



Ministry of Human Rights
Government of Pakistan

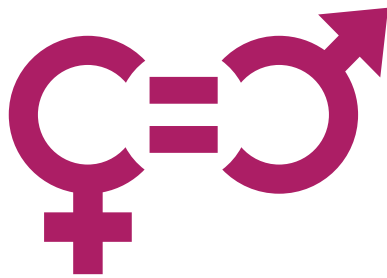


Group Development Pakistan



GENDER PARITY REPORT-ICT





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Ministry of Human Rights
Government of Pakistan



DISCLAIMER

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Gender Parity Report (GPR) 2023 is based on official data provided by various Government Departments, Ministries, Institutions, and Bodies in ICT. The report primarily reflects 2023 data, with 2024 data included wherever available. The National Commission on the Status of Women has verified the data to the fullest extent possible; however, the accuracy and authenticity remain the responsibility of the original data providers.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AD&SJ	Additional District & Session Judge
AIOU	Allama Iqbal Open University
AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir
ANC	Antenatal Care
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
BHU	Basic Health Unit
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
BPS	Basic Pay Scale
BS	Basic Scale
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CDA	Capital Development Authority
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CMW	Community Midwives
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
CNSA	Control of Narcotic Substances Act
COMSATS	Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CRC	Child Registration Certificate
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
D&C	Dilation and Curettage
D&SJ	District & Session Judge
DEPIx	District Education Performance Index
DHO	District Health Office
DHS	Directorate of Health Services
DMAP	Digital Media Alliance of Pakistan
EA	Election Act
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
EPHS	Essential Package of Health Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBISE	Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education
FDE	Federal Directorate of Education
FOSPAH	Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment

FY	Financial Year
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	General Elections
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIR	Gross Intake Ratio
GP	General Practitioner
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GPR	Gender Parity Ratio
HEC	Higher Education Commission
HEI	Higher Educational Institute
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HR	Human Rights
IBA	Islamabad Bar Association
IBC	Islamabad Bar Council
ICCI	Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IESSI	Islamabad Employees Social Security Institution
IG	Inspector General Police
IHC	Islamabad High Court
IHRA	Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IWCCI	Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry
JM/CJ	Judicial Magistrate/Civil Judge
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KRL	Kahuta Research Laboratory Hospital
LBW	Low Birth Weight
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGS	Local Government System
LHV	Lady Health Visitor
LHW	Lady Health Worker
MCI	Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad
MLO	Medico-Legal Officers
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MNA	Member National Assembly

MoFE&PT	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training
MoNHSRC	Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination
NA	National Assembly
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NAVTTTC	National Vocation and Technical Training Commission
NBF	National Book Foundation
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NDU	National Defence University
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFEI	Non Formal Educational Institutes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NICOP	National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis
NIRC	National Industrial Relations Commission
NIRM	National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine
NORI	Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute
NPB	National Police Bureau
NPC	National Press Club
NRSP	National Rural Support Program
NSER	National Socio-Economic Registry
NUML	National University of Modern Languages
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
NUTEC	National University of Technology
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOSC	Out of School Children
OPD	Outpatient Department
PAC	Post-Abortion Care
PAGE	Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education
PBM	Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PDHS	Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey
PDS	Pakistan Demographic Survey
PES	Pakistan Education Statistics
PHC	Primary Healthcare Centers
PIDE	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

PIE	Pakistan Institute of Education
PIEAS	Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences
PIERA	Private Education Institutes Regulatory Authority
PIMS	Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PMDC	Pakistan Medical and Dental Council
PMN	Pakistan Microfinance Network
PNS Hafeez	Pakistan Navy Ship Hafeez
PoR	Proof of Registration
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PTA	Pakistan Telecommunication Authority
PWDs	People with Disability
RHC	Rural Health Center
SCJ	Senior Civil Judge
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
Td	Tetanus-Diphtheria Vaccine
TT	Tetanus Toxoid Vaccine
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
TVETA	Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
VC	Vice Chancellor
WEEI	Women's Economic Empowerment Index
WHO	World Health Organization
WMFP	Women Media Forum Pakistan
ZTBL	Zarai Taraqiat Bank Limited

Message of the Honourable Federal Minister for Human Rights



Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a strong advocate for women's rights, and inspired by his vision, the Government of Pakistan is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and ensuring gender equality. Pakistan has been a leader in global human rights efforts, being one of the first countries to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 and a signatory to seven core international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Pakistan also upholds gender-related commitments through platforms such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

The Government of Pakistan remains dedicated to creating a safe, protected, progressive, and opportunity-filled environment for women through a robust legal and institutional framework. Key legislative measures include the Anti-Harassment Acts, Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021, Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offense of Rape) Act 2016, Women's Property Rights Act 2020, and Provincial Domestic Violence Laws. Additionally, the Government has introduced shelter homes (Dar-ul-Amans), protection centers, women safety mobile applications, helplines, women's complaint centers (WCC) and women help desks in police stations. Economic and social empowerment initiatives such as the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Prime Minister's Women Empowerment Package, Pink Buses, Women on Wheels, Loan Schemes, and Laptop Schemes further support and protect women across the country.

The Ministry of Human Rights and National Commission on the Status of Women remain steadfast in their commitments to fostering an inclusive and secure environment for women. As part of the Prime Minister's Women Empowerment Package, 2024, the first-ever Gender Parity Report for Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) has been developed by Ministry of Human Rights, National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and UNFPA. This report serves as a foundation for evidence-based policymaking, enabling governments, businesses, and civil society to develop targeted strategies that promote gender equality. Additionally, it provides a baseline for future assessments, helping stakeholders to track their progress and measure the impact of their interventions. It also provides valuable insights into areas such as education, employment, leadership representation and legal protections to formulate inclusive policies that uplift women and contribute to sustainable development.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar

Federal Minister for Law, Justice & Human Rights

Message of the Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights



The Government of Pakistan acknowledges the vital role of women's equal participation in driving the country's socio-economic progress. To enhance their status, both federal and provincial governments are actively implementing initiatives and programs that promote women's involvement in all aspects of life.

The Ministry of Human Rights is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and safe environment for women, upholding the principles of gender equality and the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan. Through its regional offices, human rights, women rights and child rights commissions and various allied organizations, the ministry strives to empower women and amplify their voices in decision-making. Key initiatives of Ministry of Human Rights for women's development and empowerment include awareness campaigns, gender sensitization workshops, amendments to pro-women legislation, Helpline 1099 and ZAARA App.

As part of the Prime Minister's Women Empowerment Package, the Ministry of Human Rights in collaboration with NCSW is playing a key role in implementing directives such as the establishment of a Working Women Endowment Fund, a National Daycare Fund as well as the preparation of the first-ever Gender Parity Report for Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

The ICT Gender Parity Report prepared by NCSW in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) will serve as a foundation for evidence-based policymaking in the coming years. This comprehensive report provides essential data, insights, and recommendations across various socio-economic sectors, enabling the government to assess ongoing initiatives through a gender lens and shape future policies that prioritize women as key beneficiaries of development efforts. Additionally, it will act as a baseline for future gender assessments, supporting the Islamabad administration, federal ministries, businesses, and civil society in advancing gender equality.

I commend the efforts of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) for their dedication in collecting and analyzing critical data from public institutions across ICT. The report will lay the groundwork for informed decision-making and impactful policy development.

I also extend my gratitude to the relevant stakeholders from both the public and private sectors who collaborated in the preparation of this report and I acknowledge that their contributions are invaluable in the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable society.

Allah Dino Khawaja

Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights



Message of the NCSW Chairperson

As we strive for a more inclusive and equitable society, it is essential to assess both the progress and the persistent challenges in achieving gender equality. The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) under the Prime Minister directive has recently compiled the first ever Gender Parity Report for Islamabad Capital Territory, highlighting critical areas where urgent action is needed to close the gender gap.

Grounded in global benchmarks, particularly the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Gender Gap Index, Sustainable Development Goals, and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, our report evaluates gender disparity across six key dimensions: demographics, governance, economic participation, education, health, and justice.

Despite investments in gender-sensitive infrastructure in Islamabad, our findings reveal significant barriers that continue to hinder women and marginalized gender groups from accessing equal opportunities. Addressing gender inequality is not just a matter of social justice; it is an economic and political imperative for sustainable progress.

This report serves as a call to action to dismantle the structural and cultural barriers that restrict women's full participation in society. The NCSW is committed to advocating for stronger policies and reforms, aligned with the Government of Pakistan's commitments, to drive meaningful change.

NCSW priorities for immediate action include:

- Advancing inclusive policies to promote gender-sensitive workplaces, enforce equal pay, and create pathways for women's economic independence.
- Ensuring equal access to education and justice empowers women and marginalized genders in overcoming traditional barriers and fully participate in society.
- Expanding healthcare access and prioritizing equitable healthcare, including reproductive health services and mental health resources.
- Enhancing political participation by ensuring increase in women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles at all levels.

Aligned with global efforts, we envision a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a lived reality for every woman and gender-diverse individual in Islamabad Capital Territory. The NCSW remains steadfast in its commitment to challenging the status quo and creating a society where every citizen, regardless of gender, can thrive.

Umme Laila Azhar

Chairperson, NCSW

Message of UNFPA Representative



Prime Minister of Pakistan's pivotal initiative of Women Empowerment Package played a critical role in the development of the Gender Parity Report for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The ICT Gender Parity Report 2023, which adapts the World Economic Forum (WEF) indicators to the context of Pakistan, specifically Islamabad, provides a comprehensive analysis of key areas including demographics, education, health, economic empowerment, justice, governance, and special initiatives.

Achieving gender equality is a fundamental pillar of social justice and essential for sustainable development. For years, the lack of reliable, comprehensive and accessible data has inhibited effective evidence-based planning and policymaking in Pakistan. To support the government of Pakistan's efforts to address the challenges of addressing gender parity UNFPA Pakistan is pleased to support the first ever Gender Parity Report for ICT. This report lays foundation for evidence based policy making and identifying the gaps and paving way for targeted interventions. The preparation of the Gender Parity Report represents an essential step towards addressing the 'data gap' and enabling evidence-based decision-making that can drive gender equality initiatives forward. It serves not only as a mechanism for monitoring progress towards achieving gender equality but also as a tool for assessing the impact of existing policies and identifying areas that require further intervention.

The Government of Pakistan has demonstrated its commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment as a central policy priority. UNFPA is pleased to support the Government of Pakistan's commitment to promoting evidence-based policymaking and providing a solid base for the effective design and implementation of programs focused on advancing women's rights and gender equality. We believe that this ICT Gender Parity Report will serve as a crucial starting point for the development of the National Gender Parity Report. Finally, I would like to commend the leadership by the National Commission on the Status of Women and the Ministry of Human Rights whose hard work culminated in the publication of this report.

Dr Luay Shabaneh

UNFPA, Representative

Acknowledgments

The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) acknowledges the efforts of all stakeholders who assisted in the development of the ICT Gender Parity Report. We want to thank all Departments/Institutions of the government. They have been instrumental in providing data and shaping this report. We are very grateful to UNFPA for their diligence and technical support, which allowed us to prepare and publish the ICT Gender Parity Report 2023. We would also like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands for their generous support, without which the report's completion would not have been possible. We are also thankful to Group Development Pakistan for their support in compiling this report.

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Executive Summary

This report presents a comprehensive assessment of gender parity in Islamabad. It focuses on key sectors such as justice, demographics, economy, education, health, and governance. The findings reveal significant progress in certain areas; however, disparities require urgent attention and reform interventions.

Islamabad's population of 2.36 million continues to grow, with an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent. This trend reflects how Islamabad has become a rapidly urbanizing center, attracting significant inter-provincial migrations. The report notes that a gender gap persists across population dynamics, specifically in areas like Information Communication Technology access, CNIC registration, and opportunities for marginalized groups, such as women, children, transgenders, persons with disabilities, religious minorities, and Afghan refugees.

There is a positive trend in female representation within Islamabad's judiciary. Women make up 41.1 percent of judicial officers at the district level. However, women remain under represented in senior judicial roles. The national average of female judges in superior courts is only 5.5 percent. Female participation in the legal profession, prosecution services, and law enforcement is growing but remains limited due to systemic challenges. These challenges require targeted interventions. Despite legal reforms, violence against women remains a serious concern. There are low conviction rates and barriers to justice. The lack of a dedicated women's prison and underfunded legal aid services further exacerbate gender disparities in access to justice.

Women's participation in the labor force of Islamabad is only 22.5 percent; this is much lower than men's 67 percent. Urban women face even more challenges. Economic inequalities are driven by factors like limited mobility, cultural norms, wage gaps, and restricted access to financial services and high-paying industries. The gender gap in microfinance, digital inclusion, and youth's NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates highlights the need for reforms. These changes are crucial to boost women's opportunities in entrepreneurship, higher-paying sectors, and digital economies. Social safety nets, such as the Benazir Income Support Programme, offer promise in improving women's financial independence.

While female enrolment in education is relatively high, with 56 percent of public school students being female, disparities remain, especially at higher educational levels and in specialised fields like technical education, where female participation drops. Female teachers dominate primary and secondary education, but there is a sharp decline in female representation at higher education levels, especially in university faculty and leadership roles. Targeted interventions are needed to address gender disparities in STEM fields and higher education leadership.

Gender disparities in healthcare access and outcomes persist in Islamabad, with women primarily relying on primary healthcare services. The healthcare workforce is also gendered, with a higher percentage of women in nursing but low representation among doctors. Maternal and child health services are generally well-engaged, but mental health infrastructure is

insufficient. The rising prevalence of HIV and the increasing incidence of cancer necessitate policy interventions, particularly for women. The private healthcare sector plays a significant role, underscoring the need for equitable resource allocation across both public and private sectors. There is a concerning 30 percent drop-off rate for Td immunization, suggesting the need for stronger immunization follow-up and awareness strategies.

Women's representation in governance remains alarmingly limited, with no female representatives from Islamabad in the National Assembly. However, there is a woman member from Islamabad in the Senate. Women occupy only 4.9 percent of national departmental roles and 14.49 percent of public office positions in ICT. Despite increased voter participation among women, cultural and systemic barriers continue to limit their involvement in political and administrative roles. Reforms are needed to support women's advancement in leadership positions, ensuring that gender parity in governance becomes a reality in ICT.

In conclusion, while progress has been made in many areas, there are still significant challenges to achieving gender parity in Islamabad Capital Territory. Comprehensive reforms in governance, legal structures, economic opportunities, education, healthcare, and infrastructure are crucial in addressing these inequalities and ensuring that women have equal access to opportunities and rights in all spheres of life. The report suggests actions for the Government of Pakistan to fulfil its commitments to gender equality under the Constitution of Pakistan and numerous international agreements and treaties: International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), CEDAW, Beijing platform for the action, OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women etc.

01



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Gender Parity and Sustainable Development

Gender parity is now widely recognized as a vital goal to build a prosperous society. It ensures equal participation and representation of all genders in activities critical for societal progress. These activities include, but are not limited to, economic productivity, labour force participation, and political engagement. Women's involvement in the workforce not only alleviates labour shortages but also fosters inclusive and diverse workplaces. The diverse skills, perspectives, and experiences brought by women contribute to increased productivity, innovation, improved decision-making, and the development of human and economic capital.

Sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving this requires addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges in an integrated manner. Gender parity is a cornerstone of sustainable development because it ensures that all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from development efforts.

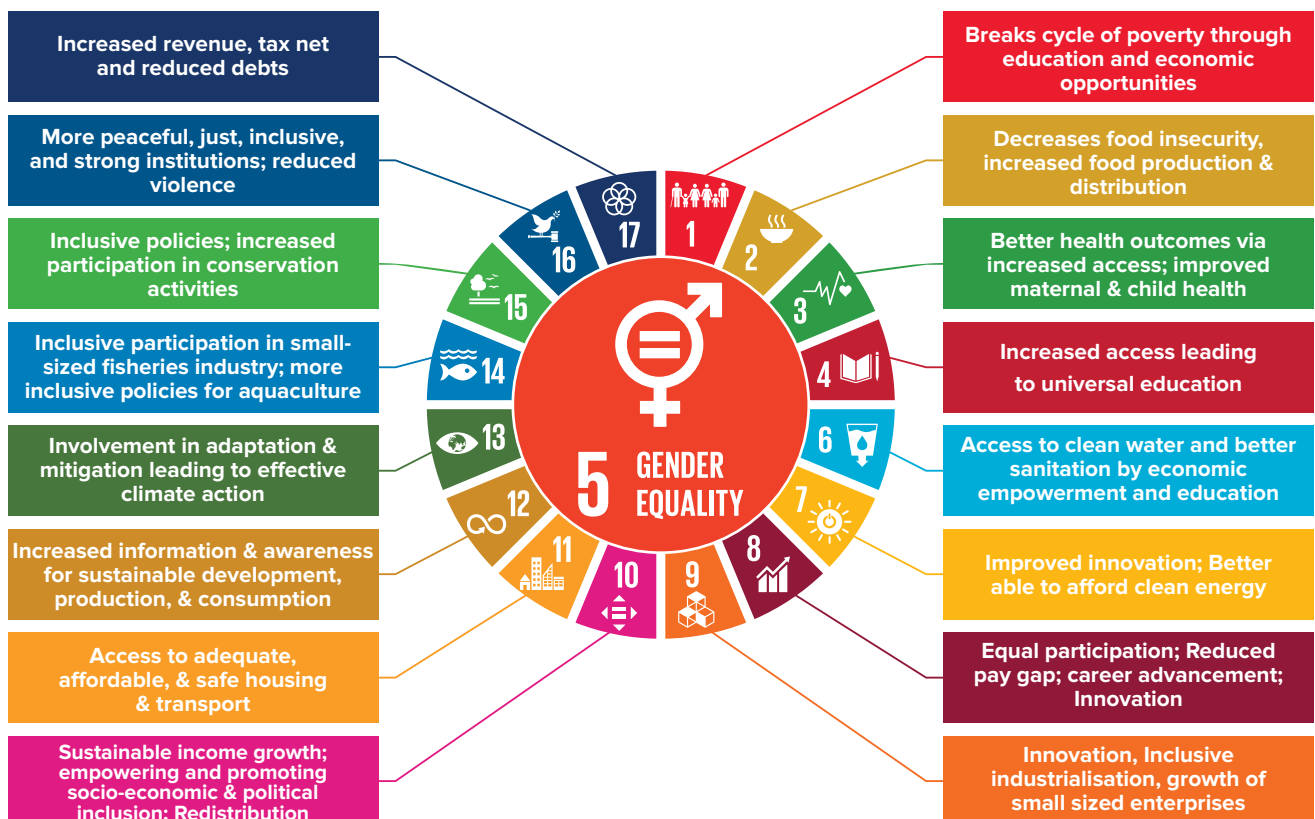


Figure 1.1 Impact of SDG 5 on other SDGs

Noting these imperatives, gender parity is embedded within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given its strong interconnections with other goals—such as poverty reduction (SDG 1), quality education (SDG 4), health and well-being (SDG 3), and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)—gender parity is a key enabler for sustainable development.

In Pakistan, gender inequality undermines sustainable development in several ways. For instance, lack of access to education and healthcare for women perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits their ability to participate in decision-making processes. When women are excluded from education, they are less likely to be informed about their rights, health, and environmental issues, which are critical for sustainable development. Moreover, women's limited participation in the workforce and political spheres means that their perspectives and experiences are often overlooked in policy-making, leading to solutions that do not fully address the needs of the entire population.

1.2 Gender Parity: Global and National Snapshot

Achieving gender parity has been a priority for global, regional, and national stakeholders for decades. However, persistent challenges continue to hinder progress, threatening the achievement of related SDGs. According to “The Gender Snapshot” jointly published by the UN Women and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), significant gender disparities remain, with only 50.1 percent of women globally covered by at least one social protection benefit, compared to 54.6 percent of men. At the current rate of progress, it will take an additional 137 years to end extreme poverty among women.¹

Additionally, there are 47.8 million women who are more moderately or severely food-insecure than men, with gender disparities in food security persisting due to unequal access to resources in the agricultural sector.² This report also highlights that only 27.4 percent of countries have successfully implemented gender-related measures under national water management frameworks, indicating the need for accelerated progress in gender mainstreaming across all SDGs.³ According to the 2023 Global Data Campaign Report, approximately 48 percent of gender-relevant indicators are not sex-disaggregated, and a significant portion of countries do not report gender data.⁴

The situation of gender parity in Pakistan remains concerning. The country ranked 145th out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2024. A review of the WEF's Global Gender Gap Reports from 2014 to 2024 reveals a marginal increase in the overall gender parity score. It rose from 55 percent in 2014 to 57 percent in 2024.

The WEF report focuses on four key themes: economic participation and opportunities; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Data indicate that economic participation and opportunities for women remain significantly low, improving only slightly from 0.32 in 2014 to 0.36 in 2024.⁵ Educational attainment witnessed progress, moving from 0.81 in 2014 to 0.83 in 2024. However, the health and survival dimension stagnated,

¹ UN Statistics Division. (2024). The Gender Snapshot 2024. UN Women & UN DESA.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Open Data Watch. (2023). *2023 Global Data Campaign Report*.

⁵ World Economic Forum. (2014). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2014*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum; World Economic Forum. (2024). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2024*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum.

maintaining a score of 0.96 over the decade. Political empowerment deteriorated, with the score dropping from 0.19 in 2014 to 0.12 in 2024, reflecting a decline in women's political representation. Despite some advancements in education, Pakistan's overall progress toward gender parity remains slow and uneven across different dimensions.

1.3 National Gender Policy Framework (2022) & URAAN Pakistan

In recent years, Pakistan has made significant strides toward gender parity through comprehensive policy frameworks and targeted initiatives to improve gender parity. The National Gender Policy Framework (2022),⁶ launched by the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, serves as a structured mechanism for advancing women's rights by enhancing economic empowerment, access to education and healthcare, and participation in governance and decision-making. To ensure effective implementation, the government has embedded gender-responsive strategies in national development plans, resource allocation, and monitoring frameworks.

Complementing these efforts, the recently launched URAAN Pakistan⁷ focuses on youth empowerment, particularly for girls under 29, by integrating quality education, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, and political engagement—directly contributing to the themes of the gender parity report. The initiative also establishes affirmative action measures, including quotas for women, transgender individuals, and differently-abled persons, while equipping them with digital skills and financial literacy to bridge existing disparities.

These initiatives collectively foster an inclusive ecosystem where women in Islamabad and across Pakistan can thrive on equal opportunities in governance, economic engagement, education, and access to justice. They also align with global commitments such as SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), reinforcing Pakistan's dedication to eliminating systemic barriers and achieving sustainable gender parity.

1.4 Pakistan's International and Regional Commitments

Pakistan has demonstrated its commitment to gender equality and social inclusion. It ratified key international and regional frameworks aimed at advancing women's rights and social protection. As a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Pakistan is obligated to eliminate gender-based discrimination. It must also promote women's participation in all spheres of life. Similarly, through the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Pakistan upholds children's rights. This includes ensuring access to education, healthcare, and protection from exploitation.

At the regional level, Pakistan actively participates in the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) programme, which focuses on economic empowerment, infrastructure development, and social inclusivity, including gender-responsive policies. Additionally, under the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), Pakistan is committed to implementing 27 international conventions, including those on human rights and labour standards, ensuring compliance with gender-sensitive labour laws and workplace protections.⁸

⁶ Dawn, "Govt launches first-ever national gender policy framework."

⁷ Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, *Empowerment - URAAN Pakistan*.

⁸ European External Action Service, "European Union Releases Fourth GSP+ Report Evaluating Implementation of 27 International Conventions," European Union.

By integrating these global and regional commitments into national policies, Pakistan aims to strengthen its gender parity efforts. This will ensure that women and marginalized groups have equal opportunities and protections in Islamabad and beyond.

1.5 Gender Parity and Economic Growth

Gender parity is not just a social justice issue; it is an economic necessity. Research consistently highlights a strong correlation between gender equality and economic growth. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, advancing gender equality could add \$12 trillion to global GDP. In Pakistan, closing the gender gap in labour force participation alone could boost GDP by up to 30 percent.⁹

Women's economic empowerment drives productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. When women have equal access to economic opportunities, they contribute significantly to job creation and local economies, particularly through entrepreneurship. However, Pakistani women face structural barriers, including limited access to credit, markets, and professional networks. Addressing these challenges through inclusive policies is crucial for unlocking Pakistan's economic potential. Moreover, gender parity in the workforce can help address labor shortages and maximize Pakistan's demographic dividend, as over 60 percent of the population is under 30. Investing in women's education, skill development, and employment will allow Pakistan to harness this talent pool, fostering long-term economic growth and stability.

Womenomics: The Economic Case for Gender Inclusion

The concept of Womenomics highlights the economic and social benefits of investing in women's well-being and empowerment. It emphasizes expanding women's access to key resources such as education, healthcare, and financial opportunities. This ultimately leads to stronger economies, healthier families, and more prosperous societies.

First introduced by Claire Shipman and Katty Kay in their book *Womenomics: Write Your Own Rules for Success* (2009), the term underscores that women are a valuable economic asset and that gender equality is not just a moral imperative but a sound economic strategy. The core dimensions of Womenomics include:

- **Education:** Investing in girls' education leads to improved health outcomes, poverty reduction, and economic growth.
- **Health:** Access to quality healthcare, including reproductive health services, is crucial for women's overall well-being and economic empowerment.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Equal access to jobs, credit, and economic resources can significantly reduce poverty and enhance national productivity.
- **Leadership:** Women in leadership roles contribute diverse perspectives, improving decision-making and driving better outcomes.

A structured framework for women's empowerment, built on expanding access to these resources, fosters agency and leads to measurable improvements in education, health, economic participation, and political influence.

⁹ Cuberes, D. and Teignier, M. (2013). Gender inequality and economic growth: a critical review. *Journal of International Development*, 26(2), 260-276. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.2983>

A Framework for Women's Empowerment

A comprehensive approach to women's empowerment must address both access to resources and the development of agency. This framework encapsulates the following:

- **Resources:** Women need access to and control over a range of resources, including financial resources, education, healthcare, and information.
- **Agency:** Agency refers to women's ability to make informed choices and exercise control over their own lives. This includes decision-making power within households, communities, and the public sphere.
- **Outcomes:** When women have access to resources and agency, it leads to positive outcomes in various areas, including improved health, education, economic well-being, and political participation.

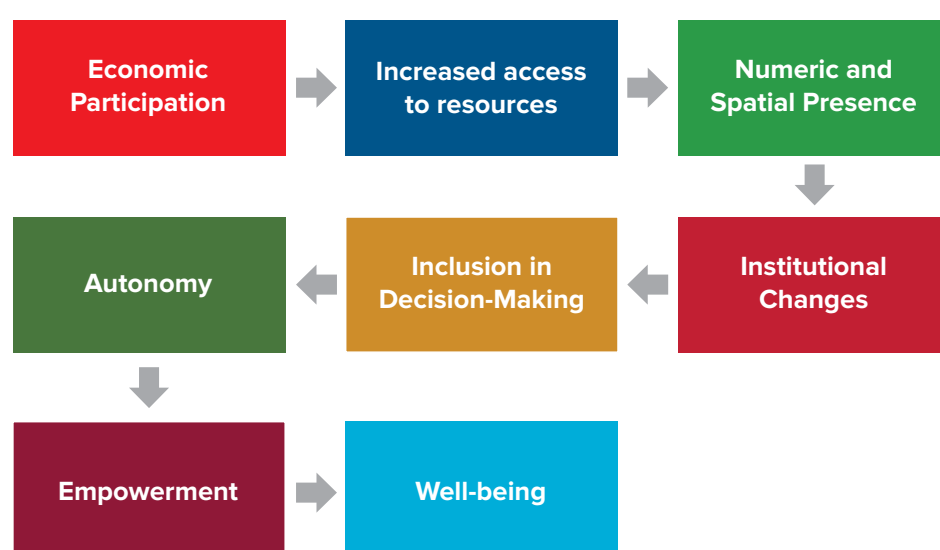


Figure 1.2 Framework for Women Well-being

To achieve women's economic empowerment, reliable evidence must be available to policymakers, legislators, and international development partners. This evidence can inform legislative and institutional interventions aimed at accelerating gender equality. In particular, data on social and economic indicators is critical.

1.6 Importance of Gender-Disaggregated Data

The availability and use of gender-disaggregated data are vital for policy planning, implementation of programmes, advocacy, public mobilization, and social change. Gender-disaggregated data distinguishes between genders across various indicators, enabling:

1. Identification of disparities in resources, opportunities, and outcomes.
2. Data-driven decision-making and targeted policy interventions.
3. Monitoring of progress and assessment of impact on gender equality over time.
4. Efficient resource allocation by identifying persistent gaps.
5. Accountability of governments, institutions, and stakeholders through outcome-based monitoring.

6. Addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalized genders.
7. Empowerment of communities by amplifying voices and promoting inclusivity.
8. Identification of gender-specific health issues to improve healthcare policies and services.¹⁰

By collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data, ICT administration and the federal government can make significant strides toward achieving gender parity, ensuring equitable representation, and addressing key challenges that impede the goals of gender equality.

1.7 Why Islamabad Gender Parity Report?

1.7.1 Overview

The Islamabad Gender Parity Report (IGPR), developed by the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), is a comprehensive study of the status of women and gender parity in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The ICT spans 906 sq. km. (350 sq. mi.) and is home to 2.36 million people, including 1.22 million females, 1.25 million males, and 270 transgender individuals. More than 53 percent of the population resides in 129 rural areas around the city.

This report, building on the experiences of similar initiatives like the Punjab Gender Parity Report, aims to present the parity status of men and women in Islamabad, including transgender persons where data is available. Data from various public offices and institutions across the ICT has been collected and analyzed to evaluate the status of women. A robust framework of indicators covers six key thematic areas: Demographics, Governance, Health, Education, Economic Participation and Opportunities, and Justice. The analysis provides gender-disaggregated data and comparisons across sectors and time periods.

IGPR 2023 also aims to conduct an independent, data-driven review of policies affecting gender parity in a non-partisan manner. The analysis is presented to call for action from the Federal Parliament, Government of Pakistan, civil society, businesses, and all stakeholders. Gender equality must be prioritized as a critical social and economic imperative.

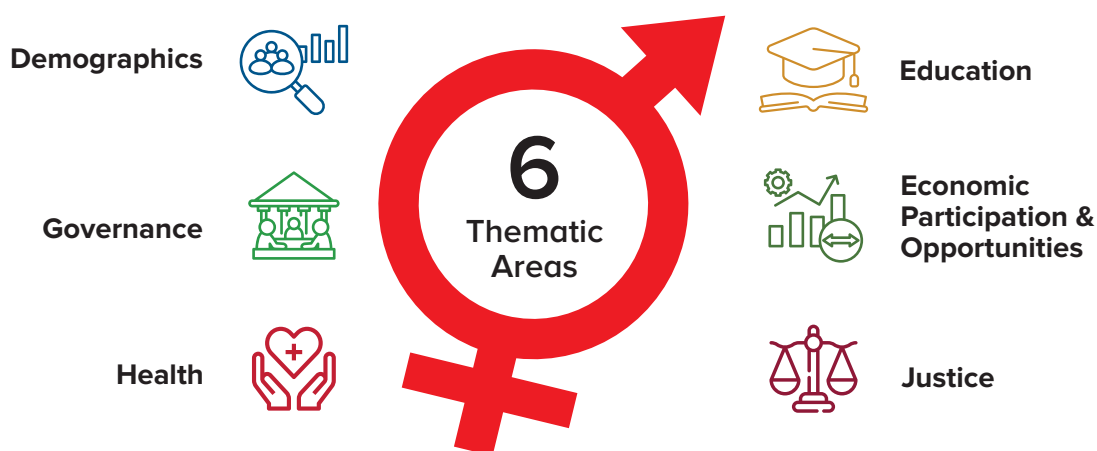


Figure 1.3 Thematic Areas of ICT Gender Parity Report 2023

¹⁰ Matsui, T. (2007). Gender equality and empowerment in health care: A practical framework. Tokyo: Springer.

United Nations Development Program. (2021). *The gender divide: How data matters for achieving equality*. New York, NY: UNDP.

¹¹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Population Census 2023, Table 1, Islamabad*.

https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/2023/tables/table_1_islamabad.pdf; *Ibid*, Table 3, Islamabad,

https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/2023/tables/table_3_islamabad.pdf

1.7.2 Methodology of IGPR 2023

The IGPR uses a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, combining primary and secondary research to provide a detailed analysis of gender parity across the ICT. This methodology ensures that findings are data-driven, actionable, and aligned with global standards. The analysis integrates the latest statistics from national and international surveys and publications, complemented by primary data from federal government departments and the ICT administration.

The framework focuses on consistent measurement of gender gaps while incorporating new data to identify emerging trends and challenges. The indicator framework, informed by international gender indices and localized research, collects data on critical gender-sensitive indicators across six thematic areas. This methodology ensures that findings provide actionable insights without setting priorities for government departments, enabling stakeholders to identify and address gaps effectively. The framework was developed through consultations with government officials, independent experts, and international development partners. It addresses the need for a consistent, comprehensive measure of gender equality that tracks progress over time.

The comprehensive framework of indicators was devised to assess gender parity through 237 indicators across six critical thematic areas: Demographics, Governance, Health, Education, Economic Participation and Opportunities, and Justice. The report is based on 170 indicators against which data was available. It was challenging to collect data from private entities especially in the health sector. Similarly, some details in the justice sector were not available. A key observation of this report is that data maintenance in several sectors requires streamlining. It is hoped that one major follow-up action will be to improve gender disaggregated data systems. Details of the indicators used for this report are attached as Annex A.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report served as the benchmark for developing these indicators. The WEF report highlights significant gaps in Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. By integrating its globally recognized methodology, the IGPR aligns local research with international benchmarks, ensuring consistency and comparability. For instance, key metrics like labour force participation rates, literacy rates, and political representation were contextualized to the unique socio-economic and cultural fabric of the ICT.

In addition, international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and CEDAW were instrumental in shaping the methodology of this report. SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and its associated targets, such as ensuring equal opportunities for leadership and eliminating all forms of violence against women, provided a global framework to contextualize local initiatives. The IGPR also aligns its indicators with other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 (Good Health & Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth). This ensures its contributions to global gender equality efforts.

The indicators were also selected while considering the commitments of Pakistan under the CEDAW which include promoting equal rights for women in areas like access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

It should be noted that the indicator framework for IGPR can undergo revisions and refinement in the future reports. The goal of this report is to provide a comprehensive dataset with a clear method for tracking gaps in critical indicators so that departments/institutions and offices may set priorities accordingly within their own organizational structures.

1.7.3 Nature of Data and Sources

The research team utilized a detailed proforma sent to public offices across the ICT to gather data on key indicators, including (i) workforce composition, (ii) beneficiaries of services disaggregated by gender, (iii) rural-urban disaggregation, and (iv) the implementation status of gender-related policies and development programmes. The data collection process combined both primary and secondary research to ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis. Additionally, this process was supported by databases developed and maintained by government and international partners, such as UN Women.

1.7.3.1 Data Collection

1. Primary Data Collection from Public Offices

Structured tools, including questionnaires and standardized proformas, were deployed to collect gender-disaggregated data from government offices, institutions, and field offices across the ICT. These tools captured critical information on workforce composition, access to resources, and the implementation of gender-related policies. The methods were kept flexible due to the complexity of public sector organizations and the unique characteristics of each government entity.

2. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources were rigorously reviewed to complement and validate primary findings. These sources included national surveys, such as the Labor Force Survey, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM), Population Census of Pakistan 2023, and Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS). Additionally, international reports, research publications, and administrative datasets were utilized. The WEF's Global Gender Gap Report provided a valuable benchmark for contextualizing findings and aligning them with global standards.

1.7.3.2 Data Analysis

The analysis in this report employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. It provides a comprehensive understanding of key issues. Data is drawn from national surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, reports by international organizations like the World Bank and UN Women, and government data sources. The methodology combines trend analysis, regional and sectoral breakdowns, and gender-based comparisons to highlight disparities and structural barriers across thematic areas. These areas include labour force participation, gender parity in health, and governance. By aligning findings with policy objectives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the report offers actionable insights and recommendations to address inequalities and drive equitable, inclusive development.



Figure 1.4 Methodology of ICT Gender Parity Report 2023

1.7.4 Significance of IGPR

This first ever IGPR report will serve as a benchmark for the assessment of gender parity in Islamabad. The existing report will serve as an essential resource for national and international organizations, NGOs, advocacy networks, and policy centres. The report provides a consolidated dataset that ICT and federal departments can use for policymaking, proposal development, and baseline studies. By identifying key gender gaps, IGPR 2023 helps facilitate the implementation of gender-sensitive initiatives. For example, data on civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) from the ICT has been enhanced through such reporting.

The report has been developed as a priority initiative under the Women Empowerment Package directed by the Prime Minister's office. This is the first-of-its-kind gender parity report led by the National Commission on the Status of Women and the Ministry of Human Rights, with technical support from UN Population Fund (UNFPA). It reflects the government's commitment to evidence-based decision-making and gender parity. It will support critical national initiatives such as the National Gender Policy Framework and Uraan Pakistan.

Furthermore, the IGPR will contribute to a standardized methodology for a national gender parity report. The indicators developed herein will inform and enable the federal and provincial governments to fulfil their constitutional and policy mandates on gender equality and inclusive economic growth.

Achieving gender parity in education, healthcare, and employment will have a transformative impact on Pakistan's development trajectory. Educated women are more likely to invest in their families' health and education, creating a positive ripple effect across generations. Studies have shown that increasing women's access to education and healthcare can significantly reduce maternal and child mortality rates, improve nutrition, and enhance overall well-being of the population. Furthermore, empowering women to participate in the workforce and decision-making, leading to more inclusive and effective policies that address the root causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation.



02

DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHICS



Key Findings

- Significant gender disparities exist in access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), with males accounting for 75 percent of active mobile subscribers.
- The age group highlights that 32 percent of Islamabad's residents are under 15 years old, signifying a youthful demographic that requires substantial investment in education and healthcare. The working-age population (15-64 years) constitutes 63 percent of the total, presenting a strong labour force and the challenge of creating employment opportunities.
- Islamabad's population consists of 53 percent males and 47 percent females, with 53.09 percent of the population located in rural areas and 46.91 percent of the population residing in urban areas.
- The average annual population growth rate has been declining since 1998, with the current rate recorded at 2.8 percent according to the 2023 Census. However, this remains higher than the national average of 2.55 percent, indicating a continuous growth in the population in the Islamabad Capital Territory.
- Inter-provincial migration patterns indicate that men primarily migrate for economic opportunities, while women relocate for family reasons.
- Rural-urban and gender disparities in Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) registration continue to hinder women's access to legal rights and essential services.
- An estimated 3.2 percent of Islamabad's population experiences functional disabilities, with women disproportionately affected, limiting their social and economic participation.
- Refugees make up 3.2 percent of Pakistan's Afghan refugee population, requiring targeted interventions, particularly for women and children, to ensure their protection and integration.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the capital's demographics, highlighting key gender disparities across population dynamics, Information Communication Technology (ICT) usage, migration, civil registration systems, and disability inclusion. Islamabad's current population of 2.36 million has an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent, reflecting its status as a rapidly urbanizing center that attracts significant inter-provincial migration. However, gender gaps persist in areas such as CNIC registration, ICT access, and opportunities for marginalized groups, including migrants, persons with disabilities, and Afghan refugees.

Demographic profiling plays a pivotal role in understanding the gendered realities within a society. By examining factors such as sex ratio, age distribution, population density, and access to civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), policymakers can better assess socio-economic dynamics and design targeted interventions. Commitments under international frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), further emphasize the need for robust demographic data. Articles 9 and 16 of CEDAW stress the importance of equitable access to identity documentation and legal recognition in marriage and family relations, which are crucial for advancing gender parity.

As Pakistan's administrative and political hub, Islamabad has a distinct demographic profile shaped by its urbanized landscape, diverse population, and concentration of social services. The total area of the federal capital is 906 square kilometers, with an additional specified area of 3,626 square kilometers, including the Margalla Hills National Park in the north and northeast. Islamabad, with a population of 2.36 million, is divided into five zones under its Master Plan to ensure organized development and land use.

Zones I and II are urban areas with a population of 1.11 million, housing residential sectors, commercial hubs, and federal government institutions, and featuring modern infrastructure. Zones III, IV, and V are rural areas with a population of 1.26 million, focusing on preserving the natural landscape, including forests, agricultural land, and low-density settlements. The rural zones, comprising 53.09 percent of the population, outnumber the urban zones, which account for 46.91 percent. Zone III includes environmentally sensitive areas, while Zones IV and V aim to balance rural development with sustainable land use.

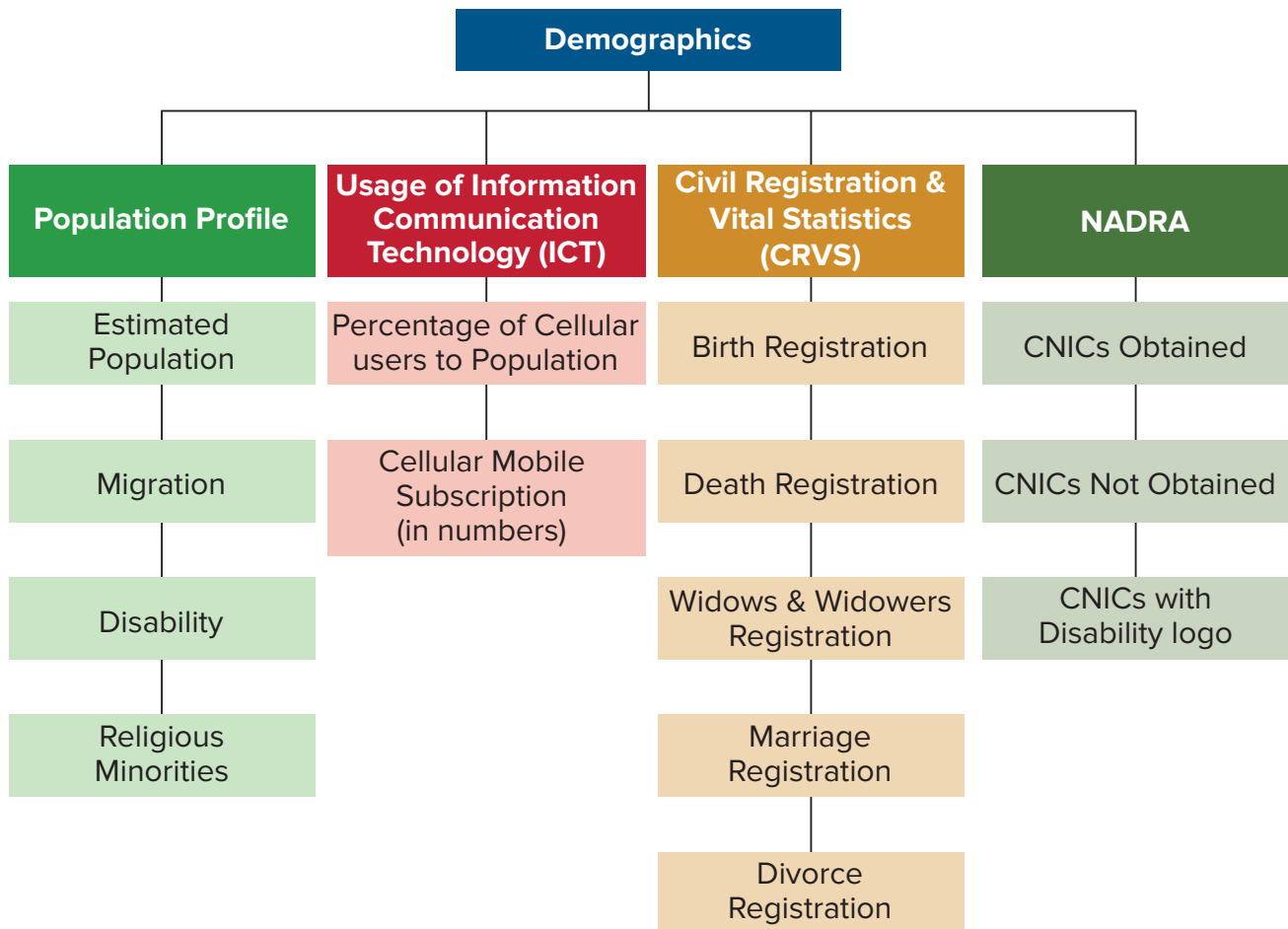
This zoning structure ensures a balance between urban growth, environmental conservation, and efficient resource management.¹² Understanding Islamabad's demographic landscape is essential for addressing the unique challenges and opportunities it presents in achieving gender parity. By analyzing gender distribution, age structures, migration patterns, and the use of ICT, this section highlights the interplay of demographic factors with gender equity in the capital.

These insights align with General Recommendation 34 of CEDAW, which advocates for equal access to services, technology, and civil registration for women, particularly those in marginalized communities. Through this detailed demographic analysis, the Gender Parity Report aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders in Islamabad, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society.

¹² Capital Development Authority. (n.d.). *Public information*

2.2 Indicator Framework

This chapter on Demographics covers the scope of the population profile in Islamabad through a gender lens examining interprovincial migration, religious minorities, persons with disabilities, access to ICT, details of civil registration and vital statistics. The figure below highlights the indicators assessed in this chapter.



2.3 Population Profile

Understanding the demographic landscape of Islamabad requires an analysis of its population dynamics, migration trends and disability prevalence. This section explores these critical elements, offering insights into how they shape the city's gender parity landscape.

2.3.1 Estimated Population

Islamabad's estimated population underscores its significance as a growing urban center. Currently, the city's demographic landscape reflects its status as a rapidly expanding metropolis with a total population of 2.36 million.

According to data published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the estimated population of Islamabad has been steadily increasing, with an average annual growth rate of 2.8 percent. The city has a higher sex ratio of 111.81 males per 100 females compared to the national average, likely due to migration trends that favor men. Islamabad exhibits a high population density of 2,609.12 persons per square kilometer, with urban and rural proportions of 46.91 percent and 53.09 percent, respectively.

It is important to highlight that Islamabad's urban proportion is significantly higher than the national urbanization rate of 38.88 percent. The average household size is 5.7, slightly below the national average. The intercensal growth rate has declined from 4.9 percent to 2.8 percent but remains higher than the national average. The average annual growth rate has shown a downward trend since 1998, as reflected in recent census data.

Table 2 indicates that the city's population has been steadily increasing due to inter-provincial migration. Targeted efforts are required to ensure that this growth translates into equitable opportunities for women, addressing disparities in access to resources and participation in public life.

Area, Population by Sex, Sex Ratio, Population Density, Urban Population, Household Size and Annual Growth Rate, Census-2023

Punjab

Population 
127,688,922

Male 
65,448,376

Female 
62,226,589

Transgender 
13,957

Rural  75,712,955

38,625,841

37,083,868


3,246

Urban  51,975,967

26,822,535

25,142,721

10,711

Area 
205,345



Density 
621.83

Sex Ratio  104.16
 106.68
105.18

Average Household Size **6.4**

 6.4
 6.3


2017-2023 Average Annual Growth Rate **2.53**

 1.46
 4.24

Sindh

Population 
55,696,147

Male 
29,014,424

Female 
26,677,501

Transgender 
4,222

Rural  25,639,408

13,245,373

12,393,405


630

Urban  30,056,739

15,769,051

14,284,096

3,592

Area 
140,914



Density 
395.25

Sex Ratio  106.87
 110.4
108.76

Average Household Size **5.6**

 5.4
 5.8

2017-2023 Average Annual Growth Rate **2.57**

 1.82
 3.24

Balochistan

Population 
14,894,402

Male 
7,768,166

Female 
7,125,471

Transgender 
765

Rural  10,282,574

5,379,780

4,902,339


455


Urban  4,611,828

2,388,386

2,223,132



310

Area 
347,190

Density 
42.9

Sex Ratio  109.74
 107.43
109.02

Average Household Size **6.4**

 6.1
 7

2017-2023 Average Annual Growth Rate **3.2**

 2.38
 5.19

Islamabad

Population 
2,363,863

Male 
1,247,693

Female 
1,115,900

Transgender 
270

Rural  1,254,991

656,104

598,837

50

Urban  1,108,872

591,589

517,063


220

Area 
906

Density 
2609.12

Sex Ratio  109.56
 114.41
111.81

Average Household Size **5.7**

 5.5
 5.9

2017-2023 Average Annual Growth Rate **2.8**



 3.97
 1.59

Figure 2.1

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics¹³¹³ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). (2023).

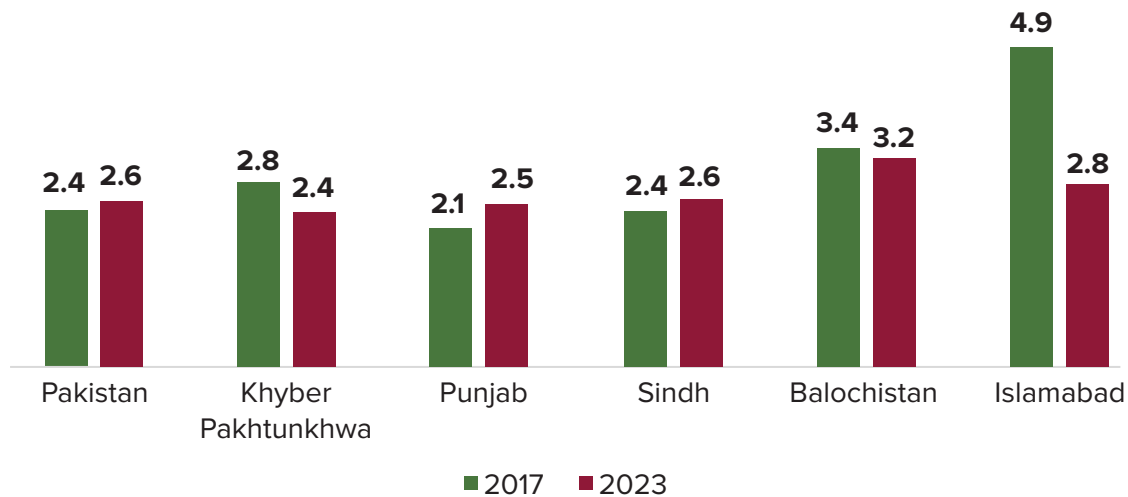


Figure 2.2 Comparison of Average Annual Growth Rate of the Year 2017 and 2023
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

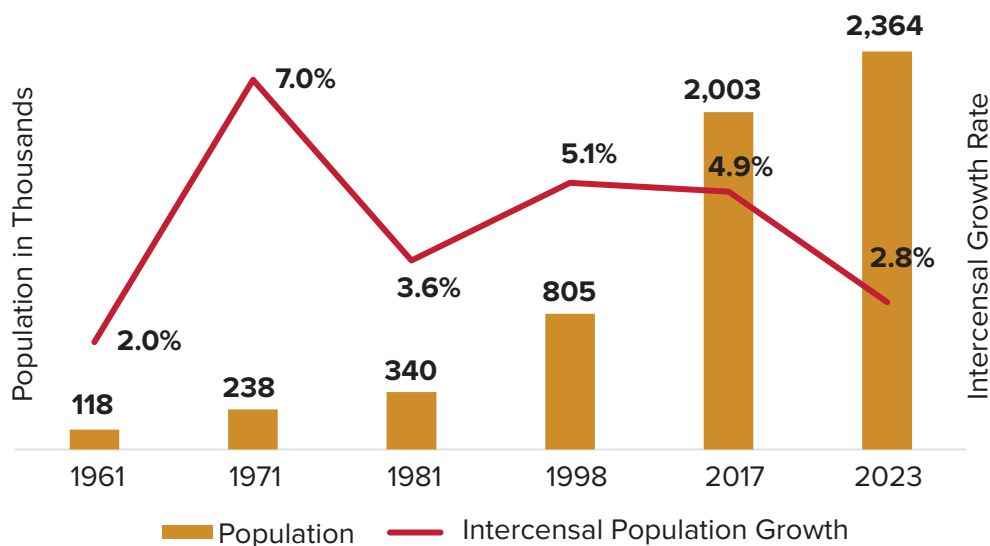


Figure 2.2.1 Total Population and Intercensal Growth Rate of Islamabad (1961–2023)

Table 1 demonstrates the population distribution across age groups showing that 32 percent of Islamabad's residents are under 15 years old, signifying a youthful demographic that requires substantial investment in education and healthcare.

The working-age population (15-64 years) constitutes 63 percent of the total, presenting a strong labour force but also the challenge of job creation. Meanwhile, the elderly population (65 years and above) remains a small fraction at 4 percent, with an almost equal split between urban and rural areas.

Gender disparities are clearly evident as males outnumber females in nearly all age brackets, particularly in the economically active segment (15-64 years), which could be attributed to male-dominated labour migration.

The transgender population, though relatively small, is predominantly found in urban areas (220 out of 270 individuals) and within the working-age group, indicating potential social and economic vulnerabilities.

Table 1: Islamabad Population by Age, Sex and Rural/Urban, Census-2023

Sex/Age Group (in Years)	ALL LOCALITIES				RURAL				URBAN			
	All Sexes	Male	Female	Trans gender	All Sexes	Male	Female	Trans gender	All Sexes	Male	Female	Trans gender
All Ages	2,283,244	1,209,000	1,073,974	270	1,240,244	649,029	591,165	50	1,043,000	559,971	482,809	220
00 - 04	237,482	122,792	114,690	-	134,174	69,183	64,991	-	103,308	53,609	49,699	-
05 - 09	248,762	128,955	119,807	-	136,331	70,036	66,295	-	112,431	58,919	53,512	-
10 - 14	250,877	134,067	116,805	5	135,519	71,334	64,184	1	115,358	62,733	52,621	4
15 - 19	220,806	120,406	100,385	15	117,925	63,487	54,434	4	102,881	56,919	45,951	11
20 - 24	201,803	107,636	94,148	19	106,786	55,900	50,879	7	95,017	51,736	43,269	12
25 - 29	191,473	98,867	92,557	49	103,685	52,185	51,489	11	87,788	46,682	41,068	38
30 - 34	177,752	89,639	88,031	82	98,086	48,989	49,093	4	79,666	40,650	38,938	78
35 - 39	165,682	84,851	80,775	56	91,166	46,204	44,948	14	74,516	38,647	35,827	42
40 - 44	146,327	77,504	68,804	19	79,262	41,884	37,376	2	67,065	35,620	31,428	17
45 - 49	114,291	61,567	52,713	11	60,817	32,463	28,351	3	53,474	29,104	24,362	8
50 - 54	94,649	51,164	43,477	8	50,308	26,688	23,617	3	44,341	24,476	19,860	5
55 - 59	74,847	41,238	33,606	3	39,672	21,215	18,456	1	35,175	20,023	15,150	2
60 - 64	60,028	33,316	26,709	3	33,351	18,427	14,924	-	26,677	14,889	11,785	3
65 - 69	42,349	24,546	17,803	-	23,498	13,727	9,771	-	18,851	10,819	8,032	-
70 - 74	29,312	16,986	12,326	-	16,026	9,419	6,607	-	13,286	7,567	5,719	-
75 & Above	26,804	15,466	11,338	-	13,638	7,888	5,750	-	13,166	7,578	5,588	-

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Overall, Islamabad's demographic profile presents both opportunities and challenges. The age-wise distribution of the population reveals a youthful demographic, with the majority under 29 years of age. While the city's young population offers economic potential, it also requires strategic policy interventions to ensure employment, gender parity, and the inclusion of marginalized communities, particularly transgender individuals.

This trend is explored further in figures 3A and 3B, where the 2017 and 2023 censuses are compared in terms of gender and age, emphasizing the need for youth-focused urban policies, including education, skill development, and employment opportunities.

With nearly 64 percent of the population below the age of 29. This large youth bulge presents an opportunity to benefit from a potential demographic dividend while also posing the challenge of providing adequate services, jobs, and meaningful engagement opportunities.

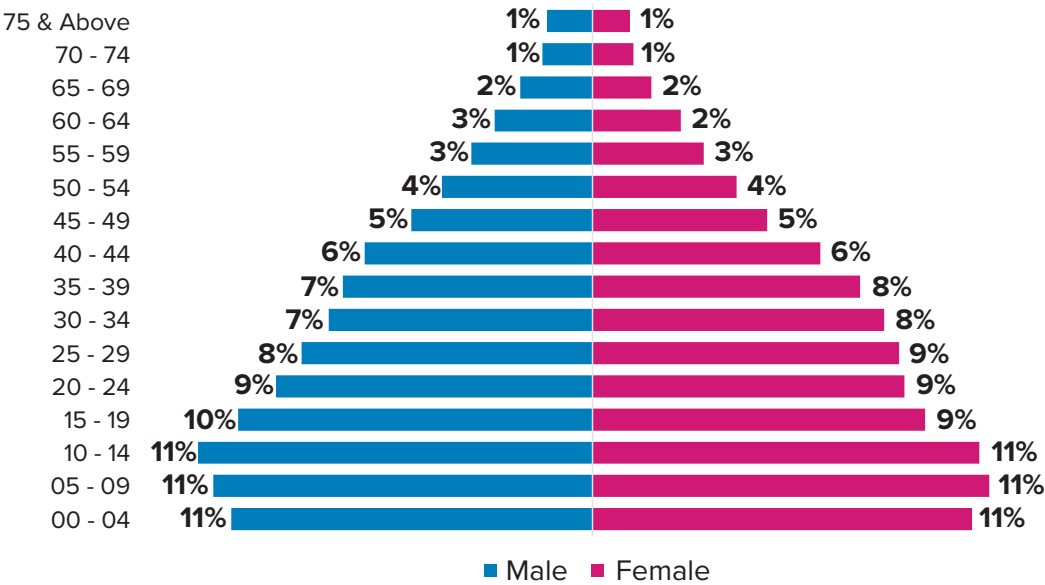


Figure 2.3A Total Population and Intercensal Growth Rate of Islamabad (1961–2023)

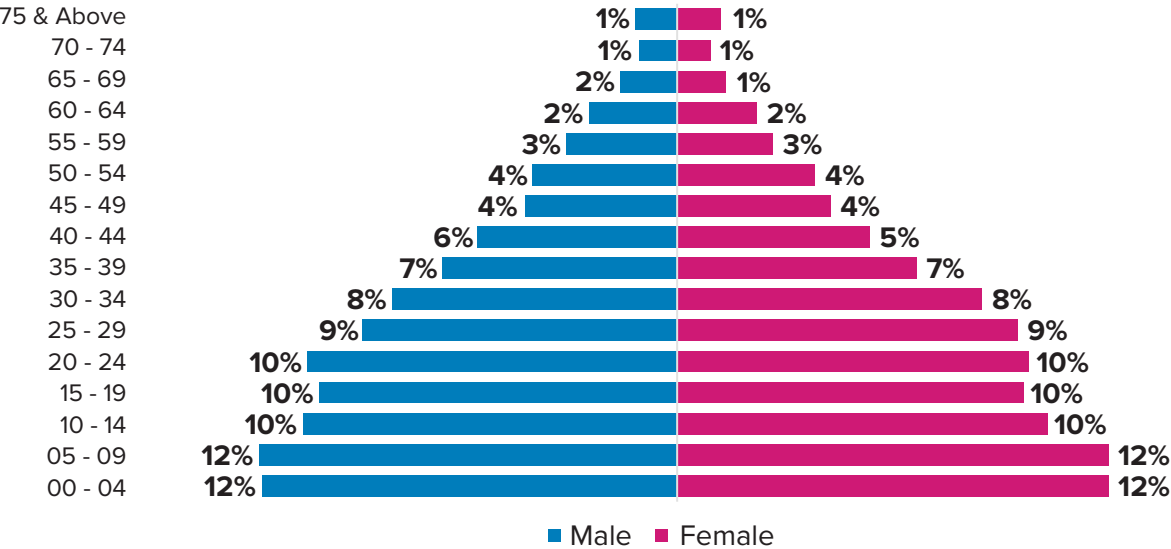


Figure 2.3B Age and Gender wise Pyramid of the Population of Islamabad Census 2017

2.3.2 Inter-Provincial Migration

Migration plays a pivotal role in shaping Islamabad's demographic profile. As a political and economic hub, the city attracts a significant influx of people from across Pakistan, contributing to its cultural and social diversity.

Table 2 highlights the number of migrants including both inter-provincial and those migrated from abroad. Majority of migrants are from other provinces. This migration is driven by factors such as better employment opportunities, access to quality education and advanced healthcare services.

Table 2: Migration and its reasons by Gender Census 2023

Indicators	Total				Rural				Urban			
	Total (000)	Male (000)	Female (000)	Trans Gender (in numbers)	Total (000)	Male (000)	Female (000)	Trans Gender (in numbers)	Total (000)	Male (000)	Female (000)	Trans Gender (in numbers)
ISLAMABAD CAPITAL TERRITORY												
Population	2,283	1,209	1,074	270	1,240	649	591	50	1,043	560	483	220
Migration	1,082	577	505	206	578	304	274	42	504	273	231	164
Inter Provincial Migration	1,048	559	489	206	567	298	269	42	482	261	220	164
Migration from Abroad	34	18	16	-	12	6	5	-	22	11	10	-
REASONS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job/ Business	250	235	14	29	124	118	6	16	126	118	8	13
Education	41	30	12	2	17	12	6	2	24	18	6	-
Marriage	99	3	97	-	48	1	47	-	51	1	50	-
With family	595	247	348	25	333	138	195	8	263	109	153	17
Back To Home (in numbers)	3,927	2,843	1,084	-	2,433	1,897	536	-	1,494	946	548	-
Others	92	58	33	150	53	33	20	16	38	25	13	134

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Migration plays a pivotal role in shaping Islamabad's demographic profile, with over 1 million migrants contributing to its growth. Figure 2.4 represents migration as per age groups. Figure 2.4A shows that inter-provincial migration dominates; Table 2 shows the reasons for migration, with men primarily moving for family and for economic opportunities, while women migrate for family and marriage reasons. This shows the gendered nature of migration, emphasising the need for gender-responsive urban planning to cater to the specific needs of migrant women, including affordable housing, healthcare and childcare services.

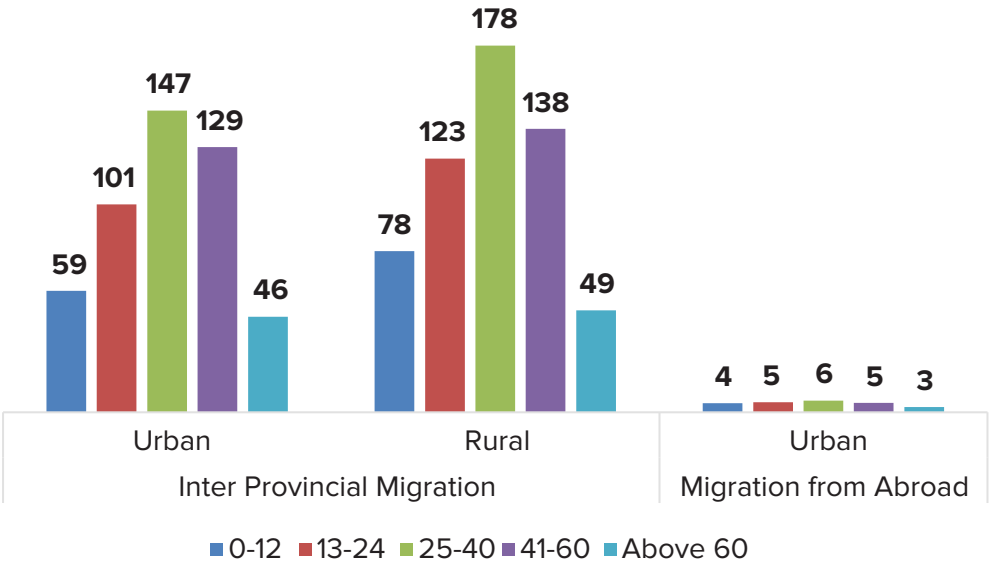


Figure 2.4 Migration Trends by Age (000) Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

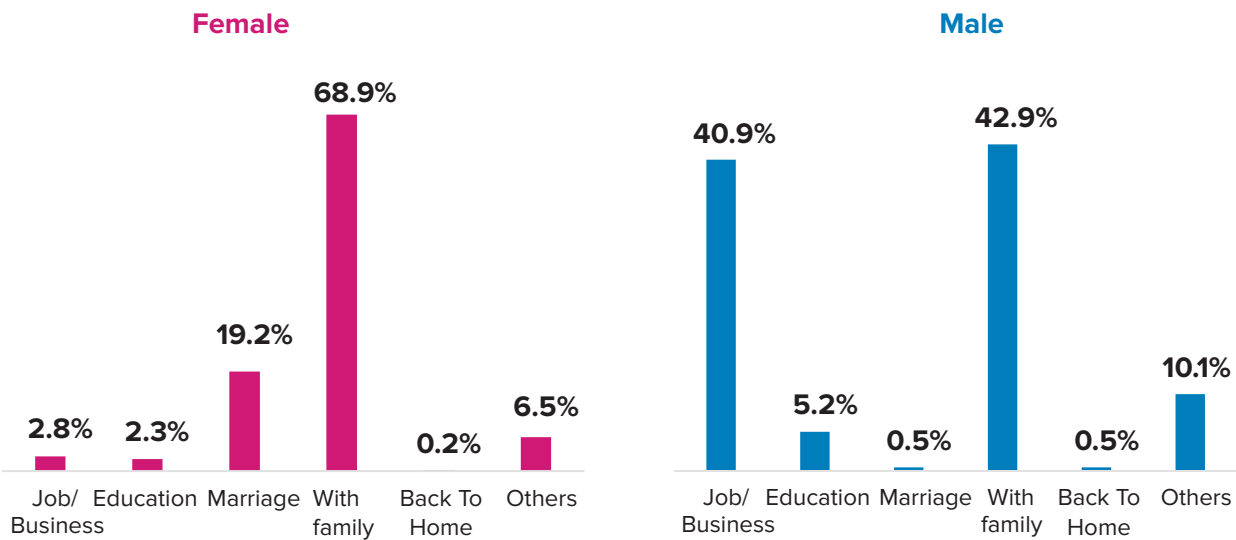


Figure 2.4A Reasons for Migration by Gender Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

2.3.3 Refugees

Islamabad hosts 3.2 percent of Pakistan's registered Afghan refugees, amounting to 42,567 individuals (Table 3) and while this is smaller compared to other provinces, the capital's role in refugee integration is crucial. The population with the Proof of Registration Card (PoR) is 121, 275 out of which 56, 757 and 64,518 are females and males respectively (Annexure 1). There is a need for tailored interventions to address the specific needs of refugee populations.

Table 3: Registered Afghan Refugees in Pakistan as of 31st Dec 2024

Location Name	Percentage of total Refugees	Population (000)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	52.6%	713
Balochistan	24%	325
Punjab	14.5%	196
Sindh	5.5%	74
Islamabad	3.1%	43
the Pakistan administered side of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir	0.3%	4
Total Afghan Refugees	100%	1,356

Source: UNHCR¹⁴

2.3.4 Disability

The inclusion of individuals with disabilities, particularly women, remains a critical aspect of Islamabad's demographic profile. According to Table 5, the prevalence of disability in the city is comparable to national averages but is often underreported due to stigma and the lack of comprehensive surveys.

