

Pakistan's Youth Are Getting More Educated—Just Not Fast Enough

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Average Years of
Schooling 2005-6



6.2
Years

Average Years of
Schooling 2005-6



4.2
Years

Average Years of
Schooling 2024-25



7.9
Years

Average Years of
Schooling 2025-26



6.4
Years

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



(Also emailed*/faxed separately)



PRESS RELEASE

Big Data Analysis Education

Pakistan's Youth Are Getting More Educated—Just Not Fast Enough

(Islamabad), 05 August 2026

Young Pakistanis today spend more years in school than they did two decades ago. But compared with neighboring countries, Pakistan still has a long way to go—especially in ensuring girls complete basic education.

Analysis by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics of the Pakistan Labour Force Survey (2005–06, 2018–19 and 2024–25), benchmarked against India's NFHS-5 and Bangladesh DHS 2022, shows steady but uneven progress.

The average years of schooling among 18–30-year-olds has increased over the past two decades.

- Young women: 4.2 → 6.4 years
- Young men: 6.2 → 7.9 years

The gender gap has narrowed from 2.0 years to 1.5 years, but it has not disappeared.

Internationally, Pakistan continues to trail both neighbors.

Young women average 9.3 years of schooling in India and 8.5 years in Bangladesh, compared with 6.4 years in Pakistan. Among young men, the averages are 10.2 years in India, 8.1 years in Bangladesh, and 7.9 years in Pakistan.

One finding stands out: Bangladesh is the only one of the three countries where young women now average slightly more schooling than young men.

The largest challenge in Pakistan is not university participation—it is keeping girls in school long enough to complete basic education.

Around 34% of young Pakistani women have never received any formal education, compared with 17% of young men. Yet among those who make it to university, the gender gap largely disappears. 7.1% of young women and 7.5% of young men hold a bachelor's degree or higher, while women slightly exceed men at the postgraduate level (3.0% vs. 2.4%).

The provincial picture also shows that progress is possible. In Punjab, secondary education completion is close to gender parity, while Balochistan continues to face large disparities in educational attainment.

The findings suggest that Pakistan's education challenge is less about getting more women into universities and more about ensuring girls remain in school through the secondary level. The experience of neighboring countries shows that sustained investment in girls' education can substantially narrow these gaps.

Pakistan's youth are getting more educated — just not fast enough

Mean years of schooling for 18–30 year olds, across three Pakistan Labour Force Survey waves, benchmarked against India and Bangladesh's most recent DHS data.

PAKISTAN'S TWO-DECADE TREND, AGES 18-30

Women Men

2005-06 • gender gap 2.0 yrs



2018-19 • gender gap 1.7 yrs



2024-25 • gender gap 1.5 yrs



HOW PAKISTAN COMPARES TODAY

Pakistan

LFS 2024-25

6.47.9

Women Men

Widest gap: 1.5 yrs

India

NFHS-5, 2019-21

9.310.2

Women Men

Highest overall

Bangladesh

DHS 2022

8.58.1

Women Men

Women lead

THE FLOOR, NOT THE CEILING

34% of young Pakistani women have no formal education at all, vs. 17% of men. But among those who reach university, women match or beat men — 7.1% vs 7.5% hold a bachelor's+, and women edge ahead at postgraduate level.

PUNJAB VS BALOCHISTAN

Punjab has nearly closed the matric-plus gender gap (49% women vs 48% men); women there lead in tertiary attainment. Balochistan's gap is vast: 17% of women vs 43% of men reach matric.

BANGLADESH SHOWS WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Decades of secondary-school stipends for girls and garment-sector labor demand flipped the regional script — young Bangladeshi women now out-school young men, a first for the region.

Sources: Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2005-06, 2018-19, 2024-25 (PBS); India NFHS-5 2019-21; Bangladesh DHS 2022. Years-of-schooling are weighted sample estimates; Pakistan LFS education categories mapped to approximate years of schooling for cross-survey comparability.

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

This analysis was conducted by Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics using data from the Pakistan Labour Force Survey (2005–06, 2018–19 and 2024–25) conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, benchmarked against India's National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) and the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2022. It examines educational attainment among young adults aged 18–30 years across South Asia.



Opinion Poll from Gallup Pakistan
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Gilani Research Foundation is a not-for-profit public service project to provide social science research to students, academia, policymakers, and concerned citizens in Pakistan and across the globe.

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
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