

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

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Access



PRESS RELEASE

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

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Access: Urban-Rural Divide Remains Stark, with 65 % of Rural Households Lacking Access to Improved Drinking Water and Only 55% Having Handwashing Facilities with Soap

11% of the population has access to formal garbage collection, with 67% of urban households relying on informal waste disposal methods.

Islamabad, April 15th, 2026

The state of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) remains a critical determinant of public health in Pakistan. Despite some progress, the country still faces significant disparities between urban and rural areas. Access to improved drinking water stands at 96% in urban areas but drops to just 65% in rural areas. These findings underline the persistent inequalities in access to WASH services and highlight the need for targeted interventions, particularly in rural regions, to improve public health outcomes.

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 edition of the PSLM Report 2024-25 focuses on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). It covers a range of critical indicators, including access to improved drinking water, sanitation coverage, handwashing facilities with soap, and garbage collection. The data is disaggregated by rural/urban regions and provincial areas, providing insight into geographic disparities. The report also highlights the gender dimension of WASH access, particularly focusing on the time burden for women in rural areas who are primarily responsible for water collection.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Access

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Access to Drinking Water:

URBAN AREAS



96%

URBAN ACCESS (HIGH)



High levels of access to safe water sources in cities.

RURAL AREAS



65%

RURAL ACCESS (REMAINS LOW)



Access in rural areas lags behind urban centers.

Urban access to improved drinking water stands at 96%, while rural access remains low at 65%.

Distance to Water Source:



65%

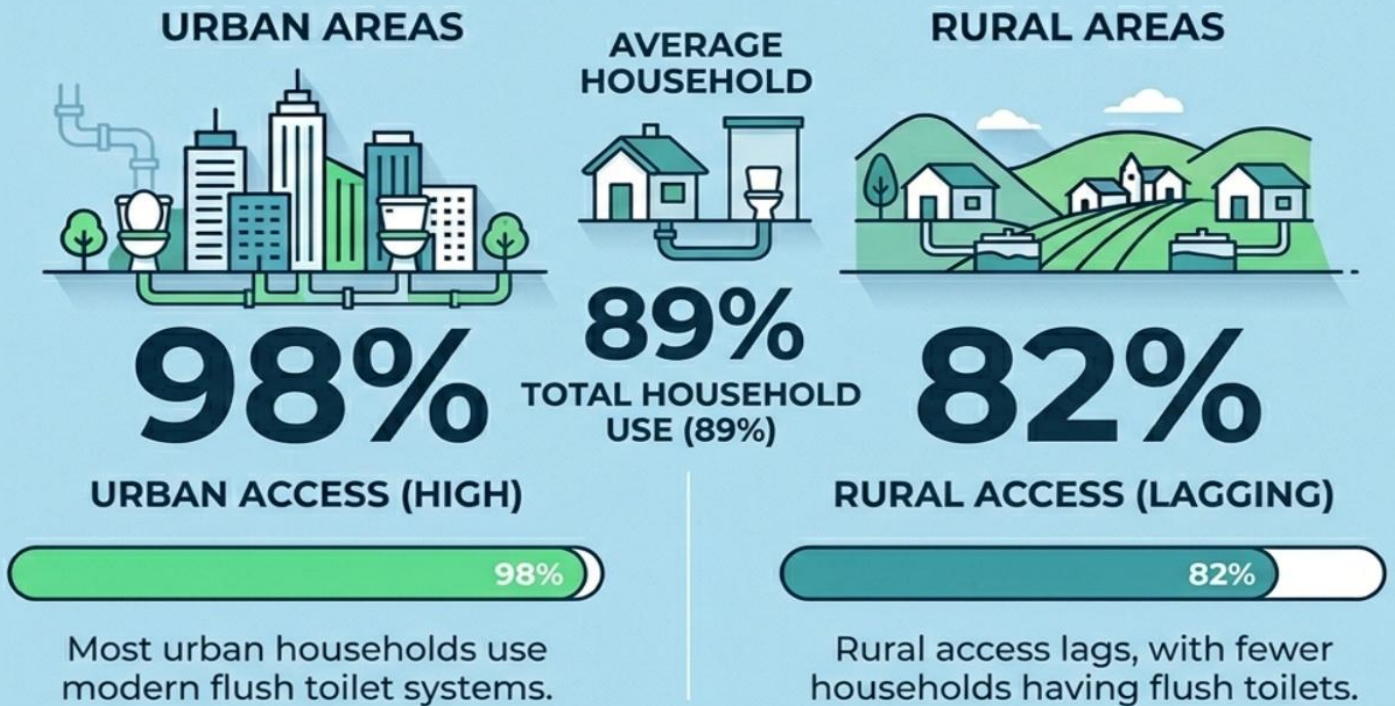
AVERAGE FETCHING TIME



Most urban households report
short water-fetching times.

