

Public Perceptions of Divorce in Pakistan



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Summary:

The report on Public Perceptions of Divorce in Pakistan, powered by Gallup Pakistan, reveals significant gaps in legal awareness, persistent societal stigma, and gendered perceptions of divorce. Half of Pakistanis are unaware of the concept and legal process of Khula, and nearly 70% do not know about Clause 18 in the Nikkahnama, which grants women the right to initiate divorce. Awareness of the different types of Talaq is similarly low, highlighting a critical need for legal education and overall social conversation using mediums like mass media.

Despite this, 65% of respondents recognize Khula as an essential right, though 18% disagree, reflecting ongoing resistance to women's autonomy in divorce. More than half believe Talaq-e-Biddat (instant triple Talaq) is misused, with women expressing stronger concerns than men. The stigma surrounding divorce remains deeply entrenched, with 72% believing women face greater judgment than men when seeking Khula, and 63% stating that a woman's reputation is negatively affected by divorce. Furthermore, 77% acknowledge that societal stigma surrounding divorce is a major issue in Pakistan, reinforcing the cultural barriers that discourage women from exercising their rights.

Financial neglect (33%) and domestic violence (19%) are seen as the primary reasons women seek Khula.

Overall, the findings underscore the need for legal awareness campaigns and cultural shifts to address misinformation, reduce stigma, and promote a more equitable understanding of divorce in Pakistan.

Public Perceptions of Divorce in Pakistan

Legal Awareness is Low:

Half of Pakistanis are unaware of the concept and legal process of Khula

70% do not know about Clause 18 in the Nikkahnama



Over **60%** are unfamiliar with the different types of Talaq in Islamic law



Primary Reasons for Divorce:

The most common reason women seek Khula is financial neglect (33%)



19% cited domestic violence as second most common reason for seeking Khula



For Talaq, financial disputes (**38%**) and domestic violence (**20%**) are the leading causes. Economic disparities influence these trends, with financial issues cited more frequently among lower-income respondents.

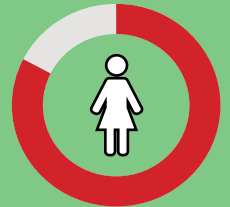
Mixed Views on Legal Rights:

65% believe Khula is an essential legal right for women, 18% disagree. More than half of respondents think Talaq-e-Biddat (instant triple Talaq) is widely misused, with women expressing stronger concerns than men.

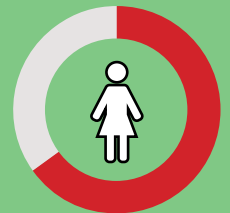


Strong Societal Stigma:

72% of respondents believe women face greater judgment than men when initiating divorce



63% say that pursuing Khula negatively affects a woman's reputation



Additionally, **77%** agree that societal stigma around divorce remains a significant issue

Topic 1: Knowledge and Awareness of Divorce Laws



Item 1.1: Key Finding

Question: How aware are you of the concept and legal process of Khula in Pakistan?

Awareness of Khula: 1 in 2 Pakistanis are unaware of the concept of Khula and its legal process, with only 42% being aware.



The proportion of women and men aware of the concept of Khula is nearly the same, at 43% and 41%, respectively. Interestingly there is no major difference in awareness across other demographic variables such as urban – rural as well as age. The variation on these counts is within error margin of this survey.

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 1.1: Statistical Analysis

Question: How aware are you of the concept and legal process of Khula in Pakistan?

	Very Aware	Somewhat Aware	Not Very Aware	Not Aware at All	DK/NR
All Pakistan	9%	33%	12%	37%	8%
Gender					
Male	9%	32%	11%	38%	8%
Female	9%	34%	13%	37%	7%
Respondent Age					
Under 30	10%	34%	9%	39%	7%
30-50	9%	34%	14%	36%	7%
50+	9%	26%	11%	41%	13%
Location					
Rural	7%	33%	13%	39%	8%
Urban	12%	33%	10%	35%	9%

