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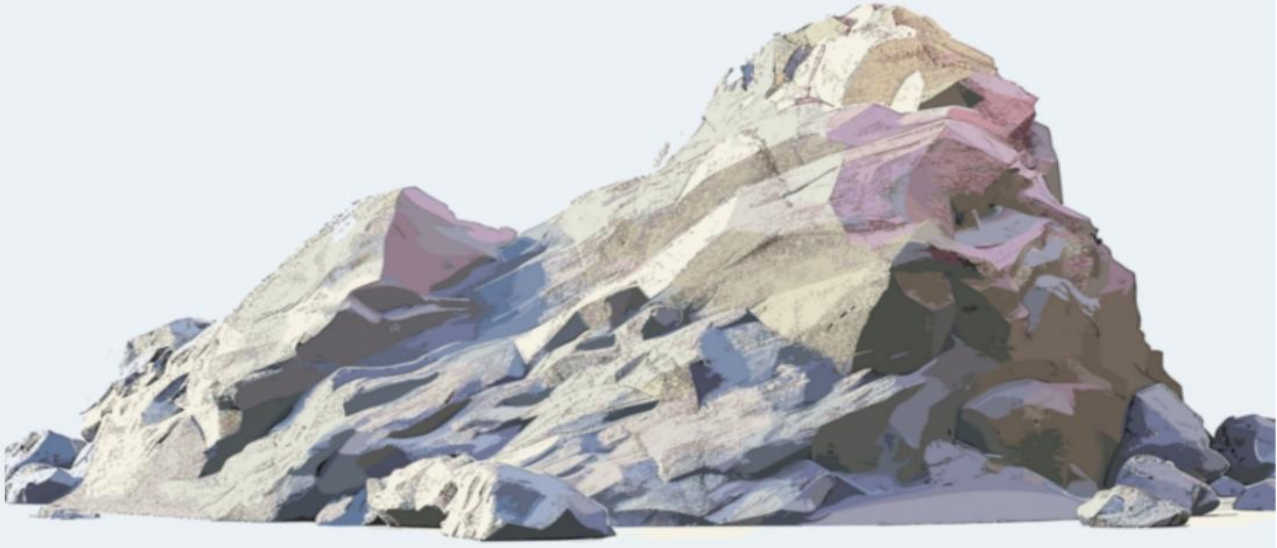
Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Punjab Development Statistics (50 Years)

Mining Sector Trends



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Punjab Development Statistics (50 Years)

Coal Production Rises from 3,602 to 4,791 While Rock Salt Surges to 25,267: Punjab's Mining Sector Shows Uneven but Expanding Growth Over 50 Years

Islamabad, May 19th, 2026

Punjab's mining sector has undergone significant but uneven expansion over the past five decades, with strong growth in industrial minerals such as rock salt, limestone, and fireclay, while traditional outputs like coal show volatility despite long-term gains. Analysis of long-term data from *Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021)* reveals that mineral production patterns have shifted considerably, reflecting changing industrial demand, resource utilization, and sectoral priorities.

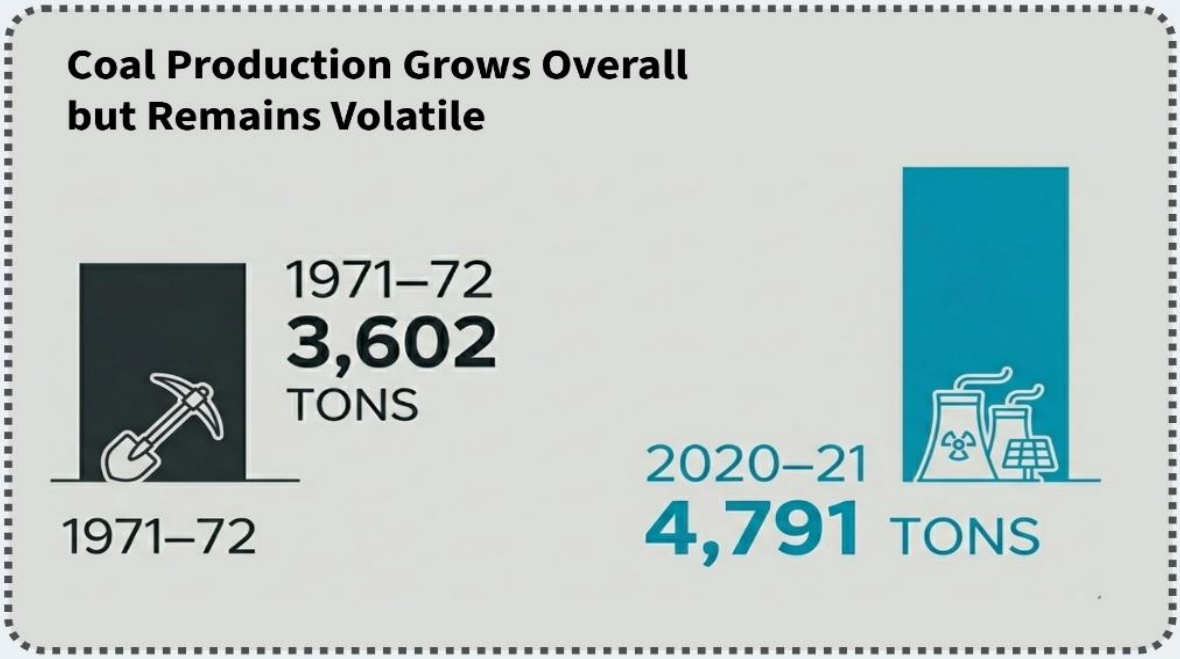
What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

