

Literacy Rate

7th Pakistan Population and
Housing Census



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of the 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census

Overall literacy rate improved by 1.8%, from 58.9% in 2017 to 60.7% in 2023; the highest literacy rate recorded was among the 13-14 year olds living in urban areas (88.8%) –

Literacy Rate – 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census

Islamabad, September 5th, 2024

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at Literacy Rates for Pakistan. This data is part of a study conducted using the ‘7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census’.

The current edition looks at data from 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, which can be found [HERE](#).

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan’s Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: “The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as [PSLM](#), [Labour Force Survey](#), and [Economic Survey reports](#) as well as [National Census Reports](#) and [Election Commission Data sets](#). The current series is using the [7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census](#), which provides a variety of health statistics. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan.”

What data points this current edition covers:

This series aims to present the important learnings from the 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, for policy makers, the public, as well as for marketers in an easy and understandable way. This edition looks at Literacy Rate statistics for Pakistan. The series’ main aim is to provide data. Implications of these data points for development sector as well as wider socio-political ramifications is something we would like to trigger in relevant circles.

Literacy Rate

7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census

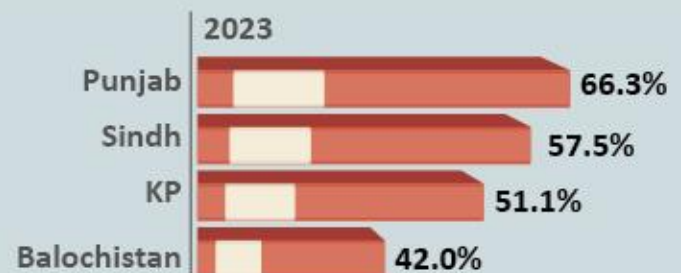
Literacy Rate for Pakistan:

Overall literacy rate improved by 1.8%, from 58.9% in 2017 to 60.7% in 2023.



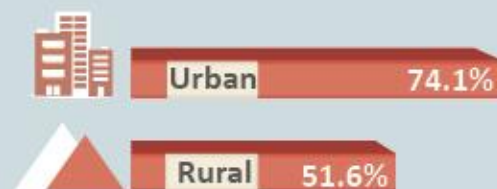
Literacy Rate by Province:

From 2017 to 2023, the total literacy rate in Punjab, Sindh and ICT increased by 2.3%, 2.9% and 2.5% respectively, while it fell for KP by 2.9% and for Balochistan by 1.6%.



Literacy Rate by Region:

Between 2017 to 2023, urban areas showed a modest increase of 0.9%, while rural areas saw a more substantial rise of 1.5% in their literacy rates.



Literacy Rate by Age Group:

Within age groups, the highest literacy rate recorded was among the 13-14 year olds living in urban areas (88.8%).



