

Big Data Analysis | Literacy Rate

Flat Numbers, Falling Rank: Sindh's Two-Decade Literacy Story

Sindh falls from second to last in Male Literacy despite little changes in its own numbers

2004



65.9%



37.3%

2025



63.0%



38.8%

Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com;
www.gallup.com.pk www.gilanifoundation.com)





(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

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(Islamabad), 14th July 2026

Pakistan's literacy story is often told through national averages. But looking province by province reveals a different picture—one where standing still can mean falling behind.

In 2004, Sindh ranked second in male literacy after Punjab. Male literacy stood at 65.9%, female literacy at 37.3%, and the province had the second-smallest gender literacy gap (28.6 percentage points).

Two decades later, Sindh's position has changed dramatically.

By 2025, male literacy in Sindh is 63.0%, the lowest among all four provinces. Female literacy has increased only marginally to 38.8%, placing Sindh third, while the gender gap has narrowed to 24.2 percentage points.

What Changed? Sindh Didn't—Other Provinces Did

The striking feature of Sindh's literacy story is not decline, but **stagnation**.

While Sindh's literacy indicators changed little over two decades, other provinces recorded much faster progress.

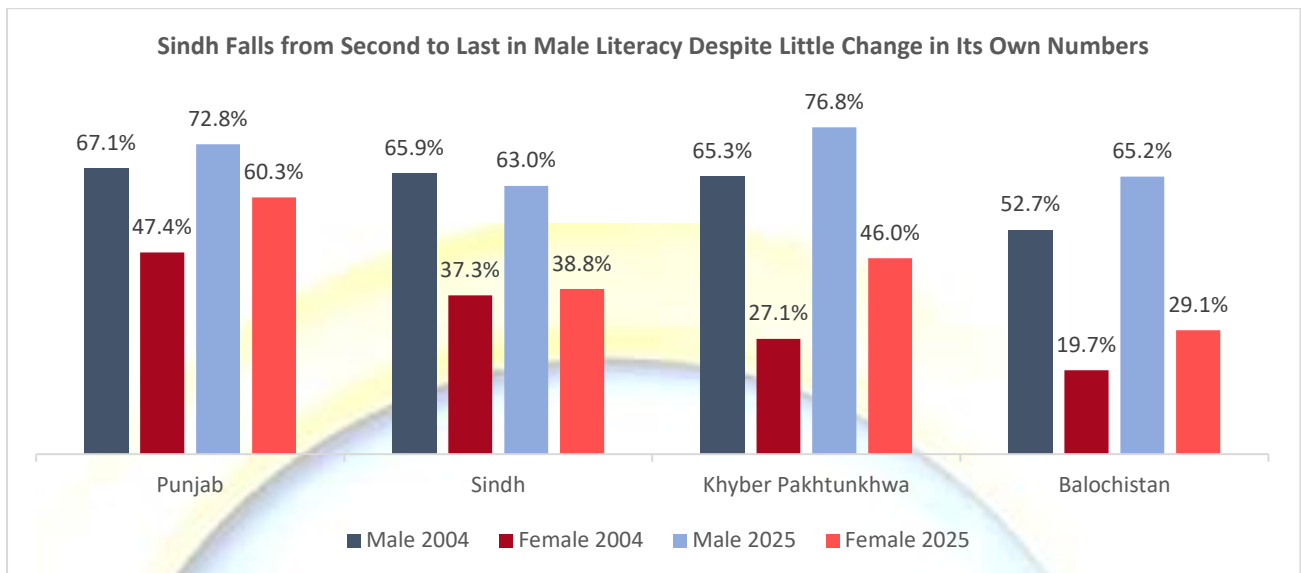
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa increased male literacy from 65.3% to 76.8% and female literacy from 27.1% to 46.0%, overtaking Sindh on both measures.
- Balochistan raised male literacy from 52.7% to 65.2%, moving ahead of Sindh despite starting nearly 13 percentage points behind in 2004.
- Punjab retained its leadership, increasing male literacy to 72.8% and female literacy to 60.3%.

