

WDI Agriculture Indicators

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of World Development
Indicators 2025



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of World Development Indicators 2025

Pakistan's agricultural dependence persists: 23% of GDP and over 37% of labor still tied to the sector in 2023– **WDI Agriculture Indicators**

Islamabad, May 22nd, 2025

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at World Development Indicators 2025, the primary World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized international sources. The broader Big Data Analysis Initiative 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.

Main messages emerging from this report:

1. **Pakistan's economy remains significantly dependent on agriculture**, both in terms of GDP contribution and labor force participation, contrasting with regional and global trends of decreasing agricultural reliance.
2. **There is a global inverse relationship between agricultural share in GDP and GDP per capita**, highlighting that economic development is typically accompanied by a decline in agriculture's role in the economy.
3. **While most countries, including India and broader Asia, are shifting labor away from agriculture**, Pakistan's agricultural labor force continues to grow, indicating a slower structural transition.
4. **Diverging patterns in GDP contribution, labor, and land use between Pakistan and other economies** reflect a unique set of structural and developmental challenges facing the country's rural economy.

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In 2023, agriculture contributed **23.33%** of Pakistan's GDP, significantly higher than India's **16%**, and has been rising, while India's share has been declining.



Pakistan's Agriculture contribution in GDP



India's Agriculture contribution in GDP

Pakistan's GDP per capita in 2023 was **\$5,364**, with agriculture accounting for **22.72%** of its GDP. In contrast, China's GDP per capita was **\$22,591** with only **7.12%** from agriculture, and the U.S. at **\$71,318** with just **0.94%**, illustrating the inverse

Pakistan: 22.72%



China: 7.12%



Between 1991 and 2019, the share of the labor force employed in agriculture fell from **45%** to **37%** in Pakistan—a modest **8%** relative decline—while India saw a steeper drop from **63%** to **43%**, a **20%** decline.



Since 1970, Pakistan's agricultural land use increased by **23.91%**, but its agricultural labor force grew by **108.07%** by 2019. This divergence contrasts sharply with Asia, where labor growth nearly flattened at **2.33%**, and global trends, where labor and land converged by 2014.



In 2015, the gap in agricultural GDP share between Pakistan and India was at its widest in recent decades, with Pakistan at **23.26%** and India at **16.17%**, underscoring Pakistan's enduring agricultural intensity.



Key Findings

1. In **2023**, agriculture contributed **23.33% of Pakistan's GDP**, significantly higher than India's 16%, and has been **rising**, while India's share has been declining.
2. **Pakistan's GDP per capita in 2023 was \$5,364**, with agriculture accounting for **22.72%** of its GDP. In contrast, **China's GDP per capita was \$22,591** with only **7.12%** from agriculture, and the **U.S. at \$71,318** with just **0.94%**, illustrating the inverse relationship between economic advancement and agricultural dependence.
3. Between **1991 and 2019**, the share of the labor force employed in agriculture fell from **45% to 37%** in Pakistan—a modest **8% relative decline**—while **India saw a steeper drop from 63% to 43%**, a **20% decline**.
4. Since **1970**, Pakistan's agricultural **land use increased by 23.91%**, but its agricultural **labor force grew by 108.07%** by 2019. This divergence contrasts sharply with **Asia**, where labor growth nearly flattened at **2.33%**, and **global** trends, where labor and land converged by 2014.
5. In **2015**, the gap in agricultural GDP share between Pakistan and India was at its widest in recent decades, with Pakistan at **23.26%** and India at **16.17%**, underscoring Pakistan's enduring agricultural intensity.

The World Development Indicators (WDI), compiled by the World Bank and OECD, provide a comprehensive set of internationally standardized metrics that enable cross-national comparisons on key development themes. Among these, agricultural contributions to GDP, labor force dynamics, and land use trends remain crucial for understanding the shifting structure of national economies. This report analyzes the positioning and trajectory of Pakistan's agricultural sector through the lens of WDI data, contextualized alongside major global and regional comparators.

