

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Punjab Development Statistics (50 Years) Education



PRESS RELEASE

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Female High School Enrollment Rose More Than Tenfold, Increasing from 204,000 Students in 1971–72 to 2.29 Million by 2020–21

Islamabad, April 29th, 2026

Long-term official statistics reveal that Punjab's education system has undergone a profound transformation over the past five decades, marked by major growth in secondary schools, higher education institutions, and female participation in education. Administrative data covering the period 1971–72 to 2020–21 show that while the number of primary schools increased modestly, secondary education expanded rapidly and higher education institutions multiplied many times over. At the same time, enrollment grew significantly across most levels of education, and female participation rose sharply. These trends reflect the gradual expansion of educational infrastructure and the increasing demand for schooling across the province.

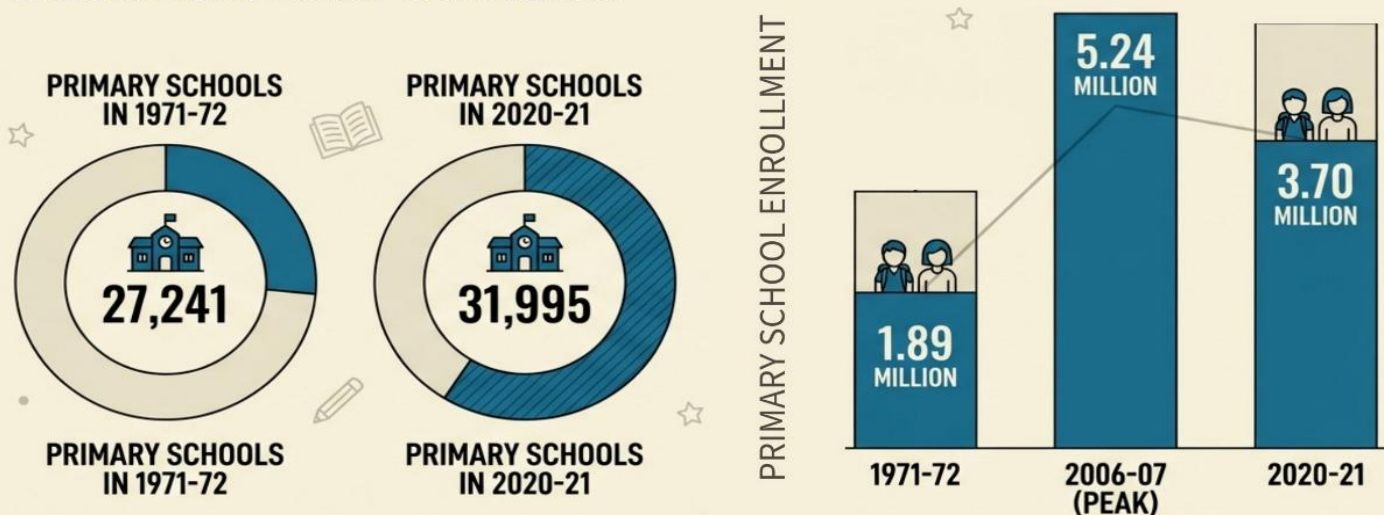
What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

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 analyzes long-term trends in Punjab's education sector using official administrative statistics from the Punjab Development Statistics (1972–2021) series. The analysis draws on the following tables: 5.1.a Government Mosque Schools, 5.1.b Government Primary Schools, 5.1.c Government Middle Schools, 5.1.d Government High Schools, 5.2.a–c Inter / Degree / Postgraduate Colleges, 5.3.a–c Technical & Vocational Institutions, 5.4 Teacher Training Colleges. The data cover: i. Number of institutions ii. Student enrollment (boys and girls) and iii. Teaching staff, over the period 1971–72 to 2020–21.

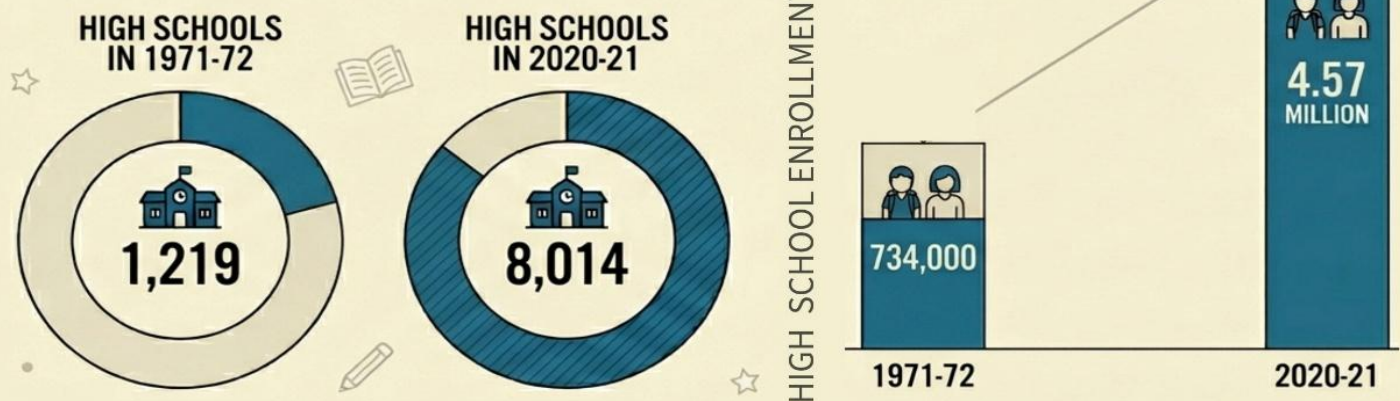
Primary Education Expanded but Enrollment Later Stabilized



Government Primary schools in Punjab increased from **27,241** in 1971–72 to **31,995** in 2020–21, while enrollment rose from **1.89** million to **3.70** million students, after peaking at **5.24** million in 2006–07.

