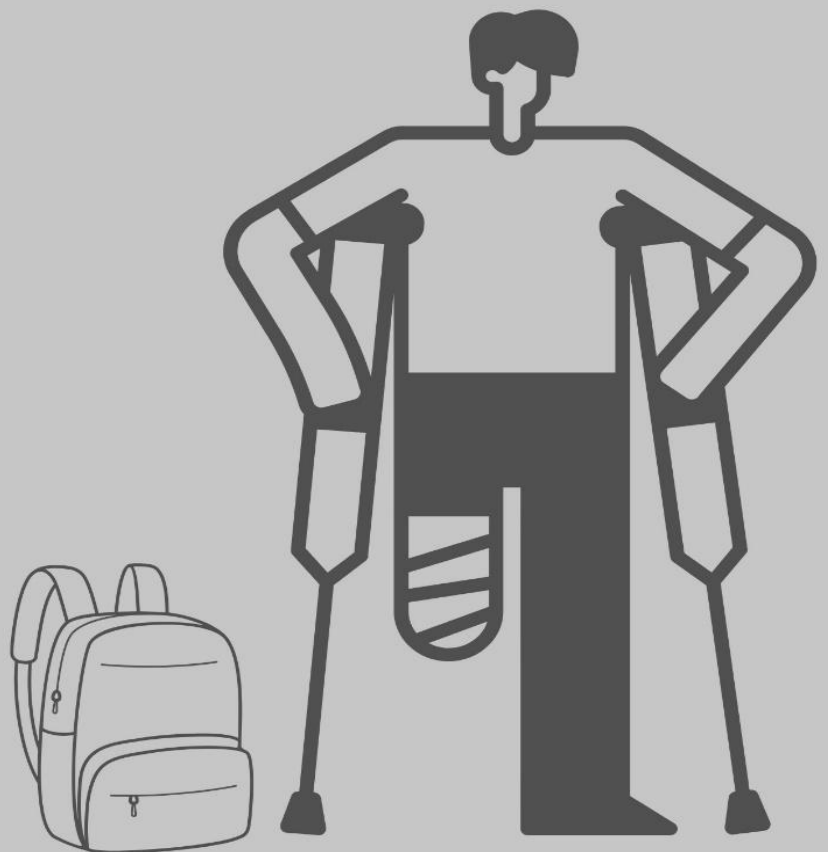




Gallup Pakistan Analysis of AESR-Pakistan 2025 Inclusive Education



PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of AESR-Pakistan 2025

Learning Inclusion Gap Persists: While 89% Children with Disabilities Are Enrolled, Schools Remain Unequipped to Support Their Needs

Islamabad, July 1st, 2026

Pakistan's education system has made significant progress in enrolling children with disabilities, but schools remain insufficiently equipped to support their learning needs. While the majority of children with functional disabilities are now attending school, the availability of inclusive infrastructure, assistive support, and specialized staff remains limited—particularly in government institutions. Analysis of ASER Pakistan 2025 data shows that 89% of children aged 6–16 with functional disabilities are enrolled in school, yet critical gaps in accessibility, assistive devices, and specialized support indicate that inclusion is still largely physical rather than functional.

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."*

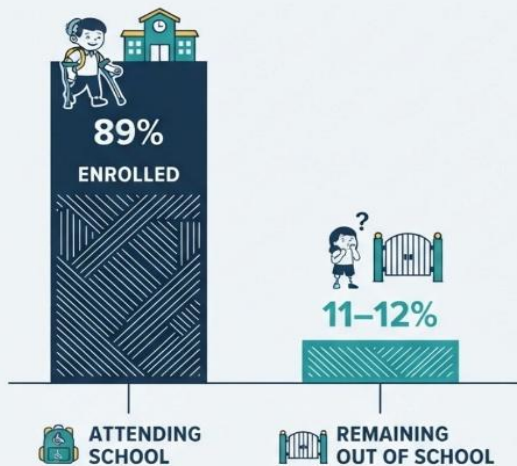
What data points this current edition covers:

This analysis is based on ASER Pakistan 2025 (National, Rural-Urban) dataset. Indicators covered:

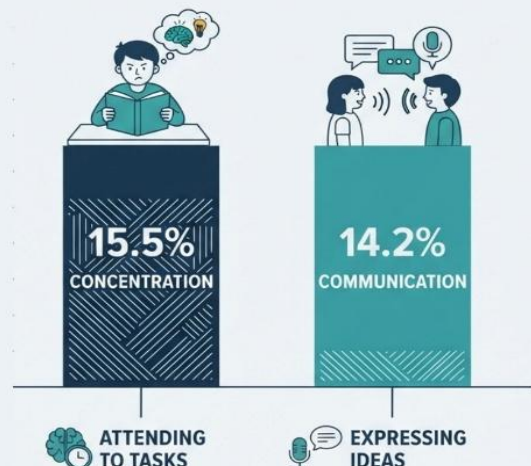
- Types of functional disabilities among children (ages 6–16)
- Disability severity levels (some difficulty, severe difficulty)
- School enrollment of children with disabilities (ages 3–16)
- School facilities supporting inclusive education
- Comparison: Government vs Private schools

Learning Inclusion Gap Persists: While 89% Children with Disabilities Are Enrolled, Schools Remain Unequipped to Support Their Needs

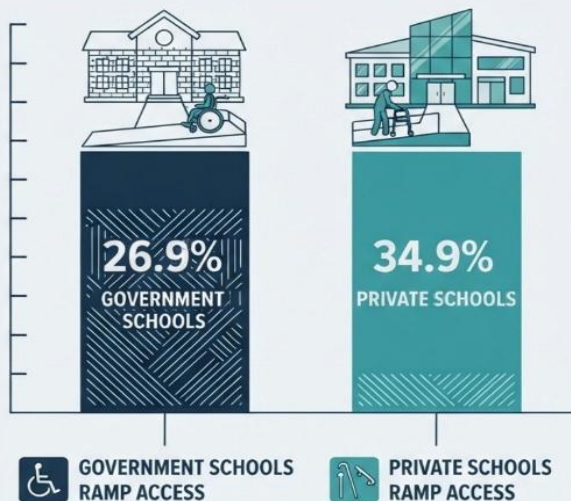
Enrollment Gains Mask Deeper Inclusion Gaps



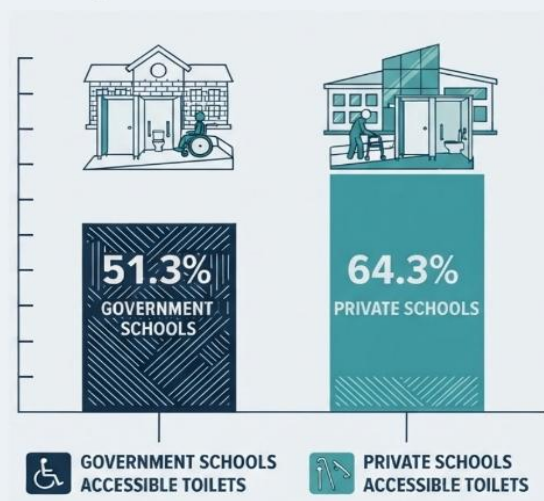
Disability in Pakistan Is Not Marginal It Is Structurally Significant