Islamabad has a disability prevalence of 3.2 percent, with men slightly outnumbering women. Functional limitations, such as difficulties in walking, climbing, and hearing, are common among residents. Women with disabilities face compounded challenges, including limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. This underscores the need for inclusive policies and accessible urban infrastructure to address their unique needs and promote equal opportunities.

Moreover, data published by the NADRA in compliance with the decision of the Honourable Supreme Court outlined that 6,706 persons with disabilities issued identity cards (Annexure 2) such as CNIC, Child Registration Certificate (CRC), Juvenile, and National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis.

¹⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], n.d.

Table 4: Disability and Functional Limitation by Region and Gender, Census-2023 (000)

Indicators	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
ISLAMABAD DISTRICT									
Population (000)	2,283	1,209	1,074	1,240	649	591	1,043	560	483
Disability	73	43	30	44	26	18	29	17	12
Functional limitation	185	105	80	105	60	45	80	46	35
Seeing	34	19	14	19	11	8	15	8	6
Hearing	38	21	17	21	12	9	17	9	7
Walking/ Climbing	62	35	26	35	20	15	26	15	11
Communication	22	13	9	13	8	5	10	6	4
Memorisation/ Focus	29	17	13	17	10	7	12	7	5
Self-care etc	22	13	10	13	7	6	9	5	4

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Islamabad has taken significant steps to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities through legislative and institutional frameworks such as the Islamabad Capital Territory Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2020, and the establishment of the Council on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹⁵ These initiatives ensure legal protection, accessibility, and social inclusion by prohibiting discrimination and facilitating reasonable accommodations.

Additionally, the Integrated Social Welfare System by the Ministry of Human Rights offers an online registration service for disability certificates, improving access to essential services.¹⁶ However, women with disabilities continue to face multiple challenges, including discrimination, limited access to healthcare and education, and exclusion from the workforce, as highlighted in the enrolment rate of special education discussed in the education chapter.

These measures align with the findings of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and CEDAW's General Recommendation 34, both of which emphasize the need for inclusive policies that address the unique barriers faced by women with disabilities. By integrating gender and disability into urban planning and policy design, Islamabad can serve as a model for inclusive development, aligning with SDG 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities, and SDG 5, which advocates for the empowerment of all women and girls.

¹⁵ Government of Pakistan, n.d.

¹⁶ Ministry of Human Rights, n.d.

2.3.5 Religious Minorities

According to the 2023 Census, Islamabad Capital Territory has a total population of 2.28 million, with religious minorities making up a small yet significant portion. The largest minority group in Islamabad is the Christian community, comprising 97,281 individuals. Moreover, women from religious minorities in Islamabad constitute a significant proportion of their communities: approximately 49 percent (47,788 out of 97,281), 47.7 percent (400 out of 839), and 49.6 percent (1,189 out of 2,398) for Christians, Hindus, and Qadiani/Ahmadi, respectively (Annexure 3).

The majority of minority communities reside in urban areas, with 54,755 Christians, 567 Hindus, and 1,212 Ahmadis living in cities, compared to 42,526 Christians, 272 Hindus, and 1,186 Ahmadis in rural Islamabad.

Presence of religious minorities highlights Islamabad's diverse demographic structure.

2.4 Demographic Profile in Islamabad Concerning Information Communication Technology (ICT)

2.4.1 Usage of Information Communication Technology

The usage of Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays a pivotal role in advancing gender parity and empowering individuals through improved access to information, services, and economic opportunities.

In Pakistan, ICT penetration is a key focus under SDG 5, which emphasizes leveraging technology to promote gender equality. Table 7 presents the official number of active mobile subscribers in Islamabad, showing that nearly 75 percent of users are male, while only 25 percent are female.

This disparity highlights barriers such as affordability, social norms, and lack of digital literacy, as discussed in the Economic Participation & Opportunities chapter. Additionally, the reported number of female subscribers is often underrepresented, as many women in Pakistan use mobile services registered under the CNICs of their male family members.

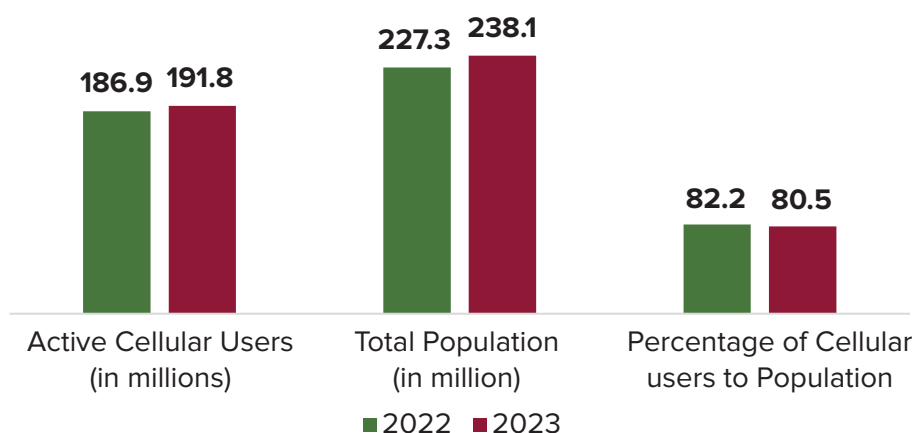


Figure 2.5 Year-wise Comparison of Active Cellular-users in Pakistan

Source: DataReportal.

The percentage of cellular users relative to the total population in Pakistan has declined from 82.2 percent in 2022 to 80.5 percent in 2023. This is explored in greater detail in the economic participation and opportunities where gender wise trends can be seen reflecting challenges in affordability, accessibility or infrastructure. Addressing these barriers is crucial to improving digital inclusion and leveraging ICT for economic and social development.

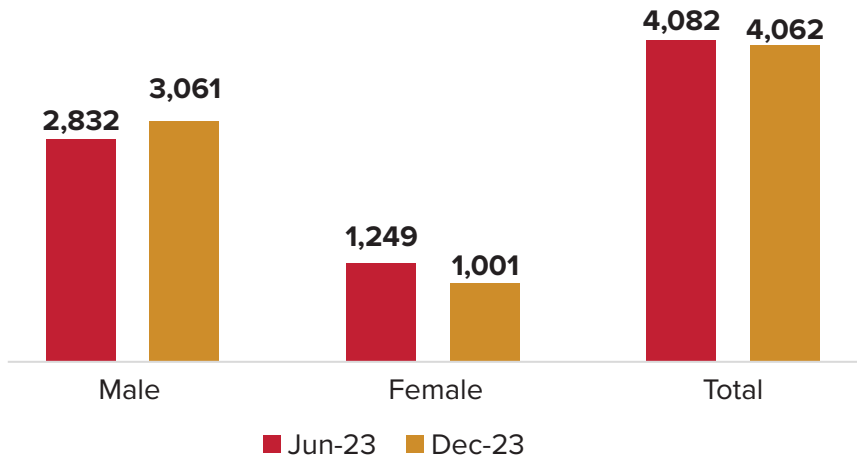


Figure 2.6 Cellular Mobile Subscription in Islamabad (in Thousands)

Source: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority

NOTE: The reported number for female subscribers tends to be underrepresented because mostly females in Pakistan use mobile services registered on the CNICs of their male family members.

2.5 Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems are essential for accurately monitoring population dynamics and ensuring that every individual is legally recognized. By systematically recording vital events such as births, deaths, marriages, and divorces, CRVS systems provide critical data for policy planning, resource allocation, and governance. They are instrumental in tracking progress toward gender equality by revealing disparities in registration rates and access to services among different demographic groups.

Additionally, robust CRVS systems empower individuals by granting them legal identity, which is fundamental for accessing education, healthcare, social protection, and other essential services. In the context of advancing gender parity, CRVS systems play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing gaps that hinder equitable access to rights and opportunities for women and marginalized communities.

2.5.1 Birth and Death Registration

The data presented in Table 8 highlights key trends in birth and death registrations in the Islamabad Capital Territory for 2023, segmented by age and gender. Birth registrations show a consistent increase from January–June to July–December across all age groups, with total registrations rising by 23.9 percent. Male registrations consistently outnumber female

registrations, reflecting a gender gap that persists across age brackets.

For children under two years, registrations increased from 4,730 to 6,008, while for the two to seven years group, they rose from 5,019 to 6,042. In the seven years and above category, registrations increased modestly from 2,291 to 2,869, with females slightly outnumbering males in the latter period. These trends suggest improved efforts in birth registration but indicate the need for focused interventions to address the gender disparity in reporting, likely influenced by societal norms or biases.

Death registrations also increased slightly, from 2,126 in January–June to 2,185 in July–December, with male deaths consistently exceeding female deaths in all age groups. Among children under two years, deaths rose marginally from 637 to 643, with males accounting for a larger share. In the two to seven years category, deaths decreased from 404 to 360, though the gender gap remains significant. For individuals seven years and above, deaths rose from 1,085 to 1,182, with males consistently recording higher mortality. This disparity in death registrations may reflect biological, environmental, or behavioral factors disproportionately affecting males, or it could point to underreporting of female deaths due to cultural or systemic biases.

Overall, the data underscores the need for gender-sensitive interventions to ensure equitable registration practices. Awareness campaigns should focus on increasing the registration of female births and addressing gaps in reporting female deaths.

Table 5: Birth and Death Registered Data for Year 2023

Indicators		Jan 23 - June 23			July 23 - Dec 23		
Registrations	By Age	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Births Registered	2 y	2,440	2,290	4,730	3,154	2,854	6,008
	2 y to 7 y	2,640	2,379	5,019	3,012	3,030	6,042
	7 y & above	1,156	1,135	2,291	1,420	1,449	2,869
	Total	6,236	5,804	12,040	7,586	7,333	14,919
Deaths Registered	2 y	378	259	637	394	249	643
	2 y to 7 y	237	167	404	238	122	360
	7 y & above	652	433	1,085	731	451	1,182
	Total	1,267	859	2,126	1,363	822	2,185

Source: Local Government Department ICT

The 2023 Census also reveals a significant gender disparity in widowhood, with widows (34,710) outnumbering widowers (9,704) by a ratio of 3.57 to 1 (Table 6). Women constitute 78.2 percent of the widowed population, highlighting their greater vulnerability to widowhood, particularly in older age groups. This disparity underscores the need for targeted social and economic support for widows, who face higher risks of financial instability and social exclusion.

Table 6: Population (15 Years and Above) By Sex, Age Group, Census - 2023, District Wise ICT

Age Group (In Years)	Total Population	Total Male	Total Female	Total Widowed	Widows	Widowers
15 & ABOVE	1,546,123	823,186	722,672	44,414	34,710	9,704
15 - 19	220,806	120,406	100,385	25	14	11
20 - 24	201,803	107,636	94,148	125	80	45
25 - 29	191,473	98,867	92,557	339	253	86
30 - 34	177,752	89,639	88,031	685	498	187
35 - 39	165,682	84,851	80,775	1,166	914	252
40 - 44	146,327	77,504	68,804	2,150	1,792	358
45 - 49	114,291	61,567	52,713	2,784	2,414	370
50 - 54	94,649	51,164	43,477	4,477	3,852	625
55 - 59	74,847	41,238	33,606	4,962	4,149	813
60 - 64	60,028	33,316	26,709	6,361	5,191	1,170
65 - 69	42,349	24,546	17,803	6,134	4,737	1,397
70 - 74	29,312	16,986	12,326	6,317	4,662	1,655
75 & ABOVE	26,804	15,466	11,338	8,889	6,154	2,735

2.5.2 Marriage and Divorce Registration

The data in Table 7 highlights notable trends in marriage and divorce registrations for the year 2023 across the Arbitration Council and Union Councils of ICT. Marriage registrations demonstrate an overall increase in the latter half of the year.

The Arbitration Council registered 3,022 marriages from January to June, which rose by 20.8 percent to 3,653 in the July to December period. Similarly, Union Councils recorded slightly higher registrations, with 3,063 in the first half of the year and a 6.6 percent rise to 3,265 in the second half. This upward trend may reflect seasonal or cultural preferences for marriage ceremonies during specific months, as well as improved accessibility to registration services.

Divorce registrations also show an increase, albeit with differing patterns across institutions. The Arbitration Council recorded a significant 35 percent rise in divorce cases, from 353 in the first half of the year to 477 in the second half, suggesting either greater reliance on formal dispute mechanisms or heightened marital challenges during this period.

Conversely, the Union Councils maintained consistently higher divorce registrations, with 589 cases from January to June and a marginal decrease to 579 in the latter half. These trends indicate that Union Councils may be more accessible or trusted for such registrations.

The data highlights the importance of equitable documentation for safeguarding legal and social protections, particularly for women. Increased marriage and divorce registrations reflect

growing awareness and utilization of formal mechanisms. However, the rise in divorce cases underscores the need for further analysis of marital dynamics and societal challenges.

Table 7: Islamabad Population by Age, Sex and Rural/Urban

Indicators		Jan 23 - June 23	July 23 - Dec 23
Marriages Registered	Arbitration Council ICT	3,022	3,653
	Union Councils of ICT	3,063	3,265
Divorces Registered	Arbitration Council ICT	353	477
	Union Councils of ICT	589	579

Source: Local Government Department ICT

2.6 Registration of CNICs

The registration of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) is essential for ensuring legal recognition and access to rights, services, and opportunities. CNIC registration enables individuals to participate fully in civic and economic activities, including voting, accessing financial services, and benefiting from government programs.

For females, CNIC registration is particularly critical in addressing gender disparities by empowering them to claim inheritance rights, access social protection schemes, and engage in formal employment. Data from the 2017 Population Census by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics highlights rural-urban disparities, with lower registration rates in rural areas due to sociocultural and infrastructural barriers.

Ensuring universal CNIC registration, especially for women in underserved areas, is fundamental to advancing gender parity in Islamabad.

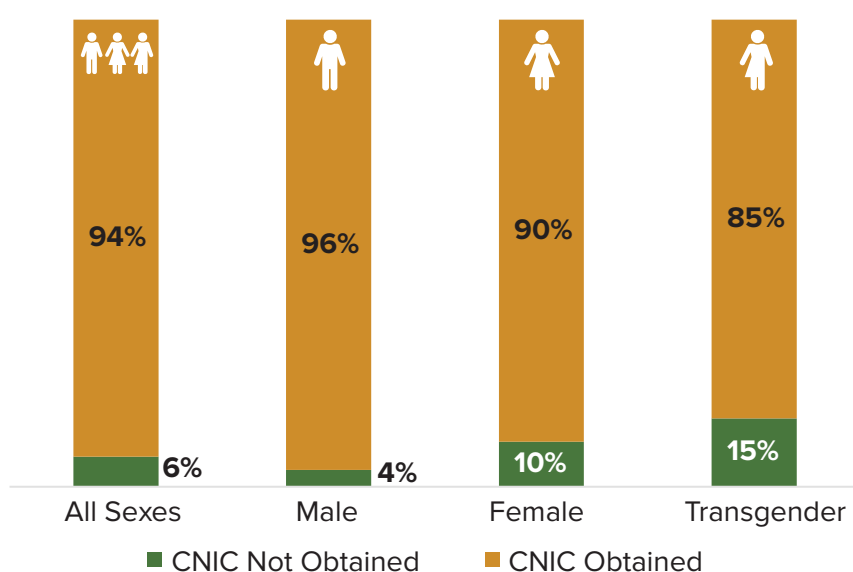


Figure 2.7 Percentage of People with and without CNICs in Islamabad - Census 2017

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

The chart above illustrates the number of obtained and not obtained CNICs across male, female, and transgender populations. According to the 2017 Housing and Population Census, 94 percent of the population above 18 has obtained their identity cards, while 6 percent remain unregistered. However, the increasing population trend, as per the 2023 census, may indicate a positive shift in the percentage of CNICs obtained.

Figures 2.7A and 2.7B show that the highest number of registered CNICs falls within the 18–29 age bracket in both rural and urban Islamabad. A comparison between rural and urban populations indicates that CNIC registration is higher in urban areas, with a ratio of 16:1 compared to 13:1 in rural areas. This trend reflects better access to registration services and awareness in urban settings, while rural populations may face infrastructural and social barriers to obtaining official documentation.

Gender disparities in CNIC registration are even more pronounced, with men acquiring CNICs at a significantly higher rate of 27:1 compared to women at 9:1. This disparity suggests systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women's access to official documentation, limiting their ability to exercise legal rights, access social services, and participate fully in economic and civic life. Addressing these barriers is crucial to ensuring gender-inclusive identity registration and advancing women's empowerment in Islamabad.

Transgender individuals face the greatest challenges in CNIC registration, with a low acquisition ratio of 6:1, indicating significant difficulties in obtaining legal identity documents. Rural men have a CNIC acquisition ratio of 24:1, while urban men fare better at 30:1, reflecting greater access to registration services in urban areas.

Similarly, rural women have the lowest registration ratio at 9:1, compared to 10:1 for urban women, highlighting systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women, particularly in rural areas.

The transgender population in urban areas has an even lower ratio of 5:1, suggesting barriers such as lack of awareness, social stigma, and administrative hurdles. These disparities underscore the need for targeted policies and inclusive outreach programs to ensure equitable access to CNIC registration for all populations.

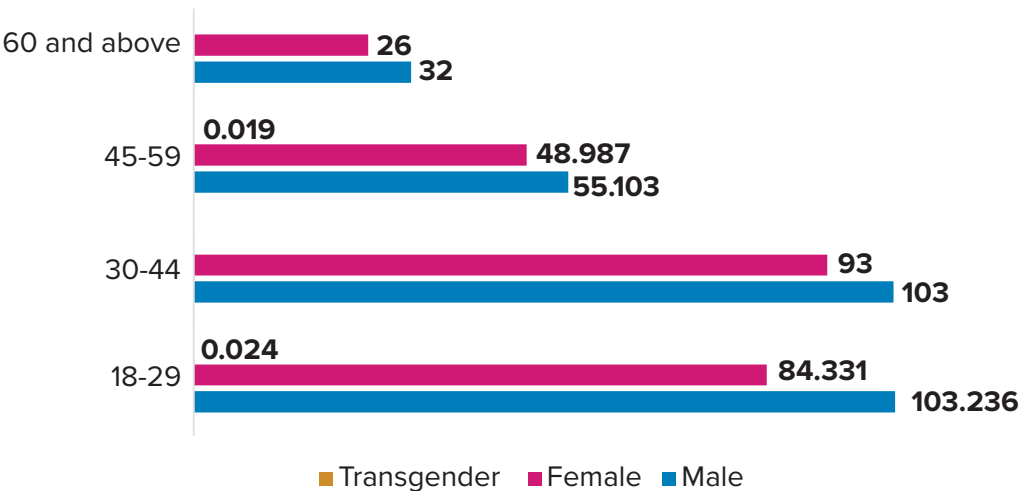


Figure 2.7A Number of registered CNICs in Rural Areas (000) - Census 2017

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

In terms of the acquisition rate of urban and rural populations, rural men have a CNIC acquisition ratio of 24:1, while urban men fare better at 30:1.

Similarly, rural women have the lowest registration ratio at 9:1, compared to 10:1 for urban women, reflecting systemic challenges faced by women especially in rural areas.

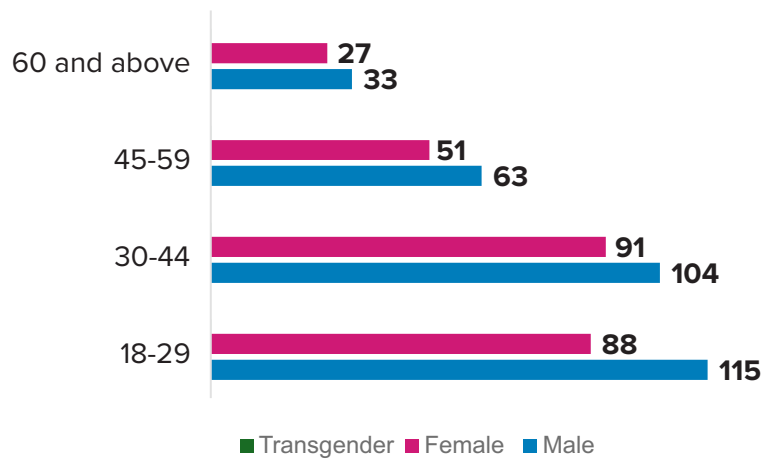


Figure 2.7B Number of registered CNICs in Urban Areas (000) - Census 2017

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

2.7 Conclusion

Islamabad's demographic trends highlight both progress and ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity. The capital's youthful population, significant rural-urban divide, and steady influx of migrants require tailored policy considerations for sustainable and inclusive development.

Despite advancements in education, healthcare, and urbanization, systemic barriers such as gender gaps in CNIC registration, ICT access, and disability inclusion continue to hinder women and transgender communities from fully participating in social and economic activities.

Key disparities, including underreporting in civil registration systems and limited access to digital technology, further reinforce socio-economic vulnerabilities. The urban-rural divide in public service access underscores the need for targeted interventions to address the specific challenges faced by women, particularly in marginalized communities.

The findings of this report emphasize that addressing gender disparities requires a data-driven, multi-sectoral approach. As a rapidly evolving urban center, Islamabad has the opportunity to set a national precedent in gender-responsive urban planning, inclusive governance, and equitable service delivery. By strengthening collaboration between government agencies, civil society, and development partners, the city can lead the way in ensuring that demographic changes translate into greater social and economic opportunities for all, particularly women, transgender persons, and other vulnerable populations.

2.8 Policy Recommendations

To bridge gender disparities and ensure inclusive development, targeted policy interventions are essential. Addressing systemic barriers such as limited CNIC registration, unequal ICT access, and inadequate public infrastructure can significantly enhance women's participation in social and economic life.

The following recommendations outline key measures to promote gender equality, improve service delivery, and create a more inclusive urban environment for all residents, particularly women, transgender persons, and marginalized groups.

1. Promote Gender-Responsive Public Infrastructure

Islamabad's growing urban population requires policies that prioritize gender-sensitive infrastructure. Investments in safe public transportation and well-lit pedestrian pathways are essential to improving mobility and safety for women in both urban and rural areas. The government has introduced a pink bus service to address these concerns, but further efforts are needed to enhance accessibility by connecting rural and urban zones more effectively.

Additionally, public transport infrastructure should include well-lit bus stops, CCTV surveillance, and emergency helplines to ensure a secure commuting environment. Urban planning should incorporate gender-responsive design elements, such as separate waiting areas in transit hubs, accessible restrooms, and secure housing for working women and students.

2. Develop Youth-Focused Urban Policies

With 32 percent of Islamabad's population under 15 years old and 63 percent in the working-age bracket, urban policies must be designed to foster youth empowerment. Safe and inclusive public spaces for women and girls, such as parks, community centers, and sports facilities, should be prioritized to promote social engagement and well-being.

Youth-focused employment and training programs should integrate a gender lens to ensure equal access for young women. Additionally, digital literacy initiatives can help bridge the ICT gender gap, enabling more women to participate in the economic workforce and access educational opportunities.

3. Address Migration Dynamics Through Gender-Responsive Planning

As migration drives Islamabad's population growth, gender-sensitive urban planning is essential. Women migrants, often relocating for family reasons, face heightened vulnerabilities due to limited housing and employment opportunities.

The government should develop policies that ensure access to affordable housing, safe transportation, and healthcare services for female migrants. Expanding hostel facilities for women in universities and workplaces will further enhance mobility and enable greater participation in the labor force.

4. Enhance CNIC Registration for Women and Transgender Persons

The persistent gender gap in CNIC registration limits women's and transgender persons' access to legal rights, financial inclusion, and social protection schemes. To address this, NADRA should introduce mobile registration units in both urban and rural areas, specifically targeting women and transgender individuals who face mobility and socio-cultural restrictions.

Awareness campaigns, particularly in rural areas, should highlight the importance of legal documentation for accessing rights such as voting, inheritance, and financial independence. Expanding outreach efforts and simplifying registration procedures will be key to ensuring greater inclusivity in CNIC acquisition.

5. Strengthen Disability Inclusion

Islamabad's 3.2 percent disability prevalence necessitates inclusive policies, particularly for women with disabilities who face compounded discrimination. Government initiatives should ensure that all public infrastructure, including transportation, workplaces, and recreational spaces, is fully accessible.

Special emphasis should be placed on providing assistive devices, inclusive education programs, and employment quotas for persons with disabilities. Sensitization campaigns can help shift public attitudes toward greater acceptance and inclusion, fostering a more equitable society.

To further strengthen disability inclusion, the government should enhance employment quotas, implement inclusive education programs, and establish assistive technology centers to improve digital accessibility. Sensitization campaigns should be conducted to promote societal acceptance, and urban infrastructure must be redesigned to ensure barrier-free mobility for persons with disabilities.

6. Improve Gender-Sensitive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems

Underreporting of female births, deaths, and marriages continues to limit accurate data collection and policy effectiveness. To address this, Islamabad should introduce digital CRVS tracking systems that integrate gender-sensitive data collection.

Local governments must ensure that CRVS services are accessible in both urban and rural areas through dedicated outreach programs that improve awareness and encourage greater participation among women. Strengthening data collection mechanisms will enhance policy planning and ensure more inclusive service delivery.

7. Support Economic Empowerment of Refugee Women

With over 42,000 Afghan refugees residing in Islamabad, targeted interventions are needed to address their economic vulnerabilities. UNHCR, in collaboration with government agencies and NGOs, should consider expanding vocational training and microfinance initiatives specifically designed for refugee women.

Ensuring access to legal work opportunities and integrating refugee women into the local economy can foster their self-reliance and long-term stability. Providing skills training, financial inclusion, and employment pathways will help empower refugee women and reduce their dependence on humanitarian aid.

03



GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE



Key Findings

- While females comprise 20 percent of parliamentarians in Pakistan, only 9 percent of ministerial positions are occupied by females.
- Females hold 14.5 percent jobs in the public sector but on a basic scale (BS) 17-22, the gender gap narrows considerably, with male employment at 56.6 percent (674 employees) and female employment at 43.4 percent (517 employees).
- Total registered female voters are 514,625 compared to 568,406 male registered voters.
- In Islamabad's local government, in the metropolitan corporation, 33 percent of the seats are reserved for females and there are 2 reserved seats for women in each union council.
- Only 9.4 percent of the members of the Islamabad Press Club are females.
- Women membership in the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry is 4 percent, and they hold only 2 out of the 26 seats on its executive committee.
- At 22 percent, less than a quarter of the members of Islamabad's Zakat and Ushr Committees are females.

Introduction

This chapter will examine national and local governance in Islamabad Capital Territory in the context of gender parity. In particular, the sections below explore women's political representation in decision making structures and political parties, voter registration, and electoral participation. Female representation in the public sector and professional associations including the press club, chambers of commerce, trade unions and Zakat committees will also be analysed.

Governance refers to a state's ability to create rules and deliver services. It applies regardless of the type of government.¹⁷ This concept involves decision-making, resource allocation, transparency, and accountability. It also includes enabling citizen participation. Good governance requires collaboration among key institutions and interest groups. These include parliamentarians, cabinet members, civil servants, and local government bodies. Media and civil society also play essential roles. The private sector increasingly contributes to effective governance outcomes.¹⁸

¹⁷ Fukuyama

¹⁸ Prof. Renate Mayntz

Public-private collaboration includes institutionalized negotiations and macroeconomic policy decisions. It also influences other policy matters. Good governance relies on key indicators. Decision-making should be participatory, consensus-oriented, and gender-inclusive. It must also be accountable, transparent, and responsive. Additionally, governance should be equitable and follow the rule of law.¹⁹

Governments that embrace diversity and uphold women's rights are more inclusive. Female inclusion in decision-making leads to more effective and responsible governance. Policies shaped by women have a greater impact.²⁰ Research shows female legislators prioritize health and education spending. They also work collaboratively rather than in isolation.

In reality, women in Pakistan face major barriers to political participation and employment. They often encounter gender-based violence, harassment, and character assassination. These challenges arise when they enter leadership roles or public spaces.

In politics, media, or high-ranking positions, women face verbal abuse and harassment (Oxford Human Rights Hub, 2023). They experience both online and offline threats. Targeted smear campaigns aim to discredit them and discourage participation.

In politics, female politicians and activists face threats, intimidation, and violence. These challenges make it hard to contest elections, express opinions, or hold office safely. Female candidates endure misogynistic rhetoric, moral policing, and social ostracization. These tactics repeatedly delegitimize their presence and block leadership opportunities. Many women withdraw from politics due to security risks and lack of support. Female journalists and activists also face disinformation campaigns, violence threats, and personal attacks.

Despite these challenges, Pakistani women have shown resilience and broken many barriers. They continue pushing for greater representation. To date, they have secured key legislative and policy measures. The Elections Act, 2017, includes reserved quotas for women. It also ensures gender-sensitive institutionalization, enabling female participation in politics and public life.

3.1 Gender Discrimination in Politics

Globally, women's representation in key political leadership remains low. Among 151 countries, only 17 heads of state are women, making up 11.3 percent. Out of 193 countries, only 19 heads of government are women, totaling 9.8 percent. Women in parliamentary leadership have slightly better representation. Out of 273 parliamentary speakers, 62 are women, accounting for 22.7 percent. Deputy speakers show higher representation, with 153 out of 529 positions held by women, or 28.9 percent.²²

As of January 2024, 21 states had less than 10 percent women parliamentarians in lower houses.²³ In countries with legislated candidate quotas, women's representation is higher. Parliaments have 5 percent more women, and local governments have 7 percent more, compared to countries without such laws.²⁴

¹⁹ What is good governance?

²⁰ Punjab Parity Report, 2022.

²¹ Women in Politics: Why are They Under-represented? 2022

²² Women in Politics: 2023, Inter-Parliamentary Union as of 1 January 2023, (<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Women-in-politics-2023-en.pdf>)

²³ Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in national parliaments, as of 1 January 2024.

²⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council (2021).

The 2023 "Women in Parliament" report by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) analyzed 66 upper chambers in 52 countries. Women comprised 27.6 percent of MPs in newly elected or appointed chambers. This marked an overall increase of 1.4 percent compared to previous elections in the same countries.

In 2023, countries with gender electoral quotas elected 28.8 percent women to parliament. Those without quotas elected only 23.2 percent. However, quotas alone are not enough for lasting gender inclusion. Long-term interventions are needed to make the political system more inclusive. Quotas must align with the electoral system and have strict enforcement.²⁵

At the international level, the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) sets legal standards for gender equality. It aims to protect and advance women's rights globally.

Article 7 of CEDAW prescribes that states shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure that women, on equal terms with men, have the right:

- (a) to vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.
- (b) to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.
- (c) to participate in non-governmental organisations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

The UN promotes equality through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda, 2030. Under SDG 5.5, it aims for women's full participation and equal leadership opportunities.²⁶ This applies at all levels of political, economic, and public decision-making. Gender equality in governance is not just social justice; it is essential for the public interest.

3.2 Women's Political Participation in Pakistan

Pakistan's commitments to CEDAW, SDGs, and its Constitution mandate greater female political participation. This includes active engagement in electoral and political processes.

As of 2023, women hold about one-fifth of the seats in both houses. They occupy 19 out of 100 Senate seats and 70 out of 342 National Assembly seats. Female parliamentarians contributed nearly 35 percent of the total parliamentary agenda. This includes 36 percent in the National Assembly and 30 percent in the Senate.

The strong participation of Pakistani females in political processes has been observed in three substantial ways:

1. Female attendance and contributions in assembly debates have surpassed those of male counterparts. Women caucuses in national and provincial assemblies serve as effective cross-party platforms. These caucuses collaborate with male politicians and civil society activists to enact laws against domestic violence, child marriage, honor killings, sexual

²⁵ Statement of IPU President, Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress, Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1 January 2024 (<https://www.ipu.org/news/statements/2024-03/statement-ipu-president-in-celebration-international-womens-day-2024-invest-in-women-accelerate-progress>).

²⁶ Article 5.5, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030.

harassment, acid crimes, and rape.²⁷

- 2. Pakistan's local government system consists of three or four tiers of councils at the district and metropolitan levels. These include metropolitan corporations, district metropolitan committees, municipal corporations, town committees, district councils, sub-district committees, and union committees. Islamabad Capital Territory follows a two-tier system with a metropolitan corporation and union councils. In the metropolitan corporation, 33 percent of reserved seats are for women, and each union council has two reserved seats for women.²⁸ Reserved seats vary across regions. In provincial metropolitan corporations, all provinces allocate 33 percent for women, except Sindh, which has 22 percent. Sindh also reserves 22 percent of seats in district metropolitan committees.
- 3. Reserved seats for women in the local government system varies across provinces and regions in Pakistan. In municipal corporations, Punjab, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) allocate 33 percent of seats for women, Sindh reserves 22 percent, For town committees, Sindh provides one reserved seat, whereas GB maintains a 33 percent quota. In district councils, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and GB each reserve 33 percent of seats, while Punjab limits it to a maximum of 15 seats. At the sub-district and union committee levels, KP, GB, and Balochistan ensure 33 percent representation, while Punjab and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) allocate two seats each, and Sindh reserves one seat for women. This quota system, defined by local government laws, aim to enhance women's representation in grassroots governance.

At the sub-district and union committee levels, KP, GB, and Balochistan have 33 percent reserved seats, the Punjab and ICT have two seats each, and Sindh has one reserved seat for women. Each province has its own legislation for local government, establishing these quotas.

3.3 Pakistan: Female Presence in Political Participation²⁹

Women Parliamentarians	20.5%
Women Ministers	9%
Members of the Local Government System (Metropolitan Corporations, District Metropolitan Committees, Municipal Corporations, Municipal Committees, Town Committees, District Councils/Sub-District councils and Union Committees) (22,429 elected women)	17%

Despite constitutional provisions against discrimination, politics remains male-dominated in Pakistan.³⁰ However, the country is making consistent and significant efforts to narrow the gender gap in its political process.

The Elections Act, 2017, introduced reforms to support women's political participation in Pakistan. It mandates political parties to nominate women for at least 5 percent of their general seats.

²⁷ Pakistan's profile on the UN Women website, <https://localgov.unwomen.org/country/PAK>; Women in Politics: 2023 <<https://localgov.unwomen.org/resource/women-politics-2023>>

²⁸ ibid

²⁹ UN Women, Women in Local Government Country Profile: Pakistan (<https://localgov.unwomen.org/country/PAK>)

³⁰ Punjab Parity Report 2022

The Act authorizes the ECP to void elections if women's voter turnout is below 10 percent in a constituency. Legislative measures, such as the minimum women's vote requirement and gender-disaggregated vote counts, increased female participation. As a result, women cast more votes than men in the 2024 General Election.

Protections for female candidates, voters, and polling staff have reduced violence against women. Likewise, the Elections Act, 2017, has addressed key legislative concerns about women's exclusion. It ensures their active participation³¹ in the electoral process.

3.3.1 Female Political Participation

The ICT administration operates under the Federal Ministry of Interior, managing the federal capital. Islamabad Capital Territory has no reserved seats for women in the National Assembly. Its three general seats are currently held by men.

However, the Local Government Act, 2015, reserves 33 percent of seats for women in local elected bodies, including the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and Union Committees.

Reserved seats ensure female inclusion and exposure to political representation. These legal and institutional provisions can accelerate women's involvement in shaping Islamabad's future.³²

3.3.2 Transgender Political Participation

The legal recognition and political participation of transgender persons in Pakistan have advanced significantly. Progress has shifted from identity documentation to electoral inclusion.

In its landmark 2009 judgment in *Dr. Khaki v. SSP (Operations)*, the Supreme Court of Pakistan recognized transgender individuals as a distinct gender. It ruled that no Pakistani laws allow the disenfranchisement of “eunuchs” from their fundamental rights.

Building on this recognition, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) granted transgender people the right to vote in 2013. However, their participation remained limited due to various contributing factors.

In 2018, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act reinforced the Supreme Court's 2009 order. It protected their self-identification and electoral participation.

As a result, five transgender candidates contested the 2018 general elections for both National and Provincial Assemblies. This marked significant progress from merely voting to actively contesting elections.

In 2023, two transgender individuals were elected to the newly established reserved seats for transgender persons in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation City Council (KMC).

In the 2024 General Elections, 3,084 transgender people exercised their right to vote. Four candidates contested for both National and Provincial Assemblies. Nayyab Ali contested for two National Assembly seats, while Sobia Khan and Saima Shaukat contested Provincial Assembly seats.³³

The shift from obtaining CNICs in 2013 to voting in 2018 and contesting elections in 2024 marks significant progress in transgender political empowerment in Pakistan.

³¹ Dawn News, Gender Parity, March 14, 2024 (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1821373>)

³² UN Women, Women in Local Government Country Profile: Pakistan.

³³ UNDP, Pakistan, Journey Mapping of Transgender Political Candidates, June 27, 2024 (<https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/journey-mapping-transgender-political-candidates>)

In 2019, Nadeem Kashish became Islamabad's first transgender council member, marking a milestone for transgender inclusion in politics and public policy.

Out of 270 transgender people in Islamabad, only 12 exercised their right to vote in the 2024 General Elections.

3.4 Female Presence at the Federal Level

In Pakistan's history, the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) remains the only party to nominate a female head of government. Ms. Benazir Bhutto served as Prime Minister twice, from 1988 to 1990 and 1993 to 1996.

Additionally, PPPP made history by electing Dr. Fehmida Mirza as the first and, to date, only female Speaker of the National Assembly (2008–2013).³⁵

Currently, Maryam Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is Pakistan's first female chief minister, leading Punjab, the country's largest province.³⁶

3.5 Female Senators

The Senate of Pakistan, under the Constitution, reserves 17 seats for women from all federating units in a house of 96, constituting about 18 percent. This includes one reserved seat for women out of four seats for the ICT. Senators serve a six-year term.

Currently, due to delays in Senate elections in KP, the house has 85 members, including 16 female senators. Of these, 48 are serving the 2021–2027 term, while 37 were newly elected for the 2024–2030 term.

The Senate ensures equal representation from Punjab, Sindh, KP, and Balochistan, with each province holding 23 seats. These include 14 general seats, 4 for technocrats/Ulema, 4 for women, and 1 for non-Muslims. ICT has 4 seats—2 general, 1 technocrat, and 1 female seat, currently held by Fawzia Arshad (March 2021–March 2027)—but unlike the provinces, it has no reserved seat for non-Muslims.

Out of 43 Senate committees, only 8 (about 19 percent) are chaired by women, representing various political parties, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and independent candidates. These women lead key committees in areas such as devolution, legislation, climate change, commerce, education, human rights, information technology, and development planning, highlighting their role in shaping national policies across diverse sectors.

The committees chaired by women include:

1. The Devolution Committee
2. The Delegated Legislation Committee
3. The Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Committee
4. The Commerce Committee

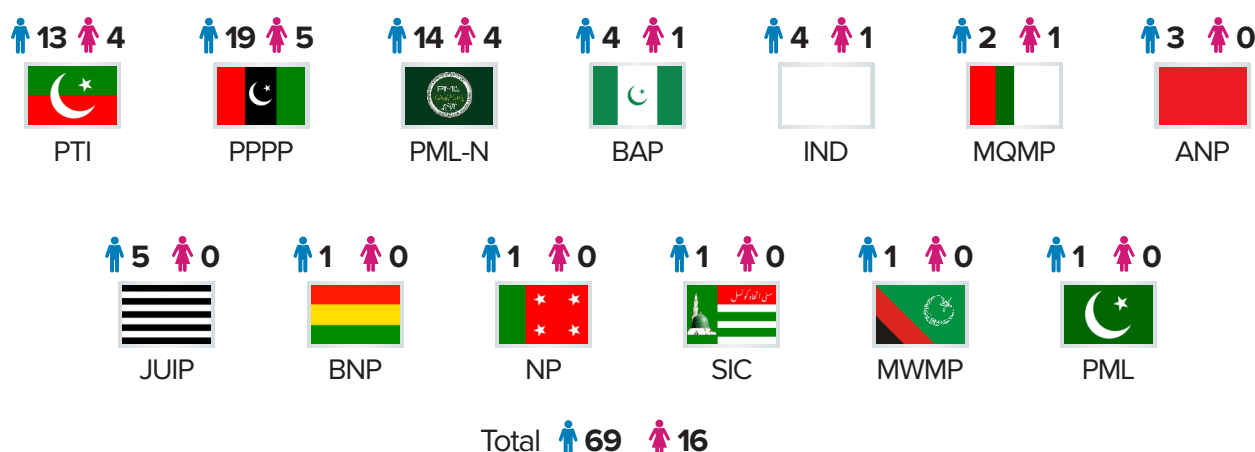
³⁴ Bhattacharya, 2019

³⁵ Punjab Parity Report, 2022

³⁶ *ibid*

5. The Federal Education and Professional Training Committee
6. The Human Rights Standing Committee
7. The Information Technology and Telecommunication Standing Committee
8. The Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Committee

Additionally, Krishna Kumari Kohli is the first minority woman senator of Pakistan. She has chaired senate sessions on International Women's Day.



Source: Website- Senate of Pakistan

3.6 National Assembly

The 1956 and 1962 Constitutions of Pakistan reserved six seats for women in the National Assembly. The 1973 Constitution initially reserved 10 seats for women for 10 years, later increasing them to 20 in 1985. However, these seats lapsed, and governments from 1988 to 1999 did not reinstate them.

In 2002, during General Musharraf's tenure (1999–2008),³⁷ the number of reserved seats for women increased to 60. Besides constitutional seat reservations, the Election Act, 2017 mandates political parties to allocate at least 5 percent of their general seats to women.

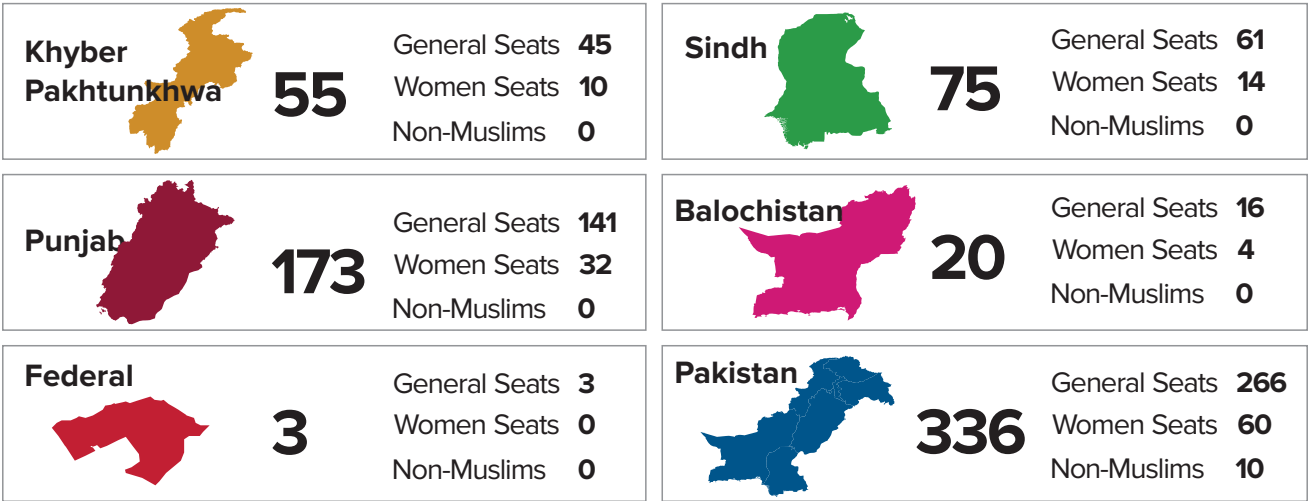
Women can also compete for general seats, though fewer succeed compared to men. In the 2024 General Elections, 12 women—about 5 percent—secured victory out of 266 general seats.

Despite being one-fifth of Parliament, women legislators contributed significantly, shaping over one-third of the parliamentary agenda in 2022–2023—36 percent in the National Assembly and 30 percent in the Senate.³⁸

The federal capital has three general seats in the National Assembly. The total seats in the National Assembly are 336 allocated population-wise to the provinces, including 266 general seats, 60 reserved seats for women and 10 reserved seats for non-Muslims:

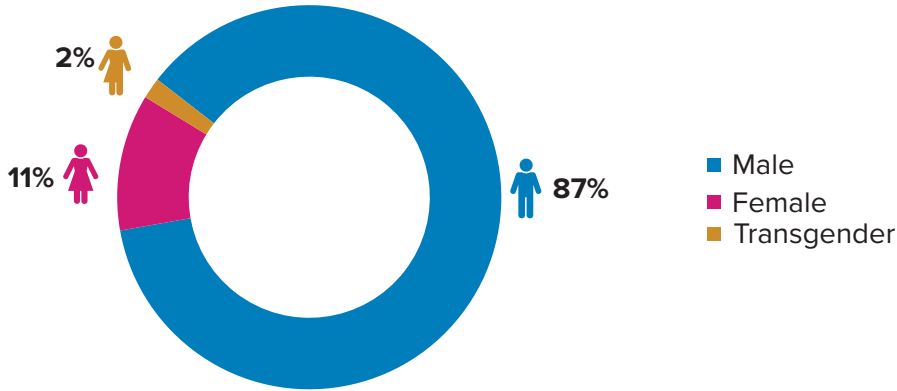
³⁷ PILDAT, Women Representation in Pakistan's Parliament, (www.pildat.org/publications/Publication/women/WomenRepresentationInPakistanParliament.pdf)

³⁸ FAFEN, Women Parliamentarian Performance 2022–2023, March 15, 2023 (<https://fafen.org/women-parliamentarians-performance-2022-2023/>)



Source: Website -NA

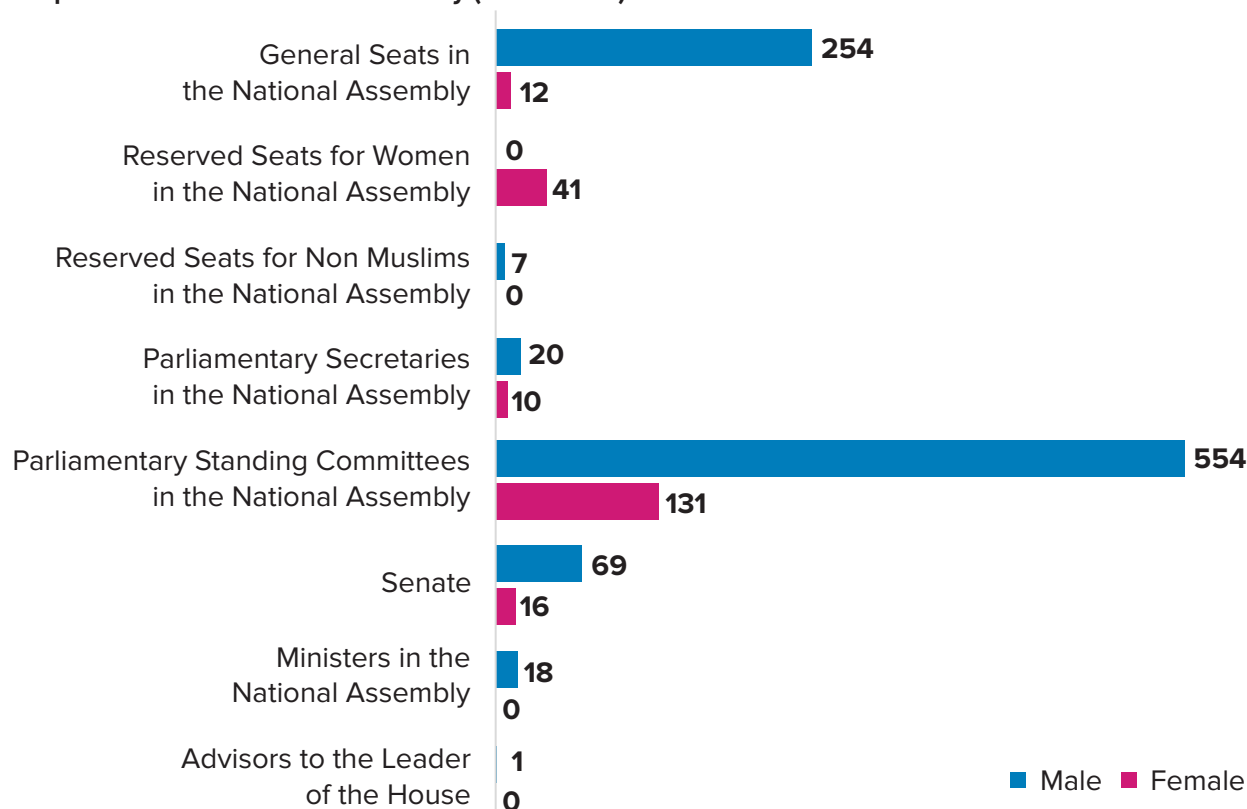
Candidate Contesting in ICT on General Seats in NA, 2024



Source: Website- Election Commission of Pakistan

The chart above shows the gender distribution of contested candidates from ICT for National Assembly general seats in the February 2024 elections. Males accounted for 86.7 percent, underscoring a significant gender imbalance.

Women made up only 11.5 percent of the candidates, highlighting their limited political participation. Transgender candidates represented just 1.7 percent, indicating their minimal inclusion and continued marginalization in the electoral process.

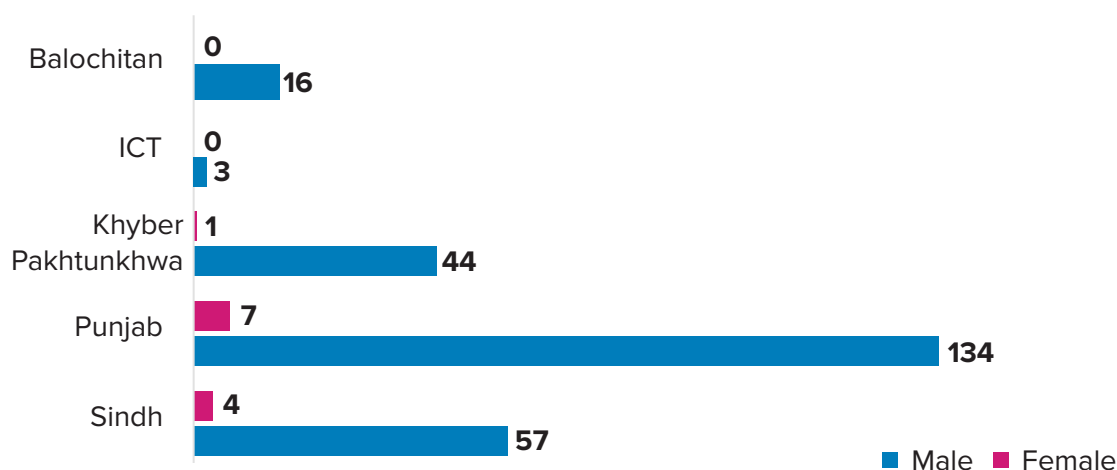
Composition of 16th General Assembly (2024-2029)

Source: Website -NA

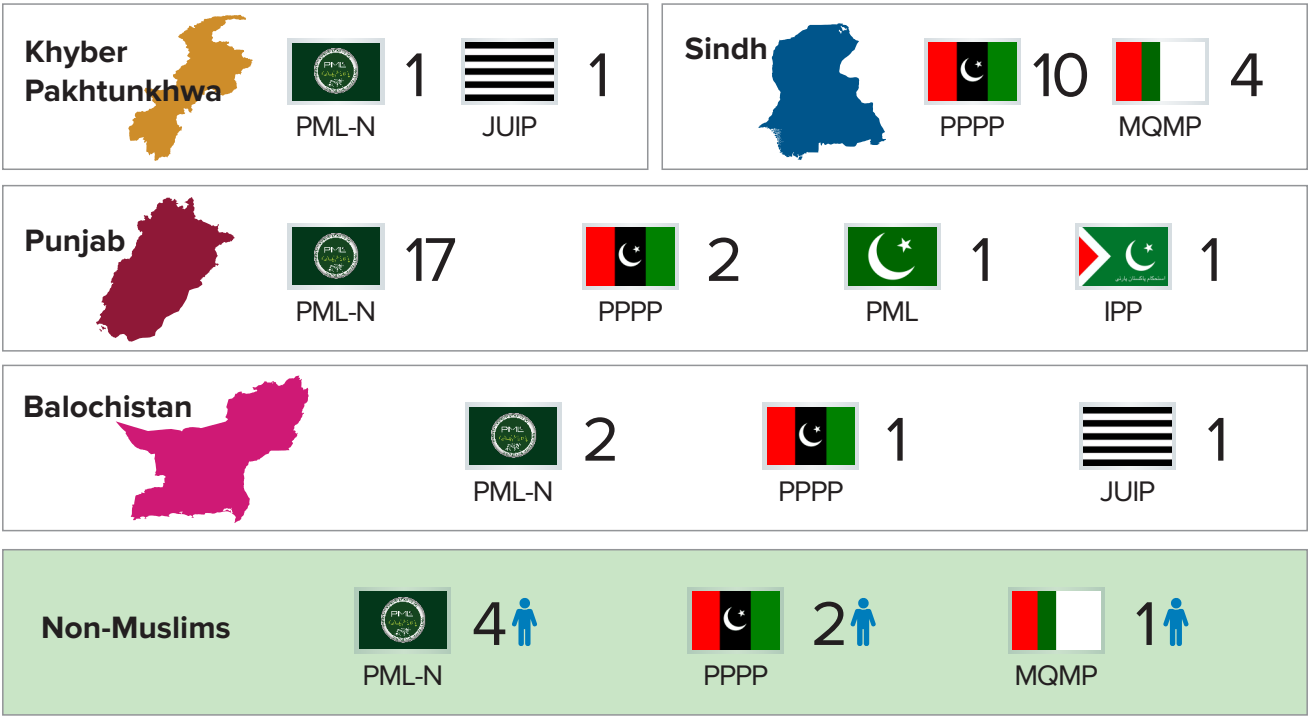
In the 16th National Assembly, formed after the 2024 General Election, males occupy most general seats (254), while females hold only 12.

Women's participation is mainly secured through reserved seats, currently 41 instead of 60 due to pending electoral disputes. This highlights a reliance on quotas rather than equal competition in general elections.

Among parliamentary secretaries, females hold 10 positions, compared to 7 by men, indicating a rare favorable distribution. However, in parliamentary standing committees, men dominate with 554 positions, while women hold only 131, reflecting their underrepresentation in decision-making roles.

Male and Female Representation on General Seats in the NA

In the 15th National Assembly, males held 260 general seats, which decreased to 254 in the 16th Assembly, while female MNAs on general seats increased from 10 to 12; no transgender individuals secured general seats in either Assembly.



Source: Website -NA

In the 16th National Assembly, 41 female MNAs hold reserved seats, down from 60 in the 15th Assembly. This decrease resulted from a legal dispute over PTI's reserved seats.

Although the Supreme Court has ruled on reserved seats,³⁹ the delay had three effects. Firstly, it diminished female participation in parliamentary affairs. Secondly, it weakened policy influence on legislative matters. Thirdly, it affected Pakistan's global standing on gender equality in politics.

Male MNAs hold most reserved seats for non-Muslims, with nine in the 15th Assembly. In the 16th Assembly, this number decreased to seven seats.

Male parliamentary secretaries increased from 14 in the 15th Assembly to 20 in the 16th. Female parliamentary secretaries rose from 7 to 10, showing a positive trend in women's leadership.

The number of male members in National Assembly standing committees declined from 810 in the 15th Assembly to 579 in the 16th.

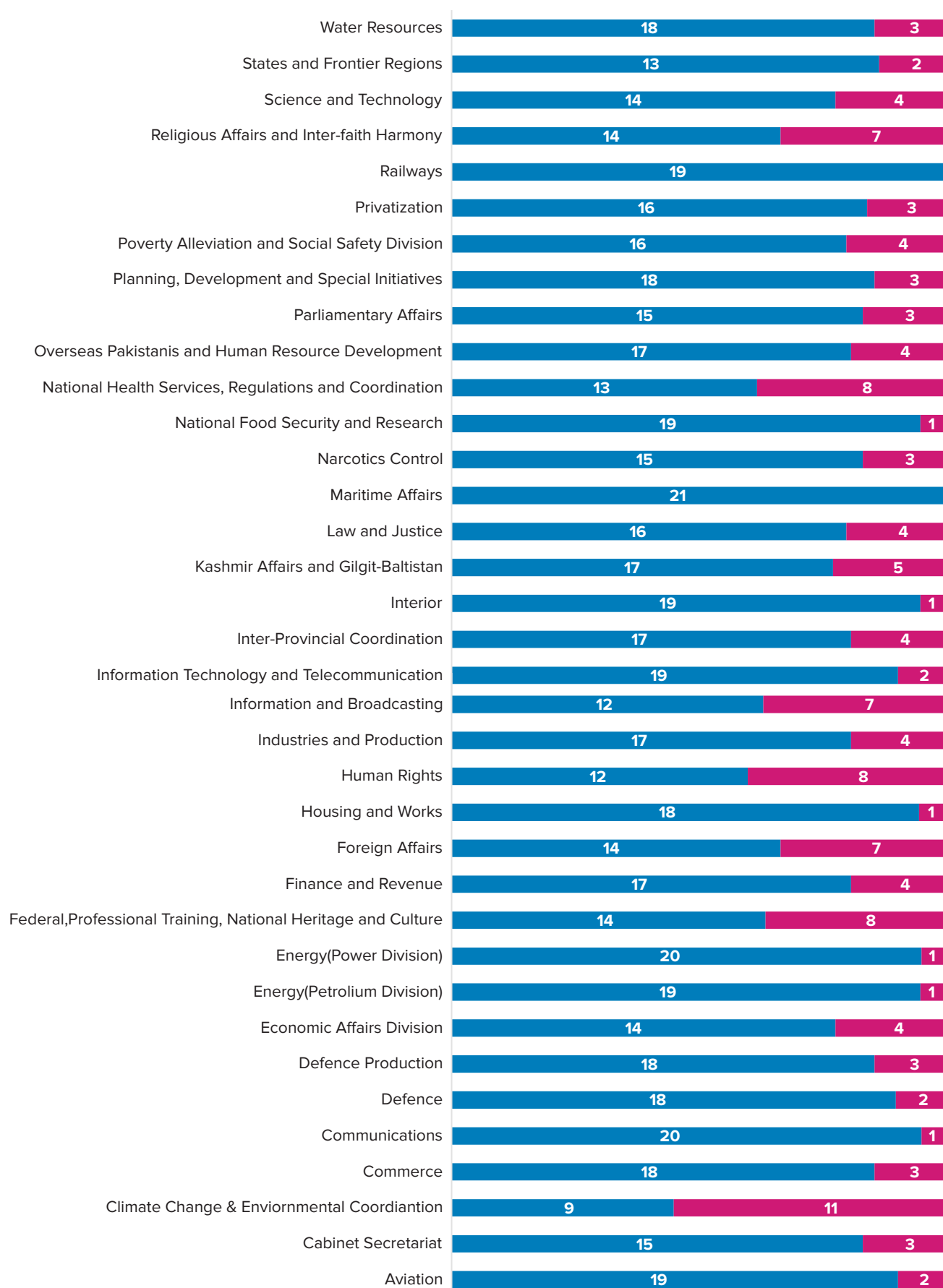
Female participation in standing committees improved, increasing from 19 in the 15th Assembly to 138 in the 16th.

However, female chairpersons of standing committees decreased from 6 to 2, highlighting the need for stronger efforts to support women in parliamentary oversight.

Male advisors to the Prime Minister dropped from 4 in the 15th Assembly to 1 in the 16th. No female or transgender individuals were appointed as advisors in either assembly.

³⁹ https://voiceofvienna.org/2024/09/pakistans-supreme-court-scolds-ecp-for-delays-in-implementing-pti-reserved-seats-verdict/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Members of Standing Committees in National Assembly



Source: Website -NA

■ Male ■ Female

The graph above shows a significant gender gap in federal ministries and divisions; male dominance remains consistent.

Ministries like States and Frontier Regions, Privatization, Planning, Development, and Energy (Petroleum Division) have over 80 percent male representation. Defence Production, Maritime Affairs, and Aviation show near-total male participation with minimal female involvement.

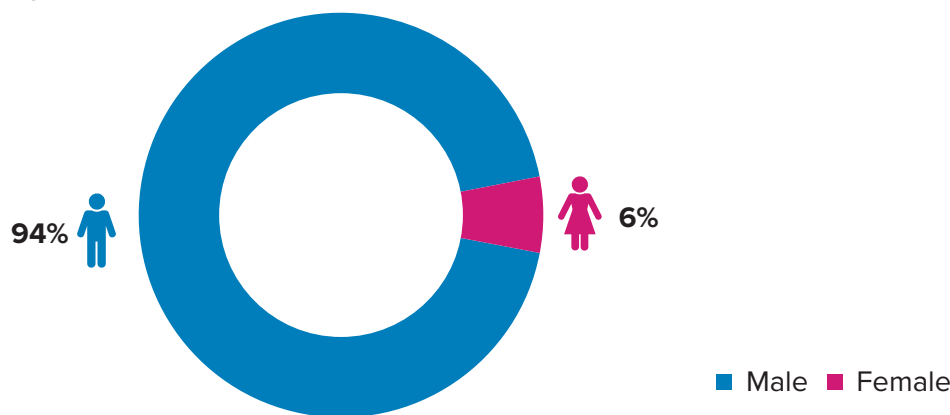
However, ministries like Human Rights, Information and Broadcasting, and Climate Change show higher female representation. This indicates progress toward gender inclusion in certain sectors.

Among these, the Human Rights Ministry stands out with significant female participation. Despite this progress, low female representation in technical and defense fields highlights traditional gender-role biases.

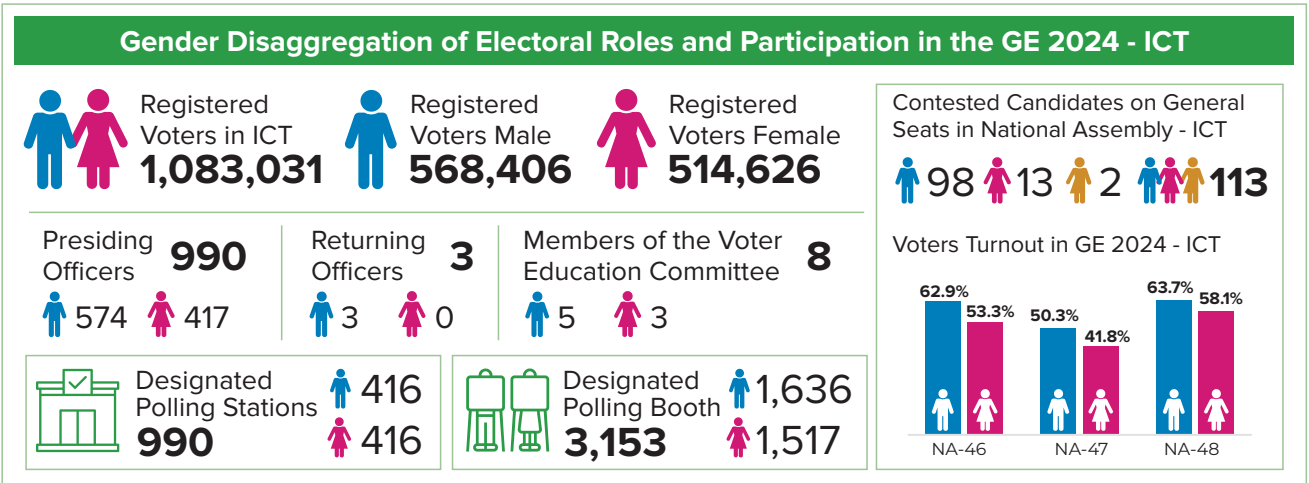
Climate Change and Environmental Coordination shows a relatively balanced gender distribution; however, men remain the majority.

These findings highlight the urgent need for policies ensuring gender parity across federal divisions.

Chairpersons of the Standing Committees in NA



Most chairpersons of standing committees are men, highlighting a significant gender imbalance. Women hold only a small fraction of these roles, reflecting systemic challenges in leadership representation.



Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

A total of 60.6 million voters participated in Pakistan's 12th General Elections on February 8, 2024. This marks an increase of 5.8 million compared to the 2018 elections, where 54.8 million votes were cast.

Although the number of voters increased, the turnout declined from 52.1 percent in 2018 to 47.6 percent in 2024. This decrease resulted from the rise in registered voters, which grew from 106 million in 2018 to 128.6 million in 2024, reflecting a record addition of 22.6 million voters.⁴⁰

A promising development was the increase of 2.3 million female voters in 2024 compared to 2018. For the first time, Pakistan registered more women voters than men before the 2024 elections. This progress resulted from efforts by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and stakeholders, reducing the gender gap on voter rolls from 12.4 million in 2018 to 9.9 million in 2024.

However, women's turnout remained 17.4 percent lower than men's. The share of female voters dropped to 41 percent in 2024 from 47 percent in 2018. In contrast, men's turnout increased from 56 percent to 58.7 percent.⁴¹

At the regional level, voter turnout declined for both genders in most areas. However, Islamabad Capital Territory was an exception, with both male and female participation⁴² increasing to 56.5 percent. This reduced the gender gap in voter turnout, indicating a decline in electoral disparities within the capital.

3.7 Female Presence and Representation in Local Government

The ICT Local Government Act, 2015, establishes a two-tier system comprising metropolitan and Union Councils (UCs) without a rural-urban division. This structure aims to enhance governance and urban management within the federal territory.

The Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), led by an elected Mayor, oversees urban services and development. It functions through multiple Union Councils (UCs), which serve as the primary administrative units across Islamabad.

The MCI comprises a chairperson and council members, including six general members, two women members, one peasant/worker, one youth member, and one non-Muslim member. Women hold 33 percent of the seats, with the entire union council serving as the constituency for electing members on reserved seats.

A Chief Officer, appointed by the federal government, facilitates coordination between the MCI and federal authorities.

