

Annual Methodological Archive Research Review

<http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/about>

Volume 3, Issue 6(2025)

Challenges of Online Nikaah in Pakistan: A Study of Technical, Legal and Social Issues. Examine the Technical, Legal and Social Challenges Associated with Online Nikaah in Pakistan

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Article Details

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Online Nikaah, Pakistan, legal recognition, social challenges, digital authentication

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The advent of digital technology has transformed numerous aspects of societal interaction, including matrimonial practices such as Nikaah (Islamic marriage). In Pakistan, online Nikaah ceremonies have emerged as a growing trend, particularly among overseas Pakistanis and during circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. While offering convenience and accessibility, online Nikaah presents a range of technical, legal, and social challenges that warrant critical examination. This study explores the multifaceted issues surrounding online Nikaah in Pakistan, focusing on the integrity of digital platforms, authentication of identity and consent, compliance with legal formalities under Pakistani family law, and acceptance within religious and cultural frameworks. The research highlights inconsistencies in the legal recognition of online marriages, lack of uniform regulation, and the potential for exploitation or fraud in the absence of standardized procedures. Additionally, the paper discusses the social stigma attached to non-traditional marriage formats and the concerns raised by religious scholars regarding the validity of such unions. Based on qualitative and doctrinal analysis, this article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implications of online Nikaah and offers recommendations for addressing existing gaps through policy reforms and technological safeguards.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF ONLINE NIKAH IN PAKISTAN

The practice of Nikaah, or Islamic marriage, is a deeply rooted religious and cultural institution in Pakistan. Traditionally, it has involved the physical presence of the bride, groom, and witnesses, with a Nikaah registrar or religious scholar officiating the union. However, in recent years, with the rise of digital communication technologies, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, a shift toward virtual and online Nikaah ceremonies has emerged. Online Nikaah refers to the solemnization of marriage through digital means such as video conferencing platforms like Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp, where at least one of the parties or participants is not physically present at the marriage location (Hanifah, 2025).

This transition has opened new avenues for couples separated by geographical distances—such as those living abroad or in remote areas within Pakistan—making the marriage process more accessible and convenient. Moreover, the increasing use of digital services in various aspects of life has normalized virtual transactions, including matrimonial arrangements. Nonetheless, despite its growing prevalence, online Nikaah remains a contentious subject due to technical, legal, and social complications that continue to challenge its recognition and legitimacy in Pakistan's religious and legal frameworks.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDYING ONLINE NIKAH CHALLENGES

The emergence of online Nikaah presents a complex interplay of modern technology with traditional Islamic jurisprudence and Pakistani family law. This interaction demands critical scrutiny as it directly impacts the lives of citizens seeking marital union through virtual means. The issue is particularly significant in a country like Pakistan, where religion and law are intricately interwoven in matters of personal status and family life. Questions have arisen regarding the authenticity, validity, and legal enforceability of online Nikaahs, especially in the absence of clear legislative direction and consistent judicial interpretations.

From a technical standpoint, ensuring proper identification of participants, the validity of consent, and the security of the virtual platform are key challenges. Legal complexities include the application of existing family laws to digital scenarios, the role of the Nikaah registrar, and the jurisdiction of family courts over online marriages. Social issues, such as societal acceptance, stigmatization, and concerns over forced or fraudulent marriages, further complicate the matter. Additionally, women's rights in the context of online Nikaah—such as informed consent and protection from coercion—raise human rights considerations that merit

serious attention (Hastarini, 2025).

