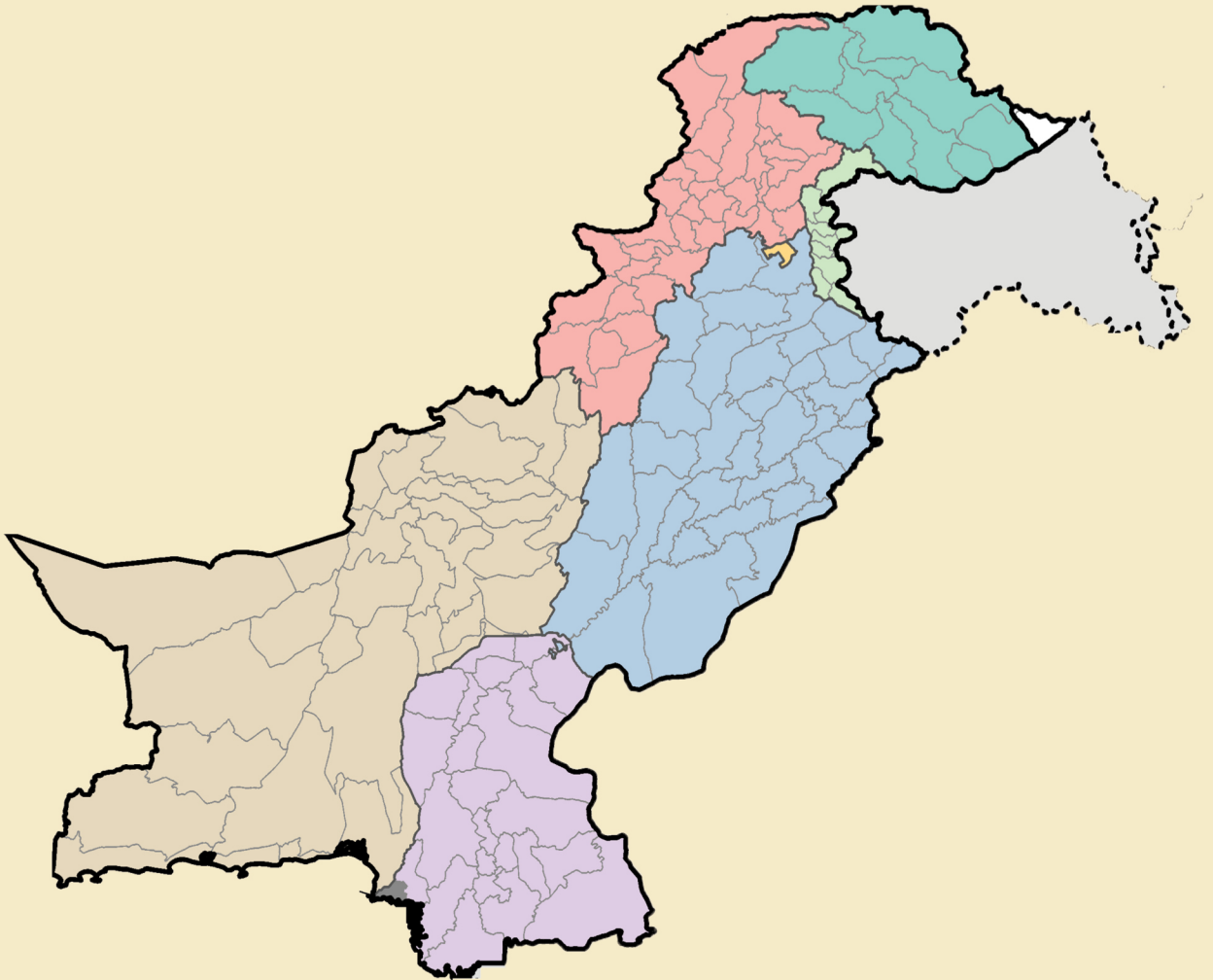


# GALLUP BIG DATA ANALYSIS OF CENSUS 2017 | VOLUME 14

Interesting trend analysis and patterns  
in mother tongue of Pakistanis using Census  
2017 and 1998



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Gallup Big Data Analysis of Census 2017

### **Volume 14**

#### **INTERESTING TREND ANALYSIS AND PATTERNS IN MOTHER TONGUE OF PAKISTANIS USING CENSUS 2017 AND 1998**

*Islamabad, May 6, 2022*

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at the Pakistan National Census 2017 ratified recently.