Source: 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

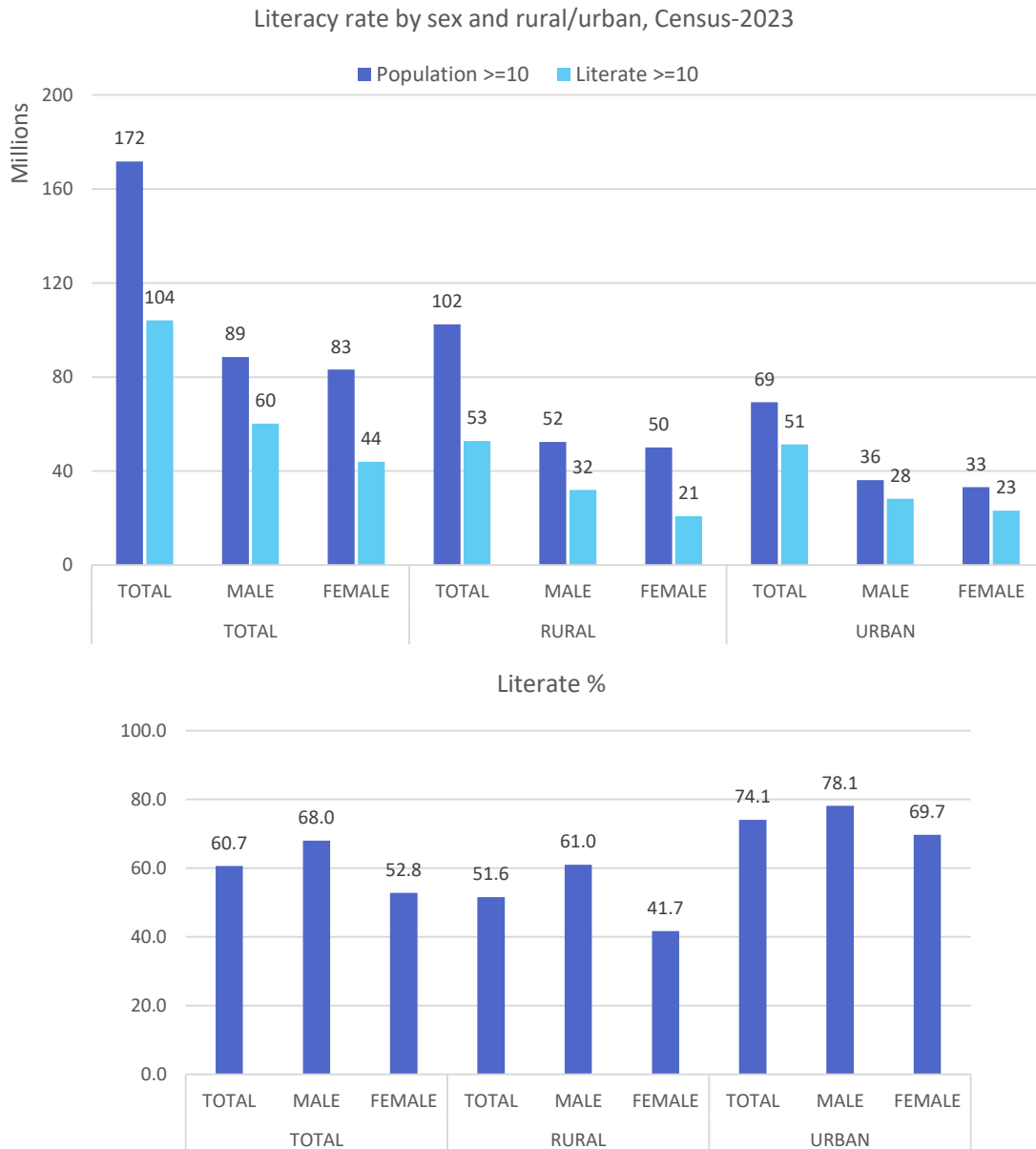
Today's topic is “**Literacy Rate in Pakistan**” from tables 12 and 13a of the 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census

Key Findings:

1. **Literacy Rate for Pakistan:** Overall literacy rate improved by 1.8%, from 58.9% in 2017 to 60.7% in 2023.
2. **Literacy Rate by Province:** From 2017 to 2023, the total literacy rate in Punjab, Sindh and ICT increased by 2.3%, 2.9% and 2.5% respectively, while it fell for KP by 2.9% and for Balochistan by 1.6%.
3. **Literacy Rate by Region:** Between 2017 to 2023, urban areas showed a modest increase of 0.9%, while rural areas saw a more substantial rise of 1.5% in their literacy rates.
4. **Literacy Rate by Age Group:** Within age groups, the highest literacy rate recorded was among the 13-14 year olds living in urban areas (88.8%).
5. **Gender and Regional Literacy Gaps** narrow to 0.7% and 9.5% among Pakistan's youngest age group (5-9 year olds).

1. Literacy Rate by Gender and Rural/Urban¹

According to the 2023 Census, approximately 104 million out of 172 million Pakistanis over the age of 10 were literate, resulting in an overall literacy rate of 60.7% (Fig. 1). Men had a notably higher literacy rate (68%) compared to women (52.8%), and urban areas (74.1%) outpaced rural regions (51.6%) in literacy.