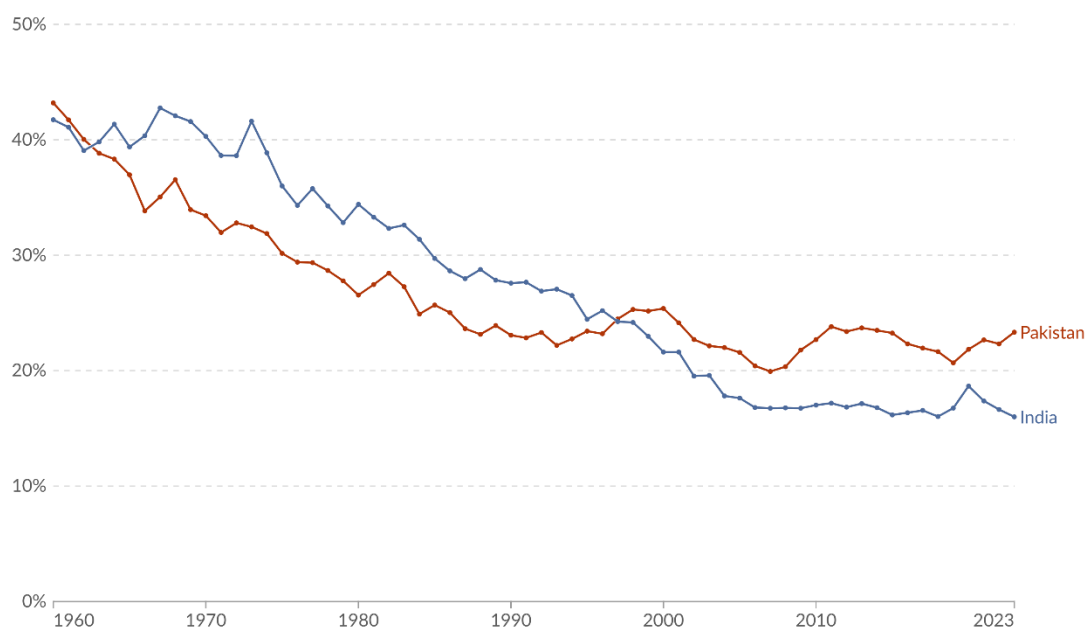
Share of GDP from agriculture (1960-2023)

The data on agriculture's share in GDP from 1960 to 2023 reveals long-term transformations in economic composition. In the early 1960s, both Pakistan and India were predominantly agrarian, with agriculture accounting for over 40% of GDP—43.19% in Pakistan and 41.74% in India in 1960. The two countries' trends briefly diverged and then converged again through the decades, with India surpassing Pakistan in 1963 and retaining a higher share until 1997, when Pakistan once again overtook it. The most substantial gap in the last twenty years emerged in 2015, with agriculture comprising 23.26% of Pakistan's GDP and just 16.17% of India's. Notably, the 2023 figures illustrate divergent current trajectories: Pakistan's agricultural share is continuing to rise at 23.33%, while India's has declined further to 16%. These opposing directions suggest differing national priorities and structural shifts, with Pakistan's agricultural sector maintaining a relatively higher degree of economic prominence.

Share of GDP from agriculture, 1960 to 2023

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This is measured as the value added from agriculture, forestry and fishing products as a share of gross domestic product (GDP).



Data source: World Bank and OECD (2025)

OurWorldinData.org/agricultural-production | CC BY

(Fig. 1) Source: World Bank and OECD (2025)¹

¹ World Bank and OECD (2025) – processed by Our World in Data. “Agriculture as a share of GDP” [<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/search/dataset/0037712/World-Development-Indicators>].]

