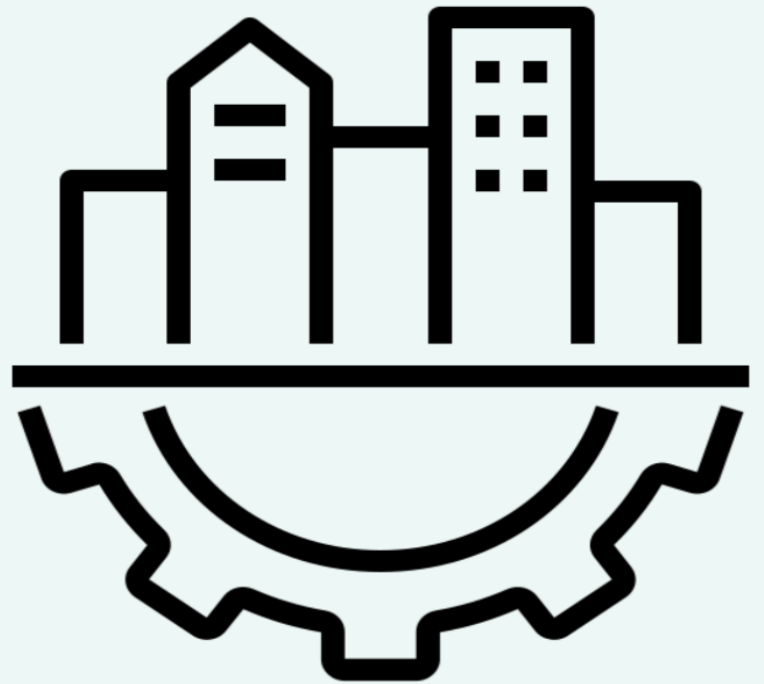




Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Punjab Development Statistics (50 Years)

Communications & Co-operative Societies



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Punjab Development Statistics (50 Years)

Communications and Co-operative Institutions in Punjab: A Long-Term View of Infrastructure Retrenchment and Institutional Resilience

Islamabad, March 6th, 2026

Public service institutions have long shaped how Pakistan's economy and society function on a daily basis. Postal services, telecommunications, and co-operative societies once formed the backbone of communication, connectivity, and community-level finance, particularly in Punjab. Drawing on five decades of official statistics, this release traces how these systems expanded during the 1970s–1990s and later adjusted to technological change, urbanization, and evolving market structures. The data show a clear shift away from labor-intensive, physical service networks toward more centralized, capital-intensive, and technology-driven models.

Together, these trends illustrate not only growth and decline in specific services, but a broader transformation in the way public service delivery itself has evolved over time.

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 Labour 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 analysis draws on long-term administrative statistics from Punjab covering postal service operations, telecommunications infrastructure, and co-operative societies. The data spans from the early 1970s to 2020–21 and captures both physical infrastructure (offices, exchanges, institutions) and financial activity (money orders, share capital, working capital). Together, these indicators provide a historical view of how public service delivery and collective economic institutions have evolved across decades of demographic, technological, and economic change.

Key Findings:

1. Punjab's postal network has contracted sharply, with the number of post offices falling to 2,267 by 2020–21, reflecting a long-term downsizing of physical service infrastructure.
2. Despite this contraction, money orders remain financially significant, with Rs. 4,534 million issued and Rs. 5,656 million paid in 2020–21, underscoring the postal system's continued transactional relevance.
3. Landline telephony expanded steadily through the late 20th century, reaching 1.66 million lines by 2010–11, before the series ends—marking the peak of fixed-line infrastructure prior to mobile dominance.
4. Punjab's co-operative sector remains extensive and financially deeper than before, with 27,038 societies and working capital exceeding Rs. 52 billion by 2020–21.

Editor's Note

This edition examines how key public service institutions—postal services, telecommunications infrastructure, and co-operative societies—have evolved in Punjab over the past five decades. While some traditional communication networks have contracted in the face of technological change, others, such as co-operative institutions, have demonstrated notable resilience and financial growth. By tracing long-term administrative data, this analysis highlights how shifts in technology, service delivery models, and institutional structures have reshaped the landscape of connectivity and community-based economic organization over time.

