



Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024-25 Education Outcomes & Inequality



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024-25

28 % of Children Aged 5–16 Not Enrolled in School, with Higher Exclusion Among Girls (34%) Than Boys (22%)

Islamabad, March 17th, 2026

Pakistan’s education landscape continues to show gradual improvement in access and participation, yet the latest evidence from the PSLM–HIES 2024–25 confirms that progress remains uneven and highly stratified. While a growing share of the population has some exposure to schooling, persistent inequalities by gender, region, and province continue to shape who benefits most from educational expansion. The data suggest that Pakistan’s core education challenge is no longer only about entry into school, but about sustained participation, equitable learning opportunities, and retention beyond the primary level—particularly for rural populations and girls.

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

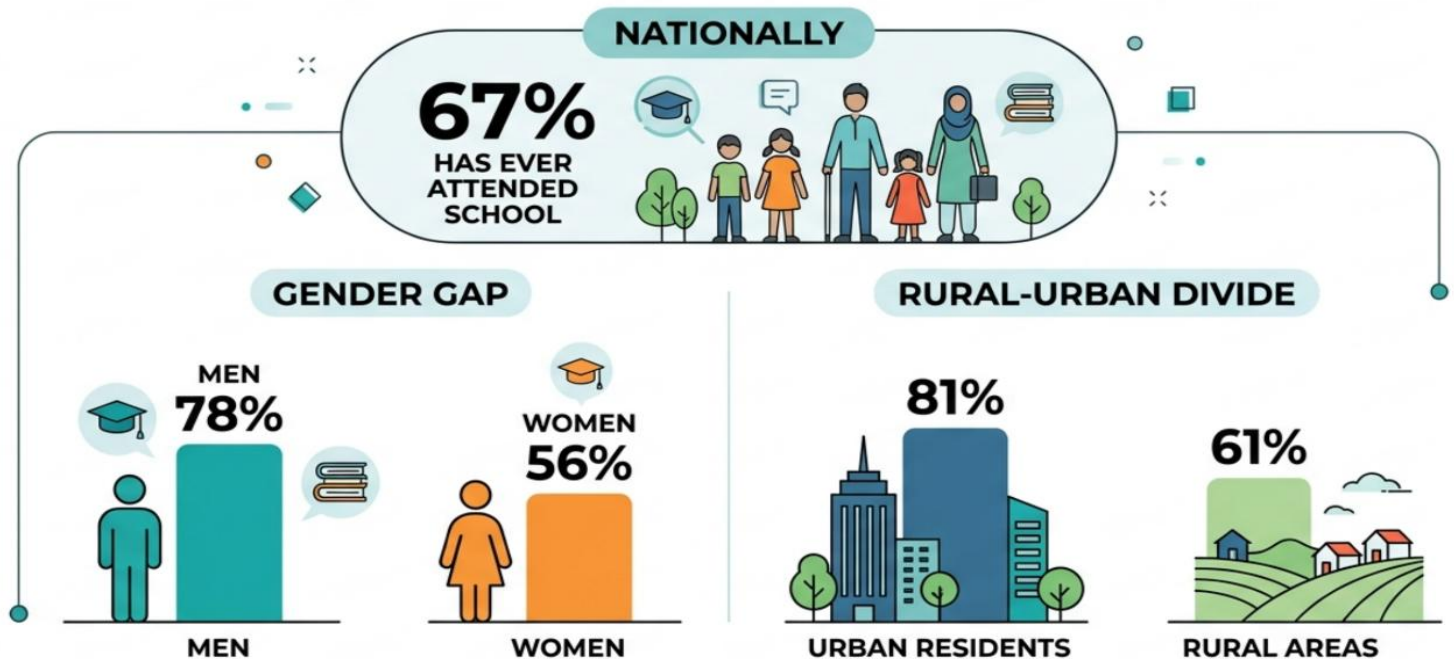
Gallup Pakistan’s Big Data series was initiated by Bilal I. Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. As he explains: *“Pakistan does not suffer from a lack of data, but from limited accessibility and weak translation of numbers into understanding. Gallup Pakistan bridges this gap by analyzing large, 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 press release is based on nationally representative data from the PSLM–HIES 2024–25 Social Report, covering school attendance among the population aged 10 years and above, out-of-school children aged 5–16 years, literacy rates (overall, youth, and adult), and gross and net enrolment at the primary, middle, and matric levels. All indicators are analyzed with gender, provincial, and urban–rural disaggregation, allowing for a detailed examination of education outcomes and inequality across Pakistan.