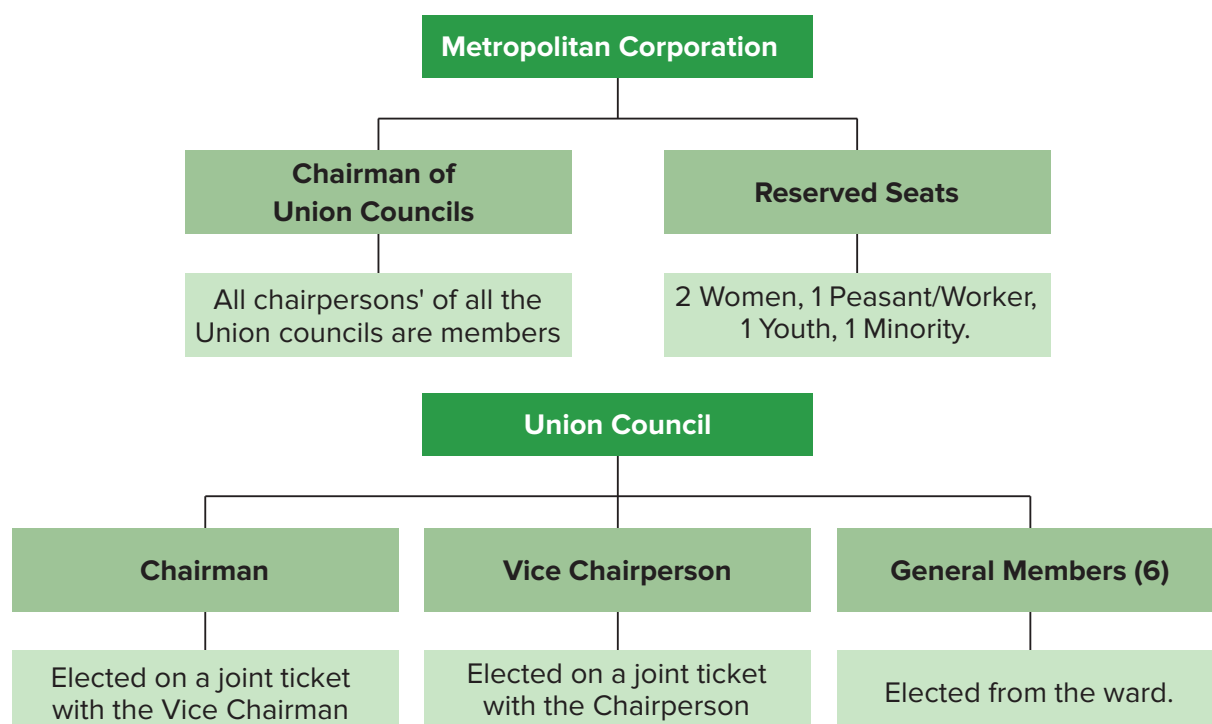
Specialized committees within the MCI oversee health, education, finance, and public safety, ensuring targeted governance.

⁴⁰ FAFEN, Analysis of Voters Turnout, February 14, 2024 accessed at <https://fafen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FAFEN_GE-2024_Turnout_Analysis_Final.pdf>

⁴¹ FAFEN, Analysis of Voters Turnout, February 14, 2024 accessed at <https://fafen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FAFEN_GE-2024_Turnout_Analysis_Final.pdf>

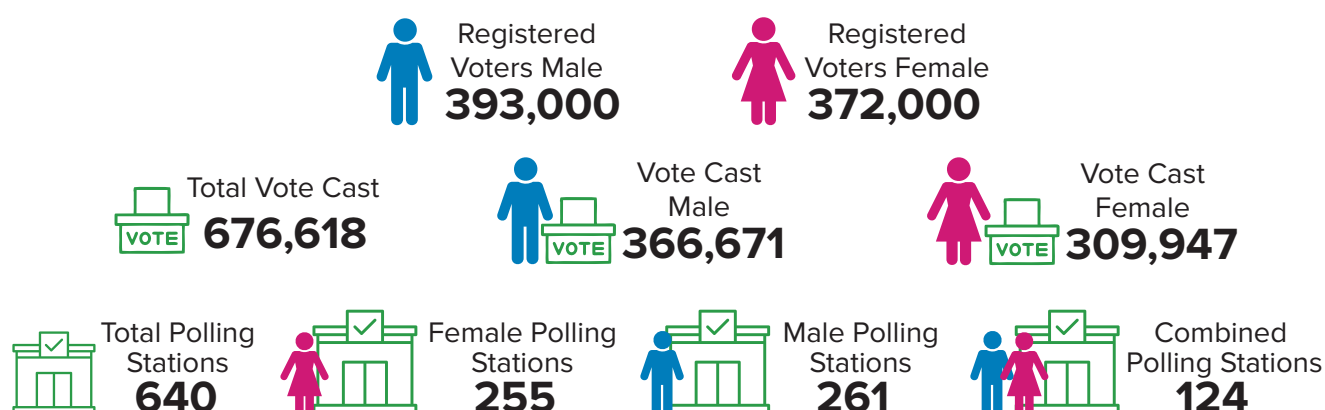
⁴² The International Growth Centre (IGC) Blog, where are the Women Voters? Insights from Pakistan's 2024 Elections, <<https://www.theigc.org/blogs/gender-equality/where-are-women-voters-insights-pakistans-2024-elections>>

2-Tiered LG System in ICT



3.7.1 Elections in Local Government, 2015

MCI and Union Council office bearers are directly elected by ICT residents. The 2015 Local Government Elections were the first and only local polls in the capital. Female voter participation stood at 46 percent, while male participation was 54 percent.⁴³



In future local government elections in Islamabad Capital Territory, 202 seats are reserved for women. Each of the 101 union councils has two seats designated for women.

Approximately 17 percent of reserved seats for women remained uncontested. No political parties or independent groups nominated candidates for these seats. Nearly one-fifth of the reserved seats may remain vacant after the elections.

⁴³ FAFEN, Islamabad Local Government Election 2015: Preliminary Observation Report(<https://fafen.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FAFEN-Preliminary-Observation-Report-on-Islamabad-Local-Government-Election-2015.pdf>).

Among 434 women contesting for 202 reserved seats, PTI secured the highest share at 32 percent. PML-N followed with 25 percent. PPP nominated only 11 candidates, showing a limited effort to encourage women's participation.⁴⁴

This lack of women candidates highlights systemic barriers, including societal and institutional challenges. It also reflects political parties' failure to actively encourage women's electoral participation.

Women primarily contest reserved seats, with minimal representation in general seats for chairmen or vice-chairmen. This reinforces the notion that women's roles remain confined to quotas rather than broader political participation.

3.8 Representation of Women in Political Parties

Political parties in Pakistan have historically shown gender insensitivity, often sidelining women in leadership. Women are confined to party wings instead of being integrated into executive decision-making bodies.

Despite legal frameworks like the Political Parties Act, 2002, later replaced by the Election Act, 2017, political structures remain exclusionary. They favor elite political families and provide minimal opportunities for women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

The Election Act, 2017 introduced a 5 percent quota for women but fails to ensure meaningful participation. These seats remain difficult to win, limiting women's representation. Political parties continue to be dominated by entrenched elites, restricting access for women outside these circles. This exclusion extends to executive leadership, where female representation remains dynastic or tokenistic.

In the current scenario, Maryam Nawaz Sharif has emerged as a strong mainstream female leader in PML-N. She serves as the party's senior vice-president and holds office as Punjab's first female Chief Minister.

Marriyum Aurangzeb is another prominent female leader in PML-N. She serves as the party's information secretary and as a senior minister in the Punjab cabinet.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja is a third notable female leader. She holds the position of joint secretary in the party and serves as a federal minister.

Despite these roles, women occupy only 5 of the 35 prominent offices in the party.⁴⁵

Among the 12 central office bearers of the Pakistan People's Party, only one is a woman—Rukhsana Bangash,⁴⁶ the finance secretary. Similarly, the PPP Parliamentarians, the party's parliamentary arm, has four central office bearers, with only one woman—Shazia Marri,⁴⁷ the information secretary.

In Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), women's representation in leadership is significantly lower than men's. Kanwal Shauzab and Shandana Gulzar previously led the Women's Wing. Currently, Aliya Hamza Malik serves as PTI's chief organizer for Punjab.

⁴⁴ Dawn, 17% Local Government Seats for Capital Women Uncontested (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1728471>)

⁴⁵ <https://pmln.org>

⁴⁶ <https://ppp.org.pk/party-structure/>

⁴⁷ <https://pppp.org.pk/website/central-office-bearers/>

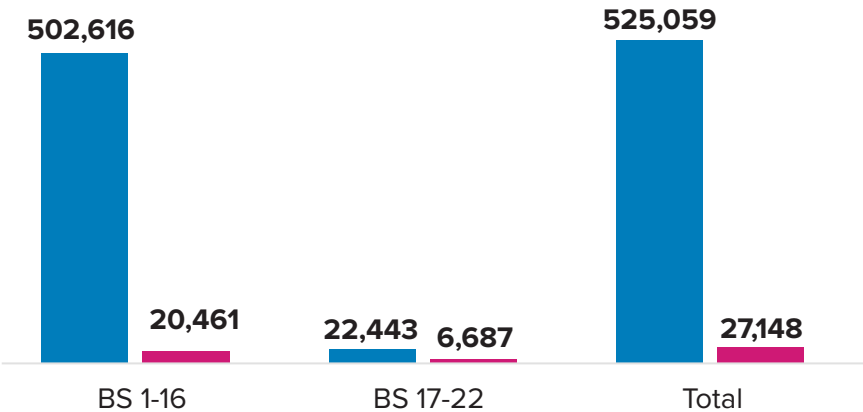
Women's representation in smaller parties like JUI, MQM, and ANP remains limited. These parties have women's wings or separate organizations for women's issues but struggle to promote women to top leadership positions.⁴⁸

The absence of mechanisms ensuring inclusion and equity in political party laws worsens this disparity. Women's representation is hindered by societal discrimination and party structures lacking pathways for meaningful engagement. While the Election Act, 2017, introduced equity measures, it remains insufficient to address systemic barriers. Legislative reforms must go beyond symbolic quotas and enforce mechanisms guaranteeing women's active participation in decision-making roles.

3.9 Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Officers (2023-2024)

Despite a 10 percent quota for women in federal government jobs, their representation remains low. In Islamabad, the administrative hub of Pakistan, women's public sector employment is gradually increasing. However, they remain underrepresented across all pay scales, especially in Islamabad's public departments.

National Level Representation of Employees in the Public Sector



Source: Establishment Division

■ Male ■ Female

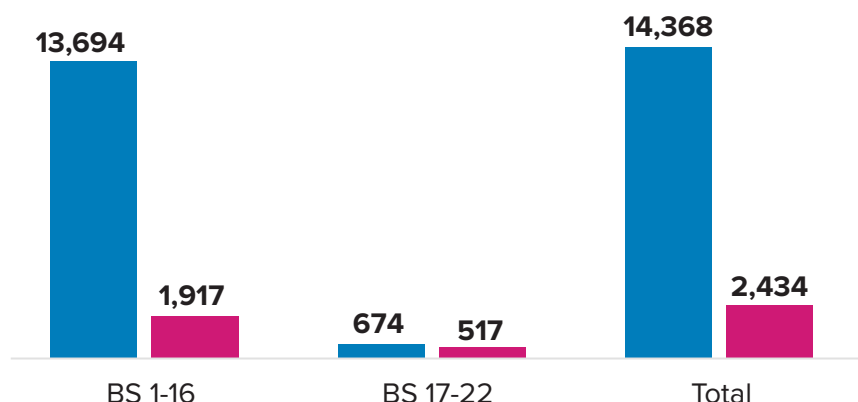
The graph highlights a significant gender disparity in national public offices. In pay scales BS 1-16, women hold 20,461 positions, while men occupy 502,616, making women's share only 3.91 percent. In higher pay scales (BS 17-22), women hold 6,687 positions compared to 22,443 men.

Overall, women hold 22.95 percent of managerial positions in the public sector. This highlights gender disparity, especially in senior management, and emphasizes the need for targeted policies to enhance gender inclusivity in public offices.

⁴⁸ International Development Research Centre, Women's Political Participation in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities

3.9.1 Representation of Public Officers (Ministries/Division/Attached departments/Subordinate Offices/Constitutional Bodies)

Gender Distribution in Public Offices



Source: Establishment Division

■ Male ■ Female

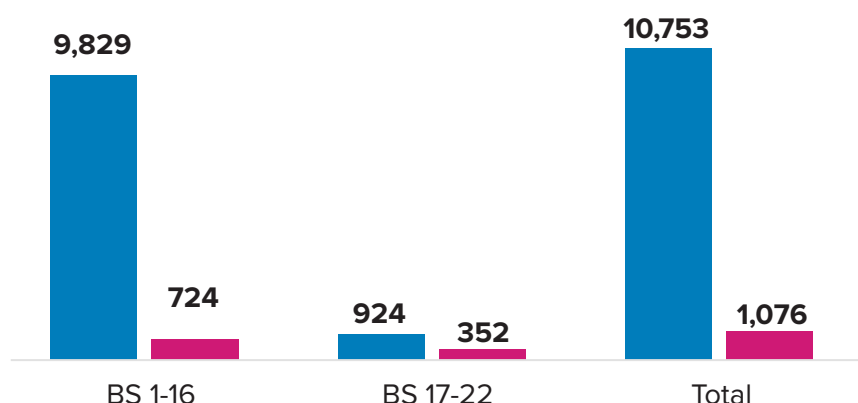
In the public sector, women hold only 14.5 percent of positions in Ministries, Divisions, Attached Departments, Subordinate Offices, and Constitutional Bodies. Men dominate with 85.5 percent, highlighting a significant gender disparity.

In Basic Scale (BS) 1-16, men comprise 87.7 percent of the workforce, totaling 13,694 employees. Women make up only 12.3 percent, with 1,917 employees, reflecting a significant gender gap.

In Basic Scale (BS) 17-22, men hold 56.6 percent of positions, totaling 674 employees. Women occupy 43.4 percent, with 517 employees. This indicates progress toward gender parity at higher levels, though an imbalance remains.

3.9.2 Public Officers

Actual Working Strength of Officers and Staff



Source: Establishment Division

■ Male ■ Female

Women represent only 9.1 percent of Islamabad's public sector workforce. This includes government-funded projects, autonomous bodies, public universities, and departments. Men

dominate with nearly 90 percent presence, highlighting a significant gender gap. At the lower pay scale (BS 1-16), the gender disparity is more pronounced. Women constitute just 6.9 percent, indicating severe underrepresentation in entry- and mid-level positions. However, at the higher pay scale (BS 17-22), female representation improves to 27.6 percent. This reflects that while women face barriers to entry, those who advance have better chances of securing leadership roles. Despite the presence of quotas, women remain underrepresented in bureaucratic and leadership roles. Societal norms often push women toward domestic responsibilities, limiting their professional engagement. Additionally, concerns about workplace harassment and unsafe commutes further discourage women from seeking employment.

3.10 Islamabad Based Female Members of the National Press Club

The National Press Club, Islamabad (NPC) has 3,346 members, with only 315 (9.4 percent) being women. This highlights a significant gender gap in media representation. Despite their underrepresentation, women have secured leadership roles within the NPC. Nayar Ali currently serves as the Secretary of NPC, Chairperson of the Women Journalists' Caucus, and head of the NPC Scrutiny Committee, demonstrating their ability to contribute effectively to decision-making. Efforts to improve gender inclusivity have been led by organizations like the Women Media Forum Pakistan (WMFP), which advocates for gender equity, labor rights, and journalists' safety. The *Pakistan's Media Needs Women* campaign, launched in December 2023, highlighted the lack of representation in media outlets, particularly in regions like Balochistan and KPK. It underscored the challenges women face in joining press clubs and unions.⁴⁹ Most outlets, with a few promising exceptions, failed to provide gender-specific facilities or entitlements, such as late-night transport or separate bathrooms. This lack of infrastructure further discourages women from pursuing careers in journalism. Despite these hurdles, women's representation in the NPC includes two women in the 40-member governing body, one as vice president, one as general secretary, and one as joint secretary.⁵⁰ This presence, though limited, marks progress in breaking gender barriers within media leadership.

Category	Male	Female	Total
Members	3,031	315	3,346
Governing Bodies	38	2	40
Vice President	-	1	
General Secretary	-	1	
Joint Secretary	-	1	

⁴⁹ International Federation of Journalist (IFJ), Pakistan: Women journalists launch national campaign calling for change, accessed at 15 December, 2023.
⁵⁰ Source: National Press club, Islamabad

Despite these efforts, digital media workers continue to struggle with poor working conditions and limited inclusion in unions and press clubs.

The Digital Media Alliance of Pakistan (DigiMAP) is actively working to support and elevate the role of digital media professionals, including women, to ensure greater representation and fairer opportunities in the industry.

The Digital Rights Foundation recently launched the *Network for Journalists for Digital Rights* to empower female journalists with essential skills, training, and resources for safe digital engagement. The initiative also strengthens their ability to report on underrepresented gender issues while leveraging digital tools to enhance the quality and reach of their journalism.⁵¹

3.11 Members in Trade Unions

Despite women constituting 23.18 percent of the total labour force in Pakistan in 2023,⁵² their representation in trade unions remains even lower. This highlights the persistent barriers to women's participation in organized labour movements and decision-making structures.

Despite 626 registered trade unions listed by the National Industrial Relations Commission (NIRC),⁵³ women make up only 2 percent of total membership. According to Rubina Jameel, General Secretary of the All Pakistan Trade Unions Federation, there are no accurate figures on women's participation in trade unions nationwide,⁵⁴ highlighting a gap in data and representation.

The absence of systematic data collection and mandatory reporting on women's participation in trade unions hinders efforts to address gender disparities. Government bodies, including the National Industrial Relations Commission, should implement mandatory annual data collection on trade union membership and leadership. Comprehensive reporting on women's representation would establish a clear basis for policies aimed at enhancing and encouraging women's active participation in trade unions.

3.12 Members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The total number of members listed in the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) is 6,104, of which 227 (3.72 percent) are women. Further, there are 26 executive members of the ICCI, consisting of only 2 women, as shown in the table below:

Gender	Total
Male	6,104
Female	227
Male members in the Executive body	24
Female members in the Executive body	2
Total Members in Executive body	26

Source: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry

⁵¹ Digital Rights Foundation, 'Statement by the Network of Women Journalists for Digital Rights'

⁵² <https://tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/labor-force-female-percent-of-total-labor-force-wb-data.html>

⁵³ <https://www.nirc.gov.pk/data/List%20Of%20Unions.pdf>

⁵⁴ <https://pakistan.fes.de/e/3rd-national-labour-conference-2024.html>

3.13 Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) promotes women's entrepreneurship and advocates for their economic inclusion. With 1,000 members, only 14 women hold executive positions. The chamber was established due to the lack of attention from mainstream economic institutions toward women entrepreneurs.

3.14 Zakat & Ushr Committee

The District Zakat and Ushr Committee, Islamabad, operates under the Federal Ministry of Poverty Alleviation, offering financial assistance and welfare support, particularly benefiting women. The committee consists of nine members, including two women, led by a male chairman. Additionally, all 196 local Zakat and Ushr committees in Islamabad are chaired by men, with no female representation in leadership roles.

While women hold 22 percent of seats in district committees, their absence as chairpersons in local committees highlights societal and administrative barriers limiting women's leadership in financial and welfare decision-making.

Enhancing gender parity in these positions requires targeted policies, capacity-building programs, and shifting societal perceptions about women in leadership.

3.15 Conclusion

The chapter has summarized the key barriers limiting women's political representation and employment. Despite constitutional and legal reforms, their participation in politics and the public sector remains restricted due to societal norms, safety concerns—especially harassment—and fear of character assassination.

While policies like reserved seats and electoral mandates have increased women's representation, barriers still prevent them from attaining leadership and decision-making roles.

The recent general elections and parliamentary compositions show progress in women's political participation; however, leadership disparities persist. Islamabad's local government remains male-dominated, offering women limited political space beyond reserved quotas.

Islamabad Capital Territory provides better opportunities for women in public offices; however, their representation remains significantly low across all pay scales.

The underrepresentation of women in the National Press Club of Islamabad reflects broader challenges in the media industry, including digital media, particularly in leadership roles.

In the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, women account for just 3.7 percent of total members and hold only two executive positions out of 26. The Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, established to address these gaps, plays a crucial role in advocating for women entrepreneurs.

Meanwhile, in the Zakat and Ushr Committees, women have a limited presence at the district level (22 percent); however, their complete absence as chairpersons in local committees highlights institutional barriers to leadership.

3.16 Policy Recommendations

1. The Election Act, 2017, should be amended to introduce clear mechanisms for gender inclusivity in political party structures. Measures such as periodic gender audits, transparent nomination processes, and penalties for non-compliance can ensure women's participation extends beyond the symbolic 5 percent electoral quota.
2. The Ministry of Human Rights and HEC should establish a policy research unit within academic centers. This unit would provide research-based feedback to women legislators and translate findings into policy reforms addressing structural and legal barriers to women's political participation.
3. The Parliamentary Caucus on Women's Rights and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should collaborate to implement gender-responsive electoral reforms. They should enhance women's political participation and conduct gender audits of electoral processes to identify and address barriers hindering women's involvement.
4. The Constitution should be amended to allocate at least one reserved seat in the National Assembly for women and one for non-Muslims in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).
5. Women Leadership Academies should be established under the Election Commission of Pakistan to train female politicians in governance, public speaking, digital literacy, and policymaking. These academies should also develop mentorship networks, pairing young female politicians with experienced women leaders to foster knowledge-sharing.
6. School-based programs should be designed and launched to introduce political literacy and leadership skills to girls from an early age, fostering confidence and interest in governance and public affairs.
7. As only 30 out of 111 parties fulfilled the Election Act, 2017 mandate of nominating at least 5 percent women on general seats in the 2024 General Elections, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) must implement a robust monitoring system to enforce compliance and impose penalties on non-compliant parties.
8. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus should organize awareness campaigns to directly engage political parties, encouraging them to nominate more women candidates.
9. Timely local government elections in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) are essential for grassroots democracy, efficient service delivery, and public representation. Implementing the reserved quota for women will enhance inclusivity and strengthen participatory governance in ICT.
10. Public offices should introduce women-centric spaces, including private lactation rooms, safe transportation options, and on-site mental health support. Additionally, flexible working hours and remote work options can further support women's workforce participation.

11. The Ministry of Human Rights and Ministry of Information Technology should establish a digital safety hub to address digital harassment and cyberbullying. In collaboration with tech companies, law enforcement, and women's organizations, this hub should provide digital literacy training, a safe reporting platform, and legal assistance for women.
12. Since there is no systematic data collection on trade unions or mandatory reporting on women's participation, government departments, including the National Industrial Relations Commission, should mandate annual data collection on trade union membership and leadership.
13. Despite progressive legislation on transgender rights, data on their representation in ICT governance structures is lacking. Government bodies should implement annual data collection on transgender individuals' participation in public offices to inform future policies and reports.

04



HEALTH

HEALTH



Key Findings

- Primary healthcare centres are the cornerstone of the public healthcare system for women, who account for 80 percent of all OPD visits there, which is in turn 44 percent of all female OPD visits in all public health facilities of Islamabad.
- Women account for 83 percent of the nurses in public health facilities and 61 percent in private health facilities, emphasizing a substantial gender disparity within the nursing profession.
- Private sector offers almost twice as many hospital beds as the public sector (6,462 versus 3,334) but has fewer number of doctors (4225 versus 5133) and worryingly fewer number of nurses (178 versus 1486).
- Private hospitals are exempt from reporting total outpatient department (OPD) visits, or the types of healthcare services provided to patients, indicating lack of transparency in this area.
- In the public sector, women are more likely to seek mental health services from primary healthcare centres (82.6 percent) than tertiary care hospitals.
- In the private sector, drug rehabilitation centres (57) far outnumber psychological care facilities (4), indicating a potential gap in addressing mental health issues comprehensively.
- There is a concerning 30 percent drop-off rate for Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) immunization of pregnant women, suggesting the need for stronger immunization follow-up and awareness strategies.
- ICT has a relatively lower proportion of Low Birth Weight (LBW) babies (2 percent) with little difference on the basis of gender.
- Cancer incidence significantly increases in individuals aged 40–59 and 60+, with breast cancer, lung cancer, benign neoplasms, and colorectal cancer showing the highest prevalence in these age groups.
- In two years from December 2022 to December 2024, there was a consistent rise in registered HIV/AIDS cases in Islamabad, across all genders: 17 percent in males, 15 percent in females and 85 percent in transgender individuals.

Introduction

This chapter explores the state of gender parity in the health sector. The analysis below is based on indicators related to public and private healthcare systems in ICT. It focuses on facilities, human resources, and the nature of services provided. The chapter also examines healthcare budgets and highlights the incidence of cancer and HIV/AIDS in the region. The findings aim to equip policymakers, healthcare providers, and community stakeholders with data-driven insights. This will help them make informed decisions to improve healthcare for all genders.

Achieving gender parity in health is vital to achieving human development. Equal access to healthcare services for both men and women fosters stronger and more resilient communities, fuels economic growth, and ensures every individual can reach their true potential. Yet, health disparities persist, often intensified by gender biases, cultural norms, and economic barriers. Gender gaps in health affect all aspects of life—from education and workforce participation to the stability of families and communities. Closing such gaps is vital to lay the groundwork for a healthier and more prosperous future.

Women in Pakistan face various forms of discrimination and exclusion. These begin even before birth with sex-selective pregnancy termination. They continue at birth with the abandonment of female infants. Discrimination persists throughout their lives, with preference given to male children in areas like food, nutrition, and healthcare. This section presents the status of women on selected indicators. These include, but are not limited to, health spending, access to healthcare, fertility, family planning, health-seeking behavior (antenatal and postnatal care), mental health, and malnutrition.

According to a report by the World Economic Forum, reducing gender disparities in health could potentially expand the global economy by at least \$1 trillion annually by 2040.⁵⁵ In Pakistan, these inequalities are starkly evident, rooted in patriarchal biases and societal norms that often neglect women's health needs.⁵⁶ Maternal health is a critical area that requires urgent attention. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Pakistan had 9,800 maternal deaths in 2020, making it the fifth most dangerous country in the world to be a mother after Nigeria (8,200), India (24,000), Congo (22,000), and Ethiopia (10,000), contrasting strongly with 73 other rich countries mostly in Europe, the Middle East and the Caribbean with just 20 or fewer maternal deaths.⁵⁷ Factors contributing to this high death rate include a lack of access to skilled birth attendants, inadequate prenatal and postnatal care, and insufficient emergency obstetric services.

According to UNAIDS estimates, as of 2023, the number of Pakistanis living with HIV is 290,000, up from 140,000 in 2015 and 79,000 in 2010, with 11,000 AIDS-related deaths to date.⁵⁸ Pakistan's own National AIDS Control Programme estimates that, as of September 2024, the number of people living with HIV is 330,000, of whom only 72,515 (22 percent) are registered with the Programme and only 49,939 (15 percent) are on antiretroviral therapy (ART) in 94 ART centres

⁵⁵ World Economic Forum (2024), *Closing the Women's Health Gap: A \$1 Trillion Opportunity to Improve Lives and Economies*, p.5, Retrieved February 12, 2025 from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Closing_the_Women%E2%80%99s_Health_Gap_2024.pdf

⁵⁶ Pakistan Today. (2024). *Health challenges to women in Pakistan*. Retrieved January 7, 2025, from <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/06/06/health-challenges-to-women-in-pakistan/>

⁵⁷ World Health Organization (2023), *Trends in maternal mortality 2000-2020: Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division*, p.35, 62-67. Retrieved February 12, 2025 from <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/366225/9789240068759-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

⁵⁸ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2024), *UNAIDS Data 2024*, p.50. Retried on February 13, 2025 from https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/data-book-2024_en.pdf

across the country.⁵⁹ The Punjab has the highest number of registered HIV patients at 39,944, with 25,925 receiving treatment at ART centres in the province.⁶⁰

In recent years, global public health experts have expanded their vision to include women's health challenges. These challenges affect women beyond their reproductive years or disproportionately, even though they are common to both men and women. Specifically, these challenges include malnutrition and mental health. In Pakistan, the lack of attention to women-specific health issues—such as antenatal and postnatal care, breast cancer, and fistula—poses serious threats to their well-being. Key factors contributing to this include a lack of awareness among women, insufficient dedicated public health facilities, and limited decision-making power for women on healthcare matters.

Pakistan is a signatory to the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978, a landmark event that redefined public health and primary healthcare. The Declaration emphasised a comprehensive primary healthcare approach, defining health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.⁶¹ It further asserted health as a fundamental human right with an emphasis on community participation and underscored the critical link between health and socioeconomic development.

In line with its commitment to equity and inclusivity, Pakistan also signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, reinforcing its obligation to uphold gender equality across all sectors, including healthcare. As a signatory, Pakistan is bound to ensure that women have equal access to healthcare services, including maternal care, family planning, and disease prevention, as part of its broader commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination. Article 12 of CEDAW explicitly requires states to “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care,”⁶² ensuring access to services related to pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care. Additionally, Article 14 highlights the rights of rural women, emphasizing their entitlement to “adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning.”⁶³ Furthermore, Article 16 affirms women's rights to reproductive autonomy, ensuring that they have the right to “decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.”⁶⁴

Although the Constitution of Pakistan, adopted in 1973, does not expressly declare health as a legally enforceable fundamental right, it guarantees non-discrimination on the basis of sex as a fundamental right (Article 25(2)) and adopts the principle of policy that “the State shall provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, as are permanently or temporarily unable to

⁵⁹ Common Management Unit: AIDS, TB & Malaria, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, *National AIDS Control Programme*. Retrieved on February 13, 2025 from <https://www.cmu.gov.pk/nacp-national-aids-control-programme/>

⁶⁰ Ibid. Retrieved on February 13, 2025 from <https://www.cmu.gov.pk/nacp-national-aids-control-programme/nacp-national-aids-control-programme-treatment/>

⁶¹ International Conference on Primary Health Care, *Declaration of Alma-Ata*, 12 September 1978, Section I. Retrieved February 11, 2025 from <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/347879/WHO-EURO-1978-3938-43697-61471-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/366225/9789240068759-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

⁶² United Nations. (1979). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved February 13, 2025 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

⁶³ Ibid. Retrieved on February 13, 2025 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

⁶⁴ Ibid. Retrieved February 13, 2025 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment” (Article 38(d)).⁶⁵ In alignment with these proclamations, the federal and provincial governments of Pakistan have built a substantial healthcare infrastructure, including a primary healthcare system, to serve both the rural and urban populations.

With a special emphasis on the “One Health” approach,⁶⁶ the Federal Government of Pakistan has adopted several important public health policies in the past decade including the National Health Vision (2016-2025),⁶⁷ as well as Action Plan: National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination Division (2019-2023).⁶⁸ As of 2020, Pakistan's public healthcare network comprised 1,289 hospitals, 5,561 Basic Health Units (BHUs), 719 Rural Health Centres (RHCs), 5,849 dispensaries, 752 maternity and child health centres, and 410 tuberculosis clinics.⁶⁹ These health facilities are staffed by 245,987 doctors; 27,360 dentists; 116,659 nurses; 21,361 Lady Health Workers; and 43,129 midwives.⁷⁰ To further advance the national healthcare vision, Pakistan has also developed and implemented the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Benefit Package, which includes an Essential Package of Health Services (EPHS) and inter-sectoral policies aimed at fostering comprehensive delivery of health services across the country.⁷¹

Health, in the context of gender, aligns with two prominent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and 5 (Gender Equality). These goals stress the importance of eliminating gender disparities in health, as well as ensuring inclusive and high-quality healthcare for everyone. Currently Pakistan ranks 137/166 on the SDG Index Rank with its scores on both SDGs 3 and 5 stagnating or increasing at less than 50 percent of the required rate.⁷²

⁶⁵ Pakistan. (1982). The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with the Provisional Constitution Order, 1981: as amended up-to-date. Lahore: All Pakistan Legal Decision.

⁶⁶ World Health Organization, *One Health*, September 21, 2017. Retrieved February 12, 2025 from <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/one-health>

⁶⁷ Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination. (2016). *National Health Vision: Pakistan 2016–2025*. Retrieved January 7, 2025, from <https://phkh.nhsrpk/sites/default/files/2020-12/National%20Health%20Vision%20Pakistan%202016-2025.pdf>

⁶⁸ Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination. (2018). *Action Plan for the NHR&C 2019–2023*. Retrieved January 7, 2025, from <https://phkh.nhsrpk/sites/default/files/2019-06/Action%20Plan%20NHR%26C%202019-23.pdf>

⁶⁹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 2020*, p.243. Retrieved on February 13, 2025 from https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/other/yearbooks/Pakistan_Statistical_Year_Book_2022.pdf

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Secretariat (2020). *Interventions' Description of Essential Package of Health Services/UHC Benefit Package of Pakistan*. Retrieved February 12, 2025 from <https://phkh.nhsrpk/sites/default/files/2022-05/Interventions%20Description%20of%20Essential%20Package%20of%20Health%20Services%20UHC%20Benefit%20Package%20of%20Pakistan%202020.pdf>

⁷² Sachs, J. D., Lafortune, G., & Fuller, G. (2024). *Sustainable Development Report 2024: Pakistan*. Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Retrieved February 12, 2025 from <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/pakistan>

4.1 Pakistan Health Profile

Pakistan's health policies have evolved significantly since the first National Health Policy was adopted in 1990. Initially, it focused on school health, communicable diseases, family planning, and access to clean water. The subsequent policies in 1997 and 2001 expanded on the concept of health for all, addressing issues such as communicable diseases, road safety, gender equity, and rural-urban health disparities. The 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010 marked a pivotal shift by devolving health sector responsibilities to the provinces. This allowed provinces to tailor healthcare delivery to local needs but also highlighted a lack of consensus on a national framework until the National Health Vision (2016-2025) was developed.

This document aimed to harmonise provincial and federal efforts, ensuring affordable and universal access to quality healthcare, particularly for women and children. Its core pillars were increasing the provincial and federal expenditure on health to 3 percent of the GDP, further strengthening primary healthcare, developing integrated and reliable health information systems, and promoting evidence-based policymaking through focused health research.⁷³ In addition, it also prioritised enhancing workforce capacity, governance, and accountability; ensuring access to quality medicines and technologies; fostering cross-sectoral collaboration aligning with global health commitments; and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to achieve health goals.⁷⁴

As per the 2023 census, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported the country's population to be around 241.5 million.⁷⁵ In terms of disease burden, Pakistan contends with both communicable and non-communicable diseases. The incidence of tuberculosis is notably high, with 277 cases per 100,000 population in 2023.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) is concerning, affecting 41.7 percent of this population according to the National Nutrition Survey 2018.⁷⁷ The same survey found childhood malnutrition to be a critical issue, with 40.2 percent of children under five experiencing stunting.⁷⁸ These indicators underscore the pressing need for comprehensive health interventions to address both infectious diseases and nutritional deficiencies across the country.

⁷³ Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination. *National Health Vision: Pakistan 2016–2025*. Retrieved January 7, 2025, from <https://phkh.nhsrsc.pk/sites/default/files/2020-12/National%20Health%20Vision%20Pakistan%202016-2025.pdf>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *7th Population and Housing Census - Detailed Results*. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/digital-census/detailed-results>

⁷⁶ World Health Organization, Pakistan Country Profile. Retrieved February 13, 2025 from <https://data.who.int/countries/586>

⁷⁷ Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, Nutrition Wing, *National Nutrition Survey 2018: Key Findings Report*, p.32. Retrieved on February 13, 2025 from <https://phkh.nhsrsc.pk/sites/default/files/2020-12/National%20Nutrition%20Survey%20Key%20Findings%20UNICEF%202018.pdf>

⁷⁸ Ibid. p.6.

4.2 ICT Health Profile

4.2.1 Life Expectancy at Birth

According to the Pakistan Demographic Survey 2020, life expectancy at birth in Pakistan was 65 years, with 64.5 years for males and 65.5 years for females.⁷⁹ It is notable that the reported life expectancy for females has declined from 2019 to 2020 by 1 year while increasing for males by 0.2 years.⁸⁰ These statistics reflect global patterns with women living longer than men,⁸¹ but the decline specifically in women's life expectancy is concerning and highlights, among other things, the need for equal access to healthcare services for both men and women.

4.2.2 Total Fertility Rate

According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-2018, the total fertility rate in Pakistan was 3.6 at the national level while in the ICT, the fertility rate was even lower, recorded at 3.0 children per woman.⁸² This figure for the ICT has remained unchanged since the PDHS 2012-2013 survey, whereas the national fertility rate declined from 3.8 in 2012-2013 to 3.6 in 2017-2018.⁸³ Although ICT's fertility rate is comparatively lower than the national average, its stagnation amid a nationwide decline is concerning. This lack of progress may indicate persistent structural or social barriers preventing further reductions, highlighting the need for targeted policy interventions.

4.2.3 Maternal Mortality Ratio

According to the Maternal Mortality Survey 2019, the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) stands at 186 per 100,000 live births at the national level.⁸⁴ Regional differences are notable, with the Punjab (combined with the ICT) reporting an MMR of 157.⁸⁵ An Islamabad-based study identified that the leading cause of maternal mortality in a federal government hospital was primarily due to a Type 1 delay.⁸⁶

This type of delay, which accounted for 53 percent of the cases, was associated with factors such as delays in seeking medical help, poverty, family taboos, ignorance of healthcare facilities, and a lack of awareness.⁸⁷

In contrast, Type 2 and Type 3 delays played a less significant role. Type 2 delays were primarily attributed to long distances and delayed referrals, while Type 3 delays were linked to surgical

⁷⁹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2020). *Pakistan Demographic Survey 2020*, p.22. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/publications/pds2020/pakistan_demographic_survey_2020.pdf

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Baum, F., Musolino, C., Gesesew, H. A., & Popay, J. (2021). New Perspective on Why Women Live Longer Than Men: An Exploration of Power, Gender, Social Determinants, and Capitals. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(2), 661. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020661>

⁸² National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF. (2019). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18*. p.83-85, Islamabad, Pakistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPS and ICF.

⁸³ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF International. (2013). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13*. NIPS & ICF International.

⁸⁴ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF. (2020). 2019 Pakistan Maternal Mortality Survey summary report. NIPS and ICF.

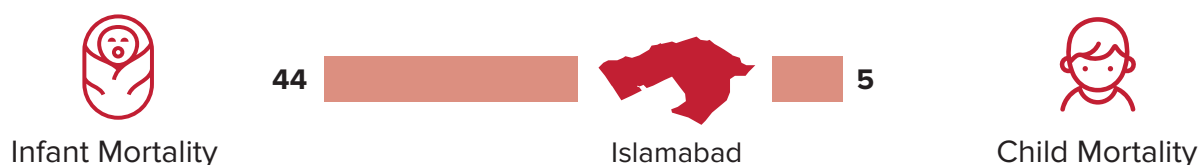
⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ain, Q. U., Farooq, N., Kashif, S., Aslam, S., Ashraf, B., & Siraj, N. (2023). Analysis of Three Delays of Maternal Mortality in Federal Government Polyclinic Islamabad. *Annals of Punjab Medical College*, 17(3), 361–366. <https://doi.org/10.29054/apmc/2023.1459>

⁸⁷ Ibid.

inexperience and insufficient medical equipment, which contributed to only 11.9 percent and 8.9 percent of the cases, respectively.⁸⁸

4.2.4 Infant Mortality Rate



PDHS 2017-2018

The analysis of mortality indicators highlights Islamabad's relatively better outcomes. For infant mortality, Islamabad reports 44 deaths per 1,000 live births, reflecting better maternal and neonatal healthcare services and overall living standards.⁸⁹ Similarly, the child mortality rate in Islamabad is only 5 deaths per 1,000 live births.⁹⁰ The strong connection between infant and child mortality rates suggests that improved infant survival translates into lower child mortality, likely due to effective follow-up care, vaccinations, and preventive measures in the critical early years of life.

4.2.5 Under-5 Mortality Rate



PDHS 2017-2018

The under-5 mortality rate in Islamabad is 49 deaths per 1,000 live births, reflecting the relatively better access to healthcare services in the capital for children under five.⁹¹ At the national level, the under-5 mortality rate has declined over time, with the 2017-2018 PDHS reporting 74 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to 89 deaths per 1,000 live births in the 2012-2013 PDHS.⁹² This overall reduction suggests improvements in child survival, likely driven by better healthcare access, immunization coverage, and maternal and child health interventions.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF. (2019). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18*. Islamabad, Pakistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPS and ICF.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid and National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF International. (2013). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13*. NIPS & ICF International

4.2.6 Contraceptive Prevalence Rate

The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) is an essential measure of family planning and reproductive health. In Pakistan, contraceptive use is broadly categorised into two methods: traditional and modern.

According to the PDHS 2017-2018, the use of modern contraceptives in Islamabad is reported at 35 percent.⁹³ In comparison, the national contraceptive prevalence rate in 2012-2013 was 44.1 percent, indicating a decline in contraceptive use over time.⁹⁴ This shift highlights the need for renewed efforts to improve access to and awareness of modern contraceptive methods. While the availability and acceptance of modern contraceptives in Islamabad reflect a positive trend in reproductive health practices, further improvements in family planning services remain crucial at the national level.

4.2.7 Unmet Need for Family Planning

The analysis of unmet need for family planning highlights regional disparities. As per PDHS 2017-18, in Islamabad, the unmet need for family planning is 17.3 percent, compared to 12.5 percent in the 2012-2013 PDHS.^{95 96} This increase suggests persistent gaps in access to family planning services, awareness, or socio-cultural barriers. While Islamabad benefits from better infrastructure and resources due to its urban status, challenges remain in fully addressing family planning demands. Strengthening service delivery and awareness campaigns could help bridge this gap and improve contraceptive uptake.

4.3 Public Sector Healthcare Facilities

The layout of healthcare facilities in Islamabad is very unique: they are divided between several different government bodies, such as the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSRC), the District Health Office, and the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) of the Capital Development Authority (CDA).⁹⁷

Three of the core healthcare service providers in the city (who manage a breadth of primary healthcare facilities across the city and are often the first point of contact for many individuals) are:

1. District Health Office, Islamabad;
2. Capital Development Authority, Directorate of Health Services; and
3. Federal Government Polyclinic.

Beyond the primary healthcare providers, there are a number of secondary and tertiary care hospitals spread across the city that report to the MoNHSRC.

⁹³ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF. (2019). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18*. Islamabad, Pakistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPS and ICF.

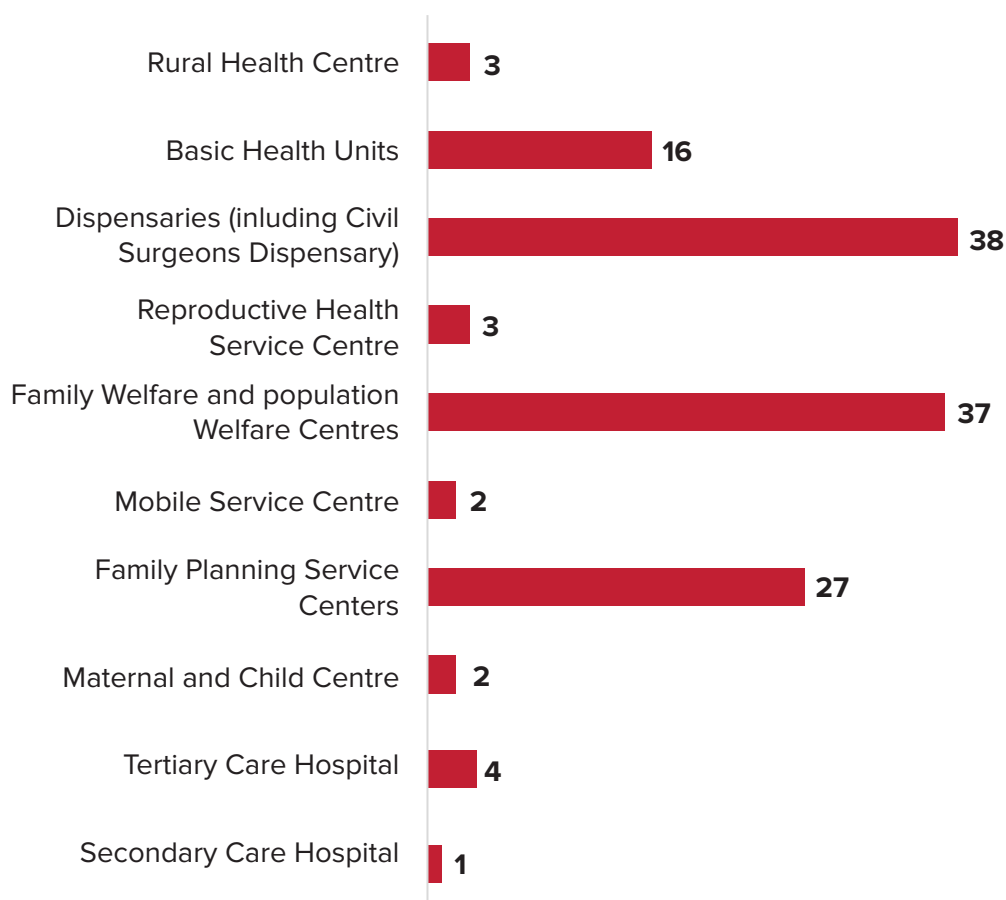
⁹⁴ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF International. (2013). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13*. NIPS & ICF International.

⁹⁵ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF. (2019). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18*. Islamabad, Pakistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPS and ICF.

⁹⁶ National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) [Pakistan], & ICF International. (2013). *Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13*. NIPS & ICF International.

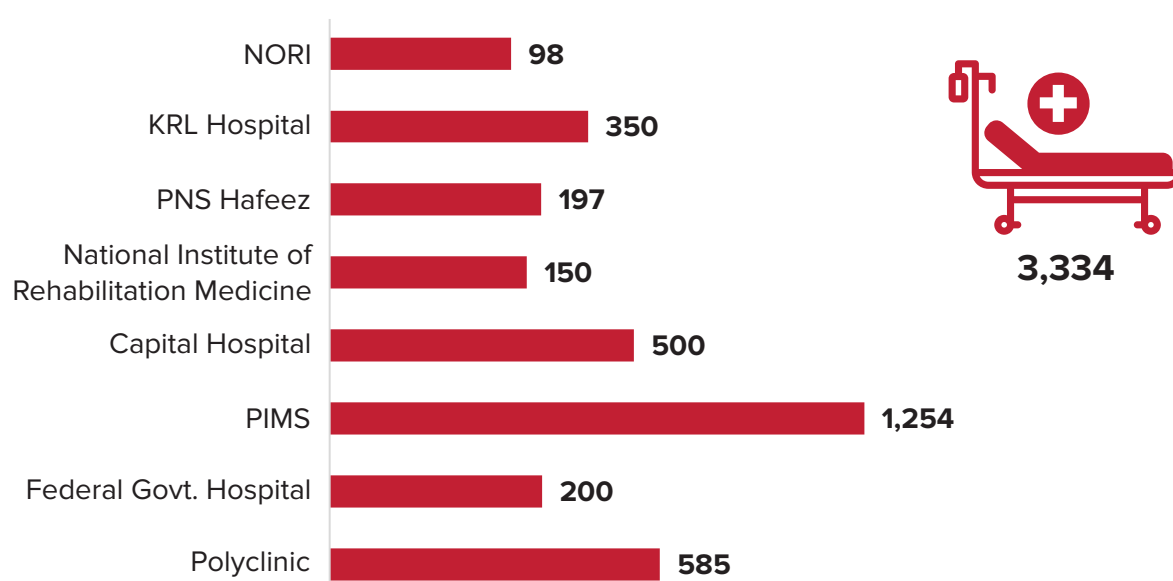
⁹⁷ Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat. (2023). *Improving primary health care system in Islamabad*. Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan. Retrieved from https://mohtasib.gov.pk/SiteImage/Downloads/W.M.S.%20REPORT%20%20%20%20IMPROVING%20PRIMARY%20HEALTH%20CARE%20SYSTEM%20IN%20ISLAMABAD_compressed.pdf

4.3.1 Health Facilities



Source: MoNHSR&C, PIMS, Polyclinic, DHO, CDA DHS, Federal Government Hospital, Capital Hospital

4.3.2 Beds in Health Facilities



Source: Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority, PIMS, Capital Hospital, Polyclinic, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, and Federal Government Hospital

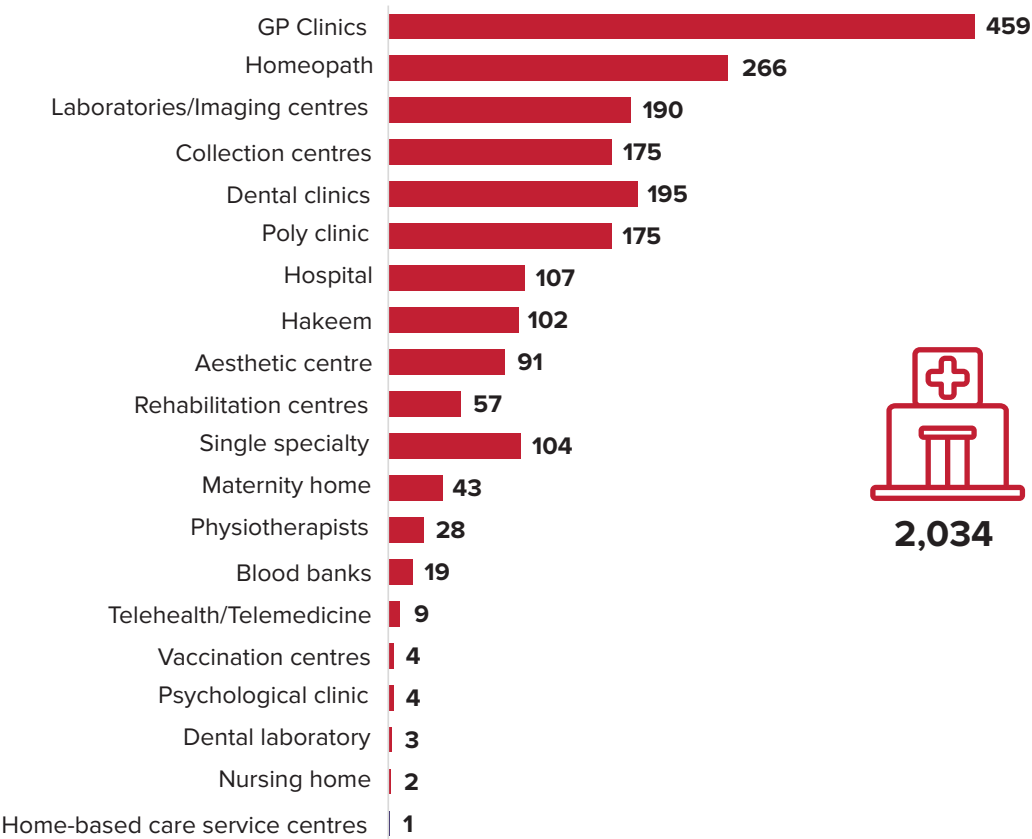
Islamabad has a total of 3,334 hospital beds distributed across its major public health facilities, providing a strong framework for inpatient care. The Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), with 1,254 beds, leads as the primary tertiary care provider in the region. Polyclinic, with 585 beds, and Capital Hospital, with 500 beds, also play critical roles in delivering specialized and general healthcare services. The Federal Government Hospital adds another 200 beds, enhancing the city's secondary and tertiary care capacity. Other facilities, including the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (150 beds), PNS Hafeez (197 beds), KRL Hospital (350 beds), and NORI (98 beds), ensure comprehensive healthcare coverage within the capital.

Notably, no primary healthcare facilities, such as dispensaries, Maternal and Child Health Care Centres, Rural Health Centres (RHCs), or Basic Health Units (BHUs), reported having beds, as inpatient capacity is not a standard requirement at the primary care level.

4.4 Private Sector Healthcare Facilities

The primary source of data collection from the private sector was the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA). However, notable limitations were observed in the scope of the available data, as private hospitals are not mandated by the IHRA to report on key indicators, such as total outpatient department (OPD) visits or detailed records of the types of healthcare services provided to patients.

4.4.1 Health Facilities



Source: Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority

The data on private healthcare facilities highlights a diverse range of services, with General Practitioner (GP) clinics being the most prominent, numbering 459. In comparison, alternative medicine facilities, such as Homeopaths (266) and Hakeems (102), collectively account for 368 facilities. While GP clinics dominate as primary care providers addressing a broad range of medical needs, the substantial presence of alternative medicine facilities reflects the cultural preference for traditional healthcare approaches, albeit at a slightly lower scale.

Single specialty clinics (104), maternity homes (43), dental clinics (195), and physiotherapy centres (28) represent focused care areas within private healthcare. Single specialty clinics cater to specific medical conditions, providing targeted treatments, while maternity homes offer essential services like labour rooms, normal deliveries, and antenatal and postnatal care. Dental clinics address a wide range of oral health needs, and physiotherapists contribute significantly to post-surgical recovery and chronic pain management, enhancing the overall scope of private healthcare services.

Rehabilitation clinics (57), focusing on drug-related recovery, and psychological care clinics (4), cater to critical but often underserved healthcare needs. While rehabilitation clinics provide structured programs for addiction recovery, the extremely low number of psychological care clinics points to a significant gap in addressing mental health issues, underlining the urgent need for investment in this area.

Diagnostic services - including laboratories/imaging centres (190), collection centres (175), and blood banks (19) - form a critical support system for healthcare delivery. However, the relatively low number of blood banks highlights potential challenges in meeting emergency and specialised care needs in the private sector.

4.4.2 Beds in Health Facilities

Beds in Health Facilities

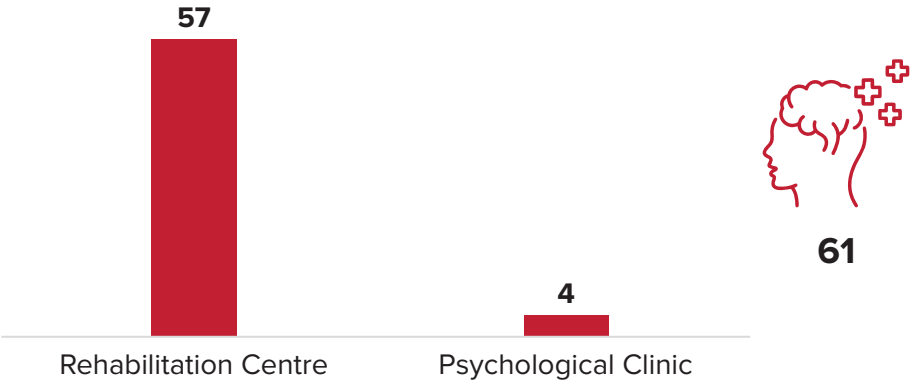


6,462

Source: Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority

Private health facilities in the ICT provide a total of 6,462 beds. These facilities do not cater solely to Islamabad's population but also serve patients from various provinces seeking medical care in the capital. The significant number of beds in private hospitals highlights Islamabad's role as a healthcare hub, attracting individuals from different regions due to the availability of specialized treatments and well-equipped facilities. This underscores the growing demand for healthcare services in the city and emphasizes the need for continued investment in both private and public health infrastructure to accommodate the influx of patients from across the country.

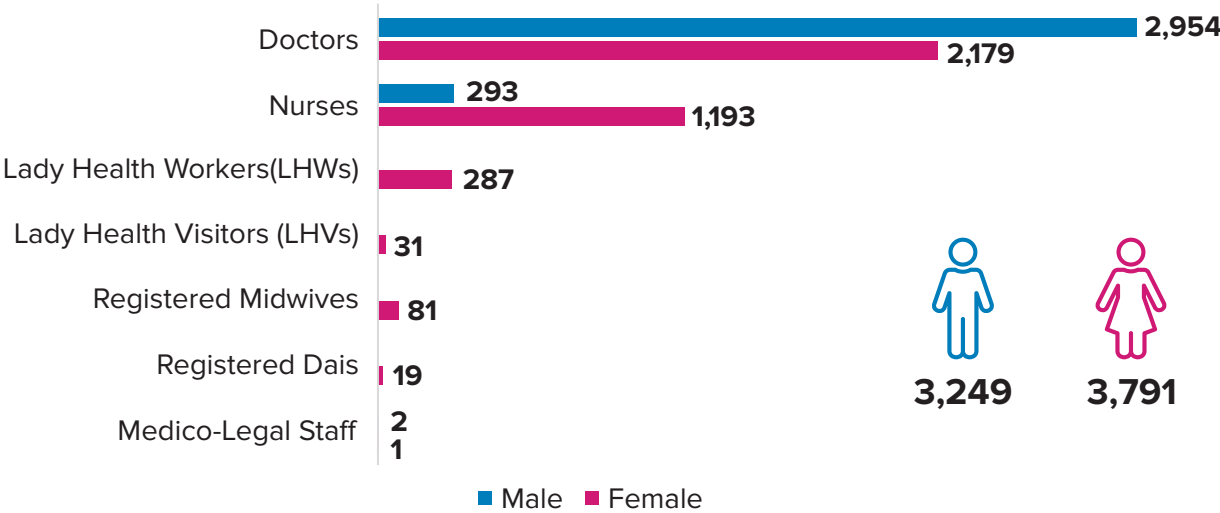
4.4.3 Mental Health Institutes



Source: Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority

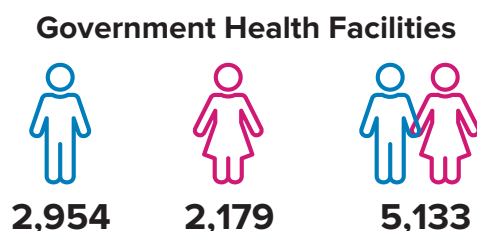
Islamabad lacks a dedicated mental health institute, either public or private. However, the city does have several clinics and treatment centers for individuals seeking mental health support. These facilities can be broadly categorized into two types: rehabilitation centers, which primarily focus on treating individuals with drug-related challenges, and psychological clinics, which offer therapy and support for various mental health issues. The ratio of rehabilitation centers to psychological clinics is approximately 14:1, highlighting a significant imbalance and indicating a greater focus on addressing substance abuse compared to broader psychological care in the city.

4.5 Public Sector Healthcare Staff



Source: PIMS, District Health Office, IHRA, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

4.5.1 Doctors

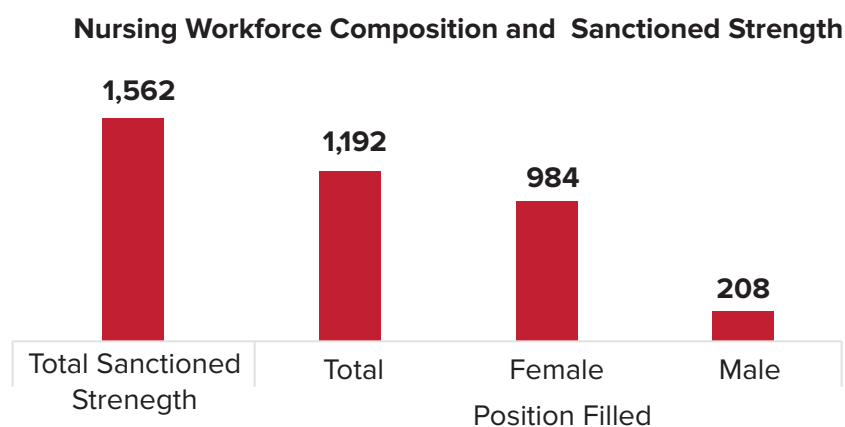


Source: PIMS, District Health Office, IHRA, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

In government health facilities, a total of 5,133 doctors are employed, with 2,954 males and 2,179 females. Women make up approximately 42 percent of the workforce, indicating a significant gender imbalance. Despite this, female doctors play a crucial role in addressing the health needs of women and children, especially in culturally sensitive areas where women often prefer female practitioners.

The gender parity ratio (GPR) for doctors further highlights this imbalance, with approximately 0.74 female doctors for every male doctor, underscoring the need for greater representation of women in the medical profession.

4.5.2 Nurses



Among the nursing staff, women occupy approximately 83 percent of all filled positions. However, when compared to the total sanctioned strength, female nurses occupy about 63 percent of available positions, while male nurses account for only 13 percent.

This disparity not only highlights the significant underrepresentation of men in the field but also underscores the overall staffing gap, with nearly 24 percent of the sanctioned positions remaining vacant. The gender parity ratio (GPR) further reflects this imbalance, with approximately 4.73 female nurses for every male nurse. Addressing these workforce shortages and encouraging greater male participation could help create a more balanced and resilient nursing workforce.

Nursing has historically been a profession predominantly pursued by women, both in Pakistan and globally. The reasons behind this gender dominance are less empowering, as studies show

that nursing is often viewed as "female work," associated with low skills, social status, salary, academic level, and autonomy.⁹⁸

4.5.3 Lady Health Workers (LHWs)



Source: PIMS, District Health Office, IHRA, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

Lady Health Workers (LHWs) play a vital role in Pakistan's primary healthcare system, acting as the first point of contact for communities in rural and underserved areas. Their efforts are critical in improving maternal and child health outcomes through initiatives like education, immunization campaigns, and ensuring access to basic health services. Islamabad has 309 LHW health houses at the community level, with a density of 0.15 per 1,000 population—significantly lower than the national average of 0.43 per 1,000 population. With the updated figure of 287 LHWs currently employed, this density drops further to approximately 0.14 LHWs per 1,000 population. This underscores the urgent need to increase their numbers to meet national benchmarks and address healthcare gaps in the region.

4.5.4 Registered Midwives (LHVs, CMWs, Nurse Midwife)



Source: PIMS, District Health Office, IHRA, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

Lady Health Visitors (LHVs), numbering 31, represent a specialized and entirely female workforce. They play a crucial role in maternal and child healthcare by providing antenatal care, advice on family planning, and guidance for managing common illnesses in infants and mothers. Their contribution is indispensable, particularly in underserved communities.

Additionally, 81 registered midwives are employed in the public healthcare sector. These midwives provide expert care during childbirth and are instrumental in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality. They are especially critical in areas where hospital access is limited, ensuring safe deliveries and promoting healthy breastfeeding practices.

⁹⁸ Teresa-Morales, C., Rodríguez-Pérez, M., Araujo-Hernández, M., & Feria-Ramírez, C. (2022). Current Stereotypes Associated with Nursing and Nursing Professionals: An Integrative Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(13), 7640. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19137640>

4.5.5 Registered 'Dais'

Registered
Dais



19

Source: PIMS, District Health Office, IHRA, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

Only 19 registered dais were reported. These traditional birth attendants often work alongside midwives and LHV's in rural communities. Their role, though less formalised, is vital for providing culturally sensitive and accessible care for pregnant women and assisting in deliveries. In Islamabad, only Polyclinic Hospital reported employing dais, with no other healthcare facilities hosting them.

4.5.6 Medico-legal Staff



2



1



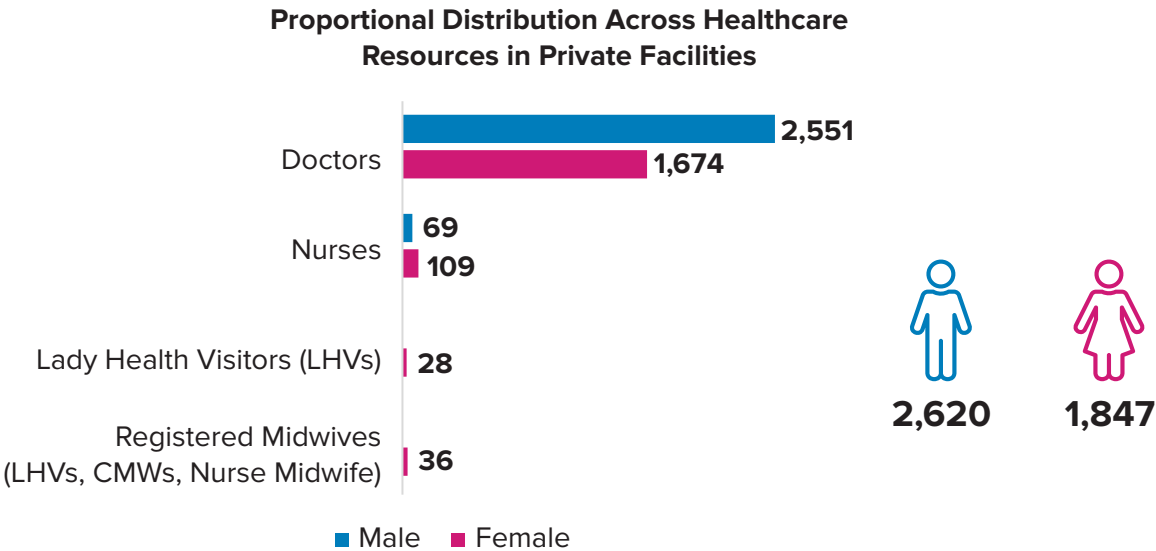
3

Source: PIMS, District Health Office, IHRA, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

Medico-Legal Officers (MLOs) are medical professionals responsible for conducting forensic medical examinations, documenting injuries, determining causes of death, and collecting medical evidence for legal cases involving assault, abuse, accidents, or unnatural deaths. Female MLOs are essential for handling sensitive cases, especially those involving women and children.

Across Islamabad, only 3 MLOs were reported, comprising 1 female and 2 males. The gender ratio here is 1:2, or a gender parity index (GPR) of 0.5, reflecting male predominance in this specialized field.

4.6 Private Sector Healthcare Staff



Source: Islamabad Health Regulatory Authority

4.6.1 Doctors

In private healthcare facilities, there are 4,225 doctors, with 2,551 males and 1,674 females. The gender parity ratio (GPR) for doctors in private settings is approximately 0.66 females per male, reflecting a more significant male dominance compared to government facilities.

4.6.2 Nurses

Private healthcare facilities employ 178 nurses, comprising 69 males and 109 females. This results in a gender parity ratio (GPR) of 1.58 females per male, showing that nursing, while still female-dominated, has more male representation in private facilities than in government ones.

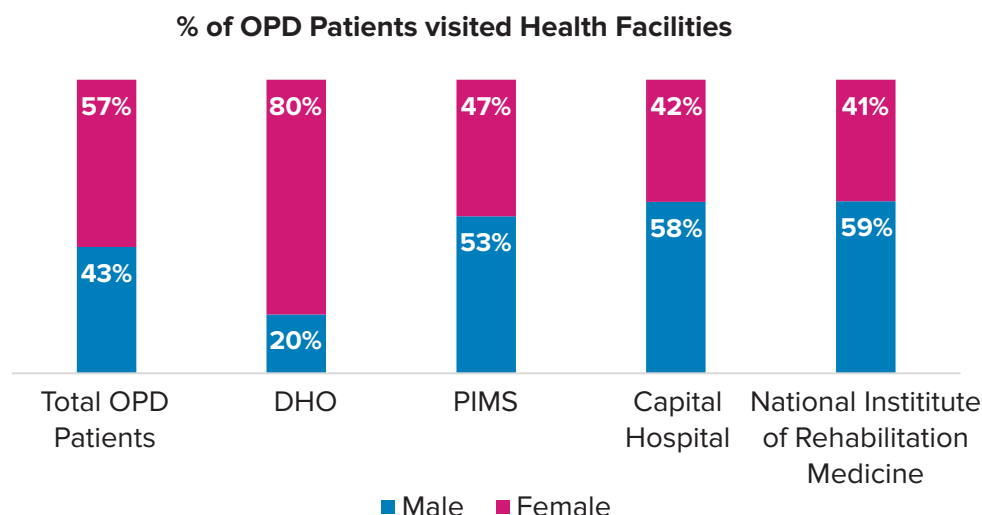
4.6.3 Registered Midwives (LHVs, CMWs, Nurse Midwife)

A total of 28 Lady Health Visitors (LHVs), all female, are employed in private facilities. LHVs continue to play an essential role in providing maternal and child health services, particularly in urban private clinics. Their presence ensures continuity of care for women and children who might prefer private over public health facilities.

Moreover, there are 36 registered midwives in private healthcare facilities. Similar to their role in the public sector, midwives assist with childbirth and provide critical antenatal and postnatal care, ensuring better outcomes for mothers and newborns.

