

Beyond two decades: 20 years of the 'Rights' Side of Life

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Beyond two decades: *20 years of the 'Rights' Side of Life*



Table of contents

Introduction

Key findings

Demographic Profiles

Community Awareness of Human Rights

Awareness of the Human Rights Commission
of the Maldives

Democratic Reform

The Right to Security of the Person/Crime

Human Rights and Religion

Attitudes towards Women's Rights

Attitudes to Family and Ideas About

Acceptable Behavior in the Home

Domestic Violence

Sexual Abuse of Children

1

8

22

24

32

46

52

56

62

73

92

98



Acronyms

DK/NA	Don't Know/Not Applicable
HRCM	The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives
ICCPR	The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, Cultural Rights
MBS	Maldives Bureau of Statistics
PSUs	Primary Sampling Units
RSL	The "Rights" Side of Life
STO	State Trading Organization
UDHR	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCRC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund



The “Reflecting 15 Years: The ‘Rights’ Side of Life” (RSL3) the third human rights survey conducted in 2019 in collaboration with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Family Protection Authority (FPA), aimed to assess the changing public awareness and attitudes towards human rights, with the addition of domestic violence and gender equality as important areas. Key findings indicated a troubling decline in support for gender equality, with an alarming increase in non-responses from women regarding equal rights within family units. While public awareness about HRCM increased, awareness of human rights declined, showing a decrease from earlier surveys. The report underscored the need for more effective governance and greater awareness of human rights issues, particularly concerning gender equality and child protection, as well as the importance of addressing these challenges to fulfill State obligations.

The fourth cycle of the “Rights” Side of Life Survey represents a continuation of a longitudinal study that commenced two decades ago, incorporating revisions to reflect the evolving human rights landscape within the country. In this iteration, two demographic groups, persons with disabilities and detainees, were included to evaluate changes in attitudes and accessibility across diverse populations. The participation rate in HRCM activities and awareness of HRCM's toll-free number were assessed to enhance the understanding of the Commission's advocacy efforts. Furthermore, significant issues such as repatriation and reintegration, freedom of expression, perceptions surrounding adolescent marriage, and the justification

for hitting children were incorporated to gauge public sentiment on these matters.

Notably, this cycle of the “Rights” Side of Life Survey was designed, conducted, and administered by the Research and Monitoring Team, with extensive support from the Commissioners and staff. Conducting the study in-house was a significant learning experience, and the next cycle will be further enhanced based on the lessons learned from this survey.

This study offers an in-depth analysis of the current human rights landscape in the Maldives, identifying critical areas that require increased focus and intervention. The results will guide future initiatives aimed at promoting human rights by the Commission and other relevant stakeholders.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this research was to assess public attitudes, awareness, and perceptions surrounding various human rights issues in the Maldives. More specifically, the research sought to:

- Evaluate the public’s knowledge of human rights and their awareness of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM).
- Analyze shifts in public attitudes and perceptions regarding human rights and HRCM’s performance over time.
- Compare differences in knowledge, awareness, and perceptions across regions, genders, age groups and among other demographic groups.

Research Design

Building on the success of the inaugural 2005 *"Rights" Side of Life* survey and its comprehensive findings, the decision was made to retain the original sampling design for subsequent surveys. Minor adjustments were incorporated in the 2011 and 2019 surveys, the fourth cycle brought further amendments to account for evolving demographics and societal changes, while ensuring consistency in methodology for longitudinal comparison.

Sampling

This study employed the same design and sampling methodology as the previous two surveys, ensuring consistency in data collection while incorporating necessary updates. A multistage stratified random sample of 1267 individuals (705 women and 562 men) were drawn from households across 25 islands and the urban centers of Greater Malé Area, Kulhudhufushi City, and Addu City. Additionally, the study expanded its representation of resorts, surveying four resorts with a sample of 90 individuals—an increase from the two resorts surveyed in RSL₂, reflecting the growth in the number of resorts since then. Furthermore, respondents were randomly selected from one prison and one industrial island to ensure the participation of individuals in diverse circumstances.

Given the geographical challenges in the country, a three-stage cluster sampling method was adopted to ensure all areas of the country were covered and to avoid randomly scattered respondents across the country. The country was initially divided into geographical clusters of atolls,

thus avoiding the extensive (and expensive) travel by enumerators that would be required if respondents were randomly selected from every inhabited island.

A multi-stage sampling methodology was adopted, stratifying the country into ten clusters. From each cluster, one atoll was randomly selected. Subsequently, two islands were chosen from each selected atoll, one administrative island and one island selected randomly. The tenth cluster included urban areas, with Greater Malé Area, Kulhudhufushi City and Addu City identified as the urban centers. Additionally, four resorts were randomly selected, along with the industrial island of Mandhoo and Maafushi prison, to ensure a diverse representation of the Maldivian society in the survey. Enumeration blocks within these designated areas were randomly selected, and all households within these blocks were enumerated until the predetermined sample size was achieved. This structured approach enabled a comprehensive assessment while ensuring that various demographics and geographies were represented in the study.

The sampling design from RSL₃ was largely retained for RSL₄, with slight modifications to the selection of islands. Using updated population data from the 2022 census, population and household numbers were aligned with RSL₃ to maintain consistency. Sampling software was used to calculate the sample size, ensuring a 95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error, and 50% response distribution. An additional 10% was added to account for non-response, resulting in a total sample size of 1267 individuals.

Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) were selected using house lists provided by the Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS). Respondents were individuals aged 18 and above, residing in the selected PSUs. In previous surveys, aged 16 and older were included; however, this approach was modified due to the requirement for parental consent for individuals under 18 years of age. If the selected individual was unavailable, a replacement was drawn from the same household, provided they met the age requirement. For the islands in the sample, block lists were obtained from MBS. The resort sample was determined in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism.

Enumerator's Training

Enumerators were trained by the Commission's research team along with key staff from different technical areas. Enumerator training covered familiarity with tablet-based data collection using Survey Solutions Interviewer Application, the survey questionnaire, relevant terminology, and knowledge of laws and regulations associated with the study. To ensure human rights sensitization of enumerators, training also covered basic human rights principles and guidelines, as well as relevant domestic and international legal instruments.

The training sessions were designed to equip enumerators with both technical and supervisory skills necessary for effective data collection. HRCM staff facilitated these sessions, with a focus on field coordination, ensuring data quality, and managing logistical challenges in various locations.

Focal points were recruited from each selected island in collaboration with the island councils, ensuring effective local representation and robust support for the survey process. Enumerators were recruited for the islands through online announcements facilitated by these focal points. They compiled and submitted a list of interested candidates for participation, from which final selections were made with careful consideration of gender representation. To qualify for participation, individuals had to be at least 18 years old and not currently serving a penal sentence issued by the justice system. A minimum of higher education equivalent to O' Levels was required. Respondents needed to be comfortable using a tablet for data collection and were required to demonstrate the ability to work both objectively and independently, following the instructions provided. The survey was conducted in pairs as strong teamwork skills and the capacity to work long hours were essential. Flexibility and a willingness to adapt to emergency situations were also important. Enumerators were expected to maintain a high level of professionalism throughout the process, and preference was given to the applicants who had participated in previous surveys. Moreover, in some islands with smaller samples, the Commission staff conducted the data collection.

Enumerators were offered a comprehensive and supportive allowance package to facilitate their work during the data collection process. On the training day, each enumerator received an attendance allowance. For every completed survey form, they were compensated, along with a daily data allowance. To support them during long

working hours, meal allowances were also provided for breakfast, lunch, evening tea, and dinner. This compensation structure not only ensured that enumerators were adequately supported but also fostered motivation and commitment throughout the survey.

Data Collection

The survey was conducted by the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM), using a survey instrument originally developed by an international consultant for the 2005 study, with modifications to suit current needs. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was administered using Survey Solutions software, a data collection platform designed for mobile and offline use by the World Bank. This software facilitated efficient data entry and management, allowing enumerators to gather responses in real time while ensuring data integrity and accuracy. Survey Solutions also provided features such as skip logic and validation rules, enhancing the quality of the data collected. By employing this technology, the survey process became more streamlined and user-friendly, contributing to a more effective and comprehensive assessment.

The Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS) played a crucial role in this process by providing training to the HRCM team on how to effectively use Survey Solutions, particularly training the team on how to create the online questionnaire. Additionally, MBS supplied electronic tablets for data collection, further enhancing the survey's efficiency. Overall, the collaboration between HRCM and MBS, along with the utilization of

advanced survey technology, significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the data collection effort.

Data collection of the survey was carried out in four phases starting from 4th August – 21st September 2024.

Limitations

Survey instrument

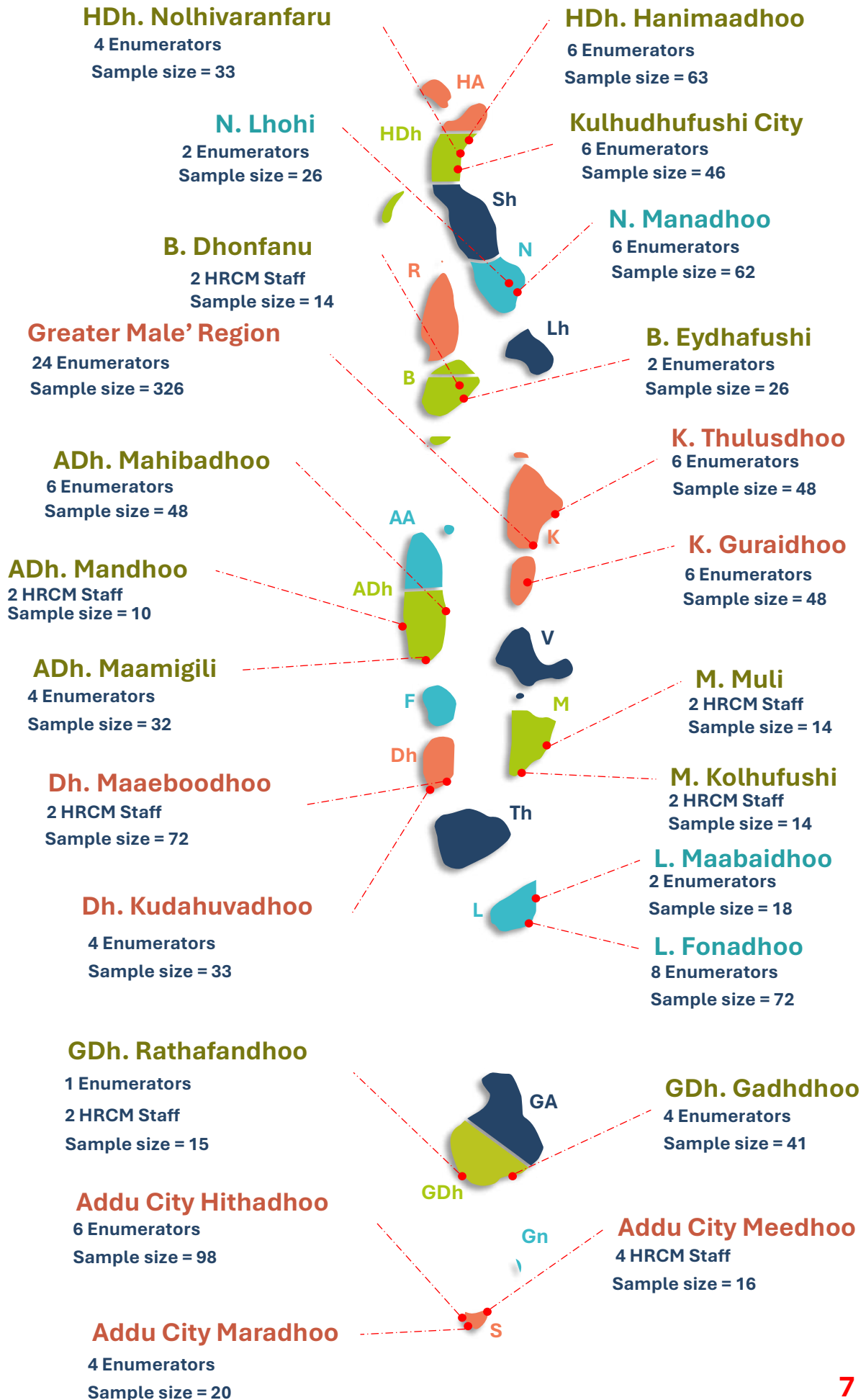
The survey questionnaire comprised more than 135 questions and hence, the survey questionnaire took an estimated completion time of approximately 45 minutes, with some respondents taking up to 90 minutes, depending on individual circumstances. As the survey was conducted mainly during the day, many respondents were engaged in professional commitments or household responsibilities. Survey timings had to be extended to late at night in some areas. Despite these constraints, there was a notable reduction in the non-response rate compared to previous years. Additionally, feedback indicated that the survey language was perceived as complex by certain participants. This suggests that a revision of the questionnaire could potentially decrease completion times and enhance overall respondent understanding.

Availability of enumerators

Although each island had a designated focal point to facilitate the recruitment of enumerators and manage the logistics of the survey, finding the number of enumerators required to complete the

survey within the specified timeframe presented challenges. Notably, the availability of male enumerators proved to be particularly difficult across all islands. Given the constraints on enumerator

availability on certain islands, there were instances where enumerators from other islands and the staff from the Commission assisted in conducting the survey on these islands.



Key findings



Community Awareness of Human Rights

1. 9.5% of respondents rated their human rights awareness as high, while the majority (52.5%) reported moderate awareness. A significant portion (28.5%) expressed low awareness.
2. Male respondents reported slightly higher high awareness (10.3%) than female respondents (8.8%). However, more women (55.7%) than men (48.6%) reported moderate awareness.
3. Maldivians exhibited higher awareness levels than migrant workers across all awareness categories, with 61.9% of migrant workers unable to name any rights.
4. Only 23% of respondents could name five human rights in 2024, compared to 37% in 2019 and 45% in 2011. 65.9% of the respondents were able to name at least 1 human right.
5. The proportion of respondents unable to name any rights remained significant (34.1%).
6. The most identified human rights included children's rights (32.8%), access to health services (22%), women's rights to equality (19.8%), access to quality education (18.3%), and adequate housing (17%).
7. Children's rights have consistently ranked highest since 2019, reflecting growing societal awareness of child welfare.
8. Access to health services rose to second place in 2024, indicating heightened awareness post-pandemic.
9. Education remained a consistent priority, retaining its place in the top three across all survey years.
10. The right to adequate housing has gained prominence in the fourth place, emerging at the top five for the first time.
11. Women's rights to equality, which peaked in 2019, have dropped to fifth place in 2024, suggesting reduced societal focus on gender equality.
12. Gender disparities emerged, with women emphasizing children's rights (66.7%) and women's equality (41%) more than men (50.6% and 23%, respectively).
13. Respondents with disabilities showed varied awareness levels, with 19.4% able to name five rights but 36.6% unable to name any.

14. More respondents in prisons exhibited moderate awareness (64.3%) but low ability to name rights.



Awareness of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives

1. Public awareness of HRCM increased from 40.8% in 2005 to a peak of 84.8% in 2019, but dropped to 79.8% in 2024, indicating a slight decline despite high overall awareness.
2. Awareness among women is higher at 84.8%, compared to 73.5% for men.
3. Among Maldivians, 87.1% were aware of the HRCM, with only 12.7% unaware. In contrast, awareness among migrant workers is significantly lower, at just 32.1%, with 67.3% unaware.
4. Awareness is highest among those aged 36-55 years at 84.7%, followed by 56-65 years at 82.6% and 65+ years at 80%. In contrast, the lowest awareness is observed in the 18-25 age group, with only 62.3% aware and 37.1% unfamiliar, emphasizing the need for targeted initiatives to engage younger populations.
5. Among outer-island respondents, 81.8% were aware of the HRCM, with slightly lower awareness in urban areas (77.8%)
6. Resort employees indicated the lowest awareness at 68.9%, with 31.1% unaware, underscoring a significant gap in engagement within the tourism sector.
7. Awareness among persons with disabilities matches the general population at 79.8%, reflecting inclusive outreach.
8. Among public sector employees, 89% were aware of the HRCM, with only 10.7% unaware. In comparison, awareness among private sector employees is notably lower at 66.5%, with 33.3% unaware, highlighting significant gaps in engagement within the private sector.
9. 23.7% of respondents rated HRCM's performance as either "excellent," or "good," a decrease from 39% in 2011 and 39% in 2019. A shift towards more moderate approval was observed, with 19.2% rating the performance as "satisfactory," an increase from 13% in 2019.
10. Nearly half of the respondents (48.5%) recognized HRCM's primary role as protecting human rights, while 41.5% expressed uncertainty or found the question not applicable.
11. A large majority of respondents expressed support for HRCM to intensify its efforts in several key areas, including protecting human rights (83.1%), enhancing its capacity to receive and investigate complaints (84.4%), increasing promotion and education on human rights (87.1%), providing more protection for vulnerable

populations (88.7%), and placing greater emphasis on preventing torture and cruel treatment (87.8%).

12. 9.5% of respondents reported participating in HRCM activities, with 90.5% not engaging in any initiatives.
13. Only 4.9% of respondents correctly identified HRCM's toll-free number 1424.
14. Knowledge of the procedures for filing a complaint with HRCM is notably low across various methods. 53.7% of respondents indicated that they did not know how to file a complaint with the Commission.



Democratic Reforms

1. 27.6% viewed democratic reforms as beneficial, while 40.3% believe there were no benefits.
2. A decline in the perception of benefits from democratic reform among men (from 38% in 2019 to 27.2% in 2024) was notable.
3. Corruption (21.6%) was highlighted as the most significant barrier towards democratic success, remaining consistent since 2019.
4. Younger respondents (18-25 years) showed less concern about democratic challenges compared to older age groups (36-55 years).
5. 50% of respondents were satisfied with the current level of freedom of expression, while 32.3% were dissatisfied.
6. Satisfaction levels for freedom of expression were similar between genders and slightly higher in outer islands (53.3%) compared to urban areas (47.4%).
7. 70.9% of respondents did not believe political parties acted in the public interest.



The Right to Security of the Person/Crime

1. 21.9% of respondents knew someone who was a victim of a crime in the past 12 months, consistent with previous survey results (20.7% in 2011, 21.7% in 2019).
2. Close to half (41.7%) of the respondents who aware of crime victims were aged 36–55 years.
3. Respondents identified victims as friends (28%), community members (25.8%), family members (24.8%), neighbors (8.2%), and household members (1.4%).

4. Crime victims were more frequently identified as men (74.8%) than women (22.3%).
5. Over half of respondents (52.9%) believed crime had increased over the past year, with 33.1% citing a significant rise.
6. Regional differences emerged, with 68.5% of outer island residents perceiving increased crime rates compared to 31.4% in urban areas, reversing trends observed in 2019 (55.2% from urban areas vs 31.7% in the outer islands).
7. Drug abuse (69%), theft (37.1%), and violence (21.1%) were perceived as the most prevalent crimes.
8. Drug abuse was identified as the primary driver (40.3%), increasing significantly from prior surveys (19.2% in 2019, 28.7% in 2011). The release of criminals (25.8%) and parental neglect (22.7%) were also cited as major factors.
9. Respondents emphasized a collective approach, with 46.3% assigning responsibility of reducing crime to society, followed by the government (45.8%) and the police (38.1%).



Human Rights and Religion

1. More respondents believed human rights conflicted with religion (43%), where 13% of respondents believed only some rights were in conflict with Islam.
2. Significantly more women (47%) perceived human rights to be in conflict in human rights than men (37%).
3. Respondents who perceived conflict increased with age, with 50% of the youngest demographic in between 18 to 25 years believing there was no conflict between religion and human rights.
4. From the respondents who perceived religion to conflict with human rights, 28.8% of respondents believed human rights conflicted with the Islamic principles and a further 26.6% believing death penalty as the conflicting factor. 15.2% stated religious freedom, followed by punishments stated in religion (14%) and gender equality (13.2%) as conflicting reasons.
5. More men leaned on towards the conflict with religious principles (34.3%) as the main conflicting factor where more women believed death penalty as the main conflicting factor (33.7%).
6. 67.7% of migrant workers believed they should be able to practice their religion in Maldives while 48% Maldivians supported the statement.

7. Although more men (54%) supported migrant workers practicing their religion than women (47%), the percentage of women who disagreed had decreased from 2011 (69.4%).
8. Significant majority (83%) were unaware of the repatriation process for Maldivians coming from conflict zones.
9. From the respondents who were aware, 37.1% of respondents were satisfied with the repatriation process.



Attitudes to Women's Rights

1. 78.1% of respondents supported gender equality in family responsibilities compared to the high uncertainty and non-response rates in 2019 (87.8%).
2. Support for women's equality in legal procedures has grown over the years, with 82.7% of 2024 respondents agreeing, an increase from 74.6% in 2011. While the data highlighted strong support, men showed slightly more skepticism (12% disagreement) than women (9.1%).
3. Improved support for equal property rights (69.6%), with women demonstrating slightly higher agreement than men.
4. Support for equal child custody rights recovered from a decline in 2011, reaching 78.2% in 2024. Agreement was slightly higher among women than men.
5. 78.5% supported equal divorce rights, a significant increase from 38.2% in 2005. These trends indicate shifting perceptions toward gender equality in domestic and legal matters.
6. Public opinion on workplace equality reflects consistent progress, with 83.3% support. Women showed stronger advocacy (86.1%) compared to men (79.8%), though disagreement among men (14.2%) suggests lingering reservations about gender equality in employment.
7. Support for women's political rights has fluctuated but remained high at 73.3% in 2024. Men showed slightly higher disagreement (18.5%) than women (16.0%).
8. Family planning enjoys strong support (87.3%) across genders, though women (89.3%) were slightly more supportive than men (84.7%).
9. Abortion remained a contentious issue. While 88.3% supported abortion when the mother's life is at risk, only 13% endorsed abortion based on personal choice.

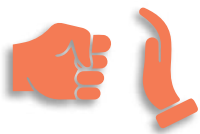
10. The data identified systemic factors, such as lack of candidates (16.7%) and societal support (10.2%), as barriers to women's political participation. Gendered biases persisted, with men more likely to view women as less qualified.



Attitudes to Family and Ideas about acceptable behavior in the home

1. 75.1% of respondents agreed that "a good wife should always obey her husband," with 33.46% strongly agreeing. Women showed marginally higher agreement (44.2%) compared to men (38.6%).
2. Younger respondents (18-25) showed less agreement (59.6%) compared to older age groups, with the highest agreement in the respondents aged 65+ (90.7%).
3. Rural respondents (83.4%) showed stronger support for traditional gender roles than urban respondents (78.4%).
4. 74.5% of respondents prioritized keeping family matters private, with 29.1% strongly agreeing.
5. 41.6% of respondents agreed with the statement, "It is important for a man to show his wife who is the boss," where male respondents showed higher agreement (16.4% strongly agreed) than female respondents (11.8%).
6. 85.8% of respondents disagreed with the notion that a wife should obey her husband if asked to act against Islamic law. Women (91.4%) were more likely than men (85.5%) to reject this idea.
7. 66.1% of respondents opposed the idea that a wife could choose her friends without her husband's approval.
8. 48.4% of female respondents agreed that a wife is obligated to engage in sexual relations with her husband even if unwilling compared to 31.3% of male respondents. However, there was a consistent decline in women strongly endorsing such obligations, dropping from 33.3% in 2011 to 13.5% in the latest survey.
9. A majority of respondents, regardless of gender, disagreed with the idea of a man hitting his wife under any circumstance (73.3% agreed a man should never hit his wife).
10. 24.1% believed a husband can hit his wife for violating Islamic principles, with higher agreement among women (27.2%) than men (20.3%).
11. 8.0% of men and 9.8% of women justified violence in cases of disobedience.

12. 5.3% of men and 5.0% of women justified violence on suspicion of infidelity.
13. 8.7% of men and 8.4% of women agreed violence is justified upon discovering infidelity.
14. A majority (57.6%) agreed that external intervention is warranted when a man mistreats his wife. However, more women (37.8%) than men (30.8%) opposed this, reflecting traditional notions of family privacy.
15. 76.4% agreed that a woman should never hit her husband.
16. 16.5% agreed a wife can hit her husband for violating religious norms.
17. 60.8% agreed women can refuse sex with their husband if they don't want to, a notable improvement from 2019 (42.3%).
18. Higher agreement was noted for refusal of sexual relations for specific circumstances like illness (83.4%), husband having an STD (84.5%), intoxication (81.9%), or mistreatment (79.4%).
19. 70.6% agreed men can refuse sex if they don't want to, slightly higher than for women.



Domestic Violence

1. 36.5% of respondents viewed substance abuse as a leading cause of domestic violence, with women attributing 40.6% compared to 31.3% of men.
2. Lack of awareness ranked second at 32.8%, indicating the growing recognition of education gaps in addressing domestic violence.
3. 24.2% felt perpetrators avoid consequences, reflecting an increased demand for systemic reforms.
4. Financial difficulties (20.8%) and housing issues (22.7%) continued to be key contributors, emphasizing the role of economic stress in fostering violence.
5. 19.4% reported knowing a victim of domestic violence, with intimate partners (58.4%) and relatives (11.4%) being common perpetrators.
6. Physical abuse (38.6%), verbal abuse (26.1%), and psychological abuse (29.6%) were prevalent with women reporting higher rates of abuse across all categories.
7. 11.1% reported being victims of domestic violence, with a gender divide (14.5% women vs. 6.8% men). Most incidents occurred over a decade ago (45.7%), though 10% were recent (within the past year).

8. Spouses were the primary perpetrators (33.1%), with gender-specific trends in abusers (e.g., men reported abuse by fathers at higher rates).



Sexual Abuse and other rights of children

1. The majority of the respondents believed that sexual abuse of boys (95.3%) and sexual abuse of girls (96.1%) as a serious problem
2. More female respondents recognized sexual abuse of both boys and girls as serious problem than male respondents.
3. Over 90% of respondents across all age groups (18–65+) regarded the sexual abuse of both girls and boys as a significant issue.
4. Half of the survey respondents (50%) expressed dissatisfaction with the protection of child rights in the country.
5. Among all respondents, women expressed greater dissatisfaction with the protection of children’s rights, with 57.8% women indicating dissatisfaction compared to 41.6% of men.
6. The dissatisfaction regarding the provision and protection of child rights has been consistent throughout the years. (53.4% in 2011, 48.2% in 2019 & 50.6% in 2024).
7. The majority of respondents, 43.8%, noted that a safe home environment should be prioritized to improve child rights followed by 31.4% emphasizing the importance of better access to education. Violence against children was noted by 26.4%, reflecting concerns about the safety and protection of children.
8. Even though the Child Rights Act states that children under 18 years of age should not be allowed to get married, a significant number of respondents (33.1%) stated that marriage of “mature” adolescents should be permitted.
9. The respondents who believed adolescents should be allowed to marry increased with age where 38.9% of the respondents between 56-65 years believing the statement. The youngest demographic aged 18 to 25 years (23.8%), demonstrating the lowest level of support.
10. The majority of respondents (70%) expressed the belief that “mature” adolescents should be permitted to marry on the grounds of it being stated in the religion. Additionally, 36.3% supported such marriages as a means to reduce out-of-wedlock births, while 24.2% believed it could serve as a protective measure for girls.

11. Among respondents who supported allowing marriage of “mature” adolescents, 80.5% of men and 60.3% of women said their belief was based on religious reasons. More women (31.7%) believed it should be allowed to decrease of out wedlock childbearing than men (21.5%).
12. More respondents from urban areas (58.8%) supported the idea of allowing marriage of adolescent children compared to respondents from outer islands (48.4%).
13. The most common reason which justified hitting a child was theft (28.5%), followed by disobedience at 12.8% and disrespecting elders at 10.2%.



Rights of Older people

1. 41% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the services and protections provided to the elderly in the Maldives, compared to 38% expressing satisfaction.
2. Satisfaction has declined significantly from 48.1% in 2019 to 38% in 2024, while dissatisfaction rose from 33.3% in 2019 to 41% in 2024.
3. Women expressed higher dissatisfaction (43%) compared to men (38%) while satisfaction remained same at 38% for both genders.
4. The highest levels of satisfaction were noted among respondents above the age of 65 meanwhile the highest levels of dissatisfaction were noted among the age group of 56-65 years of age.
5. More respondents in urban areas (43%) expressed dissatisfaction, compared to respondents from outer islands (38%)
6. Neglect (16.1%), lack of healthcare for the elderly (12%), and unconsented use of pension money by family members (7.7%) were the top three areas that respondents believed needed the most improvements.



Rights of Persons with Disabilities

1. 42% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the services and protections available for persons with disabilities, compared to 33% satisfaction, indicating significant concerns about inadequate support.

2. Satisfaction declined from 39% in 2019 to 33% in 2024, while dissatisfaction increased slightly from 40% in 2019 to 42% in 2024.
3. Among respondents with disabilities, 55.3% expressed dissatisfaction highlighting substantial gaps in addressing their needs.
4. Respondents with disabilities highlighted lack of facilities in existing schools for children with special needs (26%) and inadequate healthcare, including mental health services (26%) as two key areas of concern.
5. 46% of female respondents reported dissatisfaction, compared to 37% of male respondents, reflecting greater discontent among women.
6. The highest satisfaction level was observed among respondents aged 56–65, at 37%, while the greatest dissatisfaction was reported by respondents aged 65 and above, at 48%.
7. 45% of the respondents from outer islands expressed dissatisfaction whereas, 37% expressed dissatisfaction in urban areas.
8. Among the respondents, inadequate healthcare, including mental health services, was the most frequently mentioned concern (11.5%) followed by lack of access to education (10.1%) and insufficient facilities in schools for children with special needs (9.7%).



Right to Equality of Access to Services

1. More respondents were dissatisfied (44.2%) than satisfied (40.2%) with the current education system with more respondents from the atolls (46.4%) being dissatisfied than the respondents from Male (42%).
2. The youngest demographic, aged between 18 to 25 was observed to be the most dissatisfied age group regarding the education system.
3. With 36.5% of the respondents, better qualified teachers rank highest amongst the factors that need improvement within the education system followed by higher education in the islands (26.9%) and better budget allocation (18.2%).
4. The level of dissatisfaction over access to medical services remained unchanged with a minor decline from 63.6% to 62.8%.
5. Both Male' and atolls depicted a parallel view with people residing in atolls depicting a slightly higher level of dissatisfaction towards access to medical services. (62.6% vs 64.4%).

6. 60% respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the access to medicine, which is a slight increase from the year 2019 (57.4%).
7. 62% of the respondents in atolls were not happy with the access to medicine with 70% of the respondents residing in the non-capital islands stating to be dissatisfied, indicating a discrepancy in the delivery of medicine to the islands.
8. 43.9% of the respondents, (47.9% of respondents from atolls), believed that an increase in specialist doctors would improve the healthcare system. Improvement in access to medicine was identified by 36.5% of the respondents followed by the importance of qualified health workers as the factors that could improve the health system.
9. 61.4% of the respondents did not believe mental health services were accessible.
10. The percentage of respondents from the atolls who believed that mental health services were available was only 22.9%, while the percentage in Male' was doubled to 43.8 percent, indicating a disparity in access to mental health services between Male' and the atolls.
11. Almost half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the employment and work opportunities.
12. Similar to RSL 3, more respondents residing in the Greater Male' region (52.1%) were more dissatisfied compared to the atolls (48.5%) regarding employment.
13. Close to 50% of the respondents were unhappy with the access to markets to sell products such as handicrafts, produce etc.
14. In contrast to the previous RSL surveys, the number of respondents who were dissatisfied (46.7%) exceeded the number of satisfied respondents (37%), with access to banking and credit facilities.
15. Half of the respondents had stated to be dissatisfied with the judicial system with only 26.1% of the respondents being satisfied with the judicial system
16. Respondents expressing the highest dissatisfaction with the judiciary were from the southern region (55.8%) and the Greater Male' region (54.5%).
17. Corruption was cited as the primary cause of dissatisfaction by a significant majority of respondents (56.5%) followed by unjust and unfair decisions (43.1%).
18. More respondents (44.4%) were happy with the services provided by police and the security forces with migrant workers being significantly satisfied (60%)
19. Among the respondents who were dissatisfied, 42.3% of the respondent's stated corruption, 33.8% expressed concerns with not being able to get their service when needed and 28% of respondents believed there was lack of fairness when providing their services.