65% of households report spending 1-15 minutes fetching water, with significant time burdens on women in rural areas.

Improved Toilets & Sanitation Systems:



89% of households now use flush toilets, with rural areas still lagging at 82% compared to 98% in urban areas.

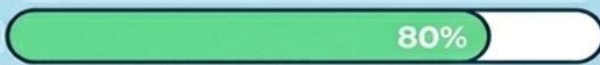
Hand-washing Facilities with Soap:

URBAN HOUSEHOLDS



80%

URBAN ACCESS (HIGH)



RURAL HOUSEHOLDS



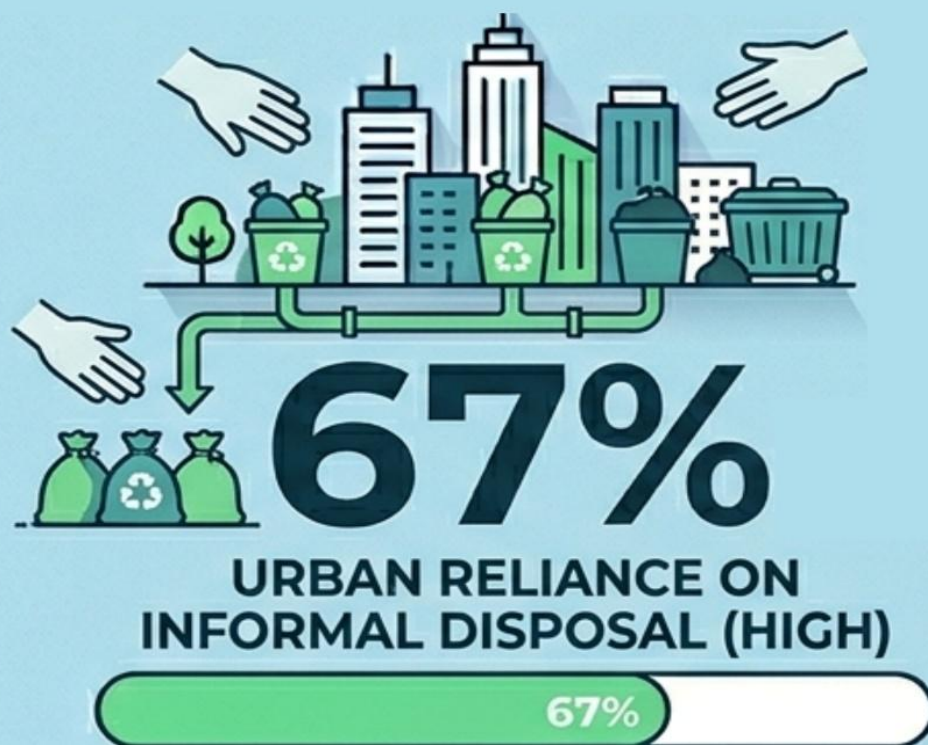
55%

RURAL ACCESS (REPORTED LOW)



80% of urban households have access to hand washing facilities with soap, but only 55% of rural households report the same.