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024-25

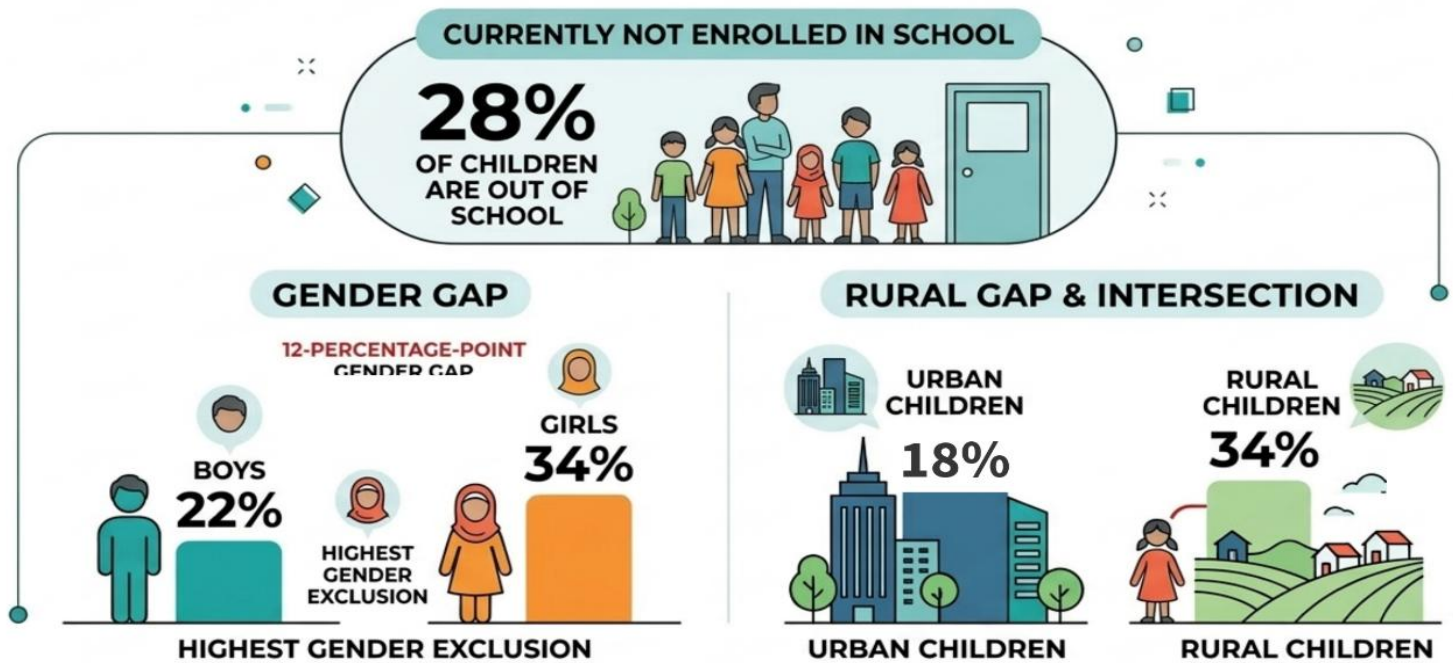
28% of children aged **5–16** are currently not enrolled in school, with exclusion markedly higher among girls (**34%**) compared to boys (**22%**).



Two-thirds of Pakistanis have ever attended school, but access remains uneven. Nationally, 67% of the population aged 10 years and above has attended school at some point; however, attendance rises to 78% among men but falls to 56% among women, reflecting a 22-percentage-point gender gap.

Rural residence sharply compounds educational exclusion. While 81% of urban residents have ever attended school, the figure drops to 61% in rural areas, underscoring a persistent 20-point rural–urban divide in basic educational access.