This series aims to present the important learnings from the census for policy makers, the public as well as for marketers in an easy and understandable way. The previous reports within this series sheds light on key topics like literacy ratios, population density, level of congestion, period of house construction and sources of energy, drinking water and information/communication, population with disability, Pakistani citizens holding a CNIC, homeless population etc.

*Click [Here](#) to view the previous reports.*

**Today's Topic is "Population by Mother Tongue: Census Year 2017"**

#### **Key Findings**

- 1) Population by Mother Tongue:** Urdu was the mother tongue of 7% of Pakistanis in 2017.
- 2) Comparison with 1998 Census:** The native speakers of Punjabi had decreased significantly from 44% of the population claiming it as their mother tongue in 1998 to 39% in 2017, a decrease of 5% over the course of two decades.
- 3) Provincial Breakdown:** Native Punjabi speaking population is disproportionately less than the province's population; Punjab's share is 55% of the total population while 39% of the residents claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue in 2017.
- 4) Rural Breakdown:** 36% of rural Pakistanis claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue in 2017.
- 5) Comparison with 1998 Census:** Over the course of two decades in the rural areas of Pakistan, the proportion of people who claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue decreased by 7% (from 43% in 1998 to 36% in 2017) and the proportion for native Pashto speakers increased by 4% (from 18% in 1998 to 22% in 2017).
- 6) Urban Breakdown:** 17% of the urban population in Pakistan claims that their mother tongue is Urdu.
- 7) Comparison with 1998 Census:** Native Sindhi speaking population witnessed a 3% increase in urban areas; Sindhi was the mother tongue of 9% of the urban residents in 1998 while the figure increased to 12% in 2017.

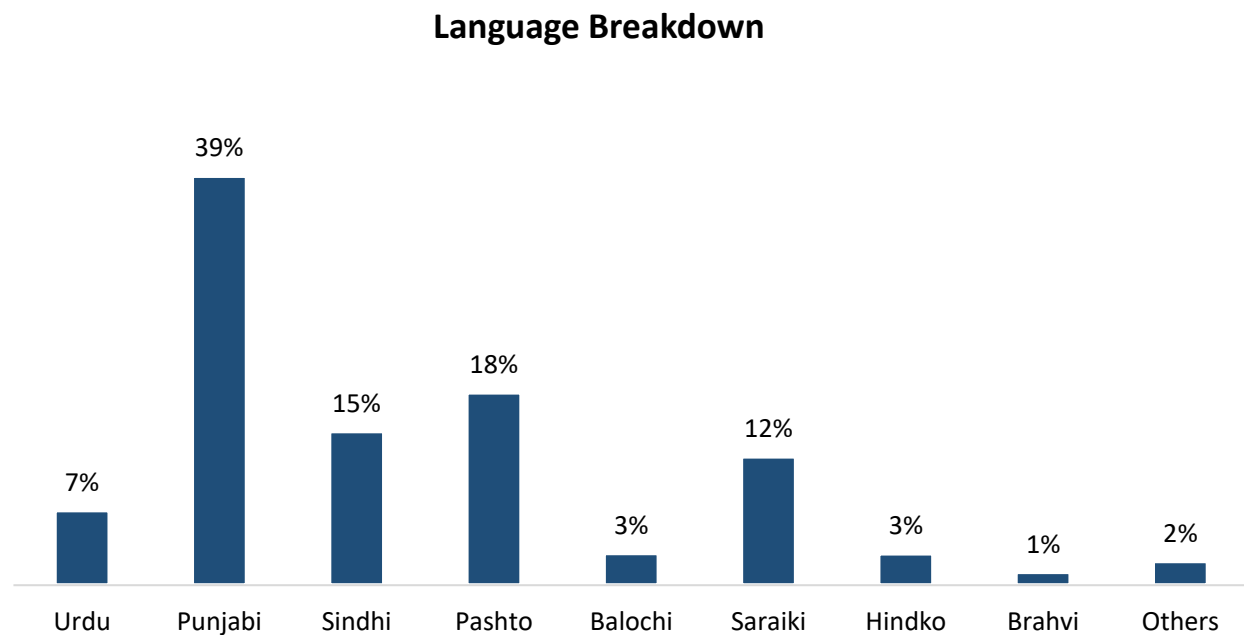
### 1) *Population by Mother Tongue: Urdu was the mother tongue of 7% of Pakistanis in 2017.*