20. Two-third of the respondents were unhappy regarding the prison system, with 31.3% non-response, reflecting a lack of firsthand experiences with the prison system.
21. Reasons for dissatisfaction regarding the prison system were cited as corruption (39%), lack of supervision (20.6%), rehabilitation and reintegration (19.8%) and abuse of prisoners (19.2%).
22. Corruption was cited as the main concern regarding the judicial system, security forces and the prison system, raising major concerns about the functioning of these systems.
23. Although more respondents believed that the social security had increased (24.2%) in the past year, number of respondents who believed social security had gotten worse in the previous year increased in comparison to the previous RSL (12.7% vs 23.7%)
24. Among persons with disabilities, more respondents believed the social protection has gotten worse (28.7%) than it had improved (26.6%)
25. A significant population believed that the state made considerable efforts to provide education up to grade 10, improve access to safe drinking water, electricity, sewerage facilities, and build waste disposal systems
26. The public did not believe the state made appropriate efforts to improve health services (53.6%) and to improve housing (53.7%).
27. 48.6% of the respondents believed improving health services should be the number one priority of the state where improving housing ranked the second most mentioned priority factor (24.4%).
28. More respondents expressed unhappiness (44.1%) with the accessibility of information from central and local administrations compared to the respondents who were satisfied (34.2%)
29. A larger proportion of urban respondents expressed dissatisfaction regarding the access to information (45.6%) compared to outer islands (42.1%).
30. There was a non-response rate of 17.3% when asked if the Right to Information Act had been beneficial, suggesting an information gap.
31. Approximately half of the respondents did not believe they were able to use or get any benefits from the Act.



People's right to participate in government and to take part in decision-making concerning them

1. 84.9% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction over the fair distribution of resources between Male' and the atoll, with over half of the respondents expressing a strong sentiment concerning the unequal distribution.
2. The respondents from the Greater Male' area (56.3%) strongly believed there was a disparity in the distribution of resources.
3. 60.3% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the current level of participation in state affairs, with Southern and Central regions having greater dissatisfaction levels compared to other regions.
4. From the persons with disabilities, 50% of the respondents were dissatisfied with their participation in decision-making.



Sexual Harassment

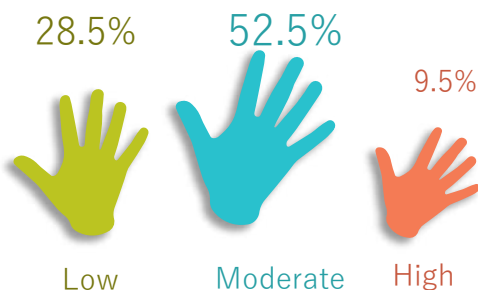
10. The most prevalent forms of harassment reported by women include men making obscene or offensive sexual remarks (16.1%), men engaging in inappropriate physical contact, such as rubbing against them or touching their breasts or buttocks in public spaces like streets or night markets (11.7%), and instances of having their hands grabbed in public (10.5%).
11. The most frequently reported forms of harassment experienced by men include women grabbing their hands in public (6.2%) and receiving obscene or offensive sexual comments from women (5.2%).
12. Harassment rates for women were higher in all categories compared to men, indicating that women were disproportionately affected by sexual harassment.
13. A total of 4.5% of respondents reported experiencing persistent obscene or sexually suggestive language or remarks directed at themselves or colleagues. Among these respondents, 62.5% were women, while 37.5% were men.
14. Workplace harassment was more frequently reported in urban areas (81.3%) compared to outer islands (18.8%), highlighting notable regional differences.

15. Reports of workplace harassment across all listed categories have shown a decline over the past 20 years.
16. While 59.6% of respondents indicated that their workplace has a complaints mechanism, 23.9% reported the absence of such systems. Among workplaces lacking these mechanisms, 61.5% were located in outer islands, underscoring regional disparities in institutional support.
17. The most common reactions to harassment included confiding in a friend or family member (38.9%), taking no action (22%), and informing a colleague (16.7%). Alarming, 11.1% of respondents stated they had resigned from their jobs due to harassment.
18. No respondents reported workplace harassment to external authorities or formal mechanisms, such as the Gender Ministry or the Employment Tribunal.
19. Among respondents who took action against harassment, 20% reported an improvement in the situation, while 8.9% observed no change, and 1.7% stated their actions worsened the circumstances.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The survey results indicated varying levels of self-reported awareness about human rights among respondents. 9.5% of respondents rated their awareness as high, while a majority, 52.5%, consider their awareness to be moderate. A significant portion, 28.5%, reported low awareness. Additionally, 9.4% indicated they did not know or found the question not applicable. This distribution suggests that while some respondents demonstrate a reasonable understanding of human rights, a substantial proportion would likely benefit from increased education and awareness efforts.

AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS



The awareness of human rights demonstrated considerable variation across different demographic factors, reflecting the complexities inherent in societal understanding and engagement with these critical issues.

Awareness of Human Rights yearly Trend

	2011	2019	2024
High Awareness	10%	13%	9.5%
Moderate Awareness	57%	56%	52.5%
Low Awareness	27%	23%	28.5%

More men expressed a slightly higher awareness rate at 10.3%, compared to women (8.8%). However, 55.7% of female respondents reported moderate knowledge versus 48.6% of male respondents. Both genders displayed similar levels of low awareness, with men at 29.2% and women at 28%. Maldivians expressed high awareness (9.9%), compared to migrant workers (6.6%). The contrast in moderate awareness was stark with 56.5% of Maldivians reporting moderate awareness, compared to just 26.2% of migrant workers. This trend continued with low awareness, where migrant workers exhibited a higher percentage at 35.7% compared to 27.4% of Maldivians.

Awareness of Human Rights by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	10%	9%	9.5
No	90%	91%	90.6
Total	100%	100%	100

Age demographics showed that younger respondents, aged 18-25, reported the highest awareness at 11.3%. More respondents in between 36 to 55 indicated

the highest level of moderate awareness at 56.4%, while older respondents reported elevated low awareness levels, with those aged 56-65 and 65+ reflecting rates of 40.3% and 41.3%, respectively.

Awareness of Human Rights by Gender		
	Male	Female
High awareness	10.3%	8.8%
Moderate awareness	48.6%	55.7%
Low awareness	29.2%	28.0%
Refused	0.4%	0.0%
DK/NA	11.6%	7.7%

Respondents from outer islands reported a higher awareness rate of human rights at (10%) compared to urban counterparts (9%). While more urban respondents exhibited moderate awareness (51.2%), outer-island respondents slightly outpaced them (53.7%). Those residing in resorts and atolls reported the highest awareness rates at 10%. From the respondents who stated to be moderately aware, respondents from prison reported the highest percentage (64.3%), while 50% of the respondents from the industrial sectors reported low awareness.

Education level appeared to be a complex factor in awareness of human rights. Respondents with no basic education reported to be the most aware at 12.5%, suggesting that they may possess a foundational understanding of human rights despite their lack of formal education. Notably, those with no basic education also exhibited the highest number of respondents stating low

awareness, at 43.8%. Conversely, those with higher educational qualifications, such as a master's degree, showed a slightly lower rate of high awareness at 10.9%. This discrepancy indicates that while formal education is generally associated with increased awareness, other factors may also contribute to individuals' understanding of human rights.

Awareness of Human Rights by Urban and Outer Islands		
	Urban	Rural
High awareness	9.0%	10.0%
Moderate awareness	51.2%	53.7%
Low awareness	31.2%	25.9%
Refused	0.2%	0.2%
DK/NA	8.5%	10.3%
Total	100%	100%

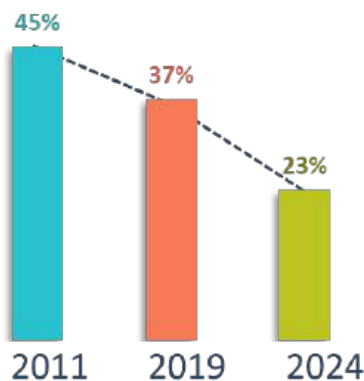
Furthermore, 9.3% of respondents with disabilities indicated that they had a high level of awareness. Moderate awareness was reported by 36.7%, while 25% reported low awareness. These findings underline the need for targeted education and outreach initiatives to address the disparities in human rights awareness across different demographic groups. By understanding the factors that influence awareness, stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to promote human rights knowledge and advocacy within the community.

Name 5 Human Rights

NAME 5 RIGHTS



NAME 5 HUMAN RIGHTS



Respondent's ability to name human rights showed varied levels of awareness. 65.9% of the respondents were able to name at least one human right. Nearly a

quarter of respondents (23%) could name five human rights, while 8.9% named four, and 13.8% named three. A further 11.5% were able to identify two rights, and 8.6% could mention at least one. However, a significant portion, 34.1%, were unable to name any human rights, reflecting a knowledge gap that suggests a need for further human rights education. Overall, this distribution emphasizes opportunities to improve awareness, particularly for those who could gain from a greater understanding of human rights.

The ability to name five human rights among respondents in the Maldives had decreased significantly over the years. In 2011, 45% of respondents could name five rights, which dropped to 37% by 2019 and further to 23% in 2024. This decline may reflect underlying gaps in human rights awareness or shifts in perceptions of specific rights over time.

The ability to name human rights varied slightly by gender, with 25.1% of female respondents able to name five rights compared to 20.3% of male respondents. Among those able to name four rights, 10.3% were men and 7.8% were women. A similar pattern was seen while naming three rights, with 14.1% of men and 13.6% of women able to do so. Both genders had nearly equal percentages in naming two rights (11.4% for men and 11.6% for women) and one right (9.8% for men, 7.7% for women). However, over a third of respondents from both genders, 34% of men and 34.2% of women, were unable to name any rights, pointing to a shared gap in fundamental rights awareness that spans across gender lines.

Awareness of Human Rights trends over the years			
	2011	2019	2024
High Awareness	10%	13%	9.5%
Moderate Awareness	57%	56%	52.5%
Low Awareness	27%	23%	28.5%

Among respondents aged 18-25, 26.7% were able to name five human rights, indicating relatively strong awareness in this demographic, while only 15.4% of those aged 56-65 and 8% of respondents aged 65 and older could do the same. Awareness of four human rights remained fairly consistent across age groups, ranging from 8% for those aged 18-25 to 9.6% for respondents aged 26-35 and 9.3% for those aged 65 and older. The ability to name three human rights showed a slight increase in middle-aged groups, with 16% of respondents aged 36-55 reporting this level of awareness. However, lower levels of awareness were more prevalent among older respondents, with 41.1% of those aged 56-65 and 49.3% of respondents aged 65 and older unable to name any human rights at all, compared to 35.3% of the youngest age group. Overall, these findings suggest that younger respondents tend to demonstrate a higher awareness of human rights compared to older age groups.

Among Maldivians, 25.4% could name five rights, compared to just 7.1% of migrant workers. Similarly, 9.5% of Maldivians could name four rights, while only 5.4% of migrant workers could do so. The difference continues for those able to name three rights (14.5% of Maldivians vs. 9.5% of migrant workers). A higher proportion of Maldivians could name two

(11.7%) and one (9%) right, compared to migrant workers, where these figures were 10.7% and 6%, respectively. Notably, 61.9% of migrant workers were unable to name any rights, as opposed to 29.9% of Maldivians, indicating a significant awareness gap regarding human rights among migrant workers.

Awareness of human rights, as indicated by the ability to name specific rights indicated interesting patterns across urban and outer-island respondents, as well as across different residential communities. More respondents from outer islands were able to name five rights (27%) compared to their urban counterparts (18.9%). However, urban respondents were more inclined to name four (11.2%) and three (17.6%) rights than outer-island residents, who reported 6.7% and 10.2% respectively in these categories. Notably, a higher percentage of outer-island respondents (36.8%) were unable to name any rights compared to urban respondents (31.4%), indicating potential gaps in awareness and education in the outer islands.

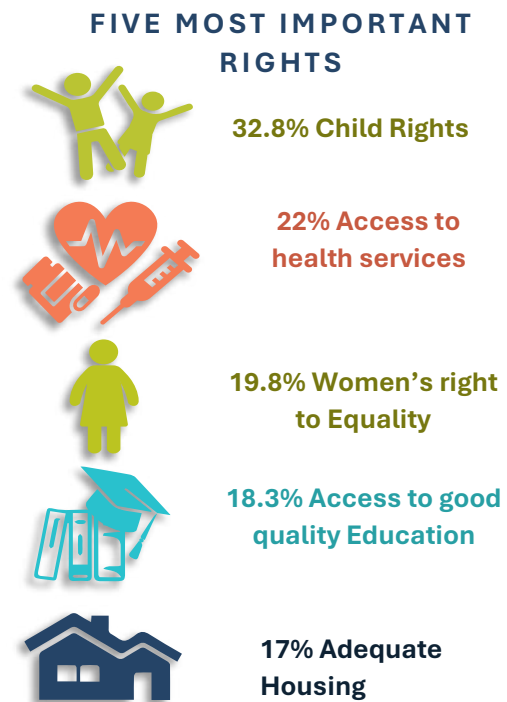
Respondents from atolls (24.7%) and Malé (22%) showed a higher capacity to name five rights, while prison-based respondents reported the lowest ability in this category (7.1%). Interestingly, respondents from prisons reported higher awareness at four rights (28.6%), possibly due to their unique experiences within the justice system. Industrial island respondents displayed the highest rate of recognizing two rights (20%) and one right (20%). Notably, respondents from resorts exhibited the least familiarity, with 41.1% unable to name any rights, followed closely by atoll-based respondents at 38.7%. These patterns highlight that while

there is a baseline understanding of human rights, certain areas particularly outer islands and some specialized island settings might benefit from targeted awareness and education initiatives.

The responses among persons with disabilities regarding knowledge of human rights revealed a range of awareness levels. Approximately 19.4% of persons with disabilities respondents could name five rights, indicating a significant portion with strong familiarity. However, there remained a notable portion, 36.6%, who were unable to name any rights, highlighting an area where targeted outreach could potentially improve human rights awareness. Interestingly, a higher percentage of persons with disabilities respondents (16.1%) could name only one right, which may suggest that while there is some level of awareness, deeper understanding across a broader spectrum of rights is limited for many.

The five human rights most commonly highlighted by respondents emphasized fundamental needs. The highest recognition, at 32.8%, was for children’s rights, emphasizing a general

importance placed on healthcare accessibility. Women’s rights to equality were also recognized by 19.8% of respondents, showing awareness of gender equality issues. Additionally, access to quality education (18.3%) and the right to adequate housing (17%) were widely cited.



FIVE MOST IMPORTANT RIGHTS (with Flash card)



awareness and prioritization of child welfare. This was followed by access to health services (22%), highlighting the

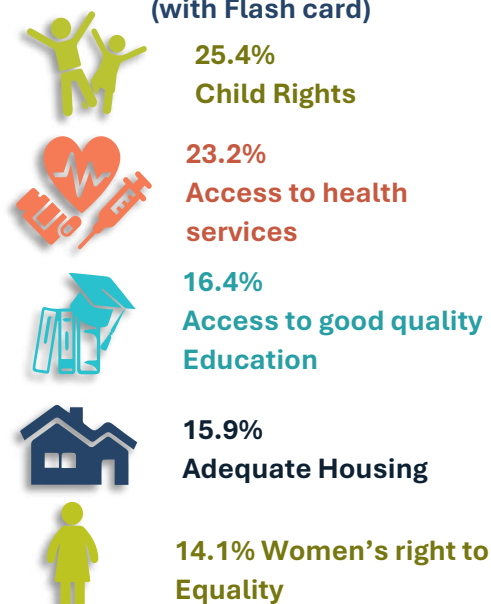
Other significant mentions included the right to a safe and clean environment (11.6%), employment opportunities

(12.1%), and freedom of expression (14.2%), while rights such as freedom of assembly and protest (1%) and the right to vote (1.7%) received relatively lower recognition.

Furthermore, respondents were shown a flash card featuring a list of 21 human rights and were asked to identify the five most important ones in their lives. The top responses highlighted a focus on essential societal and personal welfare needs, with children’s rights again receiving the highest recognition at 25.4%. This was closely followed by access to health services (23.2%), access to good quality education (16.4%), and right to adequate housing (15.9%), along with women’s rights to equality (14.1%) which was at the second position in the 2019 survey. Overall, the comparison indicates that while respondents consistently identified the same five human rights, their perception of importance may shift based on immediate needs or prevailing societal issues at the time of the survey. This suggests that prioritization of human rights may be dynamic, shaped by contextual factors and socio-political climate, highlighting the need for ongoing assessment of public perceptions in relation to human rights concerns.

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT RIGHTS

(with Flash card)



Women reported higher importance of these rights compared to men, particularly in children's rights (66.7% for women vs 50.6% for men) and women's rights to equality (41% for women vs 23% for men). This contrast illustrates a troubling trend where men were less aware or supportive of gender equality issues, which could hinder progress toward achieving true equality.

The trends observed in the top three identified human rights from 2011 to 2024 revealed shifting societal priorities regarding essential rights in the Maldives.

Number of Rights by Gender

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Able to name 5 human rights	20.3%	25.1%
Able to name 4 human rights	10.3%	7.8%
Able to name 3 human rights	14.1%	13.6%
Able to name 2 human rights	11.4%	11.6%
Able to name 1 human right	9.8%	7.7%
Not able to name any human rights	34.0%	34.2%

In 2011, access to good quality education was the most recognized right, highlighting a significant emphasis on educational opportunities as fundamental to societal development. By 2019, the landscape began to shift, with children’s rights taking the lead. This shift reflects a growing societal awareness and prioritization of child welfare, perhaps driven by sustained advocacy for children’s rights and an increasing recognition of the need for a protective framework around vulnerable populations.

Top 5 rights			
2019		2024	
Child Rights	18%	Child Rights	25.4%
Women’s Right to Equality	10.9%	Access to Health Services	23.2%
Access to good quality Education	10.5%	Access to good quality Education	16.4%
Access to health services	10.1%	Adequate housing	15.9%
Adequate food	8.2%	Women’s Right to Equality	14.1%

In 2024, children’s rights maintained top position, while access to health services rose to second place from fourth, underlining a heightened awareness of health equity and the importance of

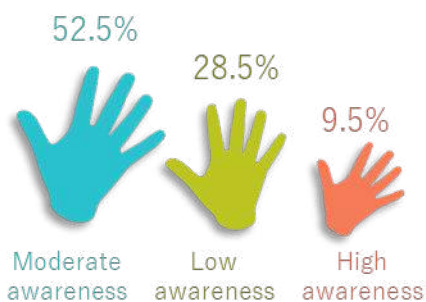
healthcare accessibility in a post-pandemic context. This shift reflects a critical recognition of health as a fundamental human right, essential for enabling that individuals can lead fulfilling lives. Access to good quality education retained its place in the top three, indicating a sustained recognition of education’s role in improving living standards and societal welfare. The consistency of this right across the years emphasizes its foundational significance, despite fluctuations in its ranking. Furthermore, the right to adequate housing, which had never previously secured a position in the top five most important rights, remarkably rose to the fourth position this time. This change in acknowledgment highlights a rising awareness of housing as a vital factor in overall well-being and societal stability. Moreover, women’s rights to equality, which held the sixth position in 2011 and rose to second place in 2019, have dropped back to fifth position this year. This decline may reflect a broader societal trend in which the urgency of gender equality issues is increasingly overshadowed by other pressing concerns. Such a shift indicates the need for renewed focus on gender equality in public discourse to ensure that it remains a priority alongside other critical issues.

Overall, the trends suggest an evolving discourse in the Maldives on human rights, where child welfare increasingly occupies a central position, accompanied by growing attention to health services and access to education. These shifts reflect the need for ongoing advocacy and awareness initiatives to address the dynamic needs of the population.

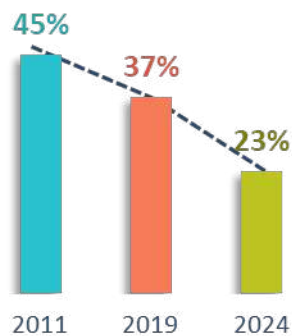
Awareness of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives



AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

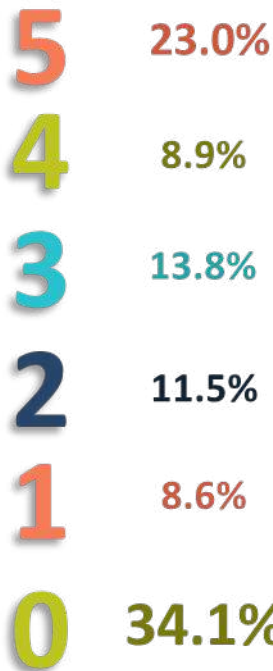


NAME 5 HUMAN RIGHTS

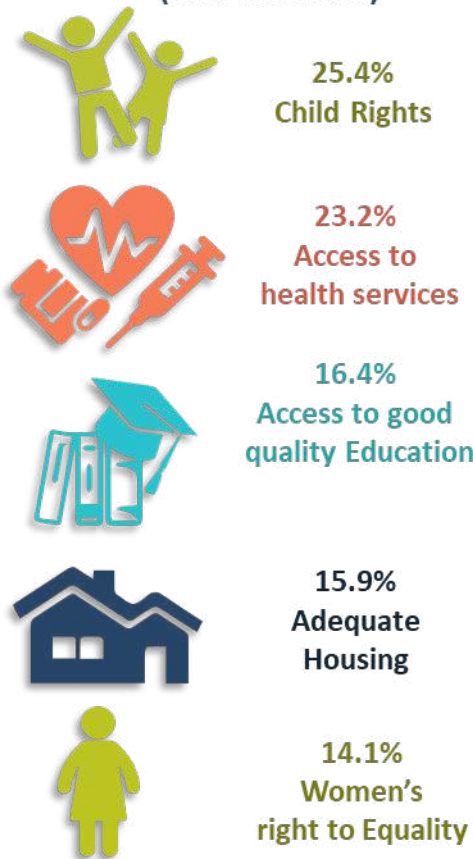


NAME 5 RIGHTS

Rights



FIVE MOST IMPORTANT RIGHTS (with Flash card)

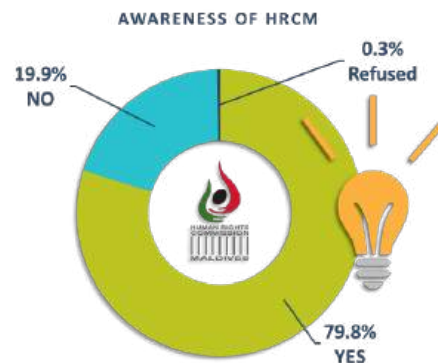


Awareness of Human Rights Commission of Maldives (HRCM)

The Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) is an independent statutory body established to uphold and promote human rights in the country. Initially formed under a presidential decree in 2003, the HRCM gained constitutional status through the ratification of the Human Rights Commission Act (Act No.6/2006), which enhanced its autonomy and broadened its mandate in alignment with universal human rights standards. The Commission is responsible for investigating human rights violations, advising the government on necessary legal and policy reforms, systemic monitoring of human rights, fostering a culture of human rights and raising public awareness. In addition, the Commission is also designated as the National Preventive Mechanism of the Maldives in accordance with the United Nations Optional Protocol on the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). Through these essential functions, the HRCM plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and advancing human rights in the Maldives.

Subsequent to the findings of the RSL₃, the HRCM has undertaken significant initiatives to strengthen the impact of the Commission's work and create awareness on the mandate of the Commission and on human rights at a broader level. The findings of the survey were factored in when the five-year Strategic Plan of the Commission was developed. In addition, a Communications and Public Relations Strategy was developed to broaden the positioning of the Commission and its relationship with the public. Other advocacy efforts also include

the implementation of the Integrated Human Rights Programme and Human Rights Defenders Programme in different regions of the country targeting key regional stakeholders, civil society actors and the public. Furthermore, regular awareness sessions and public engagement efforts were frequented aiming strengthening public education on human rights. However, the Commission could not implement these advocacy activities at full potential due to budgetary constraints and the geographical dispersion of islands heightened these challenges.



The public awareness of HRCM had increased progressively from 40.8% in 2005 to 84.8% in 2019. However, the survey in 2024 showed a slight decrease in the level of awareness about HRCM to 79.8%. While the awareness level remained high, this decline may indicate underlying challenges in maintaining a sustaining public engagement such as budget constraints that limit outreach efforts and program implementation. Potential contributing factors may include evolving political dynamics, shifts in the social landscape, or a decrease in the visibility of the HRCM's activities within the public domain.

AWARENESS OF HRCM



A notable 84.8% of female respondents reported being aware of HRCM, indicating a strong recognition of the Commission among women compared to men (73.5%). This suggests that a relatively higher proportion of men remain unaware of the Commission compared to women.

A substantial majority of Maldivian respondents (87.1%) reported awareness of HRCM, indicating effective engagement through outreach efforts and public information campaigns. In contrast, only 32.1% of migrant workers indicated awareness, highlighting challenges in reaching this demographic, potentially due to language barriers.

Knowledge of HRCM by Migrant Workers

	Maldivian %	Migrant Worker %	Total %
Yes	87.1%	32.1%	79.8%
No	12.7%	67.3%	19.9%
Refused	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%
Total	100%	100.0%	100%

Awareness of HRCM varied notably across age groups, with the highest levels in the 36-55 age group at 84.9% followed closely by respondents aged 56-65 (82.6%) and 65+ (80%). The youngest respondents,

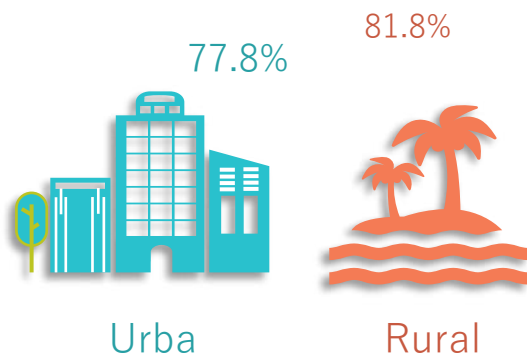
aged 18-25, reported a comparatively lower level of awareness at 62.3%. The notable variation in awareness levels across different age groups presents a significant opportunity for targeted outreach initiatives, especially directed at younger populations. Such efforts would not only contribute to bridging the information gap but also facilitate a more equitable distribution of awareness across diverse age demographics.

Knowledge of HRCM by Age (%)

	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+	Total
Yes	62.3	78.5	84.9	82.6	80.0	79.8
No	37.1	21.2	14.9	17.5	20.0	19.8
Refused	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

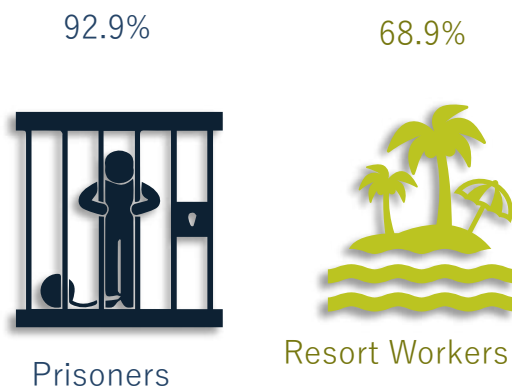
A notable 81.8% respondents from outer islands reported awareness of the HRCM, indicating a significant level of recognition in outer islands compared to urban respondents (77.8%). This increased awareness in outer islands may be attributed to targeted outreach or community engagement efforts that resonate with local populations. This disparity reveals the unequal exposure to human rights advocacy in different contexts, offering the HRCM a chance to strengthen its outreach initiatives to address this gap.

KNOWLEDGE OF HRCM BY LOCATION



Awareness of the HRCM was significantly high among persons under detention with 92.9% of prison respondents indicating to know HRCM - the highest among all groups. The Commission being mandated to investigate human rights violations and alleged cases of torture and regularly inspecting prisons acting as the National Preventive Mechanism could be the major contributing factor for the high proportion of detainees being aware of the Commission. This result is also reflective of the number of complaints lodged at the Commission – a significant proportion of the cases investigated by the Commission is related to infringement of rights under detention.

Knowledge of HRCM



Respondents from resorts had the lowest awareness at 68.9%, suggesting a potential gap in outreach efforts within the tourism sector. These findings point to a need for the HRCM to bolster awareness initiatives specifically in resort areas to ensure broader engagement.

Among the 94 respondents with disabilities, 79.8% reported awareness of HRCM, a comparable with the awareness level of 79.8% in the general population suggesting that the HRCM's outreach has been inclusive, as awareness level among persons with disabilities was consistent with the overall population. However, the findings still present an opportunity for the HRCM to explore targeted efforts to maintain and potentially increase awareness among persons with disabilities, thereby ensuring that this demographic remains well-informed about their rights and available protections.

Knowledge of HRCM by PWDs

79.8%



The awareness of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) varied across education levels, showing some interesting trends. Awareness was lowest among the respondents without formal education (65.6%). As education levels increased, awareness generally rises, peaking at 88.7% at diploma level. Awareness rates were high among respondents with primary (81.2%), lower

secondary (81.8%), and higher education (80.6%). However, awareness dropped slightly to 70.3% for those with high secondary education.

Furthermore, awareness of HRCM differed notably between public and private sector employees. While 89% of the public sector employees were aware of HRCM, only 66.5% of private sector employees reported awareness, indicating a gap in HRCM outreach or engagement with this demographic. This disparity suggests an opportunity for the HRCM to enhance outreach efforts specifically targeting private sector employees, who may have limited exposure to information about human rights initiatives.

Approval Rating of the work of HRCM

The data reflected a complex public perception of HRCM, with a lack of positive improvement in ratings over recent years and a significant portion of respondents expressing uncertainty about the organization’s effectiveness. In 2024, only 23.7% of respondents rated HRCM’s performance as either “excellent” or “good,” showing a slight decline from 27% in 2011 and 26% in 2019. Additionally, 19.2% rated HRCM’s work as “satisfactory,” showing an increase compared to 13% in 2019, which might indicate a shift towards a more moderate but cautious view of the organization’s performance. This suggests that positive perceptions of HRCM’s effectiveness have remained relatively consistent over the years, with only minor fluctuations in approval ratings. However, a notable 28.8% of respondents perceived HRCM’s performance as “not that good” or “poor”. Future research should explore the factors

contributing to this response to identify the reasons behind the lower approval ratings to develop effective strategies to enhance public engagement.

The high percentage of respondents (27.7%) who selected “Don’t Know/Not Applicable” may indicate that many individuals have not had direct interactions with HRCM. This presents an opportunity for HRCM to enhance its public image, potentially through increased transparency, increased community engagement, or by addressing areas of public concern directly.

Furthermore, 25.4% of male respondents rated the performance of the HRCM as “excellent” or “good,” while 22.4% of female respondents expressed similar approval. However, a higher percentage of men, 30.5%, categorized the HRCM’s performance as “not that good” or “poor,” compared to 27.6% of women, indicating slightly greater dissatisfaction among men. This trend highlights a critical opportunity for HRCM to enhance its outreach and communication strategies to foster greater awareness and engagement among the public.

HRCM approval by Gender			
	Male	Female	Total
An excellent job	3.2%	1.2%	2.0%
A good job	22.3%	21.2%	21.7%
A satisfactory job	18.9%	19.4%	19.2%
Not that good a job	14.8%	18.4%	16.9%
A poor job	15.7%	9.2%	11.9%
Refused	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
DK/NA	24.5%	29.9%	27.7%

20.5% of Maldivian respondents rated the Commission's performance as "good," while a significantly higher 42.6% of migrant workers expressed the same sentiment. For those who deemed it a "satisfactory job," 19.6% of Maldivians and 13% of migrant workers agreed. Regarding dissatisfaction, 17.9% of Maldivians indicated the HRCM's performance was "not that good," with further 12.5% of Maldivians rated it as "poor," while migrant workers did not report any such sentiment.

23.4% of respondents aged 18-25 rated the Commission as performing "a good job," while those aged 26-35 reported an even higher approval rate of 27%. In contrast, the approval rate dropped to 17.4% among the 36-55 age group and further decreased to 15.5% for those aged 56-65, with only 9.3% of respondents over 65 considering the HRCM's performance as "good." Regarding "satisfactory job" ratings, 21.3% of the 18-25 age group and 22.8% of the 26-35 age group expressed satisfaction, while approval rates dipped among older demographics, with 15.4% of the 36-55 age group and 13.8% of the 56-65 age group indicating similar sentiments.