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 is based on Table 15.1: Mineral Production, The Punjab from *Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021)*, covering production trends for major minerals including coal, rock salt, limestone, gypsum, fireclay, silica sand, and others across five decades.

Coal Production Rises from 3,602 to 4,791 While Rock Salt Surges to 25,267: Punjab's Mining Sector Shows Uneven but Expanding Growth Over 50 Years



Coal production increased from 3,602 (1971–72) to 4,791 (2020–21), indicating modest long-term growth relative to other minerals. However, this aggregate change masks significant variation across the time series. Output rose steadily through the 2000s, reaching a peak of 6,837 (2013–14), before declining in subsequent years.

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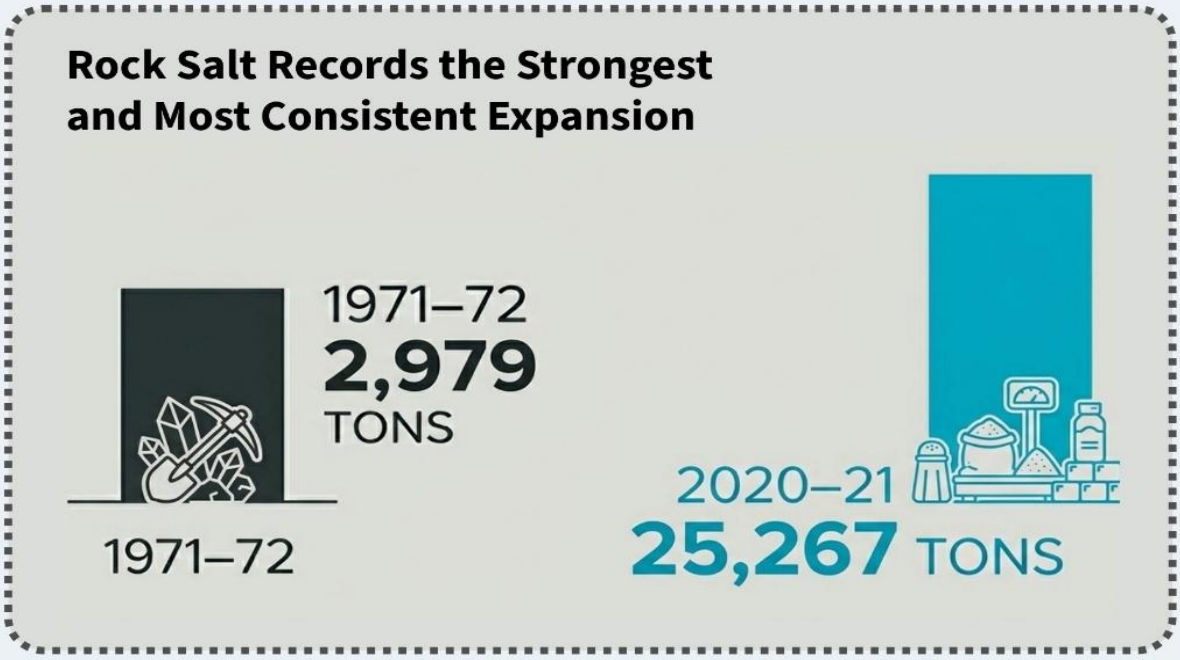

Rock salt shows the most pronounced and sustained growth among all minerals. Production increased from 2,979 (1971–72) to 25,267 (2020–21), representing a continuous upward trajectory across decades.