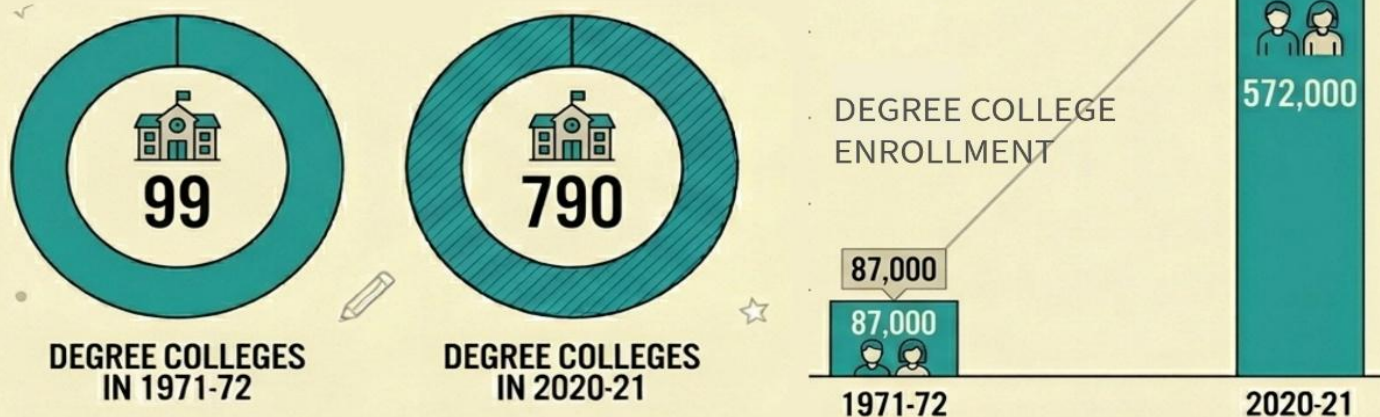
Middle schools nearly tripled, increasing from **2,645** schools to **7,164**, while enrollment rose from **651,000** to **1.91** million students.

Government High School Expansion in Punjab



High schools expanded more than sixfold, rising from **1,219** schools in 1971–72 to **8,014** schools in 2020–21, with enrollment increasing from **734,000** to **4.57** million students.

Government Degree College Expansion in Punjab

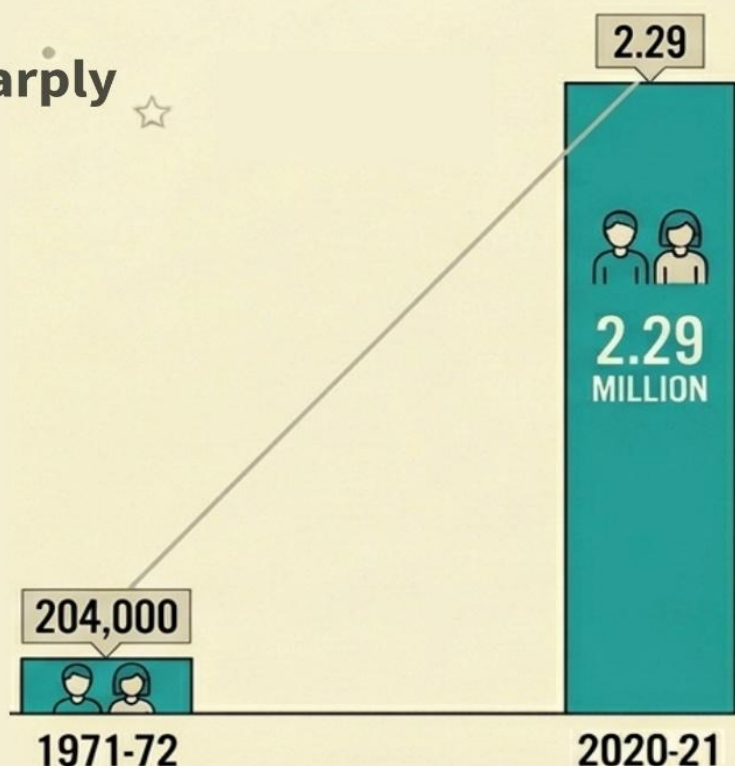


Degree colleges expanded from **99** institutions to **790**, while enrollment increased from **87,000** to **572,000** students in 2021

Technology and polytechnic institutes increased from **11** institutions to **49**, while enrollment grew from about **6,200** students to over **31,700** students.

Female Participation in Education Increased Sharply ☆

Female high school enrollment rose more than tenfold, increasing from **204,000** students in 1971–72 to **2.29** million students by 2020–21.