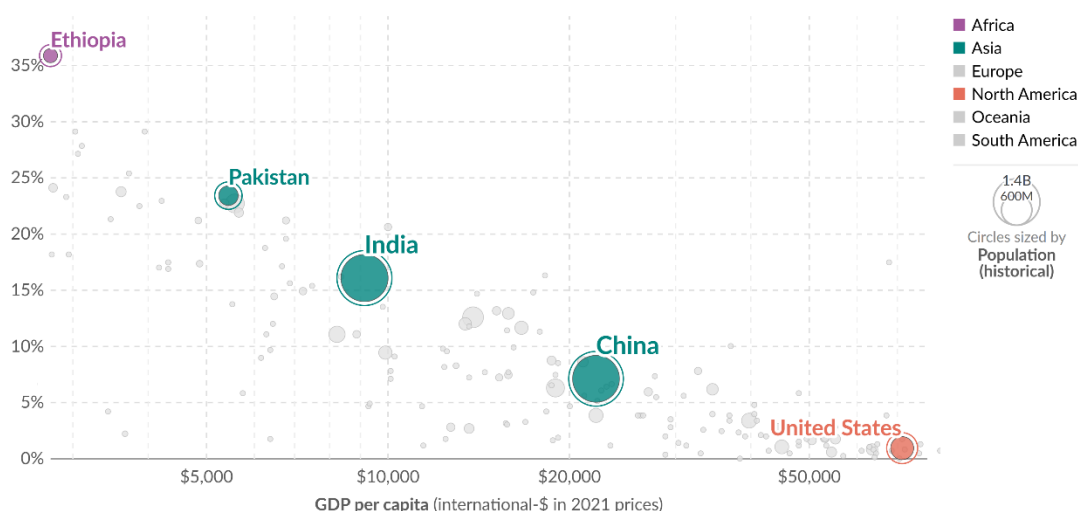
Agriculture as a share of GDP vs. GDP per capita, 2023

Further comparative analysis of agriculture's share of GDP against GDP per capita in 2023 underscores the inverse relationship between economic prosperity and dependence on agriculture. Ethiopia, with the lowest GDP per capita among the countries examined (\$2,755), has the highest agricultural share at 35.79%. In contrast, the United States, with a GDP per capita of \$71,318, records only 0.94% of its economy as agriculture based. Pakistan sits in the middle of this spectrum, with a GDP per capita of \$5,364 and 22.72% of GDP derived from agriculture. India, with nearly double the GDP per capita at \$9,160, shows a significantly lower agricultural share of 16%, while China, with a much higher GDP per capita of \$22,591, has reduced its agricultural dependence to 7.12%. This correlation indicates that as countries develop and diversify their economies, the relative contribution of agriculture to GDP tends to decline.

Agriculture as a share of GDP vs. GDP per capita, 2023

Agriculture includes the cultivation of crops and livestock production, as well as forestry, hunting, and fishing. GDP per capita is adjusted for inflation and for differences in living costs between countries.

Agriculture as a share of GDP (% of GDP)



Data source: World Bank and OECD (2025); Data compiled from multiple sources by World Bank (2025)

Note: GDP per capita is expressed in international-\$ at 2021 prices.

OurWorldinData.org/employment-in-agriculture | CC BY

(Fig. 2) Source: World Bank and OECD (2025)²

Share of the labor force employed in agriculture

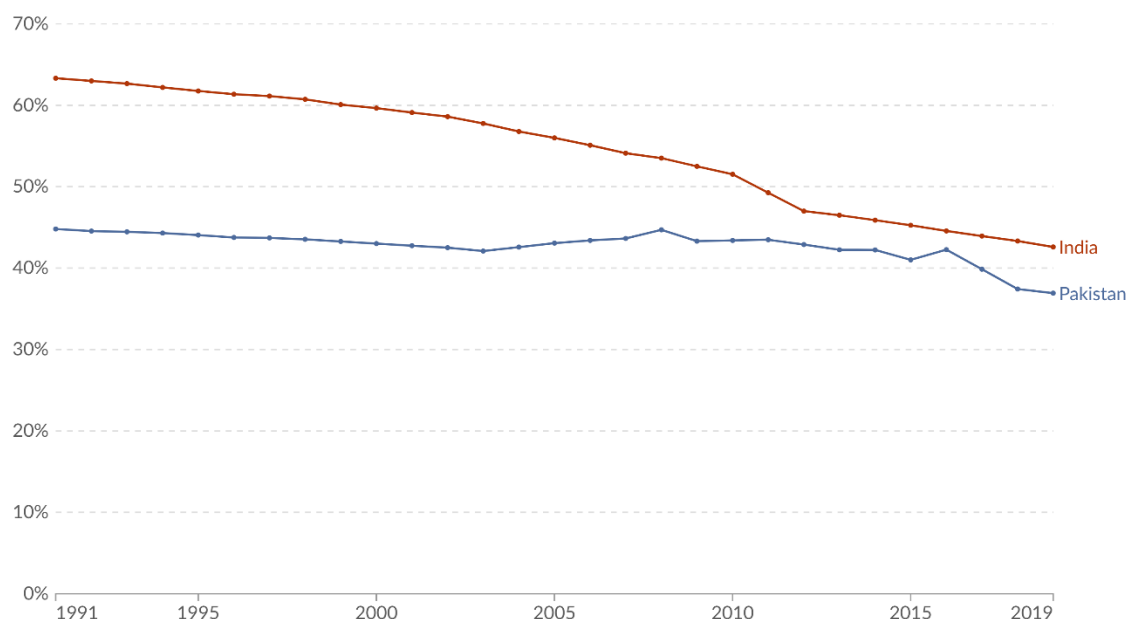
Employment data further reinforces this trajectory. In 1991, 45% of Pakistan's labor force was employed in agriculture; by 2019, this had dropped to 37%, representing an 8% decline. India's decline over the same period was more pronounced, from 63% to 43%, a 20% drop. These figures indicate a broader structural shift, with labor transitioning away from agriculture toward industrial and service sectors, although the trend appears slower in Pakistan compared to its neighbor.