Schools Lack Core Infrastructure for Inclusive Education



Assistive Support Systems Are Nearly Absent



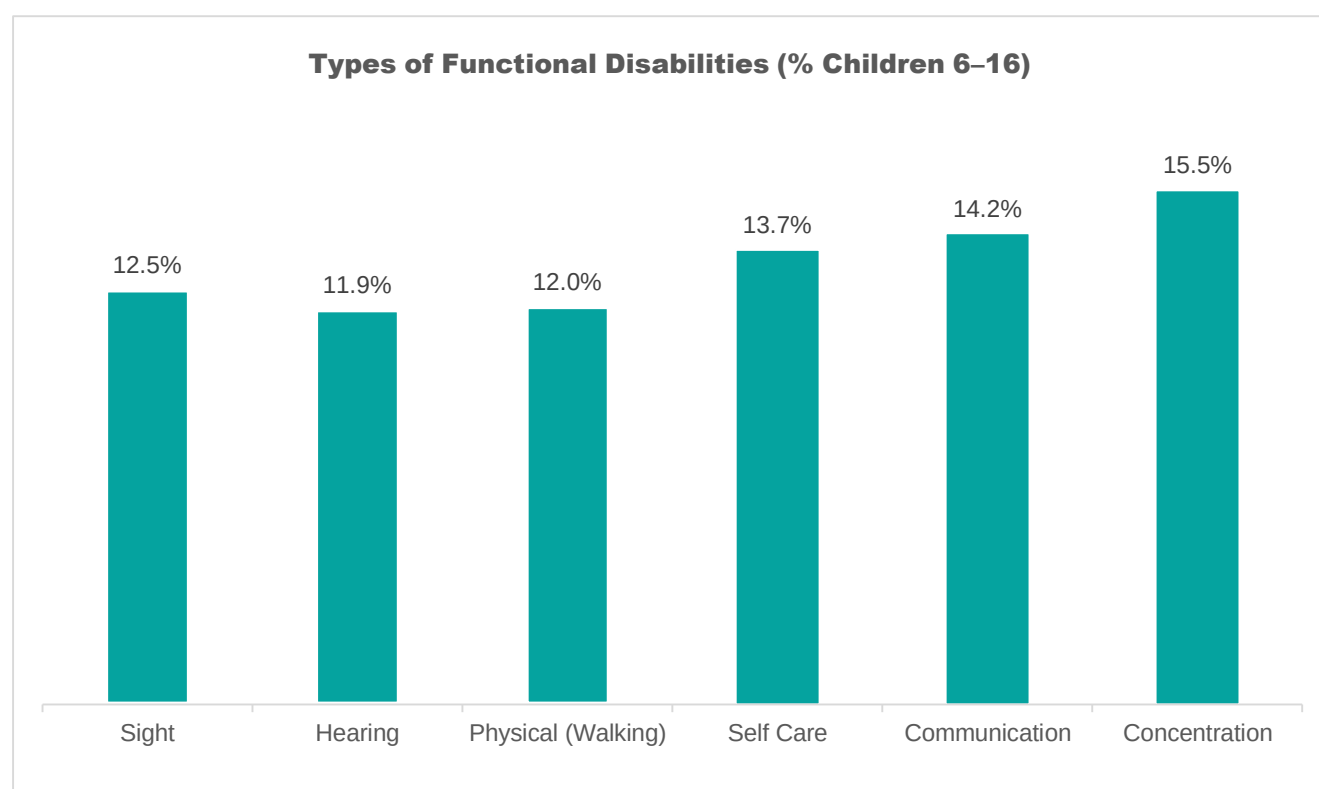
Key Findings:

1. 89% of children (6–16) with disabilities are enrolled, but 11–12% remain out of school
2. Concentration (15.5%) and communication (14.2%) difficulties are the most common disabilities
3. Only 26.9% of government schools have ramps, compared to 34.9% of private schools
4. Accessible toilets exist in 51.3% of government schools vs 64.3% of private schools
5. Assistive devices remain rare: only 4.5% of government schools provide them
6. Specialized staff availability is limited: just 20.3% in government schools
7. Transport facilities are extremely scarce: only 3.6% of government schools provide transport

1. Disability in Pakistan Is Not Marginal — It Is Structurally Significant

The ASER 2025 data reveals that functional disabilities among children are not isolated or rare occurrences but represent a substantial and structurally important segment of the child population. The prevalence of difficulties in domains such as concentration (15.5%), communication (14.2%), and self-care (13.7%) suggests that a significant share of children face challenges that directly affect their ability to engage with standard classroom instruction. Notably, these are not limited to visible or physical impairments but include cognitive and learning-related difficulties that are less immediately observable yet equally consequential for educational outcomes.

This pattern is particularly important because education systems are often designed with a narrow understanding of disability, focusing primarily on physical accessibility rather than cognitive inclusion. The presence of children who fall into more severe categories—such as those who “cannot do at all” in certain domains—further underscores the need for differentiated learning approaches and specialized support. The data therefore challenges conventional assumptions about disability and highlights the need to re-conceptualize inclusive education as a system that accommodates a wide spectrum of learning needs, rather than a small, exceptional group.