Female enrollment in middle schools increased from approximately 177,000 students in 1971–72 to more than 1.00 million students in 2020–21, while primary school enrollment for girls rose from 617,000 students to about 1.73 million students during the same period.

Key Findings:

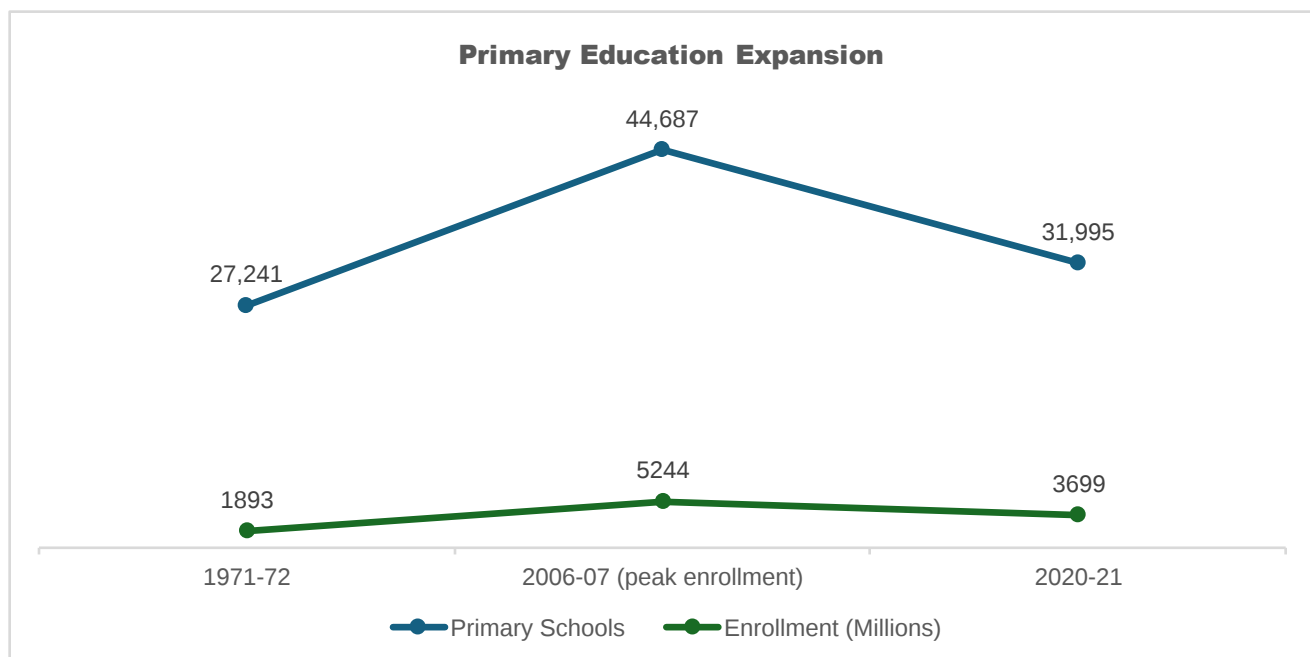
1. Primary schools increased from 27,241 in 1971–72 to 31,995 in 2020–21, while enrollment rose from 1.89 million to 3.70 million students, after peaking at 5.24 million in 2006–07.
2. Middle schools nearly tripled, increasing from 2,645 schools to 7,164, while enrollment rose from 651,000 to 1.91 million students.
3. High schools expanded more than sixfold, rising from 1,219 schools in 1971–72 to 8,014 schools in 2020–21, with enrollment increasing from 734,000 to 4.57 million students.
4. Female high school enrollment rose more than tenfold, increasing from 204,000 students in 1971–72 to 2.29 million students by 2020–21.
5. Degree colleges expanded from 99 institutions to 790, while enrollment increased from 87,000 to 572,000 students.
6. Technology and polytechnic institutes increased from 11 institutions to 49, while enrollment grew from about 6,200 students to over 31,700 students.

1. Primary Education Expanded but Enrollment Later Stabilized

Government primary schools have historically formed the foundation of Punjab's education system, and the long-term data reflect a steady expansion in institutional capacity since the early 1970s. In 1971–72, Punjab had 27,241 government primary schools, serving approximately 1.89 million students. Over the following decades, the number of schools gradually increased, reaching 31,995 institutions by 2020–21. This represents a moderate expansion of about 17% over five decades, suggesting that the primary education infrastructure grew steadily but not dramatically compared with other education levels.

Enrollment trends, however, reveal a more complex trajectory. Primary school enrollment rose sharply during the late 1990s and early 2000s, reaching a peak of 5.24 million students in 2006–07. This surge likely reflects the combined impact of population growth, expanded school access, and education policy initiatives during that period aimed at increasing basic literacy and school participation.

In more recent years, enrollment declined from that peak and stabilized at approximately 3.70 million students in 2020–21. This stabilization may reflect demographic shifts, changes in age cohorts entering school, and improvements in progression to higher education levels. Overall, the data indicate that while the number of primary schools increased gradually, the most significant expansion occurred during the period when primary education enrollment surged in the early 2000s.