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

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Limestone and gypsum both demonstrate substantial long-term expansion. Limestone production increased from 8,806 (1971–72) to 30,956 (2020–21), while gypsum rose from 1,669 to 10,696 over the same period.

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

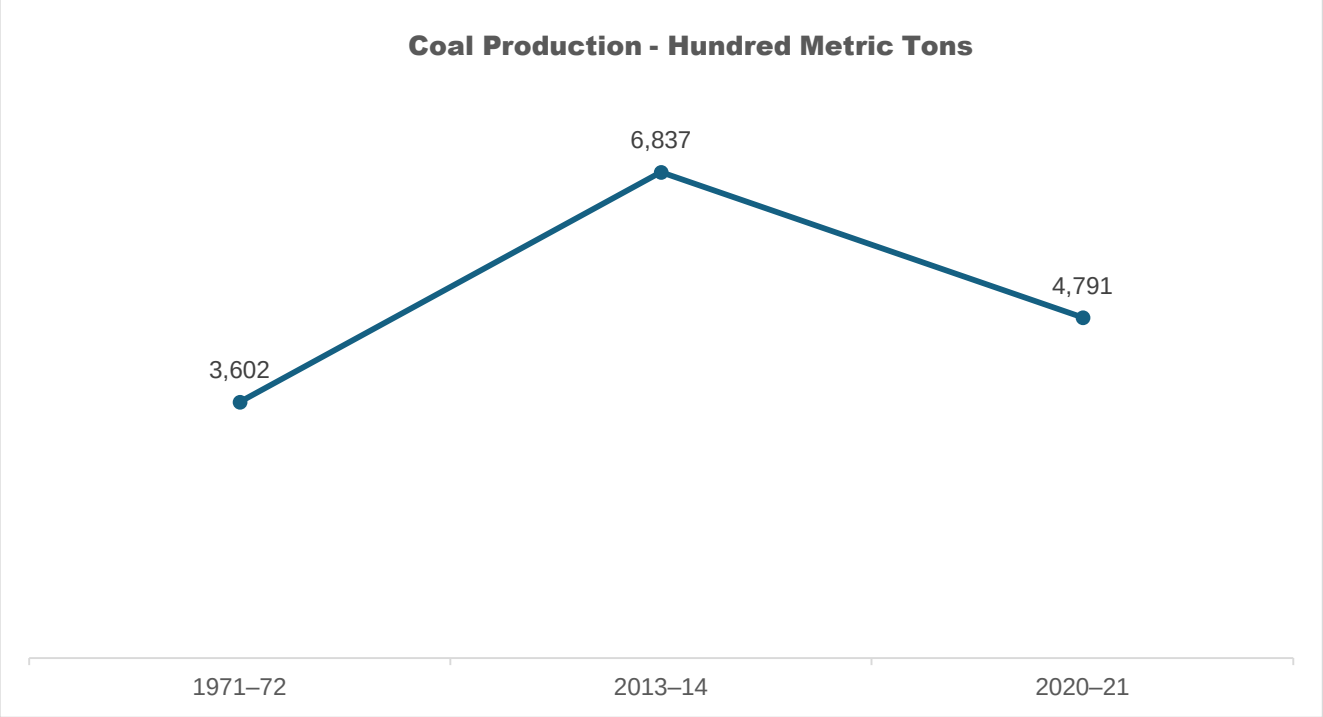
Key Findings:

1. Coal production increased from 3,602 to 4,791, but peaked at 6,837 in 2013–14, showing long-term growth with significant volatility.
2. Rock salt rose sharply from 2,979 to 25,267, representing the most consistent and substantial expansion among all minerals.
3. Limestone and gypsum grew steadily, with limestone increasing from 8,806 to 30,956 and gypsum from 1,669 to 10,696.
4. Fireclay and silica sand expanded rapidly from a low base, increasing from 213 to 8,985 and 294 to 3,849, respectively.
5. Smaller minerals such as bauxite and bentonite show gradual increases but remain limited in overall scale.
6. A broad acceleration in production is visible across multiple minerals after the early 2000s.
7. Fireclay production rose sharply from 213 in 1971–72 to a peak of 59,541 in 2017–18, before declining significantly to 8,985 in 2020–21, indicating rapid expansion followed by a pronounced post-peak contraction.