According to Ethnologue - a web-based publication's 19th edition, published in 2016, there are 7,457 languages of the world and of these 360 are "dead languages". The rest of the languages are "endangered" and there is a pressing need to act to prevent them from becoming extinct.

Some of these endangered languages are also spoken in Pakistan. As per the publication, there are 73 spoken languages in Pakistan. The language diversity in Pakistan is very rich with several languages belonging to Indo-Aryan, Indo-Iranian and Sino-Tibetan family of languages.

The 2017 census reveals that the national language of Pakistan, Urdu, was the mother tongue of 7% of Pakistanis. Punjabi emerged as the language spoken by the majority of the citizens (39%) who claimed it to be their native language. This could also be attributed to the huge population of the province of Punjab. It was followed by Pashto (18%), primarily spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and Sindhi (15%), Saraiki (12%), Balochi (3%), Hindko (3%), Brahvi (1%) and others (2%).

*Figure 1: Population by Language (Mother Tongue) in Pakistan in 2017*

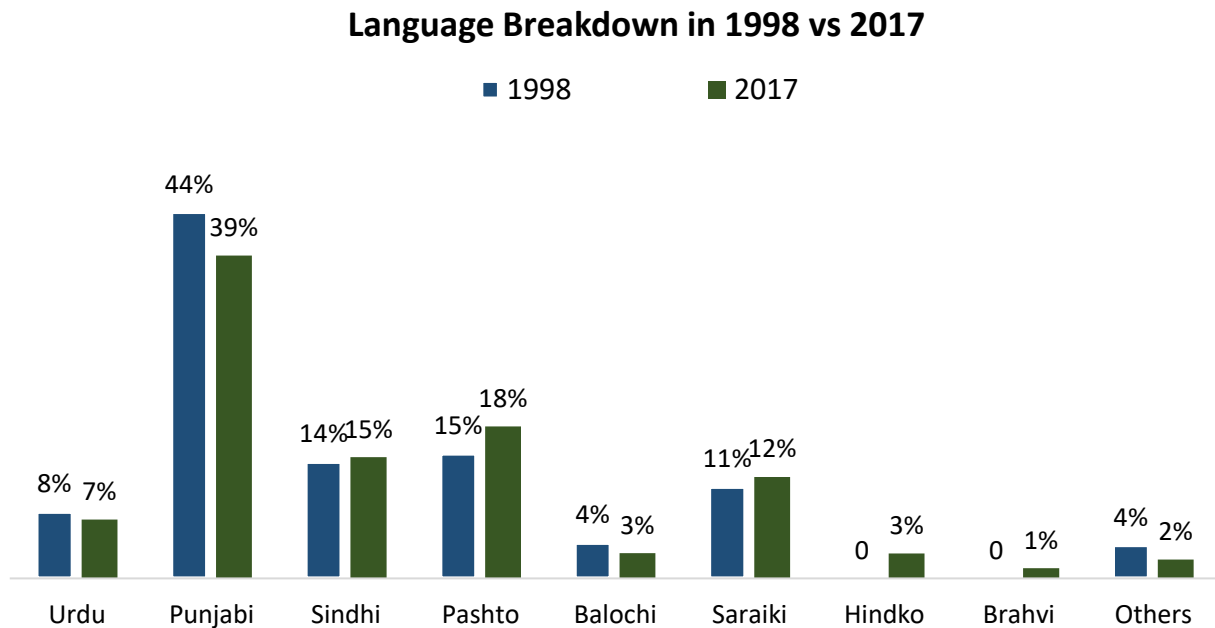


### 2) *Comparison with 1998 Census: The native speakers of Punjabi had decreased significantly from 44% of the population claiming it as their mother tongue in 1998 to 39% in 2017, a decrease of 5% over the course of two decades.*

The native speakers of Punjabi had decreased significantly from 44% of the population claiming it as their mother tongue in 1998 to 39% in 2017, a decrease of 5% over the course of two decades. Similarly, Pashto had seen an increase in usage from 15% of the population reporting it as their

mother tongue in 1998 to 18% in 2017. Native Urdu speakers had also seen a decline in usage by 1 percentage points in the said timeframe.