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

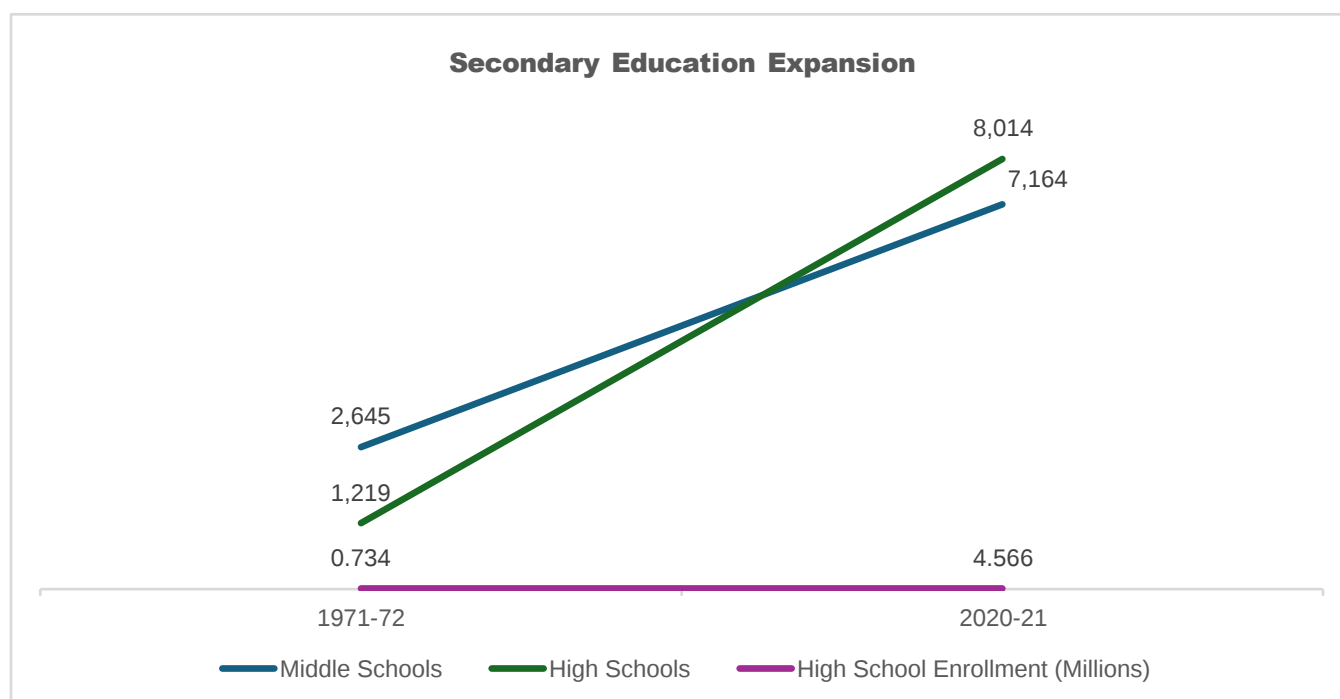
2. Secondary Education Expanded Rapidly

The most dramatic structural change in Punjab's education system over the past five decades occurred at the secondary education level, where both institutional capacity and student participation expanded at a much faster rate than in primary schooling.

The number of government middle schools increased from 2,645 in 1971–72 to 7,164 in 2020–21, representing nearly a threefold increase. Correspondingly, enrollment rose from 651,000 students to approximately 1.91 million students during the same period. This expansion reflects the growing demand for education beyond the primary level and indicates that increasing numbers of students continued their schooling after completing primary education.

The expansion is even more pronounced at the high school level. In 1971–72, Punjab had 1,219 government high schools serving 734,000 students. By 2020–21, the number of high schools had increased to 8,014, representing more than a sixfold increase in institutional capacity. Enrollment in high schools also expanded dramatically, rising to approximately 4.57 million students.

These trends highlight a fundamental transformation in the education system. While primary education expanded gradually, the rapid growth of middle and high schools indicates that the education system increasingly shifted toward supporting longer educational pathways and higher levels of schooling.