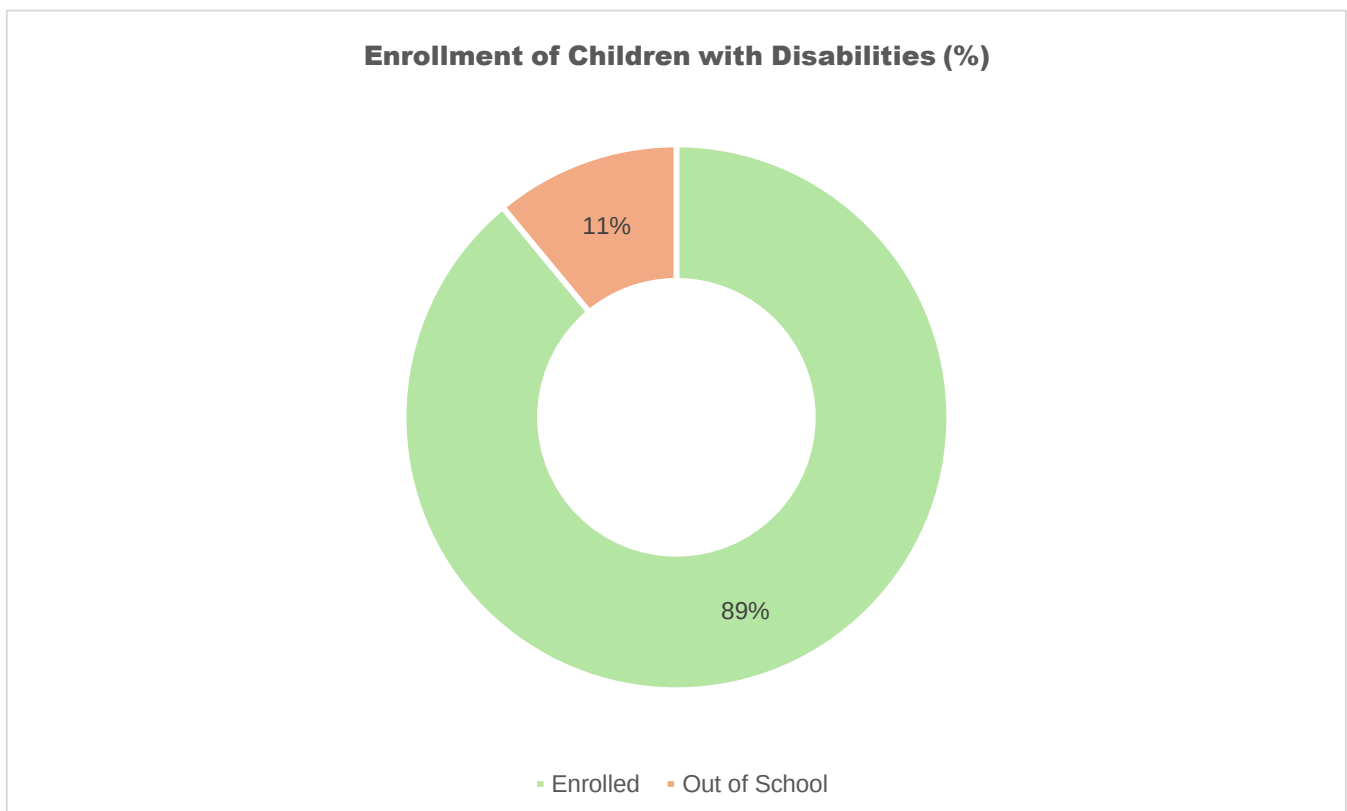


Source: ASER Pakistan 2025, National (Rural-Urban), School Survey Data, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

2. Enrollment Gains Mask Deeper Inclusion Gaps

The high enrollment rate of children with disabilities—89% among those aged 6–16—represents a significant achievement and reflects sustained progress in expanding access to education. It indicates that barriers to entry, whether social, economic, or geographic, have been partially addressed, allowing a large majority of children with disabilities to enter the schooling system. Similarly, enrollment among younger children aged 3–5 stands at 62%, suggesting growing recognition of early childhood education, although gaps remain at this foundational stage.

However, these encouraging figures risk obscuring deeper structural issues related to meaningful inclusion. Enrollment captures presence in school but does not reflect the quality of participation or the extent to which children are able to learn effectively. When viewed alongside the limited availability of assistive infrastructure and support systems, the data suggests that many children with disabilities may be physically present in classrooms but functionally excluded from the learning process. This disconnect between access and experience highlights a critical transition point in Pakistan’s education system: the challenge is no longer simply getting children into school, but ensuring that schools are equipped to meet their diverse needs. Without addressing this gap, high enrollment may coexist with persistent learning deficits, reinforcing cycles of exclusion within the system itself.