Understanding these challenges is essential not only for safeguarding the rights of individuals entering into such marriages but also for guiding lawmakers, religious scholars, and civil society in developing robust, inclusive frameworks that accommodate technological advancements without undermining religious and legal principles. A comprehensive study of these challenges can also help anticipate potential abuse, provide clarity to citizens, and promote trust in digital matrimonial processes (Warraich & Choudry, 2025).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

This research seeks to explore and critically analyze the multifaceted challenges associated with online Nikaah in Pakistan, focusing on technical, legal, and social dimensions. The central research questions guiding this study include:

- What are the primary technical barriers and risks involved in conducting Nikaah online in Pakistan?
- How do existing Pakistani laws and Islamic legal principles address or fall short in regulating online Nikaah?
- What are the societal perceptions and social implications of solemnizing marriage through digital platforms?
- How do gender dynamics and human rights concerns intersect with the practice of online Nikaah?

To address these questions, the key objectives of this research are as follows:

- To examine the current technological frameworks used for conducting online Nikaah and assess their reliability, authenticity, and security.
- To evaluate the compatibility of online Nikaah with existing legal instruments such as the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, and relevant case law in Pakistan.
- To investigate the role of religious authorities and the State in recognizing or regulating online Nikaah.
- To explore the social attitudes, cultural resistance, and community-level concerns related to online marriages.
- To identify potential policy and legal reforms necessary to ensure that online Nikaah can be conducted in a manner that is secure, legally valid, and socially accepted.

By comprehensively analyzing these aspects, this study aims to contribute to the evolving

discourse on digital marriages in Pakistan. It endeavors to highlight gaps in legislation and implementation, recommend regulatory mechanisms, and propose socially responsive and technologically viable solutions to enhance the legitimacy and protection of online Nikaah participants. This will not only benefit individuals directly involved in online marriages but also aid policymakers, legal practitioners, and religious authorities in developing standardized and equitable practices aligned with both modern needs and traditional values (Ramadhani & Sayuti, 2025).

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

The emergence of online Nikaah (marriage) as a modern method for solemnizing Islamic marriages in Pakistan has sparked considerable interest, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when physical gatherings were limited. However, the convenience and accessibility of online Nikaah are accompanied by several technical challenges that hinder its widespread acceptance and reliable implementation. These challenges include inadequate digital literacy and limited access to digital tools among the population, serious concerns about data security and personal privacy, and the lack of adequate technical infrastructure to support a secure and efficient online Nikaah process. Each of these technical impediments requires careful examination to understand their implications for the future of online matrimonial services in Pakistan (Julia & Hayati, 2025).

DIGITAL LITERACY AND ACCESS

Digital literacy is a cornerstone for effective participation in any online process, including Nikaah. In Pakistan, digital literacy remains unevenly distributed across regions, socioeconomic classes, and gender lines. According to recent surveys, a significant portion of the Pakistani population—particularly in rural areas and among women—lacks basic knowledge of how to use the internet, smartphones, or computer systems. The literacy rate itself hovers around 60%, and digital literacy is even lower. This disparity makes it extremely difficult for large segments of society to navigate online Nikaah platforms, access legal documentation, or engage in video conferencing required for such ceremonies.

Additionally, access to digital devices and reliable internet connectivity is another major hurdle. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has reported increasing internet penetration, yet broadband and smartphone access remain largely limited in rural and underserved communities. Many potential users may not own a smartphone or computer, and public digital access points are few and far between. Even when individuals possess the

necessary devices, inconsistent electricity supply and frequent load-shedding in many parts of the country further hinder their ability to participate in a seamless online Nikaah process (Pa et al., 2025).

These issues create a digital divide that marginalizes a significant portion of the population, particularly women, from using technology-driven marital services. For instance, a woman in a rural village may be willing to engage in an online Nikaah but might lack the digital competence or equipment necessary to do so. This limits the inclusivity and equality that digital platforms are supposed to promote.

SECURITY AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

Online Nikaah involves the exchange of sensitive personal data, including identity documents, photographs, and marital declarations. These data points are particularly vulnerable to cyber threats such as data breaches, identity theft, and unauthorized surveillance if adequate cybersecurity measures are not in place. Most online Nikaah platforms in Pakistan are unregulated, operate without formal compliance with international data protection standards, and lack end-to-end encryption protocols that safeguard user data.