1. Coal Production Grows Overall but Remains Volatile

Coal production increased from 3,602 (1971–72) to 4,791 (2020–21), indicating modest long-term growth relative to other minerals. However, this aggregate change masks significant variation across the time series. Output rose steadily through the 2000s, reaching a peak of 6,837 (2013–14), before declining in subsequent years.

The post-peak decline suggests that coal production has not maintained its earlier momentum, and its growth trajectory is less stable compared to other minerals. The pattern indicates that coal, while remaining a core mineral, does not exhibit consistent long-term expansion and is more sensitive to cyclical changes within the sector.

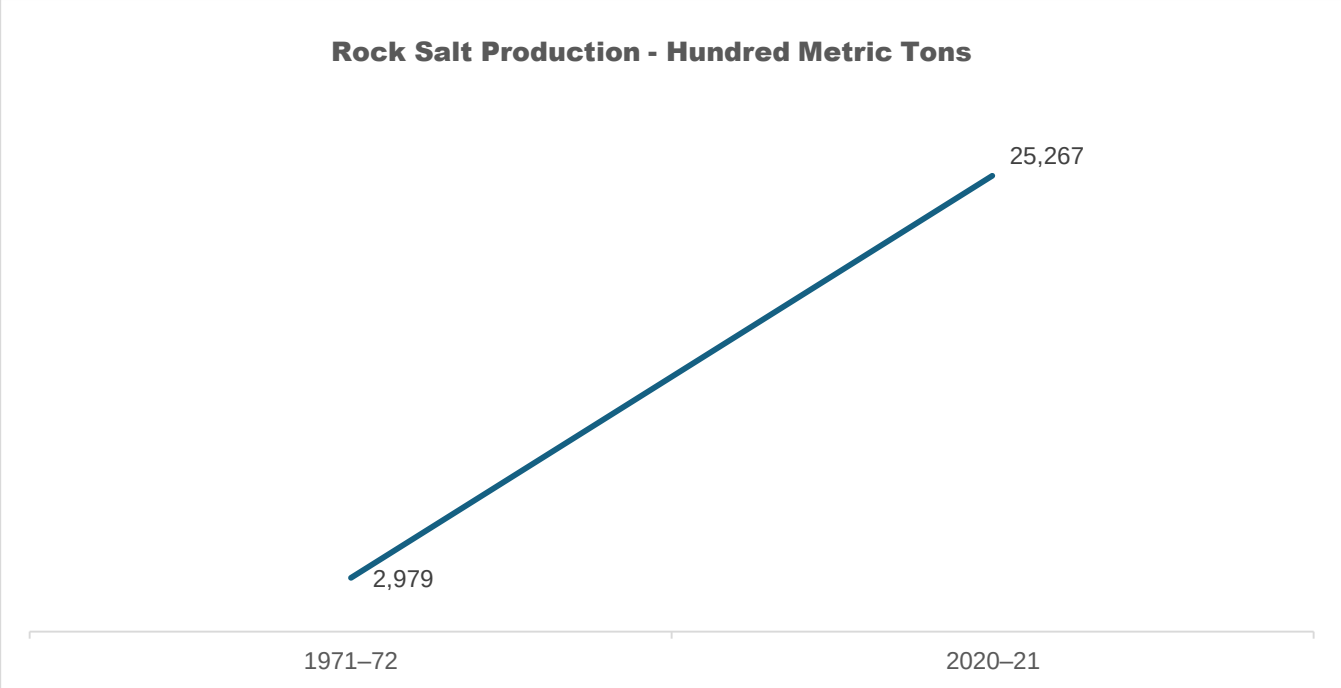


***Source**: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).*

2. Rock Salt Records the Strongest and Most Consistent Expansion

Rock salt shows the most pronounced and sustained growth among all minerals. Production increased from 2,979 (1971–72) to 25,267 (2020–21), representing a continuous upward trajectory across decades.

Unlike coal, the growth pattern for rock salt is relatively stable, with fewer pronounced declines or reversals. The steady increase over time suggests a structural strengthening of this segment within the mining sector. By the end of the period, rock salt emerges as one of the largest contributors to total mineral output, reflecting its growing importance in the sector.