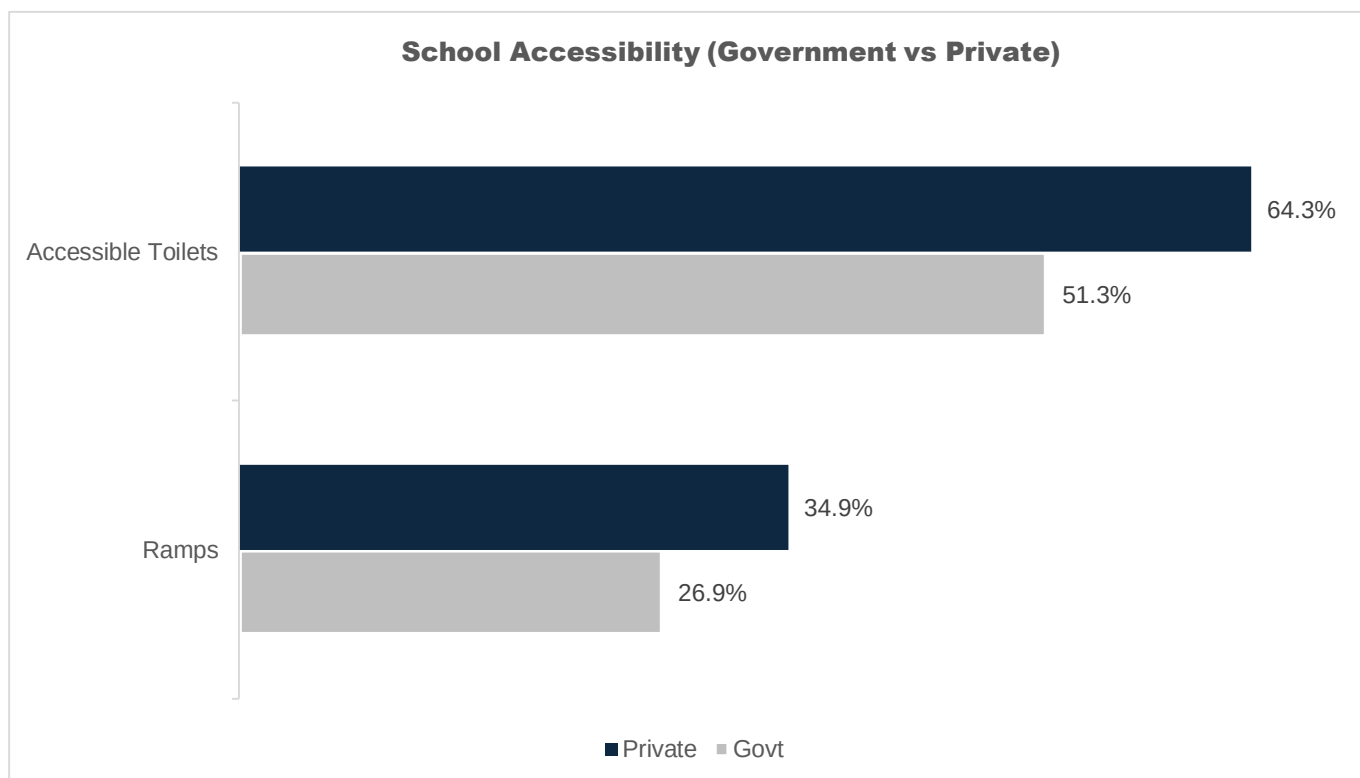


Source: ASER Pakistan 2025, National (Rural-Urban), School Survey Data, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

3. Schools Lack Core Infrastructure for Inclusive Education

The availability of basic infrastructure necessary for inclusive education remains uneven and insufficient, particularly within government schools. While over half of government schools report having accessible toilets (51.3%), this still leaves a substantial proportion without even the most fundamental facilities required for students with disabilities to attend school comfortably and with dignity. The situation is even more constrained when it comes to ramps, with only 26.9% of government schools providing them, compared to 34.9% in private institutions.

