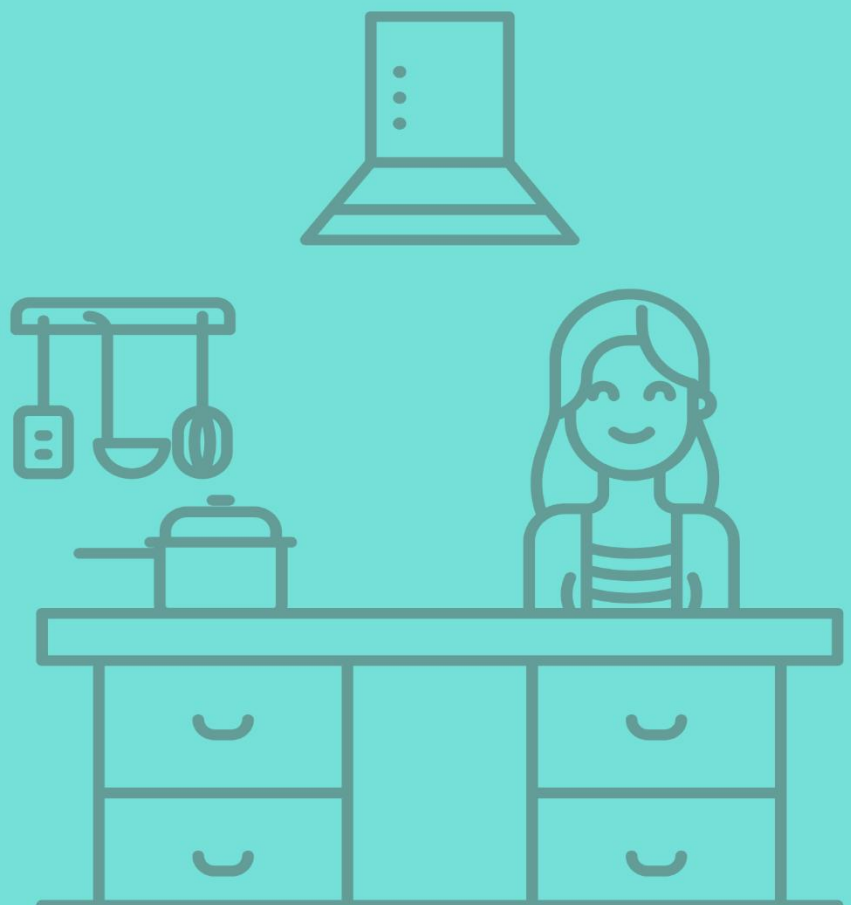




Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Labor Force Participation in Pakistan (LFS 2024–25)

Unpaid Domestic and Care Work



PRESS RELEASE

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Over 52 Million Women Engaged in Unpaid Household Work — Women’s Participation in Domestic Activities Nearly Eight Times Higher Than Men’s

Islamabad, February 20th, 2026

While public debate on Pakistan’s labor market focuses largely on employment and unemployment, new analysis from the Pakistan Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024–25 highlights a critical but often invisible dimension of economic life: unpaid domestic and care work. Data from Chapter 12 of the LFS (19th ICLS framework) show that unpaid household labor remains overwhelmingly feminized. Tens of millions of women are engaged in domestic chores, caregiving, and livestock-related activities — work that sustains households and communities but remains outside formal employment statistics.

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan’s Big Data series was initiated by Bilal I. Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. As he explains: *“Pakistan does not suffer from a lack of data, but from limited accessibility and weak translation of numbers into understanding. Gallup Pakistan bridges this gap by analyzing large, often under-used datasets — from PSLM and Labor Force Surveys to Economic Surveys and National Census data — so these statistics can meaningfully inform policy and public discourse.”*

What data points this current edition covers:

This edition draws on the following datasets from the Pakistan Labor Force Survey 2024–25:

- Unpaid domestic, livestock, and caregiving activities (19th ICLS)
- Gender-disaggregated participation in unpaid household labor
- Time-use differences between men and women

These indicators provide a comprehensive view of invisible labor, emerging work arrangements, and the structural barriers limiting women’s economic participation in Pakistan.

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52.3 million women are engaged in cooking, cleaning, and general household chores, compared to **6.3** million men.

Unpaid Domestic and Care Work: The Invisible Backbone of the Economy

21.7 million women participate in livestock-related unpaid activities, compared to **17.4** million men.