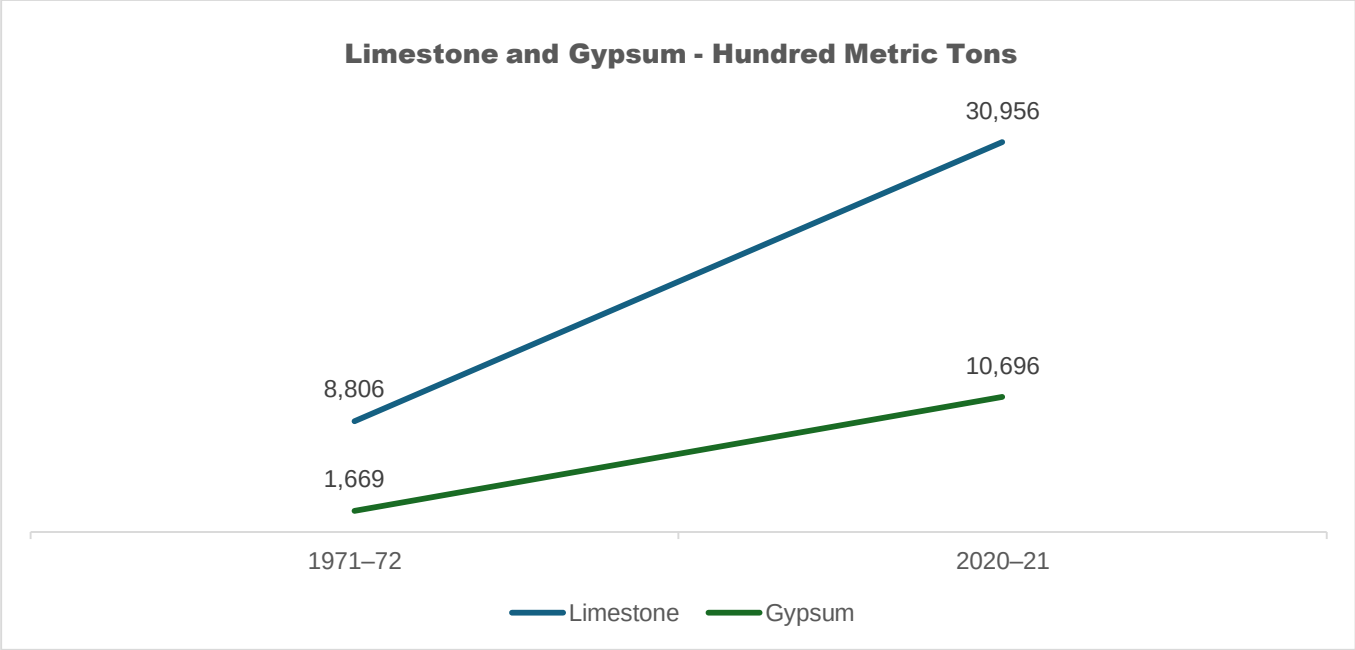


***Source**: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).*

3. Limestone and Gypsum Show Strong and Sustained Growth

Limestone and gypsum both demonstrate substantial long-term expansion. Limestone production increased from 8,806 (1971–72) to 30,956 (2020–21), while gypsum rose from 1,669 to 10,696 over the same period.

Both minerals show relatively consistent upward movement, particularly after the 1990s, indicating sustained growth rather than sporadic increases. Compared to coal, these minerals display more stable expansion patterns. Their rising production levels suggest increasing prominence within the mining sector, especially in the later decades.