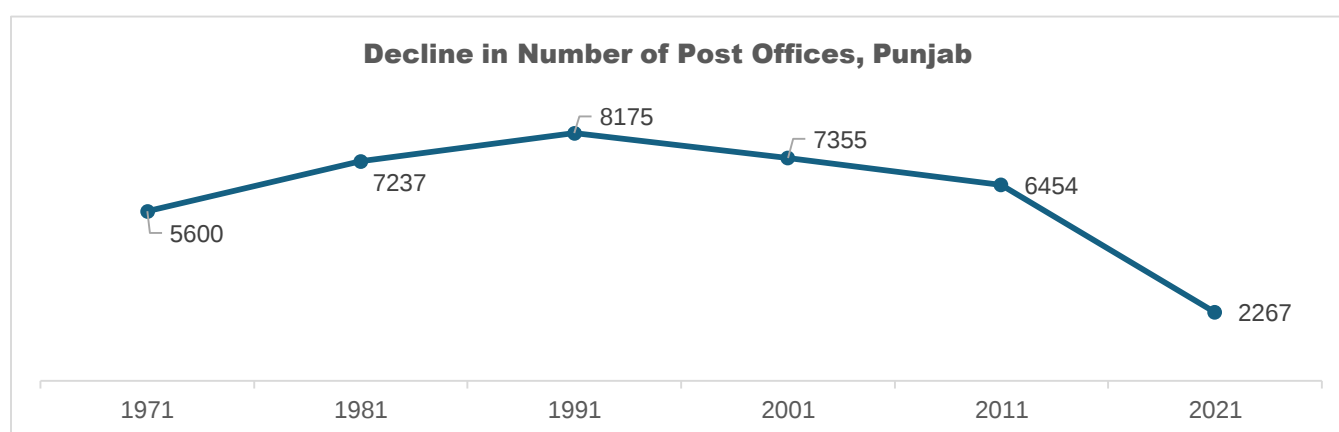
- **Aisha Aamir**

Assistant Manager Research, Gallup Pakistan

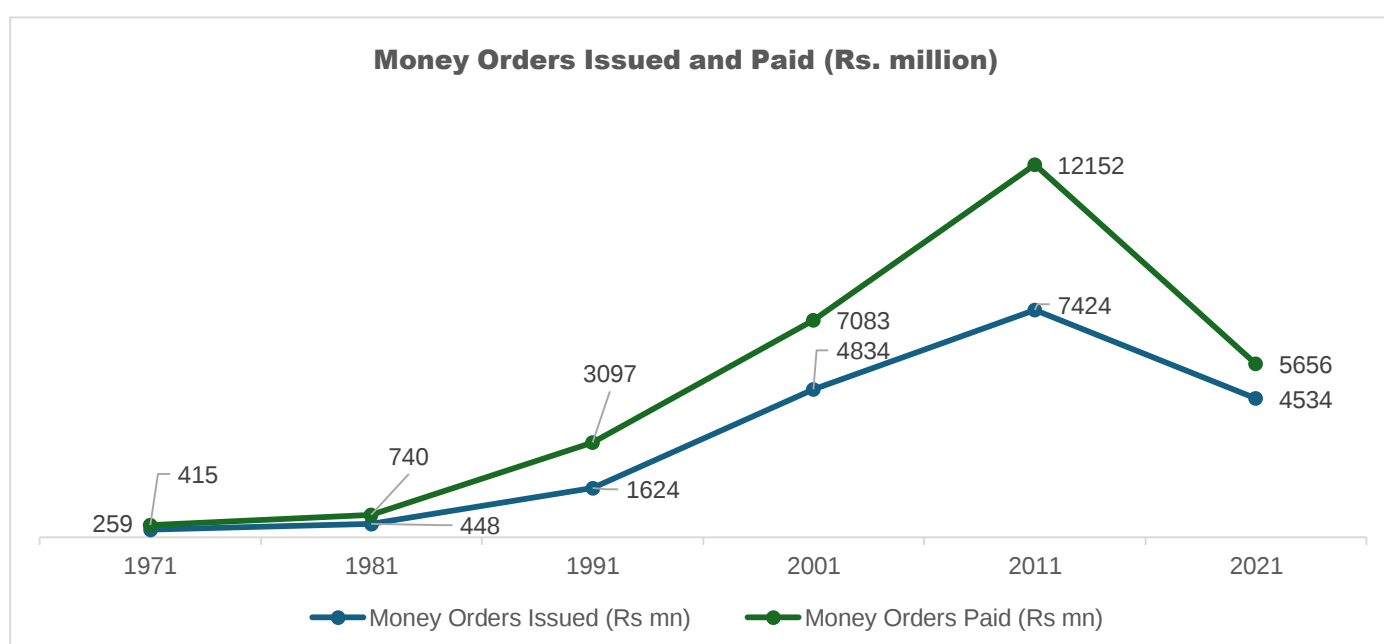
1. A Shrinking Postal Footprint, but Persistent Financial Relevance

Over the Punjab's postal system shows one of the clearest patterns of institutional retrenchment in the data. The number of post offices declines steadily over time, falling to 2,267 in 2020–21, a fraction of earlier decades when the network was far more extensive. Staffing levels follow a similar trajectory, reflecting reduced operational scale and changing modes of communication.