Another serious concern is the privacy of the participants during live sessions conducted via video conferencing. Unlike physical gatherings, online sessions can be easily recorded, intercepted, or leaked, thereby compromising the dignity and confidentiality of the couple and their families. For example, platforms using unsecured Zoom or WhatsApp video calls do not guarantee secure communication channels, which leaves the session vulnerable to hacking or eavesdropping (Wahyudin & Nurhayati, 2024).

Moreover, there is a growing concern over the misuse of personal data by unscrupulous operators who may not adhere to ethical standards. In the absence of a comprehensive data protection law in Pakistan, users have no clear recourse in case their private data is misused. This not only deters people from trusting online Nikaah services but also poses a larger threat to digital trust and e-governance in the country.

In addition to data security, authentication of identity is another technical issue. With minimal oversight, it becomes difficult to verify the identities of the bride, groom, and witnesses in a virtual setting. This opens up opportunities for impersonation, fraud, or coercion, which can severely undermine the legality and sanctity of the marriage (Sholihah, 2024).

TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

For online Nikaah to function smoothly, a robust technical infrastructure is imperative. This

includes high-speed internet connectivity, secure servers, video conferencing tools, and digital document verification systems. Unfortunately, Pakistan lags in several of these areas. Although mobile internet usage is on the rise, high-speed internet remains limited to urban areas, and even there, connection quality can be inconsistent.

Moreover, the absence of a standardized and government-recognized digital platform for conducting online Nikaah leads to the proliferation of unregulated private operators. These platforms often lack the necessary infrastructure for real-time video communication, legal documentation uploads, and electronic signatures—all crucial components of an online Nikaah. Some platforms are mere social media pages offering matchmaking and online solemnization services without proper authentication, documentation, or security protocols (Haryanti, 2024).

Furthermore, the lack of interoperability with other government systems such as NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) also poses a significant challenge. Ideally, an integrated system should allow for automatic verification of CNICs, biometric data, and issuance of digital Nikaah certificates. However, in the current landscape, such integration is virtually non-existent, which means that online Nikaah proceedings often require manual verification and follow-up with local Union Councils—negating the core advantage of convenience.

The limitations of the infrastructure are not just technical but also institutional. Pakistan lacks a central regulatory authority that oversees and certifies online Nikaah service providers. Without such an authority, it is difficult to ensure that service providers follow best practices in terms of technology use, data management, and service delivery (Khairati et al., 2024).

The technical challenges associated with online Nikaah in Pakistan represent a significant barrier to its mainstream adoption. The digital literacy gap, particularly among women and rural populations, undermines the accessibility of online matrimonial services. Security and privacy concerns further erode public trust, while the weak and fragmented technical infrastructure fails to support the smooth execution and legal validation of online Nikaah ceremonies. Addressing these technical shortcomings will require a multi-pronged approach involving digital education, cybersecurity legislation, and public-private partnerships to develop a standardized, government-backed online Nikaah platform. Without such concerted efforts, the promise of online Nikaah as a flexible and modern solution to matrimonial union will remain largely unfulfilled in Pakistan (Magfiroh et al., 2024).

LEGAL CHALLENGES

The emergence of online Nikaah as a modern adaptation of traditional Islamic marriage practices has sparked considerable legal discourse in Pakistan. As digital platforms increasingly mediate marital contracts, several legal concerns arise regarding the validity, recognition, regulatory oversight, and documentation processes associated with these online unions. While online Nikaah offers convenience and accessibility, particularly in cases of long-distance marriages or mobility restrictions, it also brings forth intricate legal complications that challenge the conventional legal and religious frameworks governing marriage in Pakistan (Jamil, 2024).

