

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of
Economic Census 2024

Household Economic Activities



PRESS RELEASE

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Hidden GDP: Millions of Homes Double as Workplaces in Pakistan

Islamabad, September 23rd, 2025

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, presents the fifth release in its series on the Economic Census 2023/24, conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). This release focuses on Pakistan's household economic activities, highlighting the 5.6 million households (28.5% of all households) engaged in income-generating work within their homes — from animal farming and tailoring to digital freelancing — underscoring the scale and diversity of the country's informal economy.

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 [Global Burden of Disease dataset](#), which provides a variety of health-related 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:

The Economic Census 2023/24 provides, for the first time, a detailed national breakdown of household economic activities. This edition builds on earlier releases in the Gallup–PBS series, which covered: (1) [Economic Establishments](#), (2) [Provincial Distribution of Establishments](#), (3) [Sectoral Distribution](#), and (4) [Workforce in Establishments](#). Together, these releases create a layered picture of Pakistan's economic landscape — from formal establishments to household-based enterprises.

One in Four Households Contribute to the Economy through Informal Activities

Overall:



**5.6 million engaged
in economic activity**

Approximately **5.6 million** households in Pakistan are engaged in economic activities, representing about **28.5%** of all households nationwide.



**Animal Farming
51.35%**

Animal farming dominates household enterprises, with **51.35%** of households engaged in livestock, poultry, and related activities.

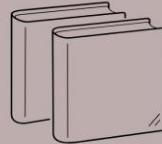


**Tailoring &
embroidery (14.2%)**



**Food production/
packaging (10.8%)**

Smaller but important shares include:



**Tuition and education
services (7.5%)**



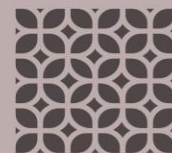
**Beauty parlors
(5.4%)**



**Freelancing/digital
work (4.0%)**



**Carpet manufacturing
(3.2%)**



**Handicrafts
(3.6%)**

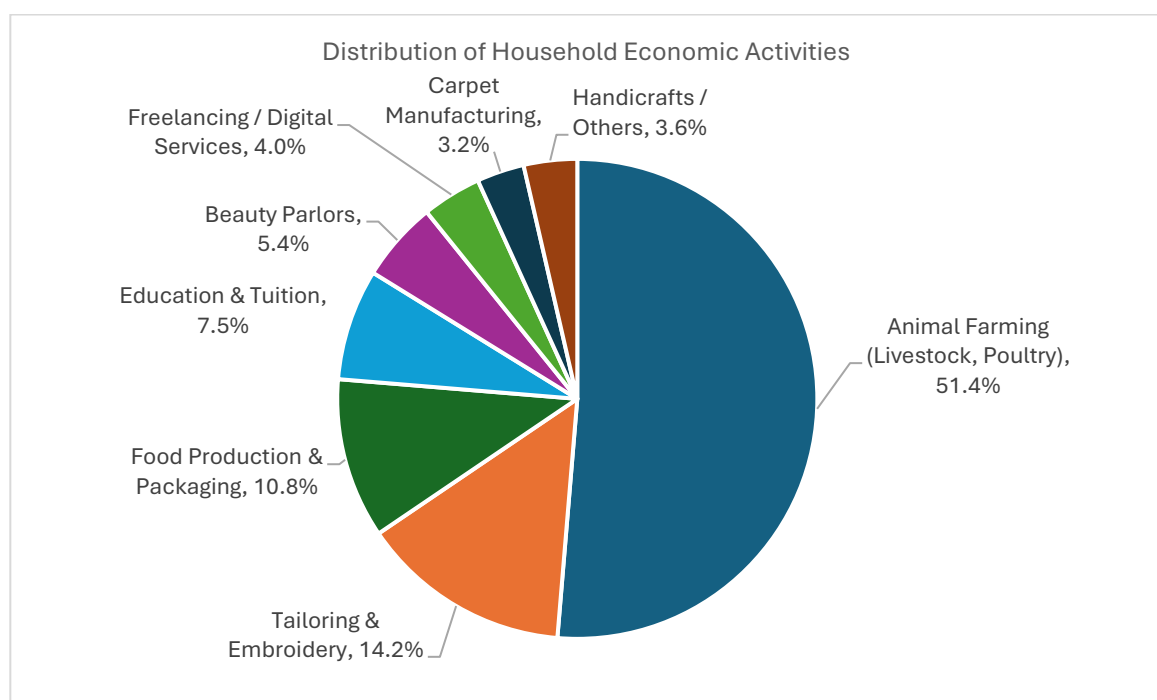
These activities underline the vibrancy of informal household enterprises and their role in employment, income generation, and women's economic participation.