² <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/value-added-in-the-agricultural-sector-as-of-gdp-vs-gdp-per-capita?country=PAK~IND~USA~CHN~ETH>

Share of the labor force employed in agriculture

Agriculture includes the cultivation of crops and livestock production, as well as forestry, hunting, and fishing. Employment includes anyone engaged in any activity to produce goods or services for pay or profit.

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Data source: Our World in Data based on International Labor Organization (via the World Bank) and historical sources
OurWorldinData.org/employment-in-agriculture | CC BY

(Fig. 3) Source: International Labor Organization (via the World Bank)³

Change in agricultural labor and land use (1970-2019)

The most nuanced insights emerge from the long-term trends in agricultural labor and land use between 1970 and 2019. Globally and across Asia, agricultural land use has increased steadily while the agricultural labor force has declined, suggesting productivity improvements, mechanization, and a shift in employment patterns. Asia, for example, saw labor and land growth converge and switch around 2008, indicating a balance in land expansion and labor reduction. In 2019, land use was 35.98% higher than in 1970, while labor had increased by just 2.33%.

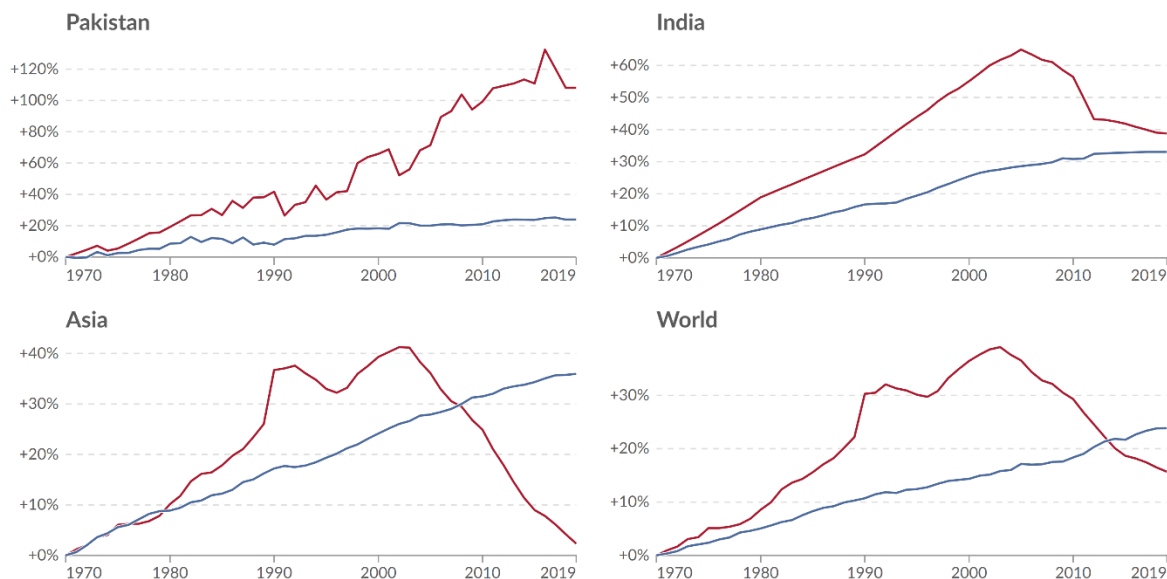
Pakistan's trajectory, however, diverges from this global pattern. While land use increased by 23.91% between 1970 and 2019, agricultural labor more than doubled, rising by 108.07%. This stands in stark contrast to India, where labor growth initially outpaced land use but began declining after 2005. By 2019, India's labor force in agriculture was only 38.78% higher than in 1970, whereas land use had increased by 33.06%, suggesting greater alignment with global trends. The persistence of high agricultural labor growth in Pakistan, alongside a slower increase in land use, may reflect continued reliance on labor-intensive methods, limited industrial absorption capacity, or underemployment masked within rural economies.