HRCM approval by Migrant Workers		
	Maldivian	Migrant Workers
An excellent job	1.8%	5.6%
A good job	20.5%	42.6%
A satisfactory job	19.6%	13.0%
Not that good a job	17.9%	0.0%
A poor job	12.5%	0.0%
Refused	0.7%	0.0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	27.1%	38.9%

However, dissatisfaction was evident among older respondents, with 20.3% of respondents aged between 56 to 65 years and 16.3% of respondents aged between 26 to 35 years rated the HRCM as "not that good." A notable proportion of younger respondents expressed uncertainty, with 23.4% of the youth (18-35 years) stating "Don't Know/Not Applicable." highlighting potential areas for targeted outreach and opportunities for improvement.

Both urban areas and outer islands depicted varying sentiments regarding the approval of HRCM. In urban areas, 1.3% of respondents rated the Commission's performance as "excellent," compared to 0.7% in outer islands. The "good job" ratings were 11.7% for urban respondents and 10% for outer-island respondents, totaling 21.7% across both demographics. Both urban and outer-island respondents equally rated HRCM's performance as "satisfactory" at 9.6%. However, dissatisfaction varied, with 6.8% of urban respondents indicating "not that good," while a higher percentage of 10.1% of outer-island respondents felt similarly. Ratings for a "poor job" were 5.3% in urban areas and 6.5% in outer islands, indicating slightly greater dissatisfaction among outer-island respondents.

Overall, the findings suggest that while urban respondents show slightly higher satisfaction with the HRCM, there is notable uncertainty across both demographics regarding HRCM's effectiveness.

HRCM approval by Urban and Outer Islands

	Urban	Outer islands	Total
An excellent job	1.3%	0.7%	2.0%
A good job	11.7%	10.0%	21.7%
A satisfactory job	9.6%	9.6%	19.2%
Not that good a job	6.8%	10.1%	16.9%
A poor job	5.3%	6.5%	11.9%
Refused	0.5%	0.2%	0.7%
DK/NA	12.9%	14.8%	27.7%

Among respondents with disabilities, 5.3% rated the Commission's performance as "excellent," and a further 16% rated it as a "good job,". The dissatisfaction rates were higher, with 14.7% rating it as "not that good" and 18.7% as "poor," respectively. Lastly, 26.7% of respondents with disabilities selected "Don't Know/Not Applicable". Overall, these results indicate that while some persons with disabilities view the HRCM positively, there remains a notable level of dissatisfaction and uncertainty within this demographic.

Knowledge about HRCM roles

Awareness of HRCM roles trend over the years

	2019	2024
Protecting Human Rights	43%	48.5%
Receiving and investigating human rights complaints	13%	13.5%
Awareness of educational and promotional efforts regarding human rights	5%	8.1%

The data revealed varying levels of knowledge regarding the roles of HRCM among respondents. A significant 48.5% identified the primary role of the HRCM as protecting human rights, a slight increase from 43% in 2019. Only 13.5% recognized HRCM's role in receiving and investigating human rights complaints. Awareness of educational and promotional efforts regarding human rights was notably lower (8.1%), however this was a notable increase from 5% in 2019. Furthermore, the role of advising the State on human rights and monitoring the State's performance was recognized by only 5.1% and 7%, respectively. A further 5.8% of respondents stated protecting offenders. A notable 41.5% either refused to answer or indicated that they did not know or find the question applicable. This high level of uncertainty indicates a substantial gap in the general population's understanding of the HRCM's functions. It is important to note that while preventing corruption is not a defined mandate of the HRCM, 6.1% respondents nonetheless identified this function as a mandate of the Commission.

KNOWLEDGE OF HRCM ROLES



The awareness of HRCM roles varied slightly by gender. Women showed marginally higher recognition in several areas, including protecting human rights (49.5% vs. 47.2%), promoting and educating about human rights (8.5% vs. 7.5%), and advising the State on human rights (5.5% vs. 4.6%). Conversely, men exhibited a stronger understanding of the Commission's role in monitoring the human rights performance of the State (8.2% vs. 6%).

These results indicate that while women tend to be more aware of HRCM's roles overall, men have slightly better recognition in specific areas like monitoring human rights performance. The findings highlight the need for targeted outreach initiatives to bridging knowledge gaps and rectifying misconceptions about HRCM's responsibilities. It is essential to tailor efforts to address the specific gender related understandings to ensure equitable access to information on human rights protections.

Knowledge of HRCM roles by GENDER

	Male	Female
Protect human rights	47.2%	49.5%
Receive/Investigate complaints about human rights	14.6%	12.6%
Promote/educate about/human rights	7.5%	8.5%
Advise the State about human rights	4.6%	5.5%
Monitor the human rights performance of the State	8.2%	6.0%
Protecting offenders	6.0%	5.5%
Preventing Corruption	5.7%	6.4%
Mandated work of other commissions	1.6%	0.9%
Other (Please state)	1.8%	1.4%
Refused	0.4%	0.1%
DK/NA	40.2%	42.6%

The knowledge of HRCM roles depicted a pronounced disparity between Maldivians and migrant workers, particularly regarding high recognition rates among Maldivians. A higher proportion of Maldivians (52%) identified the role of protecting human rights compared to only 25.6% of migrant workers. Similarly, the understanding of HRCM's responsibility to receive and investigate complaints about human rights was recognized by 14.7% of Maldivians but just 5.4% of migrant workers. The role of promoting and educating about human rights was also

better understood among Maldivians (8.6%) than migrant workers (4.2%).

Other roles, such as advising the State on human rights and monitoring the human rights performance of the State, were acknowledged by 5.6% and 7.1% of Maldivians, respectively, compared to lower percentages among migrant workers (1.8% and 6%). Maldivians also showed slightly higher awareness of protecting offenders (6.5%) compared to migrants (1.2%). 6.7% Maldivians stated preventing corruption as a function of the Commission while only 1.8% migrants stated as such.

The data also highlighted that migrant workers were more likely to lack awareness on roles of HRCM, with 67.9% indicating “Don’t Know/Not Applicable,” compared to 37.5% of Maldivians. These findings highlight the need for focused awareness campaigns, especially for migrant workers, to promote a better understanding of the HRCM's true functions and responsibilities.

Urban respondents demonstrated a higher understanding of HRCM’s role in protecting human rights, with 53.4% recognizing this role compared to 43.6% of respondents of outer islands. Similarly,

urban respondents were more likely to identify the Commission’s responsibility to receive and investigate complaints about human rights (16.0% compared to 11.1% in outer islands). The role of promoting and educating about human rights was acknowledged by 8.8% of urban respondents, slightly higher than the 7.3% of respondents from outer islands.

In terms of advising the State on human rights and monitoring the human rights performance of the State, urban respondents also had slightly higher awareness (4.8% and 7.7%, respectively) than respondents from outer islands (5.5% and 6.2%, respectively). Protecting offenders was stated by relatively the same number of urban respondents (5.9%) compared to respondents from outer islands (5.6%). It should be noted that while preventing corruption is not a role of the HRCM, 7.4% of urban respondents and 4.8% respondents from outer islands mistakenly identified this role as such.

The data suggests a slightly higher awareness among urban respondents indicating a significant need for increased outreach and education, especially in outer islands, to improve understanding of HRCM’s functions and responsibilities.

Knowledge of HRCM roles by Urban and Outer islands		
	Urban (%)	Outer islands (%)
Protect human rights	53.4%	43.6%
Receive/Investigate complaints about human rights	16.0%	11.1%
Promote/educate about/human rights	8.8%	7.3%
Advise the State about human rights	4.8%	5.5%
Monitor the human rights performance of the State	7.7%	6.2%
Protecting offenders	5.9%	5.6%
Preventing Corruption	7.4%	4.8%
Mandated work of other commissions	1.1%	1.2%
Other (Please state)	1.8%	1.4%
Refused	0.3%	0.2%
Don’t Know/Not Applicable	36.2%	46.7%

Among persons with disabilities, awareness of HRCM roles showed varying levels of recognition. A significant 61.3% of persons with disabilities understood HRCM's role in protecting human rights. However, awareness dropped significantly for other roles, with only 12% recognizing HRCM's responsibility to receive and investigate complaints, and just 9.3% acknowledged its role in promoting and educating about human rights.

Further, only 5.3% were aware that the HRCM advises the State on human rights issues, while even fewer (4%) recognized its role in monitoring the State's human rights performance. Additionally, 8% noted the role in protecting offenders, and 9.3% falsely mentioned preventing corruption. A notable 54.7% of persons with disabilities indicated they did not know or found the question not applicable, highlighting a significant gap in knowledge about the HRCM's functions among this demographic. Awareness among respondents from prison was relatively low across all roles of the Commission with only 2.7% highlighting protecting offenders and 1.6% stating protecting human rights.

ROLES OF HRCM TO STRENGTHEN



When asked about the work of HRCM, a substantial majority of respondents indicated that the Commission should enhance its efforts across various areas. Notably, 83.1% of respondents believed HRCM should do more to protect human rights, with only 1.5% suggesting less involvement and 6.8% opting for the same level of effort. Similarly, 84.4% expressed the need for HRCM to increase its capacity to receive and investigate complaints about human rights violations, while 83.5% called for more monitoring of the State's human rights performance. The call for enhanced promotion and education about human rights is even

stronger, with 87.1% of respondents advocating for increased efforts in this area.

Furthermore, a significant 88.7% believed HRCM should do more to protect the rights of vulnerable populations, including children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. The emphasis on preventing torture and cruel, inhuman treatment was similarly supported by 87.8% of respondents, who advocated for enhanced action in the area. Additionally, 81.2% of respondents believed HRCM should take more steps to ensure whistleblower protection under the law. Overall, the data reflects a broad consensus among the respondents that HRCM should considerably strengthen its efforts across all evaluated areas.

Roles of HRCM to Strengthen

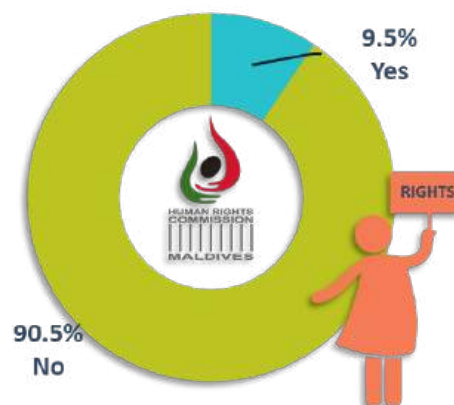
	2019	2024
Promotion and education about human rights	89%	87%
Protect the rights of vulnerable groups	89%	88.7%
Strengthen the role of advising the government on human rights issues	87%	83.7

Participation in HRCM Work*

In response to the question whether respondents participated in any work or outreach by HRCM, only 9.5% (10% male

and 9% female) of respondents reported having engaged in its activities.

PARTICIPATION IN HRCM WORK



12% of respondents aged 18-25 reported involvement in HRCM work, followed by 11% of those aged 36-55. Participation decreased among older age groups, 5% of those aged 56-65, and 8% of respondents aged 65 and older indicating they had participated in HRCM activities.

Participation in HRCM work by GENDER

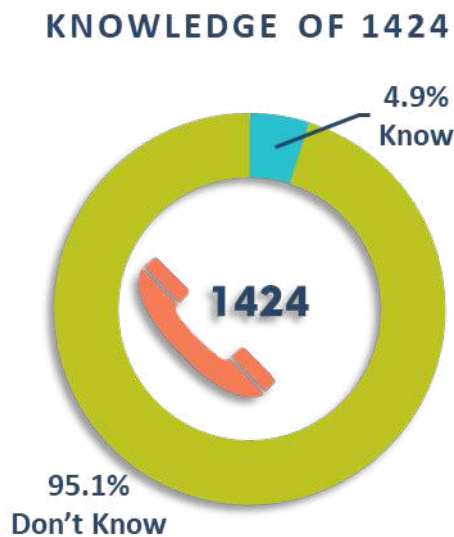
	Male	Female	Total
Yes	10%	9%	9.5
No	90%	91%	90.6
Total	100%	100%	100

Furthermore, 6.8% of urban respondents reported to have participated, while 11.9% of outer island respondents indicated their involvement. This data highlights a marginally higher participation rate in outer islands in comparison to urban areas, however overall engagement remains relatively low across both demographics.

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey

Toll Free Number (1424)*

This survey sought to understand the level of public awareness around the ways to report cases to HRCM and the toll-free number, and relevant questions were included in the survey questionnaire as new areas. In terms of awareness of HRCM's toll-free number, only 4.9% of respondents identified the number 1424, a toll-free number established on 29th July 2010. This indicates a substantial lack of awareness regarding this critical mechanism for accessing the Commission directly. Furthermore, 5.1% of Maldivian respondents correctly identified the number 1424, while only 1.8% of migrant workers were aware of it.



Awareness of the toll-free number 1424 varied significantly across different areas of residence. 21% of respondents from Male' correctly identified the number, while awareness was notably low in other areas. This highlights a critical gap in awareness of HRCM's toll-free number, particularly among those in prisons and industrial sectors. Additionally, among

persons with disabilities, awareness of 1424 is low, with only 5.3% indicating knowledge of the number.

Knowledge of the procedures for filing a complaint with HRCM was notably low across various methods. Specifically, only 9.5% of respondents were aware of the existence of a complaint form, while 8.9% recognized the existence of a toll-free number for this purpose. Awareness of the ability to file complaints via phone was higher at 28.8%. Other methods, such as submitting complaints in writing (6.2%), via email (10%), or at reception (3.4%), also showed low awareness levels. Furthermore, a substantial 53.7% of respondents indicated that they did not know or found the information not applicable, emphasizing the need for enhanced public education regarding HRCM's complaint-filing processes.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT AT HRCM



Knowledge about filing a complaint to HRCM by gender revealed slight variations between male and female respondents. Women demonstrated a marginally higher awareness in several categories. For

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey.

instance, 8.3% of women knew about using a complaint form compared to 7.2% of men. Awareness of phone submissions was also slightly higher among women (24.3%) than men (23.4%).

Conversely, men showed a greater understanding of filing complaints in writing, with 6.7% recognizing this method compared to 4.0% of women. Men were also more aware of email as an option, with 9.7% compared to 7.2% of women. A higher proportion of men (4%) knew about submitting complaints at the reception desk, while only 1.9% of women recognized this method. These findings stress the necessity of focused awareness campaigns to boost understanding of complaint-filing processes, particularly for women, while also tackling the large percentage of respondents of both genders who are unaware.

Among nationalities, Maldivians demonstrated a slightly higher level of awareness regarding the various methods to file complaints. Notably, more Maldivians (24.5%) were aware of using phone as a method of complaint, while a slightly higher proportion of migrant workers (9.7%) were aware of the toll-free number compared to 7.2% of Maldivians. A substantial proportion of both groups indicated they did not know or found the question not applicable, with 44% of Maldivians and an even higher 56.5% of migrant workers selecting "DK/NA." These findings emphasized the urgent need for

awareness campaigns for both groups, particularly migrant workers, to improve their understanding of complaint-filing procedures and address existing awareness gaps.

Respondents from the prison showed the highest awareness of filing through a complaint form (28.6%) and in writing (28.6%), while respondents from resorts and industrial islands had much lower awareness of these methods (5.8% and 0%, respectively). Awareness of the toll-free number was highest in industrial islands (10%) and atolls (8%) but minimal in resorts (1.4%).

Phone-based complaints were most recognized in Malé (30.4%) and atolls (22.5%), while email was identified by 8.8% of atoll respondents and 8.7% in resorts, with no awareness in industrial islands or prisons. Notably, a majority in resorts (60.9%) and industrial islands (60%) indicated they did not know or found the question not applicable, highlighting significant knowledge gaps.

For persons with disabilities, the awareness of how to file complaints was notably lower than other demographics. Only 2.1% were aware of the complaint form, while 13.3% recognized the toll-free number. The awareness of other methods remained low, indicating a need for improved outreach and education programs specifically designed for persons with disabilities.

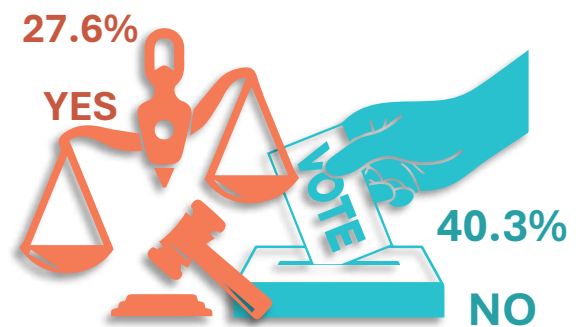
Democratic reform in the Maldives has been a complex and evolving process, marked by significant political transitions and social changes. Since the early 2000s, the nation has experienced a series of efforts aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing political participation, and promoting human rights. These reforms included the introduction of a new Constitution in 2008, which established multi-party democracy and emphasized fundamental rights and freedoms¹. However, the path to democracy has faced numerous challenges, including political instability, governance issues, and concerns over the protection of civil liberties, necessitating ongoing dialogue and commitment to democratic principles².

The survey indicated a concerning level of unfamiliarity among respondents regarding the fundamental rights outlined in Chapter II of the Constitution. Only 9.4% of respondents reported having read this Chapter, while a significant 73.9% stated they had not.

The survey results of the perceived benefits of democratic reforms in the Maldives showed a complex public opinion where only 27.6% of respondents believed that democratic reforms have been beneficial, while a significant 40.3% expressed the view that there have been no benefits at all. Additionally, 15.7% felt that the benefits were partial, indicating a mix of skepticism and cautious optimism among the population. The data suggested that while some citizens recognized positive changes resulting

from reforms, a substantial proportion remained disappointed with the outcomes of these reforms. This disparity highlights a gap between the intended outcomes of reforms and public perception, raising concerns about their effectiveness in advancing human rights and social justice.

BENEFITS FROM DEMOCRATIC REFORM



A comparable pattern was observed regarding the benefits from a democracy, among two genders, with 27.2% of men and 27.9% of women reporting positive outcomes. This reflected a slight shift in perspective compared to the 2019 data, where 38% of men and 28% of women expressed similar sentiments. The decline in the percentage of male respondents who perceived benefits from democratic reforms is particularly noteworthy. Additionally, 41.1% men and 39.8% of women did not believe democratic reforms were beneficial suggesting a growing skepticism among men regarding the efficacy of these reforms. Furthermore, 15.4% of men and 16% of women feel that the benefits were partial.

¹ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 (2008), Article.8

² <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/06/asia/maldives-political-unrest-explainer-intl/index.html>. (2018, September 4). CNN World. Retrieved

by <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/06/asia/maldives-political-unrest-explainer-intl/index.html>
 Jazeera, A. (2012, February 8). Maldives president quits after 'coup.' Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/2/8/maldives-president-quits-after-coup>



The survey results indicating the reasons for the perceived lack of success of democratic reforms highlighted several key issues that continued to hinder the benefits from political reform. Corruption was identified as the most significant factor (21.6%), reflecting deep-seated concerns about the integrity of political institutions and processes. A consistent pattern was observed in 2019 where 21% of respondents identified corruption as a primary reason for democratic failures, emphasizing its persistent role as a barrier for effective governance. Mistrust among political parties followed with 17.9% of respondents which aligned with findings from 2019, where 20% of respondents expressed similar sentiments, suggesting that biased divisions continue to undermine cooperation and collective efforts toward democratic governance. Political employment and the employment of incompetent individuals were the third and fourth most cited, with 10.1% and 10.5% respectively, highlighting concerns about the integrity of those in power. Ineffectual Parliament (Majlis), previously identified by 12% of respondents in 2019, remained relevant, though it was cited by a smaller portion (7.8%), indicating some fluctuations in

public opinion regarding legislative effectiveness. Other contributing factors highlighted include a lack of understanding about democracy among the public (7.1%) and government interference in judicial and legislative processes (6.6%). Overall, these findings reveal a complicated interplay of factors that continue to impede the success of democratic reforms in the Maldives, reflecting persistent challenges in governance, public trust, and the effectiveness of institutions.

Reasons democratic reform did not work	
	Percentage (%)
Mistrust among political parties	17.9
Ineffectual Parliament (Majlis)	7.75
Lack of understanding about democracy by the public	7.12
Insufficient resources allocated for democratic strengthening	3.12
Government/executive influence/interference with Majlis or judiciary	6.6
Political employment	10.1
Employment of incompetent people	10.5
Corruption	21.6
Other (Specify)	7.5
Refused	0.2
Don't Know/Not Applicable	7.7

The gender breakdown of respondents on the perceived lack of success of democratic reforms indicated corruption as the most frequently identified issue by both men (22.2%) and women (20.2%). More men (18.4%) highlighted mistrust among political parties than women (16.7%), demonstrating its continued importance as a perceived challenge. Political employment was another prominent concern, noted by 10.5% of men and 9.2% of women, while 11.4% of men and 9.4% of women highlighted the employment of incompetent individuals as a barrier to democratic success.

Government or executive interference with the Majlis or judiciary was a concern for 8.2% of men and 5.1% of women. Similarly, 7.4% of men and 7.6% of women pointed to the ineffectuality of the Parliament (Majlis) as a reason for democratic shortcomings. A lack of public understanding about democracy was highlighted by 7.6% of men and 6.5% of women respectively.

The highest incidence of corruption concerns was observed among respondents aged 56 to 65 years where the respondents aged 26 to 35 identified mistrust in political parties as the primary barrier to political reform, highlighting a critical issue given the importance of youth engagement in fostering a robust democracy. Furthermore, the youngest demographic demonstrated the greatest number of respondents expressing concerns regarding a lack of understanding of democratic principles highlighting the need for targeted educational initiatives aimed at fostering trust in democratic processes across all age groups.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION



The Maldives has experienced fluctuations in its ranking on the World Press Freedom Index since 2019. * After an initial improvement, the country's position deteriorated, dropping from 72nd in 2021 to 87th in 2022.³ The index further declined from 100th to 106th in 2024.⁴ After an initial improvement, the country's position deteriorated, dropping from 72nd in 2021 to 87th in 2022.⁵ The Index further declined from 100th to 106th in 2024.⁶ Several factors contributed to this decline, including harassment, intimidation, and threats faced by journalists.⁷ Issues such as the suppression of dissenting voices remain critical areas for improvement in the country's democratic landscape, as highlighted by various reports on media independence and challenges faced by journalists.⁸ The current cycle of RSL included a question to assess the satisfaction level and attitude towards the provision of freedom of expression in the country.

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey

³ Human Rights Watch. (2023, May 3). Maldives press freedom in danger. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/03/maldives-press-freedom-danger>

⁴ Reporters without borders. (2024). Maldives. RSF. <https://rsf.org/en/country/maldives>

⁵ Human Rights Watch. (2023, May 3). Maldives press freedom in danger. Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/03/maldives-press-freedom-danger>

⁶ Reporters without borders. (2024). Maldives. RSF. <https://rsf.org/en/country/maldives>

⁷ Reporters without borders. (2023). Maldives.8689_EN; RSF. https://rsf.org/en/analyse_regionale/940
 Maldives Journal. (2024). MJA expresses concern over summons on Dhiyares journalist. The Maldives Journal. <https://themaldivesjournal.com/39623>
 MJA. (2022). IFJ_SAPFR_2021-2_MAL.pdf. Maldives Journalists Association. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UTg0ef2cRV0Gj7515Z4SVutollTajW9i/view>

⁸ Maldives Journalists Association. Solidarity and Survival; The Story of South Asia. Maldives Country Report; Retrieved May 26, 2024 from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UTg0ef2cRV0Gj7515Z4SVutollTajW9i/view>

Respondents expressed a mixed level of satisfaction regarding freedom of expression in the Maldives. Half of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the current state of freedom of expression, while 32.3% reported being dissatisfied. A smaller percentage, 12.4%, stated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, suggesting a notable level of ambivalence.

Both women (50.7%) and men (50.3%) expressed similar satisfaction levels, indicating a nearly equal level of approval between genders. Among urban residents, 47.4% expressed satisfaction with the level of freedom of expression, while a slightly higher proportion of outer-island residents, 53.3%, indicated satisfaction. Dissatisfaction was reported by 30.7% of urban respondents, slightly lower than the 33.8% of outer-island respondents, indicating that dissatisfaction is somewhat more prevalent among those living in outer islands.

Freedom of Expression by Gender

	Male	Female
Satisfied	50.3%	50.7%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11.6%	13.1%
Dissatisfied	31.0%	33.3%
Refuse	0.4%	0.4%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	7.1%	2.6%

These results reflect ongoing debates about freedom of expression in the Maldives, which has faced challenges related to political dissent, media freedom, and public discourse.⁹ The high percentage of satisfaction may suggest a degree of optimism among the

population, but the substantial dissatisfaction rate points to significant concerns that persist, echoing the sentiments highlighted by civil society and journalists.

The question was originally designed to assess the extent to which respondents felt they could exercise their freedom of expression. Although some respondents indicated that they believed limitations on this freedom were necessary. However, the survey did not explore the factors contributing to dissatisfaction with the current level of freedom of expression, highlighting an area to further inquiry in future surveys.

SATISFACTION ABOUT POLITICAL PARTY WORK



The current survey sought to understand the level of satisfaction among respondents regarding the extent to which political parties act on public interest. * A significant majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction (70.9%), indicating the public did not believe that political parties were addressing the needs and concerns of everyday citizens. The broad dissatisfaction reflects the sentiment of the general populace on how ineffective political parties are on

⁹ Maldives Press Freedom in Danger. (2023, May 3). *Human Rights Watch*.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/03/maldives-press-freedom-danger>

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey

engaging in genuine public accountability and responsiveness to prevalent issues.

Satisfaction about political party work by Gender		
	Male	Female
Satisfied	10.1%	13.2%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6.8%	9.1%
Dissatisfied	70.7%	71.0%
Refuse	0.6%	0.6%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	11.8%	6.2%

There was predominant dissatisfaction observed across genders (70.7% men vs 71% women). The responses of those who neither felt satisfied nor dissatisfied were also noteworthy, with 6.8% of men and 9.1% of women choosing this option, indicating a segment of the population that may feel indifferent or unsure about the effectiveness of political parties working in public interest. Additionally, 11.8% of male respondents indicated that they did not know or found the question not applicable, while only 6.2% of female respondents shared this view suggesting a greater engagement or awareness among women regarding the political landscape, despite their overall dissatisfaction.

This data also revealed a significant disparity between urban and outer island respondents with slightly more respondents from the outer islands (72.3%) being dissatisfied with political

parties compared to 69.3% in urban islands, an area which could be explored further to understand how the work of the political parties affects different populations.

The pattern of dissatisfaction reflects broader trends observed during the election monitoring work of the Commission, where citizens reported often felt alienated from their political representatives.¹⁰ Factors contributing to this perception may include widespread concerns about corruption, lack of transparency, and ineffective governance. These issues undermine public trust and hinder the realization of key human rights, underscoring the need for urgent action to address them in order to foster a democratic environment.

¹⁰ Human Rights Commission (2023), *Presidential Election Monitoring Report 2023* retrieved by

<https://hrcm.org.mv/en/publications/presidential-election-report-2023-dhivehi>

Organized crime, gang violence, and drug-related offenses continue to pose significant challenges to societal stability. In 2023, the Maldives Police Service investigated 4,497 cases of drug-related offenses, over 4,000 cases of theft, robbery, and burglary, and 1,846 incidents of physical assault, highlighting the diverse challenges posed by criminal activities in the country.^{11 12} These statistics indicate a pressing need for comprehensive strategies to combat crime, encompassing preventive measures, enhanced law enforcement, and community engagement initiatives. Such approaches are essential for safeguarding individual safety and ensuring the realization of fundamental human rights.

RESPONDENTS WHO KNEW A VICTIM OF CRIME



Survey respondents were asked if they personally knew anyone who had been a victim of a criminal incident in the past 12 months. Of those surveyed, 21.9% reported knowing someone who had experienced a crime, while 70% stated they were unaware of any crime victims within that timeframe. The percentage of respondents who personally knew a victim of a crime has remained relatively

consistent over the duration of this longitudinal survey, with 20.7% in 2011 and 21.7% in 2019. Close to half of the people (40.3%) who reported knowing a victim of a crime were between the age of 36–55 years of age. The proportion of migrant workers aware of a crime victim remained relatively stable at 4.6% in 2024, compared to 4.1% in 2019, marking a significant decline from 15.8% reported in 2011.

Know of Victim of Crime yearly trend

	2011	2019	2024
Yes	20.7%	21.7%	21.9%

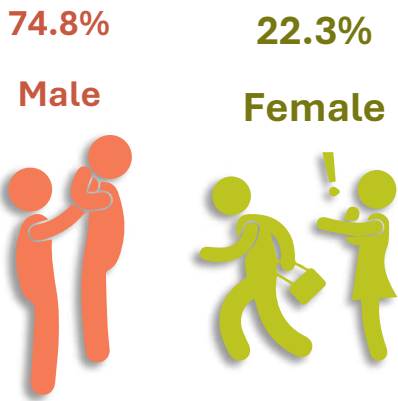
Among respondents who reported knowing a victim of a crime, 28% identified the victim as a friend, 25.8% as someone from their community, 24.8% as a family member or relative, 8.2% as a neighbor, and 1.4% as someone from their household. Comparatively, in 2019, 43.5% of respondents indicated the victim was a community member, 14.6% identified a neighbor, and 8.5% mentioned a household member. However, a direct comparison between 2019 and 2024 is limited, as the 2019 survey options were restricted to community members, neighbors, and household members, excluding categories like "self" (the respondent).

Of those who reported knowing a crime victim, 74.8% identified the victims as men, while 22.3% stated they were women. This marks an increase from 2019, when 45.3% of respondents reported the victim as a man and 17.3% as a woman.

¹¹ Maldives Police service 2023, Crime.Statistics.Quarter.7. 8689 Retrieved by [Crime_Statistics_Q1_2023_3e2223a8c5.pdf](#)

¹² Maldives Police service 2023, Crime.Statistics.Quarter.8. 8689 Retrieved by [Crime_Statistics_Q2_2023_7d07172095.pdf](#)

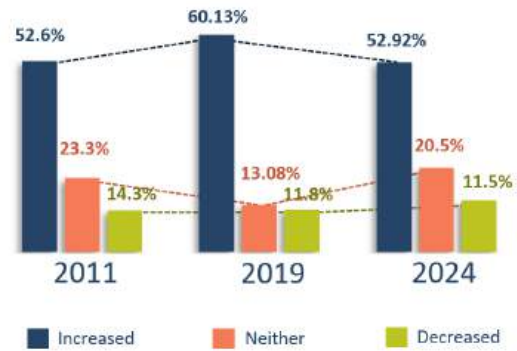
VICTIMS OF CRIME BY GENDER



Furthermore, when respondents were asked about changes in the crime rate over the past 12 months, a majority (52.9%) indicated that crime had increased during this period. In contrast, 20.5% of respondents felt that the crime rate had remained unchanged, and 11.5% observed a decrease in criminal activities over the past year.

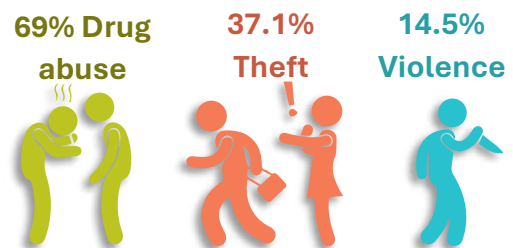
Between 2011 and 2024, public perceptions of the crime rate have shown notable fluctuations. In 2024, 52.9% of respondents believed that the crime rate have increased, aligning closely with the perception recorded in 2011 (52.6%) but representing a decline from the heightened concern observed in 2019, when 60.1% of respondents reported an increase in crime.

PERCEPTION OF CHANGE IN CRIME RATE



The survey revealed that 68.5% of respondents from the outer islands reported an increase in crime rates, compared to 31.4% of urban respondents. This marks a shift from the 2019 findings, where 55.2% of urban respondents reported higher crime rates compared to 31.7% in the outer islands. This may be attributed to violent crimes and gang-related offenses in the Greater Malé area¹³ suggesting further inquiry is needed to understand the current trends in crime rates. Furthermore, it is important to note that over the past five years, theft and drug-related crime rates have increased, while the incidence of assault has remained consistent.¹⁴

MOST PREVALENT CRIMES



¹³ Working Together to Protect U.S. Organizations Overseas. (n.d.). Retrieved by <https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/b725fb42-776a-444d-8002-16688cc101ce>

¹⁴ Maldives.Police.Service. (n.d.). Police Mv. <https://police.gov.mv/statistics>

A substantial proportion of respondents identified drug abuse as the most prevalent crime in their community (69%), followed by theft (37.1%) and violence (21.1%). This perception aligns with data from the Maldives Police Service, which reflects a high number of investigations related to these offenses in the past year.