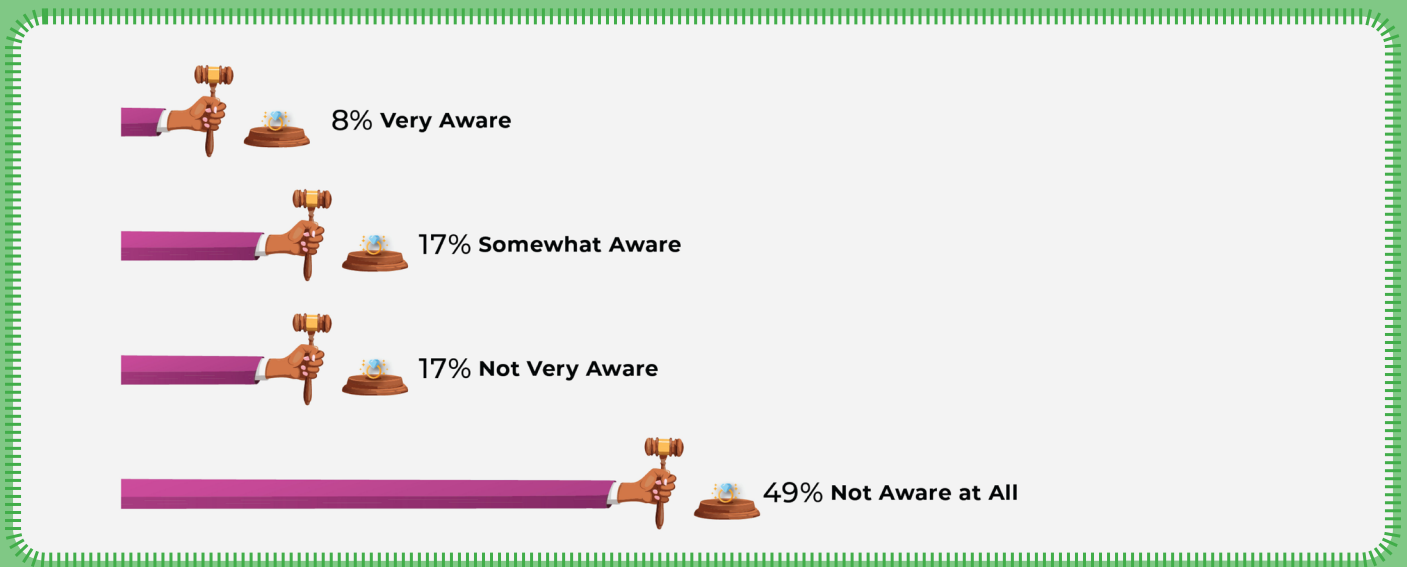
Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +/- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Item 1.2: Key Finding

Question: Are you aware of Clause 18 in the Nikkahnama, which allows the wife the right to initiate divorce (Talaq-e-Tafweez)?

Nearly 7 in 10 Pakistanis are unaware of Clause 18 in the Nikkahnama, which grants women the right to initiate divorce, while only 23% are aware of it.



Only 25% of women are aware of their right to divorce, while nearly half of both men and women are unfamiliar with the concept of Talaq-e-Tafweez. Awareness is even lower in rural areas, where more than 7 in 10 residents have no knowledge of Clause 18 in the Nikkahnama. (For more details regarding Nikah Nama clauses visit: <https://www.las.org.pk/media/pdfs/rpandp/Know-your-Nikkahnama.pdf>)

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 1.2: Statistical Analysis

Are you aware of Clause 18 in the Nikkahnama, which allows the wife the right to initiate divorce (Talaq-e-Tafweez)?

	Very Aware	Somewhat Aware	Not Very Aware	Not Aware at All	DK/NR
All Pakistan	8%	14%	14%	54%	10%
Gender					
Male	10%	11%	11%	58%	9%
Female	8%	17%	17%	49%	9%
Respondent Age					
Under 30	8%	9%	14%	55%	14%
30-50	9%	16%	15%	55%	6%
50+	12%	17%	9%	45%	16%
Location					
Rural	6%	13%	17%	56%	8%
Urban	14%	15%	9%	50%	12%

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Item 1.3: Key Finding

Are you aware of the three types of Talaq in Islamic law (Talaq-e-Ahsan, Talaq-e-Hasan, and Talaq-e-Biddat)?

Only 28% of Pakistanis are aware of the three types of divorce in Islamic law, while more than 6 in 10 are unaware.



A significant majority (62%) of Pakistanis are unaware of the three types of Talaq.

A higher proportion of females (14%) compared to males are unfamiliar with Talaq-e-Ahsan, Talaq-e-Hasan, and Talaq-e-Biddat. Similarly, a greater percentage of rural respondents (9%) than urban respondents claim to have no knowledge of these types of divorce. The highest awareness is reported among respondents aged 50 and above (38%).

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 1.3: Statistical Analysis

Are you aware of the three types of Talaq in Islamic law (Talaq-e-Ahsan, Talaq-e-Hasan, and Talaq-e-Biddat)?