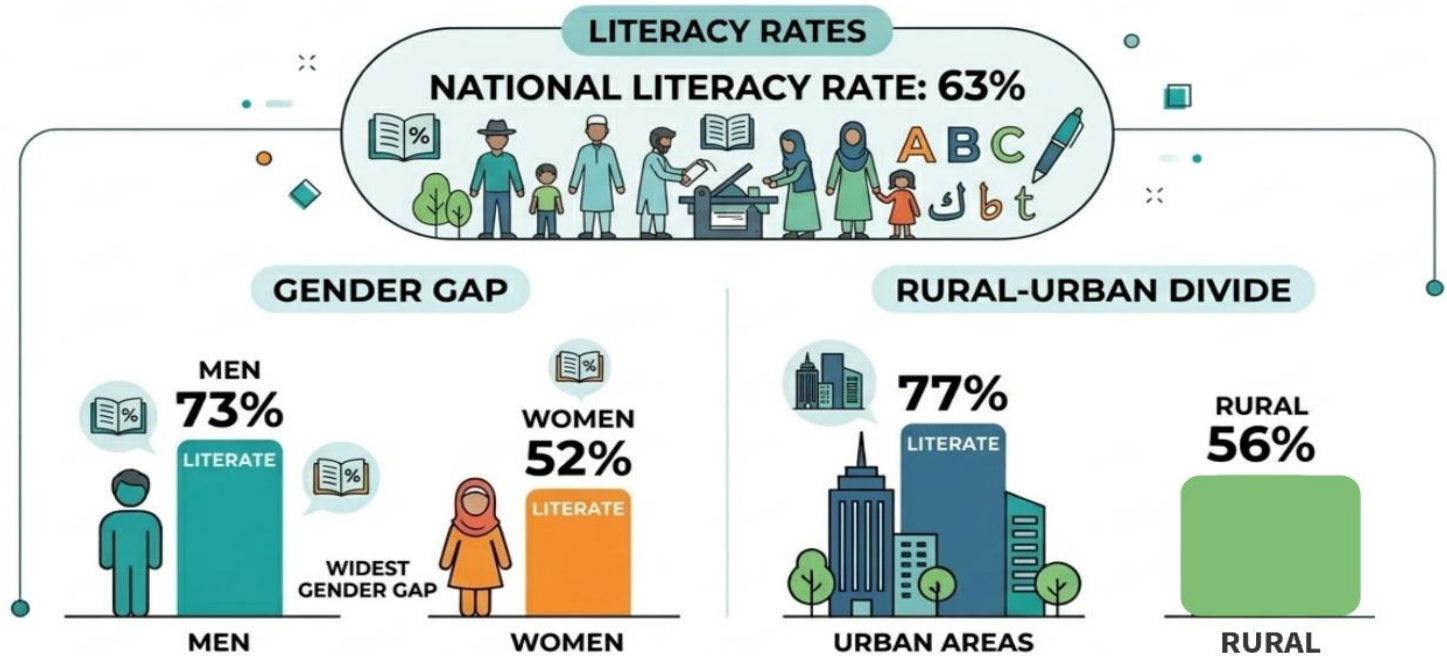
Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024-25



More than one in four children of school-going age remains out of school. An estimated 28% of children aged 5–16 are currently not enrolled in school, with exclusion markedly higher among girls (34%) compared to boys (22%).

Rural girls face the highest risk of being left behind. In rural areas, 34% of children are out of school overall, but the proportion is substantially higher for girls, highlighting the intersection of gender and geography as the strongest predictors of exclusion.

