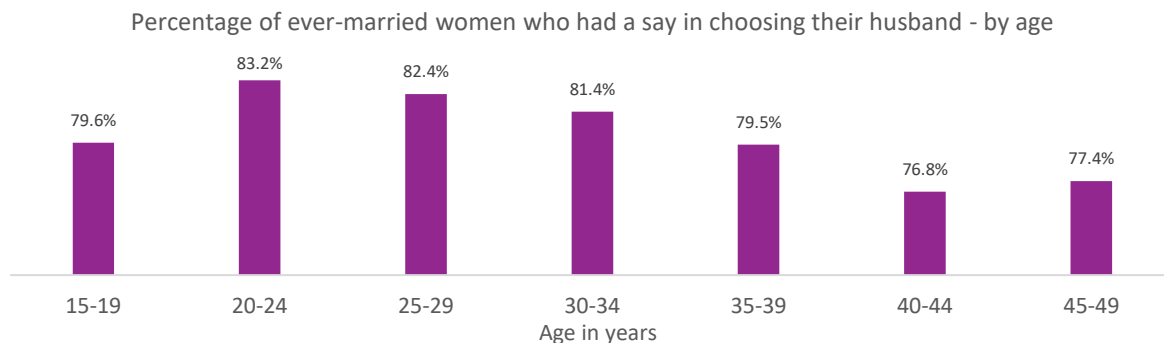
Key Findings:

- 1) **Ever married women in their twenties reported greater autonomy in choosing their husbands**, with 83% of 20-24-year-olds and 82% of 25-29-year-olds reporting they had a say in choosing their husbands
- 2) **Having a say in choosing their husband was less common amongst women who were underage when they first got married.** In 2017-18, of the women who were less than 15 years old at the time of their first marriage, 67% said that they had a say in choosing their husband.
- 3) **Education level has a positive correlation with likelihood of women to have marriage decision-making autonomy.** Women who attained higher education make up the largest proportion by education level who had a say in who they marry, at 92%.
- 4) **Wealth also has a positive, albeit less strict, correlation with marriage decision-making autonomy.** 7 in 10 women belonging to the lowest wealth quintile reported having a say in choosing their husband, while nearly 9 in 10 of those in the highest quintile report the same.
- 5) **More women in rural areas (84.7%) reported having input in choosing their spouse than those in urban areas (78%).** Provincially, KP and Punjab have the highest proportions of women reporting marriage-decision making autonomy.

1) Ever married women in their twenties reported greater autonomy in choosing their husbands.

Ever-married women aged 40-49 years were the smallest proportion across age groups who has a say in choosing their husbands, out of all women surveyed in 2017-18, but still well above half; 79.6% of 15-19-year-olds and 76% to 77% of 40-49-year-olds reported some degree of autonomy.

Ever-married women in their twenties reported greater autonomy in choosing their husbands, with 83% of 20-24-year-olds and 82% of 25-29-year-olds reporting they had a say in choosing their husbands.

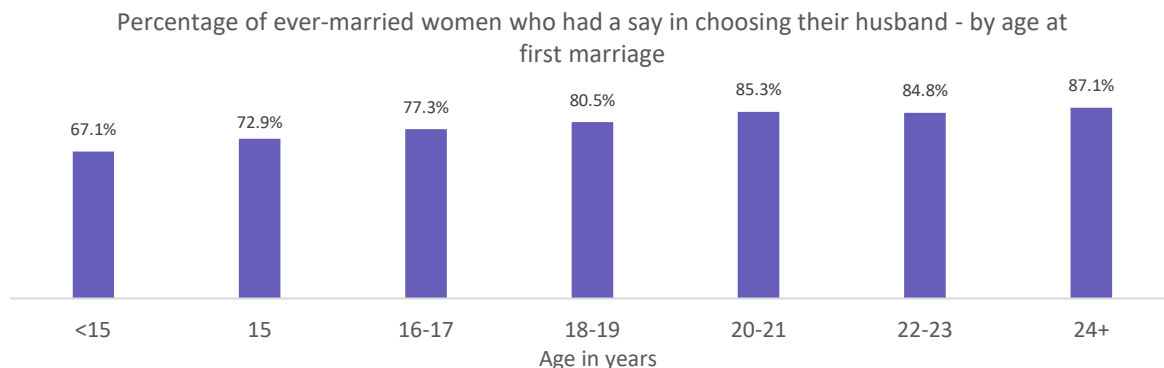


Source: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2017-18); analyzed by Gallup Pakistan

2) Having a say in choosing their husband was less common amongst women who were underage when they first got married

Having a say in choosing their husband was less common amongst women who were underage when they first got married. In 2017-18, of the women who were less than 15 years old at the time of their first marriage, 67% said that they had a say in choosing their husband. The proportion increases to 73%-77% for those who were between 15-17 years when they first married.

At least 8 in 10 women who first got married when they were of legal marriageable age reported having a say in choosing their husbands, in 2017-18. Reported marriage decision-making autonomy was higher amongst women who were married off after were of age.