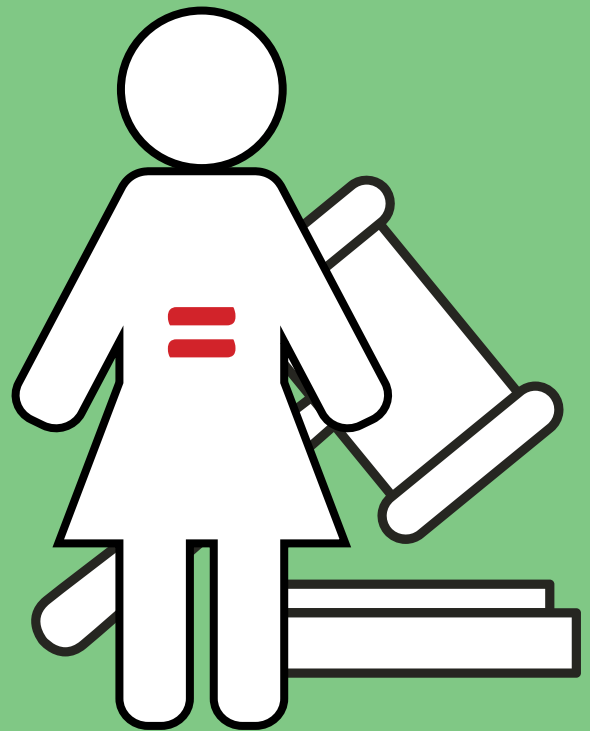
	Very Aware	Somewhat Aware	Not Very Aware	Not Aware at All	DK/NR
All Pakistan	12%	17%	9%	53%	10%
Gender					
Male	15%	19%	7%	48%	10%
Female	8%	14%	11%	58%	8%
Respondent Age					
Under 30	9%	11%	12%	54%	13%
30-50	12%	19%	9%	54%	7%
50+	19%	19%	5%	45%	12%
Location					
Rural	11%	15%	10%	55%	9%
Urban	14%	19%	7%	49%	10%

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Topic 2:

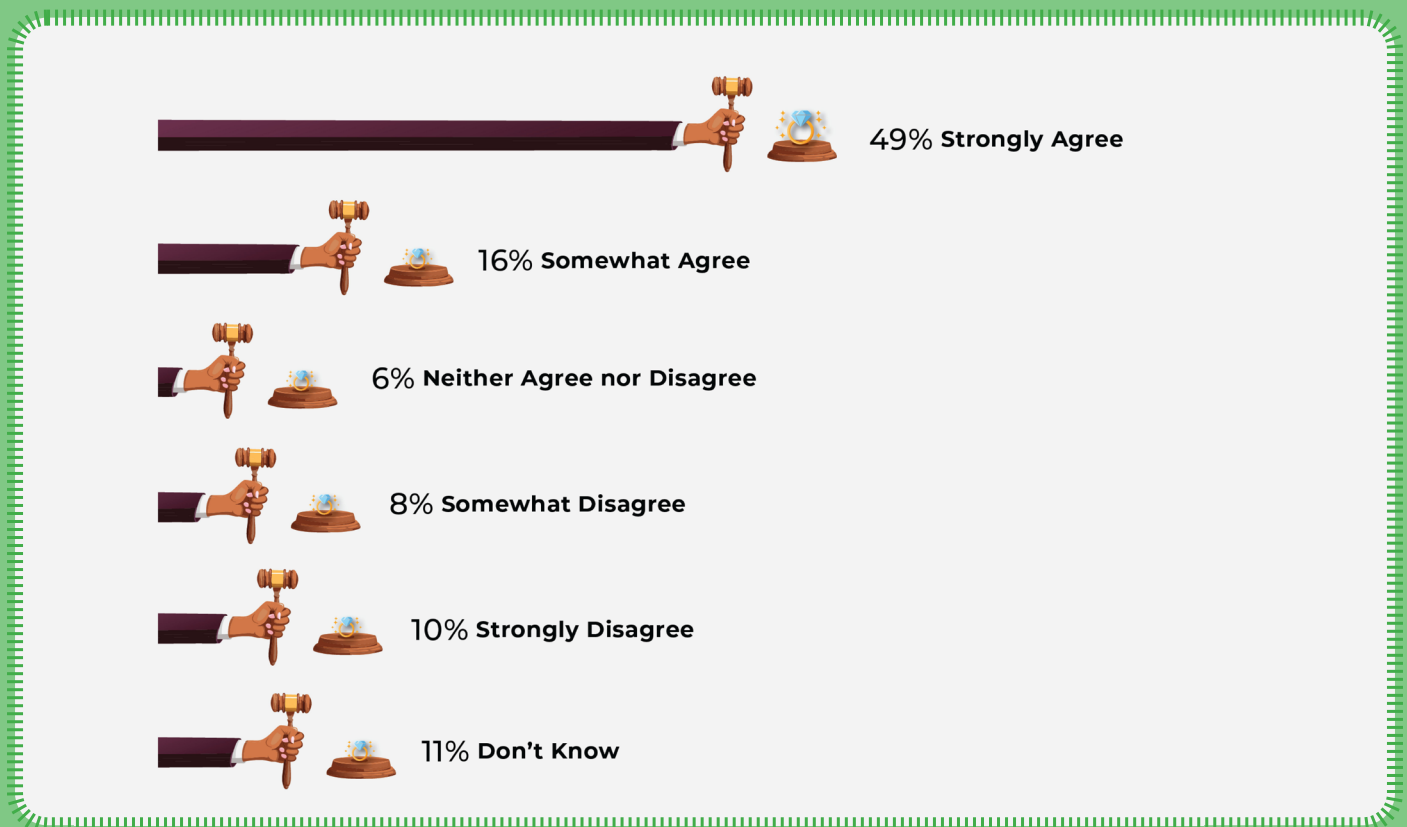
Perceptions of Legal Rights and Gender Equality