These gaps indicate that accessibility is not yet embedded as a standard feature of school design but remains partial and inconsistent. Even where facilities exist, their distribution suggests that many children encounter physical barriers at multiple points within the school environment—from entry and movement across spaces to basic sanitation needs. The disparity between government and private schools further reflects broader inequalities in resource allocation and institutional capacity. However, the relatively low levels of accessibility even in private schools indicate that the issue is systemic rather than sector-specific. Overall, the data suggests that infrastructure planning has not yet fully integrated the principles of universal design, limiting the ability of the education system to provide genuinely inclusive environments.

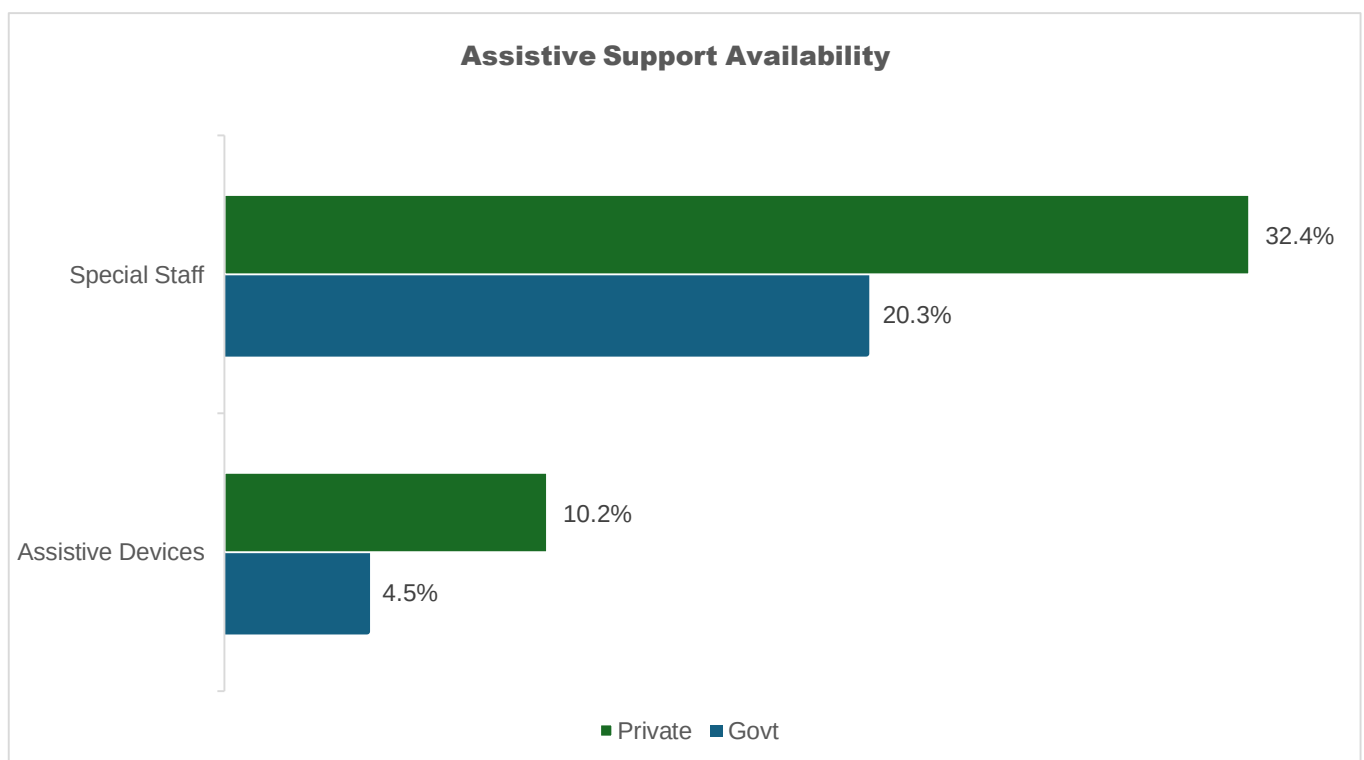


Source: ASER Pakistan 2025, National (Rural-Urban), School Survey Data, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

4. Assistive Support Systems Are Nearly Absent

Beyond physical infrastructure, the availability of assistive support systems remains one of the most critical gaps in Pakistan's approach to inclusive education. The data shows that only 4.5% of government schools provide hearing assistive devices, with private schools performing somewhat better at 10.2%, though still at very low levels overall. Similarly, the presence of specialized staff—essential for supporting children with diverse learning needs—is limited to 20.3% of government schools and 32.4% of private schools.