Garbage Collection Coverage:



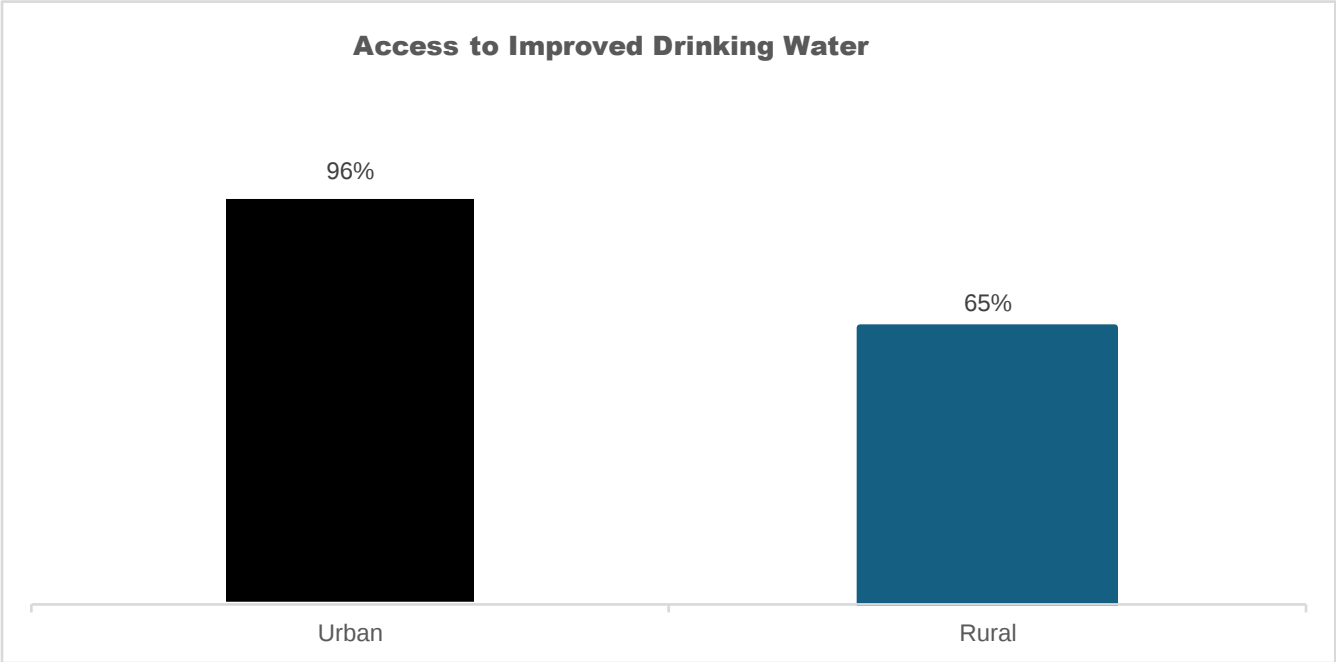
11% of the population has access to formal garbage collection, with 67% of urban households relying on informal waste disposal methods.

Key Findings:

1. Urban access to improved drinking water stands at 96%, while rural access remains low at 65%.
2. 65% of households report spending 1-15 minutes fetching water, with significant time burdens on women in rural areas.
3. 89% of households now use flush toilets, with rural areas still lagging at 82% compared to 98% in urban areas.
4. 80% of urban households have access to handwashing facilities with soap, but only 55% of rural households report the same.
5. 11% of the population has access to formal garbage collection, with 67% of urban households relying on informal waste disposal methods.