Involvement in Caregiving Responsibilities

27.3 million women are engaged in caregiving for children, the elderly, or ill household members, compared to **3.5** million men.



Gender Inequality in Household Labor Remains Extreme

Women's participation in household chores is approximately **eight** times higher than men's.



*Women spend significantly more time on domestic chores — averaging **15.3** hours per week, compared to **6.8** hours for men.*



Key Findings:

1. 52.3 million women are engaged in cooking, cleaning, and general household chores, compared to 6.3 million men.
2. 27.3 million women are engaged in caregiving for children, the elderly, or ill household members, compared to 3.5 million men.
3. 21.7 million women participate in livestock-related unpaid activities, compared to 17.4 million men.
4. Women's participation in household chores is approximately eight times higher than men's.
5. Women spend significantly more time on domestic chores — averaging 15.3 hours per week, compared to 6.8 hours for men.

(Source: LFS 2024–25, Table 12.3)

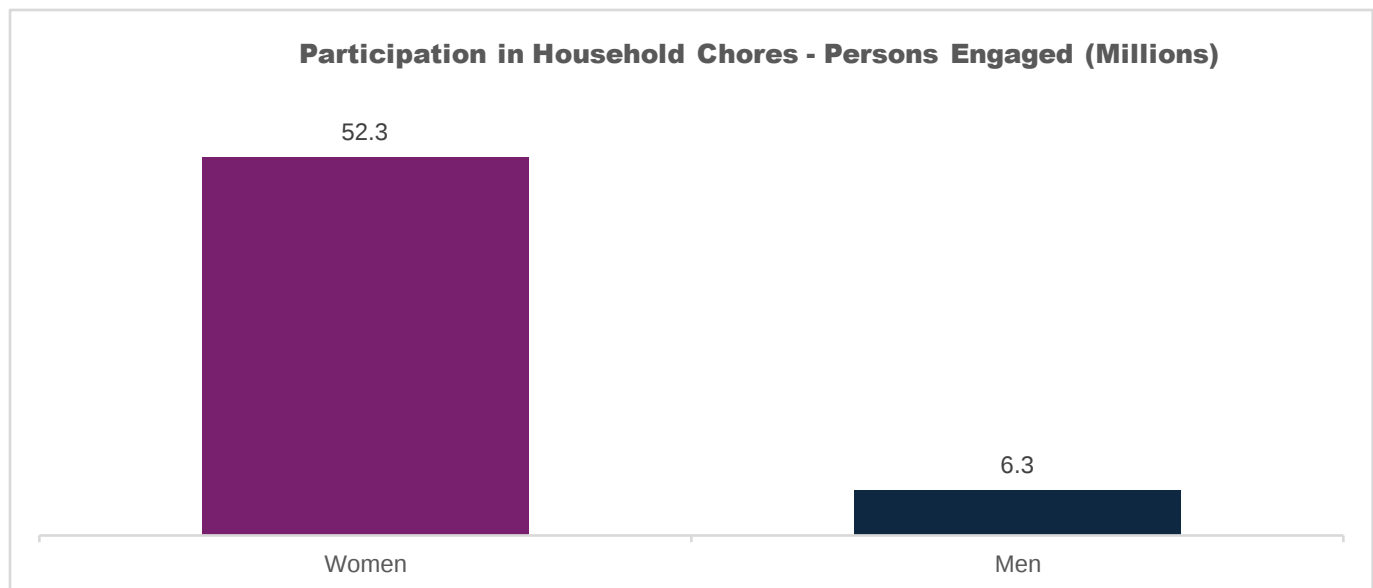
1. Unpaid Domestic Work: One of the Largest Female Economic Activities in Pakistan

The LFS 2024–25 reports that 52.3 million women are engaged in cooking, cleaning, washing, and other routine household maintenance activities. In contrast, only 6.3 million men report involvement in these tasks. This represents an engagement ratio of roughly eight women for every one man.

The magnitude of this figure is striking. In terms of sheer participation, unpaid domestic work represents one of the largest economic activities undertaken by women in Pakistan — exceeding participation levels in many formal sectors. Yet, because these activities fall outside the standard definition of employment, they do not contribute to official labor force participation rates.