VALIDITY AND RECOGNITION UNDER PAKISTANI LAW

A central legal issue surrounding online Nikaah is the question of its **validity and recognition** within Pakistan's legal system. According to Islamic law, a valid Nikaah requires the presence of two adult witnesses, an offer (Ijab) and acceptance (Qubool), and the mutual consent of both parties. In the traditional setting, these elements are typically fulfilled in person. However, with the use of digital tools such as video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp), fulfilling these requirements remotely poses legal ambiguities.

The **Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (MFLO) 1961**, which regulates marriage and family matters in Pakistan, does not explicitly recognize or regulate online Nikaah. The law assumes a physical setting for marriage ceremonies, which includes the registration process through a Nikah Registrar. In the absence of clear legislative provisions on online marriage, questions arise as to whether such Nikaahs hold the same legal status as traditional ones (Al Khuluqi Sirait & Syahputra, 2024).

Some jurists and courts have upheld the validity of online Nikaahs under certain conditions — for example, when the presence of parties is substituted with video conferencing, and all Shariah requirements are met. Nevertheless, **inconsistent judicial interpretations** and the absence of standardized guidelines have led to a **lack of uniformity** in recognizing such marriages across jurisdictions in Pakistan. This inconsistency can lead to future complications, particularly in matters of inheritance, divorce, child custody, and maintenance.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND LEGAL OVERSIGHT

The **regulatory framework** governing marriages in Pakistan is ill-equipped to address the dynamics of digital solemnization. The MFLO and rules framed under it primarily envisage physical interactions and formal registration processes. While Nikaah traditionally falls under

religious jurisdiction, the state plays a significant role in regulating its registration, enforcement, and dispute resolution.

Currently, **no specific law in Pakistan governs online Nikaah** ceremonies. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and other cyber regulatory bodies do not have a mandate over religious or civil ceremonies conducted online. This legal vacuum results in an unregulated environment where individuals and private platforms facilitate online Nikaahs without any licensing or accountability (Hanifah, 2024b).

Moreover, in the absence of clear **legislative provisions**, many online Nikaah service providers operate informally, often crossing provincial and international jurisdictions. This raises issues regarding **fraud prevention, dispute resolution, and cross-border legal implications**, especially in cases where one party resides abroad. Without formal registration or oversight mechanisms, such unions may remain **unrecognized in court**, affecting the legal status and rights of the spouses.

Efforts to regulate online marriage practices remain limited. While some religious scholars and civil society organizations have called for the codification of digital marriage procedures under family laws, **policy inertia** and lack of political will have hindered the development of a comprehensive legal framework (Ulhiyah, 2024).

DOCUMENTATION AND VERIFICATION ISSUES

A further legal challenge lies in the **documentation and verification** of online Nikaahs. The MFLO mandates that all marriages be registered with a licensed Nikah Registrar, who issues a marriage certificate (Nikahnama). In a traditional setting, this process involves the verification of the identities of both parties, presence of witnesses, and physical signatures on the Nikahnama. In online Nikaah ceremonies, these elements are often bypassed or substituted with digital alternatives, creating room for legal disputes.

One significant concern is the **identity verification** of the parties involved. In the absence of biometric verification or in-person verification, there is a **higher risk of impersonation, coerced consent, or fraudulent representation**. Similarly, digital signatures or verbal confirmations during online video calls may not hold the same evidentiary value as physical documentation in legal proceedings (Hasyim et al., 2024).

Additionally, issues may arise during the **registration of online Nikaah** with local union councils. Many union councils in Pakistan do not accept digital or foreign-issued Nikahnamas without physical verification or notarization, particularly in cases where the

ceremony was conducted abroad or online. This leads to legal uncertainty and often results in **denial of legal rights** such as inheritance, nationality claims, or spousal maintenance.

Furthermore, the lack of a centralized database or digital record-keeping system exacerbates the challenge. While NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) maintains national identity records, there is no integrated system for verifying or registering marriages conducted online. This disconnect between digital facilitation and legal documentation often undermines the **enforceability of marital rights and obligations** (Khabib, 2024).