1. Access to Improved Drinking Water

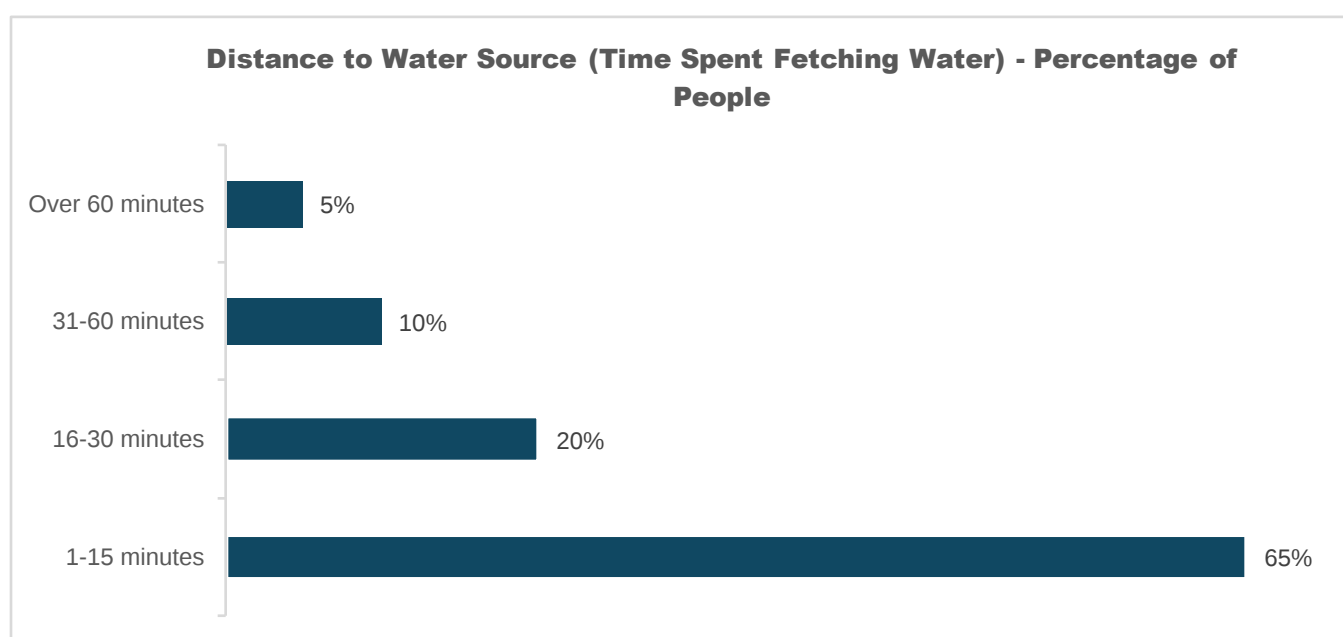
Access to clean and safe drinking water remains a cornerstone of public health. In Pakistan, while there has been notable progress in urban areas, rural regions continue to struggle with insufficient access. According to the report, urban access to improved drinking water has reached about 96%, thanks to extensive infrastructure development. However, rural areas lag significantly, with only 65% of households having reliable access to drinking water. This disparity is primarily driven by geographic and economic factors, as well as infrastructural deficits in rural communities. The government has undertaken several initiatives, including the National Water Conservation Strategy, to address these challenges, but the rural-urban divide remains a pressing issue. Moving forward, a stronger focus on expanding infrastructure in underserved areas, such as Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, could help bridge this gap.



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

2. Distance to Water Source

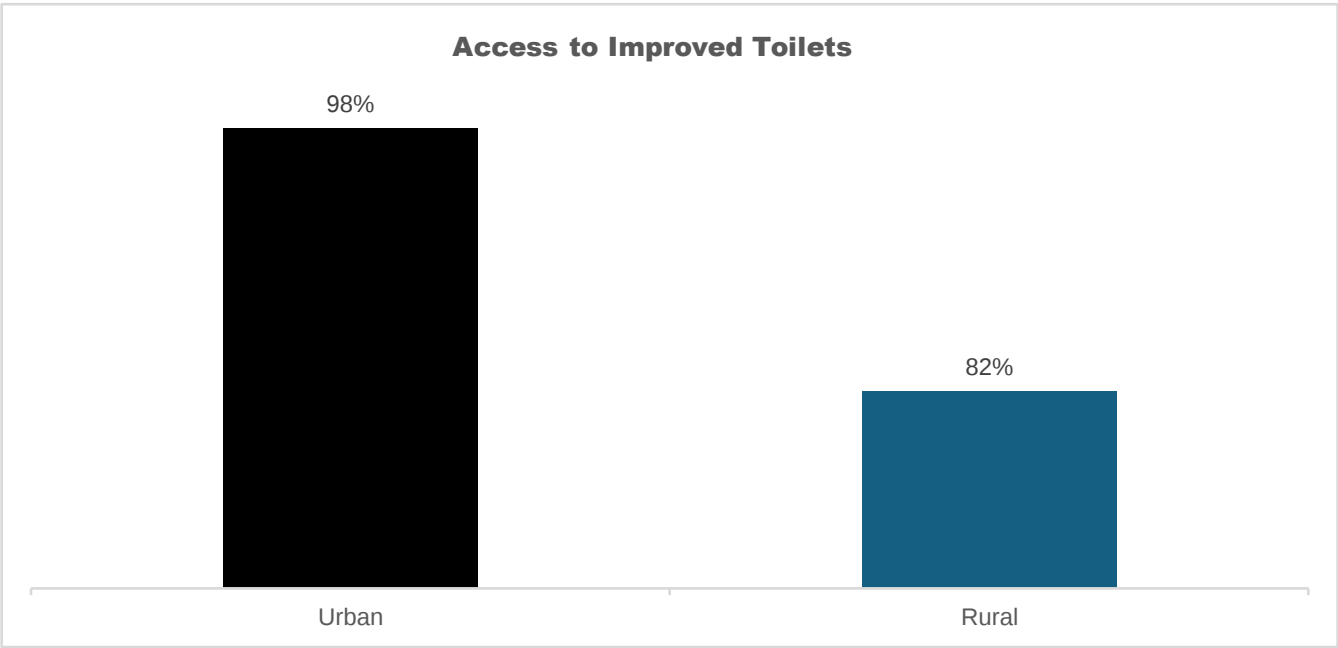
The time burden, especially on women and children, is a significant concern when accessing water. In rural areas, a large portion of the population still depends on hand pumps, dug wells, and motor pumps, which can be a considerable distance from their homes. 65% of the population travels 1-15 minutes to fetch water, but a substantial portion spends between 16 to 60 minutes collecting water. This time-consuming task disproportionately impacts women, who often bear the primary responsibility for water collection. The increased burden on women limits their opportunities for economic activities, education, and overall well-being. To improve this situation, the government could focus on establishing more local water distribution points and enhancing water accessibility at the community level.