Key Findings:

1. Approximately 5.6 million households in Pakistan are engaged in economic activities, representing about 28.5% of all households nationwide.
2. Animal farming dominates household enterprises, with 51.35% of households engaged in livestock, poultry, and related activities.
3. Tailoring & embroidery (14.2%) and food production/packaging (10.8%) are the next most common, highlighting the role of women-led and micro-scale enterprises.
4. Smaller but important shares include tuition and education services (7.5%), beauty parlors (5.4%), freelancing/digital work (4.0%), and traditional crafts such as carpet manufacturing (3.2%) and handicrafts (3.6%).
5. These activities underline the vibrancy of informal household enterprises and their role in employment, income generation, and women's economic participation.

1. Animal Farming Accounts for Over Half of Household Activities

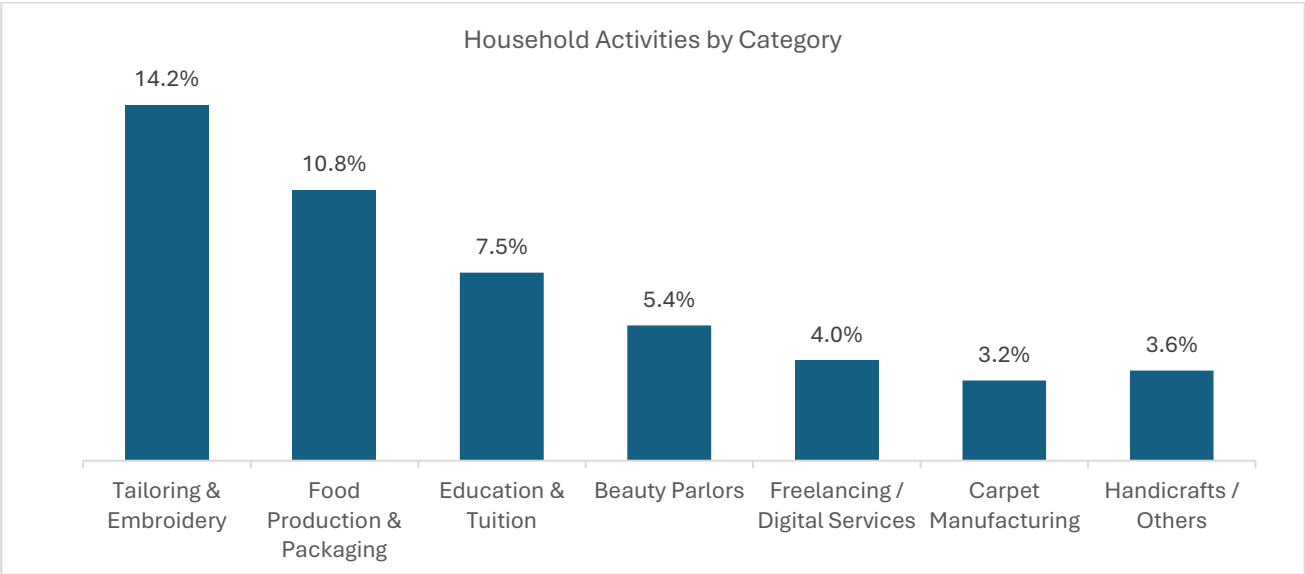
Animal farming — including livestock rearing, poultry, and related work — constitutes the single largest category of household economic activities, with 51.35% of households engaged in it. This dominance illustrates the centrality of agriculture and livestock to Pakistan’s household-level economy, particularly in rural areas where formal employment opportunities are scarce. Beyond providing cash income, livestock and poultry support food security through milk, eggs, and meat, and act as household savings or “insurance” in times of need. However, reliance on low-productivity, small-scale animal farming also signals structural vulnerabilities: limited veterinary services, poor access to markets, and weak integration into formal value chains keep many households trapped in subsistence-level activities. Strengthening productivity in this sector could yield large gains for rural incomes and national food systems.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Economic Census 2024 – Main Findings Report