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

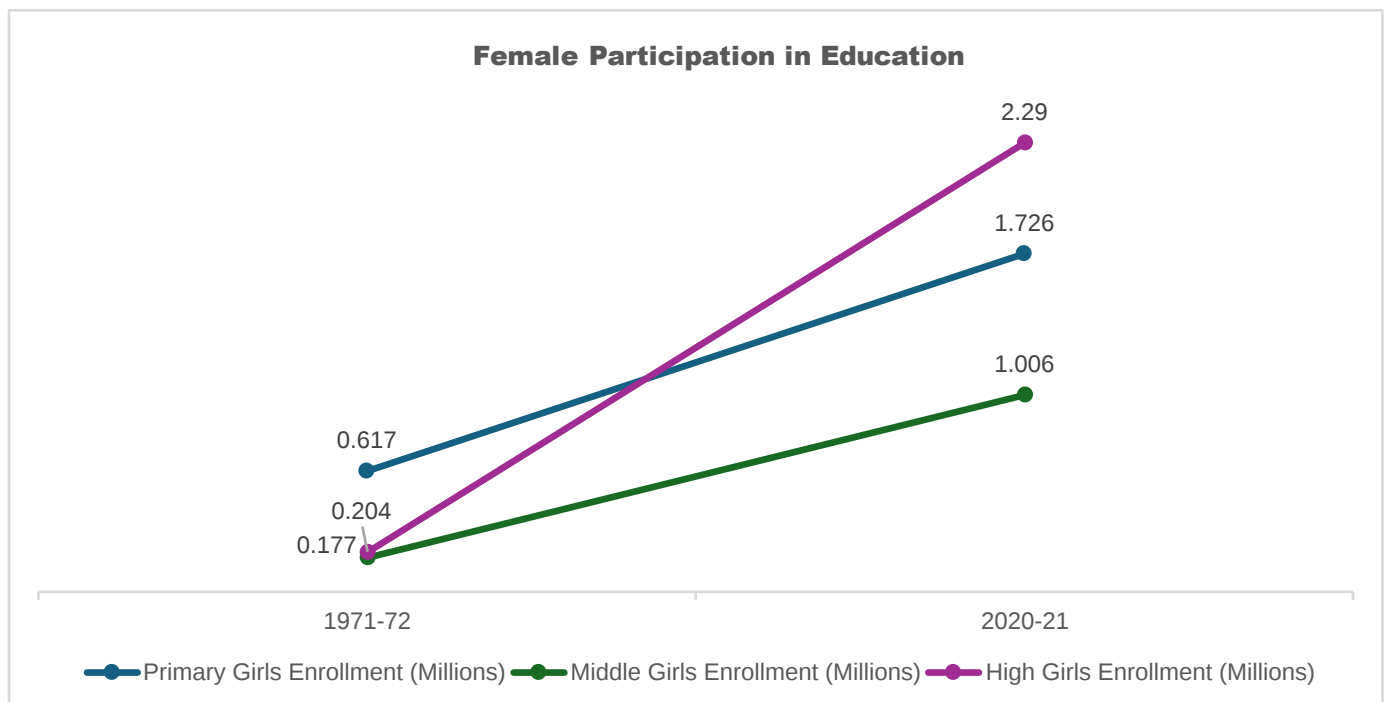
3. Female Participation in Education Increased Sharply

One of the most significant long-term changes in Punjab's education landscape has been the dramatic increase in female participation across multiple levels of schooling. In the early 1970s, female participation in education was comparatively limited. For example, in 1971–72, girls accounted for 204,000 students enrolled in high schools, representing a relatively small portion of total secondary enrollment.

Over the following decades, however, female participation expanded substantially. By 2020–21, female high school enrollment had increased to approximately 2.29 million students, representing more than a tenfold increase over the five-decade period. This growth reflects major improvements in access to education for girls, as well as broader social and policy shifts that encouraged female participation in schooling.

Similar patterns are visible at other levels of education. Female enrollment in middle schools increased from approximately 177,000 students in 1971–72 to more than 1.00 million students in 2020–21, while primary school enrollment for girls rose from 617,000 students to about 1.73 million students during the same period.

The expansion of girls' schools and improved access to secondary education likely played an important role in driving these trends. Taken together, the data suggest that female participation in education has been one of the most significant structural transformations within Punjab's education system over the past five decades.



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

4. Higher Education Institutions Expanded Significantly

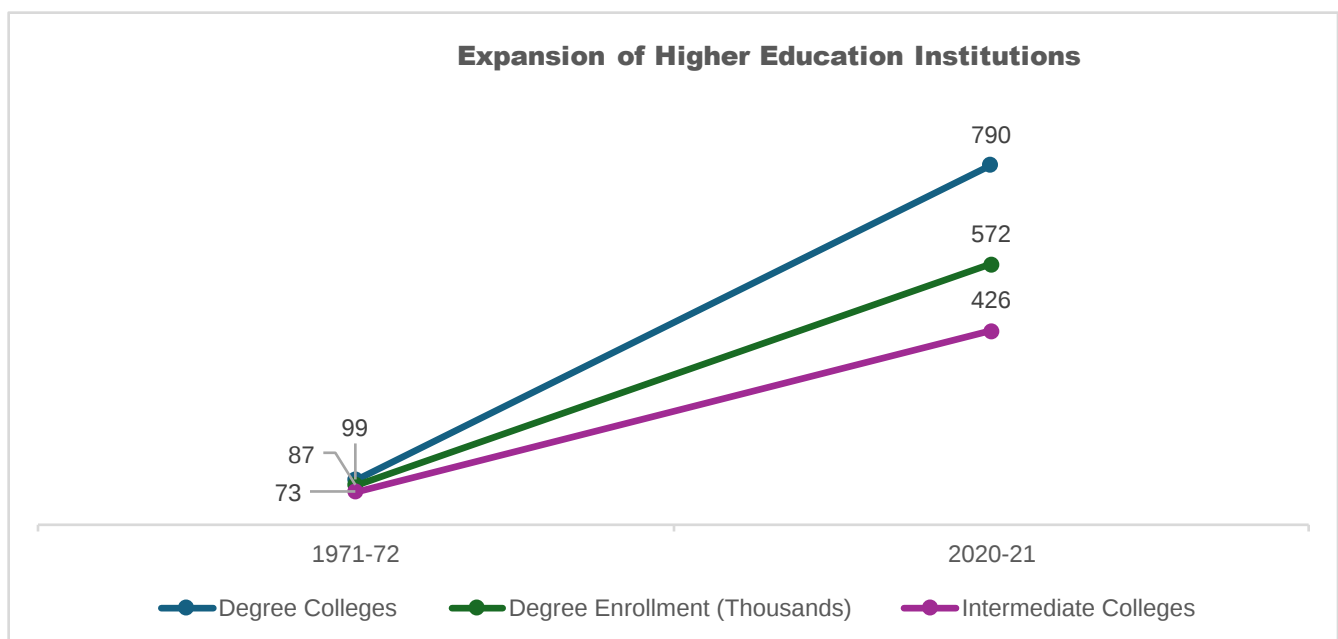
Punjab's higher education sector experienced substantial expansion during the period under review, reflecting rising demand for advanced education and increasing educational attainment across the population.