4.7 Public Sector Healthcare Facilities

4.7.1 OPD Patients Visiting Health Facilities



The data highlights a distinct pattern in healthcare utilisation between men and women. Overall, a total of 1,186,333 male OPD patients were observed, while 1,568,816 females utilised OPD services, indicating a higher number of female visits (56.9 percent) compared to males (43.1 percent) in public sector health facilities.

Further analysis of OPD visits across different healthcare levels reveals notable gender disparities. At the District Health Office (DHO) level, females make up 80 percent of OPD visits (685,443) compared to 20 percent by males (171,361). This indicates that women primarily utilize basic healthcare services, which account for 44 percent of all female OPD visits. This is likely due to their need for maternal, reproductive, and child health consultations, as well as greater accessibility to primary health centres compared to tertiary-level care.

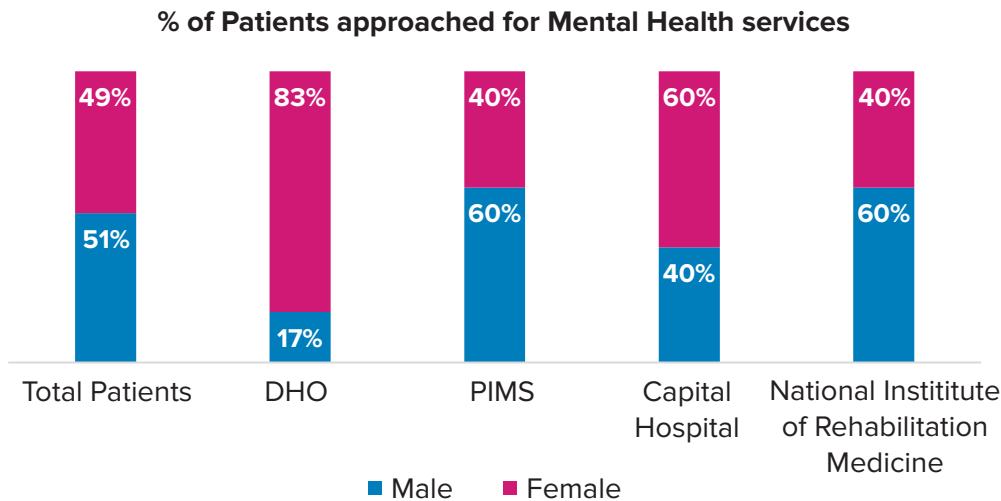
At tertiary care hospitals, gender distribution shows a similar pattern across facilities. At PIMS, 1,014,972 males (53.46 percent) accessed OPD services compared to 883,373 females (46.54 percent). A comparable trend is observed at the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (NIRM), where 74,419 males (58.7 percent) utilized OPD services compared to 52,474 females (41.3 percent). Similarly, at Capital Hospital, 7,297 males (58.4 percent) accessed OPD services compared to 5,200 females (41.6 percent). These figures highlight a consistent pattern where male utilization of tertiary care facilities slightly exceeds that of females, likely due to differences in health-seeking behaviors and the types of health issues requiring specialized care.

These patterns suggest that women are more likely to access primary healthcare services, while men are more inclined toward tertiary hospital care. A study within Pakistan's neighbouring regions found a similar pattern, where a high drop off rate was noted among female outpatients, i.e., it was found that there is a strong gender bias when it comes to women's access to healthcare at the tertiary-care level.⁹⁹ Similarly, another study found that women have a higher

⁹⁹ Kapoor, M., Agrawal, D., Ravi, S., et al. (2019). Missing female patients: An observational analysis of sex ratio among outpatients in a referral tertiary care public hospital. *BMJ Open*, 9(3), e026850. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-026850>

rate of consultation (32 percent) than men.¹⁰⁰ The reasons may include differences in health needs, health-seeking behaviour, and the accessibility of healthcare facilities, as primary healthcare facilities are generally easier for women to access.

4.7.2 Patients Approached for Mental Health Services



The data reveals significant trends in mental health service utilization across primary and tertiary care facilities, highlighting both gender and facility-based disparities. A total of 37,903 patients sought mental health services, with males accounting for 51.3 percent (19,445) and females 48.7 percent (18,458). While the overall gender gap is narrower compared to other healthcare services, notable disparities exist across different facilities.

At the primary healthcare level, such as the District Health Office (DHO), a higher proportion of women approached for mental health services, with females comprising 82.6 percent of cases (119 out of 144). This suggests that women often seek initial guidance at local facilities, aligning with the DHO's role in directing patients to specialized care rather than providing extensive mental health services directly.

In contrast, at tertiary care facilities, the gender distribution varies. At PIMS, males constitute the majority of patients (60.1 percent, or 13,120 out of 21,836), reflecting a notable gender gap in mental health service utilisation at this level. However, at Capital Hospital, females make up the majority of mental health patients (60.4 percent, or 9,623 out of 15,923), indicating a facility-specific trend. Similarly, at the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (NIRM), males slightly outnumber females, with 60.1 percent (9,992) male patients compared to 39.9 percent (6,641) females.

These trends underscore the complex interplay of gender-specific barriers, facility access, and cultural factors influencing mental health service utilisation. The data emphasises the need to address gender-specific barriers, strengthen the referral system, and ensure equitable access to mental health services across all levels of care.

¹⁰⁰ Wang, Y., Hunt, K., Nazareth, I., et al. (2013). Do men consult less than women? An analysis of routinely collected UK general practice data. *BMJ Open*, 3(e003320). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2013-003320>

4.8 Maternal and Child Health Services (Public Sector)

Facilities	Total Number
Total Births	22,145
Births by Caesarean Section	8,986
Low Birth Weight (LBW) Babies	1,218
Family Planning Visits to Public Health Facilities	78,055
Anemia in Women Utilizing Antenatal Care (ANC)	5,125
Women Utilizing Antenatal Care (ANC) Coverage	49,514
Women receiving Maternal Immunization with at least 2 doses of Tetanus Diphtheria	32,498

Source: PIMS, District Health Office, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

4.8.1 Births in Health Facilities

A total of 22,145 births occurred in health facilities, reflecting considerable utilisation of institutional delivery services. This high number underscores the importance of health facilities in providing safe childbirth options, reducing maternal and neonatal complications.

One Islamabad-based study found the institutional delivery rates in the city's squatter community to be strikingly high, with 96.9 percent of women delivering at government or private healthcare facilities. In contrast, only 3.1 percent of women reported delivering at home. This shows a strong preference for institutional care, which is essential for reducing maternal and neonatal mortality through skilled attendance at birth.¹⁰¹

4.8.2 Births by Caesarean Section in Health Facilities

Out of the total facility-based births, 8,986 were Caesarean sections, accounting for approximately 40.6 percent of all deliveries. This rate suggests a significant reliance on surgical interventions, which may indicate either a high level of complications, requiring C-sections or potentially an overuse of the procedure in some cases.

These results contrast a study on a similar subject. The study found that among 416 women from the squatter community in Islamabad, 77.0 percent of the respondents had vaginal deliveries, while 23.3 percent reported undergoing caesarean sections.¹⁰²

4.8.3 Low Birth Weight (LBW) Babies

Gender-disaggregated data on low birth weight (LBW) births from a tertiary care facility found that approximately 2 percent of both male and female children were reported as LBW. However, there was a slight predominance of male babies, with a ratio of 0.0183 (1.83 percent) for males and 0.0151 (1.51 percent) for females. These findings suggest no significant gender disparity in

¹⁰¹ Tauhidi, L., Mureed, S., Raza, T. E., Hamid, S., Hanif, K., & Emmanuel, F. (2023). Measuring coverage of essential maternal postnatal care services in the squatter settlements of Islamabad Capital Territory in Pakistan. *International Journal of Social Determinants of Health and Health Services*, 53(3), 294–302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27551938231170834>

¹⁰² Ibid.

LBW rates within the population reported by this facility. This uniformity may reflect equitable healthcare interventions or the absence of gender-specific factors influencing LBW outcomes in this context. Further statistical analysis and exploration of additional factors, such as maternal health and socioeconomic status, could provide more insights into these findings.

4.8.4 Family Planning Visits to Public Health Facilities

Public health facilities recorded 78,055 family planning visits, indicating robust utilisation of reproductive health services. These visits are critical in supporting birth spacing and preventing high-risk pregnancies, ultimately contributing to improved maternal and child health outcomes.

The significant number of family planning visits (78,055) and institutional deliveries (22,145) reflect a strong social emphasis on maternal and reproductive health, with interventions to ensure safe delivery and postpartum care.

4.8.5 Anaemia in Women Utilising Antenatal Care (ANC)

Antenatal care (ANC) coverage reached 49,514 women, highlighting significant engagement with preventive maternal health services. However, 5,125 women utilising ANC were diagnosed with anaemia, suggesting that approximately 10.4 percent of pregnant women attending ANC were affected.

Anaemia remains a critical issue that requires targeted nutritional interventions and supplementation to improve maternal and neonatal health outcomes. High ANC utilisation (49,514 women) likely contributed to the identification of maternal anaemia (5,125 cases).

4.8.6 Women Utilising Antenatal Care (ANC) Coverage

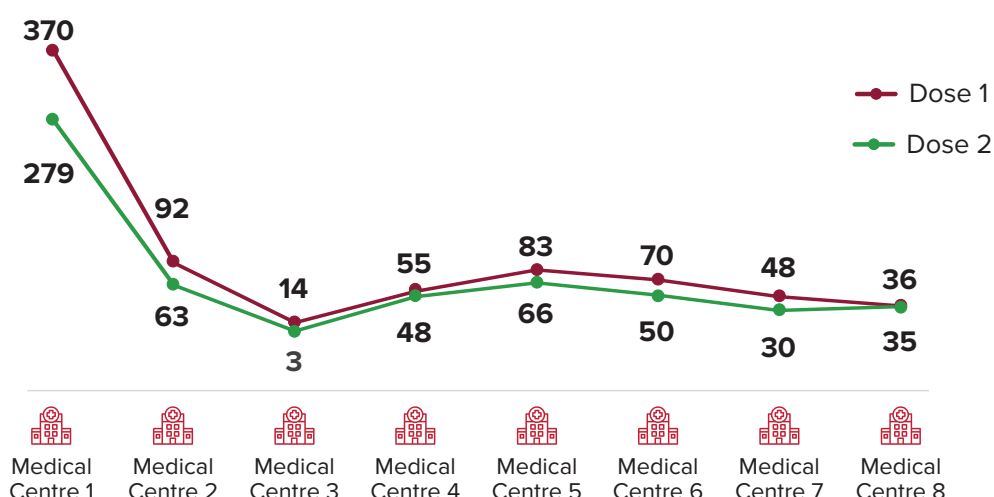
Findings from research conducted in Islamabad revealed high antenatal care (ANC) utilisation among 416 women surveyed. Approximately 95.9 percent of the women received ANC at least once during their last pregnancy, with an impressive 71.2 percent reporting eight or more antenatal contacts.¹⁰³

4.8.7 Women Receiving Maternal Immunization with at least 2 doses of Tetanus Diphtheria

In alignment with the National Immunization Policy 2022, the immunization schedule for pregnant women now includes the Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) vaccine, replacing the previously administered Tetanus Toxoid (TT).¹⁰⁴ According to the policy, all women during their first pregnancy are to receive two doses of Td, as part of routine immunization. Maternal immunization coverage with at least two doses of Td was recorded for 32,498 women, representing approximately 65.6 percent of those attending ANC. This reflects substantial progress in preventing neonatal tetanus, particularly given the high ANC utilisation of 49,514 women, which facilitates access to preventive measures like tetanus immunization.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Expanded Programme on Immunization. (2022). National Immunization Policy 2022. Government of Pakistan. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/NationalImmunizationPolicy2022-compressed.pdf>



Despite these achievements, the data reveals a significant drop-off in the completion of the two-dose schedule. While 57 percent of women received the first dose of the Td vaccine, only 43 percent proceeded to receive the second dose, reflecting a 30percent drop-off rate. This highlights the need for strengthened follow-up mechanisms and targeted interventions to address barriers, ensuring more women complete the recommended vaccination series and further improving maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

4.9 Health Issues Related to Pregnancy (Public Sector Facilities)

Issues Related to Pregnancy	No of Females
D&C Services provided by Health Facilities	1,582
Women diagnosed with Fistula	127
Women who received surgical treatment for Fistula	127

Source: PIMS, District Health Office, Polyclinic, Federal Government Hospital, Federal Government Dispensary, National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, Capital Hospital, Airport Health Establishment

4.9.1 D&C Services Provided by Health Facilities

In Pakistan, Dilation and Curettage (D&C) is part of therapeutic abortion/post-abortion care and is incorporated in the Essential Package in Health Services, wherein it falls under the overarching umbrella of management of miscarriage or incomplete abortion and post abortion care being the responsibility of the district health management.¹⁰⁵

A total of 1,582 females received Dilation and Curettage (D&C) services at health facilities, representing a significant aspect of reproductive health services provided. Given the 21,659 deliveries recorded in health facilities, the D&C cases amount to approximately 7 percent of all facility-based births, likely addressing complications such as incomplete miscarriages or retained products of conception. This emphasises the critical role of health facilities in managing both routine and emergency obstetric care.

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Secretariat & World Health Organization. (2020). *UHC benefit package of Pakistan – Essential package of health services*.

A nationwide study using the WHO Service Availability and Readiness Assessment (SARA) tool evaluated the capacity of public sector healthcare facilities in 12 districts, including Islamabad, to provide therapeutic abortion and post-abortion care (PAC). The findings revealed critically low readiness, with only 8.4 percent facilities offering therapeutic abortion services and 14.3 percent providing PAC.¹⁰⁶

In Islamabad, no facilities had all the readiness components in place to deliver these services, including Dilatation and Curettage (D&C). While D&C is claimed to be available in 59 percent of the facilities nationwide for therapeutic abortion and 55 percent for PAC, the availability of essential D&C kits is alarmingly low, reported at only 21.8 percent.¹⁰⁷

4.9.2 Women Diagnosed with and Treated for Fistula

Out of the 127 women diagnosed with obstetric fistula, all received surgical treatment, achieving a 100 percent treatment rate. This is a notable success, especially in the context of 21,659 facility-based births, as fistulas are often associated with prolonged or obstructed labour. The high treatment coverage indicates an effective healthcare response, but continued focus on timely obstetric care and preventive measures, such as skilled birth attendance, remains essential to reduce the incidence of fistulas.

4.10 Budget

4.10.1 Healthcare Budget

The government allocated Rs 24.2 billion to the Ministry of National Health Services and Regulations for the fiscal year 2023-24, reflecting an increase from Rs 19.582 billion in 2022-23 (which was later revised to Rs 22.46 billion).¹⁰⁸ According to the 2023-24 Budget in Brief, Rs 32 million has been earmarked for medical products, appliances, and equipment, compared to Rs 31 million in the previous fiscal year. Hospital services have received Rs 16.57 billion, up from Rs 14.87 billion in 2022-23, which was revised to Rs 15.06 billion. Public health services have been allocated Rs 3.11 billion, a significant increase from the initial Rs 1.001 billion in 2022-23, which was later revised to Rs 4.44 billion. Additionally, Rs 4.5 billion has been set aside for health administration services, compared to Rs 3.69 billion last year, which was revised down to Rs 2.93 billion.

¹⁰⁶ Mahipala, P. G., Afzal, S., Uzma, Q., et al. (2023). An assessment of facility readiness for comprehensive abortion care in 12 districts of Pakistan using the WHO Service Availability and Readiness Assessment tool. *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 31(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2023.2178265>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Azad, A. R. (2023, June 10). Rs24.2bn earmarked for health ministry. *Business Recorder*. <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40247009>

4.11 HIV/AIDS

4.11.1 HIV Prevalence Rate (Ages 15-49)

Pakistan has witnessed a troubling escalation in HIV cases since its first reported case in 1987 and the initial outbreak in 2004. The country now faces the second-fastest rate of AIDS breakdown globally. In 2018, an epidemic in Kot Imrana, Sargodha revealed a prevalence rate of 1.3 percent, linked to the reuse of contaminated needles by drug abusers.¹⁰⁹

The Government of Pakistan is firmly committed to eradicating the AIDS epidemic by 2030, aligning with the global 95-95-95 HIV milestones which calls for 95 percent of all people living with HIV to know their HIV status, 95 percent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection to receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 95 percent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy to have viral suppression by 2025. It is, therefore, crucial to address healthcare and societal imbalances to ensure that no one is marginalised or left behind.

HIV Prevalence Rate (in%)			
Sex	Jan 22 - Dec 22	Jan 23 - Dec 23	Jan 24 -Dec 24
Male (15-49)	0.32	0.34	0.37
Female (15-49)	0.08	0.08	0.09

Source: Common Management Unit for AIDS, TB, and Malaria

To assess the national prevalence data for HIV/AIDS between the years 2022-2024, the National AIDS Control Programme was engaged. The national-level HIV prevalence data for Pakistan among males and females aged 15–49 from January 2022 to December 2024 shows a consistent upward trend, particularly among males. The prevalence rate for males increased from 0.32 percent in 2022 to 0.34 percent in 2023 (a 6.25 percent relative rise) and further to 0.37 percent in 2024, representing an overall increase of 15.63 percent over the three years. In contrast, the prevalence among females remained stable at 0.08 percent from 2022 to 2023, before slightly increasing to 0.09 percent in 2024, reflecting a 12.5 percent relative increase. The data highlights a significant gender disparity, with the prevalence consistently four times higher in males than in females, indicating that males are at greater risk or more exposed to factors contributing to HIV transmission.

These trends suggest an urgent need for targeted interventions, particularly for men, to address risk factors and promote safer practices. For women, although the prevalence is lower, the recent increase signals the need for strengthening prevention programmes, particularly in vulnerable populations.

¹⁰⁹ Aizaz, M., Abbas, F. A., Abbas, A., Tabassum, S., & Obeagu, E. I. (2023). Alarming rise in HIV cases in Pakistan: Challenges and future recommendations at hand. *Health science reports*, 6(8), e1450. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hsr2.1450>

4.11.2 Patients in HIV/AIDs Treatment Centres

Across Pakistan, there are 94 antiretroviral therapy (ART) centres and Islamabad hosts two of these centres: in PIMS and Polyclinic.¹¹⁰ The centre at PIMS has been in place since 2005, while the treatment centre at Polyclinic opened in 2022 due to the increasing number of HIV patients.

HIV Registered Patients ICT-Federal (Consolidated)			
Sex	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24
Male (15+)	2,511	2,749	2,927
Female (15+)	624	695	716
Transgender (15+)	203	298	375

Source: Common Management Unit for AIDS, TB, and Malaria

The data on registered HIV patients in Islamabad for males, females, and transgender individuals aged 15 and above shows a consistent increase across all demographic groups.

Among males, the number of registered cases rose from 2,511 in 2022 to 2,749 in 2023 (a 9.47 percent increase) and further to 2,927 in 2024, marking a cumulative rise of 16.55 percent. Similarly, cases among females increased from 624 in 2022 to 695 in 2023 (an 11.38 percent rise) and reached 716 in 2024, reflecting a cumulative increase of 14.74 percent. Transgender individuals, however, experienced the most significant growth, with registered cases rising from 203 in 2022 to 298 in 2023 (a 46.80 percent increase) and reaching 375 in 2024, representing an 84.73 percent cumulative rise over the three years. While males consistently represent the highest number of cases, the sharp increase in transgender cases highlights their heightened vulnerability and the need for targeted interventions. This upward trend in registered cases could reflect an actual increase in infections, improved detection, or greater accessibility to healthcare services in Islamabad. When compared to national data, the trends align with the overall rise in HIV prevalence.

4.12 Cancer

4.12.1 Cancer Patients

The analysis of cancer data highlights significant gender disparities across various types. Breast cancer emerges as the most prevalent cancer among females, with 245 cases, predominantly affecting those aged 40–59 (124 cases) and 60+ (86 cases). In stark contrast, only two cases are recorded in males. Lung cancer shows a reversed pattern, being significantly more common in males, with 33 cases compared to 7 in females. Among males, most cases occur in the 40–59 (10 cases) and 60+ (18 cases) age groups, likely influenced by risk factors such as smoking and occupational hazards.

Benign neoplasms show notable prevalence in both genders, with 303 cases in females and 178 in males. For females, these cases peak in the 40–59 (121 cases) and 60+ (117 cases) age groups, while males show a similar trend with 72 and 74 cases, respectively, in these age brackets. This

¹¹⁰ Common Management Unit: AIDS, TB & Malaria, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, National AIDS Control Programme. Retrieved on February 13, 2025 from <https://www.cmu.gov.pk/nacp-national-aids-control-programme/nacp-national-aids-control-programme-treatment/>

indicates potential disparities in healthcare access or biological factors contributing to the differences in incidence rates. Colorectal cancer exhibits a more balanced gender distribution, with 28 cases in females and 31 in males. The majority of cases in both genders occur in the 40–59 and 60+ age groups, suggesting the importance of general preventive measures across both populations.

Overall, cancer incidence rises significantly in the 40–59 and 60+ age groups for both genders, emphasizing the need for age-specific screening and interventions.

CANCER TYPE	Female (Age-wise)							Male (Age-wise)							Total
	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-59	60+	Total of type (F)	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-59	60+	Total of type (M)	
(UNDEFINED)	2	4	3	7	15	20	51	3	2	3	11	13	41	73	124
Colorectum	0	1	1	3	13	10	28	0	0	3	8	7	13	31	59
Lung	0	0	0	1	4	2	7	0	1	0	4	10	18	33	40
Breast	0	0	4	31	124	86	245	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	247
Benign neoplasms	1	9	10	45	121	117	303	11	9	11	72	74	1	178	481

Source: NORI Hospital Islamabad

4.13 Conclusion

Our report highlights critical healthcare challenges and opportunities for improvement, emphasizing the need for a more responsive and inclusive system. The strong reliance on primary healthcare centers for women's health and mental health services underscores the importance of strengthening these facilities with adequate resources, trained personnel, and integrated mental health support. The gender disparity in the nursing workforce calls for policies that promote inclusivity. The fact that drug rehabilitation centers outnumber psychological care facilities points to a significant gap in addressing broader mental health concerns beyond substance use disorders. While substance abuse treatment is essential, this disparity indicates that individuals struggling with conditions such as depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders may not have sufficient access to specialized care. The healthcare system must work toward integrating mental health services into existing infrastructure by expanding the number of psychological care facilities and incorporating mental health support within drug rehabilitation programs.

The concerning drop-off rate in Td immunization indicates gaps in follow-up mechanisms and awareness, necessitating stronger outreach and digital tracking systems. While in ICT, the lower prevalence of low birth weight suggests positive maternal health trends, continued investment in prenatal care is essential to maintain these gains.

Furthermore, the sharp rise in cancer incidence among older adults highlights the urgency of improving early detection and preventive care, particularly for breast and colorectal cancer. Equally concerning is the consistent increase in HIV/AIDS cases in ICT, with transgender individuals experiencing the highest surge, underscoring the need for targeted prevention strategies and more inclusive healthcare policies. Addressing these issues requires a data-driven, multi-sectoral approach, prioritizing equitable healthcare access, awareness campaigns,

and policy reforms to ensure a healthier and more resilient population. The following section outlines some of the critical interventions required.

4.14 Recommendations

1. Unified Patient Identification

Implementing a "One Patient, One ID" system is essential to ensuring seamless, accurate, and accessible healthcare data across all medical facilities. A unified identification system will eliminate duplication, minimise data loss and improve continuity of care, ultimately enabling more efficient patient management and facilitating high-impact research and policy planning.

2. Tackling Physician Absenteeism

A nationwide socio-cultural shift is required to address the chronic issue of missing doctors and absenteeism in healthcare facilities. A strategic campaign should be launched to reshape the perception of female doctors to continue medical practice after marriage. Policy incentives and professional development opportunities must also be introduced to retain trained physicians in the workforce.

3. Increasing Accessibility in Medical Practice

Structural reforms are necessary to ensure that medical professionals can sustain long-term careers. This includes establishing daycare centers within hospitals, enforcing comprehensive maternal and paternal leave policies, and creating flexible work arrangements. Additionally, alternative medical practice models such as telemedicine and telehealth services should be expanded, allowing physicians to provide care remotely and increasing healthcare accessibility, particularly in underserved areas.

4. Strengthening the Referral System

To prevent patient loss between primary and tertiary care, a robust referral tracking system must be implemented. This system should ensure that patients referred from primary health facilities are monitored through digital records, receive automated follow-up reminders, and have streamlined pathways for specialist care. Such a framework would enhance care continuity and improve patient outcomes.

5. Mandating Data Reporting for Private Healthcare

Regulatory bodies such as IHRA must mandate regular reporting of service utilization and outpatient department (OPD) data by private healthcare providers. Compliance should be enforced through penalties for non-compliance and incentives for adherence, with all data integrated into a centralised digital repository. This will enhance transparency, facilitate better resource allocation, and support evidence-based healthcare policymaking.

6. Strengthening Primary Healthcare Facilities

As the first point of contact for most patients, primary healthcare centers (PHCs) must be strengthened to offer comprehensive care, especially for women who frequently return to PHCs even after tertiary referrals. Preventative health services should be prioritised to reduce the disease burden, and PHCs should be upgraded with enhanced diagnostic

capabilities, better-trained personnel, and expanded service provision to improve community health outcomes.

7. Addressing Gender Disparity in Nursing

The underrepresentation of male nurses highlights an urgent need to promote nursing as a viable profession for all genders. Targeted awareness campaigns, scholarship opportunities, and policy interventions should be introduced to encourage gender diversity within the nursing workforce, ensuring a balanced and sustainable healthcare system.

8. Implementing Age-Specific Cancer Screening

With cancer rates rising significantly in individuals aged 40–59 and 60+, early detection must be prioritised. A structured, nationwide age-specific cancer screening program should be implemented, particularly for breast cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, and benign neoplasms. This initiative should include mass awareness campaigns, mobile screening units for remote areas, and subsidised diagnostic services to enhance early diagnosis and improve survival rates.

9. Accelerating HIV/AIDS Response and Expanding ART Access

To achieve Pakistan's 95-95-95 HIV/AIDS targets—where 95 percent of individuals know their status, 95 percent of diagnosed patients receive antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 95 percent of those on treatment achieve viral suppression—a multi-pronged approach is required:

- Aggressive HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns that encourage early testing, reduce stigma, and promote safe practices.
- Targeted outreach for high-risk populations, including transgender communities, sex workers, and intravenous drug users, ensuring culturally sensitive interventions.
- Expansion of ART centers to hotspots, ensuring accessibility for those needing continuous treatment. Increased investment should focus on scaling up infrastructure, improving ART drug supply chains, and integrating more ART therapy services into existing healthcare facilities.

4.15 Appendix

CANCER TYPE	Female (Age-wise)							Male (Age-wise)							Total
	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-59	60+	Total of type (F)	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-59	60+	Total of type (M)	
(UNDEFINED)	2	4	3	7	15	20	51	3	2	3	11	13	41	73	124
Oral Cavity	0	0	0	2	6	9	17	0	0	1	2	7	8	18	35
Salivary Glands	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	9
Other Pharynx	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	6
Nasopharynx	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	2	5	8
Esophagus	0	0	0	0	3	4	7	0	0	0	3	1	7	11	18
Stomach	0	0	0	1	3	1	5	0	0	0	4	5	10	19	24
Small intestine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	4
Colorectum	0	1	1	3	13	10	28	0	0	3	8	7	13	31	59
Liver	0	0	0	0	5	3	8	0	0	0	10	6	17	33	41
Gallbladder	0	0	0	0	3	5	8	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	11
Pancreas	0	0	0	0	1	4	5	0	0	0	1	2	3	6	11
Larynx	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	11	19	19
Lung	0	0	0	1	4	2	7	0	1	0	4	10	18	33	40
Bone	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	7	8
Skin	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	1	1	0	5	10	17	22
Sarcomas	0	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	3	3	5	11	14
Breast	0	0	4	31	124	86	245	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	247
Female Organs (Others)	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

CANCER TYPE	Female (Age-wise)						Male (Age-wise)						Total		
	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-59	60+	Total of type (F)	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-59		60+	Total of type (M)
Cervix	0	0	0	2	1	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Uterus	0	0	1	2	7	24	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34
Ovary	0	2	2	4	20	9	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37
Male Organs (Others)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	11	15	29	29
Prostate	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	2	16	22	23
Testis	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	4	4	7	16	17
Kidney	0	1	0	3	6	3	13	2	0	3	4	3	15	27	40
Bladder	0	2	0	5	4	2	13	0	0	1	2	2	8	13	26
CNS	2	0	1	5	3	5	16	1	1	2	3	5	1	13	29
Thyroid	0	0	4	4	9	6	23	0	0	0	2	3	3	8	31
Endocrine glands	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	4	8	10
MOU	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	3	5	11	13
Hodgkins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	6	6
NHL	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	6	9	11
Leukemia	1	3	2	3	3	1	13	2	4	1	6	1	13	27	40
Benign neoplasms	1	9	10	45	121	117	303	11	9	11	72	74	1	178	481
Neoplasms of uncertain or unknown behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total per age	6	24	30	120	361	329	870	24	22	28	155	186	252	667	1537

Source: NORI Hospital Islamabad



05

EDUCATION

EDUCATION



Key Findings

- Islamabad has very healthy gender parity ratios in most aspects of its education sector.
- More females are enrolled in rural areas of Islamabad compared to urban areas. Islamabad urban area falls under Zone 1 and Zone 2, rural Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) lies in Zones 3-5 with a higher geographical area and population; moreover, households overall are progressive about female students' education, whilst male students in poor households may be vulnerable to child labour to supplement household income.
- Of children enrolled in public sector schools the Gender Parity Ratio is 1.4 favouring females, whilst it is 0.82 in private schools with female students lagging behind male students
- Households tend to spend more on male students attending private school compared to female students.
- Enrolment of females in vocational institutions is 60.3 percent, dropping to 41.1 percent in technical institutions compared with male counterparts.
- In higher education institutes, the gender parity ratio between female and male graduates in 2023 was 1.09, with females outnumbering males in tertiary education.
- There are 87 percent female teachers in private schools compared to 39.8 percent at tertiary level. When it comes to senior positions in public sector such as Vice Chancellors in universities, only 4 percent are women highlighting gender gaps in senior decision-making roles.

Introduction

This chapter examines gender parity in the education sector within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). It begins with an overview of global educational commitments before narrowing its focus to Pakistan's national context. It then provides a detailed profile of ICT, covering key indicators such as literacy rates, net enrolment rates, survival rates, the number of out-of-school children, and gross enrolment rates.

The analysis is structured around three core areas: institutes and enrolments, teachers and administration, and basic facilities. The first section, focusing on institutes and enrolments, provides a multi-tiered examination of educational participation. It explores enrolment trends from primary to high school, including formal, non-formal, special, and religious institutions, across both public and private sectors. The review then extends to higher secondary and TVET education, including degree colleges, before culminating in an analysis of tertiary education, with a particular focus on university enrolment and participation in STEM programmes across Islamabad's 22 universities offering such courses.

The subsequent section on teachers and administration examines gender representation among educators and administrators across all levels of education. Finally, the chapter evaluates the provision of essential facilities, assessing their availability and equitable distribution based on gender.

5.1 Education and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 emphasizes equal education for all genders, advocating for free and inclusive primary and secondary education for both male and female students. It promotes safe, inclusive, and gender-equal learning environments to ensure that no one is left behind.

SDG 4 includes ten targets with associated indicators spanning early childhood to adult education. These targets focus on expanding access to learner-centered education, improving ICT skills, and providing scholarships for marginalized communities.¹¹¹ Additionally, SDG 4 calls for enabling and safe educational premises, equipped with inclusive infrastructure to accommodate students of all genders and abilities, supported by an adequately trained and capable workforce.¹¹²

In line with its international commitments under the UN SDGs 2030 (2015–30), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1999), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), instructed that States must ensure that women have equal rights with men in education, including equal access to schools, vocational training, curricula and educational resources.

Article 25-A of the Constitution mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 5 to 16 years without discrimination, reinforcing the country's commitment to inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all.¹¹³

¹¹¹ UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, Targets and Indicators, https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4#targets_and_indicators

¹¹² Ibid, Targets 4.5, 4.a and 4.c.

¹¹³ National Assembly of Pakistan. (n.d.). The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Retrieved from https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf

While there are areas of progress in gender equality, Pakistan continues to face significant disparities in education. The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report 2024 ranks Pakistan 139 out of 146 countries in terms of educational attainment.¹¹⁴ According to Pakistan's Population Census 2023, the overall literacy rate stands at 60.65 percent, with a significant gender gap: 68 percent for males, 52.84 percent for females, and 40.15 percent for transgender individuals.¹¹⁵ 25.37 million children remain out of school, with female students comprising 53 percent (13.41 million) of this total. These figures highlight the urgent need for targeted policies to bridge the gender gap and improve access to education across all demographic groups.¹¹⁶

Despite country-level challenges, Islamabad has shown promising trends and significant educational reforms, which have accelerated since March 2024. These initiatives have been led by the Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT), along with affiliated units such as the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), National Book Foundation (NBF), National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), and Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE).

These efforts aim to provide state-of-the-art, 21st-century learning opportunities, encompassing foundational education, early childhood care and education (ECCE), technology, science, coding, AI skills, robotics, entrepreneurship, sports, climate change education, and value-based learning.

In less than a year (March 2024–January 2025), the 425 educational institutions in ICT, from preschool to higher secondary and colleges, have undergone a significant transformation.¹¹⁷ This progress extends beyond improved facilities, fostering enhanced skills, knowledge, and a renewed commitment to student-centered leadership, as reflected in the following key developments.

- 50.5 percent of students in formal education are females and 49.5 percent are male.
- 52.5 percent of female students are enrolled in high and higher secondary education.
- Overall, survival rates in formal education have improved, increasing by 4 percent among children aged 8–10 years and by 7 percent among children aged 12–16 years.
- The transition rate from primary to middle school has also reached 100 percent, up from 93 percent in previous years.¹¹⁸

In its commitment to strengthening education, the Federal Government allocated Rs. 103.78 billion to the education sector for the fiscal year 2024–2025.¹¹⁹ Of this, Rs. 17.8 billion was designated for primary and secondary education in ICT, focusing on improving facilities and access to quality education.

¹¹⁴ World Economic Forum. (2024). Global Gender Gap Report 2024, p.16. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2024>

¹¹⁵ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Population Census 2023, Table 12.
<https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/2023/tables/table_12_national.pdf>

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ SOURCE

¹¹⁸ Pakistan Institute of Education, Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-23, August 2024, p.27. Retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/PES-Final%20Report%2016Mb.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Ministry of Finance, Pakistan. (2024). *Federal Budget 2024-2025: Budget in Brief*, 12 June 2024, p.29. Retrieved from https://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/Budget_2024_25/Budget_in_Brief.pdf

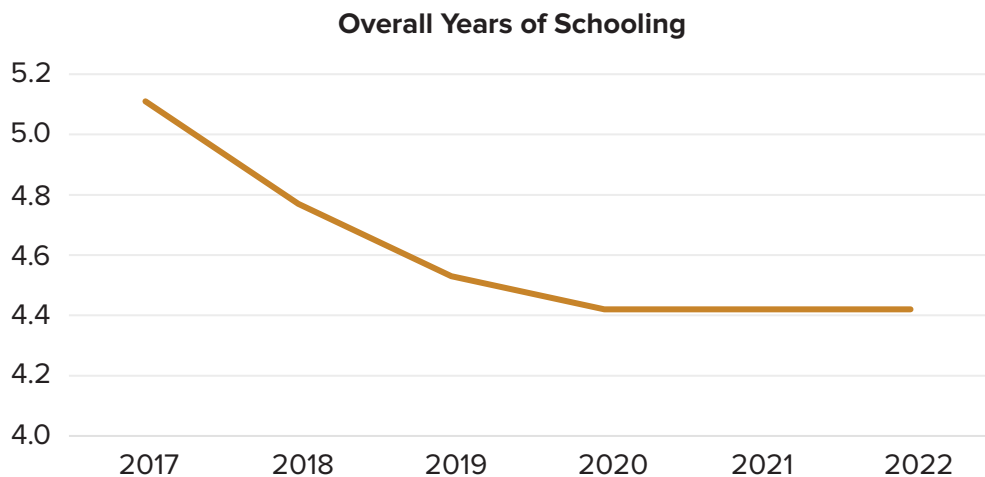
The largest share, Rs. 79.3 billion, was allocated to tertiary education, as the Higher Education Commission (HEC) supports all affiliated higher education institutions across Pakistan. This significant investment underscores the government's priority in enhancing educational infrastructure and expanding learning opportunities at all levels.

5.2 National Profile

In 2010, Pakistan adopted Article 25-A of the Constitution, making it a legally enforceable fundamental right for the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children aged 5 to 16. This guarantees 10 years of education, from primary to high school.

Similarly, on 19 February 2016, Pakistan formally adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a resolution of the National Assembly, reaffirming its commitment to achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for all.¹²⁰

However, Pakistan faces significant challenges in meeting these targets. In 2022–23, the overall share of female students in all public and private schools remained below 50 percent, with female enrollment at 46 percent in primary and middle schools and 44 percent at the high school level.¹²¹ According to the UNDP, expected years of schooling for children in Pakistan improved by 3.7 years over 32 years, rising from 4.2 years in 1990 to 7.9 years in 2022. However, this figure remains 2.1 years short of the constitutional promise of free and compulsory education.¹²² Similarly, the mean years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and older increased from 2.3 years in 1990 to 5.2 years in 2014. However, this progress reversed in 2017, with the mean years of schooling declining to 4.4 years by 2022, as illustrated in the graph below. These trends highlight the need for sustained efforts to improve education access and retention, particularly for female students.¹²³



¹²⁰ National Assembly of Pakistan, *Resolution on outcome document of UN summit for post 2015 development agenda*, 19 February 2016. Retrieved from https://na.gov.pk/en/resolution_detail.php?id=229

¹²¹ Pakistan Institute of Education, *Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-23*, August 2024, p.54-57. Retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/PES-Final%20Report%2016Mb.pdf>

¹²² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Pakistan: Country Profile*. Retrieved from <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/PAK>

¹²³ Ibid; Global Data Lab. (n.d.). Mean Years of Schooling - Subnational HDI Table. Retrieved from <https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/table/msch/PAK/?levels=1+4&interpolation=0&extrapolation=0>

The educational system in Pakistan includes formal schools, both public and private. It also comprises education foundation schools, which are privately managed with public sector financing. Additionally, it includes religious or faith-based schools, both private and public. Non-formal schools or centers, technical and vocational institutions, degree colleges, and universities are also part of the system.

As of 2022-23, Pakistan has a total of 349,909 educational institutions. Among them, 227,109 (65 percent) are formal schools, ranging from primary to high school levels,¹²⁴ Additionally, 64,417 (18 percent) are religious schools or Deeni Madaris.¹²⁵ Furthermore, 10,382 (3 percent) are education foundations, while 4,406 (1.3 percent) are technical and vocational institutes. The country has 7,072 (2 percent) higher secondary schools and 4,505 (1.3 percent) intermediate and degree colleges. Moreover, there are 217 teacher training institutes and 247 universities or higher education institutions.¹²⁶

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, Pakistan's federal and provincial governments spent Rs. 1,251 billion on education. This expenditure was 13.6 percent higher than in the fiscal year 2021-2022. It accounted for 1.5 percent of the country's GDP.¹²⁷

5.3 ICT's Educational Profile

According to the District Education Performance Index (DEPIx) Report 2023, Islamabad is an outlier. It has the highest overall index in Pakistan, scoring 73.86 out of 100.¹²⁸

Schools in Islamabad are divided into five levels: pre-school, primary, middle, secondary, and higher secondary. They fall under two major categories: formal education and non-formal education (NFE). Formal education includes schools from katchi (preschool) to grade 12, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and special education. NFE consists of literacy programs and other non-formal schools.

According to a report by the Pakistan Institute of Education, Islamabad's education budget for 2022-23 was Rs. 139.979 million. However, actual expenditures reached Rs. 147.286 million during the year.¹²⁹ Figures from the previous three fiscal years also show significant discrepancies, highlighting gaps between planning and execution.¹³⁰

The major data sources include the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Other sources are the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Private Education Institutes Regulatory Authority (PEIRA). The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFE&PT) also contributed data.

Islamabad's growing population, driven by internal migration and refugees, impacts its education system. Changing demographics influence school enrollment and resources, making population shifts a key factor in education trends. For more details, refer to Section 3.2 in the Demographics Chapter.

¹²⁴ Pakistan Institute of Education, *Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-23*, August 2024, p.50-56. Retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/PES-Final%20Report%2016Mb.pdf>

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 60.

¹²⁶ Pakistan Institute of Education, *Pakistan Non-Formal Education Annual Statistics Report 2022-23*, June 2024, p.17. Retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/NFE.pdf>

¹²⁷ Pakistan Institute of Education, *Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-23*, August 2024, p.57-60. Retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/PES-Final%20Report%2016Mb.pdf>

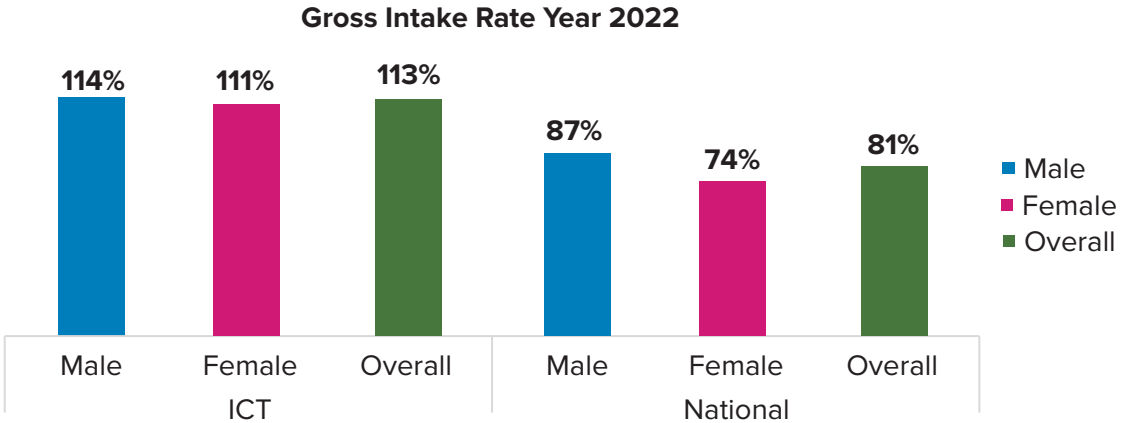
¹²⁸ Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, District Education Performance Index (DEPIx) Report 2023, p.33. https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/archives/DEPIx_Updated-Final-Report.pdf

¹²⁹ Pakistan Institute of Education, *Public Financing in Education Sector 2022-23*, p.11. Retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/SiteImage/Publication/P.F%20Report.pdf>

¹³⁰ Ibid.

5.3.1 Gross Intake Ratio

Gross Intake Ratio (GIR) measures the total number of new entrants in the first grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official primary school-entrance age.¹³¹ As of 2022, GIR for the ICT was the highest in Pakistan at 113 percent (indicating at least 13 percent repeaters in Grade 1 assuming 100 percent net intake ratio).¹³²



5.3.2 Literacy Rate

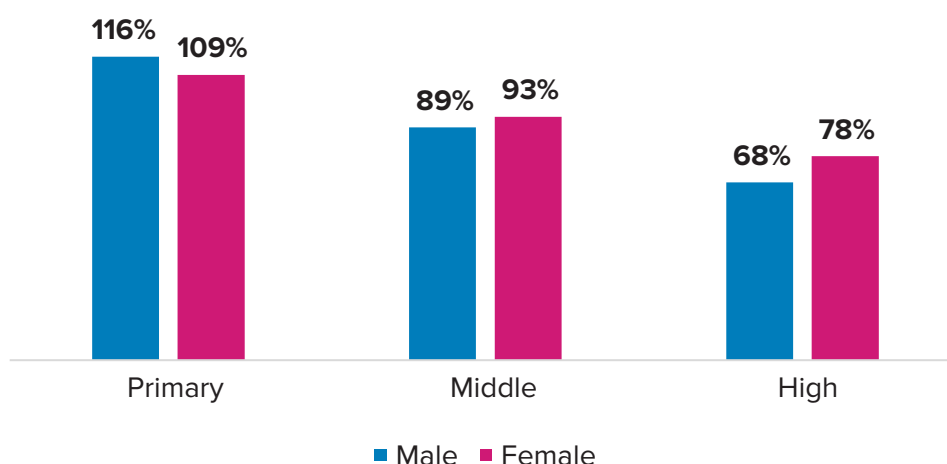
According to the Population Census 2023, Islamabad's overall literacy rate was 84 percent. A gender disparity of 9.1 percent existed, with males at 88.2 percent and females at 79.1 percent. Interestingly, literacy rates were higher in rural areas (84.9 percent) than in urban areas (82.9 percent). Female literacy was 80.2 percent in rural areas and 77.9 percent in urban areas. Male literacy stood at 89.1 percent in rural areas and 87.2 percent in urban areas. This unexpected urban deficit may reflect uneducated laborers in city slums. It calls for further investigation and targeted reforms in these areas.

5.3.3 Gross Enrolment Rate

Gross enrolment ratio is the ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown.¹³³ To evaluate the performance and accessibility of an educational system, gross enrolment rate reveals the capacity of educational system at each level. GER surpassing 100 percent at primary level indicates enrolment of overage children in addition to the children between 5-9 years of age. Overall, Islamabad has very healthy GERs compared to the national and regional statistics. At the primary level, males have a slight higher GER as compared to females, but as students transition to middle and high school, females exhibit higher GER, demonstrating better retention of females in education and a higher dropout ratio for males.¹³⁴

¹³¹ World Bank, *Metadata Glossary*. Retrieved from [https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/global-partnership-for-education/series/2.2_GIR#:~:text=Gross%20intake%20ratio%20\(GIR\)%3A,are%20determined%20by%20countries%20themselves](https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/global-partnership-for-education/series/2.2_GIR#:~:text=Gross%20intake%20ratio%20(GIR)%3A,are%20determined%20by%20countries%20themselves).
¹³² Pakistan Education Statistics 2022 retrieved from <https://pie.gov.pk/Publications>
¹³³ World Bank, *Metadata Glossary*. Retrieved from <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/jobs/series/SE.PRM.ENRR>
¹³⁴ UNESCO: The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is the enrolment at a given level of education, regardless of age, as a percentage of the population in the theoretical school-age group corresponding to the level.

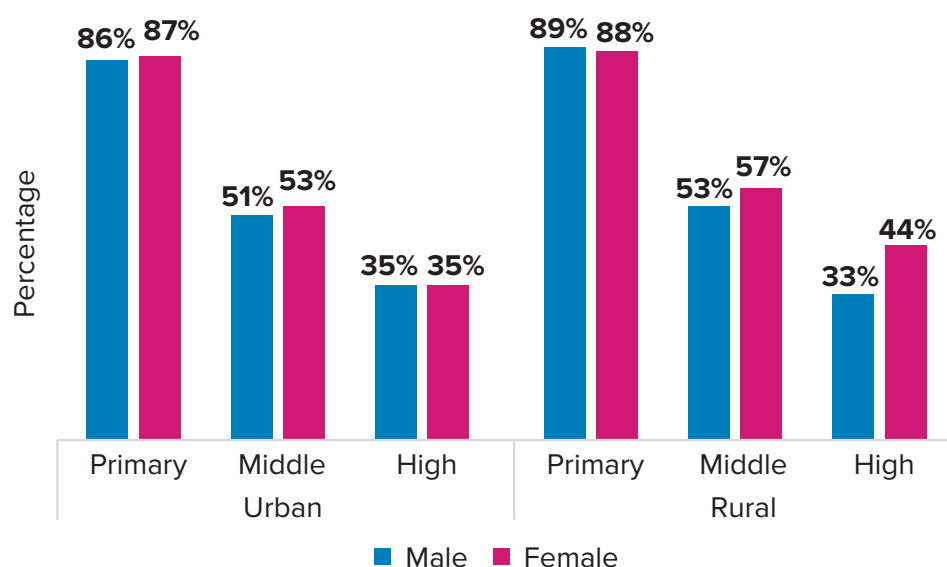
Gross Enrollment Rate 2022-2023



Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-2023 PIE

5.3.4 Net Enrolment Rate

Net enrolment rate is most important educational matric defined as the ratio of children of official school age who are enrolled in school to the population of the corresponding official school age.¹³⁵



Source: PBS 7th Census of Pakistan (Table 4 Population by single year, age and sex and 13a: Population and literacy rate for special age group)

At the primary level (ages 5–9), enrollment rates are similar across all groups. Rural male students have the highest participation rate at 89 percent, followed by rural female students at 88 percent. Urban female students have an enrollment rate of 87 percent, while urban male students stand at 86 percent. These figures indicate relatively equitable access to primary education in both urban and rural areas. This suggests that early education outreach and gender-inclusive policies are effectively in place.

¹³⁵ World Bank, Metadata Glossary. Retrieved from <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/millennium-development-goals/series/SE.PRM.NENR#:~:text=Net%20enrollment%20rate%20is%20the,the%20corresponding%20official%20school%20age>.

Disparities begin to emerge at the middle school level (ages 10–12). Urban female students have a slightly higher enrollment rate (53 percent) than urban males (51 percent). In rural areas, the gap widens, with female enrollment at 57 percent and male enrollment at 53 percent. This trend suggests that retention efforts for female students, such as scholarships and community awareness initiatives, are yielding positive results. However, the government should also focus on increasing male enrollment at all levels to counter any disparity.

The most striking gender disparity appears at the high school level (ages 13–14). In urban areas, male and female students have equal enrollment rates at 35 percent, showing no significant gender gap. However, in rural areas, a notable difference emerges: female enrollment is 44 percent, surpassing male enrollment at 33 percent. This trend may indicate shifting societal attitudes toward female education in rural Islamabad. Meanwhile, the lower enrollment of rural male students suggests economic pressures or early workforce entry. Vocational opportunities or financial responsibilities may be drawing them away from formal education.

5.3.5 Survival Rate

Along with the Net Enrollment rate, survival rate should also be considered to assess percentages of students who successfully continued their education to the next grade or level. Survival rate has been calculated by comparing sex, age and enrollment level data from 6th and 7th census of Pakistan. The formula here drive from the UNESCO's method for calculating survival rate. For Islamabad, from pre-primary to middle level rural females consistently show the highest survival rates across transitions, reflecting sustained investment in their education.

Survival Rate 2017 to 2023

	Survival Rate Urban Male	Survival Rate Urban Female	Survival Rate Rural Male	Survival Rate Rural Female
Pre-Primary(2017 Age: 5-9) to Middle (2023 Age: 11-13)	49%	45.9%	53.8%	54.9%

Source: PBS 6th (table 15) and 7th Census (table 13b) population (5 years and above) by level of education attainment, sex, age group and rural/urban

The survival rate data from 2017 to 2023 shows significant disparities between urban and rural students. It also highlights differences between male and female students. These disparities offer critical insights into the education system's strengths and areas needing improvement.

Pre-Primary to Middle (2017, Age: 5–9 to 2023, Age: 11–13): The survival rates from pre-primary to middle school show a clear urban-rural divide. Rural females exhibit the survival rate at 54.9 percent, followed by rural males at 53.8 percent. Urban males and females, at 49 percent and 45.9 percent respectively, show significantly lower survival rates.

This disparity data calculated through census suggests that rural areas provide better educational continuity for students transitioning from pre-primary to middle school, with females particularly benefiting. The data shows that pupil of rural areas in Islamabad have better access to educational facilities, more supportive family environments, and broader social infrastructure, all of which help to ensure students' continued education.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ The reader must know there could be discrepancies between interpretation of data collected from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and Pakistan Institute of Education as both bodies administer different survey tools to collect data.

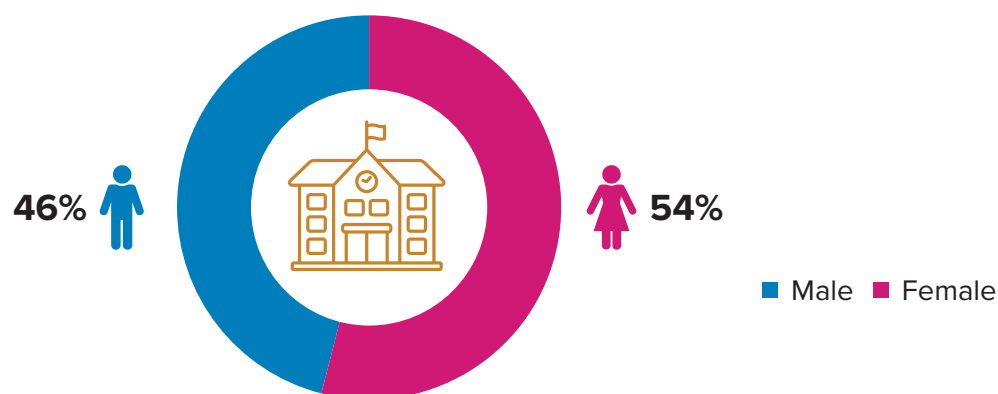
5.3.6 Out-of-School Children

Along with survival rates, the ratio of out-of-school children (OOSC) is an important indicator of educational attainment. In Islamabad, OOSC issues stem from systemic and cultural challenges.

Economic constraints, such as poverty and high education costs, force many families to prioritize male students or push children into labor. Cultural norms also play a role, with female students often withdrawn due to early marriages, household responsibilities, or safety concerns when schools are far from home.

The urban-rural divide worsens the issue, as rural areas face poor infrastructure, a lack of middle and high schools, and limited transportation. Data from the Pakistan Association for Maths and Science, calculated by comparing official enrollment ages with respective populations, reveals key disparities. More female children are out of school compared to males.

Distribution of Out of School Children by Gender



Source: *The Missing third of Pakistan - Pak Alliance for Maths and Science 2024*

The data shows that 89,127 children (14.8 percent) aged 5–16 in Islamabad are out of school. The city ranks 24th out of Pakistan's 567 tehsils in educational access, according to *The Missing Third* report.

This relatively higher ranking reflects localized advantages, such as stronger rural-urban educational infrastructure, safer environments for girls, reduced cultural pressure for early marriage, and better school facilities compared to other regions. Despite these improvements, the OOSC rate of 14.8 percent persists due to systemic challenges.

A Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) report highlights key drivers of dropout rates. These include child labor, gendered expectations like girls' household chores, and societal undervaluing of female education. Parental perceptions of education's limited economic returns also contribute to dropouts.

These factors underscore persistent inequities, even in regions with comparatively stronger educational frameworks.

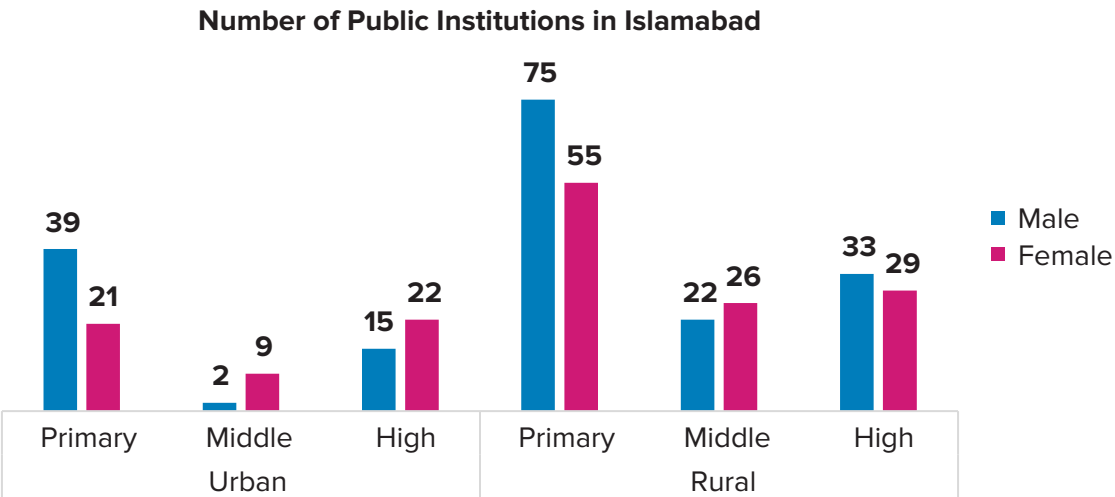
5.4 Institutions and Enrolment

5.4.1 Formal Public Schools

The analysis of public sector institutions by level and gender for 2022–23 reveals significant disparities across educational levels.

At the primary level, urban areas show a large gap between male institutions (39) and female institutions (21), with a ratio of 0.54. This indicates limited access for female students. In rural areas, the disparity is narrower, with 75 male institutions and 55 female institutions, resulting in a ratio of 0.73. However, the overall ratio for primary institutions in ICT remains 0.67, reflecting persistent gender inequity favoring male students.

At the middle level, urban areas show a reverse trend, where female students have better institutional representation. There are 9 institutions for females compared to 2 for males, resulting in a ratio of 4.50. In rural areas, the balance improves, with 22 male institutions and 26 female institutions, yielding a ratio of 1.18. This brings the overall ICT middle-level ratio to 1.46, showing progress in providing more opportunities for female students at this level.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

At the high school level, urban areas continue to favor female students, with 15 male institutions compared to 22 for females, resulting in a ratio of 1.47.

In rural areas, the distribution is relatively balanced, with 33 male institutions and 29 female institutions, yielding a ratio of 0.88. Overall, the high school ratio across ICT stands at 1.06, indicating progress toward gender parity at this level.

This data underscores the need to improve gender equity in education, particularly at the middle and high school levels.

Challenges remain, especially at the primary level in both urban and rural areas, where greater efforts are needed to enhance access for female students. With these efforts, girls' survival and transition rates will improve further.

This calls for targeted policies to bridge the gender gap in primary institutions and sustain momentum toward equitable educational opportunities across all levels.

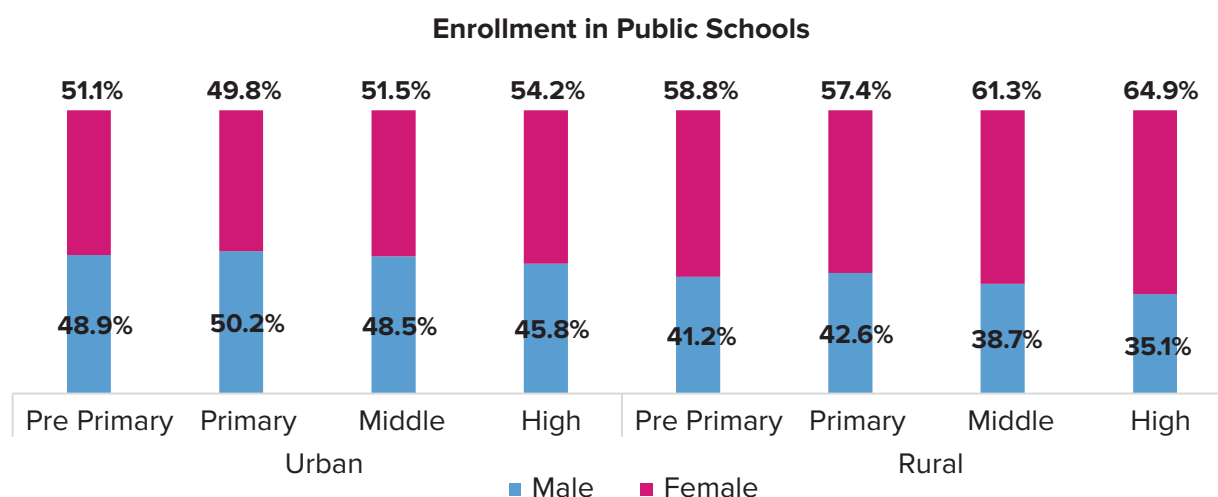
5.4.2 Enrolment in Public Formal Schools

The total enrolment across all stages is 240,883, with 138,409 female students and 102,474 male students. This results in an overall gender ratio of 1.4, indicating a higher proportion of female students in public schools.

In urban areas, total enrolment stands at 126,873, with a female-to-male ratio of 1.2. In contrast, rural areas have 114,010 students, where the female-to-male ratio increases to 1.6. This reflects a stronger presence of female students in rural public schools.

At the pre-primary level, rural areas show a higher female enrolment ratio of 1.4, compared to 1.05 in urban areas. This trend continues at the primary level, where rural areas have a ratio of 1.3, while urban areas have a nearly equal ratio of 0.99.

At the middle level, rural female enrolment further dominates with a ratio of 1.6, compared to 1.06 in urban areas. This reflects a growing preference or opportunity for rural female students to transition into middle-level education.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

The data highlights significant progress in female enrolment within the ICT, particularly in rural areas and at higher educational levels. This advancement is largely attributed to targeted initiatives by both government and non-governmental organizations.

Government interventions, led by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), have played a crucial role in enhancing educational infrastructure and accessibility for female students in rural regions. These efforts focus on establishing more schools for female students and upgrading existing facilities to create a conducive learning environment.

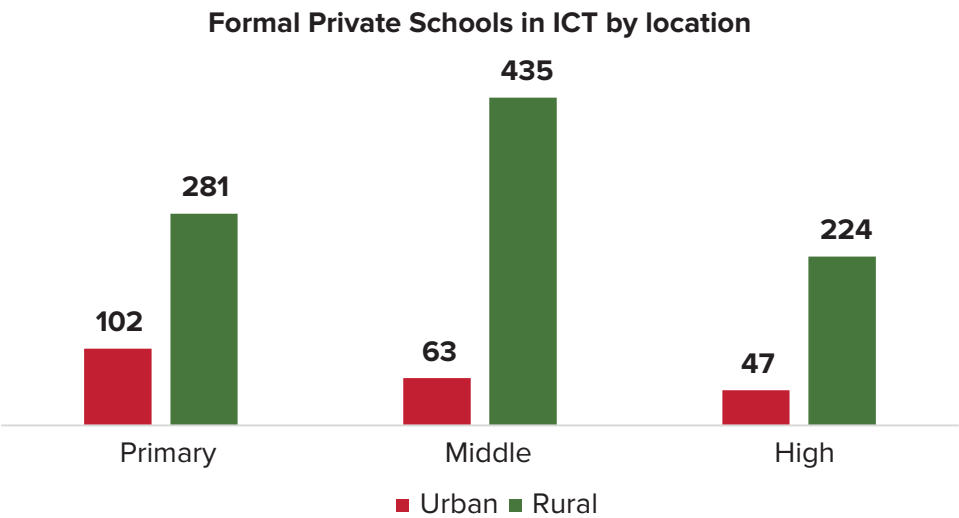
Non-governmental organizations have also been instrumental in promoting female education. For example, the Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education (PAGE) has actively worked to raise awareness and support community-based education, particularly for female students in underprivileged areas.

These trends emphasize the need for sustained efforts to bridge gender gaps in education, ensuring consistent progress across all regions and educational stages within ICT.

5.4.3 Formal Private Schools

At the primary level, rural areas have a substantially higher number of private schools than urban areas. This indicates greater availability of private schools for early education in rural ICT.

At the middle level, rural areas show a sharp increase in private schools compared to urban areas. The gap between rural and urban areas is widest at this level, reflecting a stronger reliance on private schools in rural areas for middle-level education.



Source: Data from PEIRA

At the high school level, rural areas still have more private schools than urban areas. However, the gap narrows significantly compared to the middle level, indicating a relative decline in private school presence in rural areas at the high school stage.

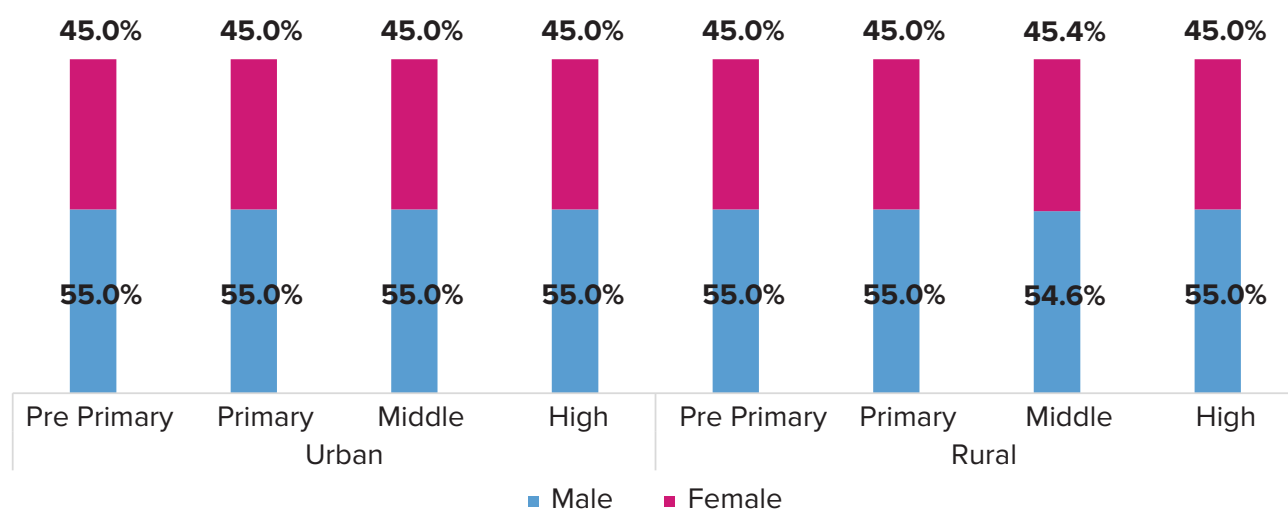
Overall, the chart highlights a consistently higher presence of private schools in rural ICT across all levels, with the largest gap observed at the middle school level. Urban areas show fewer private schools at all levels, reflecting a disparity in distribution between the two regions.

5.4.4 Enrolment in Formal Private Schools

The data for private school enrolments consistently show a male dominance at all levels, with a steady parity ratio of around 0.82 across urban and rural areas. This indicates a gender disparity where male students are more likely to be enrolled in private schools compared to female students.

The enrolment data for private schools in 2022-23 reveals gender disparities across different education levels.

Enrollment of Students in Private Formal Schools



Source: Data from PEIRA

In pre-primary, urban enrolment consists of 10,940 male and 8,952 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82, indicating male dominance. In rural areas, there are 40,998 male and 33,543 female students, resulting in a parity ratio of 0.82, reflecting a similar gender gap. The total for both urban and rural areas is 51,938 male and 42,495 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82.