(Fig 1) Source: 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

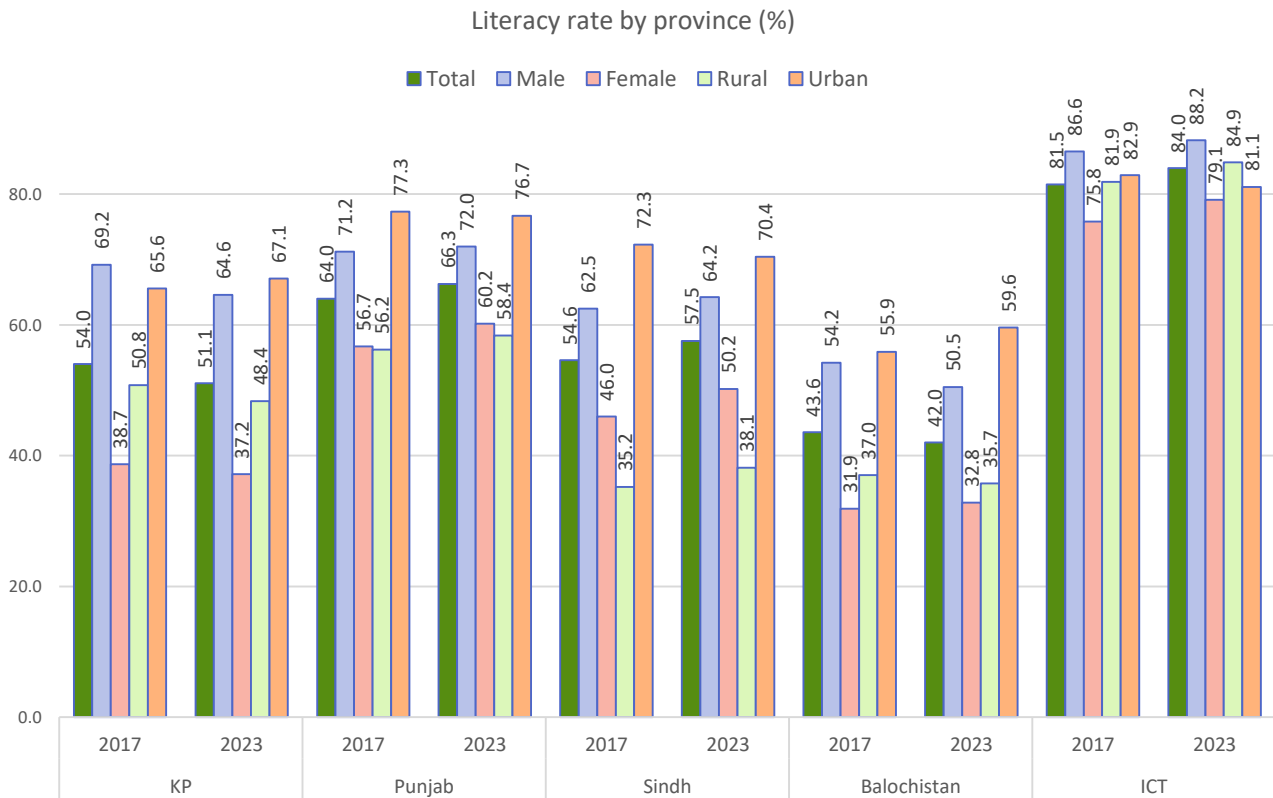
This records an improvement of 1.7 percentage points from 2017², when the overall literacy rate was 58.9%. Since then, the rate has improved by 0.2% for men and 3.2% for women. Compared to 2017, urban areas saw an improvement of 0.9% in their literacy rates, while they improved by 1.5% for rural populations.

¹ Population numbers have been rounded to the nearest million for the sake of analysis. For complete tables, visit: <https://www.gallupkistan.digitalanalytics.com/7th-population-and-housing-census-detailed-results/>

² 6th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, Table 13: <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/2017/tables/pakistan/Table13n.pdf>

The disparities in literacy rates across different demographics underscore the need for targeted interventions. In particular, the lower literacy rates among women and rural populations suggest that these groups require focused attention. Policymakers should consider implementing gender-sensitive educational programs that address the specific challenges faced by women, such as cultural barriers and limited access to educational resources. Additionally, improving infrastructure and resources in rural areas could help close the gap between urban and rural literacy rates.