The legal challenges associated with online Nikaah in Pakistan stem from the **absence of clear legislative guidance, lack of regulatory oversight, and ambiguities in documentation and verification**. While the practice of online Nikaah is not inherently invalid under Islamic jurisprudence, its acceptance and enforcement under Pakistani civil law remain contentious. The current legal framework does not cater to the procedural and evidentiary complexities introduced by digital technology. Therefore, there is an urgent need for **legal reforms** that clarify the status of online Nikaahs, set standards for digital consent and documentation, and integrate such marriages into the official registration and legal enforcement mechanisms. Only through a coherent and updated legal structure can the rights of individuals entering into online marriages be fully protected and upheld in Pakistan (Shuhufi, 2024).

SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF ONLINE NIKAAH IN PAKISTAN

The concept of online Nikaah, while increasingly prevalent in the digital age, faces significant social resistance in Pakistan. As a deeply rooted religious and cultural institution, marriage in Pakistan is more than a legal contract—it is a collective social event involving not just the bride and groom, but also their families and communities. The shift to online platforms for solemnizing Nikaah challenges longstanding traditions, social perceptions, and community practices, leading to a number of social challenges that impede its widespread acceptance. This section explores the core social issues associated with online Nikaah in Pakistan, focusing on cultural norms, societal acceptance, and the role of families and communities.

CULTURAL AND TRADITIONAL NORMS

Pakistan is a society where traditions and religious customs are deeply interwoven with daily life, especially in matters of marriage. Nikaah is traditionally a public ceremony held in the presence of family, elders, and a religious authority. It is typically followed by celebratory

rituals such as Rukhsati (bride's departure) and Walima (groom's reception), which symbolize the social acknowledgment and communal acceptance of the union. These customs hold deep symbolic and emotional value, and deviating from them can be viewed as disrespectful or inauthentic (Hayati et al., 2024).

Online Nikaah challenges these cultural expectations by moving the ceremony to a virtual space, often with limited physical attendance and reduced ceremonial grandeur. Many families consider such arrangements impersonal and lacking the spiritual sanctity associated with traditional Nikaah. In rural and semi-urban areas, where traditional practices dominate and internet access is less prevalent, the idea of solemnizing marriage through a screen is often deemed unacceptable or even illegitimate. Even in urban areas, where exposure to digital tools is greater, the deviation from ceremonial traditions creates discomfort and skepticism.

Furthermore, gender roles and expectations are also embedded in traditional marriage practices. The bride's public acceptance by the groom's family, often witnessed through rituals, symbolizes honor and acceptance. Online Nikaah can obscure this aspect, leading to doubts about the seriousness and validity of the commitment, particularly when it is arranged without the knowledge or consent of extended families (Basma et al., 2024).

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

The societal acceptance of online Nikaah in Pakistan remains limited and highly polarized. While religious scholars have debated the permissibility of conducting Nikaah online, the broader public continues to view this practice with suspicion. One of the primary reasons for this is the perception that online Nikaah arrangements are often used to bypass parental consent or social scrutiny. In cases where couples belong to different sects, social classes, or castes, online Nikaah is sometimes seen as a means to elope or avoid confrontation with disapproving families. This association with secrecy undermines the perceived legitimacy and social standing of the marriage.

In Pakistani society, where honor and reputation are closely tied to family and marital decisions, online Nikaah may be stigmatized as a "shortcut" or "disrespectful" alternative to a proper wedding. This stigma can have serious social consequences, particularly for women. A woman who marries online may face ostracization, character assassination, or even threats to her safety, especially if the union defies family expectations or traditional marital norms. In conservative settings, such marriages may not be acknowledged by the wider community, leading to difficulties in gaining social acceptance for the couple or their future children.

(Agustin et al., 2024).