Item 2.1: Key Finding

Do you believe Khula is an essential legal right for women in Pakistan?

Khula as a Fundamental Right: A majority of Pakistanis (65%) believe Khula is an essential legal right for women, while only 18% disagree



64% of males and 66% of females believe that Khula is an essential right for women in Pakistan. Very limited differences were found on demographic variables regarding this view.

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 2.1: Statistical Analysis

Do you believe Khula is an essential legal right for women in Pakistan?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/ NR
All Pakistan	49%	16%	6%	8%	10%	11%
Gender						
Male	49%	15%	4%	10%	12%	10%
Female	49%	17%	8%	6%	8%	12%
Respondent Age						
Under 30	45%	13%	7%	11%	13%	12%
30-50	50%	19%	5%	6%	9%	10%
50+	53%	12%	3%	11%	5%	16%
Location						
Rural	47%	19%	6%	8%	9%	12%
Urban	52%	12%	5%	8%	11%	11%

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +/- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Item 2.2: Key Finding

Do you believe Talaq-e-Biddat (instant triple Talaq) is widely misused in Pakistan?

Talaq-e-Biddat: More than 1 in 2 Pakistanis believe the instant triple talaq is widely misused in Pakistan.



Only 1 in 4 (24%) Pakistanis disagree with the idea that instant triple talaq is misused. A higher proportion of females (60%) compared to males (50%) agree that Talaq-e-Biddat is misused.

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 2.2: Statistical Analysis

Do you believe Talaq-e-Biddat (instant triple Talaq) is widely misused in Pakistan?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/ NR
All Pakistan	32%	23%	6%	9%	14%	15%
Gender						
Male	33%	17%	9%	12%	15%	14%
Female	31%	29%	3%	7%	14%	17%
Respondent Age						
Under 30	29%	21%	8%	13%	15%	15%
30-50	31%	25%	5%	8%	15%	15%
50+	40%	14%	7%	11%	11%	17%
Location						
Rural	28%	28%	5%	9%	14%	15%
Urban	38%	14%	8%	10%	15%	16%