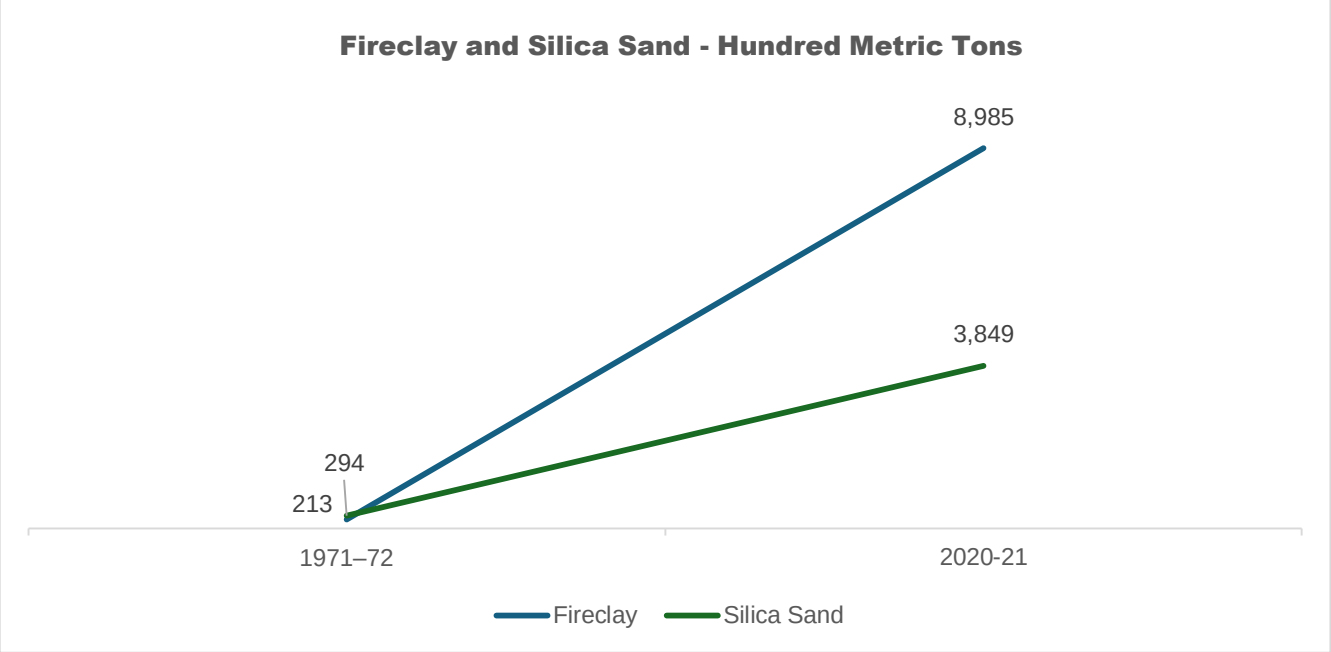


***Source**: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).*

4. Fireclay and Silica Sand Expand Rapidly from a Low Base

Fireclay and silica sand exhibit strong growth from relatively low starting points. Fireclay production increased from 213 (1971–72) to 8,985 (2020–21), while silica sand rose from 294 to 3,849 over the same period.

The growth trajectory for both minerals is particularly noticeable after the 2000s, with sharper increases compared to earlier decades. While their absolute production levels remain lower than major minerals like limestone and rock salt, their rate of growth is significantly higher, indicating rapid expansion within these segments.