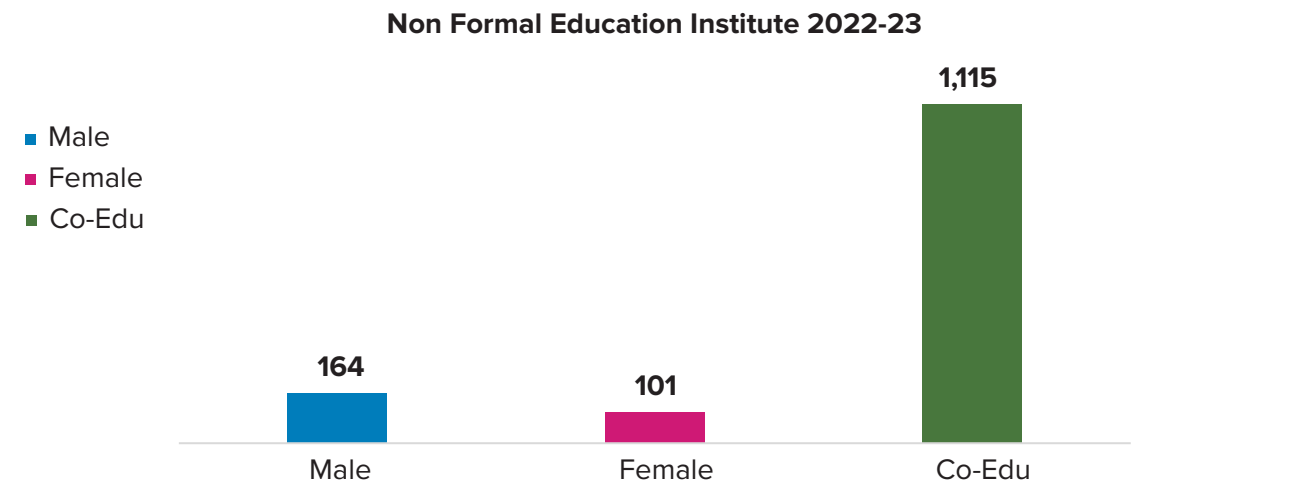
At the primary level, urban areas have 12,124 male and 9,920 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82. Rural areas show 63,474 male and 51,933 female students, yielding a parity ratio of 0.82. The overall total is 75,598 male and 61,853 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82, continuing the male dominance.

For middle schools, urban enrolment consists of 7,519 male and 6,152 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82. In rural areas, 25,257 male and 21,028 female students result in a parity ratio of 0.83. The total enrolment is 32,776 male and 27,180 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.83.

At the high school level, urban enrolment has 4,903 male and 4,011 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82. Rural areas show 10,534 male and 8,618 female students, resulting in a parity ratio of 0.82. The total for both areas is 15,437 male and 12,629 female students, with a parity ratio of 0.82, maintaining the male dominance.

5.4.5 Non-Formal Basic Education Institutes

The data for non-formal education (NFE) institutes in 2022-23 for the ICT region shows a total 1,380 NFE institutes, with 12 percent male, 7 percent female, and 81 percent co-educational institutes.

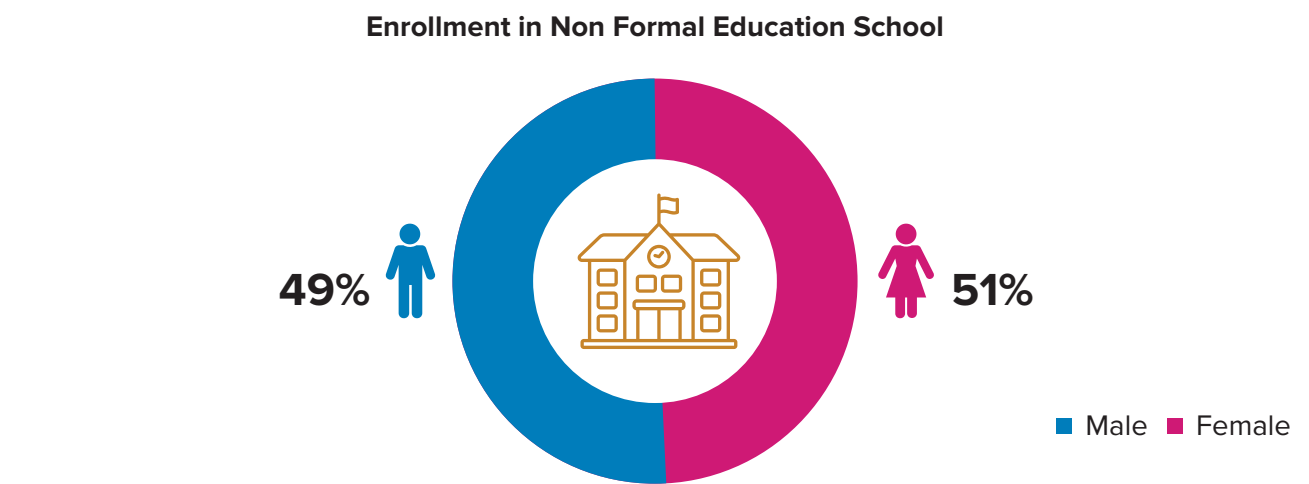


Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

The gender distribution indicates a significant male dominance, with the total number of male institutes (164) and females institutes (101) being much lower compared to co-educational enrolment. The high number of co-educational institutes (1,115) suggests that a large proportion of the non-formal education system in the region caters to both genders together.

5.4.6 Enrolment in Non-Formal Basic Education Schools

Among these, 25,985 are male and 25,224 are female students enrolled in Non-Formal Basic Education School, which makes it 51 percent male and 49 percent female students.¹⁴⁹



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

The gender ratio is nearly balanced, with a parity ratio of 0.97, indicating a slight male dominance, but with very close representation of both genders. This reflects a fairly equitable distribution of male and female students in the given dataset.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Detail table in Annexure https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KQI03d-PIEA_KRtcd8ddijHF5gklj6DaPOO_EeLmQjc/edit?gid=0#gid=0

5.4.7 Directorate General of Special Education - Ministry of Education

Special education refers to personalized educational services designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities or other learning challenges. These services aim to provide an inclusive environment where students can receive the necessary support to succeed academically and socially. Special education serves a diverse range of students, including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and behavioral challenges, employing specialized techniques and instructional strategies.

Recent research emphasizes the importance of inclusive educational settings, where students with special needs can engage in integrated learning opportunities alongside their peers. This approach not only supports academic growth but also fosters social inclusion and emotional development. Studies highlight the need for effective leadership in special education, the role of targeted interventions, and the importance of personalized teaching strategies to improve the academic and social outcomes of students with special educational needs.

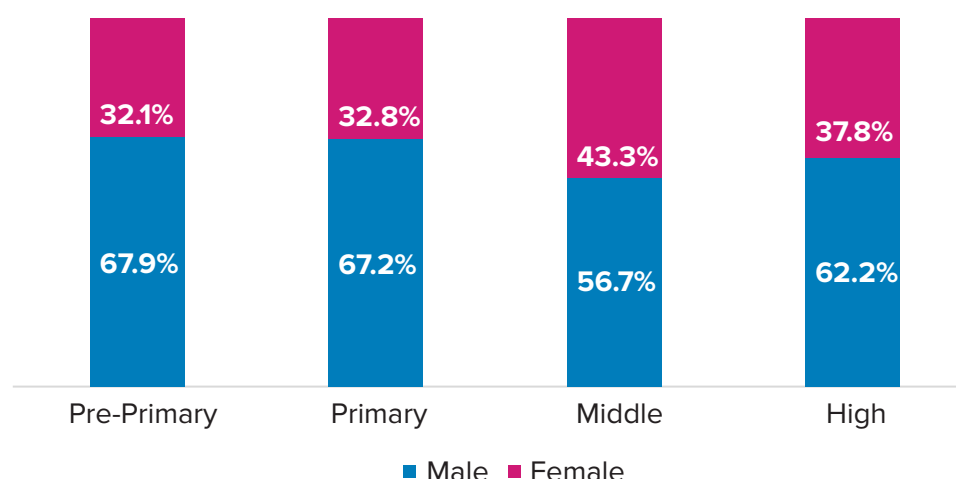
Moreover, challenges faced by special education teachers, such as identifying appropriate teaching methods and understanding individual learning needs, remain key areas of focus.

As special education continues to evolve, its goal is to provide all students, regardless of disabilities, with the tools and support they need to succeed in society. In the ICT, there are 11 public and 48 private special education schools operating to meet these needs.

5.4.8 Enrolment in Special Education Schools

The data for special education public schools from pre-primary to high level in the ICT for 2021-23 shows a total of 1,168 students, with 64 percent male students and 36 percent female students.

Enrollment in Special Education Institutes 2021-2023



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

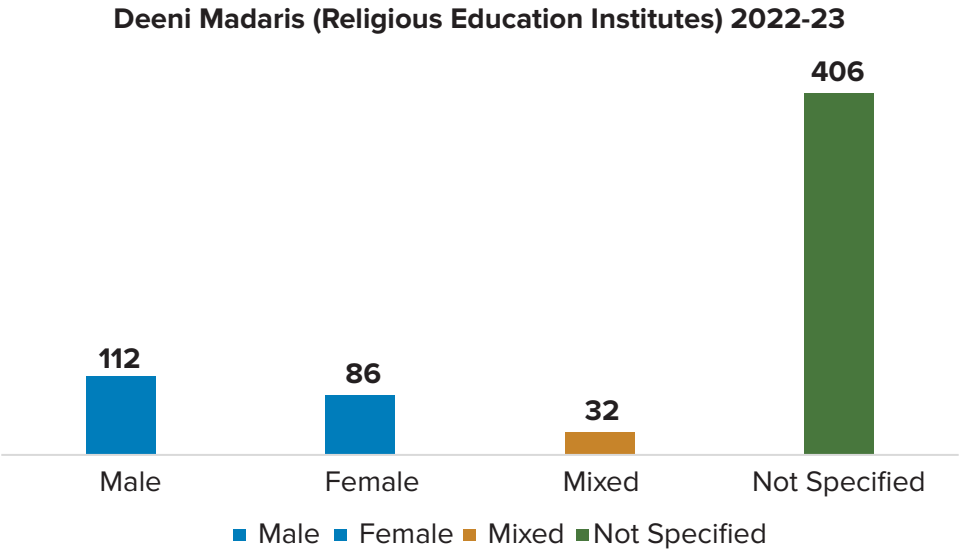
The parity ratio is 0.56, indicating a notable male dominance in special education enrolment. This reflects a higher representation of male students compared to female students in special education institutions in the region.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Detail table in Annexure https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KQI03d-PIEA_KRtcd8ddijHF5gklj6DaPO0_EeLmQjc/edit?gid=0#gid=0

5.4.9 Deeni Madaris

Deeni Madaris are religious schools or institutions that focus on imparting Islamic knowledge to students. In the ICT, several Deeni Madaris are registered with their respective wafaqs (religious boards), which oversee the curricula and operations of these schools. Among these, the largest number of seminaries are affiliated with Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia, which represents the Deobandi school of thought. Historically, the Deobandi school has had a significant presence in Pakistan, contributing to the dominance of these affiliated seminaries.

On the other hand, the smallest number of registered seminaries in the ICT are under Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Shia, which represents the Shia community. This distribution is in line with broader national trends in the registration and operation of Deeni Madaris, where the majority of religious schools are aligned with the Deobandi school of thought, and the Shia community has a relatively smaller share of the total number of registered seminaries. This pattern reflects the diverse religious landscape in Pakistan and the varying degrees of representation across different sects within the religious education sector.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

The available gender distribution data from the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) reveals a significant gender disparity in Deeni Madaris in the ICT. Male institutes comprise the larger portion of the total number of seminaries, with 112 male institutes compared to 86 female institutes. The gender parity ratio of 0.77 indicates that male institutes are more prevalent, reflecting the larger representation of males in religious education institutes.

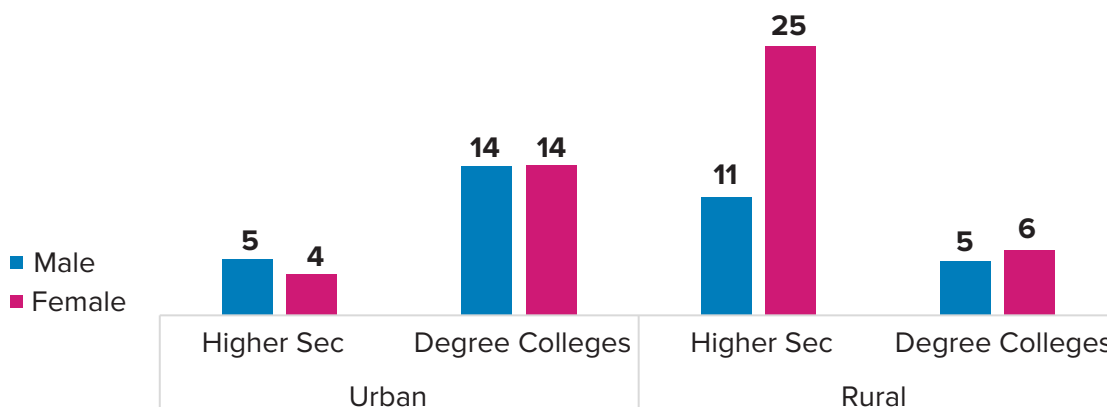
Additionally, there are 32 mixed-gender madaris, which indicates that some religious schools operate in co-educational settings, though typically male and female students are housed in separate sections of the same building. However, it is important to note that a considerable portion of the data remains unspecified. This unsegregated data comes from two madaris organizations, Rabita al Madaris Islamia and Wafaq-ul-Madaris-al-Arabia, which have not provided detailed gender-specific breakdowns. This lack of specified data limits a complete understanding of the gender distribution across these institutions.

5.4.10 Higher Secondary Schools and Degree Colleges

The higher secondary schools in Islamabad are those providing education above matric, from class 11 up to the undergraduate level. In Islamabad, the institutes providing such education are falling under the category of “colleges”, which are providing education under the Faculty of Science/Arts or equivalent.

The ratio between female and male higher secondary institutes is 1.40, which tells that special initiatives have been taken in advancing the number of female schools, for better opportunities for female students. Further the chart also shows that the rural areas have outnumbered the urban areas in terms of numbers of schools.

Public Higher Secondary Schools and Degree Colleges 2022-2023

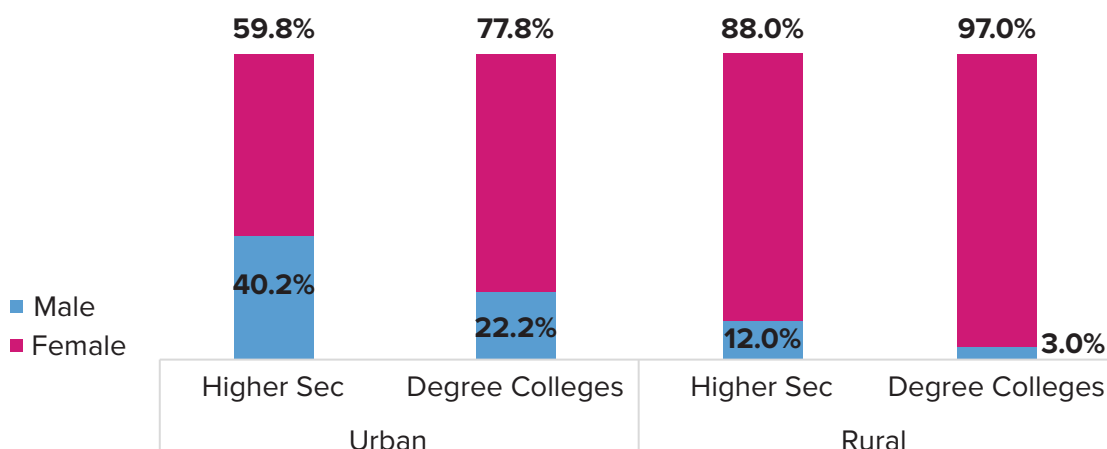


Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

5.4.11 Enrolment in Higher Education Colleges

At the higher secondary level, female students outnumber male students, with a parity ratio of 1.13 overall, showing a stronger female presence. In degree colleges, the gender disparity is most pronounced, with female students significantly outnumbering male students, resulting in a parity ratio of 3.70.

Enrollment in Higher Schools and Degree Colleges 2022-2023



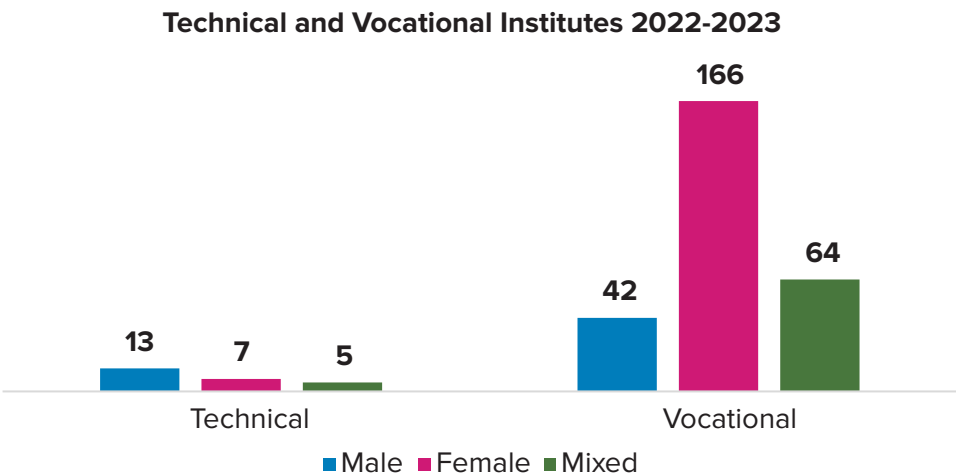
Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

5.4.12 Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) Institutes

Technical education plays a crucial role in shaping skilled professionals who are equipped with the knowledge and practical skills required for careers in specialized fields. In the ICT, the technical education system includes both technical and vocational training institutes, with the total number of institutes reaching 297. Among these, 25 are technical institutes, while 272 are vocational institutes, covering a wide array of disciplines such as engineering, technology, personal care, hospitality, masonry, plumbing, baking, and other hands-on trades.

In terms of gender distribution, there is a significant presence of female students in vocational training. Out of the 297 institutes, 55 are male-only institutes, 173 are female-only institutes, and 69 are mixed-gender institutes, where students of both genders are educated together. This results in an overall parity ratio of 3.15, highlighting the substantial dominance of female institutes within the vocational education sector in ICT.

This strong female representation in vocational education reflects the growing opportunities for women in the workforce and the emphasis placed on providing them with skills for economic empowerment. The dominance of female-only institutions suggests a targeted effort to encourage female participation in vocational training, addressing gender imbalances that might exist in certain sectors. These trends are a positive sign of gender inclusivity within the technical education system, supporting the development of a more diverse and capable workforce.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

The distribution of technical and vocational institutes in the ICT shows contrasting gender trends across the two education levels. At the technical level, there are 25 institutes, with 13 male-only institutes, 7 female-only institutes, and 5 mixed-gender institutes. The parity ratio of 0.54 indicates male dominance, with a significantly higher number of male institutes compared to female institutes. This suggests that technical fields in the region remain more male-centric, with fewer opportunities for female students in this specialized educational sector.

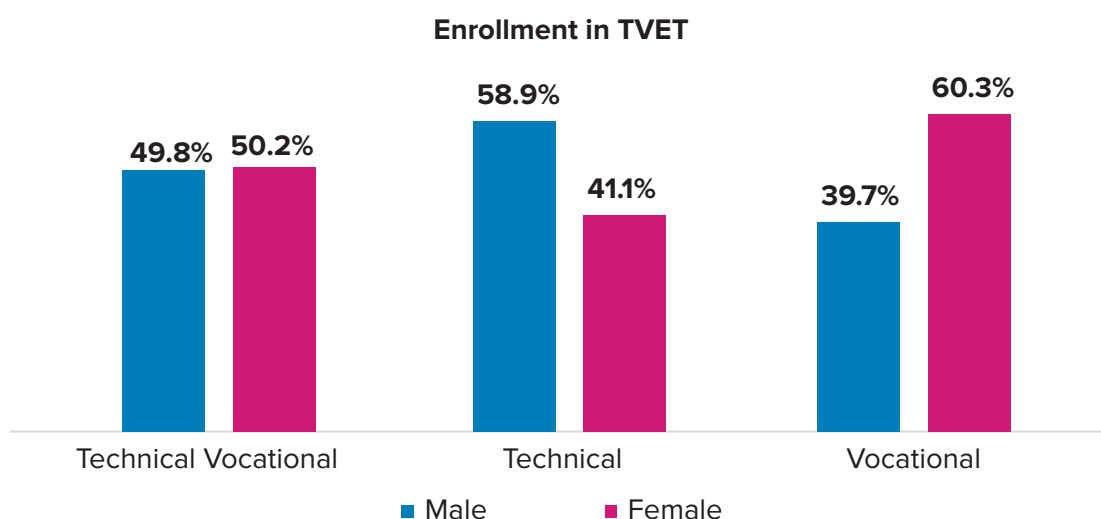
On the other hand, at the vocational level, the distribution is notably different. Of the 272 vocational institutes, 42 are male-only, 166 are female-only, and 64 are mixed-gender institutes. The parity ratio for vocational institutes is 3.95, which strongly favours female students, with a much higher number of female institutes than male ones. This reflects the growing prominence

of female students in vocational education, especially in sectors that typically require hands-on, practical skills.

In conclusion, while technical education in the ICT region shows male dominance, vocational education exhibits a clear majority of female institutes, leading to a higher overall female representation in the combined data for the region. This shift underscores the increasing engagement of females in vocational fields, which are vital for their economic empowerment and participation in various industries.

5.4.13 Enrolment in TEVTA Institutes

The overall enrolment rate of female students in technical and vocational institutes is 50.2 percent in a total student population of 18,511.¹³⁹ Technical institutes show male dominance while vocational institutes show female dominance. The overall data of vocational and technical enrolment reflects a near-equal representation of male and female students in technical and vocational education.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

In technical institutes, there are 5,712 male and 3,978 female students, resulting in a total of 9,690 students. The parity ratio is 0.70, indicating a male dominance with fewer female students in technical education.

In vocational institutes, there are 3,506 male and 5,315 female students, yielding a total of 8,821 students. The parity ratio is 1.52, reflecting a stronger female presence in vocational education.

Across both technical and vocational institutes, the total number of students is 18,511, with 9,218 male and 9,293 female students. The overall parity ratio is 1.01, indicating near gender parity in the total enrolment.

5.4.14 Higher Education Institutes and Enrolment Rate

Tertiary education plays a pivotal role in shaping both individual futures and societal development. By providing advanced learning opportunities at universities, colleges, and specialized institutions, it equips students with the expertise necessary for professional success across a wide range of fields. Beyond imparting knowledge, tertiary education fosters critical

¹³⁹ ibid

thinking, innovation, and problem-solving skills that are essential for addressing the complexities of today's global challenges.

Moreover, tertiary education serves as a vehicle for social mobility, opening doors to better career prospects, higher income levels, and improved quality of life for graduates. It also plays an integral part in promoting cultural understanding and global awareness, which are key to fostering inclusive and resilient societies. As societies become increasingly interconnected, tertiary education empowers individuals to contribute meaningfully to the global community, ensuring progress toward sustainable development goals and a more equitable world.

There are 25 universities operating in Islamabad, related to different specialization included but not limited to bio-sciences, technology, science, engineering, medicine, social sciences and research. However, the data presented below on graduates is for 22 universities in the ICT and data on fresh enrolment is for all 25 universities in the ICT.

Number of Currently Enrolled Students in Universities of Islamabad				
Sr. #	Universities in Islamabad	Male	Female	Ratio
1	Air University, Islamabad	1,827	992	0.54
2	Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad	94,038	99,377	1.06
3	Bahria University, Islamabad	4,052	3,279	0.81
4	Capital University of Sciences & Technology, Islamabad	1,126	715	0.63
5	COMSATS University, Islamabad	13,420	7,726	0.58
6	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Karachi	2,779	1,586	0.57
7	Foundation University, Islamabad	755	1,121	1.48
8	Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad	179	249	1.39
9	Ibadat International University, Islamabad	196	181	0.92
10	Institute of Space Technology, Islamabad	509	310	0.61
11	International Islamic University, Islamabad	3,246	5,500	1.69
12	Muslim Youth University, Islamabad	365	145	0.40
13	National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad	595	300	0.50
14	National Skills University, Islamabad	240	64	0.27
15	National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Islamabad	4,891	1,554	0.32
16	National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad	5,523	3,683	0.67
17	National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad	3,041	1,830	0.60
18	National University of Technology (NUTECH), Islamabad	233	31	0.13

Sr. #	Universities in Islamabad	Male	Female	Ratio
19	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad	33	34	1.03
20	Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences (PIEAS), Islamabad	342	169	0.49
21	Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad	1,559	1,104	0.71
22	Riphah International University, Islamabad	4,397	5,160	1.17
23	Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad	105	279	2.66
24	Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Islamabad	396	468	1.18
25	Sir Syed (CASE) Institute of Technology, Islamabad	261	55	0.21
Total		144,108	135,912	0.94

Source: Higher Education Data Repository Office - HEC: Graduates ICT 2023

The data analysis from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on newly enrolled students in Islamabad's universities reveals important insights into gender disparities. The overall parity ratio of 0.94 indicates that slightly fewer females are enrolled compared to males across universities in the region. However, this overall ratio masks significant variations between institutions.

In some universities, male enrolment dominates, as evidenced by parity ratios well below 1, pointing to limited female representation in these institutions. On the other hand, a few universities show a female-dominated enrolment, with parity ratios exceeding 1, indicating a higher number of female students compared to male students. These disparities highlight the uneven access and opportunities for female students across different universities, underscoring the need for targeted interventions and policies to ensure gender equity in higher education.

Such imbalances underscore the uneven access to education for males and females across different academic programmes and institutions. Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions to promote equal opportunities for both genders, in alignment with sustainable development goals and national policies for inclusive education.

The below data represents the number graduates from 22 out of 25 universities due to limitations in data availability.

Number of University Graduates in 2023				
Sr. #	Universities in Islamabad, Pakistan	Male	Female	Ratio
1	Air University, Islamabad	600	260	0.43
2	Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad	73,967	92,959	1.26
3	Bahria University, Islamabad	5,204	3,592	0.69
4	Capital University of Sciences & Technology, Islamabad	657	357	0.54
5	COMSATS University, Islamabad	5,018	3,151	0.63

Sr. #	Universities in Islamabad, Pakistan	Male	Female	Ratio
6	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Karachi	3,072	1,572	0.51
7	Foundation University, Islamabad	576	908	1.58
8	Institute of Space Technology, Islamabad	268	120	0.45
9	International Islamic University, Islamabad	2,639	2,790	1.06
10	Muslim Youth University, Islamabad	12	-	0.00
11	National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad	580	198	0.34
12	National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Islamabad	1,957	635	0.32
13	National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad	2,193	1,731	0.79
14	National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad	3,163	1,397	0.44
15	National University of Technology (NUTECH), Islamabad	87	5	0.06
16	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad	59	46	0.78
17	Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences (PIEAS), Islamabad	331	123	0.37
18	Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad	1,533	968	0.63
19	Riphah International University, Islamabad	2,641	3,049	1.15
20	Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad	67	89	1.33
21	Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Islamabad	154	449	2.92
22	Sir Syed (CASE) Institute of Technology, Islamabad	190	44	0.23
Total		104,968	114,443	1.09

Source: Higher Education Data Repository Office - HEC: Graduates ICT 2023

The analysis of data received from HEC reveals notable trends in enrolment ratios and gender parity among graduate students in universities across Islamabad. The overall gender parity ratio stands at 1.09, indicating a slight predominance of female graduates over males. However, a closer look at the data highlights significant disparities across various institutions and fields of study. While some universities demonstrate a balanced or female-dominant graduate ratio, others show a substantial male dominance, particularly in technical and specialized programmes. These variations emphasize the uneven distribution of opportunities and representation in higher education. Addressing these disparities is crucial to fostering an inclusive academic environment and ensuring equitable access to education for all genders, in alignment with national and global commitments to gender parity.

The analysis of gender parity among graduate and newly enrolled students in Islamabad's universities presents a nuanced and interconnected story. The overall gender parity ratio among graduate students stands at 1.09, indicating a slight predominance of female graduates over males. This reflects positive strides toward gender equity at the completion stage of higher education. However, the parity ratio for newly enrolled students is 0.94, signaling a slight underrepresentation of females at the entry level, suggesting that barriers persist, particularly in male-dominated technical and specialized fields.

Interestingly, some universities display female-dominant ratios at the graduate level, signaling inclusivity and the progress made in fostering female participation. In contrast, other institutions remain male-dominated, particularly among new enrolments. These contrasting trends highlight the uneven access and progression within higher education, pointing to the need for targeted interventions to address gender disparities at both the enrolment and completion stages.

To ensure equitable opportunities, it is crucial to bridge these gaps and create an educational environment that supports equal access, retention, and success for all genders. Such efforts align with national and global commitments to inclusive education and the achievement of gender parity in higher education.

5.4.15 Graduates from STEM Programmes

The analysis of data from 22 universities in Islamabad offering STEM programmes reveals significant gender disparities in enrolment, with males predominantly enrolling in STEM fields compared to females. This gender imbalance highlights the need for targeted interventions to encourage more female students to pursue STEM education, especially considering the critical role these fields play in innovation and addressing global challenges.

In examining the specific male and female ratios within these universities, it is evident that certain factors, such as cultural perceptions, lack of role models, and limited support systems, contribute to the underrepresentation of women in STEM. These disparities are particularly prominent in more technical and specialized areas of study, where males tend to dominate.

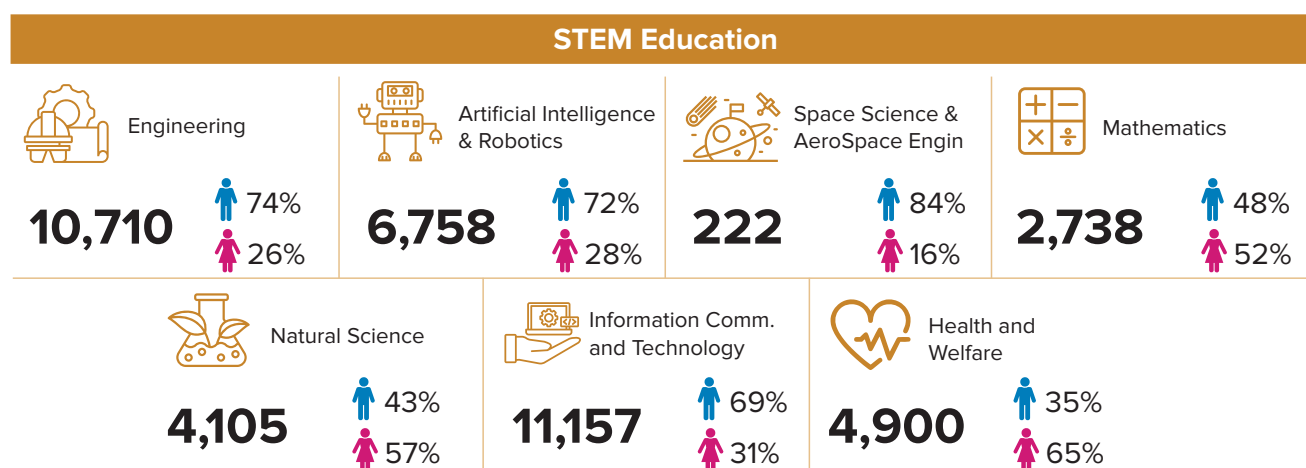
To ensure a more inclusive STEM workforce, there is an urgent need for policies and initiatives aimed at providing equal opportunities for both genders, fostering an environment where women are empowered and encouraged to enter and succeed in STEM disciplines. Programs that emphasize mentorship, scholarships, and career support can go a long way in narrowing the gender gap and ensuring a more equitable future in the global STEM landscape.

Sr.#	Higher Educational Institutes	Male	Female	Ratio
1	Air University, Islamabad	1,099	508	0.5
2	Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad	569	508	0.9
3	Bahria University, Islamabad	684	1,002	1.5
4	Capital University of Sciences & Technology, Islamabad	451	254	0.6
5	COMSATS University, Islamabad	3,910	2,306	0.6
6	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Karachi	1,675	1,080	0.6

Sr.#	Higher Educational Institutes	Male	Female	Ratio
7	Foundation University, Islamabad	382	716	1.9
8	Institute of Space Technology, Islamabad	268	120	0.4
9	International Islamic University, Islamabad	2,782	2,916	1.0
10	Muslim Youth University, Islamabad	12	-	- .0
11	National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad	390	92	0.2
12	National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Islamabad	1,720	439	0.3
13	National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad	754	610	0.8
14	National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad	2,865	977	0.3
15	National University of Technology (NUTECH), Islamabad	87	5	0.1
16	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad	3	4	1.3
17	Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences (PIEAS), Islamabad	317	115	0.4
18	Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad	943	625	0.7
19	Riphah International University, Islamabad	1,692	2,022	1.2
20	Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University, Islamabad	67	89	1.3
21	Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Islamabad	151	448	3.0
22	Sir Syed (CASE) Institute of Technology, Islamabad	70	25	0.4
Total		20,891	14,862	0.7

Source: Higher Education Data Repository Office - HEC: Graduates ICT 2023

As Pakistan's capital and a major educational hub, Islamabad plays a pivotal role in STEM education. The city's higher education institutions collectively produce 35,753 STEM graduates, with 20,891 males and 14,862 females, reflecting a gender parity ratio of 0.7. The following figure presents globally recognized STEM disciplines. It is important to note that some subjects may be classified under multiple disciplines due to their interdisciplinary nature and overlap across various fields of study so these are counted more than once.



Among these, 10,710 students graduate in engineering, though the gender parity remains low at 0.4. Similarly, fields like artificial intelligence, data science, computer science, and innovation see 6,758 graduates, maintaining the same parity ratio of 0.4. However, there is a clear need for more focus on space and technology, where only 222 students have graduated, with an even lower parity of 0.2. However, in welfare and health, mathematics, and natural sciences female have surpassed the male counterparts with parity ratio exceeding 1.

5.4.16 Medical and Dental Colleges

Medical and Dental Colleges play a vital role in healthcare by offering education, training, and research opportunities in medicine, surgery, and dentistry. These institutes equip students with practical knowledge on patient care, supported by affiliated hospitals and clinics. The research aspect is significant, as students contribute to advancements in medicine and treatment methods.

In the ICT, there are 16 Medical and Dental Colleges, where both male and female students study together. According to the PMDC, in June 2024, 855 students graduated in medicine and dentistry. Of these, 784 were female, including 604 from medical colleges and 144 from dental colleges. In comparison, 62 males graduated from medical colleges, and 9 from dental colleges.

Thus, Islamabad mirrors the national trend of enrolling more female students than males in medicine, with females accounting for 91 percent of medical graduates and 94 percent of dental graduates.

5.5 Teachers and Administration

To assess the quality, accessibility and equity in education, we should know the numbers of female to male teachers, along with the parity among decision making position at higher levels. This data should also be considered to assess the impact of female enrolment rate, analyse if there are any barriers for women to become part of teaching mainstream and to evaluate parity among leadership roles. To comprehend the complete picture, teachers' availability at all levels as discussed above needs to be reviewed for both public and private institutes.

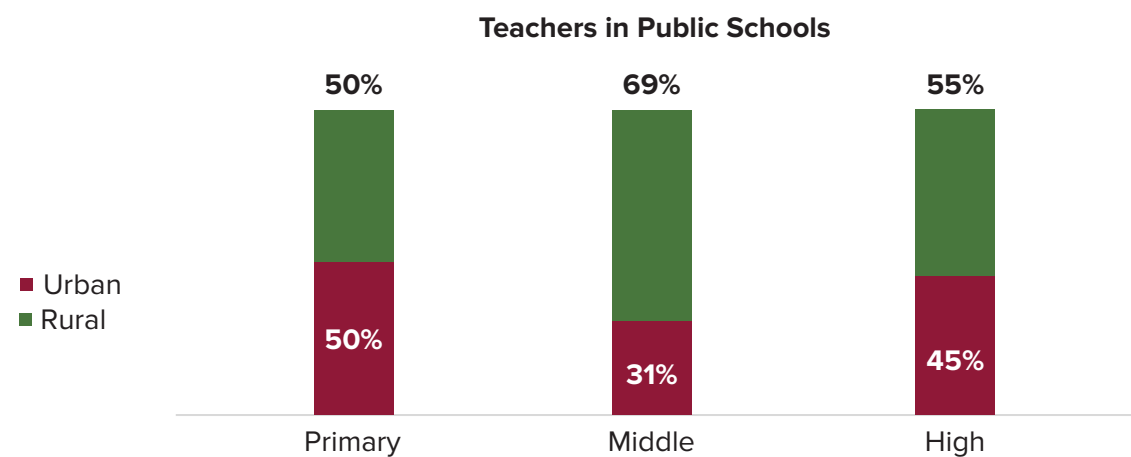
5.5.1 Teachers in Formal Public Schools

Gendered data for teachers in formal public schools has not been managed in a systematic manner, therefore, here we can only see the comparison between urban and rural areas.

At the primary level, the percentage of teachers is balanced between urban and rural areas, with 50 percent each, reflecting equitable distribution at the foundational education level.

At the middle level, the distribution shifts significantly, with 31 percent of teachers in urban areas and a much higher proportion, 69 percent, in rural areas. This indicates a stronger rural presence of middle school teachers, possibly driven by targeted recruitment or higher student enrolment in rural middle schools.

At the high school level, the distribution becomes more balanced compared to the middle level, with 45 percent of teachers in urban areas and 55 percent in rural areas. While rural areas still maintain a higher share of teachers, the gap narrows, reflecting improved equity at the high school level.

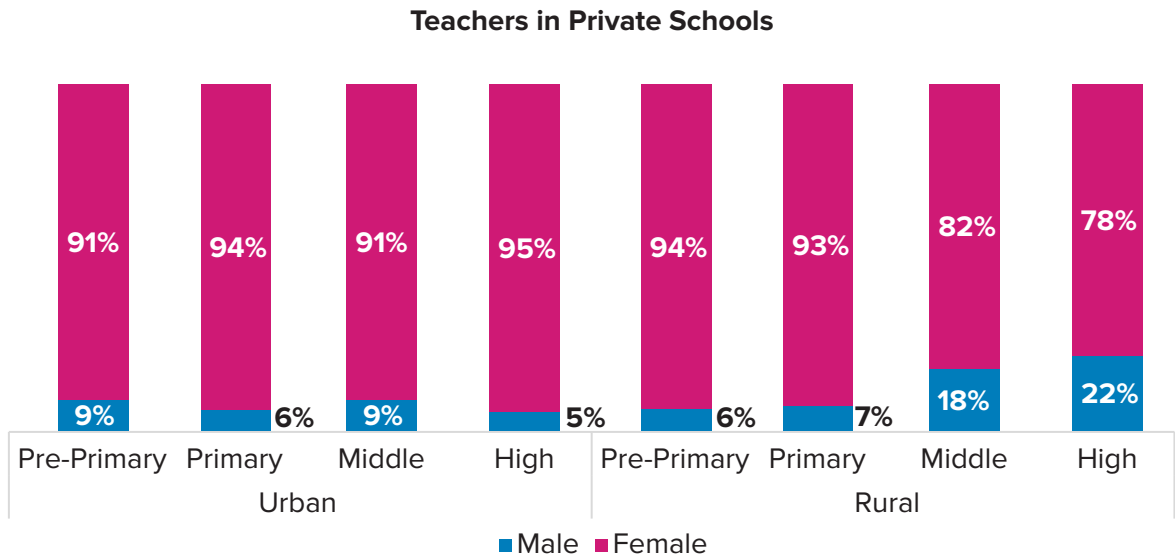


Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training data 2022-2023

However, a key limitation of the data is the lack of gender-segregated information on teachers. Additionally, the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) did not report data by gender, limiting insights into gender dynamics among teachers in public schools. This gap reduces the ability to assess the representation of female teachers, a critical factor influencing female students' education in rural and urban areas.

5.5.2 Teachers in Formal Private Schools

Overall, among 22,415 teachers who are teaching in private schools, 87 percent are female and 13 percent are male. Among all teacher, 89.4 percent have graduation or above level educational degrees.



Source: PIERA Teachers in Formal Schools 2022-2023

In urban areas, female teachers dominate at every level, as shown by high parity ratios. At the pre-primary level, the ratio is 10.22, with 92 female teachers compared to only 9 males. At the middle level, the parity ratio is 10. At the primary and high school levels, the ratios are 15.79 and 17.54, respectively, showcasing significant female representation. Overall, the total parity ratio among teachers in urban areas stands at 15.13, demonstrating a substantial female majority.

In rural areas, a similar trend of female dominance is observed. At the pre-primary level, the parity ratio is 15.25, showing a stark gender imbalance favouring females. For primary education, the ratio stands at 12.86, while at the middle school level, the parity ratio is 4.63, reflecting a notable male presence. At the high school level, the ratio is 3.61, indicating increased male participation. Despite these shifts, the overall parity ratio for rural areas remains high at 5.16.

When combined, the total parity ratio across urban and rural areas stands at 6.64, with 19,482 female teachers compared to 2,933 males. This highlights the dominant presence of female teachers in private formal schools. Urban areas show higher parity ratios compared to rural ones, though male representation gradually increases at higher education levels, particularly in rural areas.

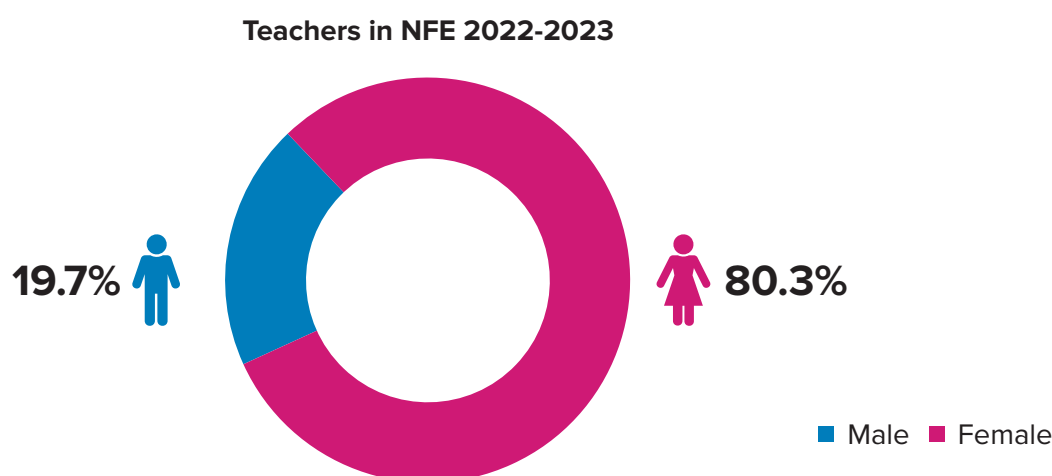
This data shows female dominance in private formal schools. Urban areas exhibit significantly higher female representation, while rural areas show a gradual increase in male representation at higher levels. This trend reflects gendered preferences in the teaching profession, influenced by cultural, societal, and institutional factors. To address these imbalances, initiatives could encourage male participation, particularly at lower levels, while ensuring equitable representation across all educational stages.

During 2023, in the private sector of urban Islamabad, the student-to-teacher ratios are as follows: 1 teacher for every 16 students at the primary level, 1 teacher for every 11 students at the middle level, and 1 teacher for every 2 students at the high school level. Despite these ratios, there is a high gender parity among teachers, measured at 15.¹⁴⁰

During 2023, in the private sector of rural Islamabad, the student-to-teacher ratios are 1 teacher for every 26 students at the primary level, 1 teacher for every 10 students at the middle level, and 1 teacher for every 3 students at the high school level. Among these, a significant level of gender parity among teachers is noted, measured at 5.1.¹⁴¹

5.5.3 Teachers in Non-Formal Education Institutes (NFEIs)

In Islamabad during 2023, there were 1677 teachers employed at NFEIs. Of these, 20 percent were men and 80 percent were women.¹⁴²



Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22 & 2022-23, PIE, Islamabad

¹⁴⁰ From Primary to High 6491 female teachers/ 426 Male teachers = 15.23 Parity (Private Urban)

¹⁴¹ From Primary to High 12838 female teachers/ 2494 Male teachers = 5.14 Parity (Private Rural)

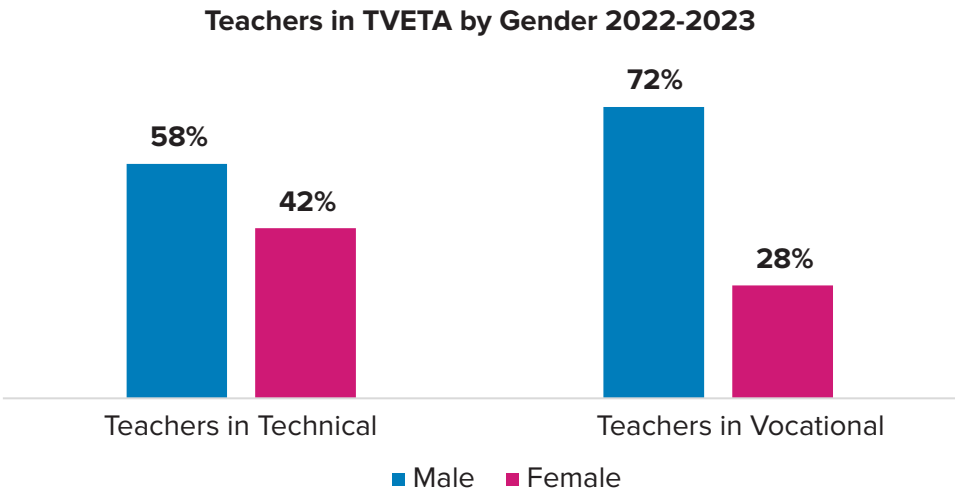
¹⁴² National Federation of Educational Management Information Systems (NFEMIS). (2023) Retrieved from <https://www.nfemis.net/Default.aspx>

The data reveals a significant gender disparity. Out of a total of 1,677 teachers, 1,347 are female, while only 330 are male. The parity ratio, calculated as the number of female teachers divided by the number of male teachers, is approximately 4.08.

This indicates that against every 1 male teacher, there are about 4 female teachers, showcasing a strong female representation in the non-formal education sector. This dominance aligns with trends in other education categories, where female teachers are more prevalent, reflecting both societal and structural factors influencing the teaching profession in non-formal education settings.¹⁴³

5.5.4 Teachers in Technical and Vocational Institutes

In the ICT, there are 595 teachers in technical and vocational institutes with stark differences in better paying jobs between males and female teachers. Of these, 69 percent are male and the remaining 31 percent are female.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

The data for teachers in technical and vocational institutes for 2022-23 highlights a disparity in gender representation: out of a total of 595 teachers, 411 are male and 184 are female.

In technical institutes, there are 73 male teachers and 53 female teachers, resulting in a parity ratio of 0.73. This shows that males dominate this area, with less than one female teacher for every male teacher.

In vocational institutes, the gender gap is slightly narrower, with 338 male teachers and 131 female teachers, yielding a parity ratio of 0.39, indicating even greater male dominance.

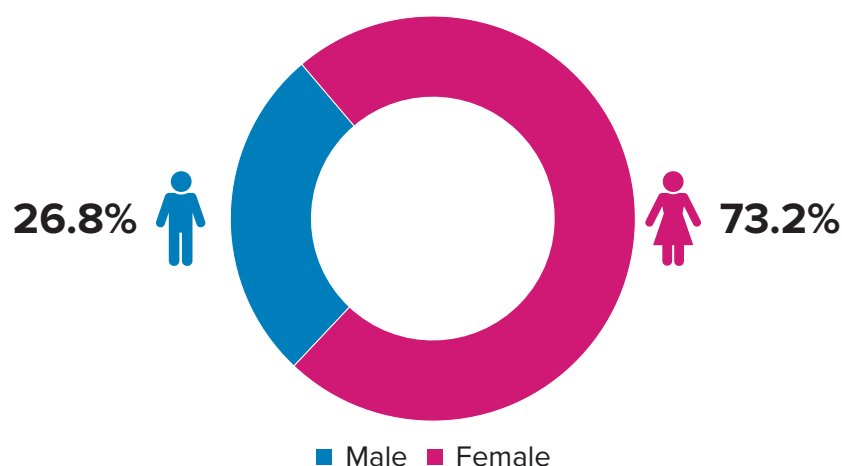
Overall, the aggregated parity ratio across technical and vocational institutes is 0.45, reflecting male predominance in these fields, with fewer opportunities or participation for female teachers.

5.5.5 Teachers in Special Education Schools

For special education, the gender gap shows a strong female representation, with 34 male teachers and 93 female teachers between years 2021-2023. This results in a parity ratio of 2.73 (93/34), indicating a significant female dominance in this field, with more than two female teachers for every male teacher.

¹⁴³ Detail table in Annexure https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KQI03d-PIEA_KRtcd8ddijHF5gklj6DaPOO_EeLmQjc/edit?gid=0#gid=0

Teachers in Special Education 2021-2023



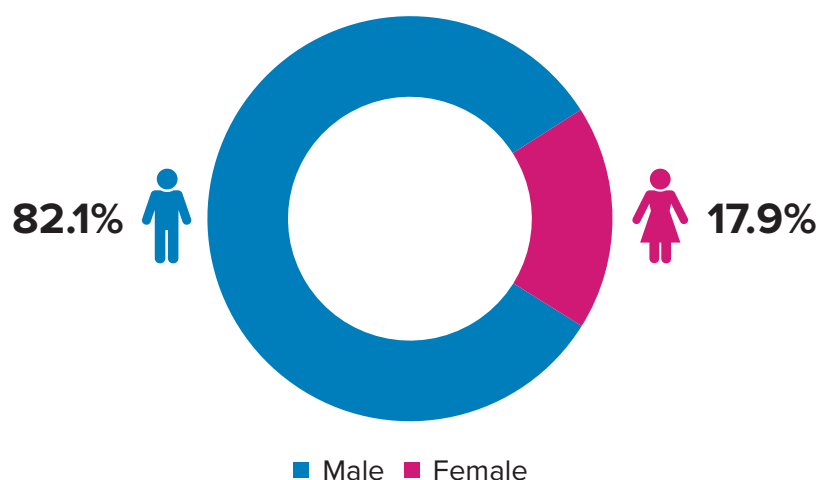
Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

Overall, the aggregated parity ratio for special education reflects a clear gender imbalance, but high female teacher dominance comprises the majority in this sector.¹⁴⁴

5.5.6 Teachers in Deeni Madaris

The data for teachers in 2022-23 highlights a significant gender disparity. Out of a total of 3,667 teachers, 82 percent are male and 18 percent are female.

Teachers in Deeni Madaris/Religious Schools 2022-2023



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

For this data set, the gender gap is substantial, with 3,010 male teachers and 657 female teachers. This results in a parity ratio of 0.22 (657/3,010), indicating a strong male dominance, with fewer than one female teacher for every male teacher.

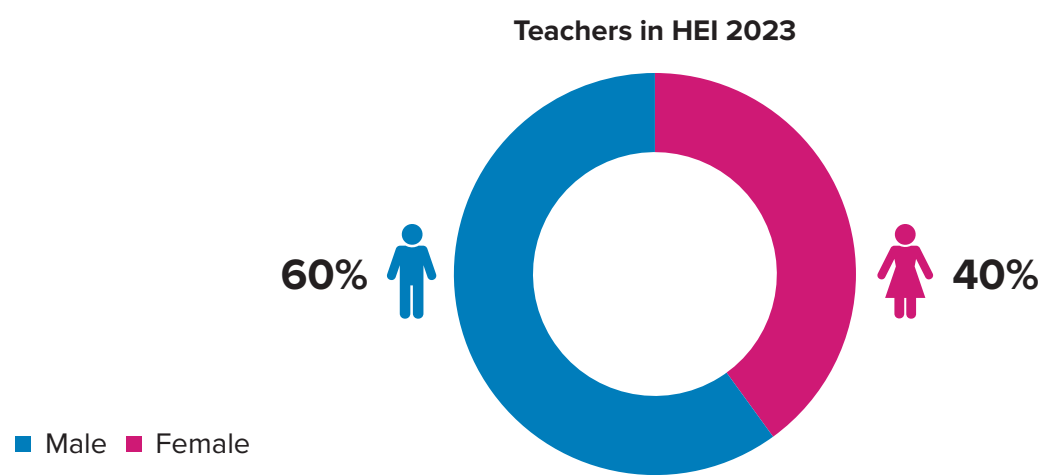
Overall, the aggregated parity ratio reflects a clear gender imbalance, with males comprising the vast majority of teachers in this field.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Detail table in Annexure https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KQI03d-PIEA_KRtcd8ddijHF5gklj6DaPO0_EeLmQjc/edit?gid=0#gid=0

¹⁴⁵ Detail table in Annexure https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KQI03d-PIEA_KRtcd8ddijHF5gklj6DaPO0_EeLmQjc/edit?gid=0#gid=0

5.5.7 Teachers in Tertiary Education/Higher Education Institutes

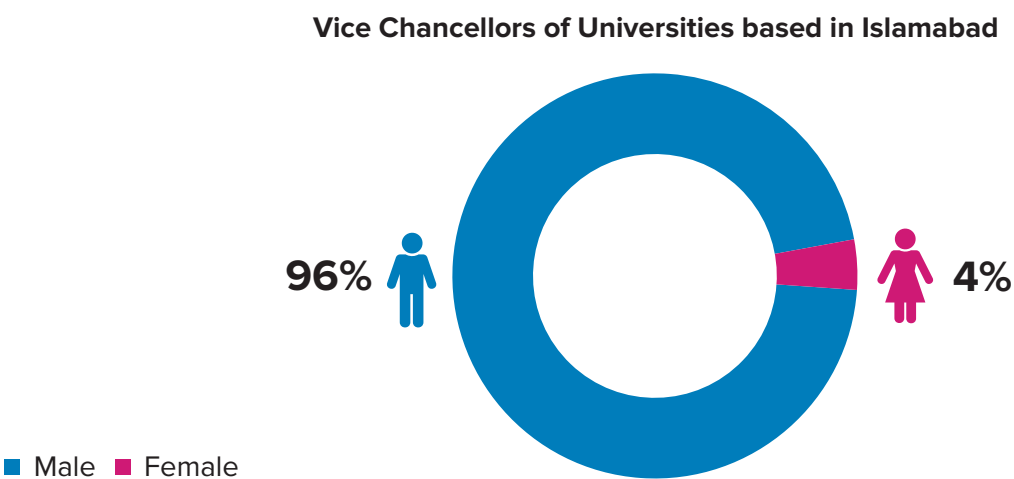
Based on the provided data, the overall gender parity ratio among teaching staff of 12,023 higher education institutes (HEIs) with headquarters in ICT stands at 0.7. This indicates a male-dominated teaching workforce, with 7,238 males and 4,785 females. Despite this, several HEIs exhibit commendable progress in achieving gender parity. Institutions like Bahria University and Riphah International University maintain a ratio of 1.0, showcasing balanced gender representation. Similarly, Foundation University (1.5), Health Services Academy (1.2), and Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (1.3) demonstrate female-dominated teaching staff, indicating progress in fostering gender inclusivity in specific fields and institutions.



Source: Pakistan Institute of Education and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFE&PT)

However, significant gender imbalances persist in other institutions, particularly in male-dominated public universities. Technical and science-focused institutions, such as COMSATS University (0.4), National University of Sciences and Technology (0.3), and Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (0.1), exhibit extremely low female representation among teaching staff. The overall ratio of 0.7 highlights the need for strategic interventions to improve female participation, particularly in male-dominated fields and institutions.

5.5.8 University Vice Chancellors



Source: Online available data

Gender parity among Vice Chancellors (VCs) in universities of the ICT is alarmingly low, with women representing only 4 percent of the total Vice Chancellors across higher education institutions, resulting in a parity ratio of 0.04. This stark underrepresentation of women in leadership positions highlights persistent gender disparities in the governance and decision-making structures of universities. Despite the progress made in increasing female participation in academia and teaching roles, the lack of women in top administrative roles underscores the barriers women face in accessing leadership opportunities.

5.6 Basic Facilities

Reviewing data on basic facilities, such as drinking water and toilets, is crucial for analysing gender parity in education because these facilities significantly impact access, retention, and the learning environment, particularly for female students. The following section highlights some of these basic needs. The data for public institutes only have been received from PIE, however, the data shows that all public male and female formal schools have facilities for drinking water and latrines, additionally all of them have complete walls for safety purposes. However, the data for specific number of facilities inside the building is not available at public level.

5.6.1 Hostels and Transportation Facilities in Universities/HEIs

Based on the data received for only 12 out of 25 universities and as per their report collectively, there are 34 hostel facilities available for male students, compared to 33 hostel facilities for female students, resulting in a parity ratio of 0.97. This indicates a relatively balanced provision of hostel facilities for male and female students, with only a slight disparity favouring male students. The distribution of hostels reflects commendable efforts to ensure gender inclusivity in the provision of residential accommodations.

Universities	Public or Private	Number of Hostels available for Males	Number of Hostels available for Females	Number of students accommodated in Male Hostels	Number of students accommodated in Female Hostels
Bahria University, Islamabad	Public	0	6	0	500
Pakistan Institute of Development of Economics (PIDE), Islamabad	Public	01	01	10	08
Muslim Youth University, Islamabad	Private	2	3	65	185
National University of Technology (NUTECH), Islamabad	Public	02	01	237	80
National University of Medical Sciences, Rawalpindi	Public	0	1	0	103
Riphah International University, Islamabad	Private	1	1	44	164
Air University, Islamabad	Public	0	01	0	173

Universities	Public or Private	Number of Hostels available for Males	Number of Hostels available for Females	Number of students accommodated in Male Hostels	Number of students accommodated in Female Hostels
International Islamic University, Islamabad	Public	07	07	2863	2644
Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), Islamabad	Public	8	3	876	360
National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad	Public	10	7	2792	1927
Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Islamabad	Public	01	01	60	60
National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad	Public	2	1	320	330
		34	33	7,267	6,534

Source: Higher Education Data Repository Office - HEC: Graduates ICT 2023

When examining the number of hostel beds 7,434 beds are allocated for male students, while 6,680 beds are allocated for female students, yielding a gender parity ratio of 0.89. This slightly lower ratio highlights a modest gap in the availability of hostel accommodations for female students. While the disparity is not pronounced, it underscores the need for further expansion of hostel facilities for female students to achieve full parity.

Overall, the data reflects positive progress in addressing gender parity in hostel facilities across HEIs in Islamabad. However, the marginal gap in the number of hostel beds suggests the need for targeted initiatives to enhance female accommodation facilities, ensuring equitable access for all students.

Data for availability of buses was received from 15 universities, who reported a total of 220 buses, including 79 exclusively for females and 48 exclusively for males. To increase access to universities and schools, the federal government in Islamabad has launched multiple metro buses routes along with pink buses. Though it is too early to assess the impact of this initiative, such services in other parts of the world have played vital role for students' access to educational institutions.

5.7 Conclusion

Islamabad's education landscape reflects both progress and persistent challenges in achieving gender equity. While female students demonstrate promising trends in retention, enrolment at higher levels, and near-parity in tertiary education, early schooling continues to favour boys, particularly in urban primary schools. Rural areas show remarkable strides in girls' education, yet disparities in access and quality persist. Male retention emerges as a critical concern, with boys facing higher dropout rates at middle and high school levels, indicating socio-economic pressures and limited opportunities.

Significant gender imbalances persist in specialized sectors: STEM fields and university leadership continues to be male-dominated, while healthcare education skews overwhelmingly towards females. Infrastructure gaps, such as inadequate hostel beds and transport for female students, further hinder equitable access. Meanwhile, non-formal education models showcase near gender parity, offering lessons in inclusivity.

To advance equity, policymakers must adopt gender-responsive strategies tailored to local contexts. Priorities include expanding girls' access to primary education, implementing mentorship programmes for boys, addressing socio-cultural barriers, and investing in gender-sensitive infrastructure. Strengthening female representation in STEM education and leadership roles, alongside efforts to retain male students through vocational training and financial support, will be vital. By building on existing successes and addressing systemic gaps, Islamabad can ensure all learners, regardless of gender or background, can unlock their full educational potential in a balanced and inclusive system.

5.8 Recommendations

1. **Establish a Unified Database System:** There is an urgent need to develop a centralized database system encompassing all educational institutions, including Formal Education Institutes, Non-Formal Basic Education Centres, Special Education Schools, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutes, the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), and Deeni Madaris. This database should include gender-disaggregated data and data segregated for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in rural and urban areas across all levels. Such a system will enable data coherence, efficient monitoring, evidence-based policymaking and planning, and targeted resource allocation.
2. **Data Analysis:** The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) should continue to deliver through the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) a comprehensive need analysis of education at all levels (ECE to Tertiary) to identify gaps in database management and data standardization across relevant organizations. Based on evidence, targeted training programmes should be initiated by the MoFEPT tracked by the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), and Private Educational Institutes Regulatory Authority (PEIRA). MoFEPT/PIE staff should be trained to design and monitor a centralized database for formal, non-formal, private, TEVT and special needs education sectors. PEIRA staff should be regularly trained and equipped to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data from private institutions. These programmes must emphasize data entry techniques, standardization practices, aligned to international benchmarks set by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) to ensure consistency and accuracy in data management and reporting for SDG 4.
3. **Annual Reporting and Monitoring:** Education regulatory authorities, including PEIRA and HEC, should introduce mandatory annual reporting requirements for all institutions to ensure consistent gender disaggregated data collection and analysis. This will allow policymakers to track progress and address gaps in gender equity and inclusivity in education.

- 4. Develop and Implement a Higher Education Data Framework:** The Higher Education Commission (HEC) should establish a comprehensive and standardized data framework to collect regular, updated data from registered universities. This dataset should include information on basic facilities such as hostels, transportation, and accessibility for students with disabilities, as well as gender-disaggregated data. Additionally, data on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programmes must be aligned with international standards to enhance the quality and global competitiveness of education in Pakistan.
- 5. Strengthen Data Collection by PEIRA:** The Private Educational Institutes Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) should expand its mandate to include the systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data from private educational institutes. This data should cover key areas such as student enrolment, teaching staff, facilities, and governance structures. Such efforts will improve evidence-based reporting and facilitate targeted interventions for improving gender equity in private education.
- 6. Promote Female Representation in Leadership:** The government must create and implement targeted programmes and policies to promote female representation in senior most decision-making positions within universities. With only 4 percent of Vice Chancellors in Islamabad being female, there is a critical need to address this disparity. Initiatives such as leadership training programmes, mentorship opportunities, and affirmative action policies can help bridge the gender gap in university leadership. This will ensure more inclusive governance and inspire female participation in academia.
- 7. Increased Investment in Women-Friendly Infrastructure:** Recognizing improvement trends led by MoFE&PT to support female participation in education, there is a need for increased investment in hostel facilities, transportation, and childcare services across schools, TEVT institutions and universities. This will remove barriers to access for female students and faculty, particularly in rural areas. There must also be consistent investment in promoting STEM opportunities across all institutions, especially for female students and women.
- 8. Policy Reforms for Inclusive Education:** The government must ensure that educational policies prioritize inclusivity in every sense of the term including access with equity for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Institutes should be mandated to provide accessible infrastructure, specialized support staff and specialists and inclusive teaching practices to accommodate the needs of all students effectively.

06



**ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
& OPPORTUNITIES**

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION & OPPORTUNITIES



Key Findings

- Women's labor force participation in Islamabad Capital Territory is significantly lower at 22.5 percent than that of men, at 67 percent, with urban participation at a mere 12.7 percent. This reflects compounded barriers of mobility, cultural constraints, and workplace accessibility.
- 51.4 percent of women work in agriculture compared to only 5.5 percent of men, while men dominate non-agriculture sectors. Women's economic roles remain limited to traditional, low-paying sectors.
- In rural ICT, 7.6 percent of women earn less than PKR 5,000 compared to just 0.5 percent of men. Only 56.5 percent of women earn above PKR 15,000, while 84.4 percent of men surpass this threshold.
- Women remain significantly underrepresented in financial services, holding only 12.69 percent of active current accounts in 2024, compared to 47.78 percent held by men, reflecting a persistent gender gap in banking access.
- In 2024, women constituted only 8.75 percent of total bank deposits, while men still dominated with 29.93 percent. This indicates limited financial independence and access to savings opportunities for women in ICT.
- Financial instruments like credit and debit cards show significant gender gaps. In ICT, 88.7 percent of credit cards are held by men, with only 11.2 percent held by women, underscoring financial access inequities.
- Digital inclusion is minimal, with women comprising only 23.8 percent of mobile subscribers in ICT. This gap results from affordability, digital literacy deficits, and sociocultural factors.
- Women face systemic barriers in claiming inheritance, with over 77 percent of cases related to inheritance disputes involving female claimants being denied in 2024, highlighting the persistent denial of women's legal property rights in ICT.
- Women's underemployment and unemployment rates are significantly higher than men's in ICT. The unemployment rate for women is 16.7 percent compared to 8.6 percent for men, reflecting systemic barriers to job security and adequate employment.

- Excessive working hours are far less common for women, with only 10.6 percent reporting excessive weekly work hours, compared to 57.4 percent of men. This may indicate limited participation in full-time, formal employment due to unpaid care responsibilities.
- Despite higher education levels, women still face barriers to employment, with only 21.6 percent of degree-holding women employed, compared to 22.1 percent of degree-holding men, indicating that education alone does not eliminate gender disparities in the labor market.
- Marital status significantly affects women's economic engagement. Married women have a lower employment rate (62.9 percent) compared to married men (67.9 percent), pointing to domestic responsibilities and societal expectations as limiting factors.
- Sectoral employment data shows that rural women are overwhelmingly concentrated in agriculture (65.4 percent), while urban women, though more present in non-agriculture sectors, still experience lower representation in high-wage industries.
- Vehicle registration and driving license ownership are heavily male-dominated, with women accounting for only 5.21 percent of vehicle registrations and 10.31 percent of driving licenses in ICT. This restricts women's mobility and access to broader economic opportunities.
- Zakat and Ushr payments show a positive trend in targeting female beneficiaries, with 89.82 percent of recipients being women, reflecting efforts to alleviate financial vulnerability.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews gender parity concerning women's economic empowerment in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The sections below will explore the status of key indicators related to women's participation in the labor force, land ownership patterns, women's mobility, and access to finance. This chapter will also examine the social security and safety nets available to support women.

Economics, at its core, studies how societies allocate scarce resources to fulfill unlimited human wants and needs. It examines how individuals, businesses, and governments make choices regarding the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services.¹⁴⁶

From a gender perspective, economics encompasses the study of how economic activities and outcomes differ between men and women. It explores how gender roles, social norms, and discriminatory practices impact economic participation and opportunities for both sexes. This includes examining disparities in labor force participation rates, employment types, wages, access to education and training, ownership of assets, and access to credit.¹⁴⁷

6.1.1 Economic Context of Pakistan: A Gendered Perspective

Pakistan's economic landscape is complex. It involves socio-economic factors. These include historical legacies and regional disparities. Significant socio-cultural challenges also play a role. This context offers opportunities. It also poses obstacles to growth. Human capital is substantial

¹⁴⁶ Samuelson & Nordhaus, 2010

¹⁴⁷ World Bank, 2022

but underutilized. Women make up nearly half the population. Their potential remains largely untapped.