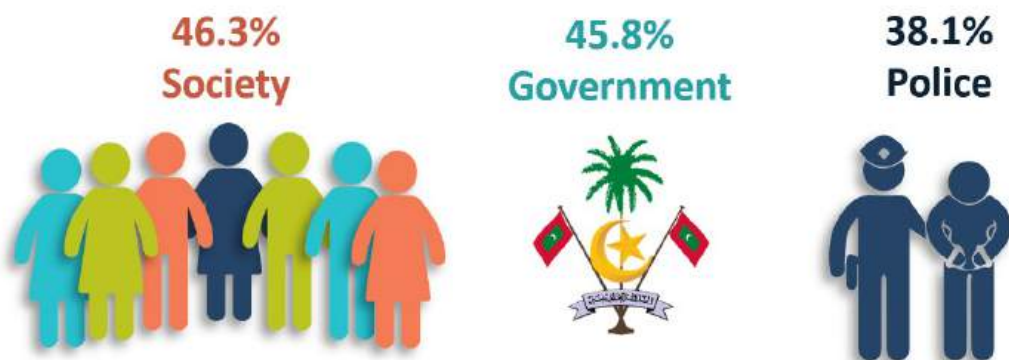
When asked about the reasons behind the increasing crime rate, 40.3% of respondents attributed it to drug abuse, highlighting the significance given by the respondents in driving criminal activity. This is a significant increase compared to previous years, where drug abuse was cited by 19.2% of respondents in 2019 and 28.7% in 2011. Similarly, the release of criminals was cited as the second most significant cause in both 2024 (25.8%) and 2019 (13.4%) suggesting persistent concerns over the justice system. Meanwhile, 22.7% identified the failure of parents to fulfill their responsibilities as a critical issue, reflecting societal challenges in addressing youth behavior and upbringing.

When respondents were asked the responsible body for addressing the rise in crime, the majority (46.3%) identified that society as a whole. This was closely followed by 45.8% who believed the government should take action, and 38.1% who felt the police should be primarily responsible. This marks a notable increase in the perceived role of society, compared to 2019, where 30.2% of respondents shared this view. The government (19.7%) and police (16.3%) were also seen as a key player in 2019. Moreover, the view shifted significantly compared 2011 where government and parents (both at 32.2%) were viewed as the main parties responsible followed by the police at 25.9%. The change in trends indicates a growing perception of collective responsibility, with society and government playing a more central role in addressing crime in 2024 compared to earlier years.

Reasons for increase in crime	2011	2019	2024
Economic reasons	3.7	4.86	13.9
Lack of work		8.33	20.4
Failure of Councils to fulfill responsibility			10.9
Failure of schools to fulfill responsibility	3.3	2.64	9.6
Failure of Parents to fulfill responsibility	22.4	10.76	22.7
Drugs	28.7	19.15	40.3
Gangs	14.4	11.17	18.8
Release of criminals	15.6	13.04	25.8
Political issues	9.4	5.69	13.7
Housing issues	2.6	3.47	10.1
Lack of law enforcement	8.5	7.22	22.5

Responsible Party	2011	2019	2024
The Parliament (Majlis)	12.2	5.39	7.8
The Government	32.2	19.71	45.8
The Police	25.9	16.33	38.1
The Courts	16.2	4.99	9.9
The Atoll Council	6.4	3.62	6
The Island Council	8.4	5.39	9
Parents	32.2	10.7	19.4
Schools			6.6
Independent Commissions			7.3
Society (all)		30.02	46.3

ACCOUNTABILITY- WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?



Do you consider human rights to be in conflict with religion?

	Yes	Some Rights	No	No connection	Refused	DK/NA
2011	29.6%	7.3%	45.6%	1.6%	15.9%	
2019	33.70%	10.63%	29.88%	0.54%	1.09%	24.16%
2024	30%	13%	39%	1%	1%	16%

The Maldivian Constitution enshrines Islam as the State religion, ensuring that all laws align with Islamic principles.¹⁵ The intersection of human rights and religion presents a complex and critical area of analysis, especially when considering the substantial impact of cultural and religious values on societal norms. Prior RSL reports indicated a notable association between public attitudes towards human rights and religious influences, highlighting the nuanced interactions involved. Although Islam does not restrict women's participation in public life, societal norms often impose rigid gender roles that confine women primarily to household and domestic duties, limiting their roles in politics and the economy.¹⁶ To overcome these obstacles, a determined effort must be made to challenge patriarchal interpretations in alignment with the human rights standards.

A greater proportion of respondents (43%) perceived an incompatibility between

human rights and religion, with 13% indicating that only certain rights conflicted with religion. The number of respondents who believed conflict existed remained the same as 2019 (44.3%). The respondents who said there were no connection between Islam and human rights had remained consistent since 2011 at 1%. 24.2% of respondents were uncertain about conflicts between human rights and religion in 2019 which decreased to 16% by 2024, suggesting a positive shift toward exploring their compatibility. However, the non-response rate remained high indicating the necessity for strengthened dialogue and interventions.

A notable gap was identified between men and women, with a greater proportion of women (47%) perceiving a conflict between human rights and religion compared to men (37%). Additionally, 33% of women firmly believed that not only some rights, but the concept of human rights itself, conflicted with religion. This

¹⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 (2008), Article.76

¹⁶ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2019).

Sixth periodic report submitted by Maldives under Article 18 of the Convention, due in 2019 Retrieved by https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FMDV%2F6&Lang=en

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FMDV%2F6&Lang=en

Do you consider human rights to be in conflict with religion?						
	2011		2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	27.1%	32.3%	29.2%	36.0%	25%	33%
Some rights	4.5%	10.3%	10.4%	10.5%	12%	14%
No	48.7%	42.4%	29.7%	30.2%	40%	38%
There is no connection between	1.3%	1.9%	0.5%	0.6%	2%	1%
Refused	18.5%	13.2%	1.3%	0.98%	1%	0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable			28.9%	21.7%	20%	14%

may reflect the patriarchal foundations ingrained in society throughout the years.

Respondents aged 18-25 had the highest percentage of individuals asserting that there was no conflict, at 50% suggesting a positive shift in ideology in younger populations. Moreover, as age increased, the respondents who believed the conflict existed increased, with the 36-55 age group at 36% and the 56-65 age group at 35%, possibly due to generational differences in human rights attitudes. Uncertainty about whether human rights conflicted with religion was reported lowest among the age group 36-55 at 14%.

In contrast to the findings from 2019, where a greater proportion of respondents from urban areas perceived no conflict between religion and human rights, data indicated a shift in perspectives. Currently, both demographics depicted a similar population of respondents expressed the belief that human rights were compliant with Islam (36%). Notably, slightly more respondents from the outer islands (32%) perceived a conflict between human rights and religion than the urban respondents (29%) suggesting a convergence in attitudes across different geographic regions while highlighting a marginally more favourable outlook among urban populations.

Do you consider human rights to be in conflict with religion?				
	2019		2024	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Yes	34.0%	33.18%	29%	32%
Some rights	10.5%	10.90%	18%	13%
No	26.4%	35.60%	36%	36%
There is no connection between human rights and religion	0.7%	0.20%	2%	2%
Refused	1.8%	0%	0%	1%
DK/NA	26.7%	20.10%	16%	17%

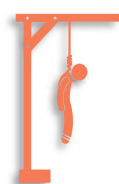
Among the respondents who had stated human rights conflicted with religion, the factors they perceived to be in conflict were asked. Majority of the respondents (34.9%) stated that human rights conflicted with the principles of Islam followed by execution of death penalty (32.3%). Religious freedom (18.5%), punishments in Islam (17%) and gender

equality (16.1%) were observed to be significant factors. In contrary, punishments in Islam were viewed as the primary factor that conflicted with religion in 2019.

FACTORS PERCEIVED TO BE IN CONFLICT WITH RELIGION



28.8% Human rights conflicts with the principles of Islam



26.6% Execution of the death penalty is in conflict with religion and Human rights



15% Religious freedom

40.5% of male respondents identified religious principles as the most critical factor influencing their views, followed by 27.1% who cited the death penalty. In contrast, 34.9% of female respondents considered the death penalty their primary concern, with 29.8% stating religious principles. A significant number of male respondents (20%) believed religious freedom conflicted with religion. Furthermore, a greater proportion of men (19.0%) reported gender equality as the conflicting issue compared to women (13.3%). This discrepancy suggests that religious principles could be used as a rationale to hinder progress toward gender equality. To address this challenge, increased

advocacy and awareness regarding gender equality from a religious standpoint could prove to be beneficial.

Notably, a substantial 15% of female respondents and 9% of male respondents indicated uncertainty or deemed the question not applicable. This finding draws attention to a notable knowledge gap among the general public concerning the relationship between human rights and religion. Overall, the findings persistently indicate the significant need for addressing the conceptions surrounding religion and human rights. The advocacy efforts and sensitization work should focus on preventing these conceptions on hindering the maximum fulfilment of human rights across the board.

Factors conflicting with Islam	Male	Female	Total
Principles of Islam	40.5%	29.8%	34.90%
Execution of the death penalty	27.1%	34.9%	32.30%
Religious freedom	20.0%	16.0%	18.50%
Punishments that violate human rights	15.7%	17.5%	17%
Gender equality	19.0%	13.3%	16.10%
Child rights	5.2%	9.9%	8.30%

Perception on the rights of migrants to practice their religion

SHOULD MIGRANT WORKERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION?

67% Migrant workers Agree

19% Migrant workers Disagree



48%

Maldivians Agree

47%

Maldivians Disagree

In 2024, 48% of Maldivians agreed that migrant workers should be afforded the opportunity to practice their religion in Maldives, with 67% of migrant workers supporting this view. Although more men (54%) supported the statement than women (46.7%), it is noteworthy that amongst women, the respondents who disagreed to the statement had declined from the year 2011 (69.4% to 46.7%) suggesting a shift from a position of strong disagreement to a more supportive stance. While more respondents (57.5%) from the youth demographic (18-35 years) favoured migrant workers practicing their religion, a negative correlation was observed with supporting migrant workers practicing their religion and age.

Should foreign workers have the opportunity to practice their religion	Maldivian	Migrant Workers	Total
Agree	48%	67%	50%
Disagree	47%	19%	43%
Refuse	2%	2%	2%
DK/NA	3%	12%	4%

The Maldives faces pressing human rights concerns within its counter-terrorism framework, with significant implications for marginalized groups. Isolated communities are particularly susceptible to radicalization, as they often resist access to basic services such as education, exacerbating their socio-economic vulnerabilities.¹⁷ As the State has initiated the process of repatriating and reintegrating Maldivians returning from conflict zones, including women and children who have been exposed to radicalization and conflict,¹⁸ HRCM viewed it important to understand the level of awareness and the attitude of the public towards this process.

This survey identified a significant knowledge gap among respondents about the repatriation process for Maldivians from conflict zones, with only 17% being familiar and 83% lacking awareness throughout the country. * The highest proportion of respondents who were aware of the repatriation process were from Male' (34%). Since repatriation and reintegration are critical issues and the

¹⁷ Human Rights Council. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ni Aoláin*, Retrieved October 22nd, 2024 from <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/Download.aspx?SymbolNo=A%2fHRC%2f52%2f39%2fAdd.1&Lang=en>

¹⁸ *Maldivian family repatriated from a conflict zone*. (n.d.). The Edition. <https://edition.mv/news/24162>

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey

impact of reintegration should not be minimized, it is concerning that a sizable majority of respondents were unaware of this process.

Knowledge about the process of repatriating Maldivians coming from conflict zones			
	Male	Female	Total
Yes	18%	16%	17%
No	82%	84%	83%

Most of the respondents (70%) who were aware about the process of repatriation and reintegration, received their information from local news followed by newspapers (21.3%) indicating these tools can be effectively used to advocate the public on relevant issues.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE RETURN FROM CONFLICT ZONES



37.1%
Satisfied with repatriation
of those who go for jihad

33.7%
Dissatisfied with repatriation
of those who go for jihad

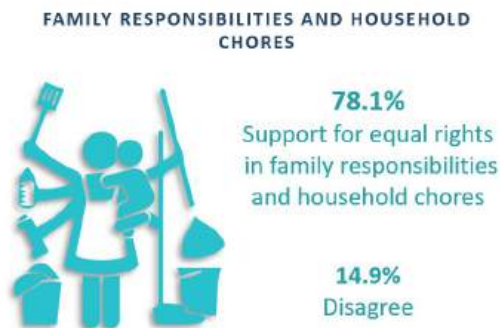
From the respondents who had knowledge about the process of repatriation and reintegration, the respondents were asked how they felt

about bringing them back to the country. It should be noted that a significantly small population (17%) of the respondents answered this question, hence may not be reflective of the whole population. 37.1% of respondents indicated to be satisfied concerning the repatriation of Maldivians coming from conflict zones, with 38.2% of male respondents and 36.4% of female respondents reflecting this positive sentiment. However, more women (36.4%) were observed to be dissatisfied than men (30%). Moreover, dissatisfaction levels increased with age, particularly among the 36-55 age group, with 35.6% indicating dissatisfaction, followed by 37.4% of respondents aged 56-65 and 37.3% of those aged 65 and above. In contrast to urban respondents (25%), outer islands showed a more pronounced dissatisfaction, with 39% conveying discontent, which could be attributed to the fact that the island communities being smaller and compact compared to the urban communities, and the effects of reintegration into these communities may have more adverse effects on the community itself.

How do you feel about the return of those who go for Jihad?	Urban	Rural
Satisfied	40.1%	34.5%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23.4%	14.4%
Dissatisfied	25.1%	39.2%
Refuse	1.2%	0.5%
DK/NA	10.2%	11.4%

Equal rights with men in Family responsibilities and household chores					
	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+
Strongly Agree	42.4%	41.2%	36.9%	34.2%	32.0%
Agree	39.1%	40.3%	41.2%	38.3%	36.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.6%	3.0%	4.5%	4.7%	4.0%
Disagree	9.9%	11.9%	15.5%	19.5%	24.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.7%	1.5%	0.5%	3.4%	1.3%
Refuse	0.7%	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	2.6%	1.8%	1.1%	0.0%	2.7%

Equal rights within the family



In 2019, 87.8% of respondents either refused to answer or were uncertain about whether women should have the same rights as men in family settings. This high non-response rate, particularly among urban respondents (94.5%), suggested a reluctance or inability to engage with the topic of women's rights within the family structure. Notably, 49.3% of women and 44.7% of men chose not to respond, highlighting a troubling lack of consensus on gender equality issues at that time.

Equal rights with men in Family responsibilities and household chores

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	35.6%	40%	38%
Agree	40.6%	39.6%	40%
Neither Agree nor Dis	3.7%	4.4%	4.2%
Disagree	15.7%	14.3%	14.9%
Strongly Disagree	1.8%	0.7%	1.2%
Refuse	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
DK/NA	2.3%	0.7%	1.4%

In contrast, 2024 survey results indicated a marked improvement, with 78.1% of respondents (38% strongly agreed and 40% agreed) expressing support for equal rights in family responsibilities and household chores. Agreement was similar among both genders while 14.9% disagreed, with just 1.2% strongly opposing the idea of shared responsibilities. This evolution from significant uncertainty and non-response in 2019 to strong support for gender equality in 2024 reflects a positive shift towards recognizing and advocating for equal rights within familial roles. The data indicates that both genders are

increasingly acknowledging the importance of shared responsibilities, a crucial step for fostering gender equality in domestic settings.

The younger respondents of ages 18-25 and 26-35 agreed the most (81.5% strongly agree and agree) with the statement. However, disagreement increased with age peaking at 25.3% (strongly agree and agree) for age 65+ respondents.

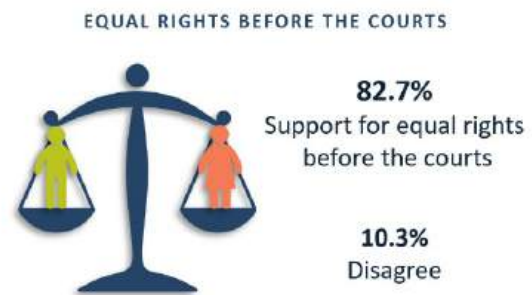
Equal rights before the courts

There was generally a favorable attitude towards women's equal rights before the courts among the respondents. A majority (82.7%) supported the notion, with 38.3% strongly agreeing and 44.4% agreeing that women should have equal right to justice. A slightly higher percentage of women (40%) strongly agreed compared to men (36.1%). Despite this overall support, there remained a notable level of combined disagreement of 10.3%. However, slightly more men 12% disagreed (10% strongly disagree and 2% disagree) than women 9.1%, suggesting a slightly higher level of skepticism among men regarding gender equality before the courts.

Younger age groups (18-25 and 26-35) showed slightly higher agreement levels

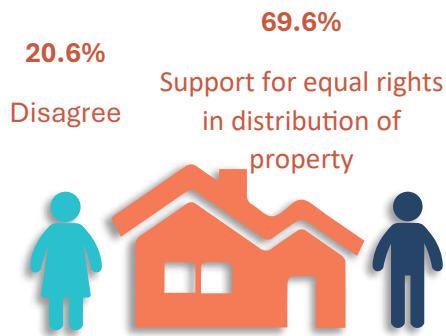
compared to older groups. Disagreement increases slightly with age, peaking at 10.7% in the 56-65 and 65+ age groups.

Data from 2005, 2011, and 2024 reveals a generally positive trend in public opinion regarding women's equal rights before the courts. In 2005, a combined 80% of respondents either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that women should have equal rights, which slightly decrease to about 74.6% in 2011 before rising again to 82.7% in 2024. The percentage of respondents who "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statement decreased from 14.5% in 2005 to about 10.3% in 2024, suggesting a shift towards greater acceptance of gender equality within the legal system.



Equal rights with men before courts					
	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+
Strongly Agree	39.10%	40.30%	36.90%	40.30%	34.70%
Agree	43.70%	42.40%	45.90%	45.60%	41.30%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3.30%	2.40%	3.40%	1.30%	6.70%
Disagree	6.60%	9.30%	9.20%	10.70%	10.70%
Strongly Disagree	1.30%	1.20%	1.30%	1.30%	0.00%
Refuse	1.30%	0.30%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4.60%	4.20%	3.20%	0.70%	6.70%

EQUAL RIGHTS IN DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY

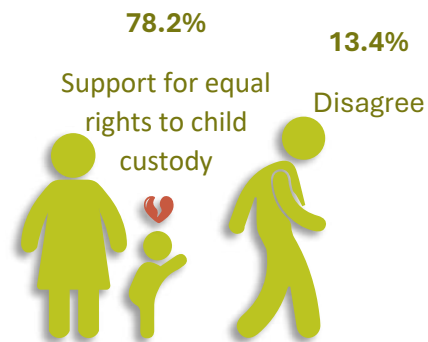


A moderate level of support was observed for equality in the distribution of property between men and women. Overall, 69.6% respondents agreed (29.4% strongly agree and 39.7% agree) where a higher percentage of female respondents (71.4%) agreed compared to male respondents (66.2%). Although the disagreement remained relatively consistent between genders with a slightly higher among men (24.6%) compared to women (21.4%). This difference indicates that women were generally more supportive of equal property rights.

32.5% of the age group between 18 to 25 years agreed strongly with the statement with the trend decreasing significantly with age, decreasing to 17.3% in the 65+ group. Disagreement with the statement increased with age, peaking at 37.4% in the 65+ group, indicating a generational divide in attitudes toward gender equality in this area.

The survey data regarding women's rights to inheritance from 2005, 2011, and 2024 highlights a significant shift in public attitudes over time. In 2005, the combined percentage of respondents who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement was approximately 66.5% which had declined slightly to about 56% in 2011, reflecting a more divided opinion, particularly as disagreement levels rose to 24.4%. In contrast, there was a notable increase in support for women's inheritance rights in 2024, with approximately 82.7% marking a significant recovery and growth in consensus compared to previous years.

EQUAL RIGHTS IN CHILD CUSTODY



There was a significant level (78.2%) of support for equal rights to child custody, with 31.6% strongly agreeing and 46.7% agreeing with the statement. This demonstrated a clear consensus on the importance of gender equality in custody arrangements, highlighting the need to

Equal rights in distribution of property					
	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+
Strongly Agree	32.50%	30.70%	29.30%	29.50%	17.30%
Agree	39.10%	41.20%	38.50%	43.00%	37.30%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6.00%	3.30%	4.00%	5.40%	4.00%
Disagree	15.20%	15.50%	23.40%	20.10%	34.70%
Strongly Disagree	1.30%	2.70%	2.20%	2.00%	2.70%
Refuse	1.30%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4.60%	6.00%	2.70%	0.00%	4.00%

Equal rights in child custody					
	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+
Strongly Agree	33.1%	32.8%	31.3%	32.2%	24.0%
Agree	45.0%	45.7%	48.4%	45.0%	45.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.7%	4.8%	4.3%	6.0%	4.0%
Disagree	11.9%	9.9%	11.3%	14.8%	17.3%
Strongly Disagree	2.7%	1.8%	1.4%	0.0%	2.7%
Refuse	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4.0%	4.8%	3.2%	1.3%	6.7%

ensure that both parents' rights and responsibilities are equally recognized. 32% of men and 31.2% of women strongly agreed, while 44% of men and 48.8% of women agreed with the statement.

Support for gender equality in child custody was evident across all age groups, though trends vary by age where support slightly declined with age, falling to 69.3% for respondents above the age of 56.

The support for equal rights for women in relation to divorce was noteworthy, with a combined 78.5% respondents (31.1% strongly agreeing and 47.4% agreeing) with the proposition where more women (83.1%) than men (72.8%) agreed with the statement. However, there persisted a combined level of disagreement at 12.4%. Notably, a slightly higher level of men (16.1%) than women (9.4%) expressed disagreement, indicating that while support for equal rights in divorce was prevalent, persistent cultural attitudes may still act as barriers to the full realization of gender equality in this context.

Younger respondents (18–25) showed higher "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" responses at 79.5%. Support slightly declined with age groups, 68% of the age group 65+ showing agreement.

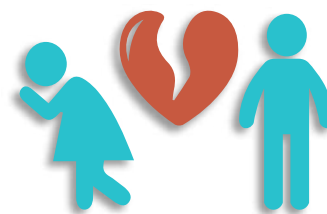
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN RELATION TO DIVORCE

78.5%

Support for equal rights for Women in relation to divorce

12.4%

Disagree



In 2005, only 17.1% of respondents "strongly agreed" and 21.1% "agreed" that women should have equal rights with men in divorce, resulting in a combined support of approximately 38.2%. By 2011, support remained relatively low, with a combined total of about 35.2% (16.8% "strongly agree" and 18.4% "agree"). Disagreement also increased slightly, with 43.6% expressing disagreement in some form. In contrast, the most recent data indicates a substantial increase in support for women's rights in divorce (78.5%) representing a notable change in acknowledging gender equality in divorce rights compared to earlier years.

EQUAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN RELATION TO WORK

83.3%

Support for equal rights of women in relation to work



11.5%

Disagree

A substantial portion (83.3%) of respondents agreed that women should have equal rights as men in relation to work, with 34.2% strongly agreeing and 49.1% agreeing. A relatively smaller percentage of respondents (11.5%) disagreed (10.4% disagree and 1% strongly disagree), signifying some opposition. However, more men (14.2%) expressed disagreement than women (9.3%) indicating that men were marginally more likely to hold reservations about the concept of equal workplace rights.

Youth population in between 18 to 35 years showed the highest support for women having equal rights in relation to work at 48.8%. Disagreement was higher

among older groups, such as 56–65 and 65+, at 14.8% and 12.0%.

88.6% of respondents showed support to women having equal rights with men at work which declined to 55.6% in 2011. Disagreement had also increased from 8.1% to 43.6%, indicating a more divided opinion compared to 2005. In contrast, there was a resurgence in support for women's rights with a combined support of 83.3% in 2024 suggesting a growing acceptance of gender equality in employment settings. Overall, these trends reflect significant progress in public attitudes toward women's rights in the workplace over the past two decades, reinforcing the importance of sustained efforts to advance gender equality in all areas of work and employment.

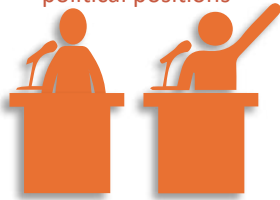
Equal rights of women in relation to work					
	18-25 (%)	26-35 (%)	36-55 (%)	56-65 (%)	65+ (%)
Strongly Agree	41.1%	34.0%	32.5%	34.9%	32.0%
Agree	45.7%	51.9%	49.4%	45.6%	48.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3.3%	1.5%	4.3%	3.4%	2.7%
Disagree	7.3%	8.4%	11.1%	14.8%	12.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	1.5%	1.3%	0.7%	0.0%
Refuse	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	2.6%	2.4%	1.3%	0.0%	5.3%

**EQUAL RIGHTS TO TAKE PART
IN GOVERNMENT**

**AND BE ELECTED TO
POLITICAL POSITIONS**

73.3%

Support for equal rights of women to
participate in government and hold
political positions



17.1%

Disagree

A majority of respondents supported equal rights for women to participate in government and hold political positions. In total, 73.3% of respondents either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with this statement, demonstrating a favorable view towards gender equality in political representation. Disagreement, including those who "disagree" and "strongly disagree," accounted for 17.1%, showing notable reservations about women's political involvement. When analyzed by gender, support among both men and women remained high, with 75.8% of women agreeing compared to 70.3% of men indicating a small gender gap in perceptions about women's political rights. This could suggest the persistence of traditional views among a portion of the male respondents.

In 2005, a combined total of 76.7% of respondents either "strongly agreed" (29.9%) or "agreed" (46.8%) that women should have equal rights in politics, with only 13.7% expressing disagreement. By 2011, support for women's political rights decreased, with a combined total of

approximately 69.4% (35.3% "strongly agree" and 34.1% "agree") increasing this percentage to 73.4% in 2024. However, the decline in the number of female parliamentarians elected signifies a gap in opinion and delivery, reflecting an ongoing and evolving societal discussions about women's roles in government and politics, emphasizing the need for continued advocacy for equal representation and participation in political processes.

**REASONS WHY LESS
WOMEN ARE ELECTED**



16.7

No
female



14.9%

Don't



11.2%

No qualified
female

10.2%

Lack of
Societal



Support for

HRCM's monitoring efforts has shown that women face significant challenges in participating in public life, especially representing in elected positions. Women have reported to have faced discrimination, harassment and anti-campaigning from their male counterparts and the general public, being held at a higher standard than men, getting limited opportunities for campaign and political financing, hindrances faced due to the societal and familial expectations for them to prioritize and allocate their time for domestic worked as opposed to the same expectation from men, and the societal belief that women should not be holding leadership positions because they are less qualified and competent than men. Hence, this cycle of RSL intended to analyze how the public viewed this issue and assess the level of understanding held.

Therefore, the main reason for the lack of elected women in Atoll Councils, Island Councils and the Parliament was asked in the survey.* 16.7% of respondents cited "no women candidates" as the primary reason, indicating limited female representation at the candidacy level. More women (17.7%) than men (15.2%) identify the lack of female candidates as a primary reason, suggesting a heightened awareness among women regarding their own underrepresentation.

"No qualified women candidates" followed with 11.2% respondents stating this reason where men (15.5%) identifying this reason compared to women (8.4%), potentially indicating a gendered bias where men perceive women as less qualified. Furthermore, men rated "men were better qualified" higher (2.3%) than

women (0.9%), possibly reflecting an assumption among men that male candidates were inherently more suitable for these roles. Moreover, a notable number of respondents aged between 18 to 25 years (13.1%) stated the lack of qualified women candidates indicating targeted awareness was necessary to foster gender equality within the public sphere.

10.2% of the respondents attributed it to "lack of societal support for candidates," pointing to societal constraints that may deter women from running. A further 9.4% pointed to "society's lack of awareness of gender equality," suggesting a persistent gap in understanding or prioritizing equal political representation. Both genders acknowledged the importance of societal and family support, yet a larger percentage of women (11.1%) than men (8.8%) viewed the lack of societal support as a significant barrier, highlighting the additional societal pressures women may feel.

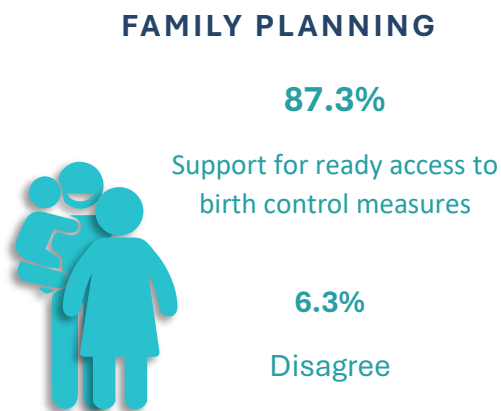
The "lack of party support for female candidates" was identified by 8.3% of the respondents where men were more inclined (9.5%) than women (7.5%) to blame political parties for not prioritizing women's promotion. This suggests the differences in how men and women perceived political institutional barriers and beliefs that women "should not be in parliament" (8.2%) further emphasize cultural and institutional barriers. Additionally, both genders recognize the cultural belief that women should not hold political positions, but the responses were closely aligned (8.3% for men, 8.1% for

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey

women), indicating a shared awareness of this traditional view.

Finally, a significant portion of women (17.6%) responded with "Don't Know/Not Applicable," compared to 10.9% of men, which may suggest a gap in engagement or information access regarding these issues among women. This distribution of responses highlights the need for targeted efforts to increase both the candidacy and public support for women in governance roles, along with promoting societal awareness of gender equality. In addition, the findings also show a gap in the public understanding of the actual nuances of gender inequality and the underlying reasons that hinder women's participation in public life and elected positions. Women's participation in public life cannot be fully achieved without a deeper understanding and mentality shift within the general populace.

FAMILY PLANNING



The data indicated a strong consensus in favor of accessible family planning, with 87.3% of respondents supporting ready access to birth control measures. This perspective was slightly more prevalent among women, with 89.3% in favor compared to 84.7% of men. A minority,

6.3% overall, oppose access to family planning, with slightly more men (7.7%) than women (5.2%) expressing this view. Support across genders was observed for access to family planning, reflecting progressive attitudes towards reproductive health rights. Age group analysis showed similar trends, with overall high support across the groups, with the 26-35 age group having the highest support (89.9%) for it. The highest disagreement was stated by 65+ respondents at 10.7%. Small but notable difference in acceptance levels between men and women suggesting the need for continuous efforts to ensure access to reproductive health services.

Attitudes to Family Planning

	2011	2019	2024
Support for ready access to birth control measures	89%	91%	87.3%

The comparison of public support for family planning and access to birth control measures from 2019 to 2024 showed a consistent trend towards favoring reproductive health rights. In 2019, an impressive 91.2% of respondents supported access to birth control, with even stronger backing from women at 94%. This level of support was slightly higher than the 89.3% recorded in 2011, indicating a stable commitment to reproductive rights over the years. By 2024, support for accessible family planning remained robust, with 87.3% of respondents endorsing easy access to birth control measures. The findings reflect a strong consensus across genders in favor of reproductive health rights and family planning, highlighting progressive

attitudes towards women's autonomy in reproductive decisions while also revealing a small but notable gender gap in acceptance levels.

Perception about Abortion

In the Maldives, abortion is legally restricted except under specific circumstances, and access to safe abortion remains a pressing issue within the broader context of sexual and reproductive health rights. According to the UNFPA report on "Efficiency of Sexual and Reproductive Health Spending in the Maldives," there are significant challenges in ensuring adequate health spending and resources for reproductive health services.¹⁹ This gap highlights a need for more comprehensive approaches to reproductive health, including preventive care, public awareness, and support for women's health needs.

KNOW ANYONE WHO DID AN ABORTION

19.2%

Respondents knew someone who has done an abortion



In the current survey, 19.2% of respondents personally knew someone who has had an abortion, an increase from 15.9% in 2011 and 15.7% in 2019. More women (22%) indicated knowing a person who has had an abortion compared to of

men (15.7%). A significant majority, 71.5%, reported not knowing anyone in this situation. Additionally, 8.1% of respondents answered, "Don't Know/Not Applicable," with men (11.3%) being more uncertain or finding the question less applicable than women (5.7%). These results suggest a gendered difference in awareness or openness regarding experiences related to abortion outside legal conditions, with women somewhat more likely to know someone who has undergone this experience.