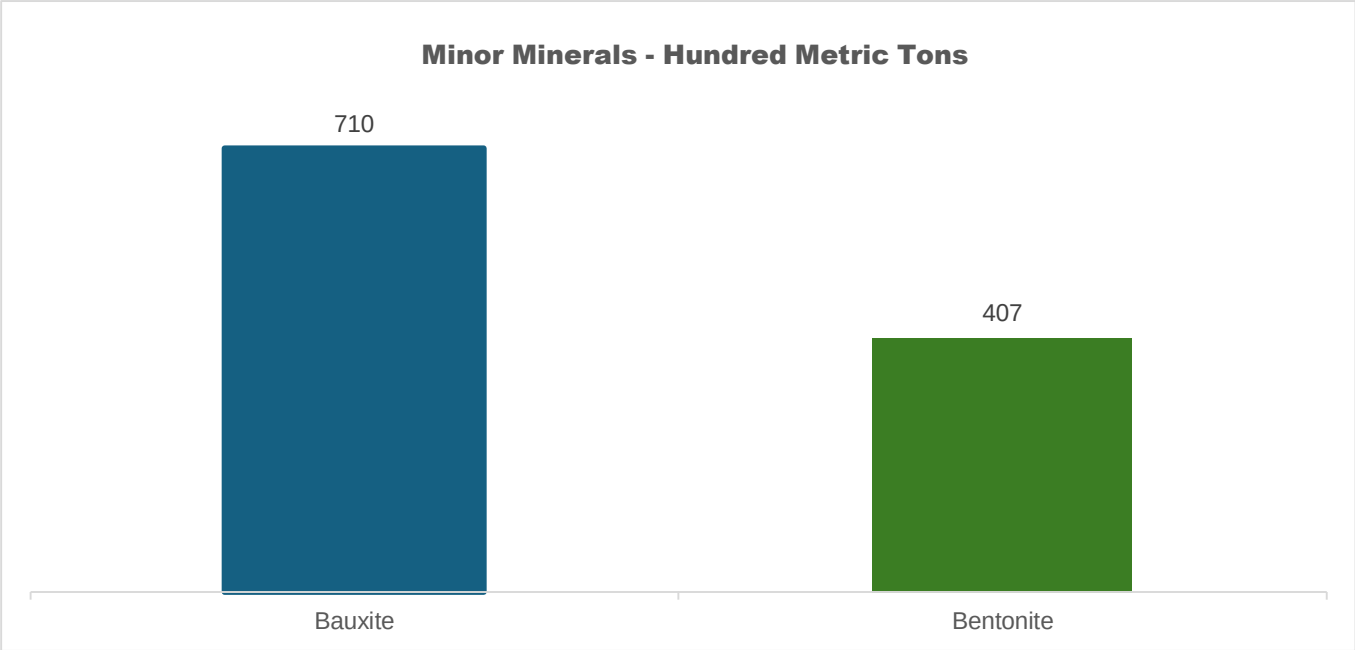


***Source**: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).*

5. Minor Minerals Show Gradual Emergence but Limited Scale

Minerals such as bauxite and bentonite appear later in the dataset and show gradual increases over time. However, their production volumes remain relatively small compared to other minerals.

This pattern suggests partial diversification within the mining sector, but without a substantial shift in overall composition. Output continues to be concentrated in a few dominant minerals, while smaller categories contribute marginally to total production.

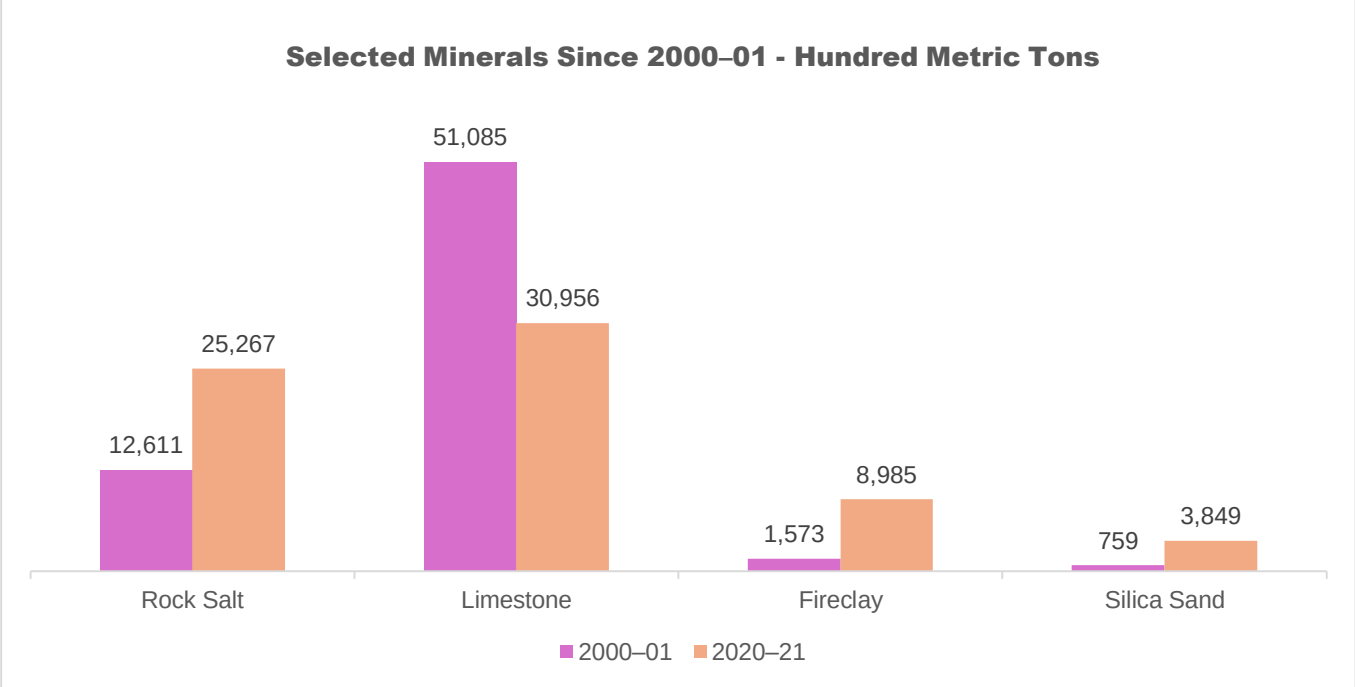


***Source**: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).*

6. Post-2000 Period Marks Acceleration Across Multiple Minerals

A clear pattern across several minerals is the acceleration in production levels after the early 2000s. Rock salt, limestone, fireclay, and silica sand all show sharper increases during this period compared to earlier decades.