In 1971–72, Punjab had 99 degree colleges, enrolling approximately 87,000 students. Over the next five decades, the number of institutions expanded dramatically. By 2020–21, the province had 790 degree colleges, representing nearly an eightfold increase in institutional capacity.

Enrollment in degree colleges also grew significantly, rising from 87,000 students to approximately 572,000 students over the same period. This increase reflects the growing importance of tertiary education within the broader education system, as more students progressed from secondary schooling to higher education.

Intermediate colleges also expanded steadily. The number of such institutions increased from 73 colleges in 1971–72 to 426 colleges by 2020–21, indicating a major expansion in post-secondary education pathways.

These trends suggest that the education system evolved over time to support a larger share of students continuing their education beyond secondary school, reflecting both rising educational aspirations and growing demand for higher-level qualifications in the labor market.



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

5. Technical and Vocational Education Also Grew

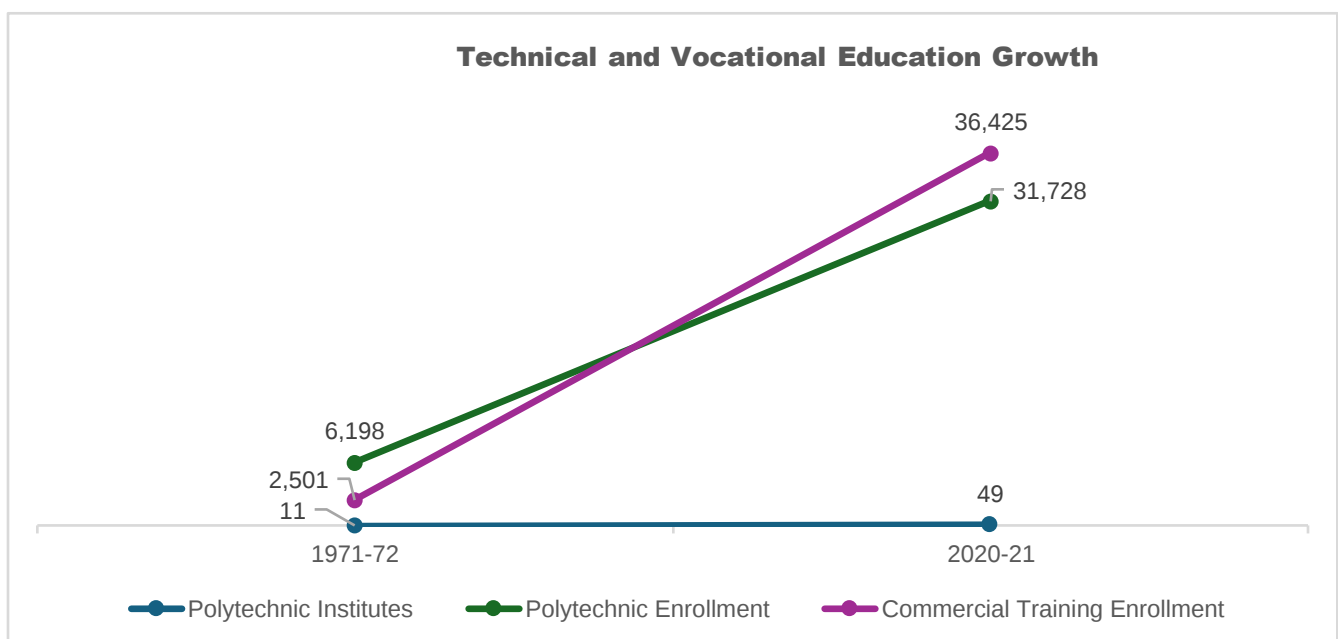
Technical and vocational education institutions also expanded over the period, although their growth occurred more gradually compared with academic schooling and higher education.

In 1971–72, Punjab had 11 colleges of technology and polytechnic institutes, enrolling approximately 6,198 students. By 2020–21, the number of such institutions had increased to 49, while enrollment rose to approximately 31,728 students.

This expansion reflects a growing recognition of the importance of technical training in supporting economic development and providing specialized skills to the labor force.

Commercial training institutes also expanded significantly during this period. Enrollment in these institutions increased from approximately 2,501 students in 1971–72 to 36,425 students by 2020–21. This growth suggests a rising demand for professional and administrative skills, particularly in sectors such as commerce, business administration, and clerical services.