Figure 2: Population by Language (Mother Tongue) in Pakistan in 2017 vs 1998 Census



*\*Hindko and Brahvi were not included in 1998 census*

**3) Provincial Breakdown: Native Punjabi speaking population is disproportionately less than the province's population; Punjab's share is 55% of the total population while 39% of the residents claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue in 2017.**

An analysis of Pakistan's total population as per 2017 census reveals that 53% of Pakistan's population reside in Punjab, 23% in Sindh, 15% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 6% in Balochistan, 2% in FATA (now part of KPK) and 1% in Islamabad.

This shows that native Punjabi speaking population is disproportionately less than the province's population; Punjab's share is 55% of the total population while 39% of the residents claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue in 2017. This hints that the province has a diversity of population with differing mother tongues. A similar trend can also be seen for Sindhi where it has 23% of Pakistan's population but only consists of 15% of Sindhi-speaking individuals. Native Pashto speaking citizens are proportionate to the provincial share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

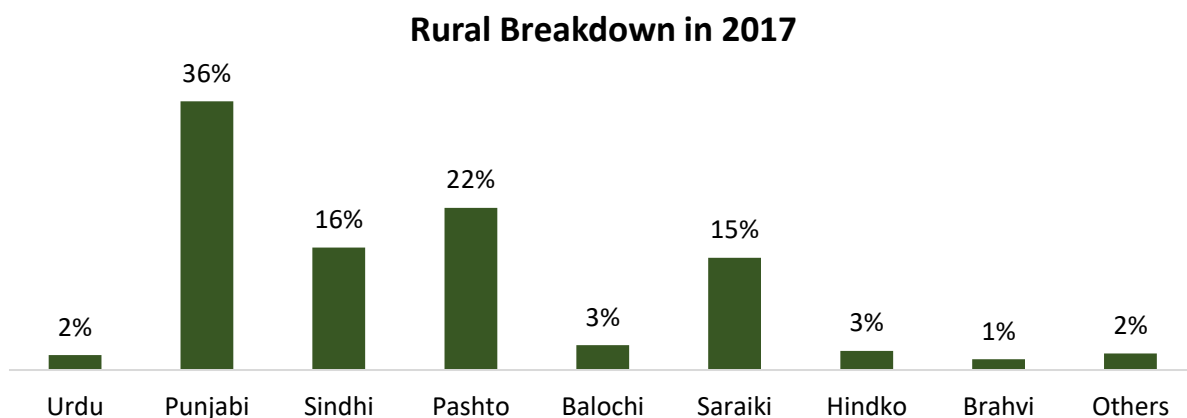
Figure 3: Provincial Breakdown of Native Languages in 2017

	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pashto	Balochi	Kashmiri	Saraiki	Hindko	Brahvi	Others
<b>Pakistan</b>	7%	39%	15%	18%	3%	0%	12%	2%	1%	2%
<b>KPK</b>	1%	1%	0%	77%	0%	0%	4%	11%	0%	6%
<b>Punjab</b>	5%	70%	0%	2%	1%	0%	21%	1%	0%	1%
<b>Sindh</b>	18%	5%	62%	5%	2%	0%	2%	2%	1%	3%
<b>Balochistan</b>	1%	1%	5%	35%	35%	0%	3%	0%	17%	2%
<b>FATA</b>	0%	0%	0%	98%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Federal Capital</b>	12%	52%	1%	19%	0%	2%	2%	6%	0%	5%

**4) Rural Breakdown: 36% of rural Pakistanis claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue in 2017.**

As per the 2017 census, 63.56% of Pakistan's population reside in rural areas. Among the rural areas, 36% of rural Pakistanis claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue. It was followed by Pashto with 22% of native speakers along with Sindhi (16%), Saraiki (15%), Balochi (3%), Hindko (3%), Brahvi (1%) and others (2%).