This scarcity has significant implications for classroom learning. Assistive devices and trained personnel are not supplementary features; they are central to enabling children with disabilities to engage with educational content. Without them, students are expected to navigate a system that is not designed for their needs, often relying on informal or inadequate coping mechanisms. This not only affects their individual learning trajectories but also places additional strain on teachers who may lack the training to address diverse learning requirements within a single classroom. The limited availability of such support systems therefore reflects a deeper institutional gap, where inclusion is recognized at the level of access but not yet operationalized through the resources and expertise required to make it effective.

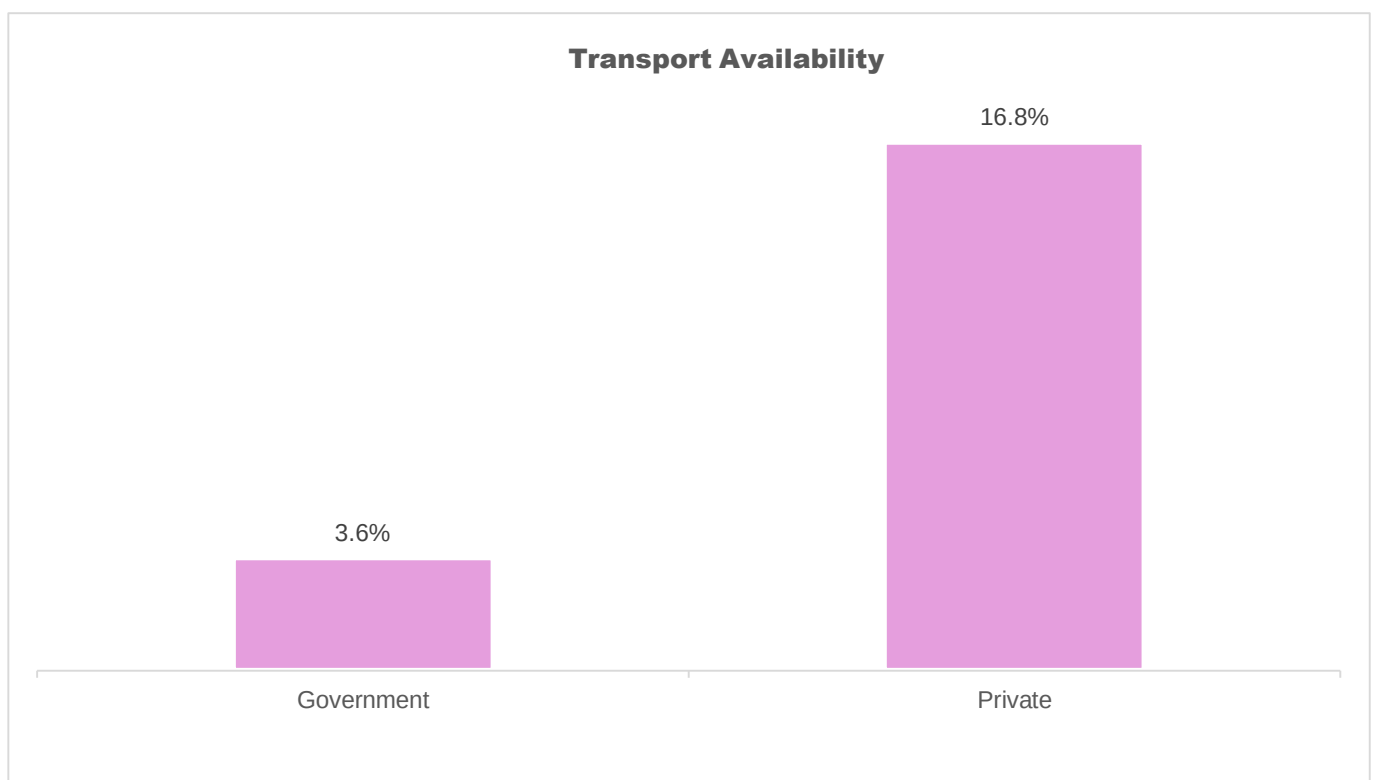


Source: ASER Pakistan 2025, National (Rural-Urban), School Survey Data, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

5. Transport Remains a Hidden Barrier to Inclusion

Transport emerges as an often overlooked but critical factor influencing the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system. The data indicates that only 3.6% of government schools and 16.8% of private schools provide transport facilities. While transport is not exclusively designed for children with disabilities, its absence disproportionately affects them, particularly those with physical impairments or mobility challenges.