As highlighted by Becker (1964), human capital is key. It encompasses skills, knowledge, and abilities of individuals. This is a critical driver of economic growth. Investments in human capital are crucial. They work primarily through education and healthcare. These are vital for enhancing labor productivity. They also unlock a nation's economic potential. However, Pakistan's human capital development remains challenging. The Pakistan Human Capital Review 2023 underscores this. It reveals a modest HCI score of 0.41. This lags behind South Asian counterparts like Bangladesh. It also lags behind Nepal. This score reflects a concerning stagnation. It shows little progress over three decades. It highlights stark disparities across various dimensions. These include gender, geography, and wealth.¹⁴⁸

6.1.2 Women's Economic Empowerment in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities

Women's Economic Empowerment Index (WEEI) is a framework developed by the United Nations to evaluate investments through the lens of women's economic empowerment. It serves as a tool to assess how businesses and public investment projects contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁴⁹ The WEEI for Pakistan highlights a low female labor force participation rate of 21.4 percent, with minimal progress in recent years.¹⁵⁰ Addressing women's economic empowerment is essential for poverty reduction and inclusive growth, particularly in rural areas where poverty is most severe.¹⁵¹ Empowering women to participate fully in the economy by promoting equality in the workplace can unlock their underutilised skills, driving economic growth and fostering a more equitable society.¹⁵²

Gender equality in the workplace is not only a matter of social justice but also an economic imperative. Realizing the full potential of Pakistan's workforce requires targeted interventions to dismantle systemic barriers and challenge deeply ingrained societal norms that limit women's economic participation. Achieving true gender parity in the workplace demands a multifaceted approach that addresses several key dimensions:

1. Societal Gender Equality: empowerment is significantly constrained by deeply ingrained social norms and cultural expectations that limit their autonomy and decision-making power. In many households, women's choices regarding education, career paths, and marriage are often influenced or dictated by family members, particularly male relatives. This lack of agency perpetuates gender inequalities and restricts women's ability to fully participate in the labor market and achieve their economic potential. Safety concerns and limited access to gender-sensitive transport also restrict women's mobility and access to jobs. Addressing these issues and empowerment from an early age, and fostering a culture of respect for women are crucial foundational steps.

2. Enabling Economic Development: Creating an environment conducive to women's economic participation is essential. This involves creating an enabling environment for women's economic participation, including access to education, skills training, mobility and employment opportunities.

¹⁴⁸ World Bank, 2023

¹⁴⁹ (UNCDF, n.d)

¹⁵⁰ (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

¹⁵¹ (World Bank, 2023)

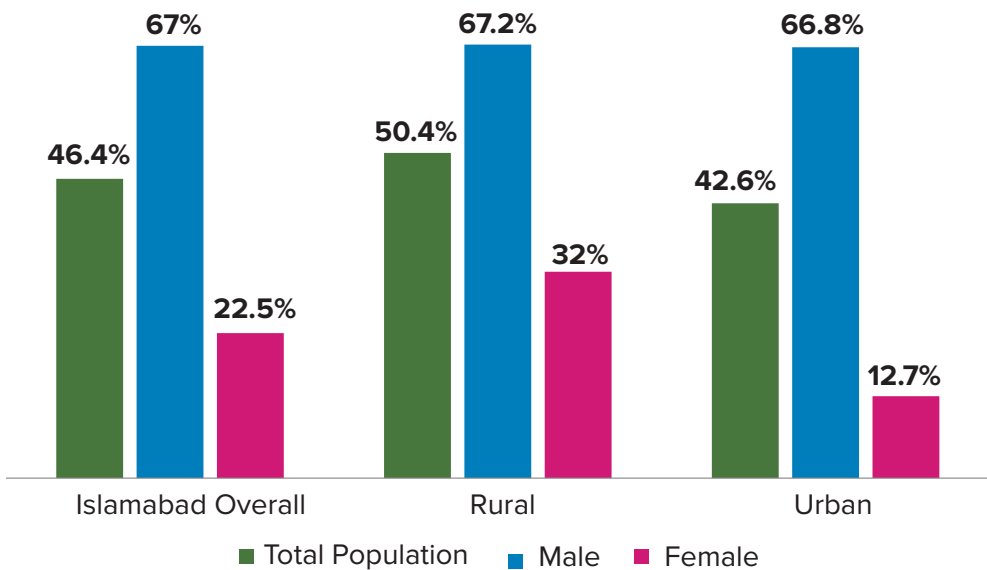
¹⁵² McKinsey Global Institute, 2015)

6.1.3 Profile of Economic Participation and Opportunity

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) plays a crucial role in Pakistan's economic and administrative framework; it hosts key ministries and institutions that promote financial inclusion and economic participation. Key players like the Ministry of Finance, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and ICT Revenue Department drive economic policy; they manage land ownership, inheritance rights, taxation, and financial inclusion. Additionally, public sector banks, microfinance institutions, and social safety net programs, such as the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and Zakat payments, play vital roles in empowering marginalized populations, particularly women.

Public sector banks like the National Bank of Pakistan, First Women Bank Limited, and microfinance institutions provide active current and loan accounts. National initiatives like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) offer direct cash transfers to women; this enables them to make independent financial decisions, invest in household needs, and support their children's education. Similarly, Zakat and Ushr disbursements target vulnerable groups, with women comprising over 80 percent of beneficiaries; this underscores their reliance on these essential resources. The Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) and the Islamabad Employees Social Security Institution (IESSI) provide financial security through pensions and social insurance; they help reduce women's economic vulnerability in times of need.¹⁵³

6.2 Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

The Labor Force Survey 2020-21 for Islamabad reveals significant gender disparities. While 46 percent of the population is in the labor force, men account for 67 percent, compared to only 22.5 percent of women. In rural areas, participation is slightly higher at 50.4 percent, compared to 42.6 percent in urban areas; however, men still dominate at 67.2 percent versus 32 percent for women. Despite higher rural participation rates for women, much of their work, such as unpaid family labor and agricultural activities, goes unaccounted for; this leads to an underestimation of their economic contributions.

¹⁵³ (ICT Administration, n.d.)

The situation is even more pronounced in urban areas, where only 12.7 percent of females are part of the labor force, compared to 66.8 percent of males. This stark disparity underscores the significant underrepresentation of females in the urban labor force of ICT.

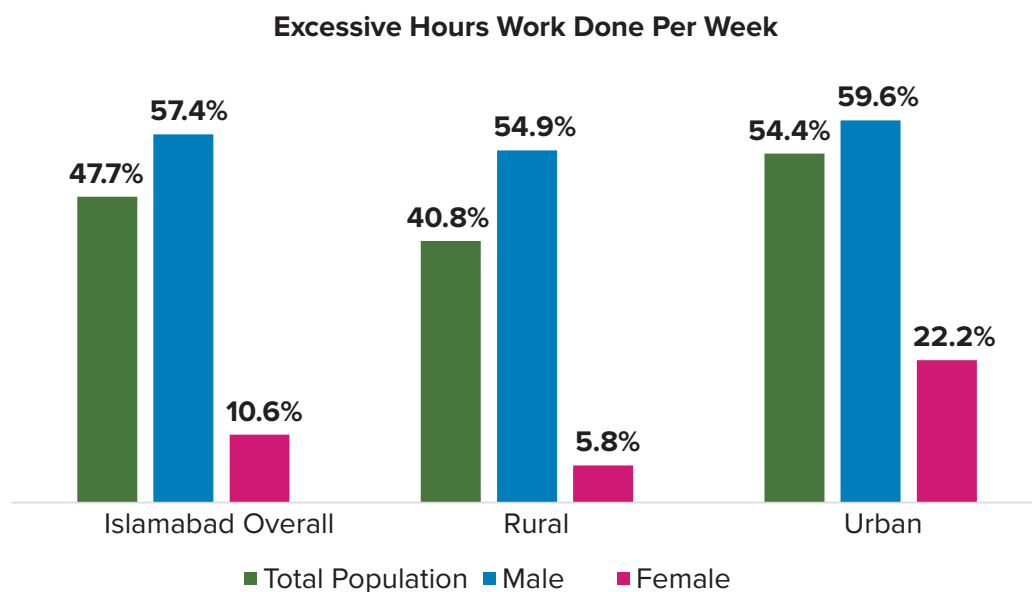
In conclusion, this data highlights a persistent and concerning gender gap in labor force participation across different settings in ICT. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions; addressing the underlying factors contributing to the underrepresentation of females in the workforce is essential.

6.3 Employment

This section unpacks the status of women's employment in terms of work hours, marital status, by education level across different sectors.

In the context of employment, ICT offers unique opportunities compared to other regions in Pakistan; its status as the administrative hub and relatively higher literacy rates (88 percent, as per the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics) contribute to this advantage. The presence of numerous government offices and international organizations provides employment opportunities for women; reserved quotas for females in public sector roles further support their inclusion. However, despite these advantages, female labor force participation in ICT remains low; it continues to mirror national trends.

6.3.1 Excessive Hours of Work



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

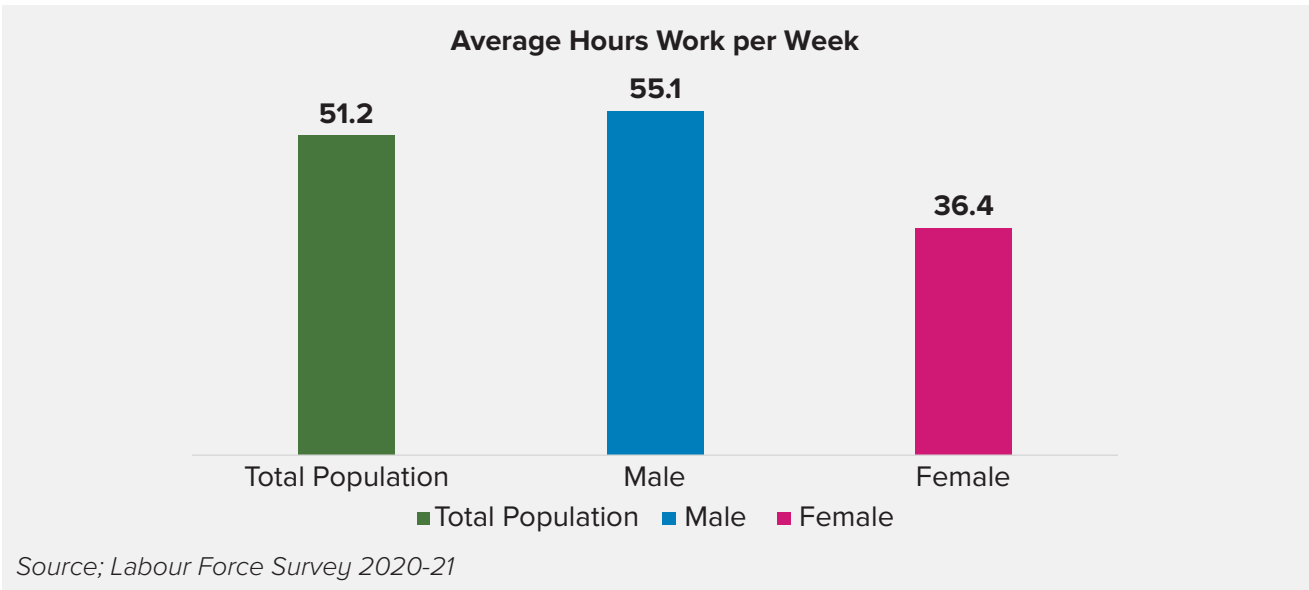
The data from the Labor Force Survey 2020-21 reveals a significant disparity in excessive work hours between males and females across different geographical areas in ICT. A considerably higher proportion of males (57.4 percent) compared to females (10.6 percent) reported working excessive hours per week. This gender gap persists in both rural areas (54.9 percent males vs. 5.8 percent females) and urban areas (59.6 percent males vs. 22.2 percent females).

The finding that men work more excessive hours than women suggests a complex interplay of factors; traditional gender roles, occupational segregation, and economic pressures all contribute. While men's longer working hours might reflect their role as primary breadwinners or concentration in demanding occupations, it is crucial to consider the underestimation of women's work due to unpaid labor and part-time employment. Furthermore, the distinction between chosen and constrained long hours is important; the potential negative impact on well-being must also be acknowledged.

Unpaid family work

The economic value of unpaid care work is often underestimated; it contributes significantly to global GDP, ranging from 9 percent to 39 percent, depending on the country (International Labour Organization, 2018).

Women disproportionately shoulder the burden of unpaid care work, including household chores, childcare, and elder care; this limits their ability to engage fully in paid employment, education, and skill development. Studies show that, on average, women spend 2.5 times more hours on unpaid care work than men; this significantly impacts their economic empowerment.¹⁵⁴ This imbalance also restricts women's financial and digital inclusion and hinders their educational attainment.

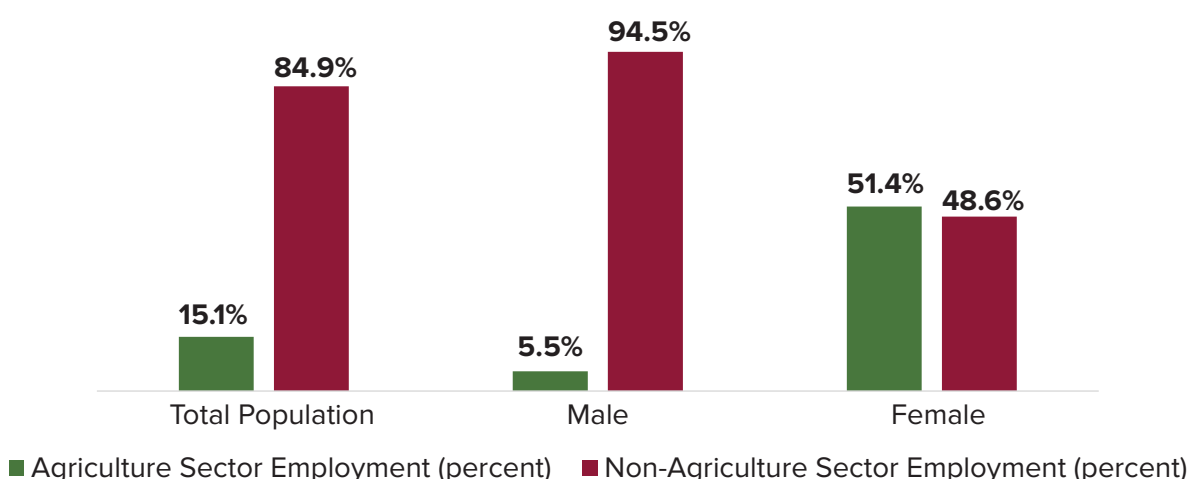


6.3.2 Employment by Sector (Agriculture/Non-Agriculture)

According to the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, a significant gender disparity is evident in sectoral employment. In the agriculture sector, 51.4 percent of females are employed, compared to only 5.5 percent of males; this stark contrast highlights a significant concentration of women in agricultural work.

Conversely, in the non-agriculture sector, the situation is reversed. Among employed men, 94.5 percent work in this sector, whereas only 48.6 percent of employed women are engaged in non-agricultural sector.

¹⁵⁴ (McGinn, Ruiz Castro, & Lingo, 2015)

Employment by Agriculture/Non-Agriculture Sector (Overall ICT)

Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

The majority of employed women in Pakistan work in the agriculture sector; this sector offers low wages and limited income potential. This overrepresentation reflects systemic challenges, including societal norms and restricted access to education and skills training; these barriers prevent women from pursuing higher-paying, non-agricultural jobs.

This occupational segregation not only limits women's economic empowerment but also perpetuates gender-based inequalities; it hinders access to better-paying, secure employment opportunities. Targeted efforts to provide women with education and skills are essential; they can help diversify employment options and reduce reliance on low-income agricultural work.

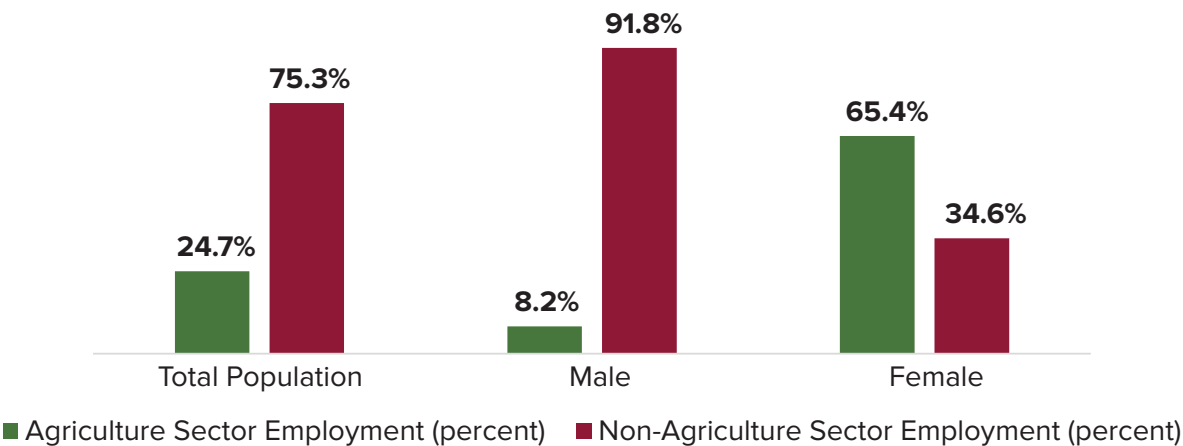
6.3.3 Employment by Sector (Agriculture/Non-Agriculture) in Rural Area

The table presents data on sectoral employment rates in rural areas from the Labour Force Survey 2020-21; it reveals a stark gender disparity. In the agriculture sector, 65.4 percent of females are employed, compared to only 8.2 percent of males; this significant concentration of women in agricultural work contrasts sharply with the non-agriculture sector.

In the non-agriculture sector, 91.8 percent of males are employed, while only 34.6 percent of females are; this data highlights that women predominantly engage in agriculture, while men dominate the non-agriculture sector.

This clear occupational segregation by gender in rural areas suggests a strong traditional division of labor; it potentially limits women's economic opportunities due to lower wages and limited advancement in agricultural work. This disparity highlights the need to investigate underlying causes; targeted interventions are essential to promote greater gender equality in rural employment.

Employment by Agriculture/Non-Agriculture Sector (Rural ICT)



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.4 Employment by Sector (Agriculture/Non-Agriculture) in Urban Area

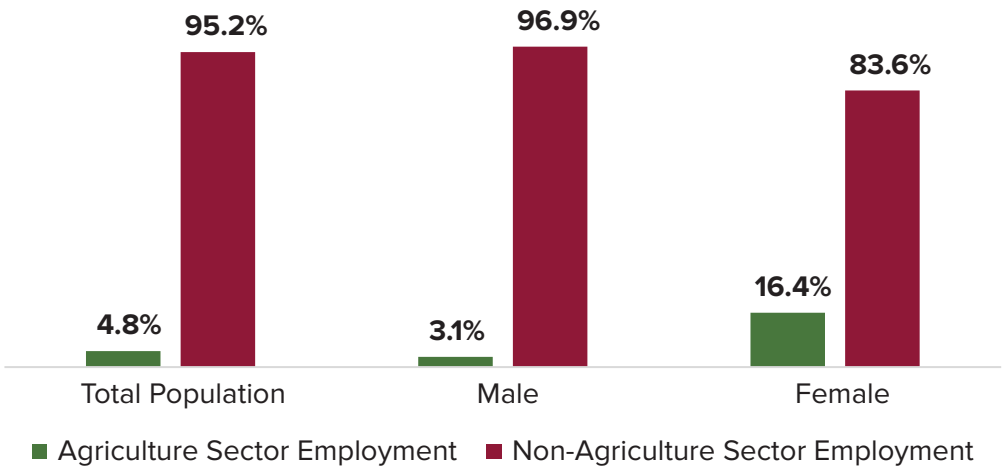
In urban areas, the data from the Labour Force Survey 2020-21 reveals a contrasting pattern. While 16.4 percent of females are employed in the agriculture sector, only 3.1 percent of males are; this indicates a higher proportion of female employment in agriculture within urban settings.

Conversely, in the non-agriculture sector, 96.9 percent of males are employed, compared to 83.6 percent of females; this highlights a significant gender disparity in urban employment.

While the majority of both men and women work in the non-agricultural sector, men have a slightly higher representation. Interestingly, a higher proportion of women than men are employed in urban agriculture; this is a departure from the typical rural trend.

Despite the urban shift away from agriculture, a gender gap persists in non-agricultural employment; barriers to women's full participation in the urban workforce remain, though they are perhaps less pronounced than in rural areas.

Employment by Agriculture/Non-Agriculture Sector (Urban ICT)



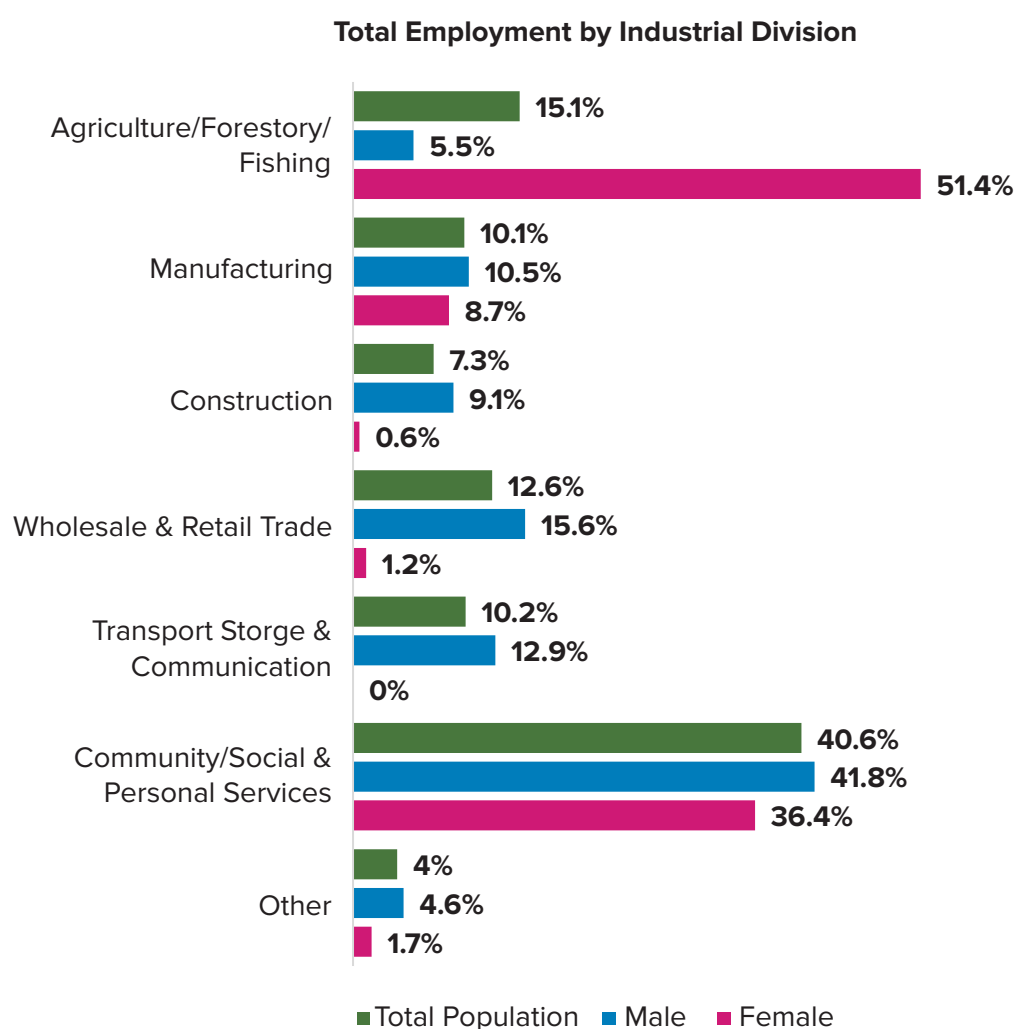
Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.5 Employment by Industrial Division

According to the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, a large proportion of females (51.4 percent) are involved in the Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing sector, compared to only 5.5 percent of males; this suggests that women play a crucial role in this sector, likely due to traditional roles and limited employment opportunities elsewhere.

In contrast, sectors like Manufacturing (10.5 percent male, 8.7 percent female), Construction (9.1 percent male, 0.6 percent female), Transport, Storage & Communication (12.9 percent male, 0 percent female), and Community, Social & Personal Services (41.8 percent male, 36.4 percent female) exhibit higher male participation rates.

This data reveals a strong gender imbalance in Pakistan's labor force; women are heavily concentrated in the Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing sector (51.4 percent vs. 5.5 percent for men), likely due to traditional roles and limited opportunities. Conversely, men dominate sectors like Manufacturing, Construction, Transport, and Community Services; this disparity suggests gender-based occupational segregation, influenced by societal expectations and women's limited access to training and resources in these male-dominated fields.

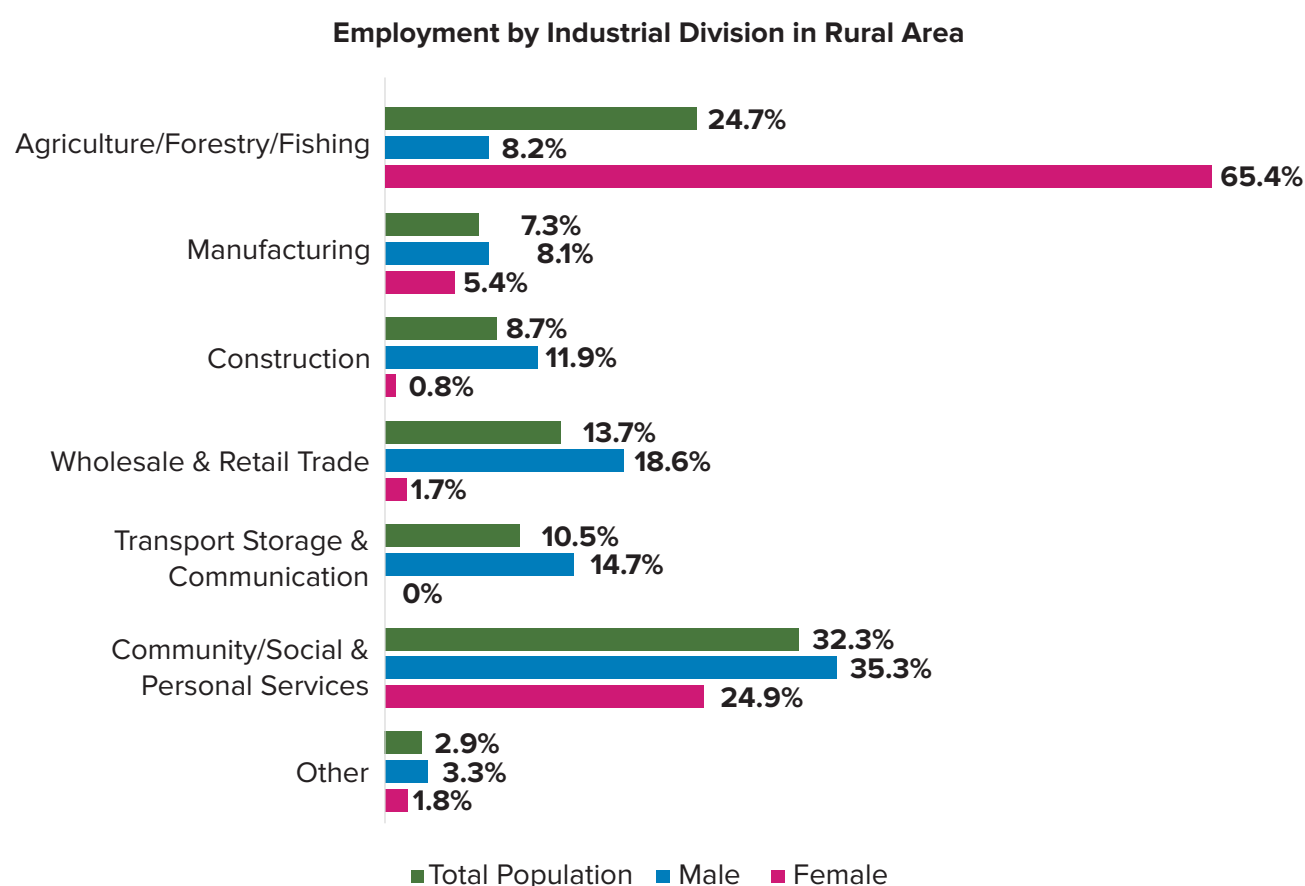


Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.6 Employment by Industrial Division in Rural Area

The gender disparity in labor force participation is even more pronounced in rural areas. According to the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, in Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing, a significantly higher proportion of females (65.4 percent) are engaged, compared to only 8.2 percent of males; this likely reflects the traditional division of labor in rural households, with women often responsible for agricultural activities.

In contrast, sectors like Construction (11.9 percent male, 0.8 percent female), Transport, Storage & Communication (14.7 percent male, 0 percent female), and Community, Social & Personal Services (35.3 percent male, 24.9 percent female) show higher male participation rates. This disparity could be attributed to limited access to education and skills training for women in rural areas; societal norms further restrict women's mobility and employment opportunities.

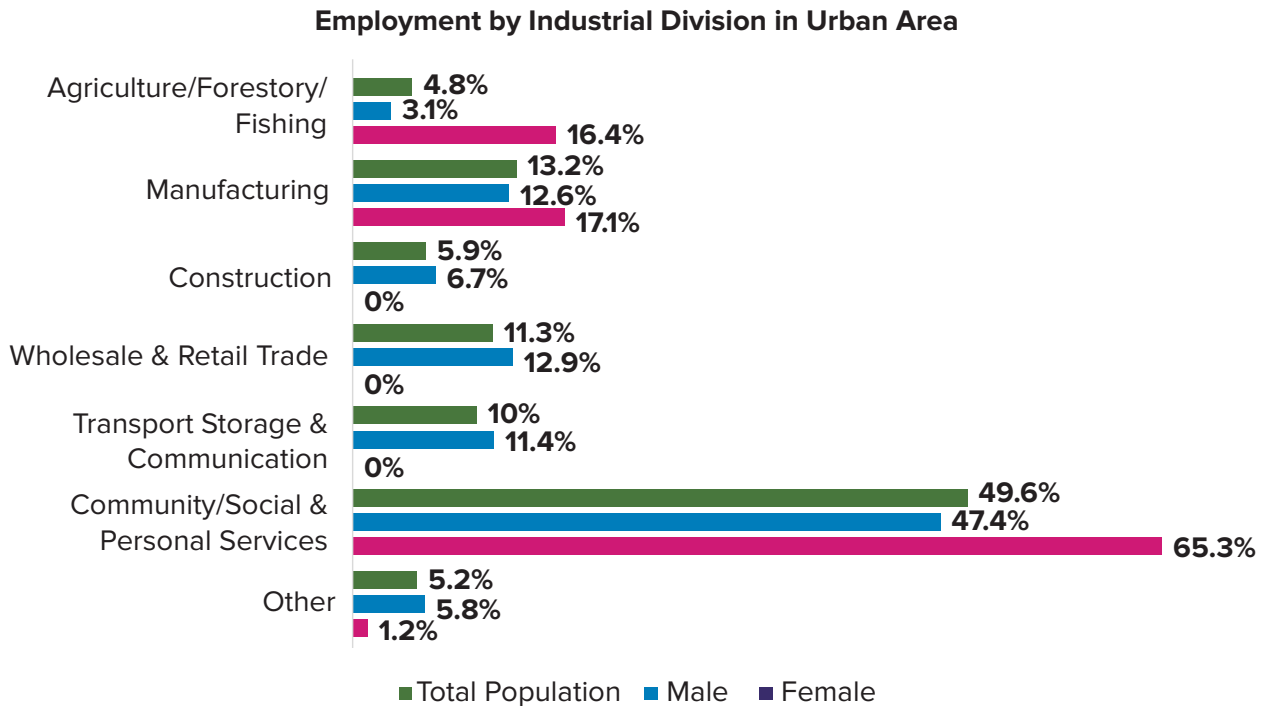


Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.7 Employment by Industrial Division in Urban Area

According to the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, the pattern of gender disparity varies across sectors in urban areas. Women have a significant presence in Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing (16.4 percent female, 3.1 percent male) and Community, Social & Personal Services (65.3 percent female, 47.4 percent male). Conversely, sectors like Manufacturing (12.6 percent male, 17.1 percent female) and Construction (6.7 percent male, 0 percent female) exhibit higher male participation rates.

Women are more represented in Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing and Community, Social & Personal Services, while men dominate Manufacturing and, especially, Construction. This sectoral variation likely stems from gender-based occupational segregation; societal expectations and barriers prevent women from entering and advancing in male-dominated fields.

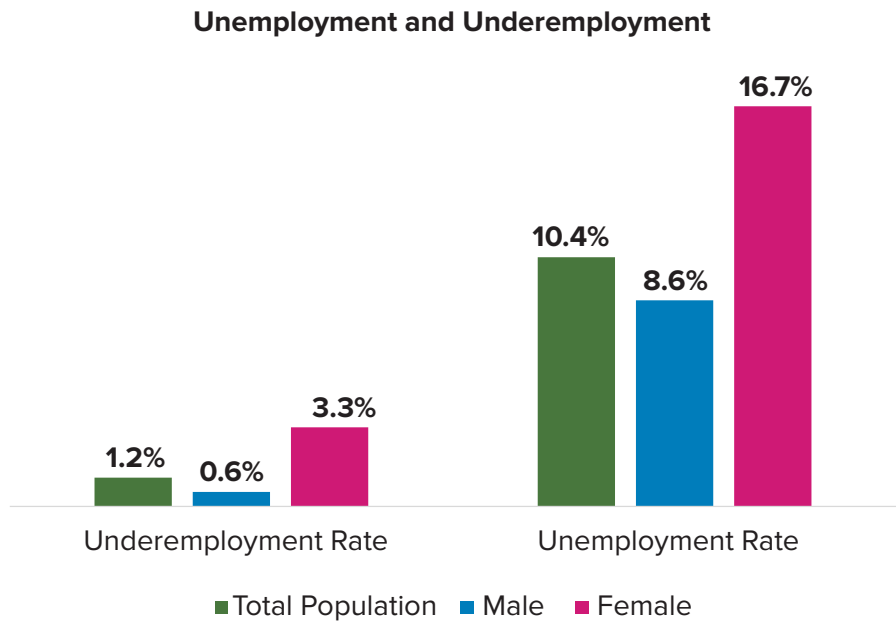


Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.8 Overall Unemployment and Underemployment

The data from the Labour Force Survey 2020-21 reveals that women experience substantially higher rates of both underemployment and unemployment compared to men. The stark difference in underemployment (3.3 percent for women vs. 0.6 percent for men) and unemployment (16.7 percent vs. 8.6 percent) demonstrates that women face greater challenges in securing sufficient and appropriate employment; this suggests potential systemic barriers hindering their full participation in the workforce.

These disparities could stem from several interconnected factors, including limited access to education and skills training for women; societal norms restrict women's work opportunities or confine them to specific roles. The lack of affordable childcare or eldercare options further limits employment prospects; gender-based discrimination in hiring and promotion practices exacerbates the issue. Further research is needed to fully understand the interplay of these factors and develop effective interventions.

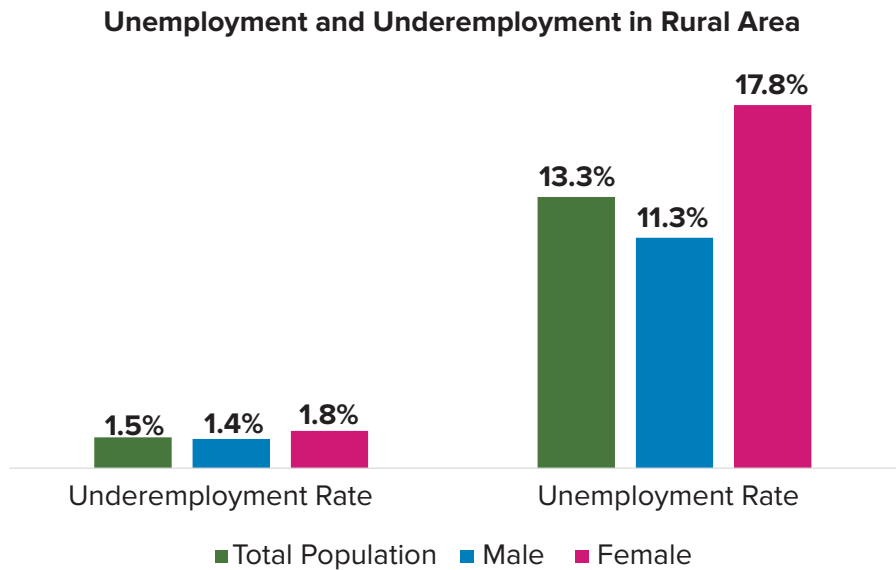


Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.9 Unemployment and Underemployment in Rural Area

The table presents data from the Labour Force Survey 2020-21 on underemployment and unemployment rates in rural areas. While the overall underemployment rate is slightly lower for males (1.4 percent) compared to females (1.8 percent), the unemployment rate is significantly higher for females (17.8 percent) than for males (11.3 percent).

This suggests that rural women might be slightly more likely to be underemployed; they often work fewer hours or in jobs below their skill level. However, they are substantially more likely to be unemployed altogether; this indicates greater difficulty in finding any work compared to rural men.

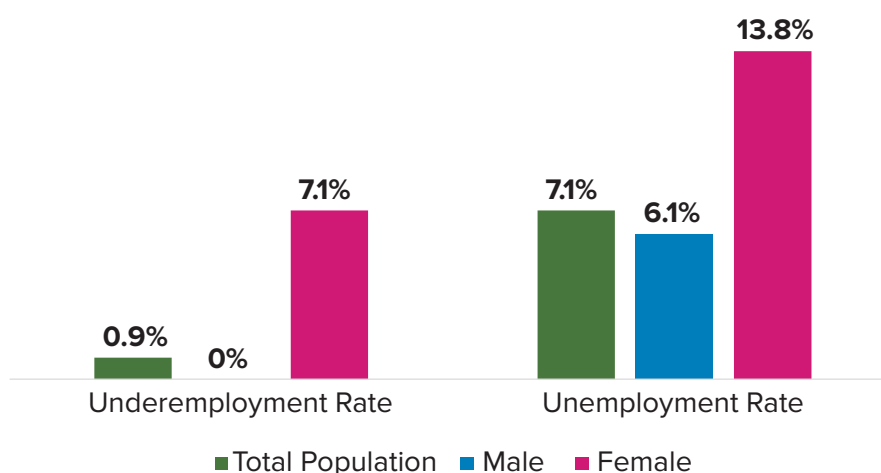


Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.10 Unemployment and Underemployment in Urban Area

While the overall underemployment rate is 0.9 percent, females exhibit a significantly higher rate (7.1 percent) compared to males (0 percent). In terms of unemployment, females also face a higher rate (13.8 percent) compared to males (6.1 percent); this suggests that women in urban areas experience greater challenges in finding and securing adequate employment compared to their male counterparts.

Unemployment Rate & Underemployment Rate in Urban Area



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.3.11 Employment by Education Level

Education is a crucial determinant of economic outcomes; gender disparities in education can significantly impact women's employment opportunities. While progress has been made in increasing women's access to education, significant gaps remain in educational attainment and its translation into meaningful employment.

Studies show that women with higher education levels are more likely to participate in the labor force; they also tend to earn higher wages.¹⁵⁵ However, even with comparable levels of education, women may face barriers to employment; gender-based discrimination in hiring and promotion, occupational segregation, and the burden of unpaid care work all contribute.

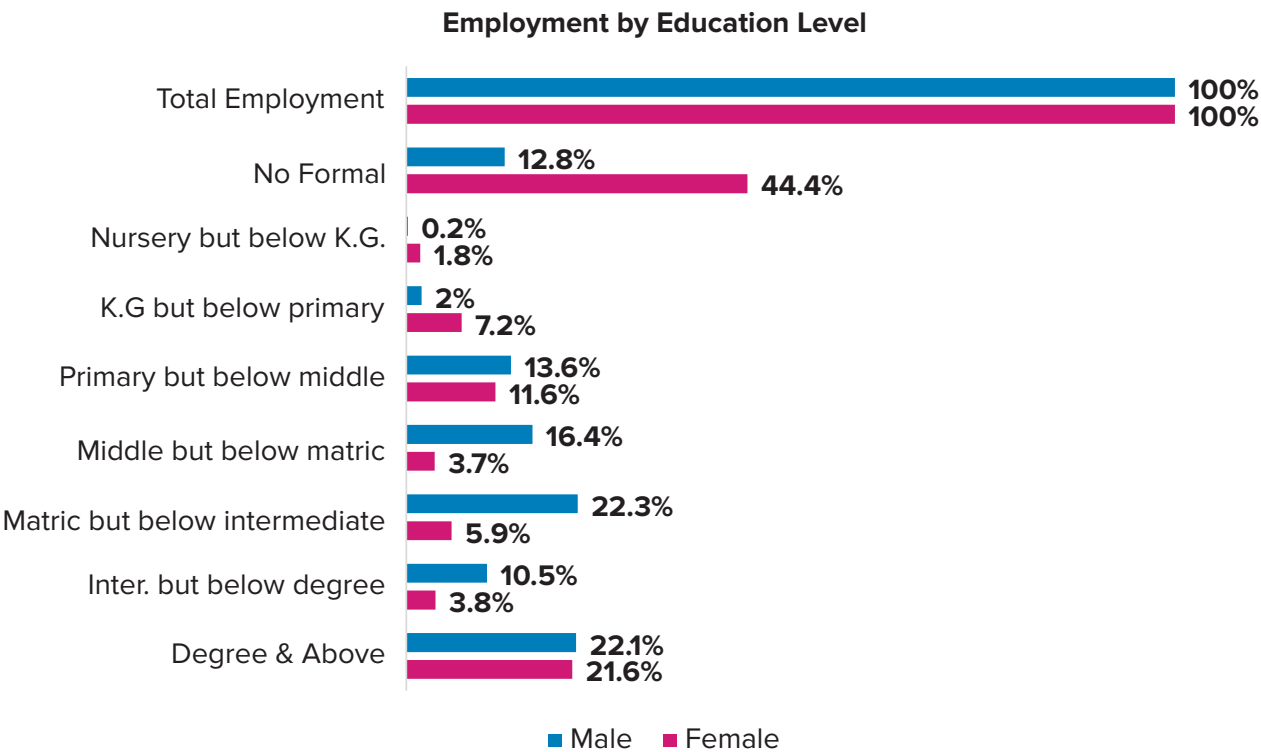
Furthermore, the types of education and skills acquired by women may not always align with labor market demands; addressing this mismatch requires a focus on providing women with high-quality education and skills training. Fields with high growth potential, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), should be prioritized.

The following table reveals significant disparities in employment rates between males and females across various educational attainment levels. At the lowest level, "No Formal Education," females exhibit a significantly higher employment rate (44.4 percent) compared to males (12.8 percent).

This trend continues in "Nursery but below K.G." (1.8 percent for females vs. 0.2 percent for males) and "K.G. but below primary" (7.2 percent for females vs. 2 percent for males); this suggests higher female participation in the workforce at these early education levels. However, this trend reverses markedly at higher education levels.

¹⁵⁵ (World Bank, 2023)

Individuals with education levels ranging from "Primary but below middle" (11.6 percent for females vs. 13.6 percent for males) to "Inter. but below degree" (3.8 percent for females vs. 10.5 percent for males) show a considerably higher employment rate for males compared to females. This disparity is particularly pronounced in the "Middle but below matric" category, where male employment significantly outnumbers female employment (3.7 percent for females vs. 16.4 percent for males). At the highest education level ("Degree & Above"), the employment gap narrows; 21.6 percent of females and 22.1 percent of males are employed.



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

The lower employment rates for females at higher education levels suggest potential barriers to career progression and economic empowerment, even after obtaining higher education. Factors such as gender-based discrimination, societal expectations, and limited access to resources may contribute to these disparities.

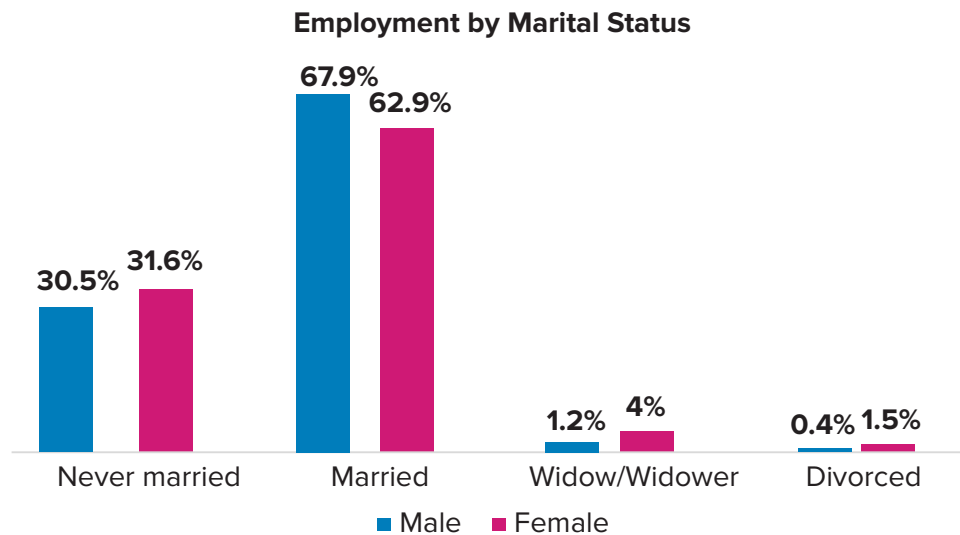
This data also suggests a concentration of women with limited education in informal economic activities; while basic education may increase workforce participation, it is often within the informal sector. Higher education, though beneficial, does not fully close the gender employment gap until the highest levels of attainment are reached.

Economic constraints often force women into labor roles when educational opportunities are unaffordable; deprived of educational pathways, these women are relegated to precarious and undervalued work. This further perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits their economic empowerment.

6.3.12 Employment by Marital Status

The data on employment by marital status in Islamabad reveals notable trends in employment rates between males and females. Among individuals who have never married, females have a slightly higher employment rate (31.6 percent) compared to males (30.5 percent).

However, for married individuals, males exhibit a higher employment rate (67.9 percent) compared to females (62.9 percent); this suggests that marriage may have a differential impact on employment outcomes for males and females in Islamabad.



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

The observed disparities in employment rates across different marital statuses have significant implications for gender equality and economic empowerment in Islamabad. The lower employment rate among married women compared to married men suggests potential barriers; domestic responsibilities, childcare obligations, and societal expectations may limit their economic participation.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach; initiatives should promote a gender-equitable division of household responsibilities, strengthen childcare support systems, and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment for women in Islamabad.

6.4 Percentage of Employees by Wage Groups

A significant barrier to women's economic empowerment lies in unequal access to skills and resources compared to men. Societal norms often dictate that men are expected to be primary breadwinners; this leads to greater investment in their education and skill development.¹⁵⁶ This disparity in educational attainment and skills training translates into fewer opportunities for women; they struggle to secure decent work with fair wages and benefits.¹⁵⁷

6.4.1 Employees by Wage Groups

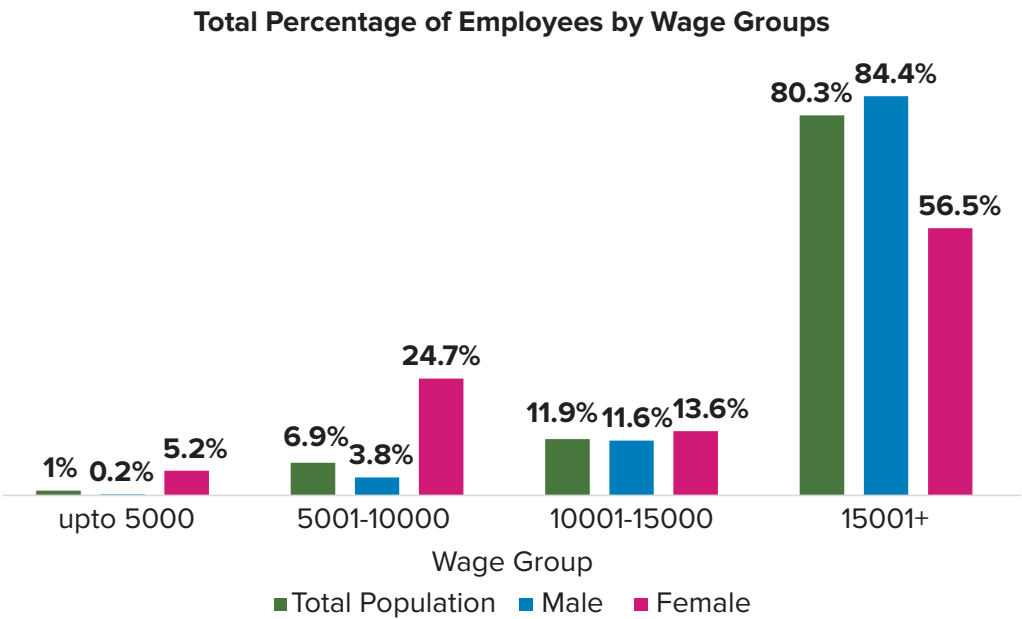
According to the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, the data reveals a significant gender disparity in wage distribution across different wage groups. A substantial proportion of individuals earning low wages (up to 5000) are female (5.2 percent), while only 0.2 percent of males fall within this

¹⁵⁶ (Bari, 2005)

¹⁵⁷ (International Labour Organization, 2023)

wage group. Conversely, the majority of individuals earning high wages (15001+) are male (84.4 percent), whereas a smaller proportion of females (56.5 percent) are represented in this category.

This stark contrast points to potential issues like occupational segregation, unequal pay for equal work, or limited access to advancement opportunities. Additionally, the gender division of labor within households disproportionately burdens women with unpaid care work; this lack of time and energy limits their ability to fully participate in work and pursue higher income-generating opportunities¹⁵⁸



Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

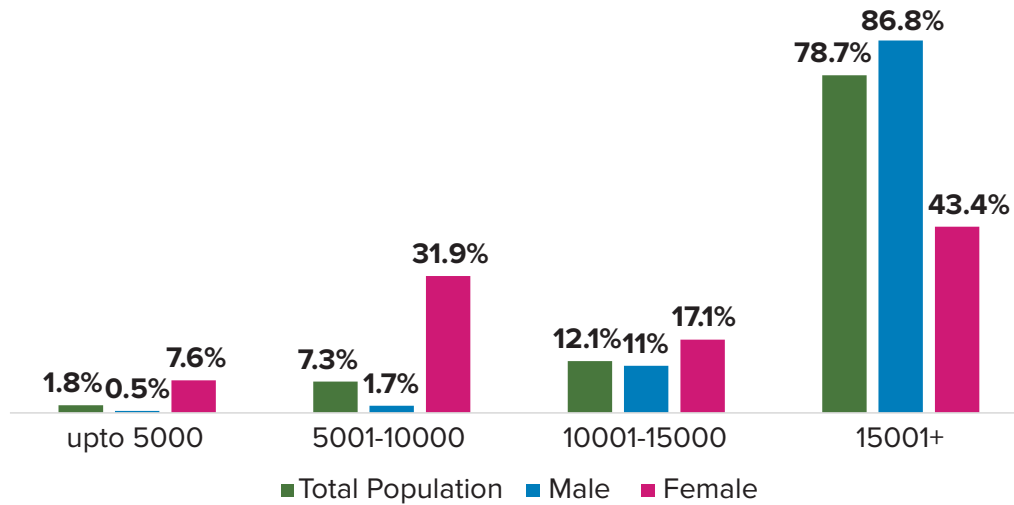
6.4.2 Percentage of Wage Group in Rural Area

According to the Labour Force Survey 2020-21, the data for rural areas further emphasizes the gender disparity in wage distribution. A higher percentage of females (7.6 percent) are found in the lowest wage group (up to 5000) compared to males (0.5 percent). Conversely, a significantly larger proportion of males (86.8 percent) are concentrated in the highest wage group (15001+), compared to females (43.4 percent). This disparity highlights the limited economic opportunities and lower earning potential for women in rural areas.

This reflects a combination of factors specific to rural contexts; limited job opportunities outside of agriculture, lower levels of education and skills training for women, and stronger adherence to traditional gender roles all contribute to this inequality.

¹⁵⁸ (FAO, 2020)

Percentage of Employees by Wage Groups in Rural Area



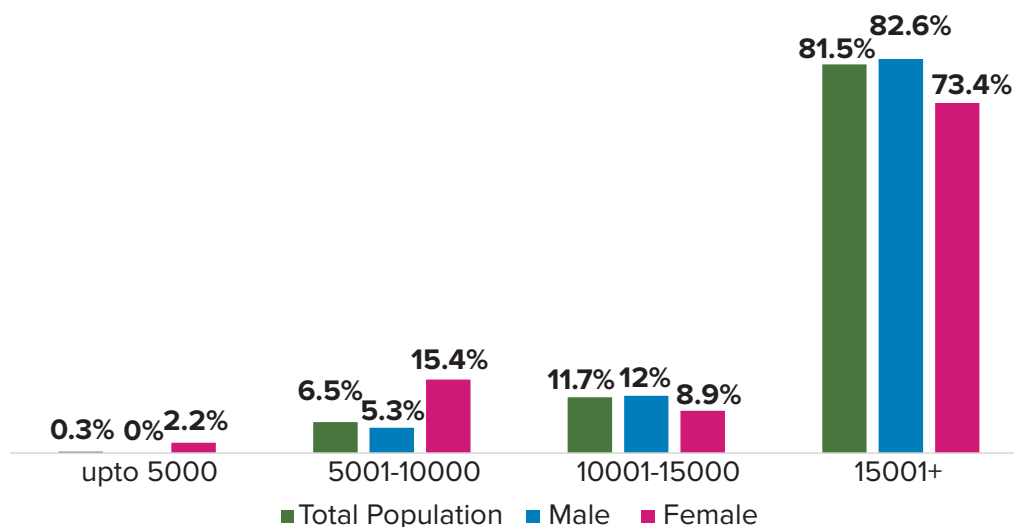
Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

6.4.3 Percentage of Wage Group in Urban Area

In urban areas, the gender disparity in wage distribution is also evident. While the percentage of females in the lowest wage group (up to 5000) is higher (2.2 percent) compared to males (0 percent), a larger proportion of males (82.6 percent) are concentrated in the highest wage group (15001+), compared to females (73.4 percent). This suggests that despite the presence of urban opportunities, women continue to face challenges in achieving economic parity with men.

Even though urban areas offer more diverse job opportunities, women remain overrepresented in low-paying jobs and underrepresented in high-paying ones, albeit to a lesser degree than in rural areas. The consistent pattern across all categories—total, rural, and urban—underscores that this is not a location-specific issue but a systemic problem of gender inequality in the Pakistani labor market. This reinforces the need for targeted interventions to address the root causes of this disparity and create a more equitable workforce.

Percentage of Employees by Wage Group in Urban Area



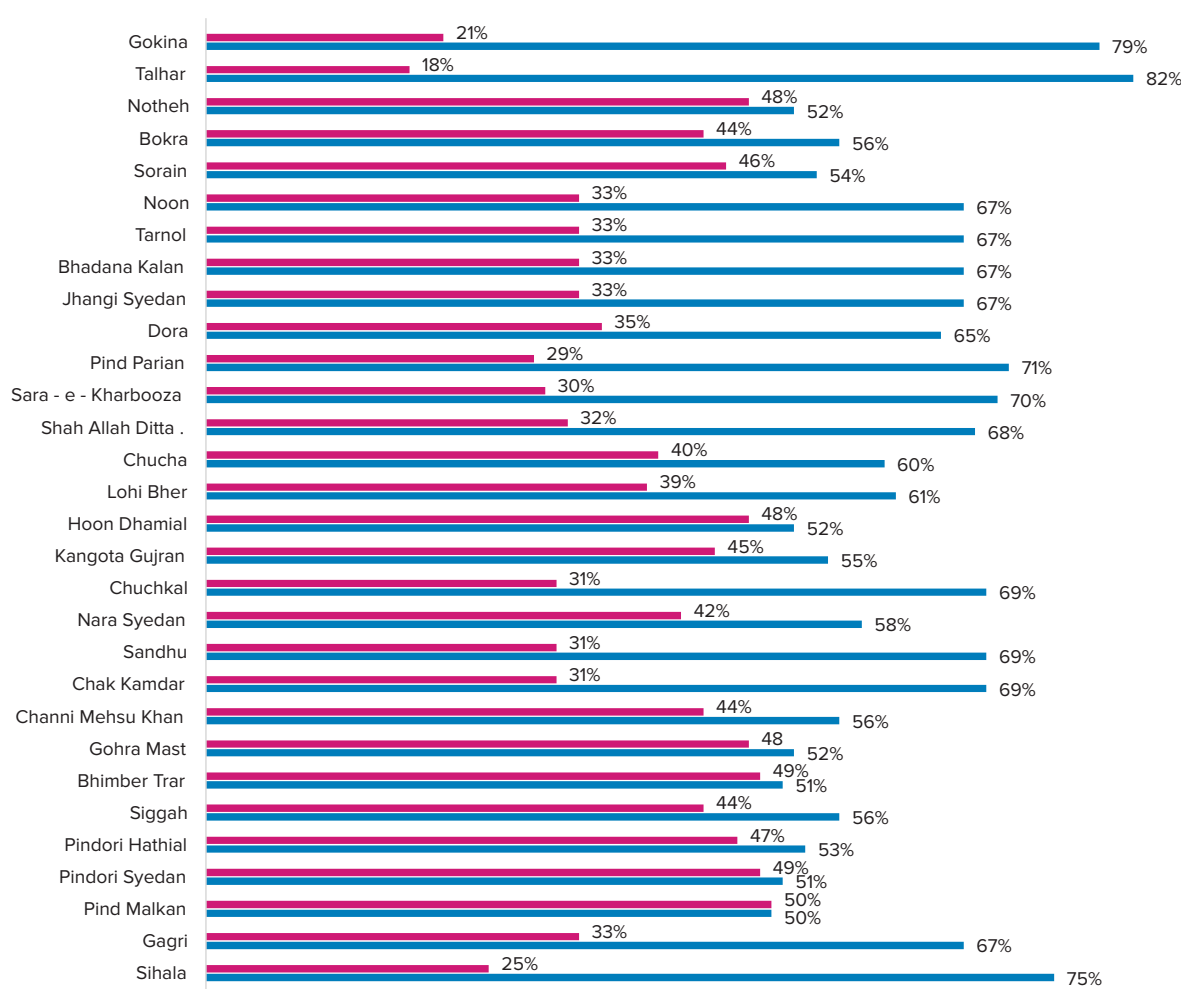
Source; Labour Force Survey 2020-21

Furthermore, limited access to financial resources hinders women's ability to start or grow businesses; this lack of access to capital restricts their entrepreneurial potential and limits their contribution to economic growth. ICT is no exception to this trend.

6.5 Land Ownership and Average Land Holding

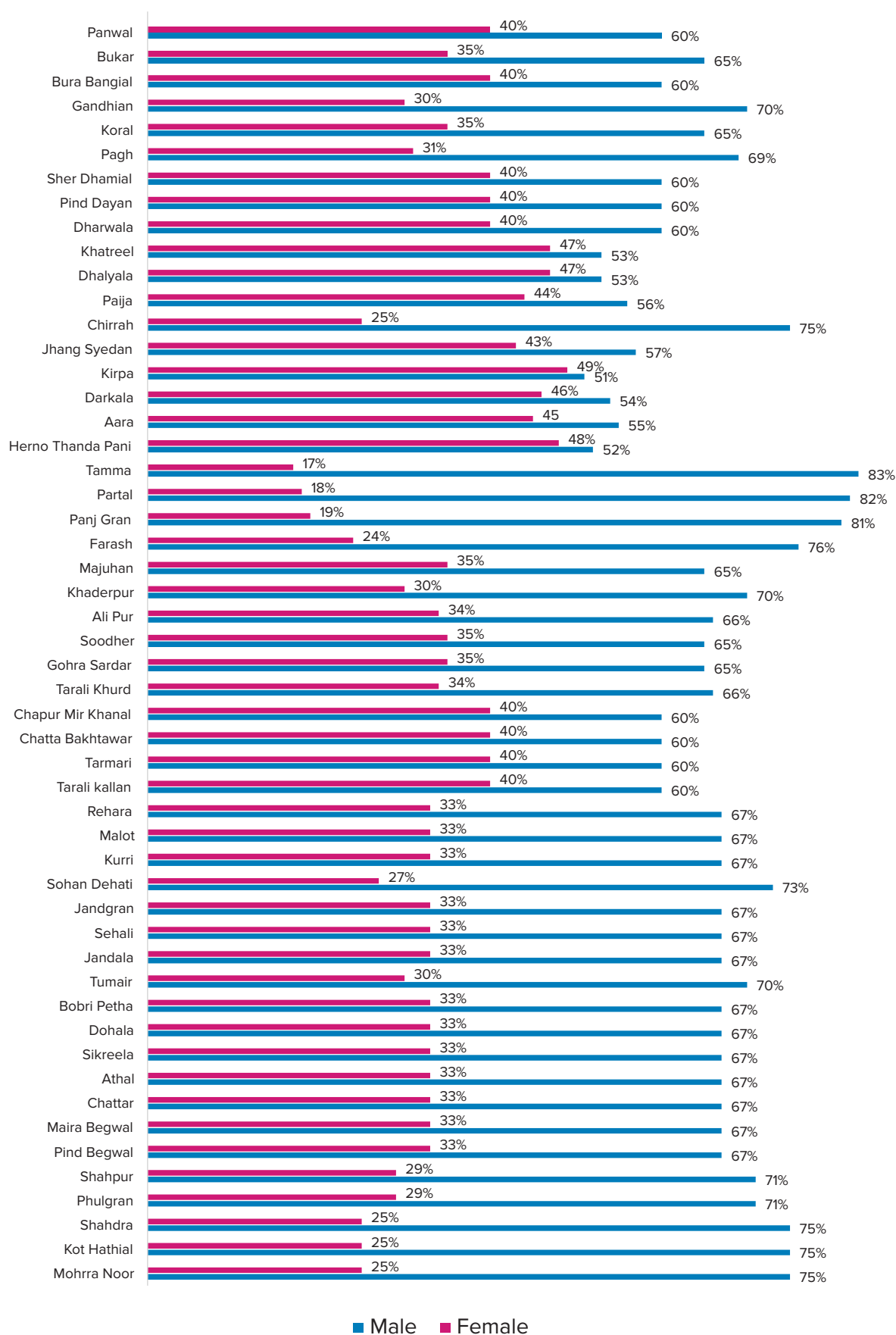
Social and political empowerment of women is inextricably linked to their economic emancipation. In countries where systemic inequalities restrict women's participation in the formal economy, inheritance rights play a crucial role in supporting their economic independence.¹⁵⁹ Research has consistently demonstrated that secure inheritance rights empower women; they provide valuable assets that can generate income, start businesses, or fund education and skills development.¹⁶⁰ This financial security reduces women's dependence on others; it allows them to make independent economic decisions.

Landownership and Average Land Holding (Jul-22 to Dec-22)



¹⁵⁹ (Jabeen & Jabeen, 2013)

¹⁶⁰ (Agarwal, 1994)

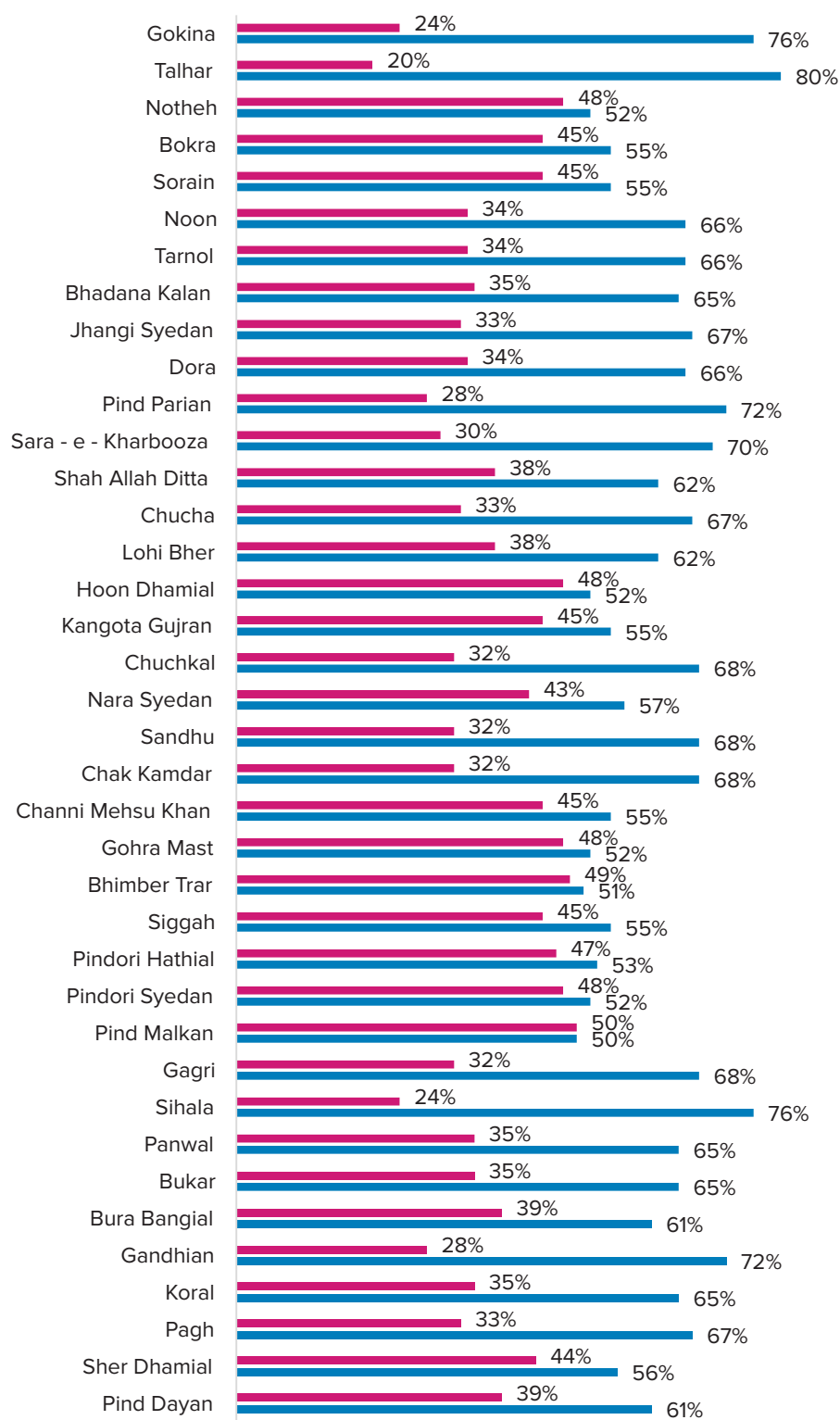


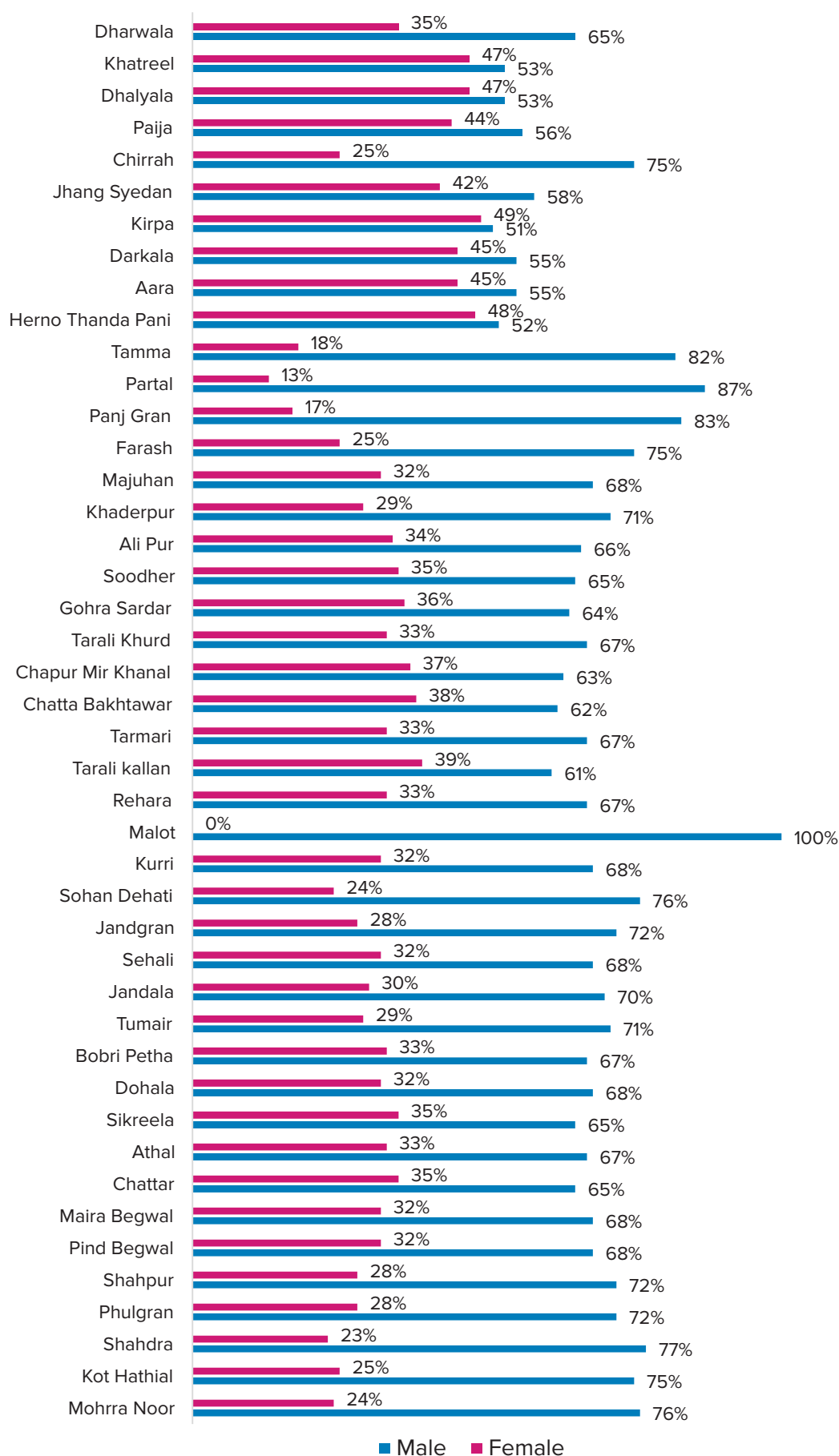
Source: Revenue Department

In 2022, males accounted for approximately 75 percent of landholders in the Islamabad Capital Territory, while females made up only 25 percent. This pattern remained consistent across major estates, demonstrating a significant gender gap.