Figure 4 - Rural Breakdown: Population by Mother Tongue in 2017

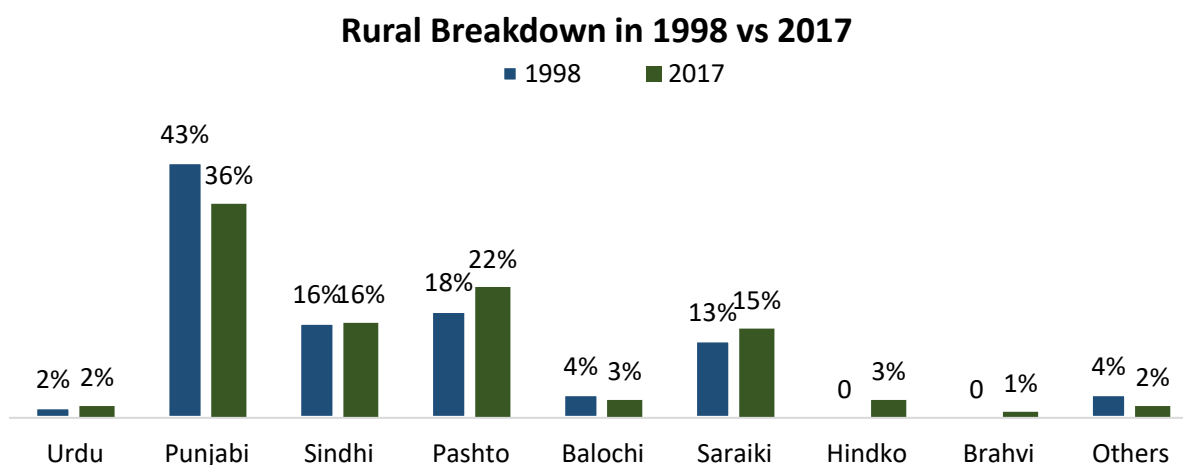


**5) Comparison with 1998 Census: Over the course of two decades in the rural areas of Pakistan, the proportion of people who claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue decreased by 7% (from 43% in 1998 to 36% in 2017) and the proportion for native Pashto speakers increased by 4% (from 18% in 1998 to 22% in 2017).**

Over the course of two decades in the rural areas of Pakistan, the proportion of people who claimed Punjabi to be their mother tongue decreased by 7% (from 33% in 1998 to 36% in 2017) and the proportion for native Pashto speakers increased by 4% (from 18% in 1998 to 22% in 2017). This

could potentially be attributed to the political-economic conditions of the country and the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan. Sindhi speaking population remained stable in rural areas of Pakistan.