Yet this physical contraction does not translate into irrelevance. Money orders—both issued and paid—continue to involve large monetary volumes. In 2020–21, money orders worth Rs. 4,534 million were issued, while Rs. 5,656 million were paid. This divergence between shrinking infrastructure and sustained transaction values suggests that while fewer physical outlets exist, the postal system continues to serve specific financial and remittance needs, particularly for populations and use-cases where alternative banking or digital channels remain less accessible or less trusted.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

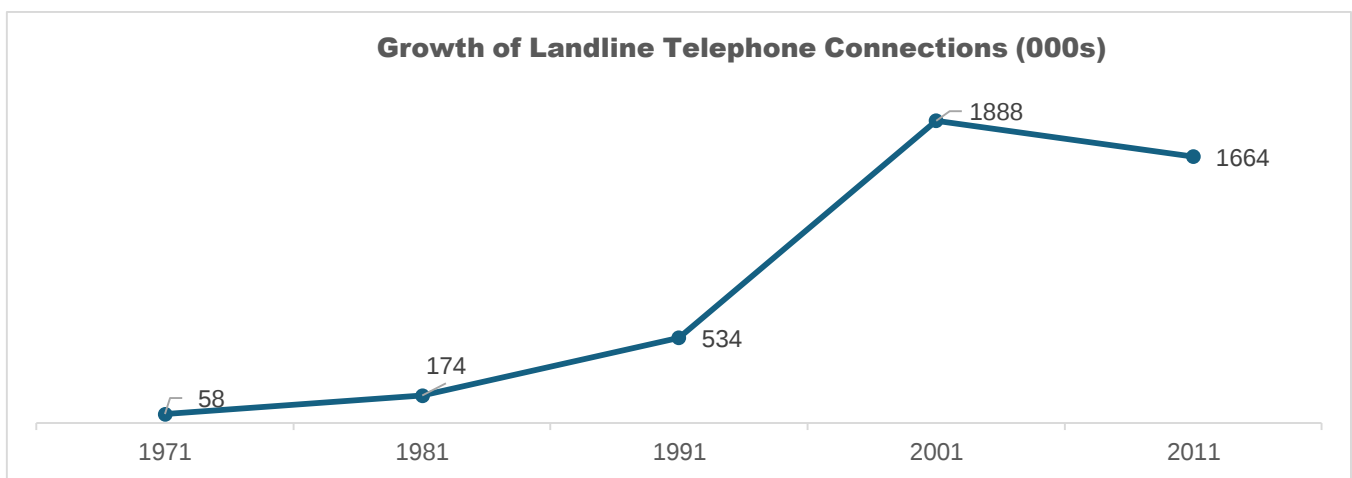


Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

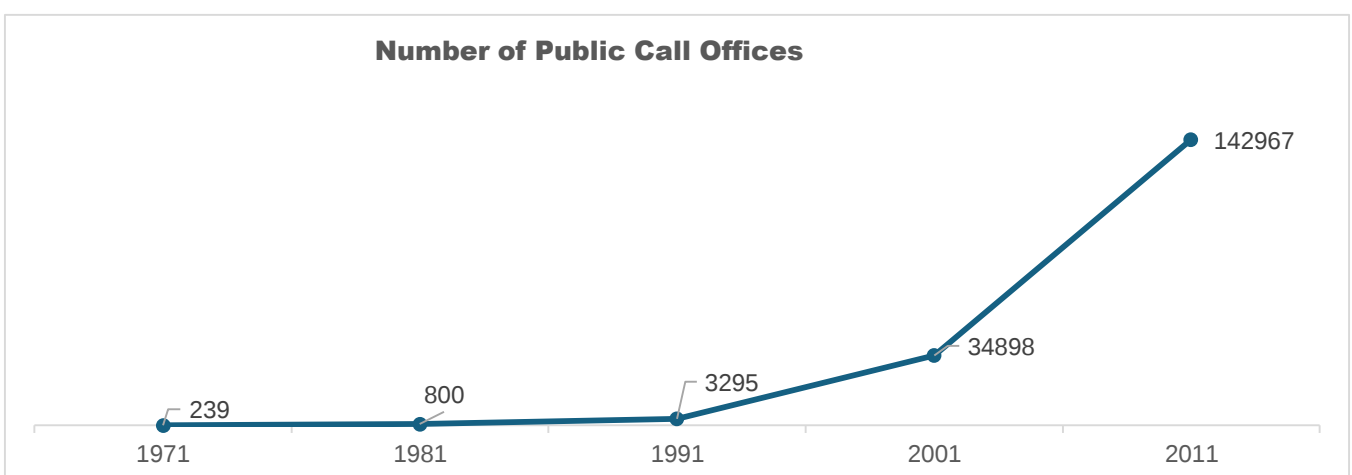
2. Telecommunications: The Rise and Plateau of Fixed-Line Connectivity