The data highlight that domestic work is not a marginal or occasional responsibility for women; rather, it is a mass, structured economic role. The gender gap is not incremental — it is systemic. Women’s overwhelming concentration in domestic chores reflects deeply embedded social norms and role expectations that assign household management almost exclusively to women.

In economic terms, this invisible labor subsidizes the formal economy. By sustaining households without compensation, women enable other household members — often men — to participate in paid employment.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Labor Force Survey 2024–25.

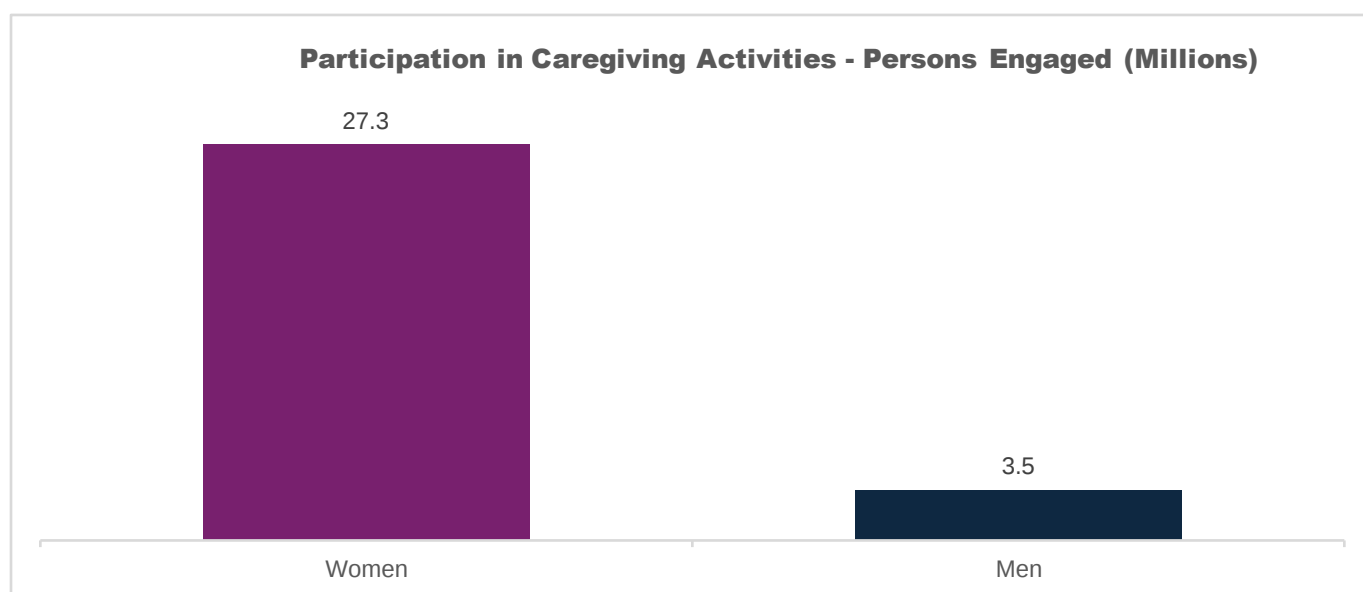
2. Caregiving Responsibilities Remain Overwhelmingly Female

Beyond routine household chores, the survey shows that 27.3 million women are engaged in caregiving activities, including caring for children, elderly household members, and individuals who are ill. Only 3.5 million men report participation in caregiving.

This eight-to-one participation gap reinforces the gendered structure of unpaid care responsibilities in Pakistan. Caregiving is not merely an extension of domestic chores; it requires time, emotional labor, and physical commitment. It often demands continuous availability, which can severely constrain women's ability to seek or maintain paid employment.

The caregiving burden has long-term implications. Women who shoulder primary responsibility for children or elderly family members may face interruptions in education, limited mobility, and reduced access to formal sector opportunities. Over time, this contributes to lower female labor force participation and persistent gender wage gaps.

The data suggest that care responsibilities remain privatized within households rather than supported through institutional mechanisms such as childcare services, eldercare systems, or flexible employment policies. As a result, the opportunity cost of caregiving falls disproportionately on women.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Labor Force Survey 2024–25.