Know anyone who did an Abortion

	Male	Female	Total
Yes	15.7%	22.0%	19.2%
No	71.7%	71.2%	71.5%
Refuse	1.4%	1.0%	1.2%
DK/NA	11.3%	5.7%	8.1%

Furthermore, the survey inquired into the circumstances in which people believed abortion was justified.

¹⁹ Abegunde, D., United Nations Population Fund, & Nacken, R. (2016). Efficiency of Sexual and Reproductive Health Spending in Maldives (A. Stanciole, A. Sibenaler, S. Ibrahim, S. Hameed, & R. Brandrup, Eds.). United Nations Population

Fund. https://maldives.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Efficiency_of_Sexual%26Reproductive_Health_Spendin_g_in_Maldives.pdf

ABORTION CIRCUMSTANCES

88.3%

Supports abortion when the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother



79.8%

Supports abortion if the pregnancy threatens the life of the baby

The survey results indicated a notable level of acceptance for abortion in specific circumstances in the Maldives, particularly when the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother (88.3%) and when it threatens the life of the baby (79.8%). However, these two factors represent the only scenarios that garnered substantial acceptance among respondents. Women showed slightly higher support for abortion in cases threatening the mother's life (93%) compared to men (82.4%). Similarly, for the life of the baby, 85.5% of women favor legalizing abortion, versus 72.6% of men.

This does not imply a broad approval for abortion, as support drops significantly for other circumstances, such as cases of birth defects (31%) or pregnancies resulting from rape (24%) or based on the mother's marital status or personal choice, which received minimal support (10.1% and 13%, respectively). Respondents aged in between 56 to 65 years displayed the highest disagreement for specific circumstances like the pregnancy being

the result of rape (70.50%) and the mother being unmarried (85.20%).

Notably, responses differed markedly when it comes to the mother's choice to abort, with only 10.9% of women in favor, contrasting with 15.5% of men. This disparity highlights gender-based variations in attitudes towards women's reproductive rights, reflecting broader societal views on the role of women in making decisions about their own bodies. This brings to light the significance of creating policies and advocacy initiatives that uphold women's rights and bodily autonomy, allowing individuals to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

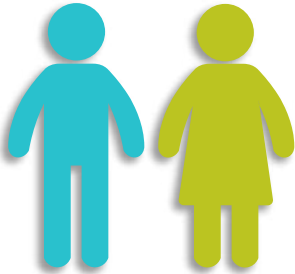
Younger respondents, particularly the 18-25 age group, demonstrated higher levels of agreement with abortion in certain areas; the pregnancy threatening the life of the mother (83.40%), the pregnancy being the result of rape (37.7%) and the mother being under the age of maturity (27.90%). In contrast, the respondents above 65 years tended to be against abortions in circumstances where husband chooses to abort (84%) and other sensitive contexts. Overall, these patterns highlighted that younger populations were more supportive towards abortion in comparison to the older age groups showing a shift in attitudes in younger generations in regard to health complications and social societal issues.

Urban respondents tended to support abortion legality more than the outer-island respondents, particularly when concerning the life of the mother (86.2% urban vs. 90.3% outer islands) and the life of the baby (74.8% urban vs. 84.6% outer islands). These findings illustrate not only the complexities surrounding the issue of

abortion in the Maldives but also the influence of gender and cultural norms on public opinion regarding reproductive rights.

This limited approval highlights the complexities and restrictions surrounding public attitudes towards abortion rights, suggesting that while there is some recognition of specific life-threatening situations, there remains a prevailing hesitance to endorse broader legal access to abortion.

A GOOD WIFE SHOULD ALWAYS OBEYS HER HUSBAND EVEN IF SHE DISAGREES
73.3% 76.7%



Agree and Strongly Agree

The survey results revealed significant insights into societal attitudes toward marital dynamics and gender roles. A significant number of respondents (75.1%) agreed that a good wife always obeys her husband even if she disagrees, where 33.5% strongly agreed. This demonstrates a prevailing belief in traditional gender roles, suggesting that many continue to view obedience as a virtue in marital relationships. 34.7% of male respondents and 32.5% of female respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 38.6% of male respondents and 44.2% of female respondents expressed agreement.

Among the respondents between 18-25 years, 59.6% agreed with this notion, showing inclination towards traditional views although less in comparison to other

age groups. Support increased to 67.8% in the 26-35 age group and further rises to 78.6% among those aged 36-55, reflecting a strong adherence to traditional gender roles. This belief was further strengthened at 86.6% among respondents aged 56-65 and reaches an overwhelming 90.7% in the 65 and older group, indicating deep-rooted acceptance of these views. Overall, older respondents were significantly more likely to endorse traditional beliefs about marital obedience, while younger respondents showed less agreement, suggesting a gradual shift in societal attitudes. Among urban respondents, 78.4% agreed with this notion, indicating a significant acceptance of traditional views. In contrast, rural respondents showed even stronger support, with 83.4% endorsing the belief in obedience, suggesting that these views were more deeply rooted in rural areas.

A relative minority of respondents (13%) expressed disagreement with the notion that a good wife should always obey her husband with 3.8% strongly disagreeing, indicating a more progressive perspective on gender equality. Overall, the high levels of agreement with the notion that a good wife should obey her husband highlight a persistent adherence to traditional gender norms within the surveyed population. This highlights the need for ongoing efforts to challenge restrictive gender

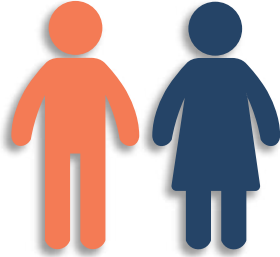
A good woman always obeys her husband even if she disagrees						
	2011		2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly Agree	43.9%	52.4%	30.7%	38.9%	34.7%	32.5%
Agree	30.1%	34.9%	47.7%	46.6%	38.6%	44.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6.3%	3.9%	3.4%	2.4%	5.9%	4.8%
Disagree	7.2%	5.9%	9.9%	8.3%	14.1%	12.2%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	2.5%	4.8%
Refused/Don't Know	12.5%	2.6%	8.1%	3.5%	4.3%	1.6%

Family problems should only be discussed with people in the family						
	2011		2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly Agree	32.8%	31.5%	18.2%	27.1%	29.9%	28.5%
Agree	32.6%	34.3%	38.5%	45%	44.1%	46.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6.7%	6.5%	4.2%	2.9%	3.7%	3.3%
Disagree	23.6%	25.7%	28.1%	21%	17.1%	18.0%
Strongly Disagree	4.4%	0.9%	1.8%	0.4%	2.9%	2.3%
Refused/Don't Know	0.7%	1.1%	9.1%	3.5%	2.3%	1.4%

norms and promote recognition of equality in marriage.

FAMILY PROBLEMS SHOULD ONLY BE DISCUSSED WITH PEOPLE IN THE FAMILY

74% 75%



Agree and Strongly Agree

A strong preference was observed for familial privacy and discretion in handling personal issues. Overall, 74.5% of respondents agreed that family problems should be discussed with people within the family, with 29.1% strongly agreeing and 45.4% agreeing. A smaller percentage of respondents, 17.6%, disagreed with the statement, indicating that there exists a minority that supports the idea of seeking outside perspectives or assistance in family matters. Both genders expressed similar values, with slightly more women (75%) than men (74%) agreeing to the statement. The number of men had increased significantly compared to 2019 (57%).

Among aged 18-25, 80.1% of respondents between 18 to 25 years agreed with the statement, reflecting a strong inclination towards keeping family matters private. In the 26-35 age group, the agreement was slightly lower at 70.2% although overall agreement remained high at. Support was slightly stronger among respondents aged 56-65, with 33.6% strongly agreeing and nearly half (49.7%) agreeing. Disagreement was relatively low across all ages, peaking at 20% in the 36-55 range. Overall, while younger respondents show slightly less support for discussing family issues solely within the family, a significant portion of all age groups endorsed the perspective.

Among urban respondents, 81.6% either strongly agreed or agreed, indicating a strong preference for keeping family matters within the family. In contrast, 76.3% of rural respondents expressed similar support, with 27.9% strongly agreeing and 48.4% agreeing. Disagreement was relatively low across both groups, with 14.1% of urban respondents and 17.1% of rural respondents indicating disagreement. Overall, while both urban and rural respondents show considerable support for discussing family issues privately, the slightly higher agreement among urban

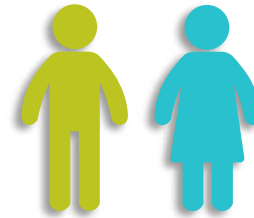
respondents highlights different cultural perspectives on family privacy.

The trends indicate that a significant portion of the population values maintaining family matters within the family circle, reflecting traditional views on privacy and loyalty. Conversely, this may lead to victims of domestic violence to remain in abusive relationships and may hesitate to report such incidents to authorities or support networks.

The statement "It is important for a man to show his wife who is the boss" provided insight into societal attitudes toward gender dynamics within familial relationships. 13.8% of respondents strongly agreed with this notion, while 27.8% agreed with it, indicating a significant acceptance (41.6%) of traditional male authority roles in households.

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR A MAN TO SHOW HIS WIFE WHO IS THE BOSS

43.1% **40.5%**



Agree and Strongly Agree

More male respondents (16.4%) than female respondents (11.8%) strongly agreed with this statement in 2024. However, this marks a substantial decline from previous years where 2005 where 38.4% of male respondents and 38.6% of female respondents strongly agreed to the statement in 2005 which decreased to 27.4% for male respondents and 26.3% for female respondents in 2011. The percentage of respondents who disagreed with the statement has increased significantly over time, with 34.4% now expressing disagreement. This growing dissent suggests a shift in perspective and a greater proportion rejecting the notion of male dominance within marital relationships.

29.2% of respondents aged between 18 to 35 years agreed with the statement which

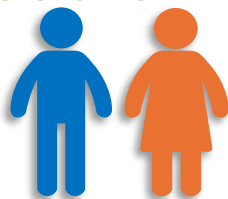
It is important for a man to show his wife who the boss is						
	2011		2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly Agree	27.4%	26.3%	4.2%	4.4%	16.4%	11.8%
Agree	33%	30.8%	4.4%	6%	26.7%	28.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.7%	8.8%	2.6%	0.8%	10.5%	8.1%
Disagree	18.5%	30.4%	57%	67.9%	31.0%	37.3%
Strongly Disagree	1%	1.1%	15.9%	16.8%	11.2%	11.8%
Refused/Don't Know	12.9%	2.6%	15.9%	4.1%	4.3%	2.4%

increased to 43.2% among the respondents between 36-55 age group. The trend peaked in the 56-65 age group, with 62.5% agreeing. Among respondents aged 65 and older, strong agreement reaches 28%, with 42.7% agreeing overall. Overall, while there is a clear acceptance of traditional male authority roles among older respondents, younger respondents tend to exhibit more resistance to this belief, reflecting a complex evolution in societal norms regarding gender roles within families.

Among urban respondents, 8.1% strongly agreed with the notion, while 28.6% expressed agreement. In contrast, rural respondents showed higher support, with 17% strongly agreeing and 32.4% agreeing. Disagreement was relatively common in both groups, with 37.8% of urban respondents and 34.4% of rural respondents indicating disagreement. Strong disagreement was minimal, with 5.9% of urban respondents and 5.8% of rural respondents strongly disagreeing. Overall, while there is a notable acceptance of traditional male authority roles among rural respondents, urban respondents display a more mixed response, reflecting differing cultural perspectives on gender roles within families.

THE WIFE SHOULD OBEY THE HUSBAND IF HE ASKS TO DO ANYTHING THAT IS AGAINST ISLAMIC LAW

85.8% **91.4%**



Disagree and Strongly Disagree

47.2% of respondents disagreed with this assertion, while 38.6% strongly disagreed revealing a strong disapproval among respondents to the statement "The wife should obey the husband if he asks to do anything that is against Islamic law". Together, these figures demonstrated most of the respondents (85.8%) rejected the notion that a wife should comply with any request that contradicts Islam indicating the majority prioritizes adherence to Shariah over the hierarchical demands of marriage. Both men (85.5%) and women (91.4%) disagreed rejecting the idea of obedience in this context, reinforcing the idea that adherence to Islamic law takes precedence over marital authority.

The wife should obey the husband if he asks to do anything that is against Islamic law

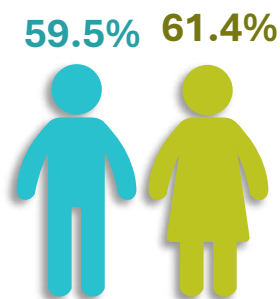
	2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly Agree	4.2%	4.4%	1.1%	1.7%
Agree	4.4%	6%	3.7%	2.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.6%	0.8%	2.7%	0.9%
Disagree	57%	67.9%	47.2%	55.7%
Strongly Disagree	15.9%	16.8%	38.6%	35.7%
DK/NA	15.9%	4.1%	6.8%	3.4%

Disagreement was prevalent across all age groups, with the highest levels of disagreement found in the 36-55 age group (50.4%) and among those aged 56-65 (55%). Strong disagreement was also significant, particularly among younger respondents (43% for ages 18-25) and those aged 26-35 (36.4%). Overall, the

data indicates a clear rejection of the notion that a wife should obey her husband in matters contrary to Islamic law, reflecting a strong commitment to ethical principles and human rights across all age groups.

Among urban respondents, disagreement was prevalent in both groups, with 49.7% of urban respondents and 58.3% of rural respondents indicating disagreement. Strong disagreement was also significant, particularly among urban respondents at 38.9% and rural respondents at 29.9%. Overall, the data indicates a clear rejection of the idea that a wife should obey her husband in matters contrary to Islamic law, reflecting a strong commitment to ethical principles across both urban and rural populations.

THE WIFE CAN CHOOSE HER FRIENDS EVEN IF THE HUSBAND DISAGREES



Disagree Strongly disagree.

The survey results for the statement, *"The wife can choose her friends even if the husband disagrees,"* revealed a prevailing belief in the husband's authority over his wife's choice of friends. The data indicated that 66.1% of respondents either disagreed (46.2%) or strongly disagreed (13.3%) with the notion that a wife's choice of friends should be independent of her husband's approval. This suggests that

societal norms around personal autonomy within marriage may still be restrictive, particularly regarding women's social relationships.

More women (61.4%) disagreed with the idea of wife having autonomy over her choice of friends compared to men (59.5%). However, more men held a stronger dissent with 13.3% of men strongly disagreeing while 9.9% of women strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that a significant portion of both genders continues to endorse the husband's authority over his wife's social decisions, suggesting persistent traditional norms around gender roles within marriage. However, the slightly higher percentage of women disagreeing with the statement may reflect a more critical stance on the issue of autonomy.

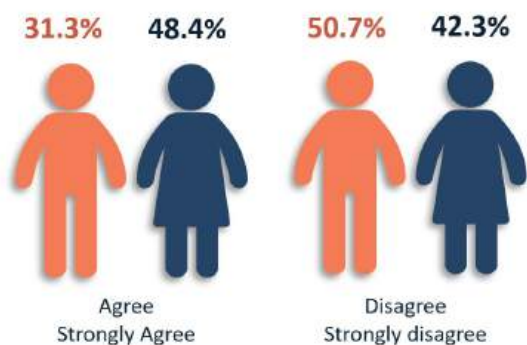
More than half of the respondents aged 18-25 did not support the notion that a wife can choose her friends even if her husband disagrees. Disagreement increased with the increase in age, peaking at 57.3% among those aged 65 and older. Strong disagreement also varied, with the highest at 17.3% in the oldest group.

55.1% of urban respondents and 56.8% of rural respondents expressed disagreement with the statement. Strong disagreement was also notable, particularly among urban respondents at 11.4% and rural respondents at 9%.

These findings indicate that a significant portion of respondents continue to endorse traditional norms regarding a husband's authority over his wife's social decisions, suggesting persistent traditional views on gender roles within marriage. Addressing these entrenched norms is essential to promoting the full

enjoyment of women’s rights in line with international human rights standards.

IT IS A WIFE’S OBLIGATION TO HAVE SEX WITH HER HUSBAND EVEN IF SHE DOESN’T FEEL LIKE



The statement "it is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn’t feel like it" revealed a concerning yet complex societal perspective on marital obligations. More than 40% of the respondents believed that women were obligated to have sex with the husband even she did not feel like it. It is notable that more female respondents supported the statement (48.4%) compared to male respondents (31.3%). Moreover, more women agreed with the statement compared to women who rejected the notion (48.4% vs 42.3%) raising concerns over bodily autonomy within marital settings.

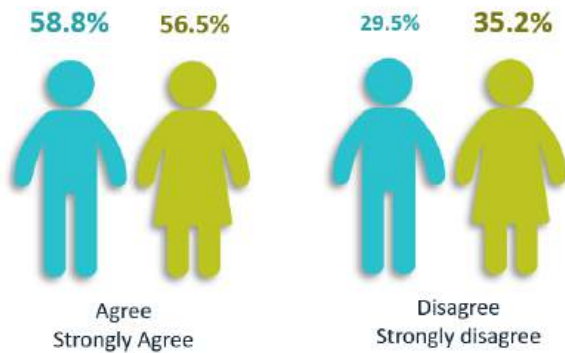
However, there was a notable decrease in the percentage of women strongly agreeing with this notion from 33.3% in

2011 to 23.1% in 2019 to 13.5% this year suggesting a potential shift towards more equitable understandings of marital roles. Yet, these findings still highlight a concerning trend where nearly half of the female respondents agree with this traditional and potentially coercive perspective. The data suggests that societal norms continue to uphold unequal expectations regarding sexual autonomy within marriage, with women themselves being more likely to endorse such obligations than men.

There was an increase in agreement from 29.1% among 18-25 age groups to 34.3% among 26-35 age group. Support continued to rise among those aged 36-55, where 41.7% expressed agreement. The oldest group (65 and above) showed the highest support, with 20% strongly agreeing and 30.7% agreeing. Overall, these findings suggest a significant portion of respondents still endorse traditional views on marital obligations regarding sexual relations, although younger respondents exhibit more resistance to this perspective.

It is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn’t feel like it						
	2011		2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly Agree	26.8%	33.3%	15.1%	23.1%	9.1%	13.5%
Agree	28.1%	37.7%	22.9%	36.9%	22.2%	34.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.8%	3.5%	5.7%	2.1%	9.6%	6.0%
Disagree	20.8%	24.3%	34.6%	26.4%	37.7%	30.7%
Strongly Disagree	1.4%	5.5%	7.3%	4.1%	13.0%	11.6%
Refused/Don’t Know	13.2%	4.1%	14.3%	7.4%	8.4%	3.4%

IF A MAN MISTREATS HIS WIFE OTHERS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY SHOULD INTERVENE



Among urban respondents, only 3.8% strongly agreed, while 29.7% agreed with the notion. In contrast, rural respondents showed significantly higher support, with 15.1% strongly agreeing and 37.1% agreeing. Disagreement was prevalent in both groups, with 38.4% of urban respondents and 30.1% of rural respondents indicating disagreement with the statement. Strong disagreement was also notable, particularly among urban respondents at 8.1%, compared to 5.5% in rural areas. Overall, these findings indicate that while there is some support for traditional views on marital obligations regarding sexual relations, a significant portion of both urban and rural populations expresses disagreement, reflecting a shift in attitudes toward marital intimacy and consent.

The survey results regarding the belief that "if a man mistreats his wife, others outside the family should intervene" presented an insightful view of societal attitudes towards domestic violence and the role of community in addressing such issues. Although 57.6% of respondents agreed with this statement, the fact that over one-third of respondents disagreed raises important concerns.

Both genders agreed that others outside the family should intervene if a man mistreats his wife, with slightly more men (58.9%) stating so compared to women (56.6%). However, more women (37.8%) expressed opposition to outside intervention than men (30.8%), indicating that more women hold traditional beliefs regarding family privacy and the sanctity of marital relations.

Data from the previous RSL Surveys indicates a decline in strong agreement over the years. In 2005, 41.4% of male respondents and 39.2% of female respondents strongly agreed that outside intervention was necessary. By 2019, these figures had dropped to 18.2% for male respondents and 20.2% for female respondents pointing towards a growing recognition of the need for intervention in cases of domestic abuse, yet the data also

If a man mistreats his wife, others outside the family should intervene						
	2011		2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Strongly Agree	20.1%	19.9%	18.2%	20.2%	18.5%	17.0%
Agree	30.4%	34.6%	40.9%	35.6%	40.3%	39.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.3%	5.2%	3.9%	2.2%	5.3%	3.7%
Disagree	27.2%	34.1%	21.6%	32.8%	24.2%	31.5%
Strongly Disagree	2.1%	3.5%	3.9%	4.9%	6.6%	6.3%
Refused/Don't Know	13%	2.6%	11.5%	4.2%	5%	2%

highlights the challenges that remain in changing deeply ingrained societal beliefs.

The youth population aged between 18-35 years had the lowest agreement rate (46.1%), warranting for further exploration into the underlying reasons for the relatively low level of agreement among this age group. Among those aged 36-55, agreement rises to 62.1%, with the trend continuing as the age increases. The oldest group (65 and above) also showed substantial support, with 20% strongly agreeing and 49.3% agreeing.

Urban respondents showed higher support for intervention (61.1%) compared to 55.1% of respondents from the outer islands. Disagreement was present in both groups, with 26.5% of urban respondents and 32.2% of rural respondents indicating disagreement. Overall, these findings indicate that a substantial portion of both urban and rural populations supports the idea that outside intervention is necessary when a man mistreats his wife, reflecting an increasing awareness of domestic issues and the importance of community involvement.

Hitting Wife/Husband

The overwhelming majority of respondents, regardless of gender, strongly disagreed that a man has a valid

reason to physically harm his wife in various situations.

SHE DOES NOT COMPLETE HER HOUSEWORK TO HIS SATISFACTION



HE DOESN'T COMPLETE HOUSEWORK TO HER SATISFACTION

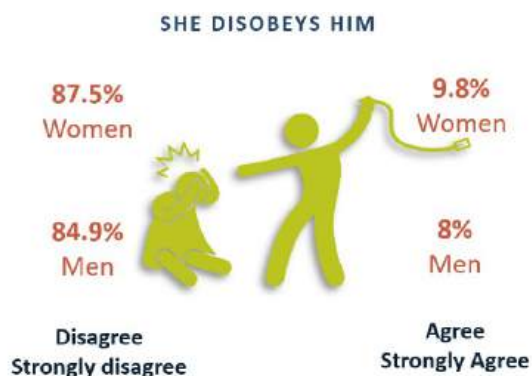


The majority of respondents felt that failing to complete housework was not a good justification for hitting either the husband (94.9%) or the wife (94.6%). A higher percentage of men considered this a justifiable reason for hitting the husband (3%) and the wife (2.7%), whereas significantly fewer women shared this view, with only 1.4% agreeing. There was a decrease in the number of respondents from 2019 (4.5% vs 2%), who believed not completing housework was situation to an

	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.82%	2.38%	2.36%	0.7%	0.1%	0.4%
Agree	1.56%	2.52%	2.18%	2.0%	1.3%	1.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.30%	0.56%	0.82%	1.8%	0.4%	1.0%
Disagree	66.67%	68.72%	67.85%	58.2%	63.1%	60.9%
Strongly Disagree	21.09%	22.16%	21.71%	34%	33.9%	33.9%
Refused	0.26%	0.14%	0.18%	1.1%	0.3%	0.6%
DK/NA	7.29%	3.51%	4.90%	2.3%	0.9%	1.5%

Justification for men hitting wife, if she disobeys him						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.82%	2.38%	2.36%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%
Agree	1.56%	2.18%	2.18%	6.8%	8.7%	7.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.30%	2.52%	0.82%	2.7%	1.4%	2%
Disagree	66.67%	0.56%	67.85%	54.3%	58.6%	56.7%
Strongly Disagree	21.09%	68.72%	21.71%	30.6%	28.9%	29.7%
Refused	0.26%	22.16%	0.18%	1.1%	0.3%	0.6%
DK/NA	7.29%	0.14%	4.90%	3.4%	1.0%	2.1%

acceptable reason to hit their spouse. At a combined 2.6% agreement for men hitting his wife and 4.7% agreement for women hitting her husband, the youngest age group showed the highest level of agreement for this statement.



Although a higher portion of respondents did not agree that disobedience justified physical violence against a spouse, a significant number of respondents still maintained that such behavior could be warranted. Specifically, 9% of participants

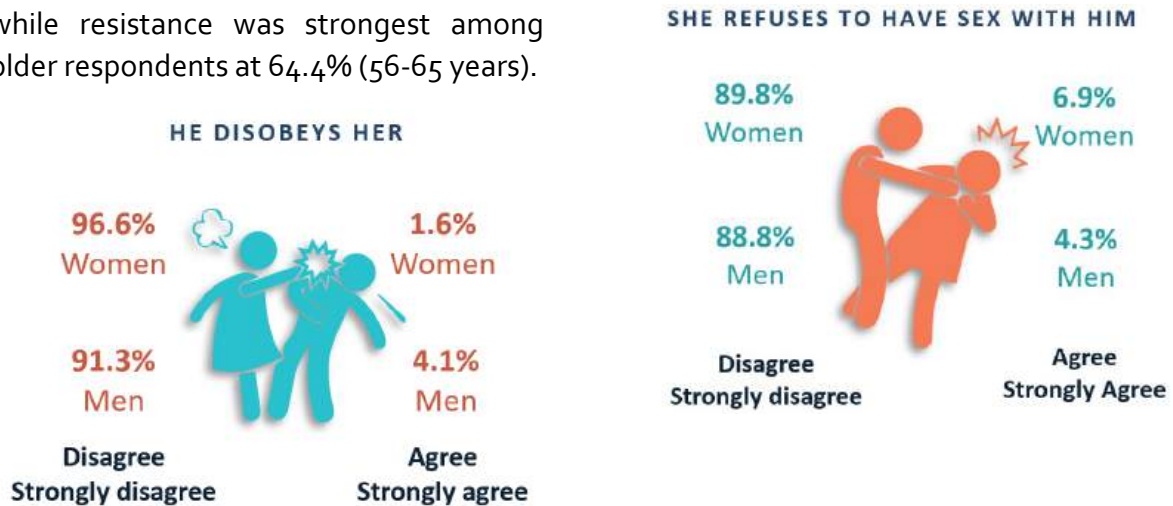
felt that a wife's disobedience could justify hitting her, compared to only 3% of respondents who held the same view regarding a husband. Furthermore, the data revealed that a higher percentage of women (9.8%) considered disobedience a valid reason for hitting a wife, while only 1.5% believed it justified hitting a husband. This contrast highlights the existing patriarchal values that emphasize obedience within marital relationships.

The 26-35 age group showed the highest agreement (7.8%) regarding hitting a wife if she disobeys her husband, while strong opposition was observed among older age groups at 57% (36-55 years) and 57% (56-65 years). Similarly, hitting a husband if he disobeys his wife had generally low agreement, though the 26-35 age group had a slightly higher response at 4.6%,

Justification for women hitting her husband, if he does not complete housework						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.82%	1.68%	1.82%	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%
Agree	1.82%	0.84%	1.18%	2.1%	1.1%	1.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.82%	66.34%	0.82%	1.4%	0.4%	0.9%
Disagree	64.06%	23.56%	65.4%	57.5%	65.8%	62.1%
Strongly Disagree	22.92%	23.56%	23.25%	35.1%	31.5%	33.1%
Refused	0.52%	1.26%	1.09%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%
DK/NA	7.03%	60.3%	6.45%	2.3%	0.7%	1.4%

Justification for men hitting wife, if she refuse to have sex with him						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.56%	3.23%	2.72%	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%
Agree	4.17%	5.19%	4.81%	3.6%	6.0%	4.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.34%	0.84%	1.45%	2.0%	1.1%	1.5%
Disagree	64.32%	65.08%	64.58%	55.3%	62.1%	59.0%
Strongly Disagree	20.31%	20.76%	20.62%	33.5%	27.7%	30.2%
Refused	0.26%	0.56%	0.45%	1.6%	0.6%	1.0%
DK/NA	7.03%	4.35%	5.36%	3.4%	1.7%	2.4%

while resistance was strongest among older respondents at 64.4% (56-65 years).



The percentage of respondents who believed that disobedience justified hitting a wife has doubled since 2019, rising from 4.5% to 9%. This trend indicates an urgent need for targeted advocacy aimed at promoting gender equality to address and challenge the societal beliefs surrounding marital relationships.

Although the number of respondents were comparatively less, a significant number of respondents believed refusing to have sex with your spouse was an acceptable reason to hit your spouse. More respondents deemed it a justifiable reason to hit a wife (5.7%) compared to hitting a husband (2.7%) for the same reason. Specifically, more women (6.9%) considered it acceptable to hit a wife in comparison to hitting the husband (2.1%)

Justification for women hitting her husband, if he disobeys her						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.56%	1.54%	1.63%	1.4%	0.1%	2.0%
Agree	2.08%	2.52%	2.36%	2.7%	1.4%	1.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.08%	0.84%	1.27%	1.4%	0.7%	61.9%
Disagree	63.80%	64.3%	64.03%	57.5%	65.7%	32.2%
Strongly Disagree	22.92%	23%	22.89%	33.8%	30.9%	0.5%
Refused	0.78%	1.40%	1.27%	0.7%	0.3%	1.6%
DK/NA	6.77%	6.31%	6.54%	2.5%	0.9%	1.6%

Justification for women hitting her husband, if he refuses to have sex						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	2.08%	2.24%	2.27%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%
Agree	2.34%	1.96%	2.09%	2.7%	1.8%	2.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.34%	0.42%	1.09%	1.2%	0.6%	0.9%
Disagree	62.5%	64.38%	63.58%	57.8%	65.4%	61.9%
Strongly Disagree	22.92%	23%	22.89%	33.8%	30.9%	32.2%
Refused	0.52%	1.40%	1.18%	1.1%	0.1%	0.6%
DK/NA	7.29%	6.59%	6.90%	2.7%	0.9%	1.7%

Furthermore, a slightly greater number of men (4.3%) found it more acceptable to hit a wife for refusing sex than to hit a husband (3.4%).



The 56-65 age group showed the highest agreement at 2.0% for hitting the wife if she refuses sex, while disagreement was dominant across all groups. Conversely, for a husband refusing sex with his wife, the 56-65 age group had the higher agreement rate at 5.37%.



spouse depicted varying perceptions across genders. Fewer number of respondents believed it was justifiable to hit their spouse if they were asked about having boyfriends or girlfriends. However, more respondents were inclined towards it being a more acceptable reason to hit the wife (4.6%) than hitting the husband (3.4%). Moreover, more respondents believed it was more acceptable to hit the wife (5.2%) than the husband (3.2%) if suspected of cheating, a view shared by both male and female respondents.



The effects of infidelity and questions surrounding infidelity on violence against

Justification for men hitting wife, if she asks him whether he has other girlfriends						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.30%	2.66%	2.36%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%
Agree	2.60%	3.65%	3.27%	2.7%	4.4%	3.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.56%	0.28%	0.73%	1.6%	1.3%	1.4%
Disagree	65.89%	67.74%	66.94%	57.5%	62.5%	60.2%
Strongly Disagree	20.57%	20.90%	20.71%	33.3%	29.1%	30.9%
Refused	0.26%	0.42%	0.36%	1.1%	0.4%	0.7%
DK/NA	7.81%	4.35%	5.63%	2.8%	1.4%	2.1%

There was an evident change in perception in an instance of a spouse being suspected of being unfaithful. Similar trends were observed where more respondents believed it was more acceptable to hit the wife (8.7%) than the husband (6.3%). In contrast to other instances, more men (7.3%) believed it justified hitting the wife than women. Furthermore, more women thought hitting the wife was more acceptable (6.7%) than the husband (3.8%) in the same instance of finding out they were unfaithful.

The 18-25 age group presented the highest level of agreement at 5.3% for a man hitting his wife on suspicion of being unfaithful, while clear rejection was most prominent among the 26-35 age group at 61.8%. For women suspecting their husbands of infidelity, the 26-35 age group showed the highest support at 4.03%, but disagreement was strong across all groups, with 60.0% of respondents aged 65 and older rejecting the idea.

There was a notable shift in perceptions when asked if hitting was acceptable in

response to infidelity. A greater proportion of respondents indicated that it was justifiable to physically assault a spouse in cases of infidelity in comparison to being asked about girlfriends/boyfriends or in the instances of suspected infidelity. Specifically, a higher percentage of respondents viewed it as more acceptable to hit a wife (8.7%) compared to a husband (6.3%).

