

Big Data Analysis | Marriage & Consanguinity

6 in 10 Ever-Married Women in Punjab Married a Blood Relative; Cousin Marriage Falls Sharply with Education

Analysis by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics of 18,599 ever-married women from the Punjab Household Panel Survey (PHPS) Baseline shows that 61.7% of women married a blood relative. Nearly half of all marriages (around 49%) were between first cousins, including 27% paternal first cousins and 22% maternal first cousins.

Married a Blood
Relative

61.7%

Between first
Cousins

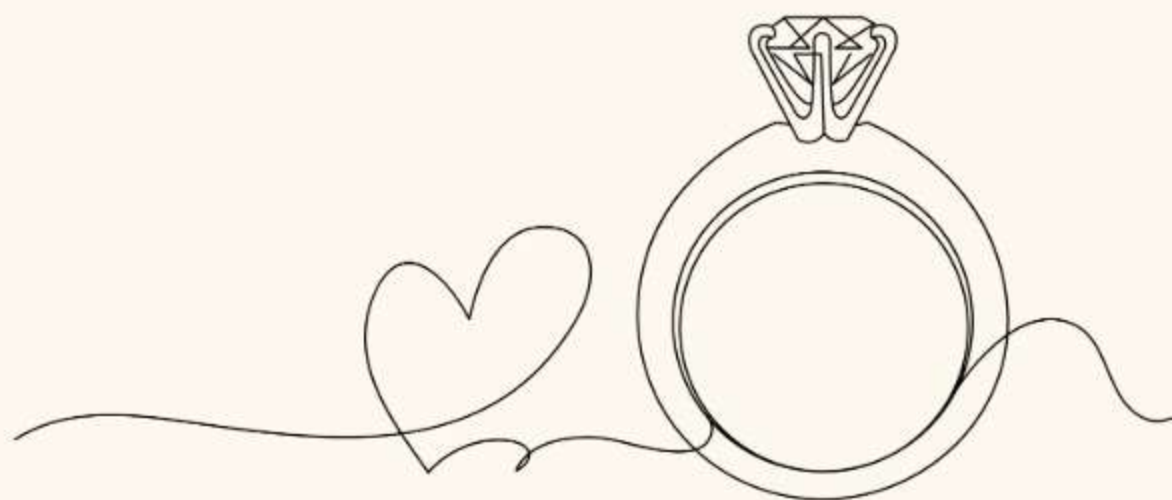
49%

Paternal first
Cousins

27%

Maternal first
Cousins

22%



Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk www.gilanifoundation.com)





(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

Big Data Analysis Marriage & Consanguinity

6 in 10 Ever-Married Women in Punjab Married a Blood Relative; Cousin Marriage Falls Sharply with Education

(Islamabad), 3rd August 2026

Marriage between relatives remains the most common form of marriage in Punjab—but the data suggests education is one of the strongest factors associated with lower rates of consanguinity.

Analysis by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics of 18,599 ever-married women from the Punjab Household Panel Survey (PHPS) Baseline shows that 61.7% of women married a blood relative. Nearly half of all marriages (around 49%) were between first cousins, including 27% paternal first cousins and 22% maternal first cousins.

The most striking finding is the education gradient. Cousin marriage declines steadily from 69% among women who never attended school to 48% among women with higher education. This pattern remains visible even within both rural and urban areas and is also observed with the husband's education, suggesting that schooling is more strongly associated with cousin marriage than place of residence.

Geography also matters, though less than education. 65.7% of rural women reported marrying a blood relative compared with 54.0% of urban women, a gap of nearly 12 percentage points.

Age at first marriage is another important factor. Women who married before age 16 were the most likely to have married a blood relative (72%). The proportion declines consistently with later marriage, reaching 51% among women who married at 26 years or older. The findings suggest that early marriage and cousin marriage often occur together rather than as independent family decisions.

The analysis cautions against interpreting the data as evidence that cousin marriage is increasing or decreasing over time. Because the survey includes only ever-married women, younger women in the sample are disproportionately those who married early—a group already more likely to marry relatives. This selection effect means the dataset cannot reliably measure generational trends in consanguinity.

Beyond cultural interest, the findings have important public health implications. Consanguineous marriage has been widely studied for its association with certain recessive genetic disorders and infant health outcomes. The concentration of cousin marriage among less-educated women and those marrying at younger ages highlights the importance of education and awareness alongside broader public health interventions.

Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics has developed an interactive dashboard to explore marriage patterns and other demographic indicators in Punjab. **Access the dashboard here:** [PHPS Baseline — Punjab Health & Population Survey - Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics](#)

GALLUP PAKISTAN DIGITAL ANALYTICS

PUNJAB, PAKISTAN · PHPS BASELINE · 18,599 EVER-MARRIED WOMEN

The most common marriage in Punjab is between cousins

61.7% of ever-married women married a blood relative—and nearly half married a first cousin. But the practice isn't evenly spread. More than anything else, it tracks a woman's education.

HEADLINE FIGURES

61.7%

married a blood relative
of all women

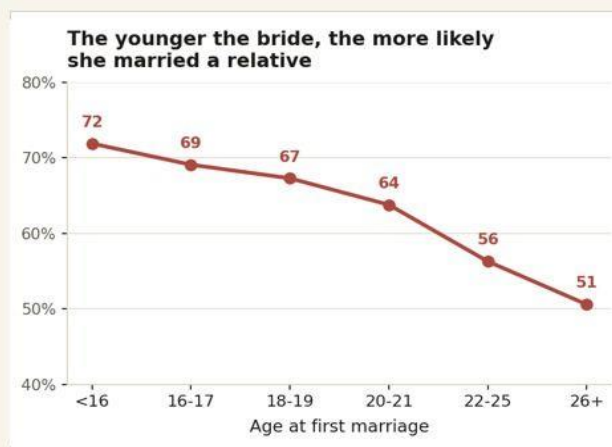
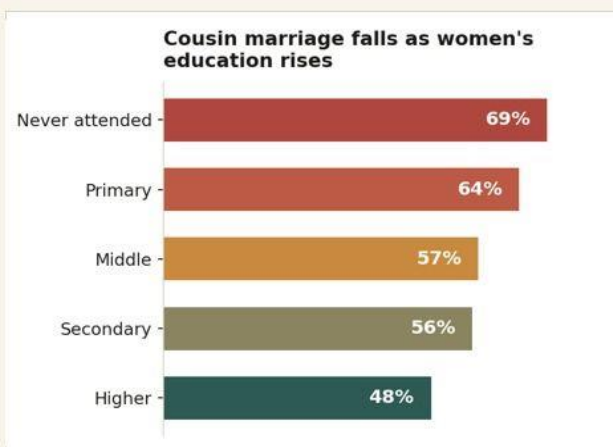
~49%

were first-cousin unions
paternal + maternal

65.7%

rural vs 54.0% urban
a 12-point gap

WHO MARRIES A RELATIVE MORE OFTEN?



READING IT CAREFULLY

The education gradient is the real story.

Cousin marriage drops from 69% among women who never attended school to 48% among the higher-educated—and this holds inside both rural and urban areas. Education, not just where you live, predicts the practice. The same pattern appears for the husband's education.

Cousin marriage and early marriage travel together.

Women who married before 16 are the most likely to have married a relative (72%), falling steadily to 51% for those who married at 26+. These are intertwined family strategies, not independent choices.

Is it declining? The data can't say cleanly.

The youngest women show the highest rates—but that's a selection trap: women already married by their early 20s are disproportionately those who married young, and early marriage itself predicts cousin marriage. A real trend can't be separated from this here.

Analysis: Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics. Source data: Punjab Household Panel Survey (PHPS) Baseline, women's questionnaire (b17 blood relationship, b18 relationship type). Unweighted; ever-married women, Punjab. 'First-cousin unions' = paternal + maternal first cousins.

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com; www.gallup.com.pk; www.gilanifoundation.com)

This analysis was conducted by Gallup Pakistan data from the Punjab Household Panel Survey (PHPS) Baseline, visualized by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, covering 18,599 ever-married women in Punjab. The dashboard examines marriage patterns, including consanguinity, by education, geography, and age at first marriage.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
The Pakistani Affiliate of Gallup
International



Monday, 3rd August 2026

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Gilani Research Foundation is a not-for-profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently, Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup Pakistan.

If you have any further questions regarding this poll, please feel free to contact us.

*Best Regards,
Gallup Pakistan*

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Daily Gilani Poll
2026



of Gallup Pakistan
(1980-2026)