Although the scale of vocational education remains smaller compared with general schooling, these institutions represent an important complementary pathway within Punjab’s broader education system.



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

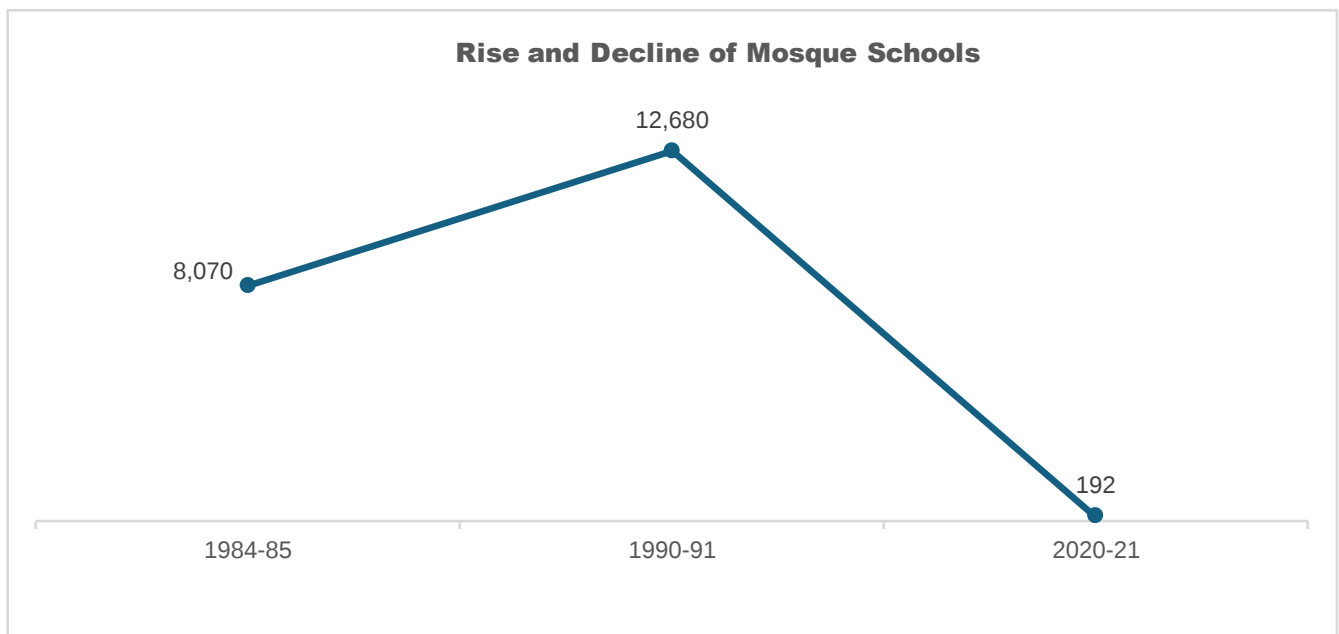
6. Mosque Schools Expanded and Then Declined

Government mosque schools emerged as a distinctive feature of Punjab's education system during the 1980s. These schools expanded rapidly within a relatively short period. In 1984–85, the province had 8,070 mosque schools, and the number continued to grow throughout the late 1980s.

By 1990–91, mosque schools had reached a peak of 12,680 institutions, representing a major expansion within the education system at that time.

However, the long-term data also show a sharp decline in their numbers in later years. By 2020–21, the number of mosque schools had fallen to 192 institutions. This decline likely reflects administrative restructuring and changes in education policy that led to the consolidation or reclassification of many mosque schools within the formal education system.

The rise and subsequent decline of mosque schools highlight how institutional structures within the education sector can evolve in response to policy shifts and administrative reforms.