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

3. Improved Toilets & Sanitation Systems

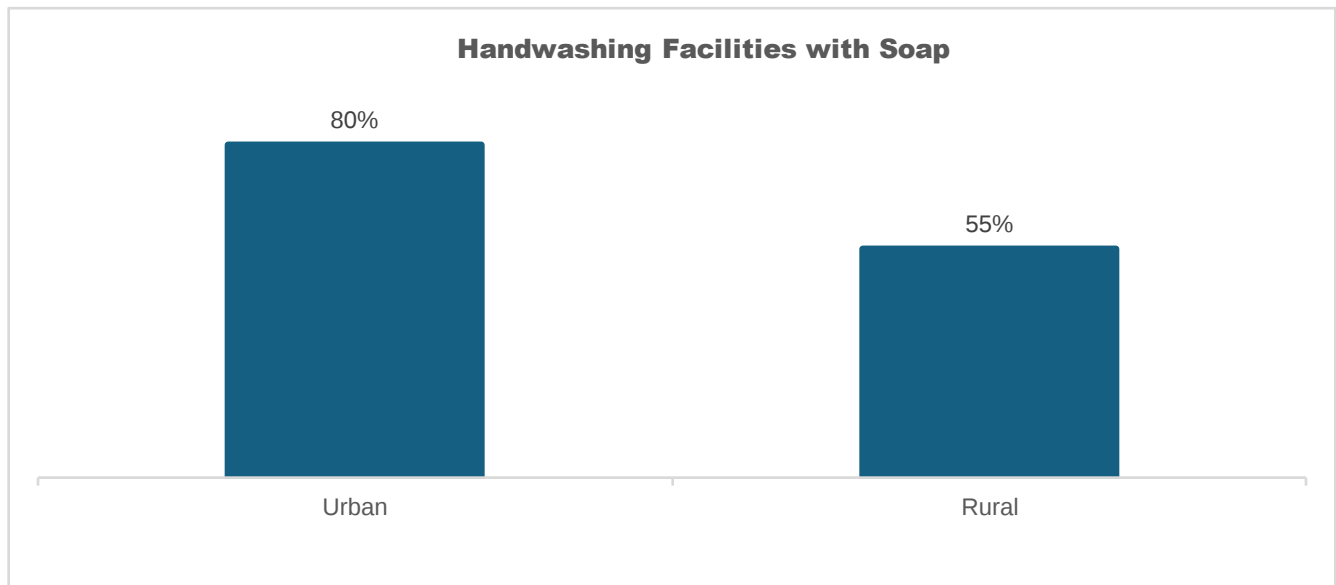
Sanitation is another critical factor in WASH, directly impacting public health. The survey reveals steady progress in sanitation systems, with 89% of households using flush toilets, an improvement from 80% in previous years. While urban areas have near-universal access (98%), rural areas still show considerable gaps, with 27% of rural households lacking access to any toilet. Balochistan remains the province with the highest percentage of households without a toilet at 66%, underscoring regional disparities. The government’s focus on promoting clean green policies and climate-resilient sanitation practices under the URAAN Pakistan Programme (2024-29) is expected to help address these gaps. However, more needs to be done in remote areas to ensure universal sanitation coverage.