Telecommunications data from Punjab captures the historical rise of landline telephony as the backbone of connectivity in the late 20th century. Landline connections increase steadily from the 1970s onward, reaching 1.66 million lines by 2010–11. This expansion reflects decades of investment in fixed-line infrastructure, departmental exchanges, and public call offices as essential communication channels.

However, the data series effectively ends just as Pakistan enters the mobile-first era. The plateau in landline numbers by the late 2000s signals a structural turning point: fixed-line telephony had reached its practical ceiling and was soon overtaken by mobile and wireless technologies. As such, the landline series serves as a historical marker of a completed phase in Punjab's communications development rather than an ongoing growth story.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

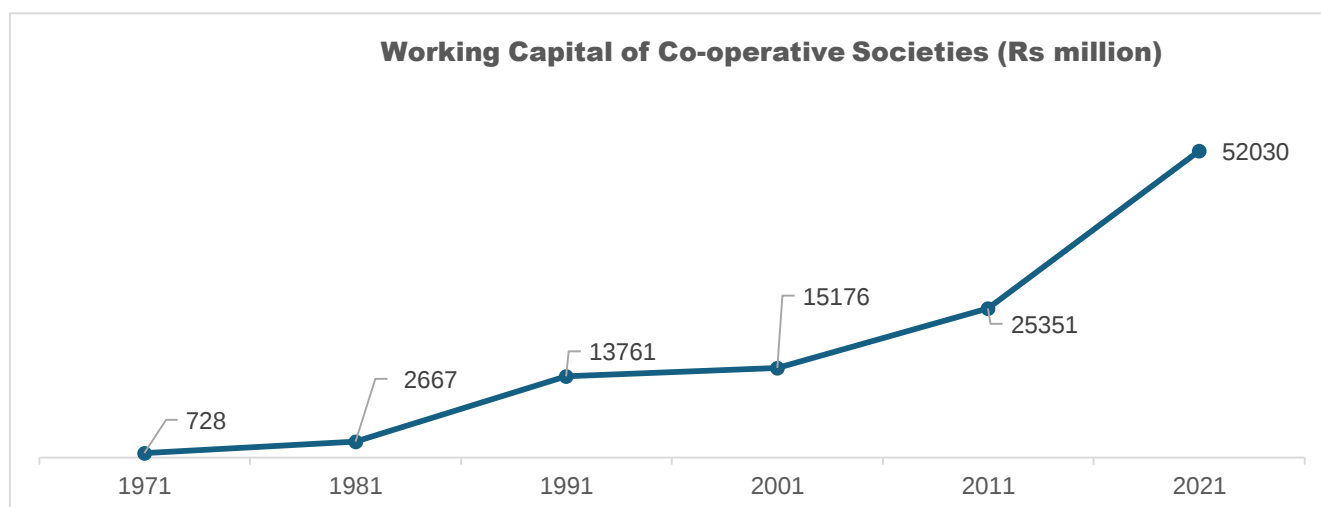
3. Co-operative Societies: Institutional Stability with Financial Deepening

In contrast to communications infrastructure, Punjab's co-operative societies display notable institutional resilience. The number of co-operative societies remains consistently high across decades, reaching 27,038 societies in 2020–21. Membership also stays substantial, standing at 1.545 million members in the same year.

More striking is the financial expansion of the sector. Working capital rises sharply in the later decades, exceeding Rs. 52 billion by 2020–21. This growth indicates that co-operative societies are not merely persisting in number but are operating at larger financial scales. The pattern suggests increasing formalization, deeper capitalization, and a greater role for co-operatives in mobilizing savings and financing local economic activity—particularly in rural and semi-urban Punjab where collective institutions often fill gaps left by commercial markets.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

4. Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the data reveal a structural rebalancing in Punjab's institutional landscape. Communication services show a clear shift away from physical, state-run infrastructure toward newer technologies and delivery modes, while co-operative societies demonstrate durability and financial strengthening over time. The contrast highlights how technological change can hollow out traditional service networks even as certain institutional forms—rooted in collective economic organization—retain relevance and adapt to new economic realities.



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.

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-international.com