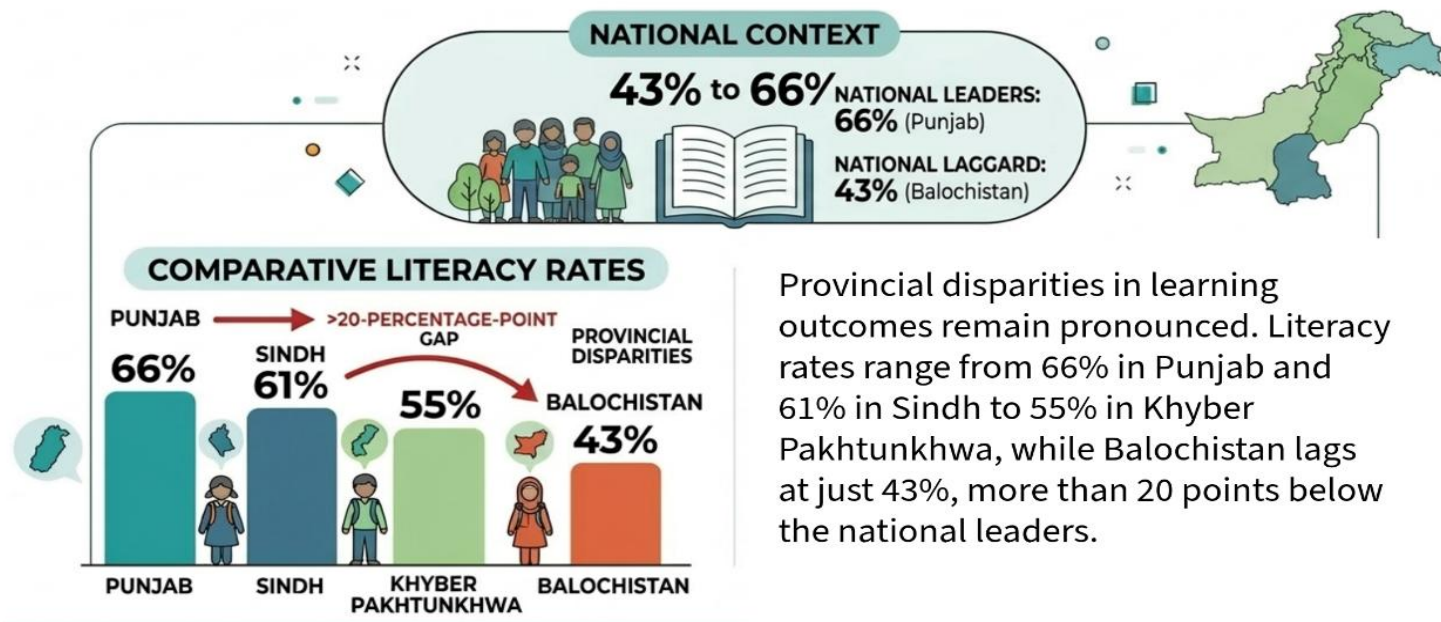
Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024-25



Literacy gains remain modest and deeply unequal. The national literacy rate stands at 63%, masking wide disparities: 73% among men versus 52% among women, and 77% in urban areas compared to 56% in rural Pakistan.

School retention collapses sharply beyond primary education. Net enrolment is relatively higher at the primary level (68%), but falls steeply to 40% at middle school and further to 30% at the matric level, indicating major dropout during early adolescence

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024-25



Education inequality reflects structural rather than temporary gaps. Persistent differences by gender, location, and province—visible across attendance, enrolment, and literacy indicators—suggest that recent gains have not been sufficient to close long-standing structural divides.

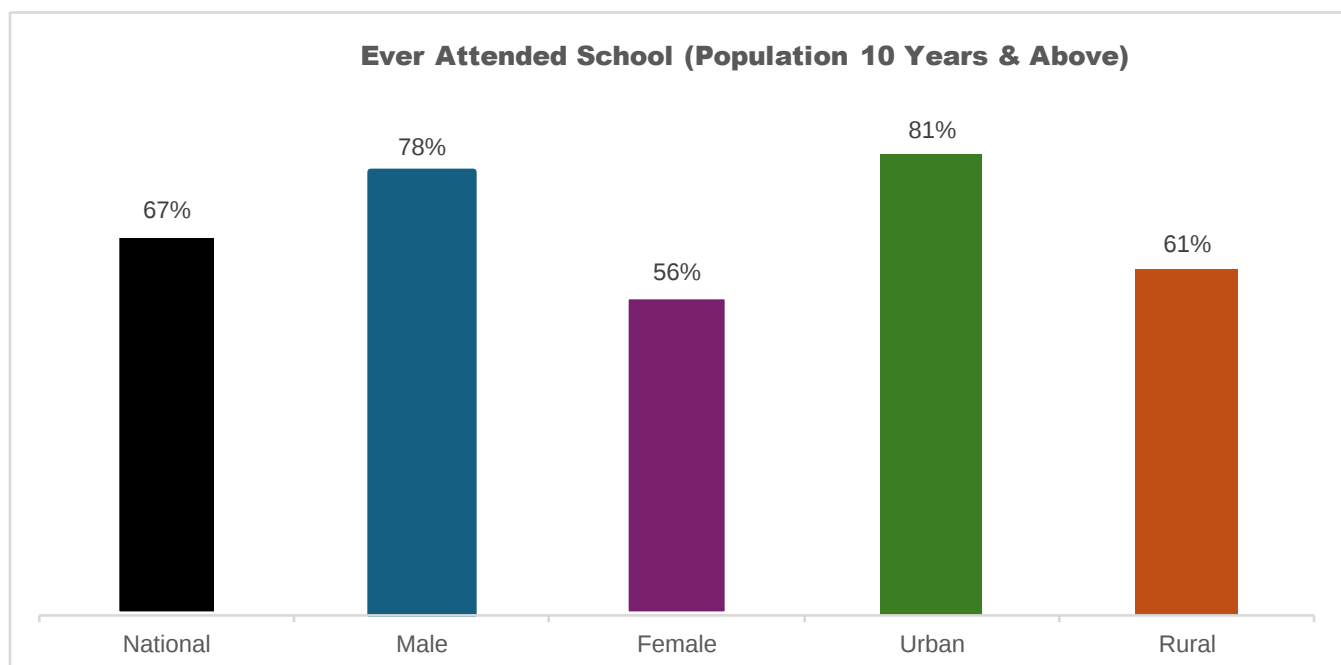
Key Findings:

1. Two-thirds of Pakistanis have ever attended school, but access remains uneven. Nationally, 67% of the population aged 10 years and above has attended school at some point; however, attendance rises to 78% among men but falls to 56% among women, reflecting a 22-percentage-point gender gap.
2. Rural residence sharply compounds educational exclusion. While 81% of urban residents have ever attended school, the figure drops to 61% in rural areas, underscoring a persistent 20-point rural–urban divide in basic educational access.
3. More than one in four children of school-going age remains out of school. An estimated 28% of children aged 5–16 are currently not enrolled in school, with exclusion markedly higher among girls (34%) compared to boys (22%).
4. Rural girls face the highest risk of being left behind. In rural areas, 34% of children are out of school overall, but the proportion is substantially higher for girls, highlighting the intersection of gender and geography as the strongest predictors of exclusion.
5. Literacy gains remain modest and deeply unequal. The national literacy rate stands at 63%, masking wide disparities: 73% among men versus 52% among women, and 77% in urban areas compared to 56% in rural Pakistan.
6. School retention collapses sharply beyond primary education. Net enrolment is relatively higher at the primary level (68%), but falls steeply to 40% at middle school and further to 30% at the matric level, indicating major dropout during early adolescence.
7. Provincial disparities in learning outcomes remain pronounced. Literacy rates range from 66% in Punjab and 61% in Sindh to 55% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while Balochistan lags at just 43%, more than 20 points below the national leaders.
8. Education inequality reflects structural rather than temporary gaps. Persistent differences by gender, location, and province—visible across attendance, enrolment, and literacy indicators—suggest that recent gains have not been sufficient to close long-standing structural divides.

1. School Attendance: Expansion Without Equity

The share of Pakistan’s population aged 10 years and above that has ever attended school has risen to approximately two-thirds nationally, indicating steady long-term progress in educational access. However, this aggregate improvement masks deep structural divides. Male participation continues to exceed female participation by a wide margin, reflecting persistent gender norms, safety concerns, and opportunity costs faced by girls—particularly in rural areas. Urban residents show substantially higher attendance rates than their rural counterparts, underscoring the continued advantage of proximity to schools and better educational infrastructure.

Provincially, Punjab records the highest exposure to schooling, reflecting decades of relatively stronger education investment and school density. In contrast, Balochistan remains the most disadvantaged, with a large proportion of its population never having attended school at all. These patterns suggest that while national access indicators have improved, progress has been spatially concentrated and socially unequal.