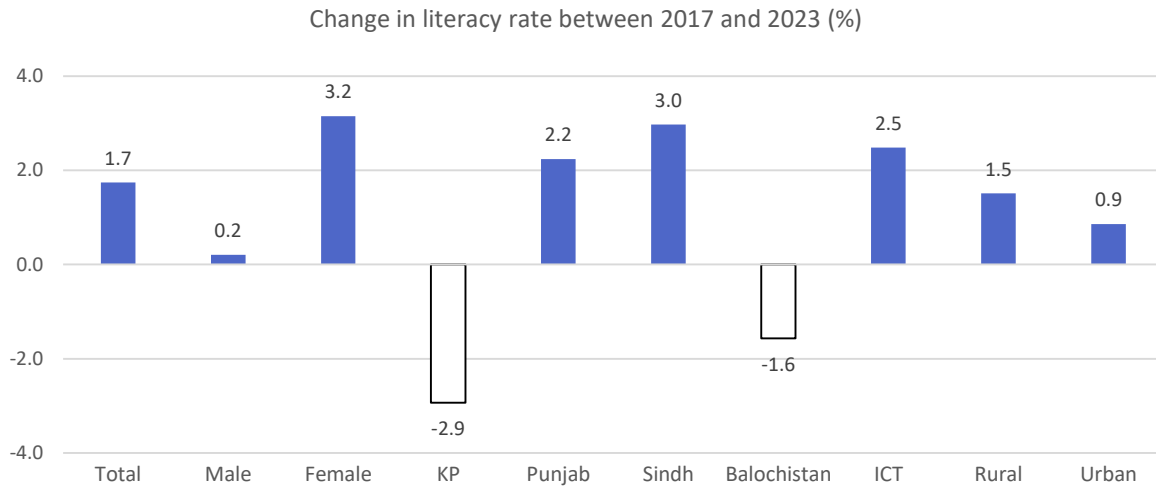
2. Literacy Rate by Province



(Fig 2) Source: 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

From 2017 to 2023, the total literacy rate in Punjab, Sindh and ICT increased by 2.2%, 3.0% and 2.5% respectively, while it fell for KP by 2.9% and for Balochistan by 1.6% (Fig 2). Male populations in ICT recorded the highest literacy rate in 2023 (88.2%), while the lowest was recorded among with female population in Balochistan (32.8%). Among the provinces, Punjab had the highest urban (76.7%) and rural (58.4%) literacy rate in 2023.

It is interesting to note that provinces and regions that are better off to begin with, in terms of resources, tend to improve faster than those with larger rural populations or misdirected resources. While provinces have more legislative and financial autonomy with respect to the education sector, it is important to consider their overall availability of resources – it becomes increasingly difficult to prioritize education when access to basic necessities is not adequate.