*Figure 5 - Rural Breakdown: Population by Mother Tongue in 2017 vs 1998 census*

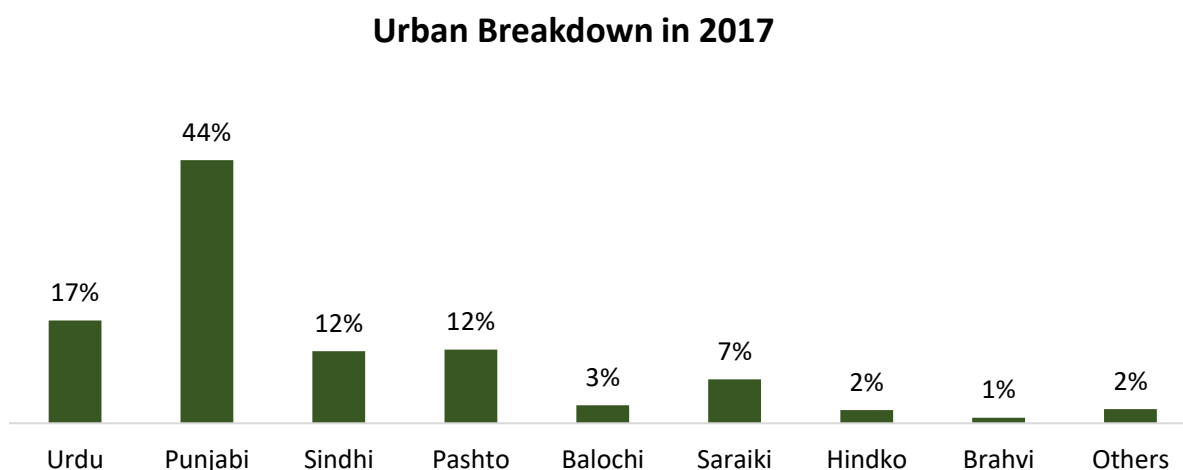


*\*Hindko and Brahvi were not included in 1998 census*

#### **6) Urban Breakdown: 17% of the urban population in Pakistan claims that their mother tongue is Urdu.**

According to the 2017 census, 36.44% of Pakistan's population reside in urban areas. Of these, a predominantly high proportion are people whose mother tongue is Punjabi (44%) followed by Pashto (12%), Sindhi (12%), Balochi (3%), Saraiki (7%), Hindko (2%), Brahvi (1%), and others (2%). 17% of the urban population in Pakistan claims that their mother tongue is Urdu.

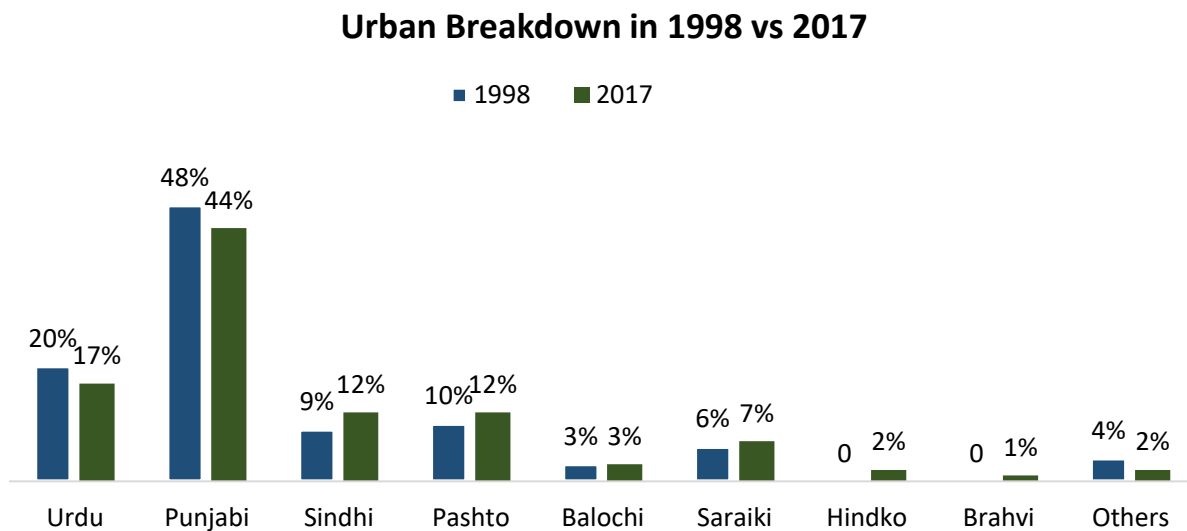
*Figure 6 – Urban Breakdown: Population by Mother Tongue in 2017*



**7) Comparison with 1998 Census: Native Sindhi speaking population witnessed a 3% increase in urban areas; Sindhi was the mother tongue of 9% of the urban residents in 1998 while the figured increased to 12% in 2017.**

Native Sindhi speaking population witnessed a 3% increase in urban areas; Sindhi was the mother tongue of 9% of the urban residents in 1998 while the figured increased to 12% in 2017. Moreover, 48% of the urban residents claimed Punjabi was their mother tongue in 1998 and the figured decreased to 44% in 2017. The trends for Pashto, Balochi and Saraiki remained relatively stable across two decades.