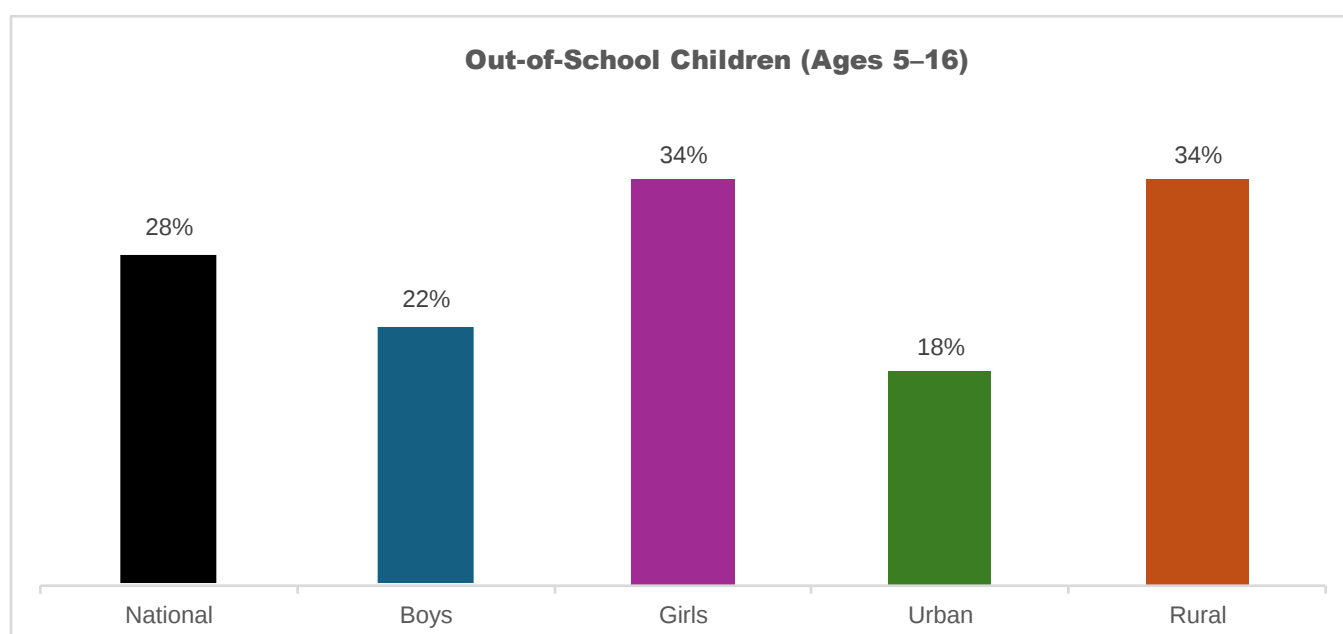


Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) / Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024–25; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

2. Out-of-School Children: A Stubborn Structural Problem

Despite gains in enrolment over time, around 28% of children aged 5–16 years remain out of school nationwide, highlighting the scale of exclusion that persists within Pakistan’s education system. Rural areas account for a disproportionate share of out-of-school children, with rural girls facing the highest risk of exclusion due to household responsibilities, early marriage, and limited availability of nearby middle and secondary schools.

Provincial disparities remain stark. Punjab shows comparatively lower out-of-school rates, while Sindh and Balochistan continue to report high levels of non-attendance. The persistence of these gaps suggests that policy efforts focused solely on school construction are insufficient; demand-side barriers such as poverty, child labour, and social norms continue to play a decisive role in shaping school participation.