2. Tailoring, Food Production, and Education Drive Home-Based Economies

Together, tailoring & embroidery (14.2%) and food production/packaging (10.8%) account for one-quarter of household economic activities. These enterprises are typically women-led, often using household spaces to produce garments, prepare meals, or package food items for sale in local neighborhoods. Their prevalence highlights the dual role of women as both unpaid caregivers and active contributors to household income. Education and tuition services (7.5%) further broaden the household economic profile, with individuals providing tutoring and coaching services, particularly in urban settings where demand for supplemental education is high. These three categories show how household enterprises not only provide livelihoods but also respond flexibly to community needs, reinforcing the resilience and adaptability of informal economies.



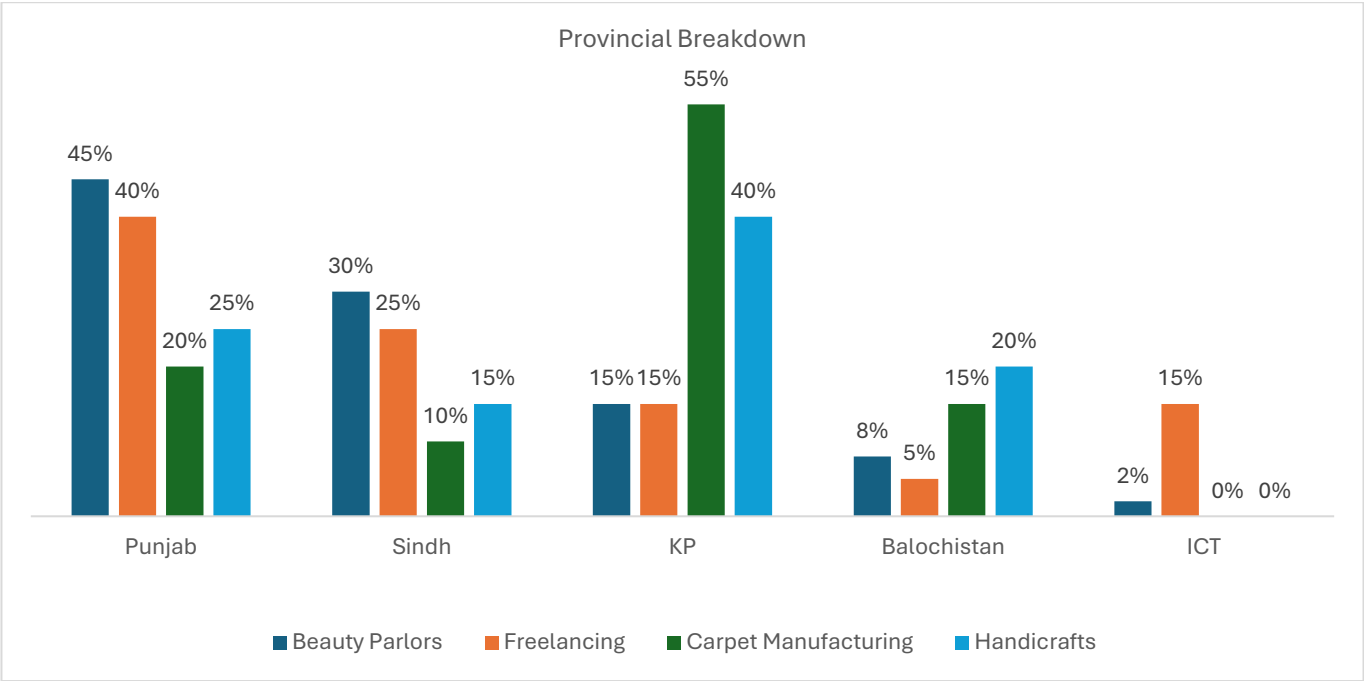
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Economic Census 2024 (Main Findings Report)