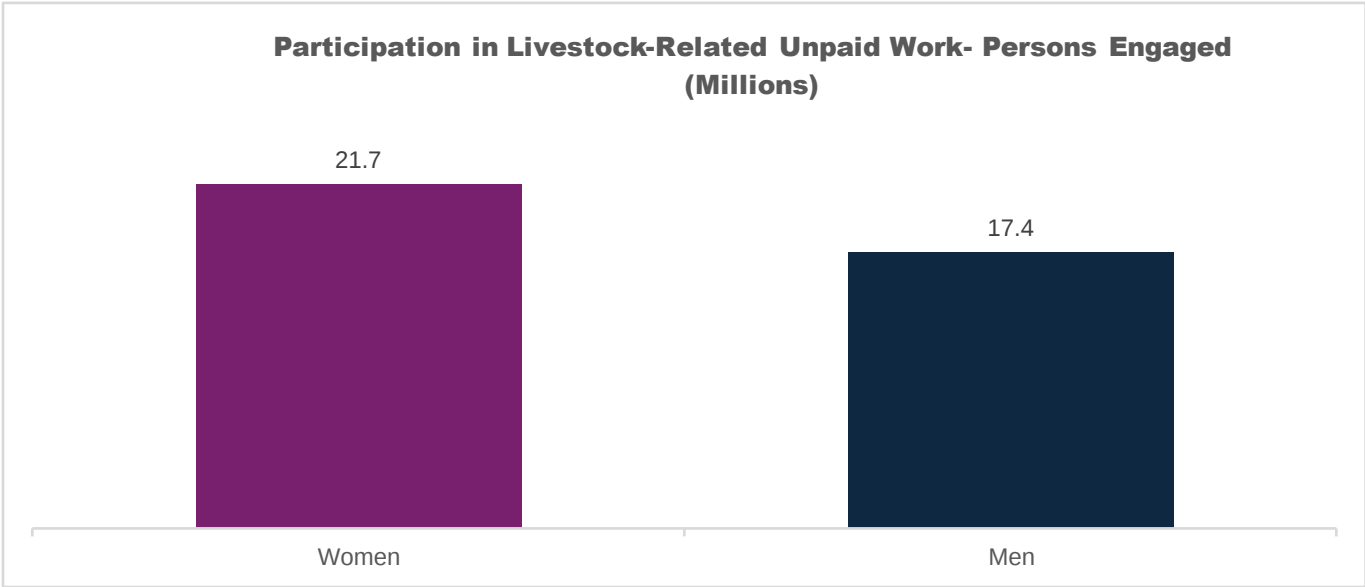
3. Livestock-Related Unpaid Work: More Shared but Still Female-Heavy

Livestock-related unpaid activities present a somewhat different gender pattern. The LFS reports 21.7 million women and 17.4 million men engaged in livestock-related work.

While this activity shows a narrower gender gap compared to cooking and caregiving, women still account for a higher number of participants. The relatively higher male involvement likely reflects the rural and agricultural nature of livestock activities, where responsibilities may be more visibly shared.

However, it is important to note that livestock-related work often remains informal, family-based, and unpaid. Women’s participation in such activities contributes directly to household income generation and food security, yet their labor is frequently unrecognized in ownership structures or financial decision-making.

This finding underscores that unpaid work is not confined to domestic interiors; it extends into agricultural production systems, particularly in rural areas.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Labor Force Survey 2024–25.