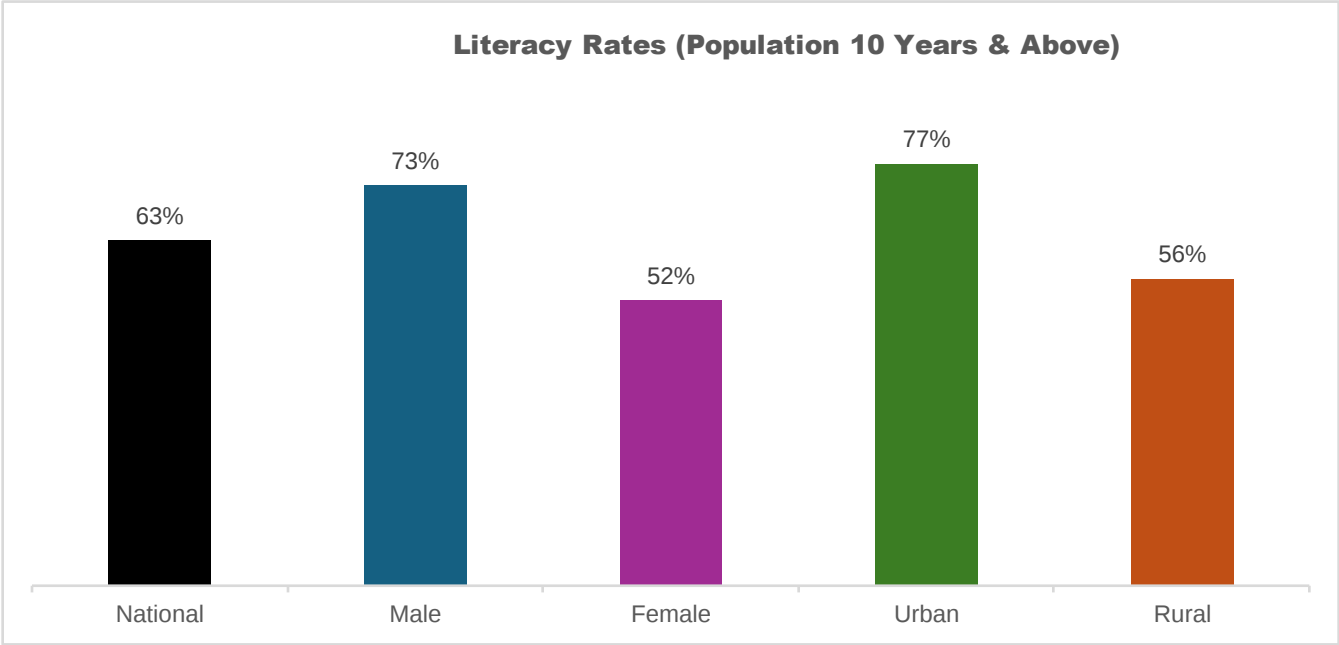


Source: *Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) / Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024–25; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.*

3. Literacy Outcomes: Generational Gains, Persistent Gender Gaps

National literacy among individuals aged 10 years and above now stands at **approximately 63%**, reflecting gradual improvement across successive PSLM rounds. Youth literacy (ages 15–24) is notably higher than adult literacy, indicating positive generational change and the long-term payoff of expanded schooling. However, these gains remain uneven.

Male literacy continues to substantially outpace female literacy, while urban literacy rates remain far higher than rural rates. In provinces such as Balochistan and rural Sindh, literacy outcomes lag significantly behind national averages. These patterns indicate that while access to schooling has improved, the quality, continuity, and inclusiveness of education remain uneven—particularly for women and rural populations.