³ Our World in Data based on International Labor Organization (via the World Bank) and historical sources – processed by Our World in Data. "Share of the labor force employed in agriculture" [<https://ourworldindata.org/agri-employment-sources>].

Change in agricultural labor and land use, 1970 to 2019

- Agricultural labor is measured as the number of adults whose main economic activity is agriculture. It includes hired labor and unpaid family labor.
- Agricultural land use is the sum of croplands and permanent pastures for livestock grazing.

■ Agricultural labor ■ Agricultural land



Data source: United States Department for Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service

OurWorldinData.org/land-use | CC BY

(Fig. 4) Source: United States Department for Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service⁴

Overall, the WDI data reveals a complex and distinctive picture for Pakistan. While many developing economies are shifting decisively away from agriculture both in terms of output and labor, Pakistan's economy retains a significant dependence on the sector, making it more vulnerable to the impact of changing climate and other environmental indicators. This is evident not only in the GDP composition and employment patterns but also in land and labor use trends over time. In contrast to global and regional tendencies towards mechanization and urbanization, Pakistan's divergence points to structural rigidities or policy gaps that may be hindering its transition toward a more diversified and modern economic base. These insights underscore the importance of targeted investments in agricultural efficiency, rural industrialization, and employment diversification if Pakistan is to follow a more sustainable and inclusive development path.

Building on these trends, it becomes increasingly clear that Pakistan's agricultural trajectory is not merely a statistical anomaly but a reflection of broader structural and developmental challenges. The persistent high share of agriculture in both GDP and labor, despite rising GDP per capita, suggests that the country has yet to fully capitalize on the opportunities presented by technological modernization and value-added services. Unlike other emerging economies that have managed to shift large portions of their labor force into more productive non-agricultural sectors, Pakistan appears caught in a prolonged transition, with agriculture absorbing a disproportionate share of underemployed or low-skilled labor.

⁴ United States Department for Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service – processed by Our World in Data. "Agricultural labor" [<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/international-agricultural-productivity>]

This continued dependence on agriculture also has implications for income distribution, rural poverty, and long-term growth potential. The sector's low productivity, compared to industry and services, limits income mobility for a large portion of the population. Moreover, the data showing a steady increase in agricultural land use without a corresponding decline in labor force participation could indicate that productivity gains from mechanization or modern farming techniques are not being fully realized. This may stem from weak rural infrastructure, limited access to credit and technology, fragmented landholdings, or insufficient agricultural extension services.

The divergence from global trends also raises questions about how Pakistan is adapting to the demands of a growing population and climate-related vulnerabilities. With agriculture still employing a significant share of the labor force, climate shocks such as floods, droughts, and rising temperatures pose systemic risks to livelihoods and food security. Countries with similar starting points have managed to reduce such exposure by moving labor into climate-resilient and higher-value sectors—something Pakistan must prioritize through deliberate policy planning and structural reform.

The WDI data on agricultural labor and land-use highlights an urgent need for strategic shifts in how the country approaches economic transformation. Bridging the gap between labor-intensive agriculture and a modern, diversified economy will require investment in education, infrastructure, market access, and institutional reforms that enable the agricultural sector to become more efficient while simultaneously creating viable alternatives for rural employment outside of farming. Only through such an integrated approach can Pakistan align more closely with the development trajectories observed across the region and the world.

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 Population Census of Pakistan 2023 dashboard](#), which provides a variety of demographic 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."*

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand the Big Data Analysis project. 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 World Development Indicators 2025?

The World Development Indicators (WDI) is the primary World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized international sources. It presents the most current and accurate global development data available, and includes national, regional and global estimates.

You can find more information on World Development Indicators at:

<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/search/dataset/0037712/World-Development-Indicators>

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