Moreover, the association of online platforms with informal or unstable relationships further fuels skepticism. There is a prevailing belief that relationships initiated or solemnized online lack permanence and depth, a perception exacerbated by media narratives of online fraud, catfishing, and misrepresentation. This negatively impacts the credibility of online Nikaah as a socially viable option.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement is a fundamental component of Pakistani marriages. Parents, siblings, and elders play a critical role not only in the matchmaking process but also in the approval, execution, and celebration of the marriage. In many cases, marriages are viewed as alliances between families rather than just individuals. This collective nature of marriage creates a challenge for online Nikaah, which can exclude or limit the role of families, especially when it is conducted privately or secretly (Setianingsih et al., 2024).

In a traditional setup, elders from both families negotiate terms, provide consent, and participate in the Nikaah ceremony, lending their moral and religious authority to the union. Online Nikaah, particularly when conducted without face-to-face interaction, diminishes this involvement. While technology enables remote participation through video conferencing, the symbolic presence and blessings of elders are often perceived as irreplaceable. As a result, families may feel alienated or disrespected when not actively involved in the ceremony.

Additionally, the communal nature of marriage ceremonies reinforces social bonds, provides social security, and enhances the couple's status within the community. Without physical gatherings, online Nikaah misses these communal dimensions, making it appear incomplete or inadequate in the eyes of many. Even when families consent to the Nikaah being held online—for example, due to physical distance or visa issues—there remains a preference to follow up with traditional ceremonies to affirm social recognition and acceptance (Nelli, 2024).

There is also the issue of logistical coordination and authenticity. Families are often concerned about the identity of the parties involved and the risk of fraud or misrepresentation when they are not physically present. Such concerns reduce trust in online Nikaah proceedings, particularly in cross-border or long-distance arrangements, where verification of the groom or bride becomes more difficult.

The social challenges facing online Nikaah in Pakistan are deeply rooted in the country's cultural fabric, communal structures, and traditional views on marriage. Despite growing

digital connectivity and religious permissibility under certain conditions, societal resistance persists due to the perceived erosion of family roles, loss of ceremonial sanctity, and fear of social stigma. For online Nikaah to gain broader acceptance, it is essential to bridge the gap between tradition and technology. This requires culturally sensitive awareness campaigns, religious guidance that addresses public misconceptions, and legal mechanisms that ensure family involvement and transparency. Without such measures, online Nikaah will continue to struggle against the powerful currents of societal norms and expectations in Pakistan (Ramlah & Hayati, 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The exploration of the online Nikaah system in Pakistan has revealed a complex interplay of technical, legal, and social challenges that significantly influence its implementation, acceptance, and validity. From a technical perspective, issues such as digital illiteracy, limited internet access in rural areas, and inadequate cybersecurity measures create significant barriers to the smooth functioning of online marriage procedures. These problems are particularly pronounced in marginalized communities, where infrastructure and education gaps exacerbate digital exclusion.

Legally, the framework governing marriage in Pakistan has not been updated to fully accommodate the digital realm. The recognition of online Nikaah under Pakistani law remains ambiguous, especially concerning the requirements of physical witnesses, the identity verification of parties, and the jurisdiction of registration. The lack of specific legal provisions addressing the digital solemnization and documentation of marriage contracts further complicates the recognition and enforcement of such unions. Furthermore, regulatory bodies such as NADRA and Union Councils lack coherent guidelines for processing and certifying online Nikaahs, leading to inconsistencies in application and enforcement.

Socially, online Nikaah faces significant resistance rooted in cultural and traditional norms. In Pakistani society, Nikaah is often seen not merely as a legal contract but as a family and community event with deep symbolic and ceremonial importance. The transition of such a sacred tradition into a virtual format challenges long-standing societal perceptions and rituals. This has led to social skepticism and stigmatization, particularly among elders and more conservative segments of society. Additionally, concerns about the authenticity, transparency, and potential misuse of online platforms for fraudulent or forced marriages further fuel social

resistance.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The challenges identified in this study have far-reaching implications for policymakers, religious scholars, legal authorities, and civil society. Firstly, the technical limitations point to the need for a broader digital inclusion agenda. Without substantial improvements in infrastructure, literacy, and user-friendly platforms, online Nikaah will remain inaccessible to large segments of the population, thereby exacerbating social and geographic disparities.