Justification for men hitting wife, if he SUSPECTS that she is unfaithful						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.56%	2.52%	2.27%	0.9%	0.6%	0.7%
Agree	3.91%	4.63%	4.36%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.04%	0.42%	0.73%	2.0%	1.6%	1.7%
Disagree	65.89%	67.46%	66.76%	56.8%	62.3%	59.8%
Strongly Disagree	20.05%	20.48%	20.25%	31.7%	28.8%	30.3%
Refused	0.26%	0.42%	0.36%	1.4%	0.4%	0.9%
DK/NA	7.29%	4.07%	5.27%	2.8%	2.0%	2.4%

Justification for men hitting wife, if he FINDS OUT she has been unfaithful						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	2.34%	3.51%	3.27%	2.0%	1.7%	1.8%
Agree	9.11%	8.84%	8.99%	7.3%	6.7%	6.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.34%	0.98%	1.45%	2.7%	1.8%	2.2%
Disagree	59.11%	62.55%	61.13%	52.2%	59.2%	55.1%
Strongly Disagree	18.75%	19.21%	18.98%	31.7%	28.2%	29.7%
Refused	0.52%	0.28%	0.36%	1.4%	0.3%	0.8%
DK/NA	7.81%	4.63%	5.81%	2.8%	2.1%	2.4%

Justification for women hitting her husband, if he asks her whether she has other boyfriends						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.30%	1.68%	1.63%	1.1%	0.1%	0.6%
Agree	1.82%	1.68%	1.73%	2.3%	3.3%	2.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.82%	0.56%	1%	2.0%	0.9%	1.3%
Disagree	65.10%	64.94%	64.85%	57.1%	64.3%	61.1%
Strongly Disagree	22.66%	23.28%	22.98%	34.0%	30.5%	32%
Refused	0.52%	1.26%	1.09%	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%
DK/NA	6.77%	6.59%	6.72%	2.7%	0.9%	1.7%

Justification for women hitting husband, if she SUSPECTS that he is unfaithful						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	1.56%	1.82%	1.82%	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%
Agree	2.08%	2.24%	2.18%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.82%	0.70%	1.09%	2.1%	0.9%	1.4%
Disagree	63.54%	63.96%	63.67%	56.2%	64.7%	60.9%
Strongly Disagree	22.92%	23.42%	23.16%	34.3%	30.2%	32.0%
Refused	1.04%	1.26%	1.27%	0.7%	0.4%	0.5%
DK/NA	7.03%	6.59%	6.81%	3.0%	1.1%	2.0%

Justification for women hitting her husband, if she knows he is unfaithful						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	2.08%	2.24%	2.27%	1.4%	1.6%	1.5%
Agree	6.51%	3.93%	4.90%	6.0%	3.8%	4.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.86%	0.56%	1.36%	2.1%	1.1%	1.6%
Disagree	58.85%	62.55%	61.04%	54.1%	63.8%	59.5%
Strongly Disagree	21.61%	23%	22.43%	32.6%	28.5%	30.3%
Refused	0.78%	1.26%	1.18%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%
DK/NA	7.29%	6.45%	6.81%	2.8%	0.7%	1.7%

Additionally, a gender disparity emerged, with a larger percentage of men (7.3%) endorsing the justification for hitting a wife than women. A greater number of women perceived hitting a wife as more acceptable (6.7%) than hitting a husband (3.8%) in the context of discovering infidelity.

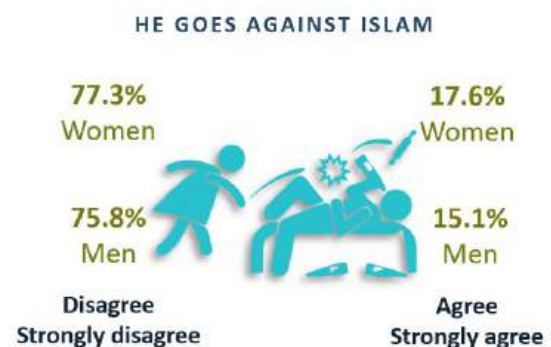
The trend suggests that women are often subjected to different expectations in marital relationships, revealing underlying inequalities. Hence, it is essential to increase awareness about the implications of gender inequality within marriage, including its impact on violence against women.

A notable disparity emerged when respondents were queried about whether a spouse going against Islamic principles constituted as justifiable reason for violence. Although deviation from religious principles was not inherently gendered, a significant proportion of participants perceived hitting the wife (23.8%) as more acceptable than similar actions directed toward a husband (16.4%). This suggests that the justification for violence is influenced not only by existing societal beliefs of the role of a wife, but also by broader cultural attitudes.

Beliefs in men and women exhibited notable discrepancies where more women

(27.2%) believed it was acceptable to hit the wife in these circumstances compared to men (20.3%). Moreover, significantly more female respondents believed going against religion principle warranted for violence against the wife (27.2%) than the husbands (17.6%).

Agreement with this statement was relatively similar across all age groups. The highest was 36-55 age group with a combined agreement at (25.2%) justifying hitting the wife if she goes against Islam, while its comparably lower at 16.9% for hitting a husband if he did the same. At 19.2% the youngest age group (18-25) has the highest agreement for hitting a husband if he goes against Islam.



Justification for men hitting wife, if she goes against Islam						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	7.55%	7.85%	7.90%	7.3%	5.5%	6.3%
Agree	13.28%	22.02%	18.89%	13.0%	21.7%	17.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.08%	0.98%	1.45%	3.4%	2.3%	2.8%
Disagree	49.4%	47.27%	47.87%	44.0%	46.9%	45.5%
Strongly Disagree	17.45%	16.97%	17.08%	25.1%	20.6%	22.6%
Refused	0%	0.42%	0.27%	1.4%	0.3%	0.8%
DK/NA	10.16%	4.49%	6.54%	5.9%	2.8%	4.2%

Justification for women hitting her husband, if he goes against Islam						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	5.47%	5.47%	5.54%	5.5%	3.8%	4.6%
Agree	10.94%	11.08%	11.08%	9.6%	13.8%	11.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.86%	1.12%	1.73%	3.2%	2.1%	2.6%
Disagree	51.04%	53.44%	52.41%	49.3%	53.2%	51.5%
Strongly Disagree	19.79%	20.76%	20.35%	26.5%	24.1%	25.2%
Refused	0.78%	1.54%	1.36%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
DK/NA	9.11%	6.59%	7.54%	5.2%	2.4%	3.6%

Justification for men hitting wife, if she beats the children						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	3.65%	3.37%	3.72%	2.8%	2.0%	2.4%
Agree	9.11%	7.99%	8.36%	8.5%	8.4%	8.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1.82%	0.98%	1.27%	2.7%	1.8%	2.2%
Disagree	19.01%	18.93%	18.89%	51.3%	59.5%	55.8%
Strongly Disagree	58.07%	63.81%	61.58%	29.7%	26.5%	28.0%
Refused	0.78%	0.28%	0.45%	1.2%	0.3%	0.7%
DK/NA	7.55%	4.63%	5.72%	3.7%	1.6%	2.5%

The justification of violence against a spouse was notably influenced by the act of beating children. A significant percentage of both men (11.3%) and women (10.4%) believed that it was acceptable to hit a wife if she had previously struck the children. In contrast, a smaller proportion of respondents supported the idea of a husband being justified in this behavior, with 7.7% of men and 7.5% of women agreeing with this perspective which may be reflective of the expectation of motherhood and the caregiving roles associated with women.



Overall, while the majority of respondents, across both genders, do not endorse physical violence as a justified response to these marital issues, the presence of a small percentage who agreed suggests a need for continued education and awareness. The findings indicate a potential shift toward more open views in marital dynamics, particularly concerning women's rights and autonomy.

The survey results provided significant insights into attitudes toward domestic violence, revealing notable gender disparities. While a majority of respondents asserted that there were no circumstances under which one should hit their spouse, a significant minority expressed disagreement.

Specifically, 22.4% of respondents indicated that they believe there may be

A husband should never hit his wife under any circumstances						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	56.25%	55.54%	55.68%	44.5%	50.5%	47.8%
Agree	14.06%	21.88%	19.26%	24.7%	26.1%	25.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.99%	4.07%	4.81%	3.0%	2.7%	2.8%
Disagree	14.84%	11.92%	12.90%	19.0%	13.8%	16.1%
Strongly Disagree	2.86%	2.81%	2.82%	6.2%	6.4%	6.3%
Refused	0.52%	1.12%	0.91%	0.9%	0.3%	0.6%
DK/NA	5.47%	2.66%	3.63%	1.6%	0.3%	0.9%

circumstances where a man hitting his wife could be justified, while 20.5% suggested that similar circumstances might exist for a woman hitting her husband indicating that both genders have, to some extent, rationalized violence in certain situations. However, the data revealed that a higher percentage of men were more likely to endorse justifications for violence against their spouses. 25.2% of men believed there were circumstances in which hitting a wife was warranted, compared to 20.2% of women who held this view. Similarly, 22.6% of men justified in hitting the husbands, whereas 18.7% of women agreed with this perspective. These findings suggest a troubling trend wherein men are more likely to condone violence against their spouses, particularly against the wife.



Over the years, there has been a notable improvement in societal attitudes towards domestic violence. In 2005, only 58.5% of survey respondents believed that a man should never hit a woman; this figure increased to 61.5% by 2011, indicating a

gradual rise in awareness of domestic violence. By 2019, the percentage of respondents who deemed it unacceptable for a husband to hit his wife had risen significantly to 74.9%.

In response to the increasing recognition of domestic violence against men, in 2019, a question was added to assess the justifications for women hitting their husbands. The percentage of respondents who agreed that a woman should not hit her husband remained stable at 76%.

This highlights a vital area for intervention, indicating the necessity for ongoing educational initiatives and awareness campaigns that emphasize the principle that violence is never an acceptable resolution to marital conflict.

A married man/woman can refuse sex with wife/husband

Notable gender distinctions in attitudes toward a married person's right to refuse sex was observed, reflecting evolving societal norms on autonomy within marital relationships. While 60.8% of respondents agreed that a woman could refuse sex with her husband if she didn't want to, 31.7% disagreed, showing improvement from the 42.3% who disagreed in 2019. In contrast, 70.6% supported a man's right to refuse sex

A woman should never hit her husband under any circumstances						
	2019			2024		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Agree	60.16%	55.82%	57.31%	46.1%	52.5%	49.6%
Agree	12.76%	23.14%	19.62%	26.9%	26.7%	26.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.21%	1.96%	3.09%	2.0%	1.4%	1.7%
Disagree	14.58%	10.52%	11.90%	16.2%	12.9%	14.4%
Strongly Disagree	2.86%	3.09%	3%	6.4%	5.8%	6.1%
Refused	0.26%	0.98%	0.73%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%
DK/NA	4.17%	4.49%	4.36%	1.6%	0.3%	0.9%

simply because he didn't want to, with a minimal gender gap 70.8% men and 70.4% women agreeing, indicating a slightly stronger societal acceptance of male autonomy in this context.

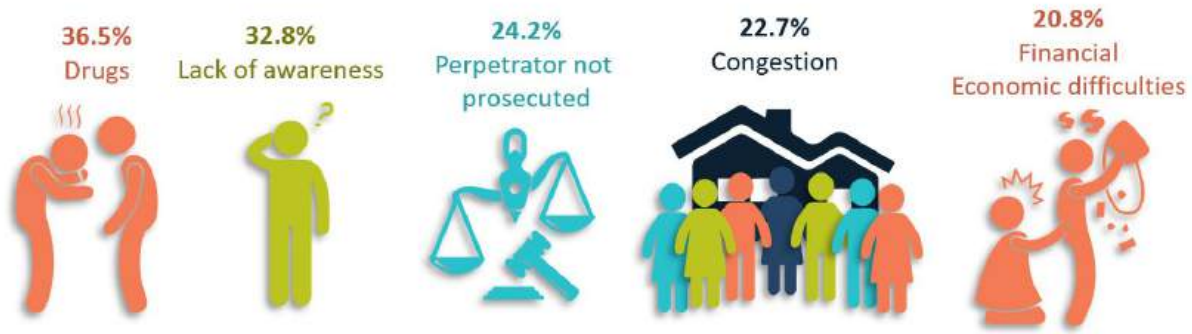
Health, religious beliefs, intoxication, and mistreatment were widely acknowledged as valid reasons for refusing sex for both men and women. For instance, 83.4% agreed that a woman could refuse sex if she were sick, identical to the percentage supporting a man's right under the same condition. Similarly, 84.5% and 85.0% affirmed that women and men, respectively, could refuse sex if their spouse had a sexually transmitted disease. Intoxication and requests contrary to religious beliefs also saw near-equal support for both genders, with 81.9% agreeing in the case of a woman and 82.0% in the case of a man.

However, gender disparities become apparent when examining more personal and subjective reasons. 36.6% of women and 25.4% of men stated that women cannot refuse sex even if they do not want to. Even in cases of mistreatment, 15.5% of women and 12.3% of men believed women cannot refuse, and similar disparities persist regarding situations involving a sexually transmitted disease (10.6% of women versus 7.3% of men). These findings suggest that while autonomy in marital relationships is supported broadly, societal expectations for women remain more restrictive, potentially tied to traditional views of marital roles.



The findings highlighting greater disagreement with a woman's right to refuse sex based on personal choice alone suggests lingering biases, with male preferences appearing more readily accepted. Addressing these gaps is essential to fostering greater equality in intimate and personal decision-making within marital relationships.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACTORS



Domestic violence is a pervasive issue that affects individuals and families across the globe, including in the Maldives. The societal norms and cultural dynamics often exacerbate the problem, as many victims face stigma and isolation, making it difficult for them to seek help. The Maldivian government and various CSOs are increasingly focusing on raising awareness and providing support services for victims, yet significant challenges remain in addressing the root causes of violence and ensuring accountability for perpetrators. Efforts to educate communities about healthy relationships and conflict resolution are essential in combating this pervasive issue and fostering a safer environment for all individuals. The recent survey indicates a positive increase in awareness and acknowledgment of domestic violence. This could be a positive indicator resulting in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.

Substance abuse emerged as a significant concern, with 36.5% of respondents identifying it as a leading cause of domestic violence. This perception is notably higher among women, who attribute 40.6% of domestic violence cases to drug-related issues, compared to

31.3% of men. This gendered perspective underlines a broader awareness of how substance abuse can aggravate tensions and lead to violence within households.

Lack of awareness ranked as the second most leading factor (32.8%) indicating a critical gap in knowledge about healthy relationship dynamics and conflict resolution strategies with a similar consensus among both genders. 24.2% of the respondents felt that perpetrators do not face consequences for their actions with more women holding this opinion (28.1%) than men (19.8%). More women being victims of domestic violence,²⁰ and more women expressing this concern indicates more work was critical to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Housing issues were cited by 22.7% of respondents, signifying that poor living conditions can contribute to the escalation of domestic violence. The data illustrates the intersection of socio-economic factors and personal safety, as overcrowding can heighten tensions and limit personal space, creating an environment ripe for conflict. Financial and economic difficulties also feature prominently, with 20.8% of respondents citing this issue as a contributing factor to domestic violence. More men felt

²⁰ Family Protection Authority (2023), Annual.Report.8689? page 46 retrieved by

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economic difficulties led to domestic violence (23.3% men and 19% women).

Domestic Violence Factors		
	2019	2024
Drugs	21%	36.5%
Financial Difficulty	14%	20.8%
Perpetrator not Prosecuted	14%	24.2%
Lack of Awareness/Education	12%	32.8%
Congestion	-	22.7%

Notable shifts were observed in public perception regarding domestic violence factors across the years. In 2019, substance abuse was identified by 21% of respondents, indicating a substantial increase in recognition in the recent survey. This may reflect a growing awareness of the issue, particularly among women, who have identified it as a primary cause of domestic violence. Similarly, financial and economic difficulties were cited by 13.8% in 2019, marking a rise in recognition to 20.8% in the latest findings. This shift highlights a heightened sensitivity to the role of economic pressures in fostering violence.

The lack of awareness was reported by 12.3% in 2019, but has now risen to 32.8%, suggesting that community education and outreach efforts may have made an impact, raising awareness of the importance of understanding domestic violence dynamics. Additionally, the perception that criminals do not get prosecuted as a factor rose from 13.8% to 24.2%, indicating an increasing concern about

accountability and the effectiveness of the justice system in dealing with domestic violence perpetrators. This trend may point to a growing demand for systemic change to ensure that victims feel supported and that perpetrators face appropriate consequences.

In summary, the recent findings show an increased awareness of domestic violence factors, particularly regarding substance abuse, financial strain, and accountability gaps. The gender disparities in perceptions highlight areas where targeted interventions can be beneficial. Moreover, there has been a notable shift in public understanding and concern, reflecting the need for ongoing education, support, and systemic reforms to address the root causes of domestic violence effectively.

Know a survivor?

PREVALENCE OF DV (KNOW A SURVIVOR?)



Respondents were asked whether anyone close to them has been a victim of domestic violence. 19.4% of respondents reported that someone close to them, either a relative or close friend, had experienced some form of domestic violence. This indicates that domestic

FORMS OF VIOLENCE



violence is a significant issue impacting personal relationships.

When examining the types of violence experienced, physical abuse was reported by 38.6% of respondents overall with 32.3% of men and 46.4% of women identified it as the form of violence inflicted. This suggests that women are more likely to experience physical abuse compared to men. Verbal abuse and psychological abuse also emerged as significant issues, reported by 26.1% and 29.6% of respondents, respectively. Here, the disparity continues, with 20.7% of men and 31.4% of women reporting verbal abuse, while 20.7% of men and 42.9% of women cited psychological abuse, further highlighting the prevalence of emotional and psychological forms of violence among women.

When considering the types of abuse, it is alarming to note that financial and economic restrictions were cited by 13.9% of respondents, with 20% of women identifying this as a form of violence, compared to only 8.5% of men. This discrepancy points to the often-overlooked aspect of economic control in

abusive relationships, highlighting the need for further awareness and support.

In terms of who the perpetrators in these cases, the majority of the reported cases (58.7%) involved a husband or wife of the victim, reinforcing the notion that domestic violence often occurs within intimate partner relationships. Additionally, 11.4% of respondents indicated that a relative of the victim was the perpetrator, which suggests that violence can also stem from broader familial relationships.



Respondents as victims*

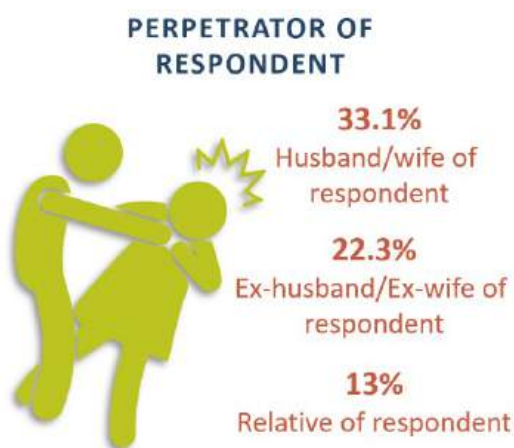
11.1% of respondents reported personally experiencing some form of domestic violence, with 6.8% of men and 14.5% of women indicating they have been victims.

When considering the timeline of these experiences, a considerable percentage reported incidents occurring more than 10 years ago (45.7%). In more recent years, 22.9% experienced violence 5 to 10 years ago, and 19.3% indicated incidents within the last 1 to 5 years. However, 10% of the respondents reported experiencing violence in the past year. This suggests that while domestic violence may be a historical issue for many respondents, it remains a relevant concern for a portion of the population.

In the 2019 survey, a higher percentage of respondents reported violence occurring within the past year (29.7%), indicating a more immediate experience with domestic violence than seen in the recent survey.

spouse, compared to 18.4% of men. Other perpetrators included ex-husbands or ex-wives (22.3%), and relatives (13%). Notably, 27.7% of women reported being abused by an ex-husband or ex-wife, while 7.9% of men cited the same. The survey also indicated that more men (13.2%) were abused by their fathers.

The 2019 survey indicated a similar trend, where most female respondents suffered violence primarily from their husbands, while male respondents reported that former intimate partners were their most common abusers. Interestingly, in the 2019 survey, 11.1% of respondents noted their in-laws as perpetrators, while in the recent survey, 2.2% identified in-laws, showing a decline in reported violence from this group.



Regarding the identity of perpetrators, 33.1% of respondents indicated that their husband or wife was the abuser. 38.6% of women who experienced domestic violence identified their abuser as a

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey.

FORMS OF VIOLENCE FACED BY RESPONDENTS



More than half of the respondents indicated experiencing physical abuse (51.4%) while 59.3% stated psychological abuse. Both men and women reported verbal and physical abuse as the main types of abuse. Notably, a higher percentage of women (20.6%) reported experiencing psychological abuse compared to men (7.9%). Additionally, significant proportions of both women (19.6%) and men (15.8%) disclosed experiences of sexual abuse.

The previous survey reported lower rates of physical abuse at 2.9%, with verbal abuse at 5.7% and sexual abuse at 5%. Here, physical abuse was cited by 4.4% of men and 3% of women. The recent survey reflects an alarming increase in reported physical abuse, highlighting an escalation in domestic violence cases over the years.

There appears to be more awareness of various forms of domestic violence, with a total of 11.1% of respondents acknowledging their personal experience with it. In the 2019 a majority (67.4%) did not know anyone who had experienced domestic violence. However, a larger percentage of women (26.7%) reported knowing a survivor compared to men (15.9%). This shows a

potential increase in awareness and openness about domestic violence issues among respondents in the recent survey. Overall, the findings indicate that domestic violence remains a significant concern, with notable gender disparities in both the experiences of victims and the identity of perpetrators. The prevalence of psychological and emotional abuse, along with economic control, highlights the complexity of domestic violence as an issue that extends beyond physical harm. The increase in self-reported experiences and types of abuse in the recent survey highlights a critical need for continued efforts in prevention and support mechanisms, while also reflecting changes in societal attitudes towards domestic violence over time.

Child rights are a fundamental aspect of human rights, specifically addressing their unique needs and vulnerabilities. While Child Rights Protection Act (Act no.19/2019) and Juvenile Justice Act (Act.18/2019) provide enhanced protections, substantial challenges remain as considerable number of children continue to face discrimination and abuse, including instances of sexual abuse and domestic violence. Addressing these persistent issues necessitates comprehensive and sustained efforts to fully realize the protections and rights afforded under domestic and international standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the Maldives is a party to.

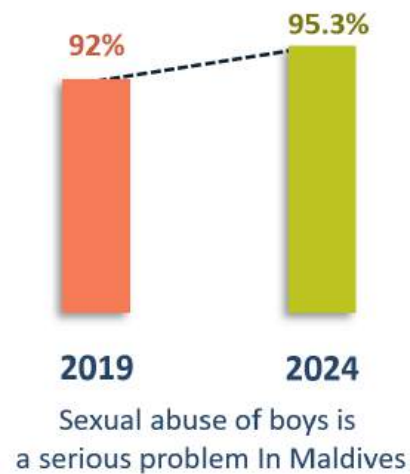
Sexual abuse of Girls and Boys

Sexual Abuse of Boys.



The data indicated that a significant majority of respondents (95.3%) recognize sexual abuse of boys as a serious problem in the Maldives, with an additional 1.4% stating it as a problem, although not of a serious nature. This reflects strong awareness and concern regarding the prevalence and impact of sexual abuse. Notably, this marked an increase in the proportion of respondents who deemed it as a serious problem (92%) compared to 2019.

SEXUAL ABUSE OF BOYS YEARLY TREND



More female respondents (97%) than male respondents (93.1%) had recognised it as a problem marking the highest levels recorded to date regarding the prevalence of the issue. In 2019, 90% of men and 93% of women identified it as a serious problem, an increase from 2011 where 85.9% of men and 97.2% of women acknowledged sexual abuse of boys as a serious issue. The trend suggests a growing awareness and acknowledgment of the issue among men, reflecting a societal shift towards more actively recognizing and addressing the sexual abuse of boys.

Over 90% of all respondents of all age groups (18 to 65+) considered both urban areas (94.7%) and outer islands (95.8%) regarded the sexual abuse of boys a serious problem. This growing awareness reflects a broader societal shift towards acknowledging and addressing the critical issue of sexual abuse, highlighting the importance of continued advocacy and support for victims.

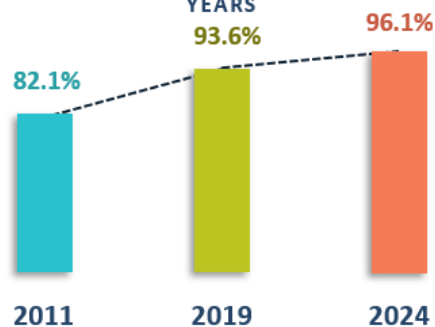
Sexual Abuse of Girls



An overwhelming majority of respondents (96.1%), considered sexual abuse of girls a very serious problem, reflecting a high level of awareness and concern about this critical issue.

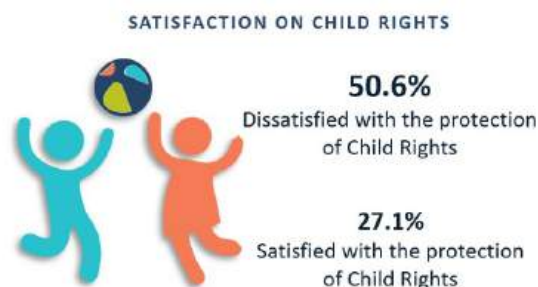
The data since 2011 demonstrated a consistent level of perception of the seriousness of sexual abuse of girls where 96.1% of respondents of 2024 survey considered sexual abuse of girls to be a serious problem compared to 93.6% in 2019 and 82.1% in 2011. This reflects an increase in concern among both genders. In 2024, 93% of men considered sexual abuse of girls to be a serious problem in comparison to 90.4% in 2019. among women, 98.0% of women considered sexual abuse of girls to be serious problem marking a slight increase from 2019 at 95.5%. Additionally, high levels of concern were noted across age groups, with 92.6% of respondents aged 18-25, 96.7% of those aged 26-35, and 96.0% of respondents aged 65 and older recognizing sexual abuse of girls as a serious issue, in both urban and outer island areas. These trends suggest a growing public awareness of the severity of sexual abuse, reflecting broader societal recognition of the need for stronger protection and support for victims, in alignment with the principles of children's rights.

TREND OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF GIRLS OVER THE YEARS



Sexual abuse of boys is
a serious problem In Maldives

Satisfaction on child rights

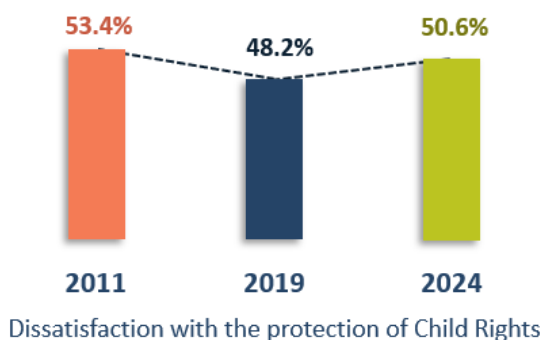


Over 50% of survey respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the protection of child rights within the country, a sentiment which has been relatively consistent since 2011, (48.2% in 2019 and 53.4% in 2011) Notably, more women (57.6%) were dissatisfied compared to men (41.6%), suggesting that gender may influence perceptions and experiences regarding the effectiveness of child rights protections. Furthermore, dissatisfaction levels varied across different age groups; respondents aged 18 to 35 reported the lowest dissatisfaction at 44.6%, while those aged 56 to 65 exhibited the highest dissatisfaction at 68.5%. These findings demonstrate that significant gaps remain in the protection of child rights, even with the introduction of legislative measures.

This situation points to an urgent necessity for focused interventions to tackle these challenges effectively.

In relation to the protection of Child rights			
	2011	2019	2024
Satisfied	30.2%	27.9%	27.1%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5.4%	13.1%	11.3%
Dissatisfied	53.4%	48.2%	50.6%

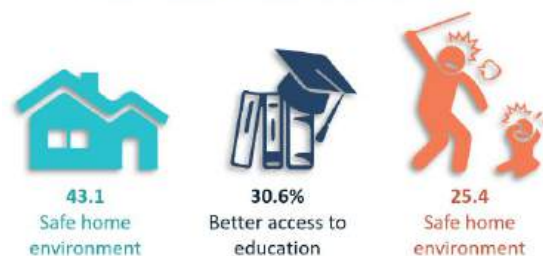
SATISFACTION ON CHILD RIGHTS – TREND ACROSS YEARS



Areas for improvement with regard to child rights

A substantial proportion of respondents (43.1%) identified a safe and secure home environment as a priority area to ensure child protection, emphasizing its fundamental importance in safeguarding various rights. This concern was prevalent among both genders, with a higher percentage of women (47.2%) recognizing it as a priority compared to men (37.9%).

AREAS TO IMPROVE IN CHILD RIGHTS



Furthermore, 30.6% of respondents emphasized the necessity for improved access to education, which has been a consistent concern in the protection of children's rights (20.8% in 2019 and 34.8% in 2011). The prevalence of violence

Areas to Improve in the protection of Child Rights	2011	2019	2024
Safe Home environment	-	-	43.1%
Better access to education	34.80%	20.81%	30.6%
Violence against children	35.20%	12.92%	25.4%
Drugs	23.80%	8.55%	17.7%
Crime and/or gangs	16.50%	6.63%	12.4%
Gender stereotyping/discrimination	16.80%	9.6%	10.1%
Lack of health services			9.5%
Malnutrition	13.20%	7.0%	8.6%
Inadequate sanitation	4.30%	2.9%	4.7%
infant mortality	7.30%	3.2%	
geographic isolation/access to basic services		3.5%	

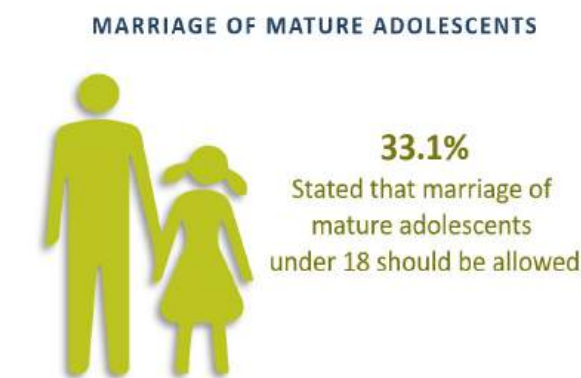
against children was reported by 26.4% of respondents in 2024, 12.9% in 2019 and 35.2% of respondents in 2011 indicating child safety has been a pressing issue among the public throughout the years. 17.7% of respondents highlighted drug-related issues, while 12.4% expressed concerns regarding crimes and gang activities, suggesting that children may be subjected to criminal environments. Other notable issues raised by respondents included gender stereotyping (10.1%), inadequate health services (9.5%), and malnutrition (8.6%).

Attitudes towards marriage of adolescent children *

The Child Rights Protection Act (Act No.19/2019) has brought an absolute prohibition on the marriage of all children under the age of 18. This development gives recognition that children, due to their mental and physical immaturity, will be legally protected from all forms of abuse and safeguarded from any harmful situation.²¹ Despite this positive change, a concerning narrative is prevalent within the society, where some people believe that adolescent children who have reached the age of puberty should be considered “mature” enough to enter into marriage. During the current cycle of RSL, HRCM aimed to assess the prevalence of these specific perceptions and attitudes by incorporating pertinent questions in this regard.

One-third of the respondents (33.1%) stated that adolescent children who have reached puberty/maturity should be

permitted to get married. Notably higher proportion of men (34.7%) supported this position than women (31.8%). A significant proportion of respondents believed that marriage should be allowed for adolescent children who have reached puberty/maturity suggesting a prevailing lack of awareness regarding the vulnerabilities associated with childhood and a significant misconception on maturity.



Should adolescent children under the age of 18 should be allowed to marry?			
	Male	Female	Total
Yes	34.7%	31.8%	33.1%
No	56.6%	64.1%	60.7%
Refuse	1%	1.0%	0.9%
DK/NA	8%	3.1%	5.3%

The respondents who believed adolescents should be allowed to marry increased with age, with the highest number of respondents recorded between 56 to 65 years (38.9%) In contrast, the youngest demographic aged 18 to 25 years (23.8%), demonstrated the lowest level of support for underage marriage suggesting a notable shift in attitudes toward

* This is a new question administered in this year’s survey.