This simultaneous rise across multiple minerals indicates a phase of broader expansion within the mining sector. However, the intensity and consistency of growth vary across minerals, suggesting that this acceleration is not uniform but rather concentrated in specific segments.

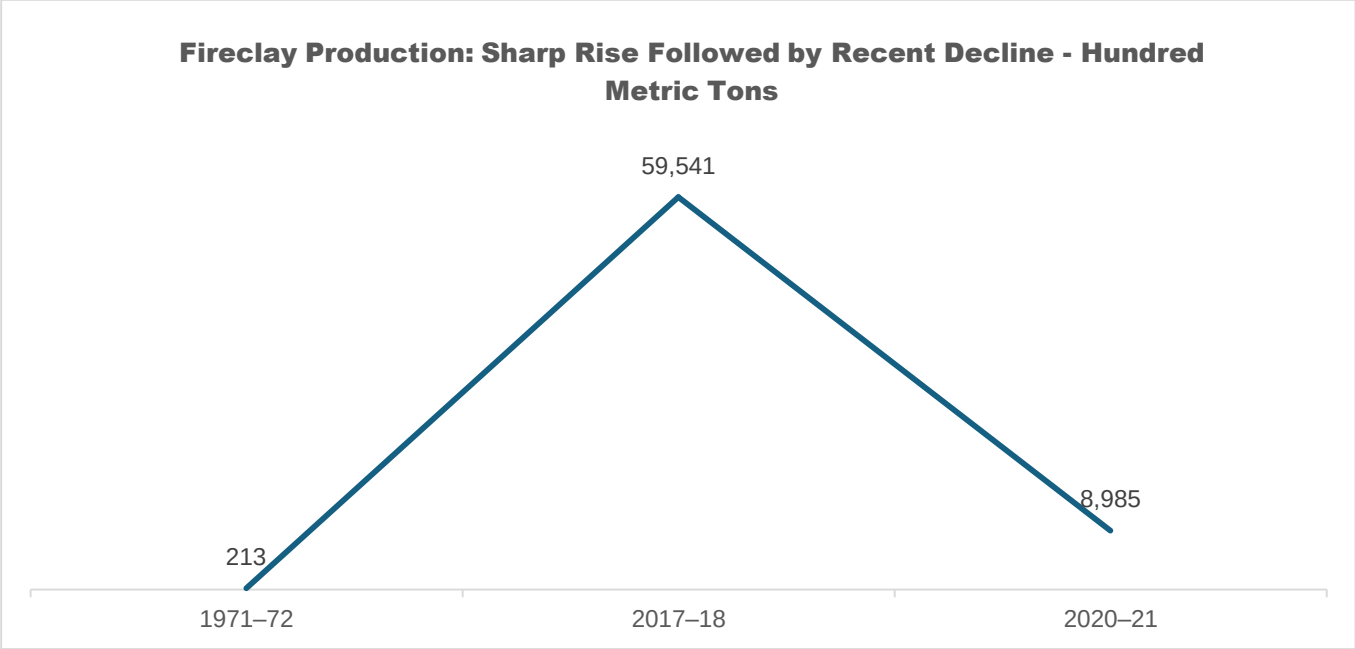


***Source**: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).*

7. Recent Declines Across Key Minerals Indicate Post-Peak Adjustment Rather Than Continued Expansion

Recent data shows that several major minerals have declined from their peak production levels, indicating a shift from earlier expansion phases to a period of adjustment. Coal production fell from its peak of 6,837 in 2013–14 to 4,791 in 2020–21, while rock salt declined from 36,287 in 2018–19 to 25,267 in 2020–21. The most pronounced drop is observed in fireclay, which decreased sharply from 59,541 in 2017–18 to 8,985 in 2020–21, suggesting a significant contraction after rapid earlier growth. Silica sand also shows a decline from 4,915 in 2018–19 to 3,849 in 2020–21, though less steep compared to fireclay.

This pattern across multiple minerals suggests that recent trends are characterized less by continued expansion and more by stabilization or correction following earlier peaks. The simultaneous decline across different minerals indicates that production levels are not uniformly increasing, but instead reflect varying stages of maturity and adjustment within the mining sector.



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

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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