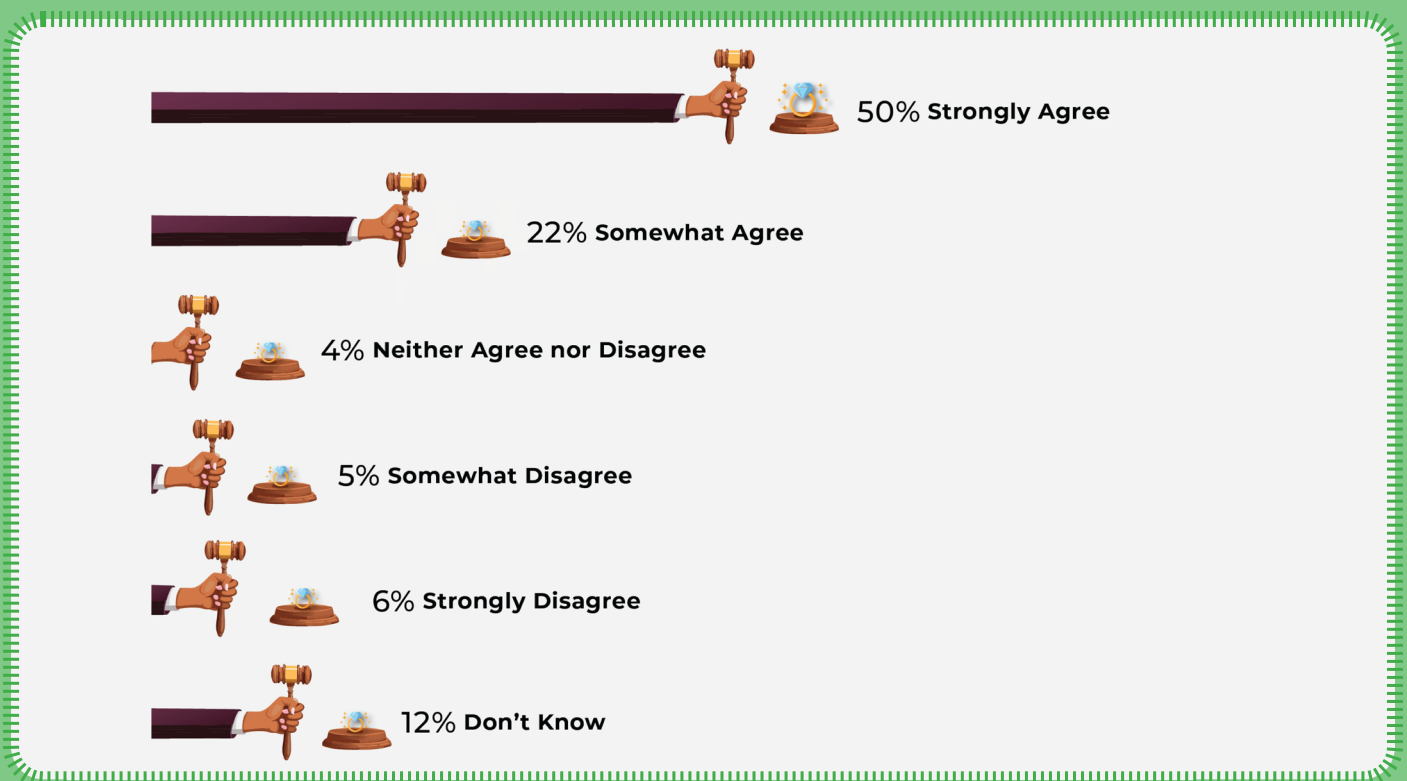
Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +/- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Item 2.3: Key Finding

Do you think women who seek Khula face greater societal judgment compared to men who initiate divorce?

Majority of Pakistanis (72%) believe that women who seek Khula face greater societal judgment compared to men initiating divorce, while only 12% disagree



Only 1 in 10 (12%) Pakistanis disagree with the idea that women face greater societal judgment when initiating Khula compared to men initiating divorce.

A similar proportion of women (73%) and men (70%) agree that women experience more societal judgment when seeking Khula. This belief is even stronger among those aged 50 and above, with 77% holding this view.

When comparing urban and rural residents, the level of agreement remains nearly identical, with 71% of urban and 72% of rural respondents acknowledging the societal judgment women face when pursuing Khula.

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 2.3: Statistical Analysis

Do you think women who seek Khula face greater societal judgment compared to men who initiate divorce?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/ NR
All Pakistan	50%	22%	4%	5%	6%	13%
Gender						
Male	50%	20%	5%	6%	6%	12%
Female	49%	24%	2%	5%	6%	13%
Respondent Age						
Under 30	47%	19%	5%	9%	6%	15%
30-50	50%	24%	3%	4%	7%	12%
50+	56%	21%	4%	3%	3%	13%
Location						
Rural	45%	27%	4%	6%	6%	12%
Urban	58%	13%	4%	5%	6%	15%

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Topic 3:

Societal Stigma and Repercussions



Item 3.1: Key Finding

Do you believe that societal stigma surrounding divorce is a significant issue in Pakistan?

Nearly 4 in 5 Pakistanis agree that the societal stigma surrounding divorce is a significant issue in the country; 1 in 10 disagree



A significant majority of Pakistanis (77%) believe that the stigma surrounding divorce in Pakistani society is a vital issue.

Among those who agree that there is significant societal stigma, female and male respondents are nearly the same (79% and 76%).

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 3.1: Statistical Analysis

Do you believe that societal stigma surrounding divorce is a significant issue in Pakistan?