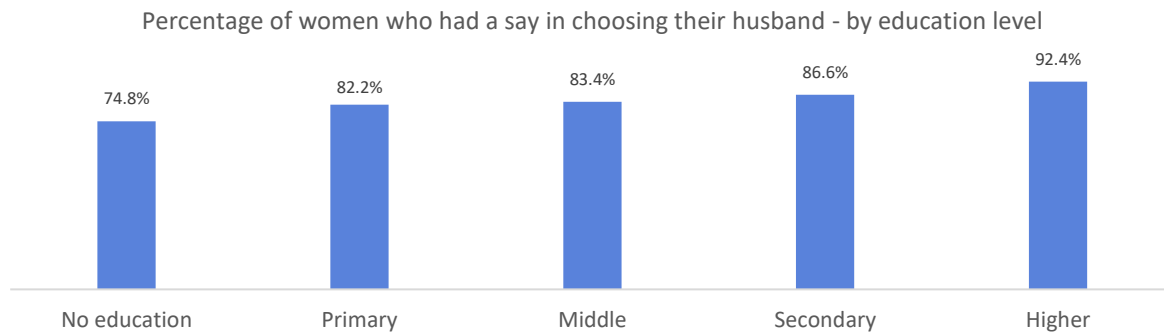


Source: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2017-18); analyzed by Gallup Pakistan

3) Education level has a positive correlation with likelihood of women to have marriage decision-making autonomy.

Education level has a positive correlation with likelihood of women to have marriage decision-making autonomy. 74.8% of women with no formal education reported having a say in choosing their husbands. That proportion increases to between 82% to 86% as education level rises from Primary through to Secondary school.

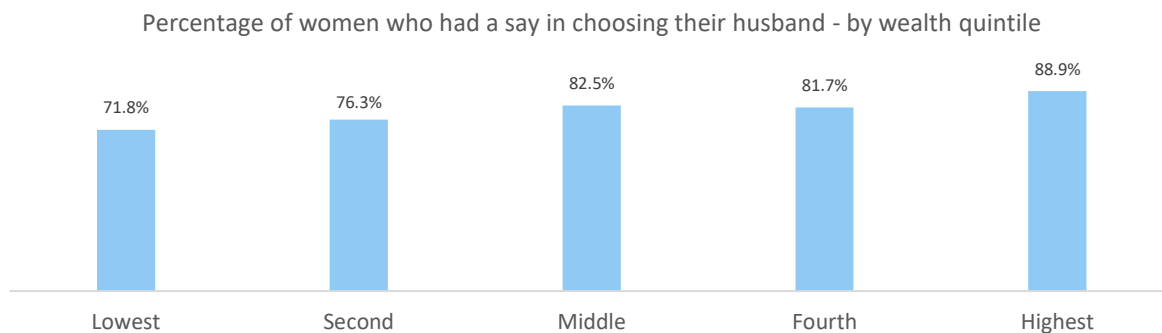
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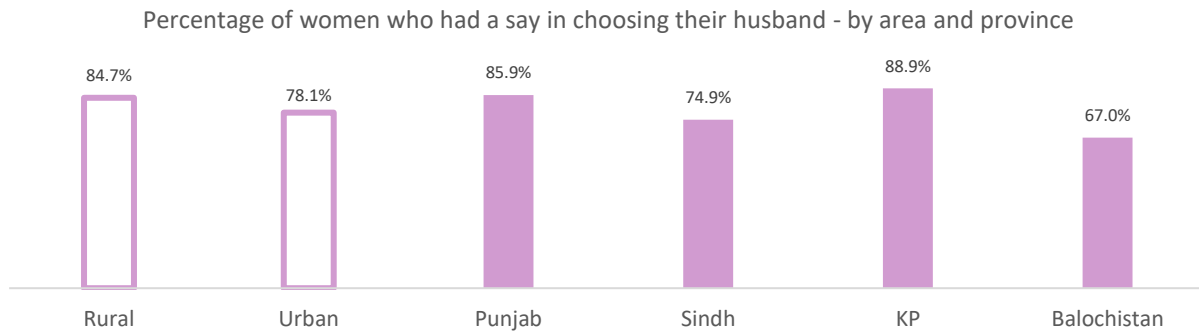


Source: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2017-18); analyzed by Gallup Pakistan

5) **More women in rural areas (84.7%) reported having input in choosing their spouse than those in urban areas (78%).**

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Province-wise, a greater proportion of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (88.9%) and Punjab (85.9%) reported having a say in choosing their husband. This was followed by Sindh (74.9%) and Balochistan (67%) with the lowest proportions.



Source: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2017-18); analyzed by Gallup Pakistan

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand both the Big Data Analysis project as well as this study of PDS 2017-18. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director of the Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

Wish to know more about the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18?

“The primary objective of the 2017-18 PDHS is to provide up-to-date estimates of basic demographic and health indicators. The PDHS provides a comprehensive overview of population, maternal, and child health issues in Pakistan. Specifically, the 2017-18 PDHS collected information on:

- Key demographic indicators, particularly fertility and under-5 mortality rates, at the national level, for urban and rural areas, and within the country's eight regions
- Direct and indirect factors that determine levels and trends of fertility and child mortality
- Contraceptive knowledge and practice
- Maternal health and care including antenatal, perinatal, and postnatal care
- Child feeding practices, including breastfeeding, and anthropometric measures to assess the nutritional status of children under age 5 and women aged 15-49
- Key aspects of family health, including vaccination coverage and prevalence of diseases among infants and children under age 5
- Knowledge and attitudes of women and men about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, and potential exposure to risk
- Women's empowerment and its relationship to reproductive health and family planning
- Disability level
- Extent of gender-based violence
- Migration patterns”

You can find out more at: <https://dhsprogram.com/>

For more on the PDHS 2017-18 and its complete tables, go to:

[The DHS Program - Pakistan: DHS, 2017-18 - Final Report \(English\)](#)

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