In the broader context of rising fuel costs, limited public transport infrastructure, and safety concerns, the lack of school-provided transport can become a decisive barrier to regular attendance. For families with constrained resources, arranging daily transportation for a child with special needs can be both financially and logistically burdensome. This is especially true in rural areas, where distances to schools may be greater and alternative transport options scarce. As a result, transport constraints can lead to irregular attendance or even complete exclusion from schooling, despite the presence of nearby educational institutions. The data thus highlights mobility as a key dimension of inclusion, suggesting that education policy must extend beyond the classroom to address the full set of barriers that shape a child's ability to participate in schooling.



Source: ASER Pakistan 2025, National (Rural-Urban), School Survey Data, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA).

6. Private Schools Perform Better — But System Gaps Persist Across Both Sectors

Across nearly all indicators, private schools demonstrate relatively better performance in providing infrastructure, assistive resources, and specialized support. This reflects differences in resource availability, management practices, and potentially greater responsiveness to parental demand. However, the advantage of private schools must be understood in relative rather than absolute terms. Despite outperforming government institutions, private schools still exhibit low levels of provision across critical indicators, particularly in areas such as assistive devices and specialized staff.

This suggests that inclusive education is not yet fully institutionalized within either sector. Instead, it remains fragmented, with pockets of provision rather than a comprehensive system-wide approach. The disparities between sectors also raise concerns about equity, as children with disabilities who are enrolled in government schools—often from lower-income households—are less likely to have access to the resources necessary for effective learning. At the same time, the overall low levels of support across both sectors indicate that the challenge is not simply one of redistribution but of systemic reform. Achieving meaningful inclusion will require embedding inclusive practices into the core functioning of the education system, rather than treating them as optional or supplementary features.

7. From Enrollment to Real Inclusion

The ASER 2025 data clearly demonstrates that Pakistan has made important progress in expanding access to education for children with disabilities. High enrollment rates indicate that the system is increasingly open to including these children within mainstream schooling. However, the persistence of significant gaps in infrastructure, assistive support, and mobility highlights that inclusion remains incomplete.

The current phase of reform must therefore move beyond access and focus on the quality and effectiveness of inclusion. This requires a shift in how disability is understood within the education system—from a peripheral concern to a central design principle. Investments in infrastructure must be complemented by investments in human resources, training, and assistive technologies, ensuring that schools are equipped to support a diverse range of learning needs. At the same time, addressing broader barriers such as transport and mobility will be essential for ensuring consistent participation. Ultimately, the success of inclusive education will be measured not by how many children with disabilities are enrolled, but by how effectively the system enables them to learn, participate, and thrive.

About the ASER Pakistan 2025 Report

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan 2025 is a nationally representative, citizen-led household survey that assesses children's schooling status and foundational learning outcomes across Pakistan. The survey covers all children aged 3–16 in sampled households, administering basic reading and arithmetic assessments to children aged 5–16.

ASER 2025 marks a significant methodological milestone. For the first time, the survey has transitioned to a census-based, nationally representative sampling framework, developed in technical collaboration with the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and drawing on Enumeration Blocks from the 2023 Population and Housing Census. Using a stratified, two-stage sampling design with defined probabilities and weights, the survey now produces estimates representative at the district, provincial, and national levels within a unified framework. In 2025, 95% of data were collected digitally via a dedicated mobile application, enabling real-time entry and automated consistency checks.

Due to this methodological shift, ASER 2025 results are not directly comparable with previous rounds. The 2025 dataset should be treated as a new baseline for rigorous, long-term trend analysis.

The report was published on March 26, 2026, by Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) with support from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), and a network of civil society partner organizations across Pakistan.

For the full report, visit: www.aserpakistan.org



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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