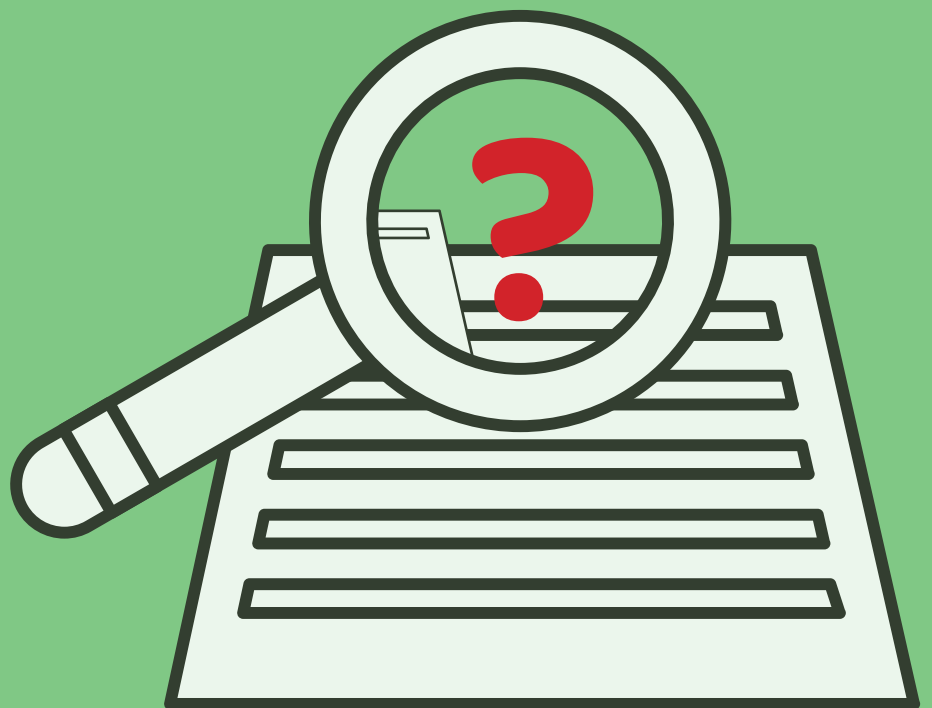
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/ NR
All Pakistan	58%	20%	3%	6%	4%	10%
Gender						
Male	57%	19%	3%	7%	4%	10%
Female	58%	21%	4%	4%	4%	10%
Respondent Age						
Under 30	59%	15%	3%	9%	5%	9%
30-50	56%	22%	3%	4%	4%	10%
50+	60%	20%	4%	3%	0%	11%
Location						
Rural	58%	22%	4%	5%	4%	8%
Urban	58%	17%	3%	6%	4%	13%

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +/- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Topic 4:

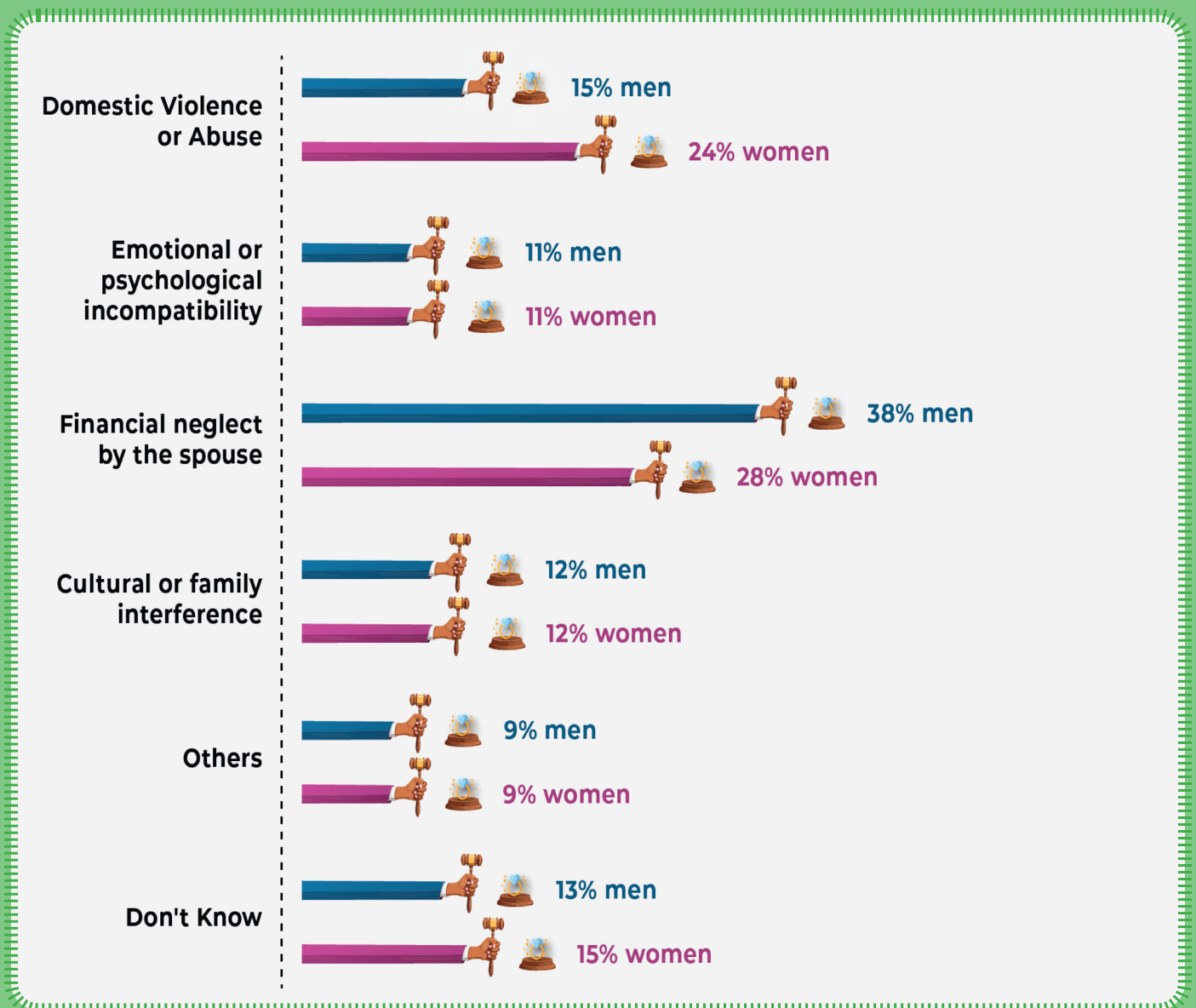
Reasons for Seeking Divorce



Item 4.1: Key Finding

What are the key reasons women seek Khula in Pakistan?

33% of Pakistanis believe financial neglect is the key reason women seek Khula in Pakistan, followed by 19% who believe domestic violence or abuse is the main reason.



Among the reasons women seek Khula, a higher percentage of women (24%) believe domestic violence or abuse is the main reason, while men are more inclined to cite financial neglect by a spouse (38%). A higher percentage of rural residents (20%) believe domestic abuse is the primary reason for Khula.

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 4.1: Statistical Analysis

What are the key reasons women seek Khula in Pakistan?

	Domestic violence or abuse	Emotional or psychological incompatibility	Financial neglect by the spouse	Cultural or family interference	Other	DK/ NR
All Pakistan	19%	11%	33%	12%	9%	16%
Gender						
Male	15%	11%	38%	12%	9%	15%
Female	24%	11%	28%	12%	9%	17%
Respondent Age						
Under 30	15%	10%	29%	18%	3%	25%
30-50	22%	10%	34%	10%	13%	11%
50+	18%	13%	38%	6%	5%	20%
Location						
Rural	20%	11%	31%	13%	10%	14%
Urban	17%	9%	37%	10%	8%	19%

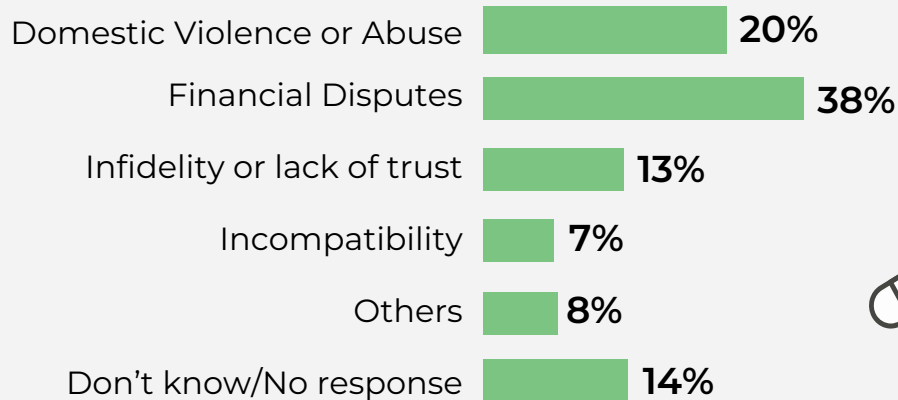
Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Item 4.2: Key Finding

What are the most common reasons Talaq is initiated in Pakistan?

Reasons for Talaq: Financial disputes rank as the most common reason for Talaq at 38%, followed by domestic violence at 20%.



A higher proportion of women (11%) compared to men believe domestic violence is the reason Talaq is initiated, while 39% attribute it to financial disputes. More rural residents (22%) consider domestic violence to be the primary cause.