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

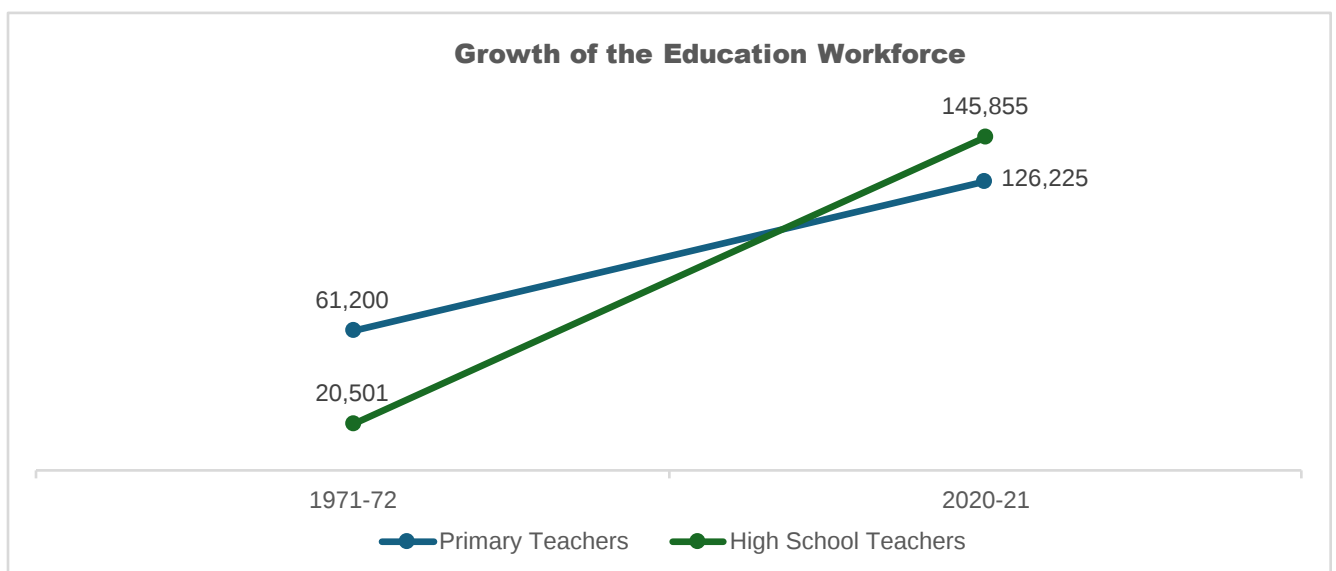
7. Growth of the Education Workforce

The expansion of Punjab's education system was accompanied by a substantial increase in the size of the education workforce, particularly in the number of teachers employed across different levels of schooling.

At the high school level, the number of teachers increased from 20,501 in 1971–72 to more than 145,855 by 2020–21, reflecting the rapid expansion of secondary education infrastructure.

Primary school teaching staff also grew significantly. In 1971–72, Punjab had approximately 61,200 primary school teachers, a number that increased to more than 126,225 teachers by 2020–21.

The expansion of the teaching workforce was necessary to support the increasing number of schools and rising student enrollment over the period. It also indicates the growing scale of the education system as it evolved to accommodate a larger student population and more advanced levels of schooling.



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

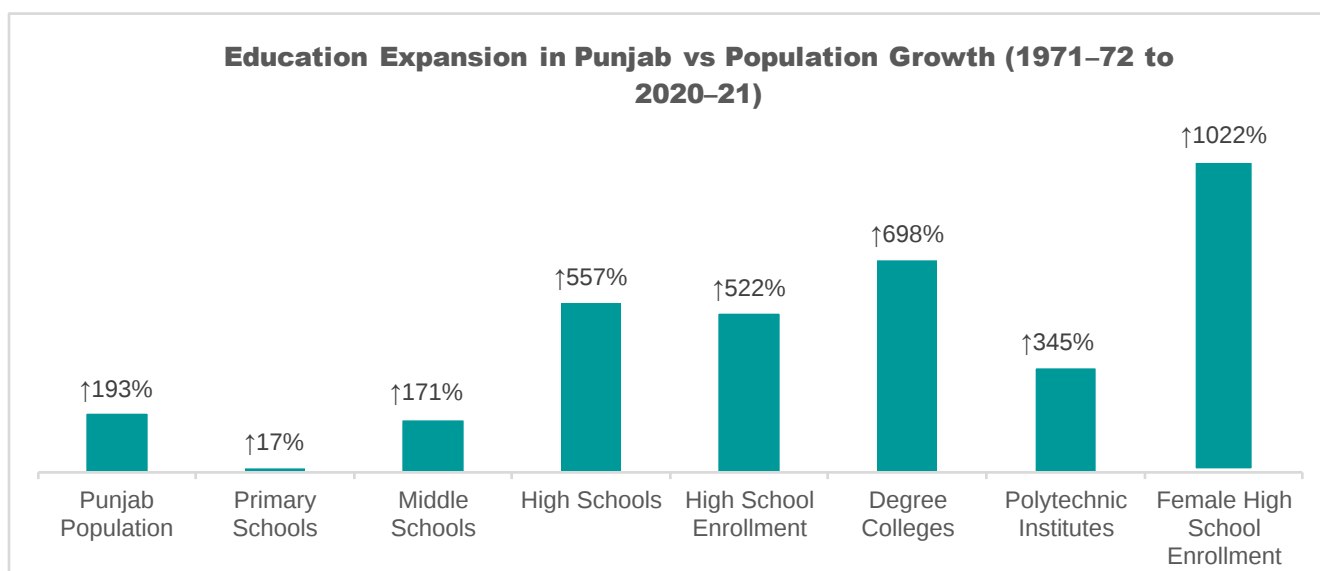
8. A Five-Decade Transformation of Punjab's Education System

Taken together, the data illustrate how Punjab's education system expanded dramatically over the past fifty years. While the number of primary schools increased moderately, secondary schools, higher education institutions, and technical education facilities grew rapidly.

At the same time, female participation in education rose sharply, and the number of teachers increased substantially across the system.

These long-term trends highlight the structural transformation of education in Punjab and the increasing importance of schooling and higher education in the province's social and economic development.

While Punjab's population increased by approximately 193% over the past five decades, the expansion of several education indicators — particularly high schools, higher education institutions, and female secondary enrollment — grew several times faster than population, indicating a substantial structural expansion of the province's education system.



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

Note on population comparison: Education indicators are drawn from *Punjab Development Statistics* tables covering 1971–72 to 2020–21. Population estimates are taken from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2021) and historical census-based estimates for 1972 (37.6 million) compiled from publicly available demographic records. These population figures are used only to illustrate broad demographic growth alongside changes in educational infrastructure and enrollment.



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