²¹ Child Rights Protection Act (19/2019), article 25

adolescent marriage among the younger population. Furthermore, more respondents from urban areas (58.8%) believed marriage of adolescent children should be allowed compared to respondents from outer islands (48.4%).

Reasons for justifying adolescent marriage



From the respondents who believed adolescents under the age of 18 should be permitted to marry, a substantial proportion of respondents (70%), cited the reason being specified in the religion as the primary justification. Additionally, 36.3% of respondents believed that marriage could decrease the incidence of children born out of wedlock, underscoring the prevailing stigma associated with this issue. Furthermore, 24% of respondents indicated that the marriage of children under 18 could serve as a protective measure for their daughters, reflecting prevailing social norms that view daughters as vulnerable and needing protection from a man. 13.6% of respondents suggested that legal marriage would be a preferable alternative.

Reasons adolescents should marry

	Male	Female	Total
Its is specified in religion	81.5%	60.3%	70.0%
To reduce out of wedlock childbearing	21.5%	31.7%	26.2%
It is better to be legally married	11.8%	18.8%	15.3%
To protect our daughters	13.8%	33.9%	23.9%
Other (specify)	6.7%	4.5%	5.6%

While being specified in the religion was the main rationale for respondents supporting child marriage among both genders, a higher proportion of men (81.5%) cited this reason compared to women (60.3%). Conversely a greater proportion of women (31.7%) compared to men (21.5%) were in favor to reduce the incidence of children born out of wedlock, likely reflecting the heightened societal stigma women encounter regarding out-of-wedlock childbirth. Additionally, a significantly greater number of women also believed that child marriage should be permitted to protect the daughters, indicative of the persistence patriarchal norms in the societies. This highlights the importance of thoroughly examining cultural practices that affect children's rights.

A significant majority of respondents from both urban areas (71.4%) and outer islands (68.3%) cited specification in religion as the main reason for marriage of adolescents to be permitted. However, a

higher percentage of respondents from the outer islands (28.7%) believed that marrying young could help reduce out-of-wedlock childbearing compared to those from urban areas (16.1%). This disparity may be attributed to the smaller community size in the outer islands, where stigma surrounding out-of-wedlock may be more pronounced.

These findings highlight the urgent need to address this negative attitude in order to prevent unregistered child marriage that could potentially take place outside of courts. This data also indicates that religious misconceptions can be used as a pretext to exploit vulnerable children, and highlights the need for significant interventions.

Hitting Children*

Despite significant efforts to raise awareness about child abuse and corporal punishment, as well as the legal protections established through various legal instruments, these issues continue to be prevalent in society. HRCM posits that effective change in societal attitudes and behaviors regarding these practices necessitates an exploration of the underlying beliefs that contribute to the high incidence of child abuse and the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure.

The main reasons cited for hitting a child were theft (21.3%), followed by lying (11.5%), disobedience (9.5%), disrespect towards elders (7.6%), and hitting another child (7.2%). While a substantial majority of respondents asserted that there were

no circumstances under which striking a child is permissible, even smaller proportions suggesting that such actions could be justified, indicates that additional efforts are required to guarantee the safety and protection for all children. Additionally, some respondents indicated that striking a child for not praying could be justified, provided it does not inflict physical harm. However, inquiring into further comments from the survey, some respondents believed it justifiable to strike a child for not praying, given the action does not inflict physical pain. The survey's lack of inquiry into religious factors was identified as a limitation which should be addressed to understand the attitudes towards hitting children.

REASONS STATED AS ACCEPTABLE FOR HITTING A CHILD



Justifications for hitting a child	
Theft	21.3%
Lying	11.5%
Disobedience	9.5%
Hits another child	7.2%
Disrespecting elders	7.6%
Refusing to go school	4.8%
Not doing school work	4.1%
Throwing tantrums	3.0%
Too much goofing around	2.6%
Parents are stressed	2.4%
Others	0.6%

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey.

Article 35 of the Constitution recognizes the elderly as a vulnerable group, ensuring their entitlement to special protection and assistance from the family, community, and the State.²² The Maldives Pension Act (Act no.8/2009) further guarantees financial support for the elderly, reinforcing the State’s commitment in safeguarding their well-being. However, it is noteworthy to acknowledge that the Maldives has yet to establish any specialized geriatric care facilities or any other formal assisted-living centers for the elderly.

SERVICES AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR THE ELDERLY



The majority of the survey respondents (41%) expressed dissatisfaction with the services and protections provided to the elderly in the Maldives, an increase in dissatisfaction compared to 2019 (33.3%) indicating a growing concern regarding the adequacy of support available to the elderly.

SATISFACTION OF SERVICE AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR THE ELDERLY YEARLY TREND



More women (43%) expressed dissatisfaction compared to men (38%) showing a similar pattern to 2019 data (women at 49% and men at 36%). A potential reason for higher levels of dissatisfaction among women could be their disproportionate involvement in caregiving roles, particularly for elderly family members. This responsibility often gives women a closer perspective on the gaps in available support services, such as healthcare, housing, and financial assistance, making them more aware of deficiencies and unmet needs.

Are you satisfied with the protection for the rights of the elderly?

	Male	Female	Total
Satisfied	38.5%	38%	38.2%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10.9%	13.8%	12.6%
Dissatisfied	38.1%	42.6%	40.0%
Refuse	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%
DK/NA	11.9%	5.2%	8.1%

Satisfaction levels varied significantly across age groups. Among respondents aged 18–25, satisfaction and dissatisfaction were evenly split at 35%. In the 26–35 age group, satisfaction was slightly higher at 38%. However, dissatisfaction rose notably in the 36–55 and 56–65 age groups, reaching 42% and 49%, respectively. Interestingly, satisfaction peaked at 44% among respondents aged 65 and older, likely reflecting the benefits of the Old Age Basic Pension, which contributes to improved

²² Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 (2008), Article.9

Are you satisfied with the protection for the rights of elderly?	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+
Satisfied	35%	38%	39%	36%	44%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfaction	19%	15%	11%	9%	9%
Dissatisfied	35%	37%	42%	49%	39%
Refuse	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Don't Know/ Not Applicable	11%	10%	7%	6%	7%

perceptions of elderly services among this demographic. Conversely, dissatisfaction peaks among those approaching old age (56-65), potentially reflecting concerns about their future security and access to similar benefits.

More respondents in urban areas expressed a higher dissatisfaction (43%) compared to the outer islands (38%) which could be reflective of the congestion and lack of space in the urban area. Moreover, the difference in perception may also be attributed to urban respondents having higher expectations for government policies and social services, possibly due to

greater exposure to resources and awareness of global standards.

Respondents identified neglect as the primary concern in safeguarding the rights of the elderly (27.8%), followed by the need for improved healthcare services (21.1%). Furthermore, 14.1% of respondents highlighted the unauthorized use of pensions by family members, marking this as an emerging issue (identified through RSL) that warrants further investigation.

A comparison of data from 2011, 2019, and 2024 highlighted significant trends in issues affecting elderly individuals.

Areas to increase protection in relation to the Right of Older People			
	2011	2019	2024
Neglect	21.9%	22.9%	27.8%
Inadequate attention to health status of older people	20.6%	9.9%	21.1%
Use of Pension by family members without their consent			14.1%
Inadequate housing for older people	9.7%	6.6%	13.6%
Lack of oversight (registration) of caregivers of older people	5.7%	3.9%	10.7%
Lack of residential care/nursing home facilities	6.0%	5.9%	10.3%
Lack of legislation and/or policies to protect older people	12.3%	6.2%	9.5%
Lack of respite care to ensure that family and volunteers are not overburdened	5.8%	3.9%	9.5%
Inadequate pension	7.1%	5.3%	8.1%
Abuse (physical or mental)	19.5%	10.9%	7.7%
Lack of information/knowledge about benefits from Aasandha Health Insurance (including medications, dentures, hearing aids etc)	4.4%	3.8%	6.5%
Lack of entertainment			4.7%
Other (Specify)		3.8%	4.9%
Refuse		0.6%	0.5%
DK/NA		16.4%	27.6%

Neglect has consistently remained a pressing concern, increasing (from 21.9% in 2011 to 22.9% in 2019) to 27.8% in 2024. Similarly, inadequate attention to the health status of older individuals, which saw a decline (from 20.6% in 2011 to 9.9% in 2019), resurged in 2024 to 21.1%, underscoring renewed concerns about healthcare for the elderly. Reports of abuse, a significant issue in 2011 (19.5%) and 2019 (10.9%), decreased to 7.7% in 2024, suggesting reduced severity or improved perceptions of this issue. Additionally, 13.6% cited inadequate housing conditions for the elderly—an issue that has steadily grown from 9.7% in 2011 to 6.6% in 2019.

Persons with Disabilities

SERVICES AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



42%
Expressed Dissatisfaction
with the services and protection
provided for persons
with disabilities

SATISFACTION OF SERVICE AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



SERVICES AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



55.3%
Of respondents with a
disability expressed Dissatisfaction
with the services and protection
provided for them

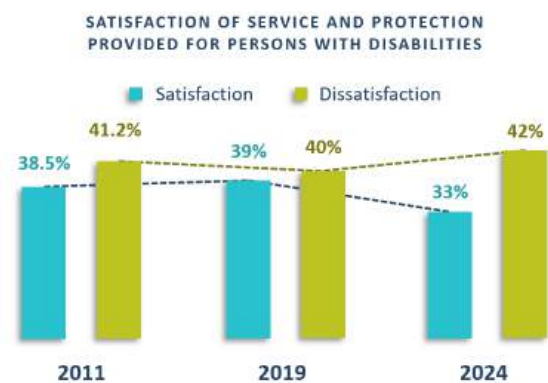
26.6%
Of respondents with a
disability expressed satisfaction



The prevalence of disability in the Maldives stands at 6.9%, indicating that approximately one in every ten individuals is affected by some form of disability.²³

Persons with disabilities in the Maldives are afforded protection under Article 17 of the Constitution, which prohibits discrimination and guarantees equal rights and freedoms. Article 35(b) further ensures that they receive special assistance and protection from the family, community, and State. In addition to these constitutional safeguards, the Maldives ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2010, emphasizing the importance of inclusive societies. However, despite these legislative advancements, significant challenges persist. Adequate measures and accommodations to ensure full equality for persons with disabilities remain insufficient, and structural discrimination continues to hinder their access to higher education, employment, training, adequate living conditions, and health services.²⁴

The survey revealed that close to half of the respondents (42%) were dissatisfied with the services and protections available for persons with disabilities, compared to about one-third (33%) who expressed satisfaction, reflecting widespread concerns about inadequate support. The level of dissatisfaction remained relatively consistent throughout the years (40.9% in 2019 and 41.2% in 2011).



Furthermore, more than half of the survey respondents with disabilities expressed dissatisfaction (55.3%) with the services and protection that are available to them, highlighting significant gaps and raising concerns over inclusivity in addressing their needs and concerns.

SERVICES AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



42%
Expressed Dissatisfaction
with the services and protection
provided for persons
with disabilities

²³ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2023). *Disability in Maldives*. Retrieved by https://census.gov.mv/2022/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/DISABILITY_Census-2022.pdf

²⁴ Human Rights Commission of the Maldives. (2023). *Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Article 35 of CRPD* retrieved by <https://hrcm.org.mv/storage/uploads/79qg2JYD/d4vj4okd.pdf>

SERVICES AND PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



More women (46%) expressed disappointment with the provision of rights to persons with disabilities than men (37%). This disparity may be attributed to the fact that women often take on caregiver roles for family members with disabilities, giving them greater insight into the existing challenges and deficiencies in services and protections available for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, women tend to face disproportionate disadvantages in managing disability-related issues compared to men, which may contribute to their higher levels of disappointment.

The level of dissatisfaction increased as the age group increased with the highest dissatisfaction recorded above 65 years (48%), and 45% in both the 36-55 and 56-65 age groups. The data suggests that dissatisfaction with the protections provided to persons with disability increases with age, indicating that older individuals are generally less satisfied with the protection and services assured for persons with disabilities.

More respondents from the outer islands (45%) were dissatisfied than the respondents from urban populations (38%) potentially reflecting disparities in access to resources and the quality of services available in islands for persons with disabilities.

Are you satisfied with the protection for the rights of people with Disabilities?			
	Male	Female	Total
Satisfied	34%	33%	33%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10%	12%	11%
Dissatisfied	37%	46%	42%
Refuse	0.2%	0.1%	0.20%
DK/NA	19%	9%	13.7%

Are you satisfied with the protection for the rights of people with Disabilities?

	Urban	Outer islands
Satisfied	31%	36%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12%	10%
Dissatisfied	38%	45%
Refuse	0%	0.30%
DK/NA	19%	8%

When respondents were asked about areas requiring increased protection, 21.9% identified inadequate healthcare as a primary concern. The lack of access to education emerged as the second most significant issue, identified by 19.3% of respondents. The third most pressing concern identified by the respondents was lack of facilities in existing schools at 18.5%.

Concerns regarding inadequate healthcare for persons with disabilities have fluctuated over the years (decreasing from 24.4% in 2011 to 8.9% in 2019 but rising again to 21.9% in 2024), with a general decline observed in 2024. Additionally, concerns about access to education (19.3%) have declined over the years (from 25.6% in 2011 to 16.3% in 2019). Similarly lack of schools for children with special needs has declined to 12.9% (27.6% in 2011 and 12.9% in 2019), suggesting a positive shift in educational opportunities, likely influenced by the 2013 Inclusive Education Policy, which emphasizes tailored support for children

with special needs based on their individual requirements.²⁵ 18.5% of respondents in 2024 highlighted concerns about inadequate facilities in existing schools for children with special needs, underscoring ongoing challenges in achieving truly inclusive education. This issue has persisted over the years, with 7.3% of respondents expressing similar concerns in 2019 and 15.8% in 2011. Stereotyping and discrimination have remained relatively consistent over the years, with 17.6% of respondents highlighting this concern in 2024, compared to 17% in 2011 and 13.2% in 2019. The survey data reflected a general decline in concerns related to education and availability of schools for children with special needs, while healthcare and school facilities for children with special needs have become areas of greater focus.

²⁵ Ministry of Education. (2021). Inclusive. Education.Policy.

Areas to increase protection in relation to the Right of Persons with Disabilities

	2011	2019	2024
Lack of access to education	25.6%	16.3%	19.30%
Lack of schools for children with special needs	27.6%	12.9%	12.90%
Lack of facilities in existing schools for children with special needs	15.8%	7.3%	18.50%
Inadequate health care (including mental health care) for people with disabilities	24.4%	8.9%	21.9%
Stereotyping/discrimination	17.0%	13.2%	17.6%
Lack of employment/employment services	18.5%	11.1%	13.0%
Inadequate benefits/lack of information/knowledge about benefits from Aasandha Healthcare	9.0%	7.1%	11.1%
Access to buildings and on transport	7.7%	4.6%	7.7%
Participation in community affairs			11.7%
Facilities for families caring for people with disabilities			12.9%
Protection from bullying and harassment			11.5%
Other		4.6%	4.7%
Refuse		0.2%	0.5%
DK/NA		13.4%	27.1%

Education

The right to quality education is firmly rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and international legal instruments.²⁶ The Convention on the Right of Child entails the State Parties to ensure all children have access to education on the basis of equal opportunity.²⁷ Maldives recognizes education as a basic human right and has passed the Education Act (Act No.8/2010) in which every child between the ages of four to sixteen, living in the Maldives is required to complete compulsory education.²⁸ Moreover, it is the obligation of the State to ensure every child has equal access to opportunities and to ensure a safe environment within the schooling and education system.

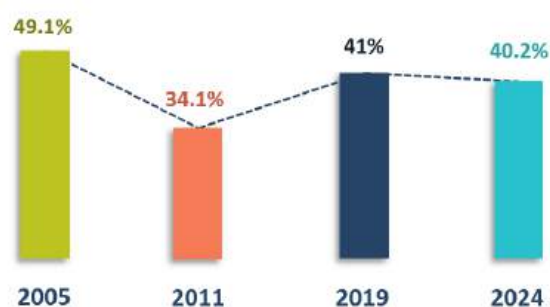
Access to Education				
	2005	2011	2019	2024
Satisfied	49.1%	34.1%	41%	40.2%
Dissatisfied	38.1%	44%	40%	44.2%

SATISFACTION ABOUT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM



The level of satisfaction amongst the public about the education system has varied over the years (49.1% in 2005 vs 34.1% in 2011 to 41% in 2019). The survey indicated similar results as the previous survey, with more respondents stating to be dissatisfied (44.1%) with the education system, with the highest level of dissatisfaction recorded in the central region with a percentage of 60.1% followed by south region (except Addu) with 59%.

SATISFACTION ABOUT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM YEARLY TREND



Male' and atolls continued to have a significant disparity with more people living in Male' being more satisfied than dissatisfied with the schooling system (43.8% vs 42%). However, 50% of the respondents from the atolls were dissatisfied with the current education and schooling system. Almost 1 in 3 people migrating to the Greater Male' region for education²⁹ was an indication of the dissatisfaction among the people living in the atolls. Similar trends have been recorded where people living in the urban centers and the capital islands were more satisfied than the population living in the outer islands. Among the atolls,

²⁶ United Nations General Assembly (1948), Universal Declaration of Human Rights 27(10) article.8

²⁷ United Nations Conventions of the Child (2006), article.8

²⁸ Education Act (24/2020), article.9

²⁹ Maldives Bureau of Statistics (2023), *Population and Movement Dynamics- an analysis from census 2022* retrieved by <https://census.gov.mv/2022/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Migration-Report-Census-2022.pdf>

respondents from Addu City reported the most satisfied (55.9%) with the education system which was a notable improvement from the 2005 where 57.7% of the respondents of Seenu Atoll reported to be dissatisfied. This data directs towards the need for a more equitable distribution of educational resources and opportunities, ensuring that all children regardless of their geographic location have access to quality education in line with their fundamental rights to education.

In relation to access to education:	Male'	Atolls
Satisfied	43.8%	38.8%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10.8%	7.4%
Dissatisfied	42.0%	46.4%
Refuse	0.0%	0.4%
Don't Know/ Not Applicable	3.5%	6.9%

Although both sexes had similar level of dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction among women were higher than men (43% vs 45%). Among the age groups, it was identified that the younger population aged 18-25 years, were the most dissatisfied (47%). Since some respondents in this age group were in school at the time of data collection or had finished studying recently, these statistics indicate the need for further research and improvement in the education system.

Parallel to the past three cycles, better qualified teachers ranked as the most significant factor for improvement within the schooling system (36.5%). Although there was a degree of variance in the percentage of respondents who had stated this over the four cycles, the consistency of this belief being the number one factor indicates that there has not been significant progress in this area. Higher Education opportunities in the islands ranks second most important area to focus on education and schooling sector with 26.9% respondents, accounting to 28.5% of the atoll respondents and 24% of Male' respondents. Allocating an adequate budget for the education sector accounted for 18.2% of the respondents followed by 15.6% of the respondents stating that incorporating life skills and vocational training would improve the sector. The inclusion of these two factors in the survey was noteworthy, as it highlights the public's growing concern regarding these issues. In addition, improving the curriculum and the content of books, improving facilities and better qualified principals are significant areas for improvement highlighted by the respondents.



Area in need of improvement in Education System	2024
Better trained and qualified teachers	36.5%
Higher education opportunities in islands	26.9%
Adequate budget for the education system	18.2%
Life skills / vocational training	15.6%
Content of curriculum/books	14.5%
Better qualified Principals	12.9%
Personality development	12.6%
Better facilities, such as library, laboratory	12.4%
Better monitoring systems	10.2%
Extracurricular activities	9.8%
Making education system decisions based on political gains	7.9%

Right to Health

The right to health is a fundamental human right guaranteed in the Constitution³⁰ and is expressly referred to in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 10, which expressed the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Moreover, non-discrimination is a key principle in human rights and is crucial to the enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health where all services, goods and facilities must be available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality. Right to Health is also interdependent on other human rights, meaning violation of this right may impair the fulfilment of other human rights such as Right to Life or Right to Education.

Over the four cycles of RSL, public dissatisfaction with the health system was evident, showing no substantial improvement over the two decades.

SATISFACTION ABOUT ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES



DISSATISFACTION ABOUT ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES



In this cycle, two components were used to assess the right to health which are access to health services and access to medicine,

³⁰ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 (2008), Article.89

In relation to access to health, are you:	Male	Female
Satisfied	30.07%	22.55%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9.07%	8.51%
Dissatisfied	56.76%	67.38%
Refuse	0.4%	0.3%
Don't Know/ Not Applicable	3.7%	1.3%

where the public displayed a general dissatisfaction concerning both the components. The level of dissatisfaction over access to medical services remained unchanged with a minor decline from 63.6% to 62.8% signifying a consistent gap in delivering efficient health services to the public throughout the country. More women were dissatisfied than men (67.4% vs 56.8%) representing a similar trend to the third cycle of RSL suggesting further research was necessary to explore any gender differences in the accessibility of health services.

Although the Greater Male' region provides more diverse medical services with more medical health professionals and medical providers³¹, both Male' and atolls displayed a parallel view with people residing in atolls depicting a slightly higher

level of dissatisfaction. (62.6% vs 64.4%). However, the dissatisfaction levels of the islands except the capital islands remained the highest, with two-thirds of the respondents being dissatisfied highlighting the necessity for effective decentralization strategies to guarantee access to health services to everyone.

Access to medicine has been a prominent issue, particularly in the atolls, with prolonged delays between the distribution of essential medications to the people.³² 60% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction, a slightly higher margin than 2019 (57.4%) indicating no significant improvements have been made in proper delivery of medicine to the public. More female respondents (64.1%) expressed dissatisfaction with regard to access to medicine than male respondents (53.7%).

In relation to access to medicines are you	Male	Female	Total
Satisfied	33.6%	26.2%	29.5%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8.9%	7.9%	8.4%
Dissatisfied	53.7%	64.3%	59.6%
Refuse	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Don't Know/ Not Applicable	3.6%	1.4%	2.4%

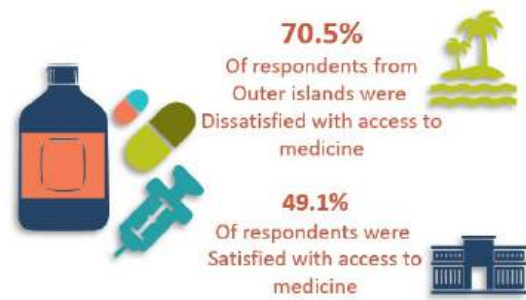
³¹The.under_developed.healthcare.in.the.islands.Maldives. Financial.Review. <https://mfr.mv/opinion/the-under-developed-healthcare-in-the-islands>

³² Human Rights Commission (2022), CRPD atoll monitoring 2022, unpublished

As of now, to provide the atolls with the essential medications, a system has been put in place wherein the State Trading Organization (STO) purchases medications for the atolls and distributes the necessary medications to them.³³ However, 62% of the respondents in atolls were not happy with the access to medicine with 70% of the respondents residing in the islands other than the capital islands stating to be dissatisfied indicating a discrepancy in the delivery of medicine to the islands. With the already existing transportation barriers in the atolls, it is crucial for the government to take urgent measures to identify the existing gaps and make necessary changes to the existing system.

The majority of the respondents (43.9%) believed that an increase in specialist doctors would improve the healthcare system as whole. More respondents in the atolls compared to Male' (47.9% vs 36.8%) supported this, given that people are required to travel to the central region to seek medical services due to lack of specialist doctors and services in the atolls.³⁴ Emphasizing on the availability of quality medicine once again, 36.5% of respondents stated that access to quality medicine would improve the healthcare system. One-third of respondents indicated the need to focus on better health workers and another 30% of respondents stated that the system needed to focus on better services at hospitals.

DISSATISFACTION ABOUT ACCESS TO MEDICINE



Certain discrepancies were observed among the respondents from Greater Male' region and atolls, specifically the respondents living in outer islands. More respondents living in atolls (31.4%) stated the need to provide better services at health centers while only 16.7% stating that they needed more hospitals at regional level indicating the public demands for improved services in the existing facilities. Furthermore, respondents from Greater Male' region identified that the appointment system needed improvement, focusing more on the accessibility rather than the availability perspective in attaining the right to health. Moreover, 23.3% of the respondents living in Greater Male' region also stated that affordable healthcare was an important aspect to focus on addressing the affordability of private healthcare services in Male'. In the outer islands, 24.8% respondents focused on the importance of immediate health care with 20.6% stated that the transportation for health care needed improvement, highlighting the need to address the geographic challenges in accessing healthcare services.

³³ ibid

³⁴ Ministry of Health 2016, Health.Master.Plan.(8670868) <https://health.gov.mv/storage/uploads/xRwX4kwW/yqc3bjm r.pdf>

Areas of improvement in the Health System		
	Maale	Atolls
Specialist doctors	36.8%	47.9%
Quality medicine	37.7%	38.6%
Qualified health care workers	35.3%	34.0%
Appointment system	41.1%	12.0%
Better services at hospitals	28.2%	32.3%
Transportation for healthcare	16.3%	18.1%
Affordable health care	23.3%	10.6%
Better services at health centers	14.7%	31.4%
Immediate Emergency health care	18.7%	22.0%
More hospitals at a regional level	12.3%	16.7%
Preventive Care	8.9%	11.0%
More health centers	8.6%	8.6%

Mental health*

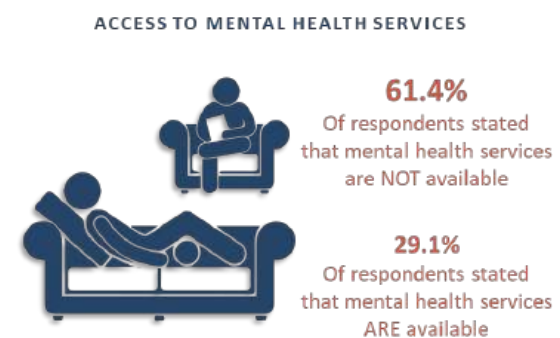
Mental health is acknowledged as a fundamental human right essential for achieving a fulfilling life³⁵. Every individual, irrespective of their location, profession, or identity, is entitled to attain the highest possible level of mental well-being. This encompasses the entitlement to safeguard oneself from mental health

* This is a new question administered in this year's survey.

³⁵ *Mental health: Promoting and protecting human rights*. (2022, June 17). <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/mental-health-promoting-and-protecting-human-rights#:~:text=Mental%20health%20is%20a%20basic,and%20ood%20quality%20care%3B%20and>

risks, access to mental health care that is readily available, easily accessed, and of high quality, as well as the entitlement to freedom and involvement within their community.³⁶

Recognizing the importance of mental health services in the health sector, a new question was added to assess the accessibility of mental health services.



When asked if mental health services were available, a significant majority (61.4%) did not believe that the services were available. It was significant that when inquired about access to health services overall, non-response rate was lower than 1%, however, when asked about mental health, nearly 9% of respondents, comprising 11% of men and 12.2% of respondents aged 18 to 25 were unable to answer reflecting a lack of awareness regarding mental health services.

Similar trends to access to health services were noted in men and women, with women stating that mental health services were not available with a slight margin (27.5% vs 30%). A significant disparity was observed between the Greater Male' region and atolls, with 42.6% of

³⁶ World Health Organization: WHO. (2023, October 10). World Mental Health Day: Mental Health is a Universal Human Right. World.Health. Organization. <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/detail/10-10-2023-world-mental-health-day-mental-health-is-a-universal-human-right>

Are mental health related care and services available?		
	Male'	Atolls
Yes	42.6%	22.3%
No	39.0%	64.2%
Refuse	0.3%	0.7%
Don't know/ Not Applicable	18.1%	12.7%

respondents from Male' region believing that mental health services were available while only 22.3% of the respondents residing in atolls shared this belief.

In the existing health system, only the regional hospitals (tier 3) and tertiary hospitals employed a psychiatrist resulting in challenges in accessibility due to transportation and time limitations.³⁷ Furthermore, alternate therapies are unavailable in the atolls and the referral system was reported to be ineffective.³⁸ The data highlights an urgent necessity for the enhancement of accessible mental health services throughout the country, particularly focusing on the atolls. The existing disparities in mental health resources emphasize the critical need for comprehensive strategies aimed at improving service availability to ensure that all individuals can lead lives characterized by optimal mental and physical well-being, thereby fostering a healthier population across diverse geographical regions.

³⁷ Ministry of Health 2016, Health.Master.Plan.(867-868) <https://health.gov.mv/storage/uploads/xRwX4kwW/yqc3bjm r.pdf>

Employment and Work Opportunities

Half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the employment and work opportunities available, a slight increase in dissatisfaction compared to the RSL 3 (43.1%). The pattern of dissatisfaction has been consistent since the initial RSL survey indicating there has not been a significant development in the employment prospects in the country.

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT



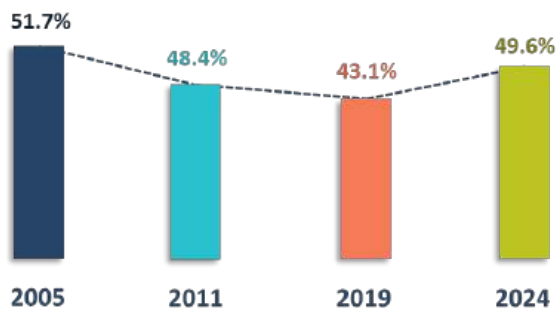
49.6%
Of respondents
expressed

More women were dissatisfied with the available employment opportunities compared to men (48.3% vs 50.3%). The youngest age group of the respondents, aged from 18 to 25, had a higher dissatisfaction percentage than the average (52%), indicating potential challenges in entering the job market. Similar to RSL 3, more respondents residing in the Greater Male' region

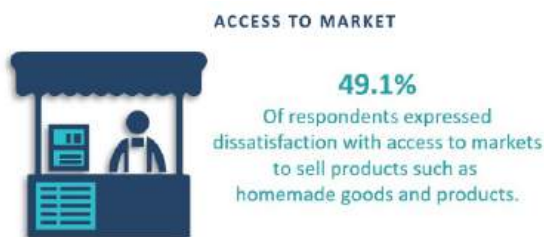
³⁸ Human Rights Commission (2022), CRPD atoll monitoring 2022, unpublished

(52.1%) were more dissatisfied compared to the atolls (48.5%). The highest dissatisfaction was noted from the respondents from Laamu atoll (68%) and Addu City (59%). The availability of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities presents a significant challenge and the survey confirms this with 47.9% of respondents with a disability being dissatisfied with the available employment opportunities.

DISSATISFACTION WITH EMPLOYMENT AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES



Access to Market to sell products such as fish, produce, handicraft etc. Access to Markets to Sell Products



In relation to access to markets to sell products such as homemade goods, produce, fish etc. 49.1% of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction. More men were dissatisfied compared to women (52.4% vs 46.8%). A significant disparity was noted in the extend of dissatisfaction amongst the respondents from the Greater Male’ region (41.7%) and the atolls

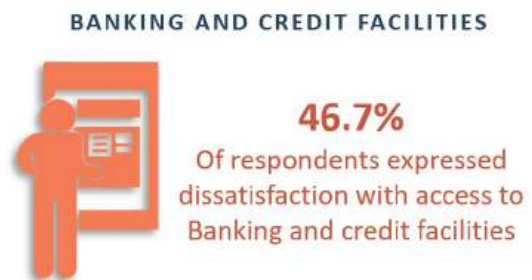
(51.2%), which was reflective of the size of the available markets and longer market chains to sell the products from atolls.

Access to transportation



Majority of the respondents (57.4%) were satisfied with access to transportation services with women (59.4%) being more satisfied than men (54%). Satisfaction levels were consistent in Male’ and the atolls. It is noteworthy that older people (62.7%) and people with disabilities (60.1%) stated to be satisfied with the transportation system.

Banking and credit facilities



In contrast to the previous cycles of RSL surveys, the number of respondents who were dissatisfied (46.7%) outweighed the satisfied respondents (37%) indicating a decline in accessibility to banking and credit facilities. Even with the availability of more services, the greatest majority of dissatisfaction was observed from the Greater Male’ region at 59%. Although this

could be a reflection of greater awareness of banking and credit facilities available and the constraints attached to it, more information was necessary to assess the decline. Half of the respondents from the outer islands expressed dissatisfaction likely due to the lack of office branches or ATMs in the outer islands.