The Lesson: Standing Still Is Falling Behind

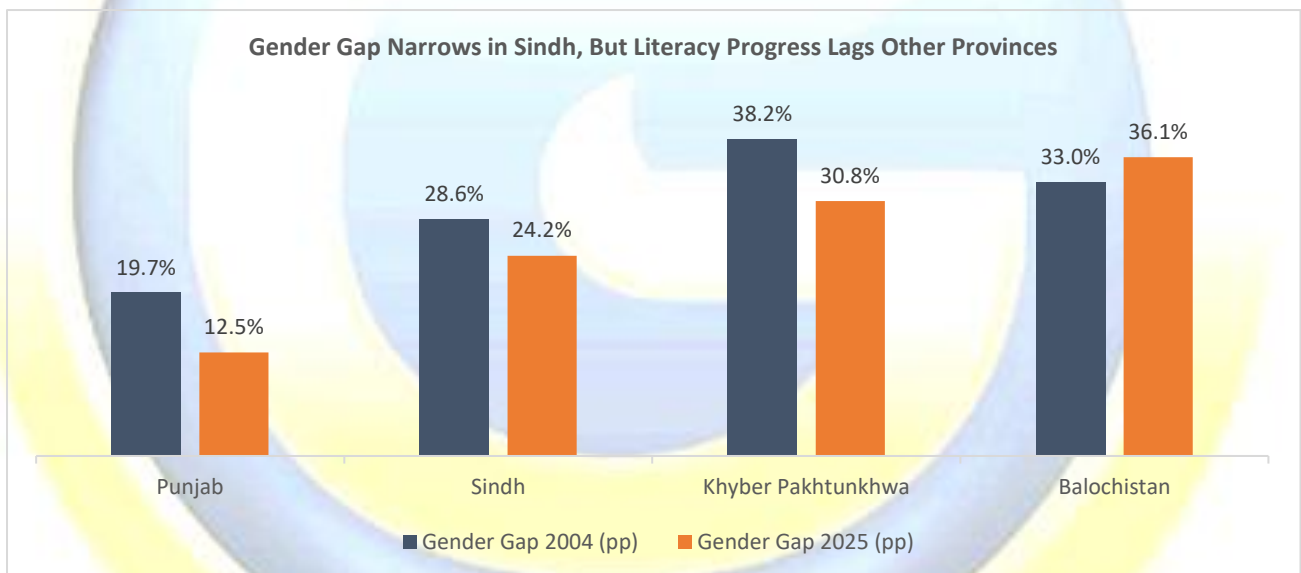
Sindh's experience illustrates an important policy lesson. Development is relative. When neighbouring provinces improve rapidly, maintaining similar outcomes over time results in a decline in comparative performance.

The province's literacy indicators have remained broadly unchanged over two decades, while Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have made substantially faster gains. The result is a significant shift in provincial rankings despite relatively stable literacy levels within Sindh itself.

Looking only at national literacy averages risks missing these important provincial dynamics, which are essential for understanding where future education policy efforts need to be focused.



Source: Gallup & Gilani Pakistan
(www.gallup-international.com; www.gallup.com.pk; www.gilanifoundation.com)



This analysis was conducted using the Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics Atlas of Development (1990–2025), which compiles provincial literacy indicators from nationally representative household surveys. The comparison highlights changes in male literacy, female literacy, and gender gaps across Pakistan's provinces between 2004 and 2025.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
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Gilani Research Foundation is headed by Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani who pioneered the field of opinion polling in Pakistan and established Gallup Pakistan in 1980. Currently, Dr. Gilani, who holds a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has taught at leading universities in Pakistan and abroad, is Chairman of Gallup Pakistan.

If you have any further questions regarding this poll, please feel free to contact us.

*Best Regards,
Gallup Pakistan*

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of Gallup Pakistan
(1980-2026)