*Figure 7 – Urban Breakdown: Population by Mother Tongue in 2017 vs 1998 census*



*\*Hindko and Brahvi were not included in 1998 census*

### **Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis**

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

Individual Big Data Analysis reports can be found at the following links:

#### **Census Reports**

**Volume 1:** Male Literacy Ratio: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32297>

**Volume 2:** Female Literacy Ratio: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32361>

**Volume 3:** Population by Administrative Units: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32389>

**Volume 4:** Level of Congestion: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32423>

**Volume 5:** Sources of Energy: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32452>

**Volume 6:** Sources of Drinking Water: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32471>

**Volume 7:** Sources of Information/Communication: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32496>

**Volume 8:** Owned Housing Units by Period of Construction:  
<https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32525>

**Volume 9:** Construction Material Used for Outer Walls: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32564>

**Volume 10:** Population with Disability: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32625>

**Volume 11:** Pakistani Citizens Holding Computerized National Identity Cards:  
<https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32720>

**Volume 12:** Number of Persons Living Abroad: <https://www.gallup.com.pk/post/32720>

**Volume 13:** Homeless Population: <https://gallup.com.pk/post/32888>

### **Wish to know more about National Census 2017**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Population and Housing Census of Pakistan was undertaken throughout the country from 15<sup>th</sup> March to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017. For this purpose, the country was delimited into manageable census areas i.e., Blocks, Circles, Charges and Districts. The whole exercise was successfully completed by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) through deployment of field staff in all the census areas with strong support from the Provincial Government Departments and the Armed Forces of Pakistan.

You can find more information on the national census and complete tables on [www.pbs.gov.pk](http://www.pbs.gov.pk)

Or visit:

[https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//population\\_census/ncr/ncr%20Pakistan.pdf](https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//population_census/ncr/ncr%20Pakistan.pdf)



## Appendix

### Population by Mother Tongue in 2017

POPULATION BY MOTHER TONGUE - Table 11, Census 2017											
ALL	TOTAL	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pashto	Balochi	Kashmiri	Saraiki	Hindko	Brahvi	Others
Pakistan	100%	7%	39%	15%	18%	3%	0%	12%	2%	1%	2%
KPK	100%	1%	1%	0%	77%	0%	0%	4%	11%	0%	6%
Punjab	100%	5%	70%	0%	2%	1%	0%	21%	1%	0%	1%
Sindh	100%	18%	5%	62%	5%	2%	0%	2%	2%	1%	3%
Balochistan	100%	1%	1%	5%	35%	35%	0%	3%	0%	17%	2%
FATA	100%	0%	0%	0%	98%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Federal Capital	100%	12%	52%	1%	19%	0%	2%	2%	6%	0%	5%

### Population by Mother Tongue (Rural) in 2017

Rural	TOTAL	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pashto	Balochi	Kashmiri	Saraiki	Hindko	Brahvi	Others
Pakistan	100%	1%	36%	16%	22%	3%	0%	15%	3%	1%	2%
KPK	100%	0%	0%	0%	77%	0%	0%	4%	12%	0%	7%
Punjab	100%	2%	67%	0%	2%	1%	0%	27%	1%	0%	1%
Sindh	100%	1%	2%	92%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Balochistan	100%	0%	0%	4%	38%	36%	0%	2%	0%	17%	2%
FATA	100%	0%	0%	0%	98%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Federal Capital	100%	10%	56%	1%	15%	0%	2%	2%	6%	0%	7%

### Population by Mother Tongue (Urban) in 2017

Urban	TOTAL	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pashto	Balochi	Kashmiri	Saraiki	Hindko	Brahvi	Others
Pakistan	100%	17%	44%	11%	12%	2%	0%	7%	2%	1%	2%
KPK	100%	3%	2%	0%	77%	0%	0%	5%	11%	0%	2%
Punjab	100%	10%	75%	0%	3%	0%	0%	10%	1%	0%	1%
Sindh	100%	34%	9%	34%	10%	2%	0%	4%	3%	0%	5%
Balochistan	72%	2%	3%	6%	2%	35%	0%	4%	1%	16%	3%
FATA	100%	1%	2%	0%	96%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Federal Capital	100%	14%	48%	1%	22%	0%	2%	2%	7%	0%	3%

### Population by Mother Tongue in 1998

POPULATION BY MOTHER TONGUE								(In percent)
Administrative Unit	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pushto	Balochi	Saraiki	Others	
Pakistan	7.57	44.15	14.1	15.42	3.57	10.53	4.66	
Rural	1.48	42.51	16.46	18.06	3.99	12.97	4.53	
Urban	20.22	47.56	9.20	9.94	2.69	5.46	4.93	



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