(Fig 3) Source: 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

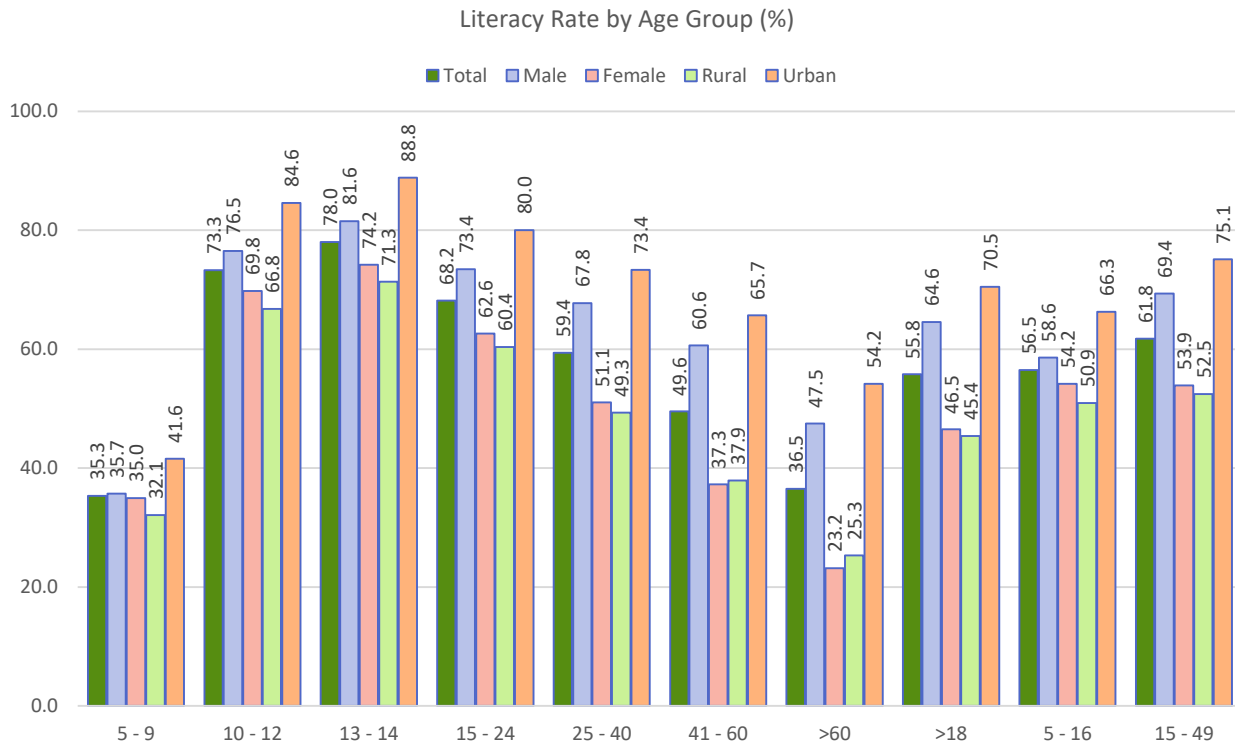
Figure 3 more clearly illustrates the change in literacy rates between 2017 and 2023 across different demographics in Pakistan. These findings once again highlight that while Pakistan has made strides in improving literacy rates, especially among women and in provinces like Sindh and Punjab, there are still areas that require focused attention, such as KP and Balochistan, where literacy rates have declined. The significant gains in female literacy and urban areas suggest that targeted initiatives can yield positive results. These insights are crucial for policymakers as they underscore the effectiveness of localized education policies and the need for continued support in underperforming regions.

3. Literacy Rate by Age Group

Within age groups, the highest literacy rate recorded was among the 13-14 year olds living in urban areas (88.8%), while the lowest was among women aged over 60 (23.2%). Individuals older than 60 who lived in urban areas had a significantly higher literacy rate (70.5%) than their rural counterparts (45.4%).

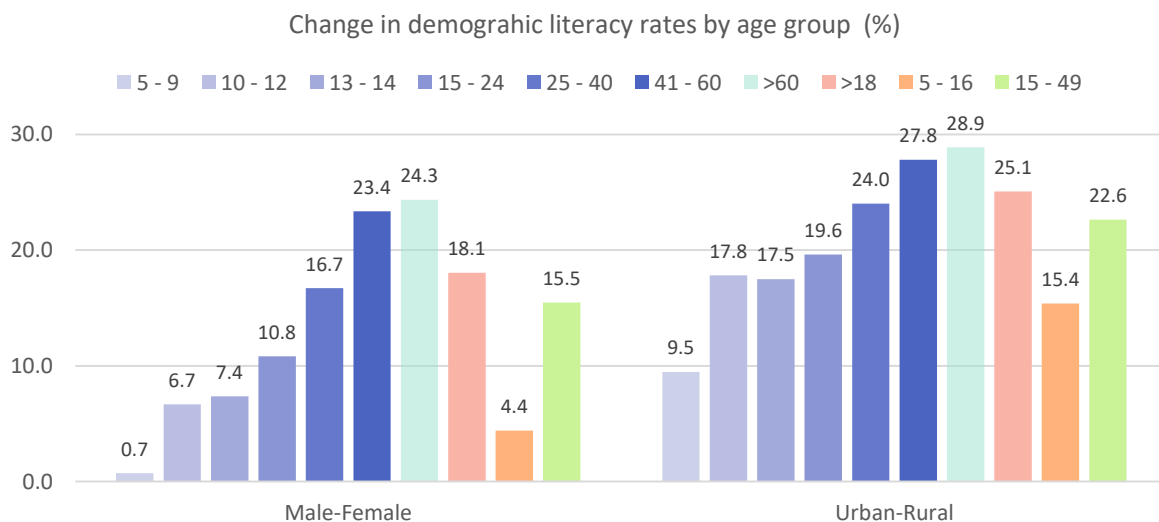
Literacy rates are among the metrics that can help determine whether the younger population is receiving adequate education. The data from the census presents some intriguing findings in this regard. For those aged 15-24, the literacy rate decreased by 0.5% between 2017 (68.5%) and 2023 (68.2%) while for the 10-14 age group, it fell from 72.9% in 2017 to 68.5% in 2023 – a decline of 4.4%.