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Item 4.2: Statistical Analysis

What are the most common reasons Talaq is initiated in Pakistan?

	Domestic violence or abuse	Financial disputes	Infidelity or lack of trust	Incompatibility	Others	DK/NR
All Pakistan	20%	38%	13%	7%	8%	15%
Gender						
Male	14%	39%	16%	6%	9%	15%
Female	25%	37%	10%	7%	6%	14%
Respondent Age						
Under 30	23%	36%	12%	7%	3%	18%
30-50	18%	40%	13%	6%	10%	13%
50+	17%	36%	14%	7%	8%	18%
Location						
Rural	22%	40%	11%	5%	8%	14%
Urban	16%	35%	16%	9%	7%	18%

Source: Powered by Gallup Pakistan, January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Error Margin: +- 2 to 3% at 95 % Confidence Level

Summary of Gallup Pakistan's Polls on Divorce (1979-2019)

Gallup Pakistan has conducted several surveys over the years to gauge public perceptions of divorce, including views on women's right to divorce and justifications for divorce by either spouse. The findings highlight evolving social attitudes toward marital dissolution in Pakistan.

1. Women's Right to Divorce

- In **2013**, **33%** of respondents believed women should have the right to divorce, while **46%** opposed it, and **22%** were unsure.
- By **2016**, support for women's right to divorce had risen significantly to **58%**, with opposition dropping to **41%**, and only **1%** remaining undecided.

2. Justifications for Divorce (Women's Perspective, 2010 Survey)

Women respondents cited multiple reasons for seeking a divorce, including:

- **91%**: If the husband has extramarital relations.
- **84%**: If the husband is highly aggressive or hot-tempered.
- **79%**: If the husband is an addict.
- **69%**: If there is no love in the marriage.
- **64%**: If the husband cannot have children.

These results indicate that factors such as infidelity, abuse, and addiction are widely accepted as valid reasons for a wife to seek divorce.

3. Justifications for Divorce (Men's Perspective, 2017 & Earlier Polls)

In a **2017** poll, men were asked whether certain conditions justified divorcing their wives:

- **42%** justified divorce if the wife started addiction.
- **39%** considered it reasonable if her temperament differed from the husband's.
- **37%** believed lack of love was sufficient cause for divorce.
- **36%** found high temper and quarrelsome behavior a valid reason.

Over the years, data has shown that while men are more likely to justify divorce for reasons such as temperament and incompatibility, they are less supportive of divorce due to financial instability or lack of wealth.

4. Evolution of Attitudes Toward Divorce (1982-2017)

- Acceptance of divorce due to a husband's drug addiction increased from **29% (1982)** to **45% (2017)**.
- Acceptance of divorce if the husband is highly aggressive decreased from **42% (1982)** to **37% (2017)**.
- Economic reasons for divorce (e.g., husband being very poor) saw reduced acceptance, dropping from **51% (1982)** to **16% (2017)**.

This shift indicates that while social concerns like addiction have gained recognition, financial instability is increasingly seen as an insufficient cause for divorce. The rising acceptance of women's right to divorce (from 33% in 2013 to 58% in 2016) suggests changing social norms, likely influenced by greater awareness of legal rights and gender equality movements.

Access the full reports:

[1. 38 YEARS OF POLLING ON FAMILY AND SOCIETY](#)

[2. 40 YEARS OF POLLING ON WOMEN IN PAKISTAN](#)

Summary

Methodology

Summary Methodology

Sample size:	785 Participants (18+ Males and Females)
Sampling Method:	Random Digit Dialing
Coverage:	National Cross Section All Pakistan Urban and Rural
Error Margin:	+3-5% at 95% confidence level
Interview Mode:	Telephonic
Field Dates:	January 17, 2025 – January 22, 2025

Gallup Pakistan adheres to ESOMAR/WAPOR Code of Ethics of Opinion and Marketing Research (form more details please see detailed methodology)

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Demographics: Profile of Respondents

	Weighted Col%
BASE: All	100%
Gender	
Male	51%
Female	49%
Location	
Rural	64%
Urban	36%
Age Groups	
29 years or younger	30%
30 - 50 years	58%
51+ years	12%
Education of Respondents	
No formal education / illiterate	25%
Less than 5 classes / primary	17%
Between 5 and 10 classes / up to high school	16%
Matric / Secondary School Certificate	24%
Intermediate / Higher Secondary School Certificate	6%
University graduate	7%
Graduate degree or higher	10%
Province	
Punjab	54%
Sindh	23%
KPK	17%
Balochistan	6%



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