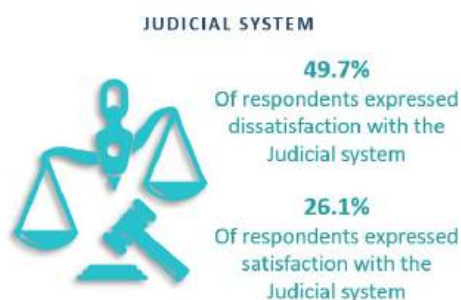
Radio, TV, Internet and Post



Similar to the previous surveys, there was significant satisfaction concerning accessibility to TV (80.9%), internet (78.6%), radio (66.7%) and postal services (65.9%).

In relation to the following, are you?	2019			2024		
	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Work and employment opportunities	38.70%	6.20%	43.10%	35%	11%	49.60%
access to markets to sell your products such as fish, produce, handicrafts etc.	32.20%	6.40%	45.20%	30.60%	11.30%	49.10%
transport services (ferries, air services etc.)	50.40%	6.80%	32.20%	57.40%	8.40%	32.40%
Banking and credit facilities	43.70%	6%	37.60%	37%	9%	46.7%
Access to radio	59.30%	3.32%	16%	69.3%	7.3%	7.6%
access to television	69.30%	3.90%	16.40%	80.9%	6.9%	8.2%
access to postal services	60.70%	3.90%	17.50%	65.9%	7.6%	11.7%
Access to Internet	-	-	-	78.6%	6.1%	11.3%

Judiciary



The public's perception of the judicial system has varied with satisfaction levels declining from 41.5% in 2005 to 21.5% in 2011 and to 21.5%, which then remained consistent in 2019. The survey indicated that although the dissatisfied population exceeds the satisfied population, there was a slight improvement in the respondent's satisfaction with the judiciary this year at 26.1%.

However, half of the respondents had stated to be dissatisfied with the judicial system with the youth population aged 18 to 35 years being the least dissatisfied population, which may be attributed to their lack of personal experience with the court system. More men expressed dissatisfaction with the judiciary than women (55.7% vs 45.7%). Respondents expressing the highest dissatisfaction with the judiciary were from the southern region (55.8%) and the Greater Male' region (54.5%). A notable disparity exists between the atoll capitals and outer islands, with 52% of respondents in the outer islands expressing dissatisfaction compared to 40% in the atoll capitals. This area needs further exploration to comprehend the challenges encountered by residents of the outer islands.

Moreover, in a democracy characterized by a separation of powers, with the

judiciary tasked with upholding the rule of law, 10.6% of respondents being unaware of how to evaluate the judiciary raises concerns regarding public awareness.



Corruption was cited as the primary cause of dissatisfaction by a significant majority of respondents (56.5%). Concerns regarding corruption have increased from 23.9% in 2005 to 32.6% in 2011, 39.2% in 2019, and currently surpass half of the respondents, indicating a decrease in public confidence in the judiciary. Additionally, 43.1% of the respondents noted that the decisions were unjust and unfair, indicating that additional efforts were necessary to foster greater public trust. Over 25% of the respondents raised concerns over the judiciary's competence. Delays in the trial process was stated by 8% of the respondents marking a new area for improvement identified in the survey.

Reason for loss of confidence in judiciary	2011	2019	2024
Unfair/unjust decisions	69.6	15.9	43.1
Corruption	23.9	39.2	56.7
Competence of judiciary	21.7	12.4	28.7
Lack of access to lawyers	8.7	3.2	10.6
Lack of information	9.8	3.1	11.4
Delays in trial process			8.0
Lack of security for judges	9.10	3.4	6.4

Security forces

SATISFACTION ABOUT SECURITY FORCES



44.4%
Of respondents expressed satisfaction with the Security forces

The police and security forces were met with a favorable response from the respondents, with 44.4% of them expressing satisfaction, a slight increase from the 2019 (43.5%). However, the degree of satisfaction decreases from Maldivians at 41.9% compared to migrant workers (60%), suggesting that migrant workers were generally satisfied with the services provided by the security forces.

In relation to the security services, are you?	Maldivian	Migrant Workers
Satisfied	41.9%	60.7%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16.2%	8.3%
Dissatisfied	37.7%	4.8%
Refuse	0.5%	0.6%
DK/NA	3.6%	25.6%

It was important to note that the youth population, between the ages of 18 and 35, was the most satisfied (46.2%), which may be interpreted as a positive indicator that the youth maintain a certain level of trust in the system. Men had a slightly higher satisfaction rate (45.6% vs 43.4%), while both sexes reported similar levels of satisfaction. In contrast to RSL 3, respondents from the outer islands were more satisfied than urban respondents,

which may be indicative of the fact that police stations in the islands have been expanding.

SATISFACTION ABOUT SECURITY FORCES YEARLY TREND



When inquired about the causes of dissatisfaction, 42.3% of respondents cited corruption, with a higher proportion of men giving this explanation. In 2005, only 14.9% of respondents mentioned corruption as their cause for dissatisfaction which escalated over time to 20.8% in 2011, 25.1% in 2019, to a significant increase this year. While communities rely on security forces for their safety, the significant perception of corruption among them raises serious concerns.

One-third of the population felt they were unable to reach the police when in need, with 44.3% of respondents from urban area stating this reason, which was also the most prevalent reason for the dissatisfaction among women (35.3%). 28% of respondents believed the police lack fairness or impartiality, while 27.1% believed they do not effectively address criminal activity. Political influence was identified as a factor for dissatisfaction by 23.9% of respondents. Although on average 7.7% of respondents indicated torture as the factor for dissatisfaction, the percentage of respondents stating this factor in the urban areas increases to 11%

indicating an increase in a concern for torture cases in urban centers.

The question inquired about public satisfaction regarding the police and security forces together, which could result in mixed views and hence should be asked separately for a clear perception of the public.

Prison System

HRCM plays an important accountability role in ensuring that individuals in State detention centers are afforded their fundamental rights and investigates into cases to protect detainees from any form of abuse or torture. As the National Preventive Mechanism, the Commission plays a crucial role in safeguarding detainees' rights through systemic monitoring and continuous dialogue with the authorities. However, the prison system still requires comprehensive and systematic reforms to ensure the protection of all individuals' rights.



With the exception of 2005, all surveys have shown that the public was more dissatisfied than satisfied with the prison

system, with an increase in dissatisfaction of 24.9% in 2019 to 33.1% this year. There were only minor discrepancies in the beliefs of both sexes regarding the system. Nevertheless, the degree of dissatisfaction was observed to increase as the age of the respondents increased, from 30.3% between the ages of 18 and 25 to 34.4% between the ages of 26 and 35, 34.5% between the ages of 36 and 55, and 37.7% up to the age of 65. This question has consistently had a high non-response rate, with a 31.3% non-response rate this year, reflecting a lack of first-hand experiences with the prison system.

In relation to prison services:	2005	2011	2019	2024
Satisfied	30.9%	28.6%	15.1%	44.4%
Nor satisfied or dissatisfied	6.0%	-	4.6%	15.2%
Dissatisfied	20.1%	38.7%	24.9%	33.4%

Respondents who were dissatisfied stated corruption in the prison system as their main reason (39%). Lack of supervision of prisoners followed with 20.6%. Abuse of prisoners, lack of fairness and bias amongst the prisoners and lack of rehabilitation and reintegration were reasons stated by 19% of the respondents.

Improvement of social services			
	2011	2019	2024
Improved	30	24.2	24.2
Got worse	20.9	12.7	23.7
Stayed about the same	23.2	32.7	36.9
Don't Know/Not Applicable	25.2	27.6	14.4

With a significant number of respondents stating abuse of prisoners, another 17.9% of respondents stated torture which was reflective of the significant number of torture related cases lodged to the Commission.³⁹ Although, 11.5% of the respondents highlighted lack of space and medical facilities as a concern, this figure increased to more than half of the prison population reflecting broader systemic issues that exists within the prisons.

Reasons for dissatisfaction with prison services	
Corruption	39.0%
Lack of supervision	20.6%
Rehabilitation and reintegration	19.8%
Abuse of prisoners	19.5%
Lack of fairness/bias	19.2%
Political influence	17.9%
Torture	17.9%
Lack of space and medical facilities	11.5%
Lack of adequate access to prisoners	8.2%
Lack of information about prisoners	6.6%

Social Security

The accessibility and availability of social protection mechanisms are crucial for fostering an equal society and ensuring that all individuals live with dignity. Consequently, the Social Protection Act (Act No.2/2014) was enacted to protect the citizens from poverty and to create a more equitable society. There are established mechanisms to ensure vulnerable communities are provided

support from the government. However, these mechanisms need to be monitored and reviewed to guarantee the best outcomes for the people.

The respondents were asked if they believed social protection had gotten better in the past 12 months. About a quarter of respondents believed social protection had improved in the past year, which was consistent with the findings of the previous RSL in 2019 (24.2%), a decline from 2011 when 30% of respondents thought social protection mechanisms had gotten better. There was an increase in percentage of respondents who perceived the social protection systems had gotten worse from 12.7% in 2019 to 23.7% this year, indicating a considerable difference. Although some programs have undergone revisions in the past five years,⁴⁰ the perceptions may indicate that these programs did not have the best outcomes and may serve as a useful reflection for the administration to conduct further inquiry in order to ensure that the social protection programs are implemented in a way that was inclusive and participatory. The majority of respondents (37%) stated that social security programs remained unchanged. The non-response rate averaged 26.4% in the two preceding surveys, which has fallen to 14.4%. Although a significant

Improvement of social services			
	2011	2019	2024
Improved	30	24.2	24.2
Got worse	20.9	12.7	23.7
Stayed about the same	23.2	32.7	36.9
Don't Know/Not Applicable	25.2	27.6	14.4

³⁹ Human Rights Commission (2024) Anti_Torture.Report. 8680. (2024). <https://hrcm.org.mv/storage/uploads/ArovGkwj/5vzn1gqg.pdf>

⁴⁰ *The administration reveals a new disability financial support framework.* (2023, June 15). The President's Office. Retrieved December 7, 2024, from <https://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Press/Article/28519>

number, this reduction may suggest that respondents were more aware of the available social security mechanisms.

Among Persons with Disabilities, has social security	
Improved	26.6%
Got worse	28.7%
Stayed about the same	30.9%
Refuse	0.0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	13.8%

A slightly higher percentage of women (24.6%) perceived a decline in social security services over the past year compared to men (22.2%), similar to RSL 3. Among persons with disabilities, more respondents believed the social protection has gotten worse (28.7%) than it had improved (26.6%).

The respondents were asked if they believed given the ability of the resources whether the State made an appropriate amount of effort to improve the rights mentioned below. A substantial majority of respondents believed the State made considerable efforts to provide education up to grade 10, improve access to safe drinking water, electricity, sewerage facilities, and build waste disposal systems. A significant improvement has been noted in these areas since the

introduction of the question in 2011, suggesting public appreciation for government efforts and widespread satisfaction with the provision of these rights. Although a significant number of respondents perceived that the State attempted to improve social security, the proportion of those who disagreed has increased since 2019 (39% vs 32%).

DISSATISFACTION ON EFFORTS TO IMPROVE HOUSING



The respondent's satisfaction with the State's efforts to enhance housing has been declining since 2011. More than half of the respondents believed State did not make appropriate effort to improve housing where more men (57%) held this opinion than women (51.3%). Even with the increase in housing schemes in the Greater Male' region,⁴¹ 57% of the respondents from the Greater Male' region stated that the government did not make adequate efforts to improve housing, suggesting that these schemes did not meet the public housing needs.

Do you believe the government is doing enough to ensure the following	2011		2019		2024	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Improving Health services	46.4%	44.7%	50.0%	39.0%	42.9%	53.6%
Improve housing, including financial assistance	52.9%	36.6%	46.0%	41.0%	42.4%	53.7%
Improved social security	43.4%	42.9%	51.0%	32.0%	53.8%	39.9%
Improved access to electricity	60.8%	23.6%	57.0%	30.0%	67.7%	30.2%
Improved waste disposal system	48.4%	39.6%	62.0%	26.0%	68.1%	28.4%
improved access to safe drinking water	58.6%	31.2%	61.0%	27.0%	77.1%	20.2%
Improved access to education up to grade 10	68.0%	22.7%	61.0%	26.0%	78.4%	19.1%
Improved sewerage facilities	54.3%	34.9%	59.0%	26.0%	80.5%	17.2%

⁴¹ The.President.announces.land.grant.commencement.for. »Binveriya«.housing.scheme.in.August.NPhe.President's.

Office. The President's Office. <https://presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/28571>

Priority areas for the Government

Improving health services	48.6%
Improved housing, including financial assistance	24.4%
Improved social security	8.3%
Improved access to education?	6.7%
Improved sewerage facilities	2.3%
Improved access to electricity	2.2%
Improved access to safe drinking water	2.1%
Improved waste disposal systems	1.7%

DISSATISFACTION ON EFFORTS TO HEALTH SERVICES



42.9%
 Respondents believed that the State did not make appropriate efforts to improve health services

Public perception of the State efforts to improve health services was satisfactory in the years 2011 at 46.4% and 50% in 2019. However, this percentage has decreased to 42.9% overturning the public perception on the provision of health services with an increase of the respondents (53.6%) who believed the government did not make appropriate efforts to improve the issue.

The concerns of the public regarding economic and social rights were evident from the opinions mentioned above which were further validated when the respondents were asked the single most important social issue the government should prioritize. Approximately half of the respondents have stated that the government should be focusing on improving health services, which has been consistent since initially asking this question in 2011.

Improving housing has ranked as second most important issue highlighted by the respondents since 2011, however, the number of respondents raising concerns about this issue has been increasing in every survey (15.9% in 2011, 16.9% in 2019, 24.4% in 2024) suggesting that the need for sustainable housing solutions has not been met. There were differences in opinion among the urban and outer island areas where more respondents (52.3%) stated improving access to health services compared to the respondents from urban areas (44.2%). 30.7% of respondents from the urban areas stated improving housing issues while 18.6% respondents in the outer islands shared this view. A further 8% of survey respondents stated improving social security followed by 6.7% respondents stated improving access to education.

Access to Information

The right to access information is a fundamental human right that is essential for making informed decisions and ensuring participation in a democratic society. This right is guaranteed by the Constitution and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Most of the respondents expressed unhappiness with the accessibility of information from central and local administrations (44%), an opinion that has been mostly constant in both 2019 (41.9%) and 2011 (42.9%). A larger proportion of urban respondents expressed dissatisfaction (45.6%) compared to respondents from outer islands (42.1%), contrasting with the significant disparity in 2011 when the outer islands (54%) showed a greater dissatisfaction than the urban population (30%) indicating more information was accessible from the local administrations and there was a positive change in the public information availability in the islands compared to previous surveys. However, there lies room for significant improvement even in the outer islands as more respondents were dissatisfied (42.1%) than satisfied (39.1%). Half of respondents with a disability expressed dissatisfaction, citing limited access to information, a complaint raised across many platforms.

The Constitution stipulates that all information concerning government decisions and actions to be made public unless declared as State secrets and a Right to Information Act (Act. No.1/2014) was ratified in 2014 to empower citizens by giving them the right to access information about public authorities, and to promote transparency and accountability in the government.

However, even after a decade of enacting the Act, almost half of the respondents did not believe that they were able to use and benefit from the Act. Respondents aged between 56 to 65 were the most unhappy with 54.7% while the youngest age group between 18 to 25 years being the least dissatisfied with 38.2% of the respondents. The question had a significant non-response rate at 17.3%. It was identified that a significant number of respondents were not aware of the Act, which suggests that increased awareness was essential to achieve the most favorable results from the Act.

DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE ABLE TO USE AND BENEFIT FROM THE RTI ACT?



Access to Information			
	2011	2019	2024
Satisfied	25.8%	31.4%	34.2%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.8%	6.0%	11.4%
Dissatisfied	42.9%	41.9%	44.1%
Refuse	17.5%	1.8%	0.7%
Don't Know/ Not Applicable	18.9%	20.7%	9.6%

Equality and non-discrimination are fundamental pillars of human rights, and it is the State's duty to guarantee equitable access to basic resources for all individuals. The Maldives implemented the Decentralization Act (Act No.7/2010), with one of its objectives being promoting local development through participation and inclusivity. Nonetheless, 84.9% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction over the distribution of resources between Male' and the atoll, with over half of the respondents strongly disagreeing. This represents a substantial increase from the 57% of the people who opposed the statement in the previous survey in 2019.

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION AMONG MAALE AND ATOLLS



The respondents from Male' itself had strongly disagreed (56.3%) to the opinion showing consensus across the country. The findings reveal a distinct disparity in resources between Male' and the atolls, necessitating efforts to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources among people. Furthermore, these results show that additional research needs to be done to assess the implementation of the Act over the past 15 years.

Do you believe there is a fair and equal distribution among Maale and atolls		
	Urban	Outer islands
Strongly Agree	2%	1%
Agree	5%	6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4%	4%
Disagree	27%	35%
Strongly Disagree	57%	49%

Participation in public affairs*

The right to participate in public affairs is codified in international law in Article 21 of the UDHR and Article 25 of ICCPR. It is also a core value of democracy which is crucial to ensure inclusivity and social cohesion. Participation ensures diversity of views and opinions in decision-making, allowing for more tailored approaches in policies and programs that fulfil the needs and priorities of the various voices in society, with emphasis on the inclusion of marginalized population when formulating policies. Although Maldives is a representative democracy and allows casting ballots for the parliament and the president, the right to participation extend beyond voting. Everyone has the right to participate in the decision-making processes that impact them.

SATISFACTION ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION



* This is a new question administered in this year's survey.

This question highlights the significance of public engagement in a democratic society and is new to the survey, excluding any comparative analysis with past cycles. The survey indicated that a significant population of 60.3% were dissatisfied with the current level of participation in State affairs, with Southern and Central regions having greater dissatisfaction levels compared to other regions. The youngest demographic aged 18 to 25 years was observed to be the least dissatisfied potentially due their detachment from the civic sphere observed during the election monitoring of the of the most recent elections in the country.⁴²

reinforcement of the current policies regarding public participation across all levels of the country.

View on the extent of citizen participation in matters related with citizens

	18-25	26-35	36-55	56-65	65+
Satisfied	20.8%	16.8%	17.2%	20.4%	26.7%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	16.8%	16.1%	12.8%	8.8%	10.7%
Dissatisfied	51.2%	55.9%	59.0%	61.2%	53.3%
RF	2.4%	0.0%	0.4%	1.4%	0.0%
DK/NA	8.8%	11.2%	10.2%	8.2%	9.3%

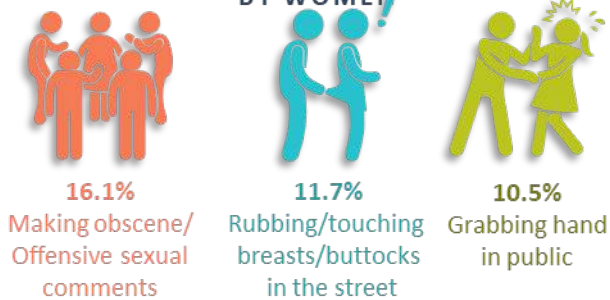
Both the urban centers and outer islands depicted a similar trend with the outer islands showing a slightly higher level of dissatisfaction (61% vs 59.2%) suggesting a consistent pattern across the country. Furthermore, half of the respondents with one or more disabilities stated to be dissatisfied with the level of participation in State affairs. The Survey indicates a need for further assessment regarding public participation and further

⁴² Human Rights Commission (2023), Presidential.Elections.Monitoring.Report.8689 Retrieved by

<https://hrcm.org.mv/en/publications/presidential-election-report-2023-dhivehi>

Sexual Harassment

COMMON FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC – FACED BY WOMEN



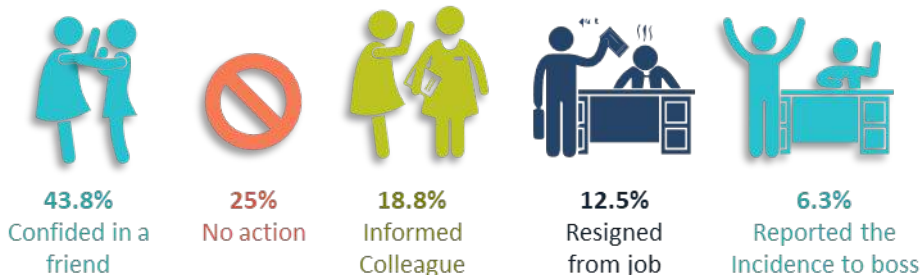
COMMON FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC – FACED BY MEN



MOST COMMON FORM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN WORK PLACE



ACTIONS TAKEN BY VICTIM



Common forms of sexual harassment in public – faced by women

	Ever	In past 2 years	Never	Refuse	DKNA
A man rubbed himself up against you or touched you on the breasts or bottom in the street, at the night	11.66	1.42	83.21	2.56	1.14
A man grabbed your hand in a public place	10.53	1.14	85.78	1.56	1
A man rubbed himself up against you or touched you on the breasts or bottom on, or when getting on or off, a ferry or other vessel	4.27	0.85	91.32	2.99	0.57
A man made obscene or offensive sexual comments to you	16.07	2.7	78.81	1.99	0.43
A man rubbed up against you or touched you on the breasts or bottom when you were swimming with other people	2.13	0.71	94.17	2.42	0.57

Sexual harassment continues to be a significant concern, highlighting ongoing societal and workplace challenges. In 2023, the Maldives Police Service investigated 325 cases of sexual offenses, including 39 cases specifically related to sexual harassment, underscoring the prevalence.^{43 44 45}

Sexual harassment in public places – faced by women

When women were asked about the most likely type of harassment they were subjected to, they said it was a man making obscene or offensive sexual comments (16.1%). The second most common type of harassment reported by women were of a man rubbing himself up against the respondents or touching them on their breasts or buttocks in the street, at the night market or any other public place (11.7%), followed closely by a man grabbing their hand in public (10.5%), in third place.

COMMON FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC – FACED BY WOMEN



The 2024 data align with the 2019 findings, as the top two categories remained unchanged. In 2019 the most common type of harassment was cited as a man making obscene or offensive sexual comments (14.2%) and a man rubbing himself up against the respondents or touching them on their breasts or buttocks in the street, at the night market or any other public place (12.8%). However, in 2011 the most common type of harassment was cited as grabbing the victim's hand in public (22.9%).

Sexual harassment in public places – faced by men

Male respondents identified a woman grabbing their hand in a public place as the most common type of harassment (6.2%). The second most common type of harassment identified by men was a

⁴³The Maldives Police service, Crime Statistics Q1 2023 retrieved by [Crime Statistics Q1 2023 3e2223a8c5.pdf](#)

⁴⁴ The Maldives Police Service, Crime Statistics Q2 2023 retrieved by [Crime Statistics Q2 2023 7d07172095.pdf](#)

⁴⁵ The Maldives Police Service, Crime Statistics Q3 2023 retrieved by [Crime Statistics 2023 Q3 315040081e.pdf](#)

woman making obscene or offensive sexual comments to them (5.2%).

COMMON FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC – FACED BY MEN



6.2%
Grabbing hands
in public



5.2%
Making obscene/
Offensive sexual
comments

While sexual harassment of both men and women is equally abhorrent, it is important to note that the percentage of women who have experienced harassment in all categories are higher compared to men, indicating that more women are subjected to sexual harassment than men.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

The Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Harassment Act (Act No.16/2014), aims to prevent and address sexual harassment in various contexts such as workplaces and public spaces. It defines sexual harassment broadly and outlines legal measures for victims to seek redress and protection.

The law mandates organizations to establish committees to handle complaints and ensure a safe working environment.

MOST COMMON FORM OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN WORK PLACE



4.5%
Stated it was colleagues
making obscene/Offensive
Sexual comments

62.5%
Were Women

Although the large majority of respondents (81.2%) viewed their workplace as safe, a lower but significant 15.6% respondents expressed that they do not believe their workplace to be safe. Most respondents stated that they had never encountered any form of sexual harassment in their workplace. Among those who acknowledged having had experiences of harassment at the workplace, the most identified type of harassment was constantly using obscene or sexually suggestive language or remarks aimed at the respondent or colleagues (4.5%). Among these respondents a staggering 62.5% were women whereas, only 37.5% were men. It is also to be noted that respondents who reported being subjected to the constant use of obscene or sexually suggestive language or remarks were mostly from

Common forms of sexual harassment in public – faced by Men

	Ever	In past 2 years	Never	Refuse	DKNA
A woman rubbed herself up against you or touched your private parts in the street, at the night	3.74	0.36	90.57	2.49	2.85
A woman grabbed your hand in a public place	6.23	0.89	88.26	1.96	2.67
A woman has rubbed herself up against you or touched your private parts when getting on or off, a ferry or other vessel	1.42	0.36	93.24	2.14	2.85
A woman made obscene or offensive sexual comments to you	5.16	0.71	89.5	2.14	2.49
A woman has rubbed herself up against you or touched your private parts while swimming or performing other activities	1.42	0	92.88	2.85	2.85

Common forms of Sexual Harassment in work place					
	Ever	In past 2 years	Never	Refuse	DKNA
Another employee, or your boss, touched you inappropriately at work, such as rubbing up against you, touching you on the breasts or bottom or patting, pinching or stroking you market or any other public place?	1.84	0.71	93.07	1.56	2.83
At work, constantly uses obscene or sexually suggestive language/ remarks aimed at you or your female colleagues	4.53	1.13	90.81	1.27	2.26
At work, persistently suggested that you have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship	1.7	0.57	93.78	1.84	2.12
At work, you were shown/exposed to pornography or sexually explicit photos, text etc	2.12	0.28	94.06	1.27	2.26
At work, threatened you or implied trouble if you did not have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship	0.57	0.57	95.33	1.56	1.98
At work, forced you to have sex with him against your will, or attempted to do this [forced Ziney]?	0.14	0.28	95.47	2.12	1.98

urban regions (81.3%) as opposed 18.8% from outer islands.

The decrease in the percentage of respondents who reported experiencing any of the listed behaviors reflects a positive advancement in workplace conditions. Although sexual harassment remains present in the workplace, it is noteworthy that all the listed types of workplace sexual harassment have declined over the past 20 years, reflecting a positive change. This improvement can be attributed to the effective implementation of the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Harassment Act, which has contributed to increased awareness,

the enforcement of stricter policies, and the development of enhanced workplace training programs to prevent such behaviors.

More than half (59.6%) of the respondents had stated that their workplace has a complaints mechanism whereas 23.9% stated their workplace lacks any mechanisms for complaints. The majority of the respondents (61.5%) who stated that their workplace lacks a mechanism for complaints were from outer islands. This disparity may stem from limited resources, smaller organizational structures, and reduced regulatory oversight in outer islands.

Type of harassment at work place				
	2005	2011	2019	2024
Another employee, or your boss, touched you inappropriately at work, such as rubbing up against you, touching you on the breasts or bottom or patting, pinching or stroking you market or any other public place?	7.30%	8.30%	2.69%	1.84%
At work, constantly uses obscene or sexually suggestive language/ remarks aimed at you or your female colleagues	17.50%	11.50%	3.54%	4.53%
At work, persistently suggested that you have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship	5.50%	5.40%	2.71%	1.70%
At work, you were shown/exposed to pornography or sexually explicit photos, text etc	1.50%	5.40%	1.72%	2.12%
At work, threatened you or implied trouble if you did not have sex with him or begin a sexual relationship	1.50%	4.10%	1.20%	0.57%
At work, forced you to have sex with him against your will, or attempted to do this [forced Ziney]?	2.00%	3.40%	1.22%	0.14%

Among respondents who disclosed how they responded to harassment, the majority (43.8%) reported confiding in a friend or a family member about their experience. A significant proportion (25%) chose to take no action, while 18.8% informed a colleague at work and only 6.3% of respondents reported the incident to their boss. Alarming, 12.5% of respondents indicated that they resigned from their job because of the harassment. It is particularly concerning that none of the respondents reported the incident to external authorities such as the police, Island Office, Atoll Office, or the Gender Ministry, nor did they lodge a case with the Committee on Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse at their workplace or the Employment Tribunal.

to ensure that actions taken effectively address harassment and lead to positive outcomes.

Change in situation		
	2019	2024
Improve the situation	2.9%	20%
Make the situation worse	0.5%	1.7%
Make no difference	4.3%	8.9%
Refuse	92.4%	3.9%
Don't Know/Not Applicable		65.4

20% of the respondents stated their action had improved the situation while 8.9% said it made no difference and 1.7% said it made the situation worse. This highlights the need for robust reporting mechanisms

ACTIONS TAKEN BY VICTIM



Conclusion

The survey revealed a significant decline in respondents' knowledge of human rights with only half of the respondents able to identify five fundamental rights compared to 2011. This highlights a critical need for immediate and effective interventions to address the knowledge gap.

Child rights was perceived as the most important right, mirroring sentiments from previous years. However, over half of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the protection of child rights. Access to health and education ranked among the most important rights, while adequate housing has made its debut in the top five rights. This shift may reflect current public sentiments concerning accessibility to affordable housing. Moreover, the data indicated that a significant majority of respondents lack access to mental health services; a new area explored in RSL. There was widespread dissatisfaction regarding the fulfillment of the most emphasized human rights, indicating that substantial efforts are required to ensure these rights are guaranteed equitably and without discrimination.

The importance of women's right to equality shifted from second to fifth place, with fewer men recognizing this right as a priority. This shift indicates a decline in support for gender equality; however, there have been improvements in perceptions regarding gender equality in specific contexts such as home, workplace, courts, and public spaces. Notably, discrepancies remain between genders, with men generally less supportive than women, emphasizing the need for targeted advocacy efforts.

The data also demonstrated a more nuanced understanding of inequalities present in marital relationships, domestic settings and the public sphere. A significant number of women believed that it was a wife's obligation to engage in sexual relations with her husband irrespective of her consent, raising concerns about women's bodily autonomy. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents indicated that men should hold authoritative roles within the household, with more respondents justifying physical violence against wives compared to husbands in similar circumstances. Additionally, the findings of the survey highlighted the gap in public understanding of the underlying challenges hindering women's participation in the public sphere. These complex gender disparities contribute to wider societal problems that necessitate urgent action.

The prevalence of sexual abuse against both girls and boys were perceived as a serious issue across all demographics, reinforcing the need for preventive measures to protect children's rights within their homes, often considered their safest environments.

The relationship between human rights and religion continues to be perceived as conflicting, particularly women were likely to perceive such conflicts. However, there has been an encouraging trend towards greater acceptance of migrant workers practicing their religion compared to 2011.

Other rights associated with religion included marriage of mature adolescents where approximately one-third of respondents believe that adolescents under 18 should be permitted to marry with majority of respondents belief being dictated by religion. This indicates an increasing influence of religious perspectives despite concerns regarding child vulnerability and existing legal frameworks.

Public perception of democratic reforms varied, with more respondents viewing the reforms as not beneficial, a concerning reflection from the public 25 years after the new constitution came to effect. The public expressed a general dissatisfaction towards equality of resource allocation, participation in the governing process and access to information from the administration which is critical to be effectively established in an efficient democracy.

A strong dissatisfaction was observed across services provided by the State and the State institutions. Corruption was identified as a significant barrier to the democratic success with the public raising concerns regarding corruption in the judiciary, police services the prison system as well. The significant increase in concern over corruption is a key area that requires immediate and serious interventions.

Dissatisfaction regarding the rights of older people had also increased, reflecting a decline from previous surveys. The non-consensual use of pension allowances has emerged as a newly identified concern warranting further exploration. More respondents, particularly persons with disabilities, expressed dissatisfaction with the protection of their rights. Persons with disabilities also highlighted dissatisfaction with the participation in decision-making process which is crucial to ensure the policies enacted by the government are inclusive and participatory.

Furthermore, the younger demographics demonstrate notable disparities on human rights compared to older age groups, reflecting significant generational shifts. These differences were more pronounced across various issues highlighting the urgent need for targeted outreach efforts to enhance their understanding of human rights, gender equality, democratic reforms, and civic participation.

The awareness of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (HRCM) among the general population remained relatively consistent in 2024. However, notable disparities in awareness levels were observed across various demographics. Specifically, women demonstrated a higher level of awareness compared to men, while awareness was significantly lower among migrant workers. Furthermore, there is significant support among the populace for the HRCM to intensify its initiatives in critical areas such as education on human rights and the protection of vulnerable populations.

Annex

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