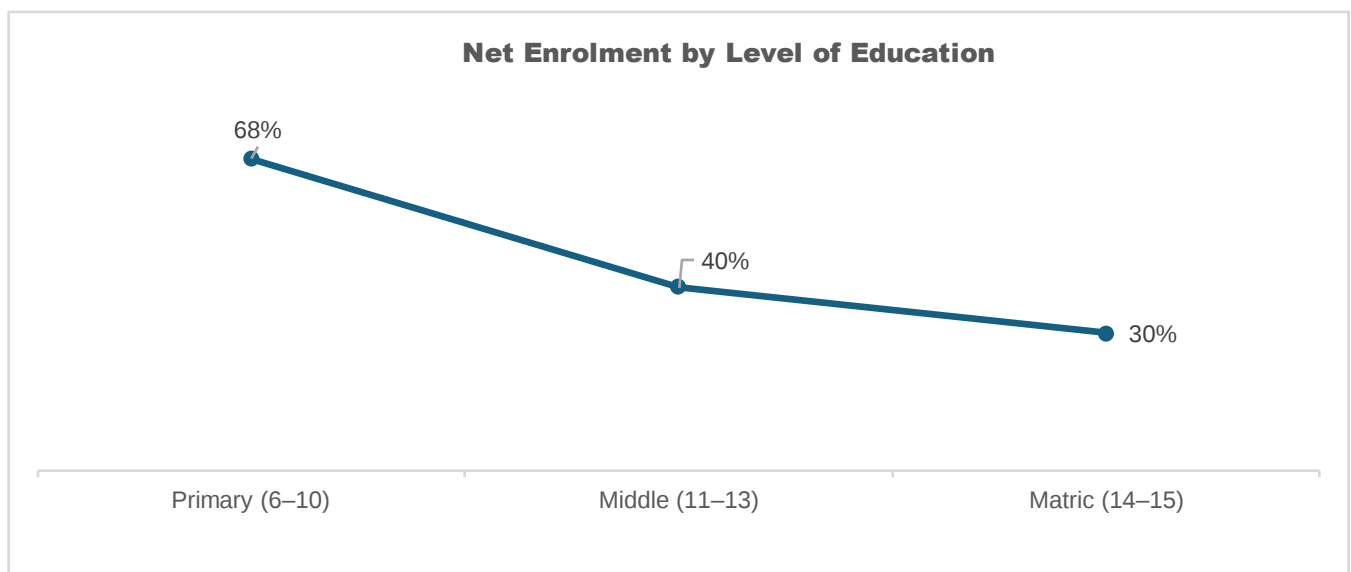


Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) / Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024–25; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

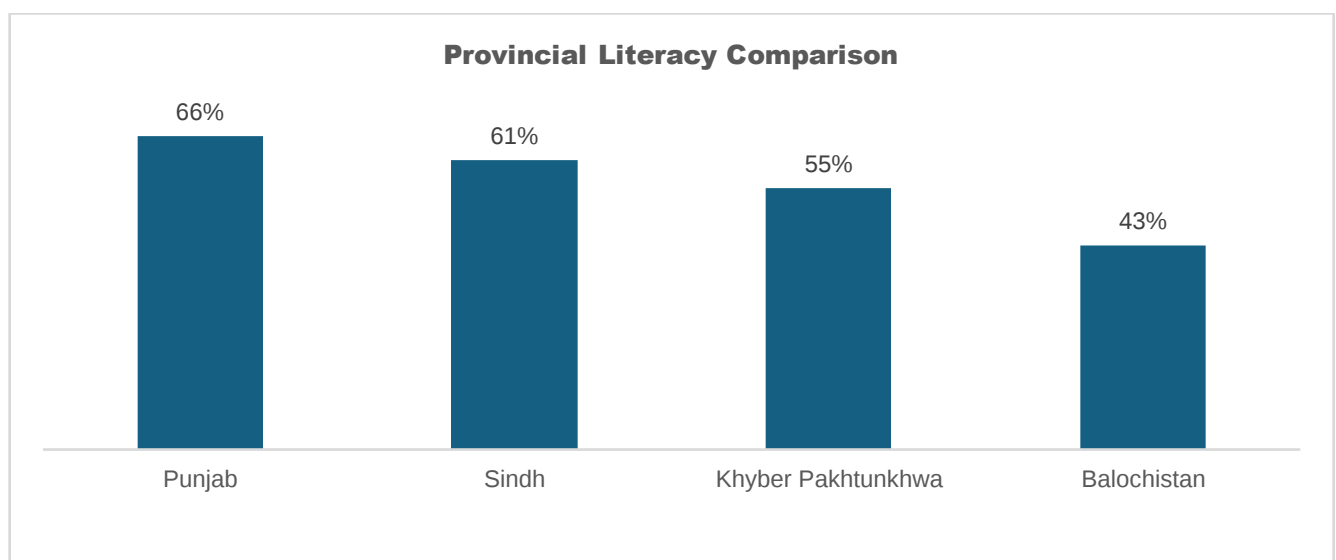
4. Enrolment Patterns: The Retention Crisis Beyond Primary

Net enrolment at the primary level (ages 6–10) has reached around 68% nationally, signaling moderate success in bringing children into the education system. However, enrolment drops sharply at higher levels. Net enrolment at the middle level falls to roughly 40%, while matric-level enrolment declines further to around 30%.

This steep drop-off is especially pronounced for rural girls, pointing to structural barriers such as school distance, safety concerns, and rising opportunity costs as children age. The data clearly show that Pakistan's education challenge is no longer confined to access at entry, but to ensuring smooth transitions and sustained participation through adolescence.



Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) / Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024–25; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.



Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) / Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024–25; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

5. Dropouts and Early Exit: A Critical Bottleneck

Dropout patterns reveal that the transition from primary to middle school is a major point of attrition. Economic pressures, domestic responsibilities, and limited post-primary schooling options—particularly in rural areas—contribute to early exit from the education system. For girls, these challenges are compounded by social expectations and early marriage. Without targeted interventions addressing these bottlenecks, improvements in primary enrolment are unlikely to translate into meaningful gains in secondary education completion.



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