While an overall improvement in literacy rate is a sign of progress, pinpointing which areas, provinces and age-groups need are lacking behind the rest could be the first step in creating targeted policies and legislation that would eventually lead to equitable access to education for all. Strategies could include investing in early childhood education, enhancing teacher training, and ensuring that schools are equipped with the necessary resources to provide quality education. Implementing targeted interventions will not only improve literacy rates but also contribute to broader social and economic development by empowering all citizens with the skills they need to participate fully in society.



(Fig 4) Source: 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

Figure 5 highlights the differences in literacy rates between males and females, as well as between urban and rural populations, across various age groups. The most pronounced disparities are observed in those over the age of 60, with a 24.3% gender gap and a 28.9% regional gap. However, a promising trend emerges among younger age groups, where these gaps significantly narrow. For example, the gender difference in literacy rates for the 5-9 age group is only 0.7%, and for those aged 5-16, it is just 4.4%. Although the regional gap remains more substantial, it is notably smaller among the youngest age group (9.5%) and the 5-16 group (15.4%).



(Fig 5) Source: 7th Pakistan Population and Housing Census, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

These findings suggest that recent efforts to promote gender and regional equity in education are beginning to bear fruit, especially among the younger population. The narrowing gaps among children and adolescents indicate progress towards a more balanced educational landscape. By continuing to focus on these younger age groups and expanding access to education in rural areas and for women, policymakers can further close these gaps in the coming years.

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 Literacy in Pakistan. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

Wish to know more about the Pakistan Population and Housing Census?

The 2023 Census of Pakistan was the detailed enumeration of the Pakistani population and the seventh national census in the country. It was conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. It was also the first ever digital census to be held in Pakistan, including the first in South Asian history.

You can find more information on Literacy Rates, and complete tables, on www.galluppakistandigitalanalytics.com

Disclaimer: Gallup Pakistan is not related to Gallup Inc. headquartered in Washington D.C. USA. We require that our surveys be credited fully as Gallup Pakistan (not Gallup or Gallup Poll). We disclaim any responsibility for surveys pertaining to Pakistani public opinion except those carried out by Gallup Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International Association. For details on Gallup International Association see website: www.gallup-international.com

Disclaimer: The views and inferences expressed in the article are that of the author himself and Gallup Pakistan does not take any responsibility in this regard. This series, and many such initiatives, are internally funded by Gallup Pakistan and Gilani Research Foundation. No outside country or local funding has been received for this current activity.



Gallup Pakistan is not related to Gallup Inc. headquartered in Washington D.C. USA. We require that our surveys be credited fully as Gallup Pakistan (not Gallup or Gallup Poll). We disclaim any responsibility for surveys pertaining to Pakistani public opinion except those carried out by Gallup Pakistan, the Pakistani affiliate of Gallup International Association.

Contact Details:
Islamabad : +92 51 2655630
Email: isb@gallup.com.pk
www.gallup.com.pk