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

4. Handwashing Facilities with Soap

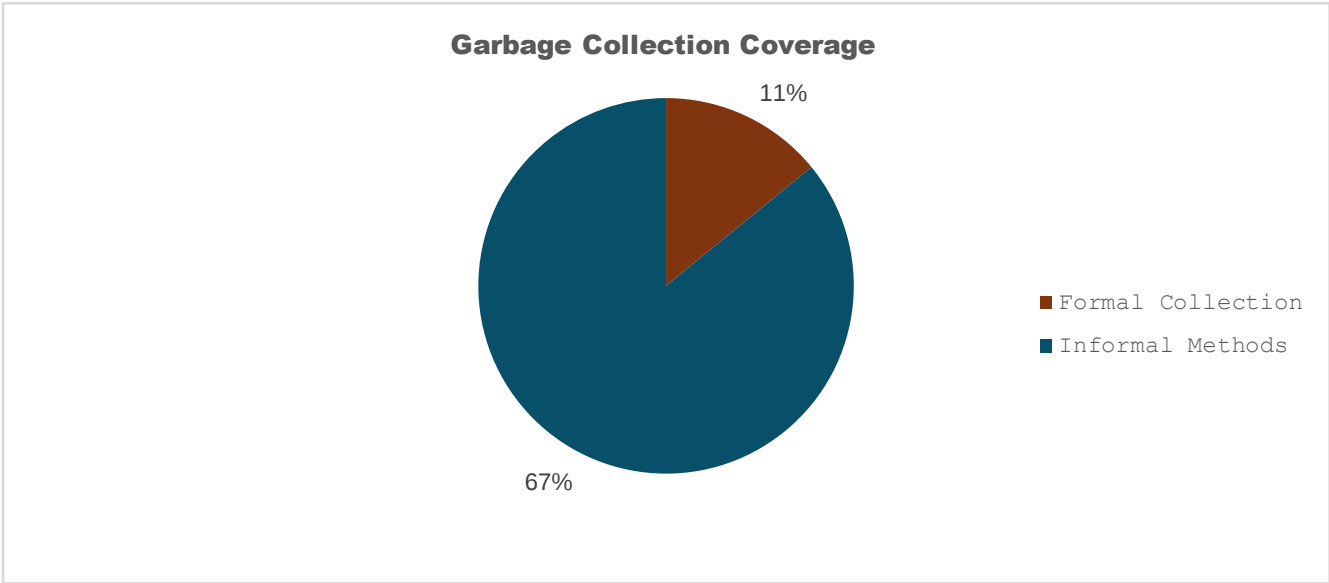
Hand hygiene is critical for preventing the spread of infectious diseases. The survey indicates that 80% of households in urban areas have access to handwashing facilities with soap, but rural areas are significantly behind, with only 55% of households reporting access to such facilities. The access to handwashing facilities is lower in poorer regions and households with less educational attainment. Given the persistent risks posed by waterborne diseases, improving hand hygiene infrastructure in rural and low-income areas should be a priority, in line with SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation.



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

5. Garbage Collection Coverage

In terms of solid waste management, formal garbage collection services cover only about 11% of the population, with informal waste disposal methods—such as open dumping—being prevalent in rural areas. Urban areas have seen slightly better waste management, with 67% of urban households relying on informal garbage disposal methods. These numbers reflect a significant gap in waste management services and raise concerns about public health, particularly in informal urban settlements where garbage collection systems are either underdeveloped or non-existent. The government needs to address this pressing issue by expanding municipal waste collection services, particularly in growing urban slums, to reduce environmental pollution and improve living conditions.



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



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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Contact Details:

Islamabad : +92 51 2655630

Email: isb@gallup.com.pk

www.gallup-international.com