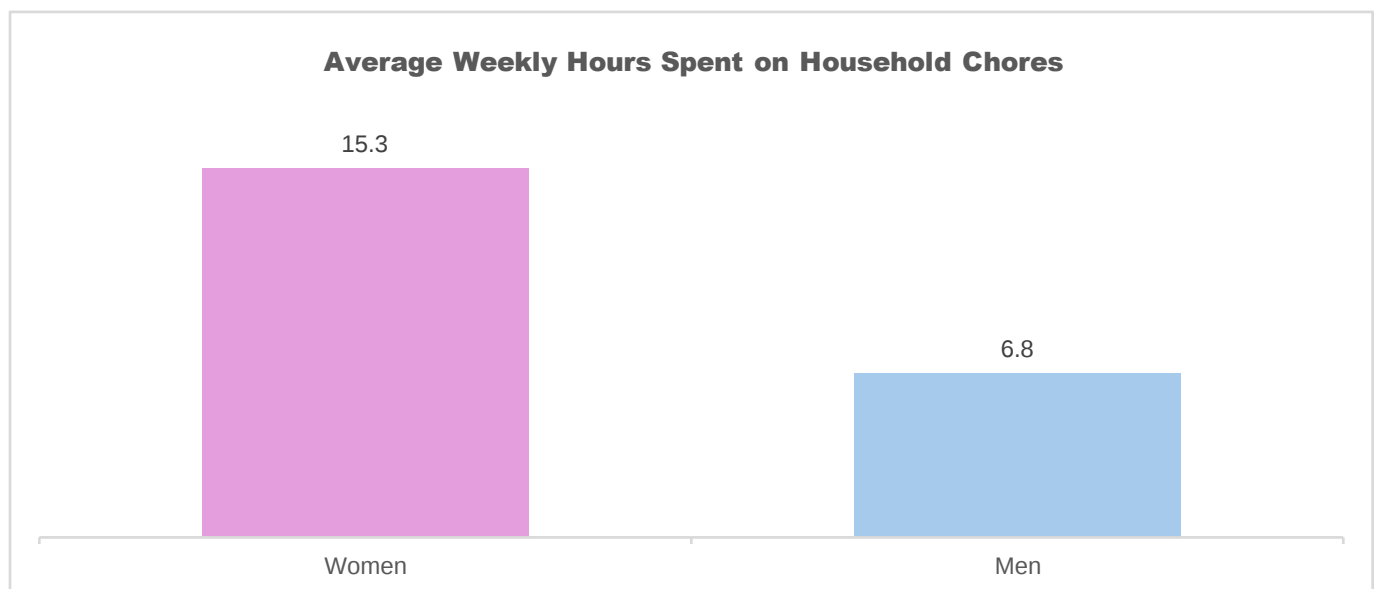
4. Time Burden: Women Spend More Than Twice as Many Weekly Hours on Household Chores

Participation rates alone do not capture the full extent of gender disparity. Time-use data from Table 12.3 show that women engaged in household chores spend an average of 15.3 hours per week, compared to 6.8 hours per week for men.

This indicates that women devote more than double the weekly hours to domestic tasks. Even among those who are engaged, women carry a significantly heavier time burden.

The time dimension is critical because labor market participation depends not only on whether individuals are available but on how much discretionary time they possess. When women allocate substantial weekly hours to unpaid domestic work, their capacity to pursue full-time employment, skill development, or entrepreneurial activities is reduced.

In effect, time poverty becomes a structural barrier to women's economic participation.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Labor Force Survey 2024–25.

5. Broader Implications for Labor Policy

The LFS 2024–25 data make clear that unpaid domestic and care work remains one of the largest and most gender-skewed components of Pakistan’s economic system.

When more than 52 million women are engaged in unpaid household chores alone, it becomes evident that women are not absent from economic activity. Rather, they are deeply embedded in forms of labor that remain statistically invisible.

Recognizing unpaid work does not automatically solve gender inequality, but ignoring it distorts the true picture of labor participation. Policies aimed at increasing women’s employment must therefore address structural care responsibilities. Without childcare services, eldercare support, and workplace flexibility, the burden of unpaid labor will continue to constrain women’s entry into paid employment.

The LFS 2024–25 offers empirical evidence that unpaid work is not peripheral to Pakistan’s labor market — it is foundational to it.

About the Labor Force Survey (LFS) 2024–25

The *Labor Force Survey (LFS) 2024–25* is Pakistan’s most comprehensive national survey on employment, labor market structure, and workforce participation. Conducted annually by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the LFS provides detailed insights into the size and characteristics of the labor force, employment patterns, sectoral distribution, informality, wages, and demographic differentials across age, gender, province, and rural–urban divides.

The 2024–25 edition covers a nationally representative sample drawn through a stratified two-stage design across all four provinces, enabling robust comparisons between regions and demographic groups. The survey generates labor market indicators using internationally recognized standards, including the 13th ICLS (International Conference of Labor Statisticians) framework and the updated 19th ICLS definitions, capturing both traditional employment and emerging forms of work such as gig and platform-based activities.

The report serves as a critical evidence base for policymakers, researchers, development partners, and labor economists seeking to understand the evolving dynamics of Pakistan’s workforce. By documenting shifts in labor force participation, employment, unemployment, wages, sectoral transitions, and informal economy trends, the LFS helps inform national strategies on economic planning, job creation, skills development, and gender inclusion.

Gallup Pakistan’s analysis draws exclusively from this PBS-published dataset to translate complex statistical findings into accessible insights to support public understanding and policymaking.



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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