The overwhelming majority of landholdings were controlled by men; this highlights systemic inequalities in land ownership between genders.

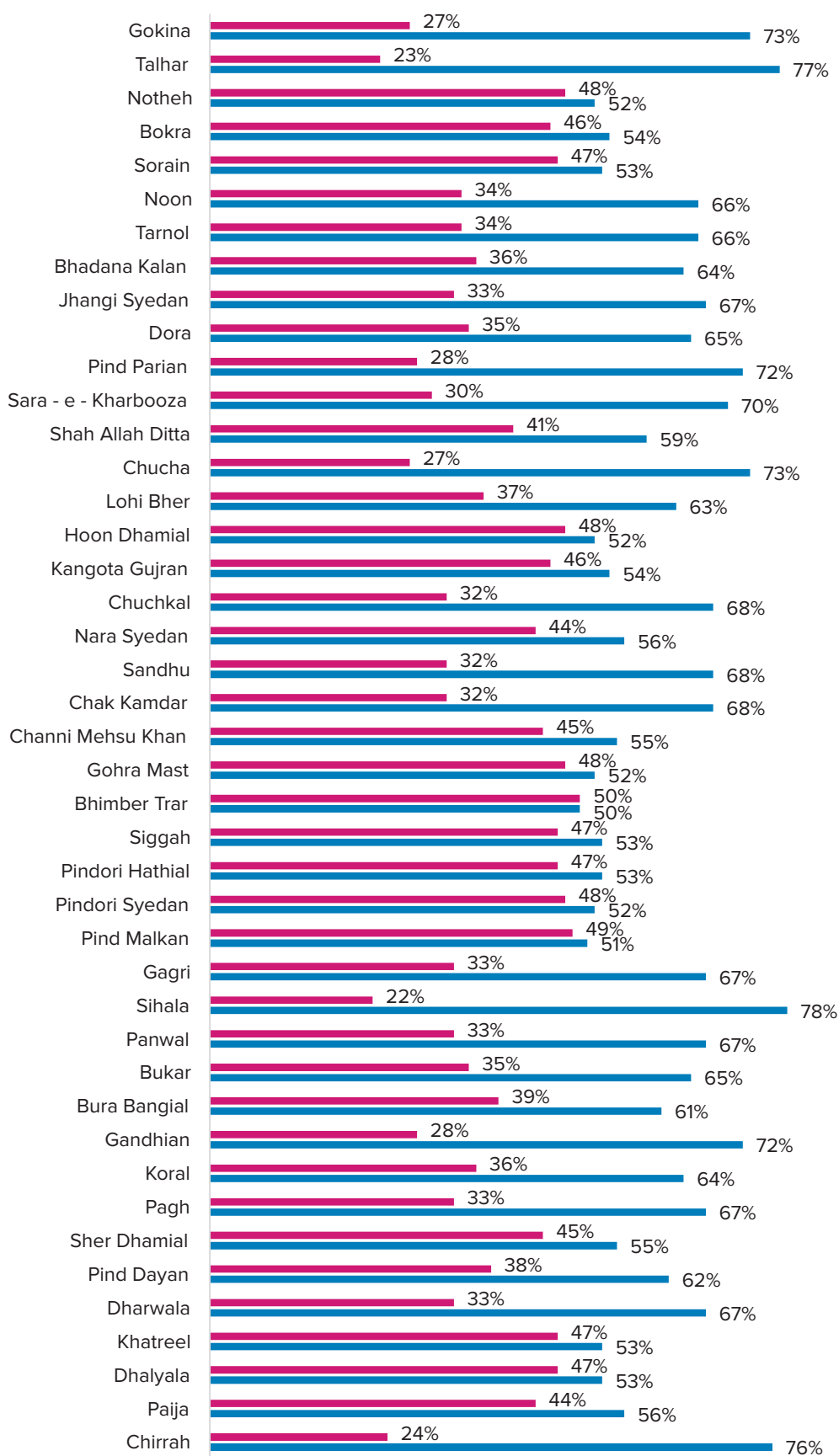
Landownership and Average Land Holding (Jan-23 to Jun-23)

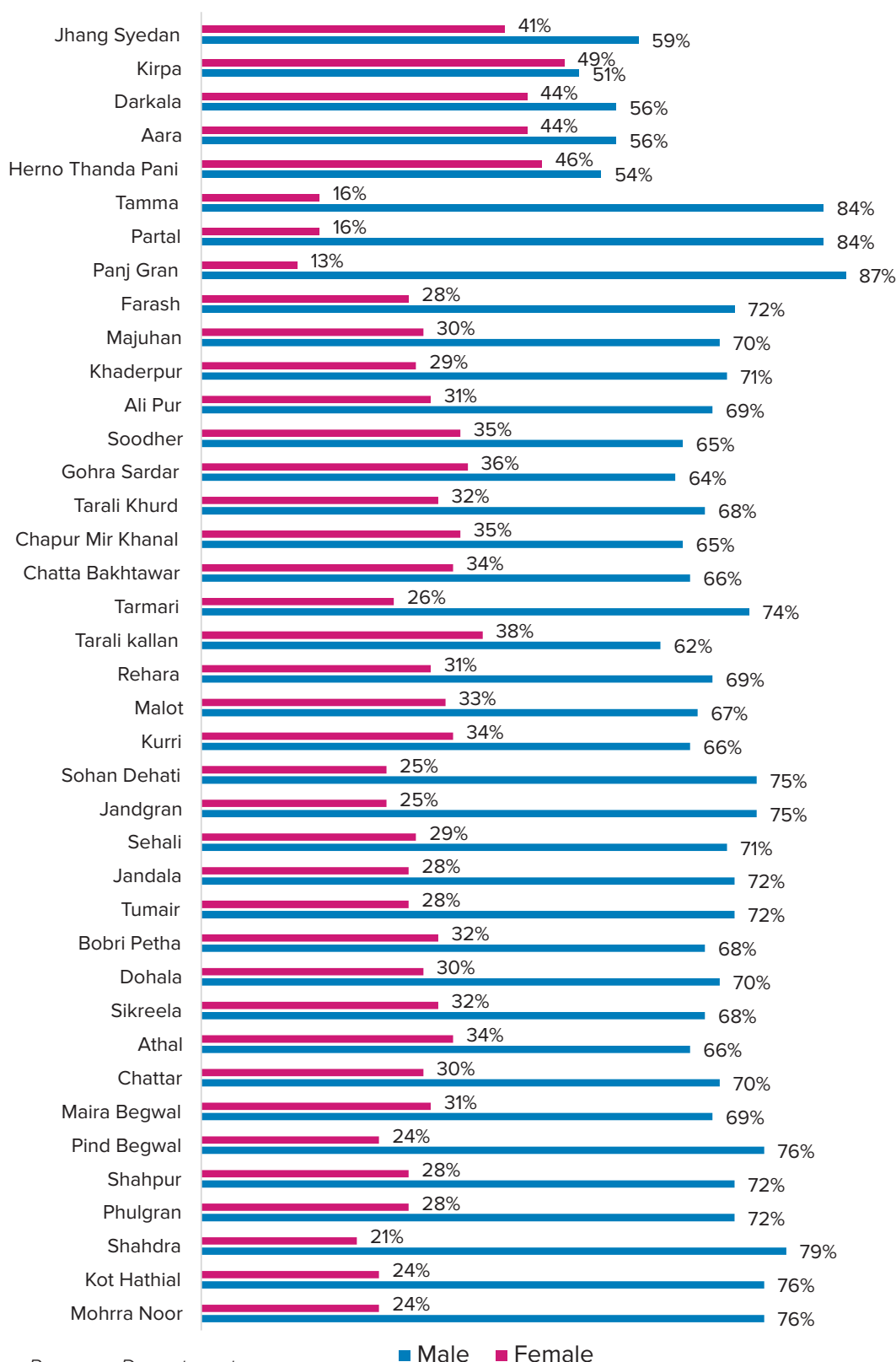




Source: Revenue Department

Landownership and Average Land Holding (Jul-23 to Dec-23)

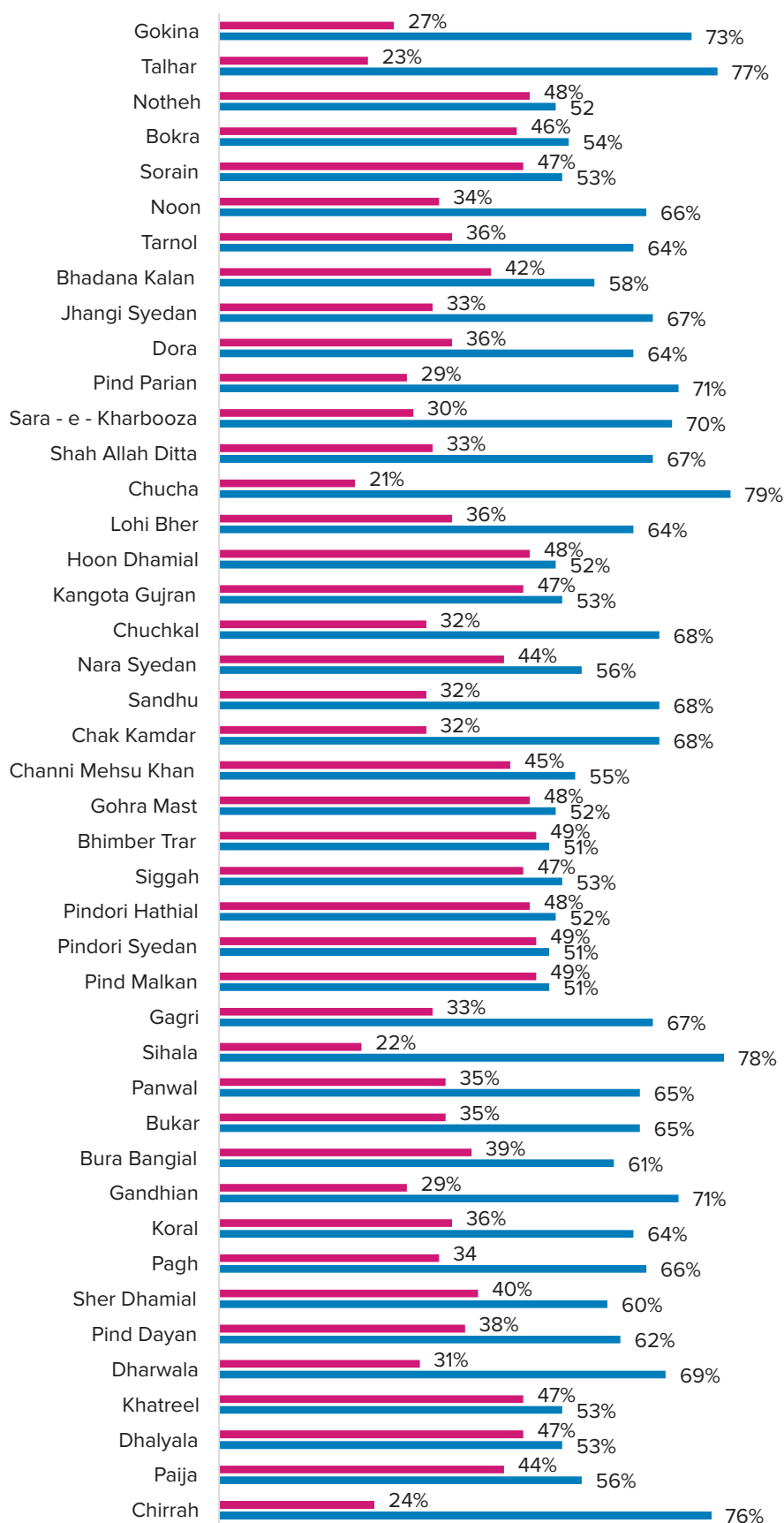


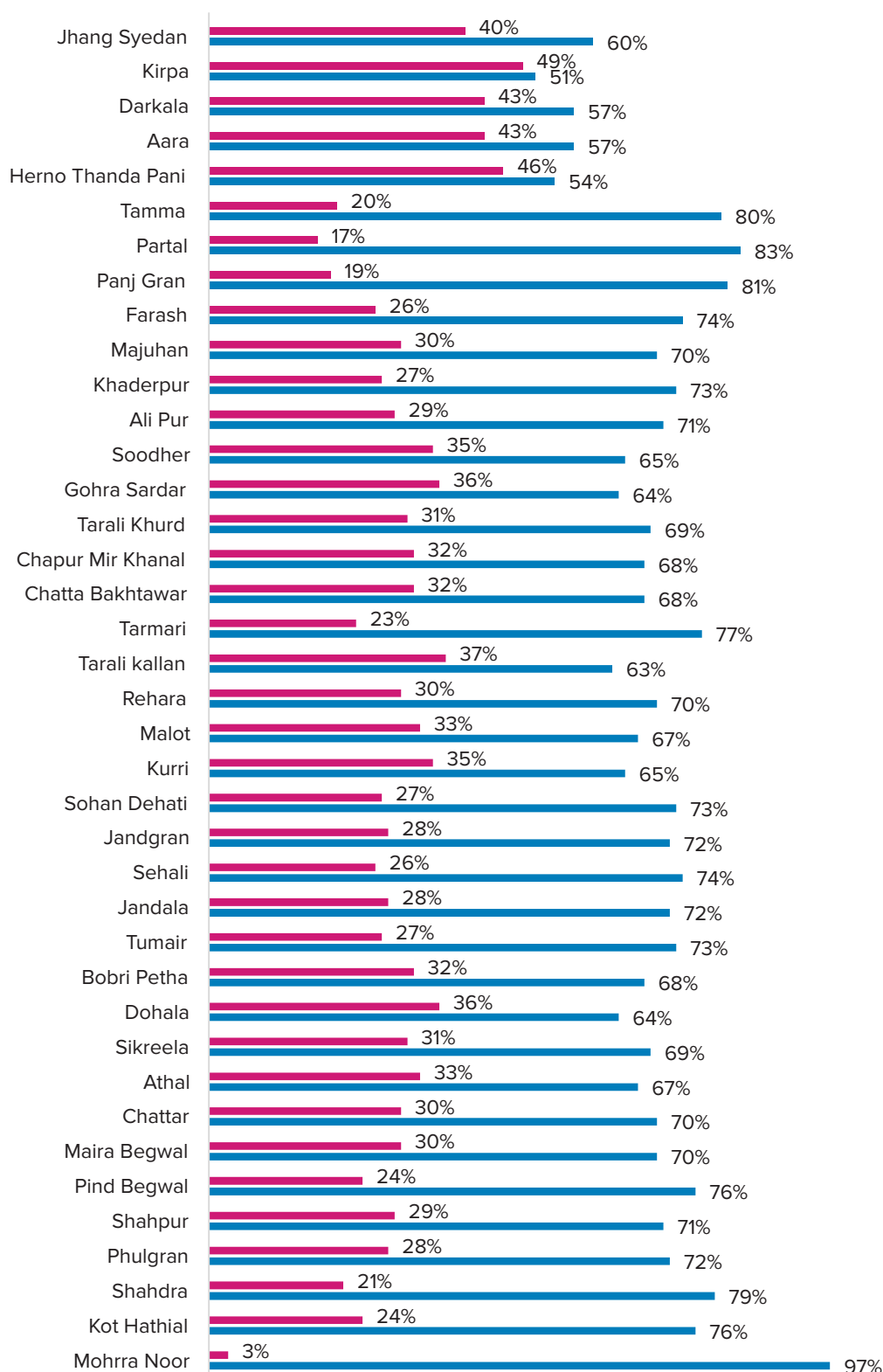


Source: Revenue Department

In 2023, male landholders owned nearly three-quarters of the total landholdings, while female landholders accounted for just about one-quarter. This stark disparity in average ownership underlines the unequal access to land resources; it emphasizes the need for greater inclusion of women in land ownership structures.

Landownership and Average Land Holding (Jan-24 to Jun-24)





Source: Revenue Department

■ Male ■ Female

By the first half of 2024, males continued to dominate landholding, maintaining a share of approximately 72–75 percent, while females remained at 25 percent or less. Despite a slight overall growth in the number of landholdings, there was no notable improvement in gender parity; men continued to hold a disproportionately larger share of land.

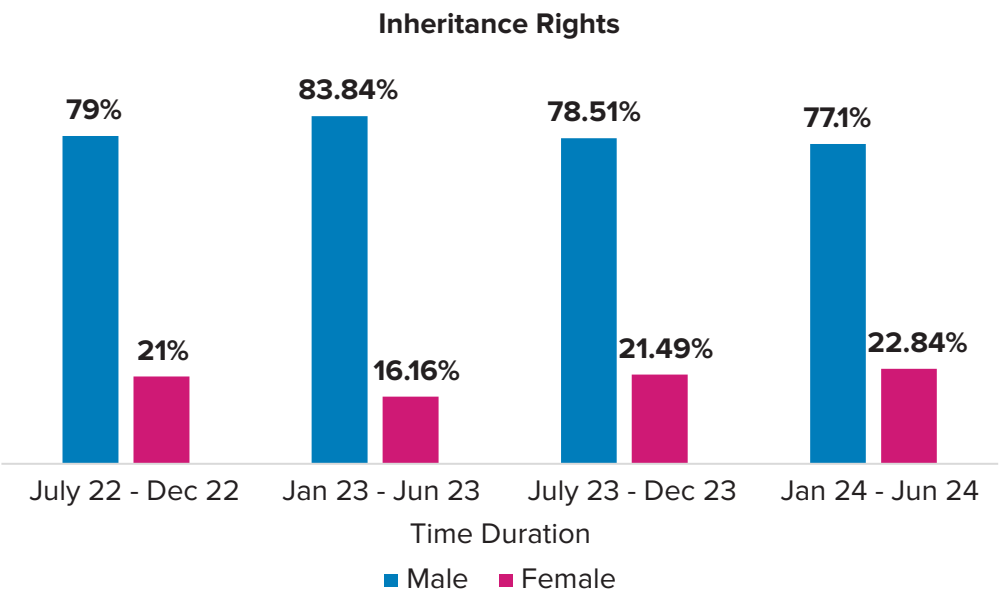
This data clearly demonstrates a persistent and significant gender gap in land ownership in the Islamabad Capital Territory. From 2022 to 2024, men consistently held approximately three-quarters of landholdings, while women owned only about a quarter. Despite a slight overall increase in total landholdings, the proportion held by women remained stagnant at roughly 26 percent; legal, cultural, economic, and informational barriers continue to prevent women from achieving equitable access to land resources.

This lack of improvement over time, even with overall growth, strongly suggests that systemic inequalities and structural barriers prevent women from accessing and owning land at the same rate as men. It underscores the need for targeted interventions to address these underlying issues and promote more equitable land distribution.

6.6 Inheritance Rights

The Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment (FOSPAH) operates as an autonomous, quasi-judicial, statutory body. It was established under the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 in response to the growing recognition of workplace harassment and the need for a dedicated mechanism to address it. The Act provides the legal framework for FOSPAH's mandate, which primarily focuses on protecting individuals from harassment in the workplace.

This mandate was significantly expanded with the passage of the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020;¹⁶¹ this legislation entrusted FOSPAH with the additional responsibility of adjudicating cases related to women's legal property rights within the Islamabad Capital Territory. FOSPAH's overarching mission is to foster a safe and respectful work environment free from abuse, violence, intimidation, and discrimination; this ensures the well-being and security of all individuals.



Source: FOSPAH

¹⁶¹ Federal Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment. (n.d.).

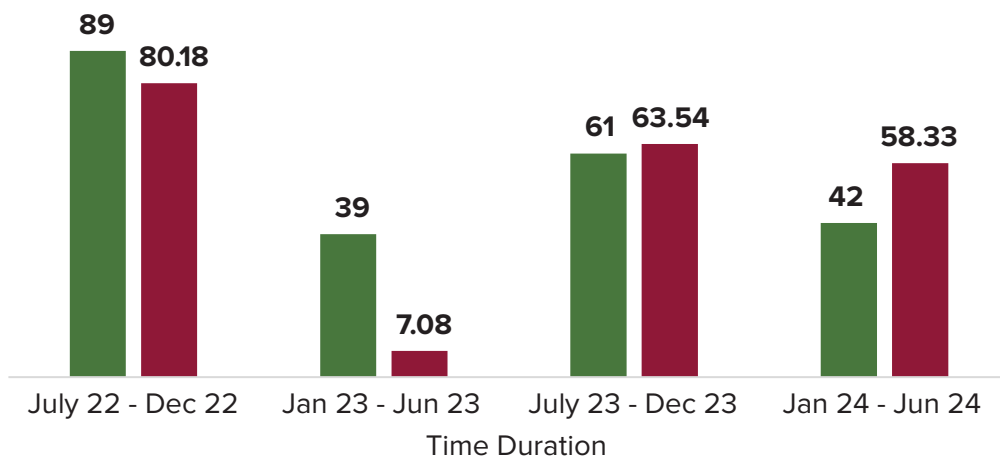
Research from the UNDP shows that secure property rights enable women to make independent decisions and improve their livelihoods. Data from FOSPAH reveals a troubling pattern; a high ratio of women have been denied inheritance rights, making up the majority of cases—79 percent in 2022, 78.51 percent in 2023, and 83.84 percent in 2024. This highlights the need for comprehensive measures; preventing violence against women, strengthening support services, and holding perpetrators accountable are essential.

Property Rights Cases

Furthermore, denying women their rightful inheritance can have significant social and psychological impacts; it can lead to increased dependence on male relatives, vulnerability to exploitation, and limited access to basic necessities such as healthcare and education.

This denial further perpetuates a cycle of poverty and marginalization; women and their families face continued economic and social disadvantages.

Percentage of Disposed Property Rights Cases 2022-2024



Source: FOSPAH

■ Cases Disposed ■ Percentage of Disposed Cases

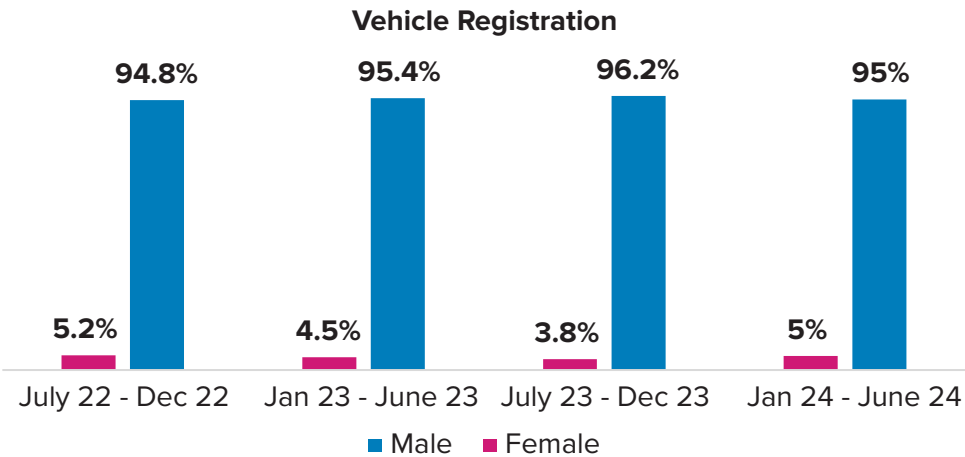
6.7 Vehicle Registration

Vehicle registration is a crucial process for road safety and revenue generation; in Islamabad, the excise department is responsible for vehicle registration and related services.

According to data from the Excise Department, the total number of registered vehicles varies across different periods. Throughout all four periods, the vast majority of vehicle registrations are attributed to men.

From July 2022 to December 2022, only 5.21 percent of vehicles were registered to women, while 94.79 percent were registered to men; this translates to a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.05, indicating a substantial gap in vehicle ownership.

This disparity persists and even widens in some periods. From July 2023 to December 2023, the percentage of women registering vehicles dropped to 3.80 percent; the GPI further decreased to 0.04, suggesting that women in Islamabad face significant barriers in accessing and owning vehicles.



Source: Excise Department

Socio-cultural norms and expectations often limit women's mobility and access to resources, including vehicle ownership. Economic constraints, such as limited access to finance and employment opportunities, further hinder women's ability to purchase and maintain vehicles. Additionally, safety concerns and inadequate infrastructure for women drivers further discourage female vehicle ownership; these barriers contribute to the persistent gender gap in transportation access.

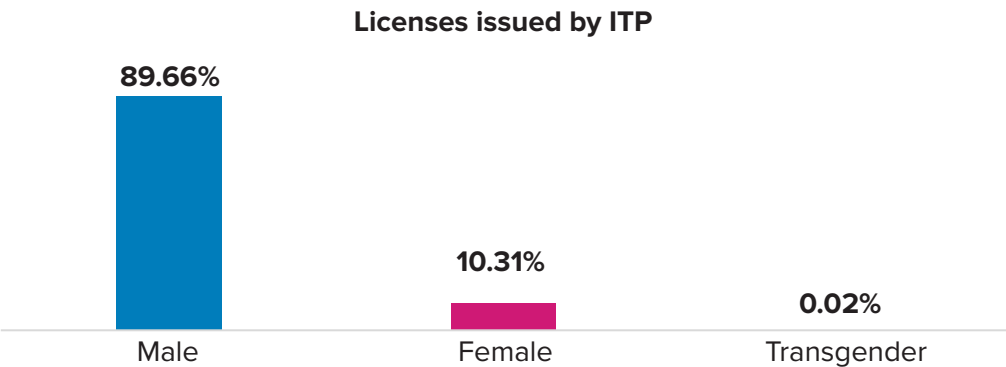
6.8 Issued Driving Licenses

Access to personal transportation can significantly enhance women's independence; it allows them to access employment opportunities, education, healthcare, and social networks more easily.

Data from the Islamabad Traffic Police shows that out of 746,472 recorded license holders, a significant majority—89.66 percent—are male. In contrast, females constitute only 10.31 percent of total license holders; this indicates a significant gap in driving license ownership between males and females in the city.

This highlights the potential barriers women face in accessing driving licenses; these barriers may include socio-cultural norms and limited access to driving training and resources.

Furthermore, societal expectations and cultural norms may also influence women's ability to obtain and utilize driving licenses; these factors contribute to the persistent gender gap in personal mobility.

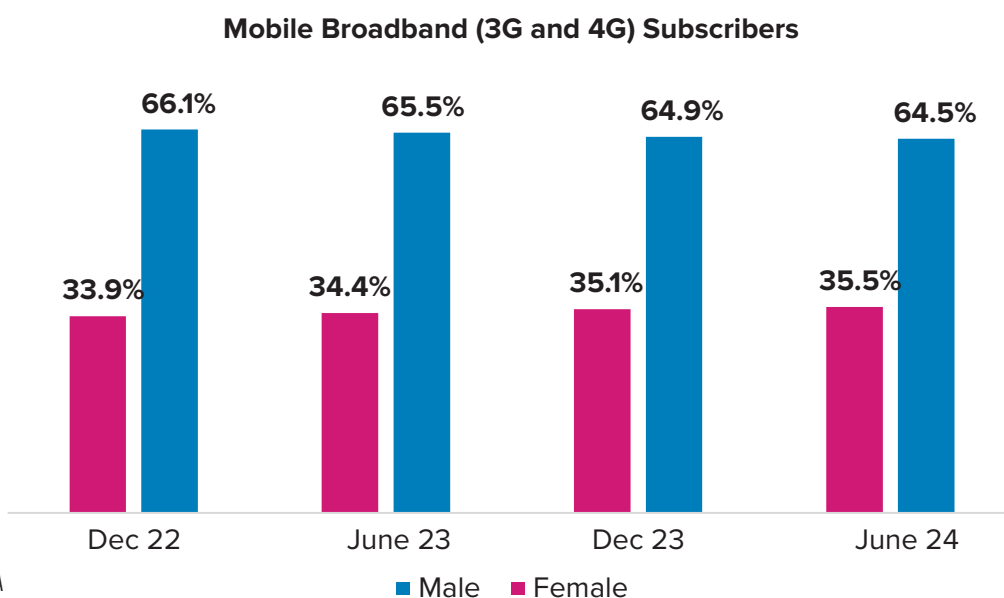
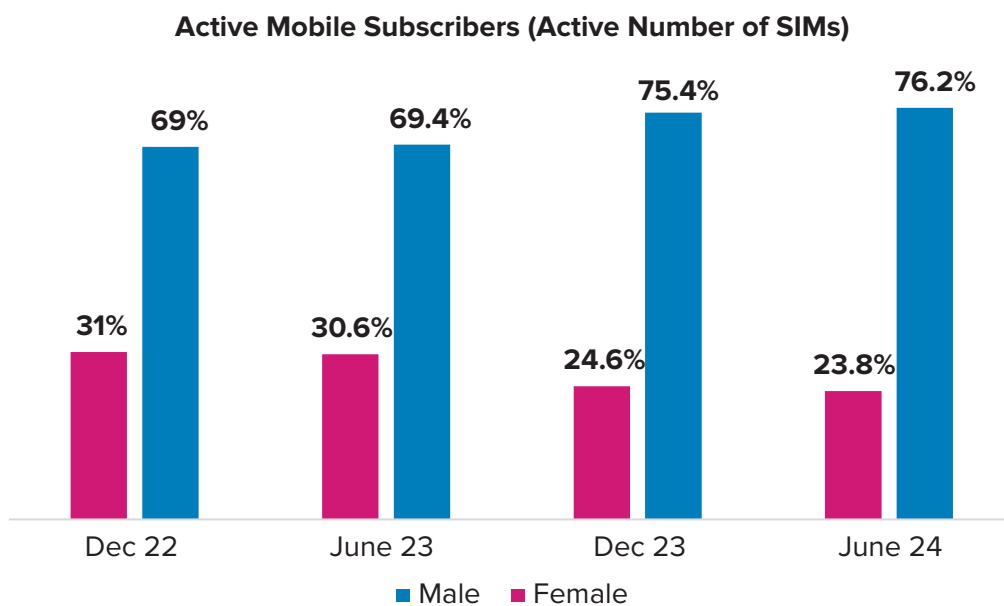


Source: Islamabad Traffic Police

6.9 Mobile Phone & SIM Card Ownership & Internet Users

Mobile phone ownership has become increasingly crucial for social and economic participation in contemporary society. In Islamabad, analyzing mobile phone and SIM card ownership by sex provides valuable insights into gender disparities in technology access and its potential impacts.

While mobile phone penetration rates in Pakistan have increased significantly in recent years, it is essential to examine whether these gains are equitably distributed across genders. Studies show that gender disparities in mobile phone ownership persist due to various factors; socio-economic status, education levels, and cultural norms all play a role.¹⁶²



Source: PTA

The data on active mobile phone and broadband subscriptions in Islamabad reveals a growing gender gap in mobile phone ownership; female subscribers remain significantly

¹⁶² ITU, 2023

underrepresented. In December 2022, 31.01 percent of mobile phone subscribers were female, dropping to 23.81 percent by June 2024. While the decline continues for mobile broadband subscriptions, the gender gap is smaller; in December 2022, 33.91 percent of mobile broadband subscribers were female, increasing slightly to 35.51 percent by June 2024.

The gender gap in mobile phone usage is likely underreported due to the practice of women using mobile phones under male family members' CNICs in Pakistan.¹⁶³ Barriers such as limited digital literacy, restricted access to devices, and online gender-based violence hinder women's digital participation.

Limited access to education and digital literacy training leaves many women without the skills and knowledge to effectively use technology.¹⁶⁴ Affordability of devices and internet access remains a major barrier, particularly for women in low-income households. Social norms and cultural restrictions further limit women's access to technology and online spaces; male family members sometimes control their access.

Concerns about online safety and gender-based violence also deter women from engaging online. This digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities; it limits women's access to job opportunities, entrepreneurial resources, financial services, and crucial information.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), under the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), is actively addressing the digital gender divide through its comprehensive Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy.¹⁶⁵ This initiative recognizes the critical need to empower women in the digital sphere, focusing on several key policy areas. Firstly, it aims to enhance digital literacy through programs designed to equip women with essential skills for navigating and utilizing digital technologies.¹⁶⁶ Secondly, the strategy prioritizes the creation of safe online spaces, addressing issues of cyber harassment and online violence through improved reporting mechanisms and awareness campaigns.¹⁶⁷ Thirdly, it focuses on leveraging technology for economic empowerment, promoting digital entrepreneurship and access to e-commerce platforms for women-led businesses. Furthermore, the PTA is developing regulatory frameworks that ensure women's perspectives are integrated into the design and implementation of digital infrastructure and services.¹⁶⁸ The strategy also emphasizes collaborative efforts with various stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and widespread impact. Ultimately, this initiative aims to bridge the digital gender gap, fostering an inclusive digital ecosystem that benefits women and the nation as a whole.¹⁶⁹

6.10 Active Current Accounts

The data shows a persistent and significant gender disparity in bank account ownership in the Islamabad Capital Territory. In both 2023 and 2024, males held the majority of active current and savings/time/other accounts, while females remained significantly underrepresented.

This ongoing trend reflects the continued exclusion of women from formal financial systems in the region; systemic barriers such as limited financial literacy, restricted mobility, and socio-cultural norms contribute to this disparity.

¹⁶³ PTA

¹⁶⁴ ITU, 2023

¹⁶⁵ Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, n.d.

¹⁶⁶ Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, n.d.

¹⁶⁷ Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2025

¹⁶⁸ Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2024

¹⁶⁹ Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, 2024

Indicator	As of December 31, 2023					As of June 30, 2024				
	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT
Active Current Accounts	55.07	9.48	0.77	5.40	1,773,031	47.78	12.69	0.72	3.12	1,622,646
Active Saving/Time/Other Accounts	22.81	4.51	0.57	1.80	744,512	26.55	7.16	1.19	2.12	876,585
Dormant Current Accounts	16.09	3.47	0.44	1.08	528,233	15.96	3.60	0.45	0.81	525,762
Dormant Saving/Time/Other Accounts	6.00	1.71	0.40	0.27	210,177	5.46	1.70	0.41	0.18	195,553
Banks Deposit Accounts-Total	100.00	19.16	2.18	8.56	3,255,953	94.65	23.19	2.75	6.22	3,220,546

Source: State Bank of Pakistan

While there are minor fluctuations in percentages between 2023 and 2024, the overall pattern of male dominance in bank account ownership remains unchanged; this suggests a lack of progress in addressing the gender gap in financial inclusion.

Several interconnected factors contribute to women's underrepresentation in financial services, significantly impacting their economic participation and opportunities. Limited financial literacy and awareness of available services prevent women from understanding banking benefits and accessing these services. Economic constraints, including lower incomes and limited control over household finances, make it difficult for women to open and maintain bank accounts.

Socio-cultural norms and patriarchal structures often restrict women's autonomy and decision-making power; this limits their ability to manage their own finances. Lack of access to formal identification documents, a frequent requirement for opening bank accounts, disproportionately affects women. Geographic barriers, particularly in rural areas where bank branches are scarce, pose another challenge.

This lack of financial inclusion restricts women's economic opportunities; it limits their ability to save, invest, access credit, and participate fully in the formal economy. As a result, it perpetuates financial dependence and hinders economic empowerment.

Only 13 percent of women in Pakistan own a bank account. The fourth lowest proportion in the world. (Nikkei Asia, 2023)

6.11 Active Deposit Accounts

In 2023, a significant portion of active current accounts (12.12 percent) were held by males, while females accounted for a much smaller share (2.71 percent). A similar trend was observed in active saving/time/other accounts; males held 14.31 percent, compared to 4.28 percent for females.

The disparity continued in dormant accounts. Males held 0.51 percent of dormant current accounts and 0.52 percent of dormant saving/time/other accounts, while females held only 0.16

percent in both categories.

In 2024, significant gender disparities in bank account ownership persisted. Males held a much higher proportion of active current accounts (15.34 percent vs. 3.13 percent for females) and saving/time/other accounts (16.58 percent vs. 5.24 percent). Similarly, dormant accounts showed a male majority across categories; this data underscores the ongoing exclusion of women from formal financial systems in the region.

Limited financial literacy and lack of access to financial education prevent women from understanding and utilizing banking services. Traditional gender roles and social norms restrict women's control over household finances; they limit their ability to make independent financial decisions.

Lack of access to formal employment, particularly in the formal sector, reduces women's income and hinders their ability to open and maintain bank accounts. Furthermore, discriminatory lending practices and collateral requirements make it difficult for women to access credit and other financial products; this further reinforces their exclusion from the formal financial system.

This lack of access to formal financial services limits women's ability to save for the future, invest in businesses, build assets, and manage financial emergencies. As a result, many women rely on informal and less secure financial mechanisms; this increases their vulnerability to economic shocks and restricts their potential for economic empowerment.

Indicator	As of December 31, 2023					As of June 30, 2024				
	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT
Active Current Accounts	12.12	2.71	0.74	12.12	775,026	13.54	3.13	1.16	11.16	731,424
Active Saving/Time/Other Accounts	14.31	4.26	2.01	68.68	2,233,211	15.88	5.34	2.61	80.27	2,626,060
Dormant Current Accounts	0.51	0.16	0.14	0.35	29,155	0.52	0.17	0.14	0.34	29,431
Dormant Saving/Time/Other Accounts	0.52	0.16	0.10	1.37	53,895	0.44	0.17	0.12	1.18	48,310
Deposits in Banks Deposit Accounts-Total	27.46	7.29	3.00	85.25	3,091,287	29.93	8.75	3.98	91.44	3,435,226

Source: State Bank of Pakistan

Furthermore, discriminatory lending practices and collateral requirements can make it difficult for women to access credit and other financial products, further reinforcing their exclusion from the formal financial system. This lack of access to formal financial services limits women's ability to save for the future, invest in businesses, build assets, and manage financial emergencies.

Consequently, they are often relegated to informal and less secure financial mechanisms, making them more vulnerable to economic shocks and limiting their potential for economic empowerment.

6.12 Number of Advances Accounts

An analysis of the data on the number of Advances Accounts in the Islamabad Capital Territory from 2023 to 2024 reveals several key trends. In 2023, a significant majority (97.25 percent) of Advances Accounts were held by Private Sector Businesses, while a negligible percentage (0.06 percent) was held by females.

By 2024, there was a notable shift; the percentage of accounts held by Private Sector Businesses decreased to 70.01 percent, while the percentage held by females slightly declined to 0.04 percent. This suggests a potential, albeit modest, change in female participation in these financial instruments within this sector.

Men overwhelmingly dominate access to these financial instruments, with women holding a negligible share. While there was a tiny, statistically insignificant increase in female participation between 2023 and 2024, the overall picture shows extreme underrepresentation of women.

This lack of access to credit and financial resources significantly hinders women's economic participation and opportunities; it limits their ability to start and grow businesses, perpetuating economic inequality. While this indicates potential progress in financial inclusion for women, further research is needed; identifying factors driving these trends and any remaining barriers to women's access to financial instruments is essential.

Indicator	As of December 31, 2023					As of June 30, 2024				
	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT
No. of Advances Accounts	27.61	0.37	9.92	9.01	37,781	21.19	0.23	0.79	6.77	38,417
Private Sector Businesses	48.10	4.51	0.24	0.16	42,537	48.99	14.23	0.02	0.12	67,507
Private Sector Personal	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Others	-	-	-	1.62	131	-	-	-	1.22	131
Banks Advances Accounts-Total	75.20	4.86	1.02	9.22	80,520	70.18	14.46	0.82	6.98	106,131

Source: State Bank of Pakistan

6.13 Debit/Credit Cardholders

Credit cards show substantial male dominance, with 88.70 percent held by males and only 11.20 percent held by females. Similarly, debit cards demonstrate a notable male skew; 77.40 percent are held by males, while 22.20 percent are held by females.

These figures suggest a significant gender gap in access to and utilization of these essential financial instruments within the territory.

	As of December 31, 2023					As of June 30, 2024				
Indicator	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male & Female	% of Others	Overall ICT
Credit Card	-	-	-	-	-	88.70	11.20	-	-	13,629
Debit Cards.	-	-	-	-	-	77.40	22.20	-	0.23	1,918,903

Source: State Bank of Pakistan

The gender disparities in credit card and debit card ownership in Islamabad have significant implications for financial inclusion and women's economic participation.

Limited access to these financial tools hinders women's ability to make purchases, manage finances, and build credit history; this further restricts their financial independence and economic opportunities.

To bolster economic empowerment, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) launched the Women Champion initiative in 2021, focusing on enhancing financial inclusion for women through improved access to finance, financial literacy programs, and capacity building.¹⁷⁰ Complementing this, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) is fostering an inclusive corporate environment through family-friendly policies, including flexible work arrangements and maternity/paternity leave.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, the SECP acknowledges and incentivizes women-led businesses through its Award for Women Companies, promoting their contributions to the national economy. These initiatives collectively aim to dismantle barriers and create opportunities for women to thrive in Pakistan's financial and corporate sectors.

Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL)

ZTBL is Pakistan's premier agricultural development finance institution; it provides credit and financial services to farmers, particularly smallholders, to boost agricultural productivity and rural incomes.

It enables farmers to invest in inputs, technology, and infrastructure; this contributes to increased agricultural production and food security.¹⁷²

National Rural Support Program (NRSP):

NRSP is a rural development organization focused on poverty reduction and community empowerment. It operates through a participatory approach, mobilizing rural communities and building their capacity to manage their own development.

NRSP's work empowers rural communities by improving access to financial services, creating income-generating opportunities, and enhancing social sector outcomes. It plays a key role in poverty reduction and rural development.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ State Bank of Pakistan, n.d.

¹⁷¹ Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, n.d.

¹⁷² Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited, n.d.

¹⁷³ National Rural Support Program. (n.d.)

6.14 Pakistan Microfinance Network

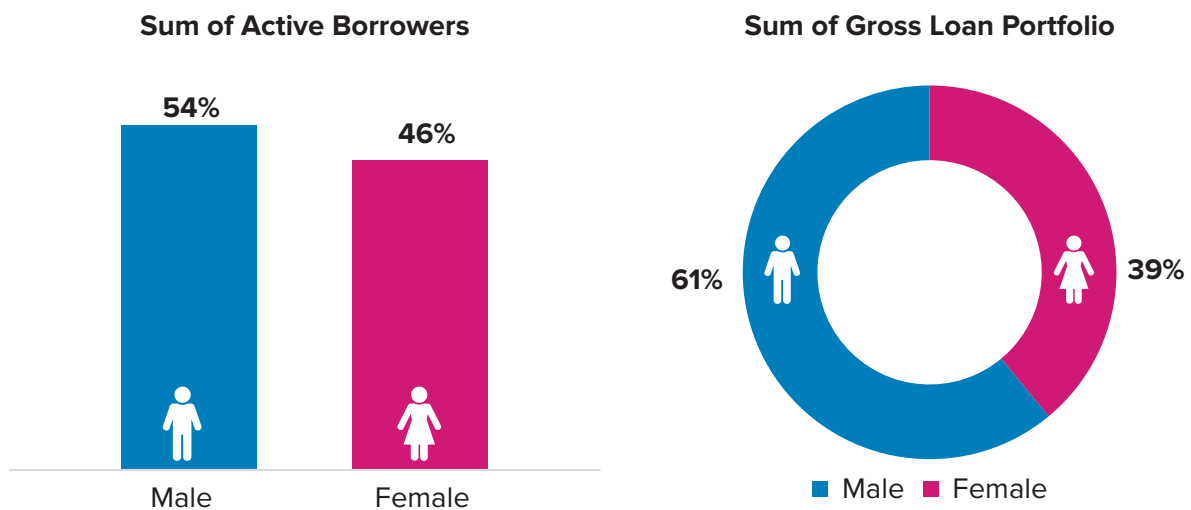
The Pakistan Microfinance Network (PMN) empowers women by providing access to financial services, supporting economic independence, and fostering entrepreneurship. In Islamabad, females constitute 46 percent of active microfinance borrowers, while males account for 54 percent.

However, women receive only 39 percent of the total loan portfolio, while men account for 61 percent; this highlights a gender gap in accessing larger loan amounts.

Studies have shown that microfinance institutions significantly contribute to women's economic empowerment; they provide financial resources and support needed to start and grow businesses.

Furthermore, PMN's focus on financial inclusion and poverty reduction aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. By empowering women through access to finance, PMN helps advance these critical development goals.¹⁷⁴

The data on microfinance borrowers in Islamabad presents a mixed picture of gender inclusion. A significant proportion of active borrowers are women (46 percent); this indicates that women are actively engaging with microfinance institutions in the city. This suggests that these institutions are somewhat successful in reaching out to women and providing them with access to financial services; however, disparities in loan amounts and financial opportunities still persist.

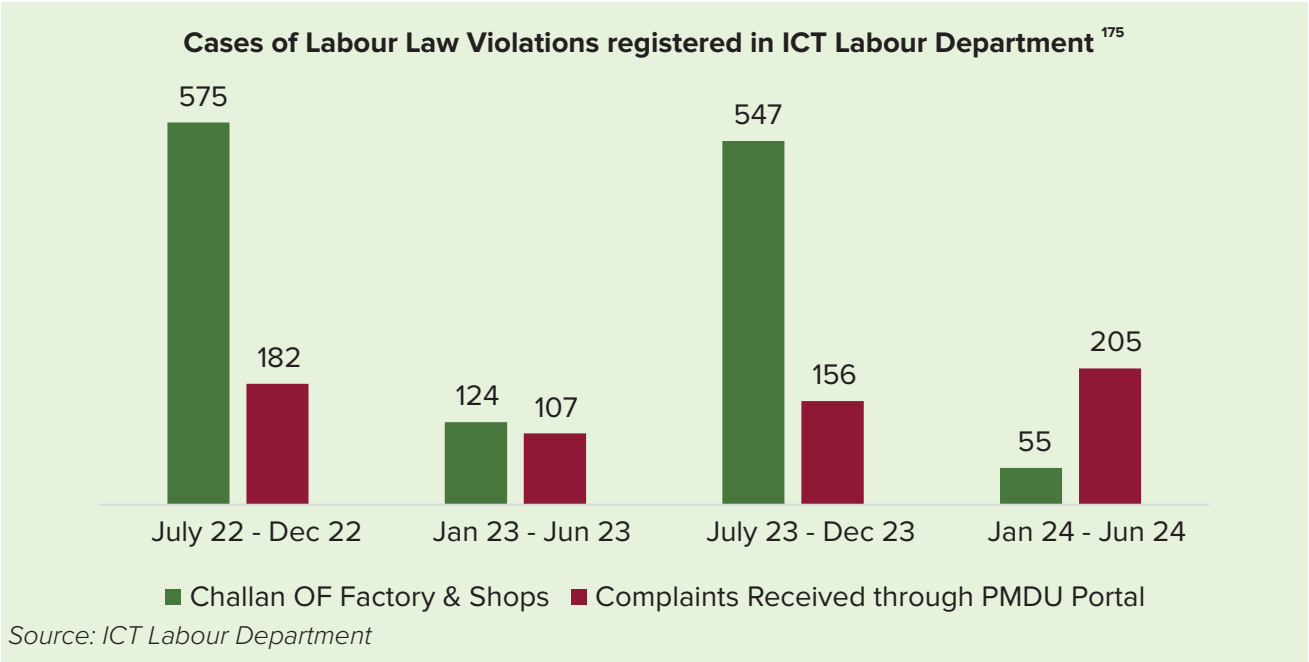


Source: Pakistan Microfinance Network

Despite relatively equal access to microfinance services, women face barriers in obtaining larger loans; this potentially limits their ability to invest in and grow their businesses. This gap in access to larger loan amounts hinders women's economic empowerment; it restricts their ability to scale up existing ventures or pursue capital-intensive opportunities. Several factors contribute to this disparity; perceptions of women as higher-risk borrowers, collateral or guarantor requirements, and implicit biases within lending institutions all play a role.

This inequitable access to larger loans perpetuates existing gender inequalities; it limits women's economic potential, despite their active engagement with microfinance.

¹⁷⁴ Morduch & Haley, 2002



6.15 Social Safety Nets

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) benefits from several social safety net programs; these initiatives aim to alleviate poverty and support vulnerable populations.

6.15.1 Beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme

The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is a significant social safety net in Pakistan; it aims to alleviate poverty and empower vulnerable households. By targeting women as primary beneficiaries, BISP has played a crucial role in enhancing women's economic empowerment.

Studies show that cash transfer programs like BISP significantly impact women's empowerment; they increase decision-making power within households, improve nutritional status and health outcomes, and enhance children's education.¹⁷⁶ By providing direct cash transfers to women, BISP enables them to make critical household expenditure decisions; they can invest in education, improve nutrition, and start small businesses.

BISP comprises several key initiatives designed to address poverty and empower vulnerable populations. These programs rely on the Benazir National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), a comprehensive database of household socio-economic information across the country. Meticulously compiled through surveys and data collection, the NSER allows BISP to effectively identify and enroll eligible beneficiaries for its various programs.¹⁷⁷

Benazir Taleemi Wazaif is a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program focused on promoting education, particularly among children from underprivileged families. Recognizing that poverty often hinders access to schooling, this initiative provides financial assistance to families; eligibility requires regular school attendance for their children.

¹⁷⁵ ICT Labour Department

¹⁷⁶ World Bank, 2023

¹⁷⁷ Benazir Income Support Programme [BISP], n.d

By incentivizing education, especially for girls, *Taleemi Wazaif* contributes to long-term human capital development; it aims to break the cycle of poverty through educational empowerment. Since its inception, the program has enrolled 12.01 million children, with a gender distribution of 52.7 percent boys and 47.2 percent girls.¹⁷⁸

Benazir Kafaalat serves as the flagship unconditional cash transfer program, providing a basic income safety net to approximately 9 million vulnerable families. It empowers women economically, enabling them to meet essential daily needs. The Kafaalat program not only addresses immediate poverty but also strengthens women's financial autonomy and decision-making power within their households. The stipend has increased from Rs. 3,000 per beneficiary per quarter at its inception to the current amount of Rs. 8,500 per beneficiary per quarter.¹⁷⁹

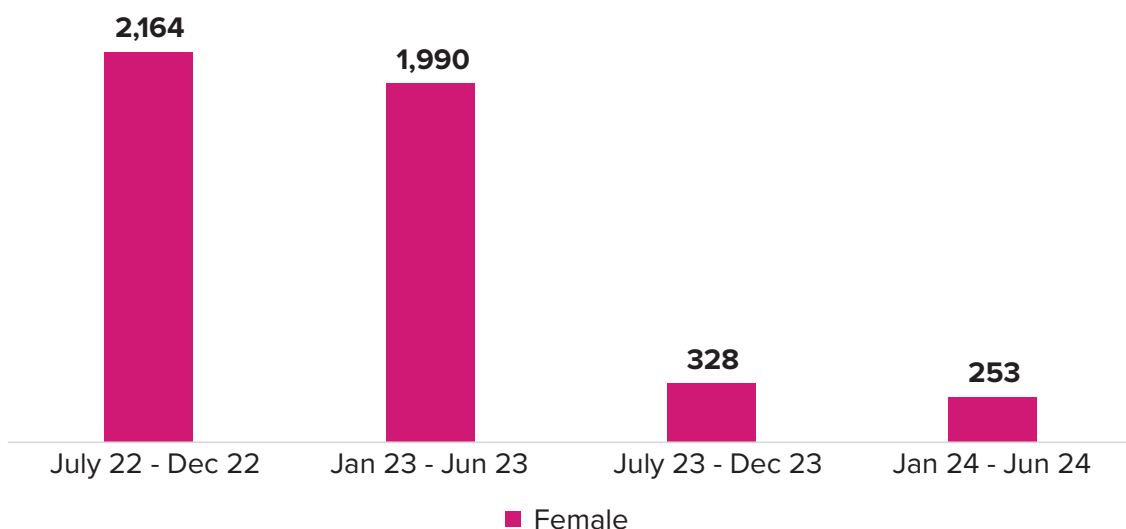
Benazir Nashonuma is a nutrition program targeting children under two and pregnant/lactating women. It provides nutritional support, cash transfers, and awareness sessions on health and childcare. Beneficiaries receive PKR 2,000 per quarter for pregnant/lactating women and boy children, while PKR 2,500 per quarter is provided for girl children. Participating mothers must commit to regular health checks, consuming specialized nutritious food, and ensuring children's immunizations and checkups.

The program has reached over 1.2 million individuals, including 645,800 pregnant women and 630,000 children.¹⁸⁰

The data from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) shows a steady decline in the number of declared female beneficiaries over the specified periods. The figures dropped from 2,164 in July-December 2022 to 1,990 in January-June 2023, followed by a sharp decrease to 328 in July-December 2023 and 253 in January-June 2024.

This trend highlights a significant decrease in BISP support over time, raising concerns about the accessibility and sustainability of financial assistance for women.

Beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme



Source: BISP

¹⁷⁸ Benazir Taleemi Wazaif [BISP], n.d.

¹⁷⁹ Benazir Income Support Programme [BISP], n.d.

¹⁸⁰ BISP, n.d.

¹⁸¹ International Labour Organization, 2023

In 2022, the lingering effects of COVID-19 and the rollout of the National Ehsaas Program aimed to provide essential financial assistance to women in need. However, as businesses reopened and economic opportunities expanded post-2022, fewer women sought or were deemed eligible for this aid.

This shift suggests a transition from emergency relief measures to a more stable economic environment. However, the sharp drop in beneficiaries raises concerns about accessibility and evolving eligibility criteria for the program.

6.15.2 Social Security Payments made through IESSI

Studies show that social security programs, when effectively implemented, play a crucial role in reducing poverty and improving women's economic security.

By providing financial support during pregnancy, childbirth, and old age, these programs empower both men and women; they enable independent decision-making, labor force participation, and overall well-being improvement.¹⁸¹

The social security payments made through IESSI indicate a gender disparity in financial protection and benefits. While the program aims to provide economic security, women remain underrepresented in receiving social security benefits compared to men.

This highlights the need for expanded coverage and accessibility for female workers, particularly those in informal employment who lack financial safety nets. Strengthening awareness campaigns and policy reforms can help ensure more women benefit from social security initiatives; this would improve their long-term financial stability and workforce retention.

¹⁸¹ International Labour Organization, 2023

Social Security Payments made through IESSI

	Death Grant Availed by		Iddat Grant Availed by		Injury Grant Availed by		Maternity Leave Availed by		Medical Leave Availed by		Disablement Gratuity Availed by		Disablement Pension Availed by		Survivor Pension Availed by	
	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female	% of Male	% of Female
Jul 22 - Dec 22	7	-	-	3	-	-	-	11	52	7	-	-	27	1	4	12
Jan 23 - Jun 23	9	-	-	2	5	-	-	10	33	4	-	-	27	1	4	11
Jul 23 - Dec 23	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	66	1	-	-	27	1	4	11
Jan 24 - Jun 24	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	10	61	5	1	-	28	1	4	11

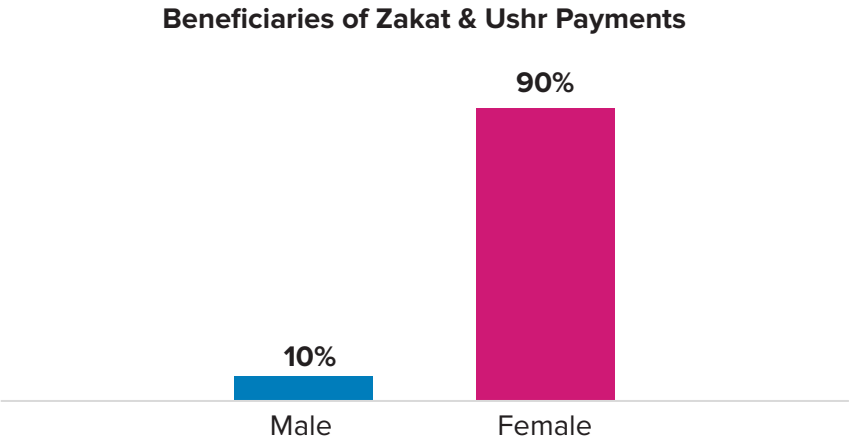
Source: IESSI/

6.15.3 Beneficiaries of Zakat and Ushr Payments

Zakat and Ushr payments significantly contribute to women's empowerment in Pakistan. When effectively administered, these funds provide crucial support to vulnerable households, particularly those headed by women.

Targeted Zakat and Ushr disbursements empower women by granting access to education, healthcare, and income-generating activities. By supporting economic independence and social well-being, these programs help break the cycle of poverty and enable women to play a more active role in their communities.¹⁸²

The table shows the distribution of Zakat and Ushr payments between female and male beneficiaries. A total of 26,720 individuals received these payments; among them, 24,000 were female and 1,990 were male. This translates to 89.82 percent of the beneficiaries being female and 7.45 percent being male. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is 12.06, indicating a significant proportion of female recipients.



Source: Zakat and Ushr Department

This suggests that women are disproportionately represented among recipients of Zakat and Ushr payments, likely indicating greater vulnerability to financial hardship. While the data does not directly imply bias, it highlights a significant difference in benefit allocation. Several factors may contribute to this trend, including lower labor force participation, the gender pay gap, and responsibility for unpaid care work. Dependence on social safety nets can limit women's economic empowerment; it may disincentivize formal workforce participation or hinder their ability to build long-term financial security.

¹⁸² Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2023

6.16 Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal vs. Benazir Income Support Programme and Zakat: A Comparative Overview

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), and Zakat are vital. They form Pakistan's social safety net with distinct mandates. Each aims to alleviate poverty and provide social assistance.

PBM, established in 1992, functions as a welfare organization. It provides financial assistance to destitute individuals, orphans, and widows. It also helps persons with disabilities through diverse programs. These range from financial aid and educational stipends to healthcare. PBM supports shelter needs as well. Unlike PBM's diverse assistance model, BISP focuses on women. It enables them to meet daily needs and improve families. BISP utilizes the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) for targeting. This ensures assistance reaches the most vulnerable segments effectively.

Zakat, the third pillar of Islam, is a mandatory act of charity. It applies to Muslims with wealth exceeding a prescribed minimum (nisab). They must donate 2.5 percent of their liquid assets annually.¹⁸³ Zakat funds are collected and disbursed locally through Zakat Committees; this supports the poor. It aims to help the needy within their communities. Zakat expenditures typically focus on immediate needs like food; shelter and clothing are included too. Funds can also support education and healthcare for the community.¹⁸⁴

PBM serves a broader range of beneficiaries with diverse needs; it's demand-driven. It relies on mixed funding sources for support. BISP is more focused, targeting women specifically. Zakat operates at the community level, utilizing faith-based contributions. It addresses immediate needs within a local context effectively. All three contribute to social welfare in Pakistan. Their differing approaches and target groups highlight poverty alleviation's multi-faceted nature.

6.17 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study reveals persistent gender disparities in ICT's economic landscape. Women remain significantly under represented in the formal workforce, particularly in urban areas, due to cultural, social, and economic barriers. They are concentrated in low-paying or informal jobs, while men dominate higher-paying sectors.

Limited access to finance, property rights, and mobility, combined with unpaid care responsibilities and societal norms, further restricts women's economic participation. Despite ICT's higher literacy rates and administrative hubs, these advantages have not translated into equal opportunities.

Creating a more equitable landscape requires inclusive policies that promote women's access to education, employment, finance, and leadership. Targeted interventions are needed to dismantle societal and institutional barriers. Recognizing women's crucial role in development and actively supporting their participation is essential for building a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

¹⁸³ Anera, 2021

¹⁸⁴ Zakat and Ushr Department

After discussing various aspects of women's empowerment and digital inclusion, it is important to highlight the Prime Minister's Women's Empowerment Package 2024, which represents a significant step towards gender parity in Pakistan, particularly within Islamabad. This initiative takes a multi-faceted approach to addressing key barriers faced by women, including the establishment of daycare centers in public sector entities to ease childcare burdens and the promotion of financial inclusion through subsidized loan schemes for women-led SMEs. Additionally, the package focuses on advancing gender equality and women's leadership while also taking crucial steps to combat gender-based violence. A notable aspect of this package is the emphasis on digital skills training and mentorship programs, particularly within the IT sector, equipping women with the tools needed to succeed in the modern economy. While these measures mark progress and hold the potential to enhance women's participation in the workforce and decision-making processes, the journey toward true gender equality remains long. Effective implementation and sustained efforts will be key to ensuring that these initiatives bring lasting and meaningful change to Pakistan's socio-economic landscape.

To bridge the gender gap in economic participation, comprehensive efforts are needed across multiple sectors. A major priority is promoting workplace policies that accommodate women's needs, such as flexible work hours, maternity leave, and affordable childcare services. Many women hesitate to enter or remain in the workforce due to unpaid domestic responsibilities; raising awareness about shared household duties can help reshape societal expectations.

Additionally, companies should be encouraged to actively recruit and retain women through gender-sensitive hiring policies, wage transparency, and incentives for businesses that maintain gender parity. A crucial aspect of economic inclusion is financial independence, yet women continue to face barriers in accessing credit, owning land, and participating in financial decision-making. To address this, it is essential to simplify the process of opening bank accounts for women, introduce low-interest loans for female entrepreneurs, and expand financial literacy programs.

Awareness campaigns must educate women about banking systems, investment opportunities, and inheritance rights; empowering them to make informed financial decisions is key to fostering greater economic participation.

Moreover, educational and skills development initiatives must align with evolving job market trends to ensure that women are not confined to low-paying roles. Efforts should be made to increase female participation in STEM fields, vocational training, and entrepreneurship programs, particularly in non-traditional sectors. In rural areas, where a majority of women work in agriculture with minimal financial return, skill-building programs should focus on diversifying employment opportunities and encouraging small business development. These initiatives must be paired with nationwide awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of women's inclusion in high-growth industries.

Mobility remains another significant challenge, as women's limited access to transportation directly affects their ability to work and pursue education. Expanding safe and affordable public transport options for women, subsidizing driving training programs, and creating financing schemes for female vehicle ownership can play a transformative role in increasing mobility and workplace participation. Additionally, cultural shifts are necessary to normalize women driving

and owning vehicles, which requires awareness campaigns to dismantle restrictive societal norms.

The digital divide further exacerbates gender inequalities, with women having lower mobile phone ownership and internet access compared to men. To address this, affordable mobile phone schemes, digital literacy training, and online safety measures should be introduced to encourage women's engagement with technology. Given the increasing role of digital platforms in employment and entrepreneurship, ensuring equal access to technology is essential for bridging the gender gap in economic participation. Raising awareness about the importance of digital inclusion and addressing safety concerns related to online harassment will further encourage women's active participation in the digital economy.

Social safety nets, including programs such as Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and microfinance initiatives, play a key role in women's economic stability. However, the declining number of female beneficiaries suggests that eligibility criteria, accessibility, and program outreach need to be reassessed to ensure that women in need receive adequate support. Awareness campaigns should also highlight the benefits of social safety nets and ensure that marginalized women are informed about and able to access these services.

Finally, systemic policy reforms are necessary to ensure long-term change. The implementation of gender quotas in leadership roles, stricter enforcement of equal pay policies, and increased monitoring of workplace discrimination will help create a more inclusive workforce. Governments, financial institutions, and the private sector must work together to remove barriers to women's economic participation through legislative measures and nationwide awareness campaigns aimed at shifting public perceptions about women's roles in the economy.

By taking these measures and continuously raising awareness about women's rights and economic contributions, Pakistan can move towards a more gender-inclusive economic system where women are not only participants but also leaders, innovators, and decision-makers.