Activity	Households (approx.)
Animal Farming (Livestock, Poultry)	2875600
Tailoring & Embroidery	795200
Food Production & Packaging	604800
Education & Tuition	420000
Beauty Parlors	302400
Freelancing / Digital Services	224000
Carpet Manufacturing	179200
Handicrafts / Others	201600

Although smaller in share, several categories add important nuance to Pakistan’s household economy:

- Beauty Parlors (5.4%) represent one of the most visible forms of women-led entrepreneurship, especially in peri-urban and rural settings where women seek affordable services. They also illustrate cultural and social dimensions of household-based enterprises.
- Freelancing/Digital Services (4.0%) mark a new and expanding trend, reflecting how households are increasingly engaging in knowledge-based and online income generation. This is particularly important for younger populations in urban centers.
- Carpet Manufacturing (3.2%) and Handicrafts (3.6%) are smaller shares but deeply rooted in Pakistan’s artisanal traditions, supporting not only local livelihoods but also export potential. These sectors are often regionally concentrated, offering opportunities for targeted interventions.

Provincial distribution of these smaller categories shows important variations: Beauty Parlors are concentrated in Punjab and Sindh’s urban centers, Freelancing is most prominent in ICT and Punjab, while Carpet Manufacturing and Handicrafts have stronger bases in KP and Balochistan. This highlights how household activities also mirror regional specializations and socio-economic structures.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Economic Census 2024 (Main Findings Report)

3. Implications: Informal Economy as a Pillar of Household Livelihoods

The high prevalence of household economic activities demonstrates that informal enterprises are not peripheral but central to Pakistan's economy. They provide critical livelihoods, especially for women and rural households. However, they often operate without access to credit, training, or formal market linkages, limiting their growth potential.

4. Policy Implementation

1. Expand microfinance programs tailored for women-led enterprises in tailoring, beauty, and food production.
2. Provide training and extension services for livestock and poultry management to raise productivity.
3. Support home-based workers with market linkages, e-commerce platforms, and certification for handicrafts and carpets.
4. Integrate household enterprises into local economic planning, recognizing their role in employment and resilience.

About the Economic Census

The **Economic Census** is Pakistan's most comprehensive and authoritative statistical exercise on business and enterprise activity. Conducted by the **Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)**, it provides policymakers, researchers, and the public with a detailed snapshot of the structure of economic establishments across the country. The Census records information directly from enterprises and institutions, covering critical aspects such as establishment type, sectoral classification, workforce size, and location.

The 2023/24 Economic Census marks the country's **first integrated enumeration of economic activity**, conducted alongside the 7th Population and Housing Census. By merging these efforts, PBS not only achieved significant cost savings but also created Pakistan's first geo-coded **Business Register** — a foundational dataset for understanding enterprise dynamics nationwide.

This inaugural round represents an important milestone in Pakistan's statistical history. It incorporates methodological innovations such as **digital data collection, GIS-based mapping, and geo-tagging of establishments**, resulting in more reliable and timely results. The Census thus provides insights not only into the size and distribution of enterprises but also into the emerging challenges and opportunities facing Pakistan's economy — from the dominance of small-scale units to regional disparities in business activity and the rise of service-oriented enterprises.

Ultimately, the Economic Census stands as the **foundation for enterprise statistics in Pakistan**. Its findings guide ministries, provincial departments, and regulators in designing SME policies, industrial strategies, and regional development initiatives. They also serve as a valuable reference for academics, investors, and development partners seeking to understand Pakistan's business landscape. By documenting both continuity and change in enterprise structure, sectoral composition, and regional distribution, the Census underscores the vital role of establishments in the country's economic and social development.



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.

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