Legally, the lack of a codified framework for online Nikaah can lead to disputes over marital rights, inheritance, custody, and divorce. This ambiguity undermines legal certainty and can potentially lead to the exploitation of vulnerable parties, particularly women. Policymakers must consider how to modernize family laws in a way that preserves Islamic principles while ensuring legal safeguards in a digital age.

From a societal perspective, the integration of online platforms into religious practices such as Nikaah demands a sensitive and inclusive approach. Religious and cultural leaders must be engaged in public discourse to help shape narratives around the legitimacy and acceptability of online Nikaah. Otherwise, there is a risk of creating parallel systems—one officially sanctioned but socially rejected, and another practiced informally with no legal protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING TECHNICAL, LEGAL, AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

A. TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Enhancing Digital Infrastructure:** The government should prioritize expanding internet access, especially in rural and underserved areas, through public-private partnerships and targeted development programs.
- **Digital Literacy Campaigns:** Nationwide awareness campaigns and training programs are essential to improve digital literacy, particularly for women and older populations who may be less familiar with technology.
- **Secure Platforms for Online Nikaah:** Specialized platforms designed for conducting online Nikaahs must adhere to strict security protocols, including end-to-end encryption, identity verification systems, and data protection measures. The government can collaborate with tech firms and religious institutions to certify and standardize these platforms.
- **Technical Support and Helplines:** Establish helplines and technical support centers to

assist individuals during the online Nikaah process, ensuring inclusivity and ease of access.

B. LEGAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Formal Legal Recognition:** The Pakistani legal system must formally recognize online Nikaahs under the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance. This involves clarifying the status of remote witnesses, digital signatures, and virtual solemnization in line with Islamic jurisprudence and constitutional law.
- **Legislative Reforms:** Parliament should introduce amendments or new legislation to regulate the conduct, registration, and enforcement of online Nikaahs. These laws should define jurisdiction, evidentiary standards, and the rights and responsibilities of the parties involved.
- **Regulatory Guidelines for Union Councils:** Union Councils and NADRA should receive clear guidelines on how to verify and register online Nikaah contracts, including digital documentation protocols and validation mechanisms.
- **Legal Aid Services:** Provide legal aid to individuals—especially women—who may face complications or disputes arising from online Nikaahs, ensuring they are not left unprotected in legal proceedings.

C. SOCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Engagement with Religious Scholars:** Collaborate with respected Islamic scholars and religious institutions to develop consensus and Fatwas that support the permissibility of online Nikaah, ensuring theological legitimacy and community acceptance.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Use mass media, community outreach, and social media to raise awareness about the legitimacy and benefits of online Nikaah, countering misconceptions and reducing social stigma.
- **Community Integration Models:** Develop hybrid models that blend traditional and online practices—for instance, hosting a small physical gathering alongside virtual solemnization—to maintain cultural significance while leveraging technology.
- **Safeguards Against Misuse:** Introduce monitoring mechanisms to prevent misuse of online platforms for forced or fraudulent marriages. Reporting channels and whistleblower protections should be made accessible to the public.

In conclusion, while online Nikaah in Pakistan holds the potential to increase accessibility and efficiency in marital procedures, its realization is hindered by substantial technical, legal, and social obstacles. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and

multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, legal experts, religious authorities, and civil society. With thoughtful regulation, robust technological infrastructure, and community engagement, online Nikaah can evolve into a credible and culturally sensitive alternative to traditional marriage practices. However, without immediate reforms and investments, it risks remaining a marginal and controversial option, inaccessible to many and unrecognized by most.

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