07



JUSTICE

JUSTICE



Key Findings

- **Islamabad High Court (IHC):** 12.5 percent female representation, with 1 female judge out of 8.
- **Supreme Court:** 14 percent female representation, with 2 female judges out of 14.
- **Islamabad District Judiciary:** 37.3 percent female representation, with 44 female judges out of 118. This represents more than 6 percent increase than the preceding year.
- **Female Prosecution Officers:** 5 out of 23, indicating 22 percent female representation.
- **Kidnapping of Women Cases in 2023:** 472 as per IG Police, Islamabad.
- **Rape Cases:** 61 cases reported in 2023.
- **Gang Rape Cases:** 3 cases reported in 2023.
- **Domestic Violence (Murder):** 15 cases of domestic violence-related murders reported in 2023.
- **Domestic Violence (Beating):** 15 cases of physical beating reported in 2023.
- **Total cases of gender-based violence in 2023:** 639 as per IG Police, Islamabad

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the justice sector in Islamabad Capital Territory in the context of gender parity. The key subthemes in this report include violence against women, the police, prosecution, prisons, and courts in ICT, along with gender representation among police officials, judges, and advocates.

Furthermore, this chapter examines the availability of legal aid, government-run social service institutions, the disposal of family cases, and the handling of workplace harassment in ICT. The sections below present data collected from government agencies and provide an overview of gender parity in these critical areas of the public sphere.

Law and justice shape people's ability to accumulate endowments, benefit from them, access rights and resources, and act as free, autonomous members of society.¹⁸⁵ Inequalities in endowments, resource access, rights, social status, voice, and agency are reinforced, codified, challenged, and addressed through social and legal norms and institutions.

Although such inequalities impact both women and men, women continue to lag behind in many areas, facing greater barriers to justice, resources, and opportunities.¹⁸⁶

The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, expressly guarantees gender equality under Article 25 and ensures citizen equality before the law. Specifically, Article 25(2) states that *"there shall be no discrimination on the basis of sex."*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 and 16, highlights the global responsibility to achieve gender equality and enhance women's representation in public institutions, including the judiciary.¹⁸⁷

However, despite this constitutional guarantee, gender inequality persists and manifests in various forms, including violence against women. Article 9 guarantees the right to life and security, yet women frequently face discrimination in its application.

Ranked 130 out of 139 countries on the Rule of Law Index, Pakistan's justice system remains inadequate in delivering equitable justice. Nonetheless, Pakistan's adherence to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reflects its long-term commitment to gender equity.

According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-18, conducted by the National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS), violence against women remains a critical issue in Pakistan. The survey reveals that 28 percent of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, while 6 percent have faced sexual violence.

Furthermore, 34 percent of ever-married women reported experiencing spousal violence, including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, with 5 percent specifically subjected to spousal sexual violence. Despite the prevalence of such violence, 56 percent of women who have endured physical or sexual abuse have neither sought help nor disclosed their experiences to anyone. This highlights significant barriers related to social stigma, lack of legal support, and fear of retaliation.

Women, often confined to traditional roles, face barriers to participation in public life due to pervasive stereotypes. Within households, physical and sexual abuse from an early age is

¹⁸⁵ Sen, Amartya (2009) "The Idea of Justice", Harvard University Press

¹⁸⁶ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/db497e43-a547-596f-9206-8b974659cc84/content>

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.undp.org/blog/promoting-gender-equality-judiciary>

common, while societal pressures frequently silence victims.

Limited awareness of rights and fear of stigmatization further hinder the reporting of crimes against women, preventing them from seeking justice and protection.

This systemic discrimination not only compromises women's access to justice but also undermines the rule of law. Intimidation, insensitivity from authorities, and low conviction rates discourage victims from seeking redress, fostering a culture of lawlessness.¹⁸⁸

Outdated practices, such as child and forced marriages, continue to perpetuate injustice. However, Pakistan has made progress in banning certain obsolete practices, such as the two-finger test.

In recent years, several advances have been made to promote gender equality. Led by women parliamentarians, political initiatives have resulted in significant legislative measures, including the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, the establishment of special gender-based violence courts, the Federal Sexual Violence Response Framework, and the National Gender Policy Framework. These measures aim to protect women and empower survivors.

Initiatives such as in-camera trials and video testimonies have also been introduced to ensure a more survivor-sensitive justice system, making legal proceedings more accessible and less traumatic for victims.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained efforts, inclusive policies, and a societal commitment to upholding women's rights as foundational to development and justice.

7.1 Landscape of Justice Sector in ICT, Categories of Violence and Contextualised Challenges

The justice sector in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) comprises key stakeholders, institutions, and practices that uphold the rule of law and protect human rights. It includes judicial institutions such as the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad High Court, Federal Shariat Court, and District Judiciary, along with prosecution services, advocates, law enforcement agencies, legal aid providers, and correctional facilities.

Each of these institutions plays a vital role in ensuring access to justice, particularly for marginalized groups, including women and transgender individuals.

Key stakeholders in the justice sector

The judiciary, comprising the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the Islamabad High Court (IHC), and the District Judiciary, is responsible for interpreting and applying the law at different levels, ensuring justice and legal accountability.

Prosecution services play a critical role in guaranteeing fair trials and enforcing gender-sensitive legal protections, particularly in cases related to gender-based violence (GBV). Law enforcement agencies, such as the Islamabad Police, including specialized units like Women Police Stations and gender-based violence response units, are instrumental in investigating crimes, supporting survivors, and maintaining public order.

Legal aid organizations, both government-led and NGO-supported, provide essential legal

¹⁸⁸ WP No.13537/2020, Sadaf Aziz etc Versus Federation of Pakistan etc.

assistance and representation to vulnerable populations, including GBV survivors, ensuring justice is accessible regardless of socioeconomic status.

The Islamabad Bar Council and District Bar Associations, alongside practicing lawyers, oversee legal practice, regulate the profession, and advocate for legal reforms. However, women's representation within these organizations, both as members and in leadership roles remains disproportionately low reflecting broader systemic gender disparities in the legal sector.

Despite constitutional guarantees and legal frameworks promoting gender equality, barriers to gender parity persist due to systemic discrimination, lack of institutional gender sensitivity, and deeply rooted societal norms. These challenges continue to hinder women's access to justice, both as legal professionals striving for equal representation and as victims of crime seeking legal redress.

Categories of Violence Against Women (VAW) in the ICT

The term "violence against women" (VAW) is defined as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Gender-based violence in the ICT, not unlike the rest of the country, manifests in various forms.

The major categories include:

- **Domestic Violence:** To counter domestic violence a special legislation does not exist at the ICT level. However, the offences of domestic violence or gender based violence are covered under the general law, i.e. Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). For instance Section 336 deals with acid throwing offences, section 337 deals with various types of physical violence and injuries. However, this general does not cover the immediate protection of the victim of violence and it also doesn't focus on the rehabilitation of the survivor of any violence. PPC solely focuses on punishing the offender.
- **Sexual Violence:** Encompasses rape, gang rape, and sexual harassment. Laws such as the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021 aim to address these issues, but low conviction rates remain a challenge.
- **Honour Killings:** Although illegal under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2016, honour-based violence persists due to weak implementation.
- **Child and Forced Marriages:** The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, remains outdated, and enforcement is inconsistent across provinces. Except for Sindh where the minimum marriageable age is 18 years for both boys and girls, the minimum age to marry for boys is 18 years and for girls is 16 years in Punjab, KP, Balochistan and ICT.
- **Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV):** TFGBV has risen, yet PECA (Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016) lacks strong gender-specific protections.
- **Economic Violence:** This includes restricting women's financial independence through economic coercion, workplace discrimination, and denial of inheritance rights.

Contextualised Challenges in Achieving Gender Parity in the Justice Sector

Despite progress, gender parity in the justice sector remains constrained by several challenges, including the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles within the judiciary, police, and prosecution. Weak enforcement of gender-sensitive laws, barriers to effective law enforcement

and policing, lack of institutional support for survivors, and inadequate legal aid, rehabilitation, and shelter facilities further hinder progress.

To address these challenges, comprehensive reforms are needed across all justice institutions. This includes affirmative action to increase women's representation in leadership roles, wide-scale gender-sensitivity training programs for law enforcement agencies and judges, expanded access to legal aid, and stronger enforcement of existing laws.

A gender-sensitive justice system is essential to ensuring equal protection under the law for all citizens in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

7.2 Violence Against Women

Violence against women remains a critical issue in Islamabad, in 2023, 61 cases of rape, 15 murders linked to domestic violence, and 80 incidents categorized as “other violence” were reported. Similarly, in 2022, there were 65 reported cases of rape and 15 reported murders. These figures underscore the ongoing challenges in addressing violence against women, exacerbated by systemic underreporting and societal stigma.

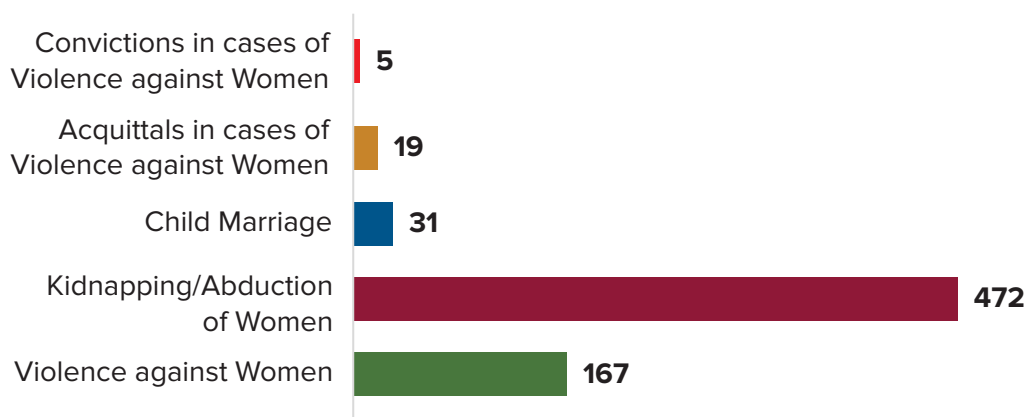
Experts argue that actual numbers are likely much higher due to fear of retaliation and the lack of accessible support systems for survivors. Nationally, the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017-18 revealed that 28 percent of women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence, while 6 percent had faced sexual violence. These statistics align with trends in Islamabad, where cultural norms, insensitivity from law enforcement agencies, and low conviction rates create significant barriers for survivors seeking justice. Many women remain reluctant to report crimes due to fears of stigmatization and a lack of trust in the judicial system.

Despite legislative measures like the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021, and the establishment of gender-based violence courts, implementation gaps persist. The inefficacy of these reforms, combined with deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes, limits the potential for systemic change.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including raising awareness, improving institutional responsiveness, and implementing gender-sensitive training for law enforcement and judicial officials.

7.3 Reported Cases of Violence Against Women

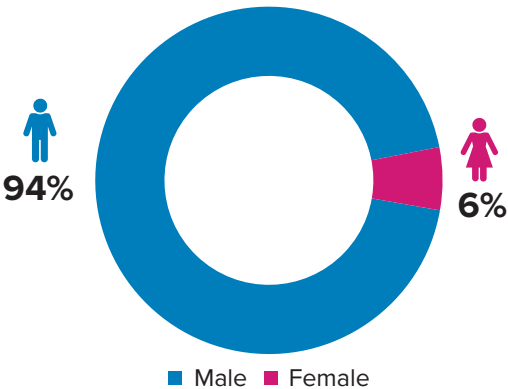
The data received from the Inspector General (IG) Police Office, Islamabad is presented below:



The data received from the IG office highlights persistent gender disparities in the ICT. Cases of violence against women remain a significant concern, with reported incidents showing little decline over the years. For example, according to the IG office, cases of violence fluctuated between 80 (July-Dec 2022) and 75 (Jan-June 2024), while cases of kidnapping/abduction increased from 195 to 240 over the same period, reflecting a worrying trend. (It is noteworthy that the National Police Bureau (NPB) only reported a total of 185 cases of gender-based violence from January to December 2023, compared to 639 cases reported by the IG office for the same period, which indicates significant under-reporting of such cases at the national level).

Similarly, reported cases of child marriage, though fluctuating, remain concerning. Judicial outcomes further illustrate systemic gaps, as acquittals in violence against women cases remain high, reaching 18 in Jan-June 2024, while convictions are alarmingly low, with only eight recorded during the same period. These statistics underscore the need for targeted reforms in the justice system, particularly in investigation, prosecution, and survivor support mechanisms.

The representation of women in law enforcement agencies and the availability of gender-sensitive facilities in the ICT also reveal critical deficiencies. Although there are 8,834 police officials in the ICT, only 26 have received gender sensitivity training—a stark indication of inadequate institutional prioritisation of this issue.



The lack of infrastructure catering to women's needs is another challenge. The ICT has only one women's police station and only five police stations (out of a total of 27¹⁸⁹) have women's help desks as of end 2023. Basic facilities such as separate washrooms, prayer areas, and ramp access remain grossly insufficient, with only one washroom, one prayer area, and no ramps across police stations. However, the recent addition of a daycare facility is a positive development, demonstrating some progress in creating a supportive environment for working women.

Overall, the data reveal a mixed picture of gender parity in the ICT. While some steps, such as the introduction of help desks and daycare facilities, show progress, systemic gaps in legal, institutional, and infrastructural support for women persist. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive measures, including judicial reforms, mandatory gender sensitivity training for law enforcement, and significant investment in infrastructure that supports women and persons with disabilities. Only through sustained and targeted efforts can the ICT achieve meaningful gender parity.

7.4 Superior Judiciary

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprises eight judges, including one female judge, Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz.¹⁹⁰ This composition indicates that women constitute 12.5 percent of the IHC judiciary. In the Supreme Court of Pakistan, there are currently two female judges, Justices Ayesha A. Malik and Musarrat Hilali, out of 14 judges, reflecting a 14 percent female representation.

¹⁸⁹ Islamabad Police. (n.d.). Police stations. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from <https://islamabadpolice.gov.pk/PoliceStations.php>
¹⁹⁰ Islamabad High Court. (n.d.). Official website of the Islamabad High Court. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from <https://mis.ihc.gov.pk/>

In the broader context of Pakistan's judiciary, women remain significantly under represented. Recent reports highlight that only seven women serve in the superior courts—including the Supreme Court, Federal Shariat Court, and five high courts—out of a total of 126 judges, equating to approximately 5.5 percent female representation at the highest judicial levels.¹⁹¹

Women make up 18 percent of the overall judiciary in Pakistan, with 572 female judges out of 3,142 judges and judicial officers nationwide.¹⁹² In the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), the subordinate judiciary exhibits a similar gender disparity. Data indicates that women hold 19 percent of judicial positions in ICT, with no female representation among Senior Civil Judges and District & Sessions Judges.¹⁹³

This persistent gender imbalance in the judiciary has profound implications for the legal system's inclusivity and sensitivity to gender-specific issues. The under representation of women, particularly in senior judicial roles, may affect the judiciary's ability to fully understand and address women's rights and gender-based cases. A diverse judicial perspective is crucial for a holistic interpretation of the law, and the current disparity must be addressed through systemic reforms to promote gender parity.

Efforts to enhance female representation should include targeted recruitment, mentorship programs, and policy reforms aimed at creating an enabling environment for women in the legal profession. Addressing structural barriers and societal biases that hinder women's progression to higher judicial positions is essential. Achieving gender parity in the judiciary is not only a matter of equity but also vital for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the legal system in representing and protecting the rights of all citizens.

7.5 District Judiciary

As per the data received from the Islamabad High Court, the gender distribution of judicial officers reveals an encouraging trend towards greater female representation. On July 1, 2022, the total number of male and female judges stood at 62 and 29, respectively, with women accounting for approximately 31.9 percent of the judiciary.

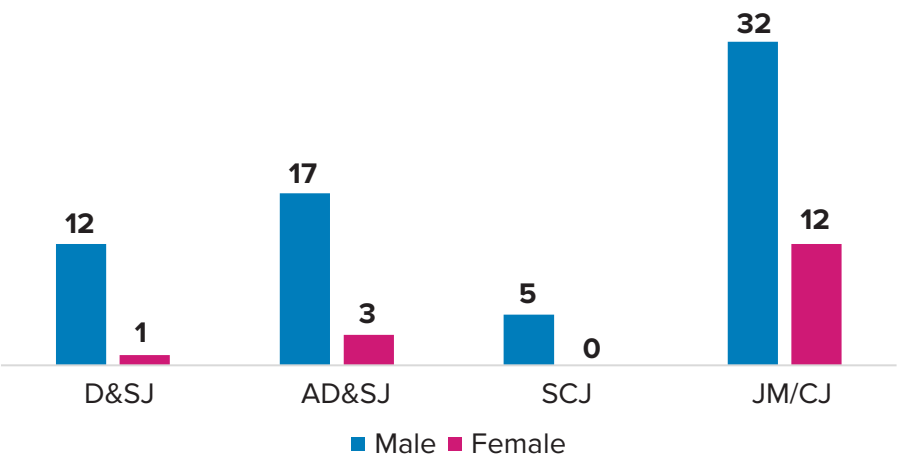
By December 31, 2023, the total number of male judges rose to 74, and female judges increased to 44, raising the proportion of women to 37.3 percent. This increase highlights efforts to diversify the judiciary, especially at the entry level, as seen in the consistent rise of female judges in the Judicial Magistrate/Civil Judge and Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) categories.

However, the higher tiers of D&SJ and SCJ (the Senior Civil Judge), continue to show a significant gender gap, indicating the need for targeted measures to ensure inclusivity at leadership levels.

¹⁹¹ DW. (2024, May 15). *Pakistan: Why are there so few female judges?*. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from <https://www.dw.com/en/pakistan-why-are-there-so-few-female-judges/a-69086765>

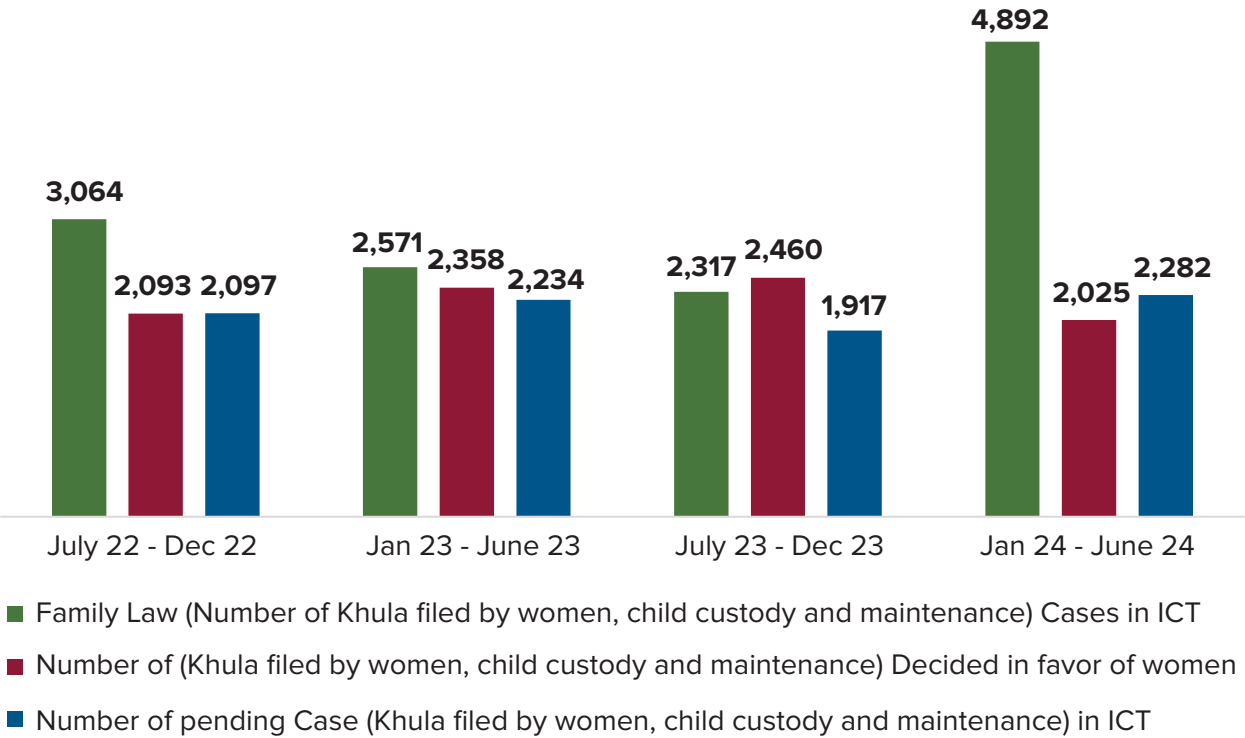
¹⁹² Accountability Lab Pakistan. (n.d.). *Gendered justice: Assessing the influence of female judges on judicial outcomes in Pakistan*. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from <https://pakistan.accountabilitylab.org/>

¹⁹³ Lawyher.pk. (n.d.). *Baseline report: Women in the legal profession in Pakistan*. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from https://gdpakistan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Baseline-Report-Lawyher.pk_.pdf



The data provides an overview of the working strength of judicial officers in the Islamabad Judicial Service, along with key statistics on family law cases filed, decided, and pending between July 2022 and end 2023. The sanctioned strength of judicial officers remains consistent throughout this period, with 15 District & Sessions Judges (D&SJ), 30 Additional District & Sessions Judges (AD&SJ), 10 Senior Civil Judges (SCJ), and 52 Judicial Magistrates/Civil Judges (JM/CJ). These figures reflect the planned capacity for the judiciary to address its caseload effectively.

Family Law Cases



Source: Islamabad High Court

The data on family law cases filed, decided, and pending provides insight into judicial workload and efficiency. Between July and December 2022, a total of 3,064 family law cases—primarily involving khula, child custody, and maintenance—were filed. During this period, 2,093 cases were decided in favor of women, while 2,097 cases remained pending.

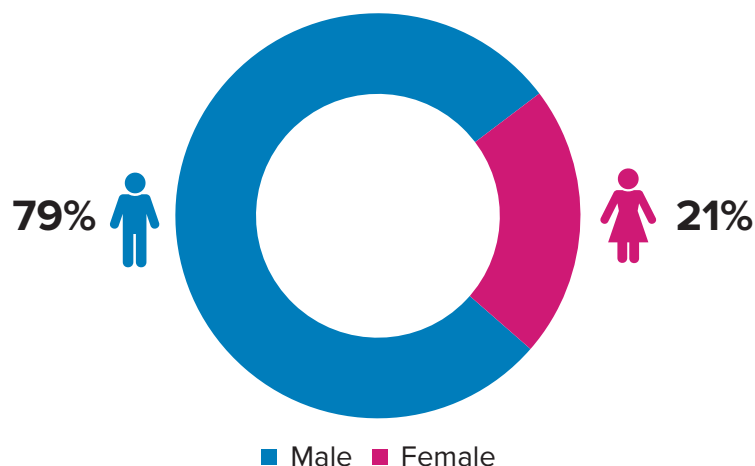
In the following period, January to June 2023, the number of cases filed dropped to 2,571, while 2,358 cases were decided in favor of women. However, pending cases increased to 2,234, suggesting steady judicial performance but also highlighting the need for more efficient case management.

While the increase in women's representation in judicial roles is a positive development, the gender imbalance in higher-tier roles remains a concern. Mentorship programs, targeted recruitment, and capacity-building initiatives could help bridge this gap. Additionally, the rising number of family law cases underscores the need for streamlined court processes, greater reliance on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and improved legal aid and counseling services for women.

The judiciary must also monitor case trends regularly to allocate resources efficiently and address the underlying causes of disputes, such as socio-economic challenges and gender-based inequalities.

Overall, while the data demonstrates progress in gender representation and judicial efficiency, the rising caseload and backlog highlight areas requiring immediate attention. Strategic interventions at both institutional and policy levels will be crucial in strengthening the judicial system's capacity to deliver timely and equitable justice.

7.6 Advocates



As per the report published by the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, there are a total of 7,173 lawyers in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), out of which 1,520 are female and 5,653 are male.

In ICT, female lawyers constitute 21 percent of total legal professionals, exceeding the national average of 17 percent. While this reflects better gender parity compared to other provinces, a substantial gender gap in the legal profession persists.

Despite this higher representation, women's participation in bar politics remains limited. The Islamabad Bar Association (IBA), which represents lawyers practicing in district courts, has historically been dominated by male leadership. As of December 2024, no women hold key positions such as President, Vice President, Secretary, or other executive roles. This trend

reflects a broader national pattern where bar politics remain male-driven, often sidelining female lawyers from decision-making processes.

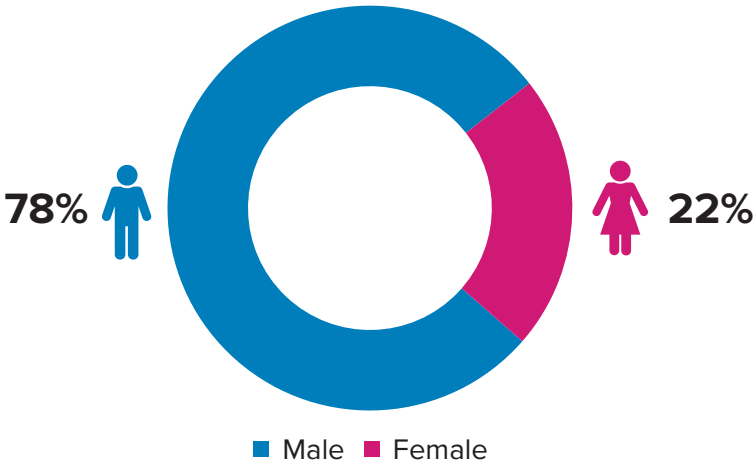
Several factors contribute to this underrepresentation. Cultural norms and societal expectations discourage women from pursuing leadership roles, while a lack of mentorship and support networks further hampers their professional advancement. Additionally, the adversarial nature of bar politics, characterized by intense competition and hostility, can be particularly discouraging for female practitioners.

Efforts to address these disparities are emerging. Initiatives aimed at empowering female lawyers, such as mentorship programs and advocacy for policy reforms, are gaining traction. Notably, in other regions, there have been breakthroughs; for instance, the Lahore High Court Bar Association elected its first female Secretary, Sabahat Rizvi, in its 130-year history, signaling a potential shift toward inclusivity.¹⁹⁴

To foster greater gender parity in ICT's bar politics, it is essential to implement targeted measures that encourage and support female lawyers in pursuing leadership positions. This includes creating conducive environments that challenge existing biases, providing platforms for women's voices, and ensuring equal opportunities for professional development.

Such steps are crucial for cultivating a legal community that truly reflects the diversity and talents of all its members.

7.7 Prosecutors



As per the report published by the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, there are a total of 23 Prosecution Officers in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Among them, 5 are female, while 18 are male, reflecting only 22 percent female representation in the prosecution sector.

However, ICT leads in female representation among prosecution officers across provinces, with a higher proportion of female prosecutors compared to the national average of 15 percent. Despite this progress, the total number of prosecution officers in ICT remains significantly smaller compared to other provinces.

¹⁹⁴ The Express Tribune. (n.d.). Making history: Female lawyers finally breaking the glass ceiling. Retrieved January 13, 2025, from <https://tribune.com.pk/article/97700/making-history-female-lawyers-finally-breaking-the-glass-ceiling>

7.8 Islamabad Bar Council

The Islamabad Bar Council (IBC), established under the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act of 1973, serves as the regulatory authority for legal practitioners within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The IBC's leadership comprises the Advocate-General as the Ex-officio Chairman and elected members representing the legal community.

As of December 2024, the IBC's official website lists its key office-bearers, including the Vice Chairman, Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Chairman of the Legal Education Committee, and Chairman of the Inter-Provincial Bar Council Relations Committee. Notably, all these positions are occupied by male members, indicating an absence of female representation in the council's upper echelons.

This lack of female leadership within the IBC reflects broader gender disparities in Pakistan's legal profession. Nationally, women constitute approximately 12 percent of registered advocates, with ICT exhibiting a slightly higher representation at 21 percent. Despite this, women's presence in leadership roles remains minimal.¹⁹⁵

The underrepresentation of women in bar council leadership positions has significant implications. It perpetuates systemic gender biases and limits the profession's ability to address issues affecting female legal practitioners effectively.

To address these disparities, targeted measures are needed to promote gender inclusivity within the legal profession. This includes establishing mentorship programs, providing leadership training for female advocates, and instituting policies that encourage and support women's participation in bar council elections. Additionally, raising awareness about the importance of gender diversity in leadership roles can foster a more equitable and representative legal community in Islamabad and beyond.

In conclusion, while women constitute a notable portion of the legal profession in Islamabad, their absence in leadership positions within the Islamabad Bar Council underscores the need for concerted efforts to achieve gender parity.

7.9 Prisons

As of December 2024, the ICT does not have its own dedicated prison facilities. Consequently, individuals arrested or convicted within the ICT are typically detained in nearby facilities, such as Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.¹⁹⁶

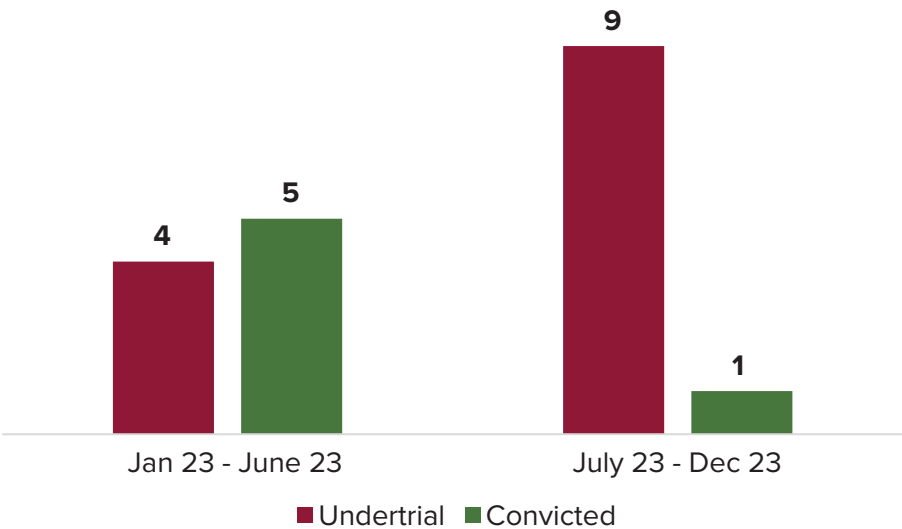
Nationally, women constitute approximately 1.5 percent of the total prison population in Pakistan.¹⁹⁷ Given the absence of a dedicated women's prison in the ICT, female detainees from the region are housed in separate sections within these facilities. For instance, Adiala Jail has designated areas for female prisoners to ensure segregation from male inmates.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ GDP Pakistan. (2021). Baseline report: Lawyher.pk. Retrieved from <https://gdpakistan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Baseline-Report-Lawyher.pk.pdf>

¹⁹⁶ Federal Ombudsman Pakistan. (n.d.). *Report on Adiala women's prison: Women and minors in prisons committee report*. Retrieved from https://www.mohtasib.gov.pk/SitelImage/Downloads/WMS%20Committee%20report/Report_Adiala.pdf

¹⁹⁷ Deutsche Welle (DW). (2023). *Pakistan: Why are more women being imprisoned?* Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/pakistan-why-are-more-women-being-imprisoned/a-68615741>

¹⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch. (2020). *Pakistan: Poor conditions rife in women's prisons*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/07/pakistan-poor-conditions-rife-womens-prisons>



The conditions for female prisoners in these facilities have been a subject of concern. Reports indicate that women in prison face inadequate medical care, poor living conditions, and limited access to necessary services.¹⁹⁹

7.9.1 Female Prisoners

In Pakistan, female prisoners are allowed to keep their children below six years of age with them in prisons.²⁰⁰

The total number of female prisoners in Islamabad includes 175 women without children and 25 women with children, indicating that approximately 87.5 percent of incarcerated women do not have children accompanying them. Additionally, cases of female prisoners without children are spread across 40 different police stations, whereas cases involving mothers with children are concentrated within just six police stations. This disparity suggests that the incarceration of mothers is limited to fewer jurisdictions, possibly reflecting localized enforcement patterns or other socio-legal dynamics.

Regarding criminal charges, the most common offense for prisoners without children is vagrancy under Section 9 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), accounting for 30 cases. This is followed by 18 cases of drug trafficking under Section 9C of the Control of Narcotics Substances Act, 1997 (CNSA) and 11 cases of trafficking in significantly large quantities under Section 9(1)3(c) of CNSA.

Among prisoners with children, the most common charges are evenly distributed between Section 9C of CNSA (6 cases), Section 9 of PPC (6 cases), and Section 9(1)3(c) of CNSA (4 cases). The prevalence of drug-related charges under CNSA across both categories suggests a systemic issue of female involvement in narcotics-related offenses.

From a gender parity perspective, the overwhelming representation of women without children suggests a potential oversight in recognizing familial and caregiving roles within the justice system. Mothers, making up just 12.5 percent of the female prison population, face disproportionate consequences due to incarceration, with significant disruptions to family structures, particularly for young children.

¹⁹⁹ Human Rights Watch. (2020, September 7). Pakistan: Poor conditions rife in women's prisons. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/07/pakistan-poor-conditions-rife-womens-prisons>

²⁰⁰ Rule 326, the Punjab Amendment, Pakistan Prison Rules, 1978.
<<https://prisons.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Pakistan%20Prison%20Rules%201978%20%28Final%29.pdf>>

The high incidence of drug-related offenses among women reflects deeper systemic issues, such as economic vulnerabilities, coercion, or targeted enforcement in marginalized communities.

Additionally, the absence of a separate prison for the ICT highlights critical infrastructure gaps, particularly in addressing the needs of female prisoners and ensuring adequate facilities for incarcerated mothers and their children. the infrastructure needed to address the needs of prisoners, especially female prisoners.

7.10 Cyber Crimes

As per data from the Federal Investigation Agency, male victims consistently outnumber female victims across all reporting periods. Islamabad reported the highest number of cases in most periods, with a significant gender disparity.

For instance, from July to December 2022, 294 cases involved males, while only 20 cases involved females. Cities like Lahore, Gujranwala, and Faisalabad also exhibit notable gender imbalances, with significantly higher numbers of male victims.

7.10.1 Convictions in Cybercrimes

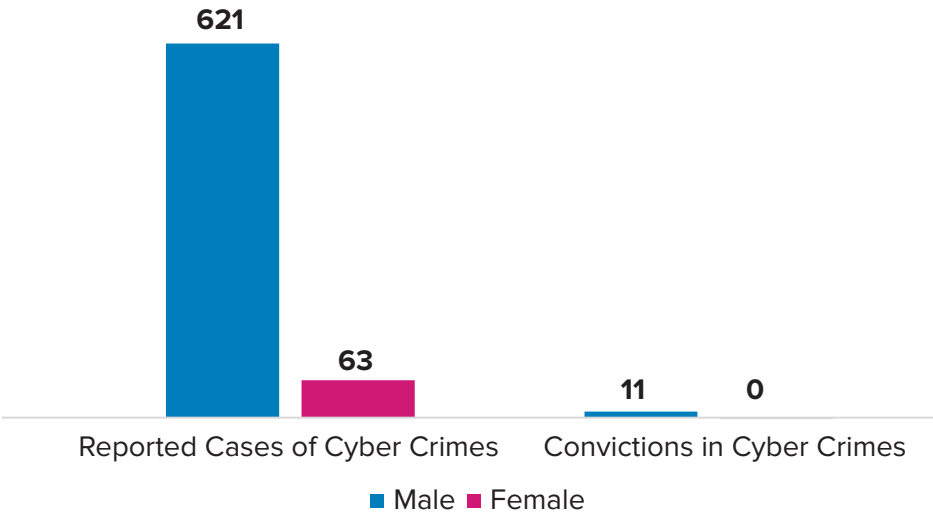
While convictions are already minimal compared to reported cases, indicating challenges in pursuing legal resolutions, there is a stark gender disparity even within these limited convictions.

For instance, from July to December 2022, only three female-related convictions were recorded, compared to 26 male-related convictions. Certain regions, such as Multan, Rawalpindi, and Abbottabad, reported negligible to no convictions for female-related cases.

From July 2022 to June 2024, the total reported cases stand at 3,183 for males and 749 for females. During the same period, total convictions amounted to 96, with 82 involving males and only 14 involving females.

The data highlights significant gender disparities in cybercrime reporting and convictions. The overwhelming number of male-reported cases suggests either a higher victimisation rate among men or societal and cultural barriers, limiting women from reporting cybercrimes. Female-related cybercrime cases see far fewer convictions compared to their male counterparts. This disparity points toward systemic challenges, such as potential biases in legal processes or difficulties in substantiating cases involving female victims. Islamabad and Lahore emerge as major cities for cybercrime reporting, which could reflect better awareness and access to reporting mechanisms in these regions. However, rural areas and smaller cities like Gilgit and Gwadar have minimal female-related data, underscoring a lack of reporting and/or awareness. Cultural stigma surrounding women's online presence and victimisation might lead to underreporting, further widening the gap in documented data.

Based on the table above, Islamabad consistently reports the highest number of cybercrime cases among all regions.



Source: FIA Office ICT

Based on the table above, Islamabad consistently reports the highest number of cybercrime cases among all regions.

- July - December 2022: 314 cases (294 males, 20 females)
- January - June 2023: 279 cases (254 males, 25 females)
- July - December 2023: 405 cases (367 males, 38 females)
- January - June 2024: 395 cases (353 males, 42 females)

Lahore had the second-highest number of cases across reporting periods, but far fewer compared to Islamabad. For example

- July - December 2022: 170 cases (113 males, 57 females)
- July - December 2023: 103 cases (65 males, 38 females)

Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi reported moderate numbers of cases:

- Gujranwala: Peaks at 130 cases (105 males, 25 females) during January - June 2024.
- Faisalabad: Peaks at 85 cases (61 males, 24 females) during July - December 2023.
- Rawalpindi: Peaks at 93 cases (75 males, 18 females) during January - June 2024.

Smaller cities like Gilgit, Abbottabad, and Gwadar consistently reflect low case numbers, with many periods reporting fewer than 10 cases. Gilgit and Gwadar show almost no female-reported cases throughout.

The high number of reported cases in Islamabad reflects relatively better reporting infrastructure, awareness, and accessibility, especially for females, though the numbers remain unequal. Convictions remain low across all regions, with no substantial difference between Islamabad and others. This highlights systemic legal challenges in pursuing and resolving cybercrime cases, especially for female victims. The stark contrast between Islamabad and smaller regions reflects broader issues of inequitable resource distribution, awareness, and societal norms limiting female participation in legal processes.

7.11 Legal Aid

In Pakistan, state-run legal aid services are notably limited and under-resourced, both technically and financially. This inadequacy has led to a significant reliance on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private law firms to provide pro bono legal assistance.

Organizations such as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell focus on supporting victims of human rights abuses, particularly women, children, and minorities.²⁰¹ Additionally, NGOs like Community Help Community, Norwegian Refugee Council Pakistan, Rights Now Pakistan, and the Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid extend legal support to refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced individuals.²⁰²

Despite these efforts, the provision of legal aid remains insufficient to meet the needs of marginalized communities, especially women. The existing legal aid framework is often described as ineffective, lacking government support and adequate funding. Consequently, legal aid is predominantly limited to pro bono services provided by individual lawyers, legal aid NGOs, and a few law firms.²⁰³

This situation underscores the urgent need for the Pakistani government to enhance state-run legal aid facilities, ensuring they are adequately resourced to provide comprehensive legal assistance to those in need.

7.11.1 Legal Aid and Justice Authority

The Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA), established under the Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act, 2020, is an autonomous body mandated to ensure equal access to justice for all citizens of Pakistan, particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups who cannot afford legal representation.

Its primary role is to provide free legal aid, advice, and assistance in both civil and criminal cases, with a special focus on supporting women, children, victims of gender-based violence (GBV), persons with disabilities, religious minorities, and transgender individuals. LAJA works to protect the rights of these communities by offering legal counsel, court representation, and financial assistance to cover legal expenses such as court fees and documentation.

Beyond direct legal support, LAJA also promotes legal literacy and awareness through educational programs, helping individuals understand their rights and the legal remedies available to them.

7.11.2 Special Initiatives

National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Complaint Cell operates to address issues related to gender discrimination, workplace harassment, domestic violence, and other forms of violence against women. It facilitates legal support and works in coordination with law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to ensure that cases are effectively processed.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ International Bar Association. (n.d.). Legal landscape for pro bono services in Pakistan. Retrieved from <https://www.ibanet.org/legal-landscape-for-pro-bono-services-in-pakistan>

²⁰² Ibid

²⁰³ PDFPK. (n.d.). Innovative approaches to legal aid: Exploring the prospects of online. Retrieved from <https://pdfpk.net/pdf/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Innovative-Approaches-to-Legal-Aid-Exploring-the-Prospects-of-Online.pdf>

²⁰⁴ <https://ncsw.gov.pk/>

Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) Helpline 1099 is a government initiative designed to provide free legal advice, assistance, and counseling services to individuals facing human rights violations, particularly gender-based violence (GBV), domestic abuse, and child protection issues.²⁰⁵

Police Khidmat Markaz is a dedicated facility established by the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police to provide citizens with efficient, transparent, and hassle-free access to police-related services under one roof. It aims to enhance public-police interaction, reduce bureaucratic delays, and improve the overall quality of policing services in the capital.²⁰⁶

Key services offered include the issuance of character certificates, verification of tenants and domestic workers, lost document reports, crime reports (FIR copies), vehicle verification, and security clearances. The Khidmat Markaz also handles requests related to police record verification for employment, travel, and legal matters, as well as services for foreign nationals residing in Islamabad. Designed with a citizen-friendly approach, the centre ensures quick processing times, a transparent workflow, and dedicated counters for women, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities. The facility also supports online applications through the ICT Police website, allowing for digital access to many services. By fostering a trust-based relationship between the police and the community, the Police Khidmat Markaz plays a crucial role in improving public safety, promoting accountability, and ensuring that citizens' interactions with law enforcement are efficient, respectful, and inclusive.

Gender and Child Protection Unit (GCPU) operating under the Islamabad Police, the GCPU addresses cases involving domestic violence, sexual harassment, abuse, and forced labour. Victims can approach the unit through its helpline (1815) to receive assistance and support.²⁰⁷

7.12 Conclusion

The state of gender parity in Islamabad's justice sector reveals both progress and persistent gaps across various dimensions. While incremental improvements in female representation within the judiciary, prosecution, and legal professions are promising, significant challenges remain in achieving equitable participation and ensuring gender-sensitive justice delivery. The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, systemic inadequacies in legal aid provision, and limited resources allocated to national commissions highlight structural barriers that need immediate attention.

The data presented in this report underscores the urgency for a multi-faceted approach to address these issues. Expanding state-run legal aid facilities, empowering national commissions, and introducing gender-sensitive reforms within law enforcement and the judiciary are essential steps toward fostering inclusivity. Additionally, prioritizing vulnerable groups such as women and children through targeted interventions, enhanced legal frameworks, and public-private partnerships can help bridge existing gaps in access to justice.

Empowering women within the legal system and providing robust mechanisms to address gender-based violence are not just measures of equity but also critical to strengthening the rule of law and fostering societal progress. By adopting a comprehensive and collaborative strategy,

²⁰⁵ <https://mohr.gov.pk/Detail/ZjhiZThiZDUtMzY0ZS00MDEzLWE3MDAtZTA5NjgzN2RlZGRm#:~:text=Privacy%20Policy%20Toll%20Free%20Helpline%201099>

²⁰⁶ https://islamabadpolice.gov.pk/service_centers.php

²⁰⁷ <https://victimsservicedirectory.org/directory/details/1411>

Islamabad can pave the way for a justice system that is more inclusive, responsive, and representative of its diverse population.

7.13 Recommendations

Efforts to combat violence against women in Islamabad must align with global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes gender equality and women's empowerment through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16. While the Government of Pakistan has made progress in translating these commitments into legislation, significant work remains.

Most importantly, the government can develop an ICT-specific action plan to address violence against women, particularly technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). This action plan can serve as a model, guiding provinces and federal territories in initiating their own region-specific legal and institutional frameworks to combat gender-based violence effectively.

1. Enhanced Representation of Women in ICT Justice Sector

- **Targeted Recruitment and Promotion:** Introduce policies to ensure equitable recruitment and promotion opportunities for female judges, particularly in higher-tier roles like District & Sessions Judges (D&SJ) and Senior Civil Judges (SCJ).
- **Mentorship Programmes:** Establish mentorship networks pairing senior female judges with aspiring women in the judiciary, to provide guidance and professional development.
- **Leadership Training:** Implement leadership development programmes tailored for female judges, to prepare them for roles in the constitutional judiciary.
- **Quota System:** Consider a gender quota for appointments in superior courts, to expedite progress toward parity.

2. Gender Diversity in Bar Associations and Legal Profession in ICT

- **Encourage Women in Leadership:** Introduce incentives for female lawyers to participate in bar politics, such as reduced campaign costs or targeted training.
- **Diversity Mandates:** Amend bar council regulations to mandate a minimum percentage of female representation in executive positions. **Support Structures:** Establish forums or working groups within bar associations to address gender-specific challenges faced by female lawyers.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Facilitate networking events exclusively for women in the legal profession to foster collaboration and visibility.

3. Inclusive Prosecution Services

- **Capacity Building:** Conduct gender-sensitive training for all prosecutors to improve understanding of issues faced by female prosecutors and victims.
- **Incentivised Hiring:** Offer scholarships or incentives to female law graduates for pursuing careers in prosecution.

- **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for a higher proportion of female prosecutors to better handle gender-based violence cases and ensure sensitivity and equity in prosecution.

4. Combating Violence Against Women and GBV

- **Enhanced Survivor Support:** Expand survivor support services, including legal aid, counselling, and medical assistance for women reporting violence.
- **Judicial Accountability:** Establish performance metrics for courts handling gender-based violence cases to reduce delays and improve conviction rates.
- **Community Outreach:** Launch awareness campaigns targeting communities to encourage reporting and reduce stigma.
- **Specialised Courts:** Scale up the number of gender-based violence courts with trained judges and staff for sensitive handling of such cases.

5. Reforming prisons

- **Dedicated Prison Facilities:** Construct a women-specific prison in Islamabad to provide tailored facilities for female prisoners, particularly mothers.
- **Alternative Sentencing:** Prioritise community-based sentencing (e.g., probation, rehabilitation programmes) for women convicted of non-violent offenses like drug-related crimes.
- **Mother-Child Programmes:** Develop programmes within prisons to maintain mother-child bonds, such as nursery facilities and supervised interaction areas.
- **Rehabilitation Focus:** Offer vocational training, counselling, and reintegration programmes to reduce recidivism among female prisoners.

6. Cyber Crimes

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Increase awareness about reporting mechanisms for female victims of cybercrime, targeting schools, universities, and workplaces.
- **Gender-Sensitive Investigations:** Train cybercrime investigators on handling cases involving female victims sensitively and effectively.
- **Accessible Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish anonymous online reporting platforms, to encourage women to report cybercrimes without fear of stigma.
- **Legislative Updates:** Advocate for harsher penalties for cybercrimes targeting women and streamlined legal processes to improve conviction rates.

7. Expand Legal Aid in ICT

- **Expand State-Run Legal Aid Centres:** Establish more government-funded legal aid facilities across urban and rural areas to ensure accessibility for marginalised populations.
- **Increase Funding and Resources:** Allocate sufficient financial and technical resources to strengthen existing legal aid centres enabling them to handle complex cases effectively.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborate with NGOs, law firms, and civil society organizations to expand pro bono legal services and pool resources.
- **Introduce Mandatory Pro Bono Work:** Encourage or mandate lawyers to dedicate a set number of hours to pro bono services as part of their professional obligations.
- **Digital Legal Aid Platforms:** Develop online platforms to provide remote legal consultations, case tracking, and awareness about legal rights, especially for remote and underserved communities.
- **Empower the National Commissions:** The commissions such as National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) are vital to ensuring justice and equality, and empowering their legal cells and desks through enhanced human and financial resources is essential for their effective functioning.

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Annexure

Annex A: Indicators used for the ICT Gender Parity Report

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
1	Population	Population & Housing Census (2023)	By Sex, By Age, Urban/ Rural
2	Refugee population	Population & Housing Census (2023)/Facility based Record/UNHCR	By Sex, By Age, by Area (Urban/ Rural)
3	Refugee population with legal documentation	Population & Housing Census (2023)/Facility based Record/UNHCR	By Sex, By Age, by Area (Urban/ Rural)
REGISTRATIONS			
4	Births registered	DMA/Local Govt/DHIS	By Sex, Urban/Rural, By Level of Age (Birth to 2 years, 2-7 years, 7 years and above)
5	Marriages registered	Local Govt	N/A
6	Divorces registered	Local Govt	N/A
7	Deaths registered	DMA	By Sex, by Age
CNIC HOLDERS			
8	Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) issued in ICT	National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA)	By Sex, Urban/rural, By religion/minority status, By age
9	Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) with Disability Logo issued	NADRA	By Sex, Urban/rural, By religion/minority status, By age, by disability
GOVERNANCE			
POLITICAL REPRESENTATION			
10	Members on General Seats in the National Assembly	National Assembly of Pakistan	By Sex, By Party affiliation

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
11	Members on Reserved Seats for Women in the National Assembly	National Assembly of Pakistan	By Party affiliation
12	Members on Reserved Seats for Non-Muslims in the National Assembly	National Assembly of Pakistan	By Sex, By Party affiliation
13	Parliamentary Secretaries in the National Assembly	National Assembly of Pakistan	By Sex
14	Members in Parliamentary Standing Committees in the National Assembly	National Assembly of Pakistan	By Sex, By Committee
15	Chairmen/Chairpersons of Parliamentary Standing Committees in the National Assembly	National Assembly of Pakistan	By Sex, By Committee
16	Members of the Senate	Senate	By Sex, By Party affiliation
17	Ministers in the National Assembly	National Assembly	By Sex, By Portfolio
18	Advisors to the Leader of the House	National Assembly	By Sex, By Portfolio
VOTERS REGISTRATION			
19	Registered voters	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex
20	Voter Turnout	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex, By Election
CANDIDATES CONTESTING ELECTIONS			
21	Candidates Contesting for General Seats in the National Assembly	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex, By Political Party affiliation, By Election
ELECTION COMMISSION STAFF			
22	Presiding Officers	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex, By Election
23	Returning Officers	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex, By Election
24	Members of District Voter Education Committees	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex
POLLING STATIONS/BOOTHES			
25	Designated Polling Stations and Booths in ICT	Election Commission of Pakistan	By Sex, By Election

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
PRESS CLUBS			
26	Members in National Press Club, Islamabad	District Press Clubs	By Sex, By District, By Year
POLITICAL PARTIES			
27	Members in Executive and Decision - making bodies of major Political Parties	Party Offices	By Sex, By Party, By Year
WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION			
28	Members of Chambers of Commerce and Industry	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of respected area	By Sex, By Year
29	Members of Zakat & Ushr Committees	Zakat & Ushr Department	By Sex, By Year
WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR			
30	Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Officers	Establishment Division	By Sex, By Grade, By Year
HEALTH			
31	Total Fertility Rate	Pakistan Economic Survey (2022-23 or the World Bank)/NHS/DHS Survey/Birth Registration System for 1 year and accurate age of women/Demographic Models (CPR)	By Year
32	Infant Mortality Rate	NHS	By Year, by sex
33	Under-5 Mortality Rate	UNICEF/NHS/Efficient DHIS II can be an efficient source.	By Year, by sex
34	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate	World Health Organization (WHO)/World Bank)/NHS/ Can be estimated for ICT through FPET Model	by year
35	Unmet Need for Family Planning	World Health Organization (WHO)/World Bank)/NHS/ Can be estimated for ICT through FPET Model	
GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES			
36	Health Facilities	NHS/CDA/DHO/Facility assessment Survey	By Type of Facility

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
37	Beds in Health Facilities	NHS/CDA/DHO	By Type of Facility
38	Family Planning Service Centres	NHS/CDA/DHO	By Type of Facility
39	Mental Health Institutes	NHS/CDA/DHO	N/A
40	Population Welfare Centres	NHS/CDA/DHO	by type of facility
PRIVATE HEALTH FACILITIES			
41	Health Facilities	NHS/IHRA	By Type of Facility
42	Beds in Health Facilities	NHS/IHRA	By Type of Facility
43	Family Planning Service Centres	NHS/IHRA	By Type of Facility
44	Mental Health Institutes	NHS/IHRA	N/A
HUMAN RESOURCE IN GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES			
45	Doctors	NHS/CDA/DHO	By Sex
46	Nurses	NHS/CDA/DHO	By Sex
47	Lady Health Workers (LHWs)	NHS/CDA/DHO	N/A
48	Registered Midwives (LHVs, CMWs, Nurse Midwife)	NHS/CDA/DHO	by designation/Title or registration, by type of facility
49	Registered 'Dais'	NHS/CDA/DHO	by type of facility
50	Medico-legal Staff	NHS/DHO	By Sex, By Type of Facility
HUMAN RESOURCE IN PRIVATE HEALTH FACILITIES			
51	Doctors	NHS/IHRA	By Sex
52	Nurses	NHS/IHRA	By Sex
53	Registered Midwives (LHVs, CMWs, Nurse Midwife)	NHS/IHRA	by designation/Title or registration, by type of facility
OPD PATIENTS			
54	OPD Patients visiting Health Facilities	NHS/CDA/IHRA/DHIS	By Sex, By type of disease
55	Patients approached for Mental Health services	NHS/CDA/IHRA/DHIS	By Sex

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES			
56	Births in Health Facilities	NHS/IHRA/DHIS	By Year
57	Births by Caesarean Section in Health Facilities	NHS/IHRA/DHIS	By Year
58	Low Birth Weight (LBW) Babies	NHS/IHRA/DHIS	By Year, by sex
59	Family Planning Visits to Public Health Facilities	NHS/IHRA/DHIS/CLMIS	By Year
60	Anaemia in women utilizing Antenatal Care (ANC)	NHS/IHRA/Planning Commission/DHIS	By Year
61	Women Utilizing Antenatal Care (ANC) Coverage	NHS/IHRA/DHO/DHIS	By Year
62	Women receiving Maternal Immunization with at least 2 doses of Tetanus Diphtheria	NHS/IHRA/DHO/DHIS/EPI	By Year
HELATH ISSUES RELATED TO PREGNANCY			
63	Post D&C Services provided by Health Facilities	Public Hospitals/NHS/IHRA/DHIS	By Year
64	Women diagnosed with Fistula	Public Hospitals/NHS/IHRA/DHIS	By Age, By Year
65	Women who received surgical treatment for Fistula	Pakistan National Forum on Women's Health/NHS/IHRA/DHIS	By Year
BUDGET			
66	Healthcare Budget	MNHSR&C/DHO/CDA	By Year
HIV/AIDS			
67	HIV Prevalence Rate (% Ages 15-49)	National AIDS Control Programme/DHIS/NHS	By Sex
68	Patients in HIV/AIDs Treatment Centres	National AIDS Control Programme/DHIS/NHS	By Sex
CANCER PREVALENCE			
69	Cancer Patients	National Cancer Registry/PIMS and Noori/NIH/DHO	By Sex, By Age, By Type
70	Deaths caused by Cancer	National Cancer Registry/PIMS and Noori/NIH/DHO/DHIS	By Sex, By Age, By Type

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
EDUCATION			
EDUCATION PROFILE			
71	Literacy Rate	Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23/ Population Census 2023	By Sex
72	Adult Literacy Rate	Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23/ Population Census 2023	By Sex, By District
73	Net Enrolment Rate	Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23/ Population Census 2023	By Sex
74	Gross Enrolment Rate	Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23/ Population Census 2023	By Sex
75	Survival Rate	Pakistan Education Atlas/ Population Census 2023	By Sex
76	Effective Transition Rate	Pakistan Education Atlas/ Population Census 2023/ MICS Survey	By Sex, By Level (middle to primary)
77	Out of School Children	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics	By Sex, By Level (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, post-secondary)
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS			
78	Formal Schools	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
79	Non-formal Basic Education Institutions, Community Schools and Deeni Madaris	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
80	Technical and Vocational Education Institutes	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
81	Special Education Institutions	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
82	STEM Education	Higher Education Commission	by sex/by Type
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (Private)			
83	Formal Schools	PEIRA	By Sex

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
84	STEM Education	Higher Education Commission	by year/by sex
85	Medical and dental Colleges	Higher Education Commission	by year/by sex
ENROLLMENT			
86	Enrolment in Formal Schools	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
87	Enrolment in Non-Formal Institutes	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
88	Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education Institutions	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex, By Institute
89	Enrolment in Special Education Institutions	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
90	Enrolment in Higher Education institutes	Higher Education Commission	by sex, by type
ENROLLMENT (Private Sector)			
91	Enrolment in Formal Schools	PEIRA	By Sex
92	Enrolment in Higher Education institutes	Higher Education Commission	by sex, by Type
TEACHING STAFF			
93	Teachers in Formal Schools	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
94	Teachers in Non-Formal Institutes	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex, By Type of Institute
95	Teachers in Technical and Vocational Education Institutions	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex, By Type of Institute
96	Teachers in Special Education Institutes	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex
97	Teacher Qualifications	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Sex, By Qualification Level, By School Level

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
98	Lecturer/professors in higher Education Institute	Higher Education Commission	by sex, by qualification, by designation, by type of institute
TEACHING STAFF (Private Sector)			
99	Teachers in Formal Schools	PEIRA	By Sex
100	Teacher Qualifications	PEIRA	By Sex, By Qualification Level, By School Level
FACILITIES IN FORMAL SCHOOLS			
101	Boundary Walls	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training/Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22	By Education level (primary till higher secondary)
102	Electricity	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training/Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22	By Education level (primary till higher secondary)
103	Drinking Water	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Education level (primary till higher secondary)
104	Toilets	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Education level (primary till higher secondary)
105	Transport Facilities	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Education level, by sex (primary till higher secondary)
106	Hostel Facilities	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training	By Education level, by sex (primary till higher secondary)
BUDGET			
107	Education Budget	Ministry of Federal Education and professional training/CDA	
ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION & OPPORTUNITIES			
LABOUR FORCE			
108	Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)	Labour Force Survey (LFS), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics	By Sex, Rural/Urban, Augmented LFPR
109	Employment	LFS	By Sex, Rural/Urban

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
110	Employment by Marital Status	LFS	By Sex, Rural/Urban Married/Never Married/Widowed/Divorced
111	Excessive Hours of Work done by Women	LFS	By District (Urban/Rural)
112	Employment by Sector	LFS	By Sex, Rural/Urban Agriculture/Non-Agriculture
113	Employment by Industry Division	LFS	By Sex in 5 major industries
114	Employment by Education Level	LFS	Male/Female, Literate/Illiterate Employed/Unemployed/Not in Labour Force
115	Percentage of Employees by Wage Groups	LFS	By Sex, Rural/Urban Wage Groups (up to Rs.5000, 5000-10000, 10000-15000, 15000& over)
116	Unemployment	LFS	By Sex, Rural/Urban
117	Hours Worked	LFS	Rural/Urban, By Sex Less than 35 hours (underemployment) More than 48 hours (excessive work)
118	Overseas Employment	Overseas Employment Corporation/OPHRD	by sex, by age, highly skilled, technical etc
LAND OWNERSHIP			
119	Landowners	Revenue Dept	By Sex
120	Average Landholding	Revenue Dept	By Sex, By Area
121	<i>Warasti/Non-Warasti Intiqals</i>	Revenue Dept, FOSPAH (for inheritance)	By Sex
WOMEN'S MOBILITY			
122	Vehicle Registrations in	Excise Department	By Sex
123	Driving Licences Issued in	ITP	By Sex
USAGE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)			
124	Mobile Phone and SIM Card Ownership	Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)	By Sex
125	Internet Users	Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM)	By Sex

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
ACCESS TO FINANCE			
126	Active Current Accounts	Public sector banks (National Bank of Pakistan and First Women Bank Limited)/State Bank	By Sex
127	Active Deposit Accounts	Public sector banks (National Bank of Pakistan/First Women Bank Limited/State Bank)	By Sex
128	Active Loan Accounts	Public sector banks (National Bank of Pakistan/First Women Bank Limited/State Bank)	By Sex
129	Value of Loans Issued	Public sector banks (National Bank of Pakistan/First Women Bank Limited/State Bank)	By Sex, By Type (long-term loans, short-term loans)
130	Debit/Credit Cardholders	Public sector banks (National Bank of Pakistan/First Women Bank Limited/State Bank)	By Sex
131	Active Borrowers of Microfinance Banks and Institutions	Pakistan Microfinance Network	By Sex
132	Gross Loan Portfolio of Microfinance Banks and Institutions	Pakistan Microfinance Network	By Sex
SOCIAL SECURITY AND SAFETY NETS			
133	Cases of Labour Law Violations registered	ICT labour dept	
134	Beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme	Benazir Income Support Programme	By Sex
136	Social Security Payments made through IESSI	Islamabad Employees Social Security Institution	By Sex
137	Beneficiaries of Zakat & Ushr Payments	Zakat & Ushr Dept.	By Sex, By Type of programme

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
JUSTICE			
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN			
138	Reported Cases of Violence against Women	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad/ Gender Crime cell	By Type of crime, By Year
139	Reported Cases of Kidnapping/Abduction of Women	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad/ Gender Crime cell	By Year
140	Reported Cases of Child Marriage	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad/ Gender Crime cell	By Year
141	Acquittals in cases of Violence against Women	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	By Type of crime, By Year
142	Convictions in cases of Violence against Women	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	By Type of crime, By Year
143	Convictions in Trafficking cases	FIA	By Sex, By Year
144	Reported cases of Harassment at workplace	FOSPAH, Office of the President of Pakistan	by sex, by year
145	Convictions in Harassment Cases	FOSPAH, Office of the President of Pakistan	by sex, by Year
146	Reported cases of cyber crimes	FIA	by sex, by Year
147	Convictions in Cyber Crimes	FIA	by sex, by Year
POLICE STATIONS			
148	Police Stations	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	
149	Women Police Stations	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	
150	Police Stations having Help Desks for Women	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	
151	Separate Washrooms for females and PWDs	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	
152	Separate Prayer areas (police station, courts, hospitals, schools, universities) for females	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
153	Daycare facility at police stations	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	
PRISONS IN ICT			
154	Prisoners	Chief commissioner ICT/Home department Punjab	By Sex, By Prison, By Status (Under Trial, Convicted, Condemned)
155	Juveniles	Chief commissioner ICT/Home department Punjab	By Prison, By Sex, By Status (Under Trial, Convicted), By Year
156	Female Prisoners	Chief commissioner ICT/Home department Punjab	By Prison, By Status (Under Trial, Convicted, Condemned), By Year
POLICE OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS			
157	Police Officials	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	By Sex, by rank
158	Police Officers	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	By Sex, by rank
159	Gender Sensitivity Trainings of Police officials	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	By Sex, by rank
160	Police Officers trained on Gender Sensitivity	Office of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad	By Sex, By Rank
JUDGES AND ADVOCATES			
161	Judges	Islamabad High Court/Supreme Court	By Sex, By Type of Judge
162	Judges trained on Gender Sensitivity	Federal Judicial Academy	By Sex, By Type of Judge, By Year
163	Advocates	Islamabad Bar Council	By Sex, By Type of licence (Lower/High Court/Supreme court), By Year
164	Prosecutors in the Prosecution Department	Prosecution Department, ICT	By Sex, By Year, By Type
165	Gender Sensitivity Trainings of Prosecutors	Prosecution Department, ICT	By Sex, By Year, By Type
FAMILY LAW CASES			
166	Family Law (Number of Khula filed by women, child custody and maintenance) Cases	Islamabad High Court	By Year

Sr#	Indicator	Source	Data Disaggregation
167	Number of (Khula filed by women, child custody and maintenance) Decided in favour of women	Islamabad High Court	By Year
168	Number of pending Case (Khula filed by women, child custody and maintenance)	Islamabad High Court	By Year
FOSPAH			
169	Workplace Harassment Committees	All public offices (Certain offices, ministries, authorities, universities etc need to be defined/determined)	registered, and notified, gender segregation (male/female)
170	Display of Code of conduct under Harassment Act 2012	All public offices (Certain offices, ministries, authorities, universities etc need to be defined/determined)	by year

Annexure-1

Islamabad PoR Cardholders as of 31st Dec 2023

Gender	0 to 4 Years	5 to 11 Years	12 to 17 Years	18 to 59 Years	60 Years and above	Total
Female	9,048	14,515	8,148	23,350	1,696	56,757
Male	9,126	15,607	8,528	28,818	2,439	64,518
Total	18,174	30,122	16,676	52,168	4,135	121,275

Annexure-2

Disability Details (Till 28-02-2021)

Province	CNIC	CRC	JUVENILE	NICOP	Total
AJK	10,368	2,259	392	310	13,329
Balochistan	9,682	475	287	51	10,495
GB	6,147	1,216	506	17	7,886
Islamabad	5,941	437	183	145	6,706
KP	101,625	10,665	2,624	1,577	116,491
Punjab	127,591	7,471	10,563	1914	147,539
Sindh	64,340	3,088	1,593	366	69,387
Grand Total	325,694	2,5611	16,148	4,380	371,833

Annexure-3**Population of Islamabad by Sex, Religion and Rural/Urban, Census - 2023**

AREA/SEX	Total Population	Muslim	Christian	Hindu Jati	Qadiani/Ahmadi	Sikh	Others
All Localities							
All Sexes	2,283,244	2,181,663	97,281	839	2,398	45	10
Male	1,209,000	1,157,217	49,490	439	1,209	25	6
Female	1,073,974	1,024,180	47,788	400	1,189	20	4
Transgender	270	266	3	-	-		
Rural							
All Sexes	1,240,244	1,196,025	42,526	272	1,186	22	3
Male	649,029	626,661	21,510	146	598	12	3
Female	591,165	569,316	21,014	126	588	10	
Transgender	50	48	2	-	-		
Urban							
All Sexes	1,043,000	985,638	54,755	567	1,212	23	7
Male	559,971	530,556	27,980	293	611	13	3
Female	482,809	454,864	26,774	274	601	10	4
Transgender	220	218	1	-	-		

Annexure-4**Population of Islamabad by Sex, Religion and Rural/Urban, Census - 2023**

Stage	URBAN			RURAL			TOTAL		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Primary	3,165	3,312	6,477	3,280	4,688	7,968	6,445	8,000	14,445
Primary	21,340	21,135	42,475	22,542	30,355	52,897	43,882	51,490	95,372
Middle	15,554	16,542	32,096	12,180	19,259	31,439	27,734	35,801	63,535
High	8,793	10,393	19,186	5,305	9,791	15,096	14,098	20,184	34,282
Higher Sec.	8,131	12,109	20,240	753	5,529	6,282	8,884	17,638	26,522
Degree	1,421	4,978	6,399	10	318	328	1,431	5,296	6,727
Total	58,404	68,469	126,873	44,070	69,940	114,010	102,474	138,409	240,883

Annexure-5**Enrollment in Private Schools, Level, Gender and Location 2023-2024**

Level	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Primary	10,940	8,952	19,892	40,998	33,543	74,541	51,938	42,495	94,433
Primary	12,124	9,920	22,044	63,474	51,933	115,407	75,598	61,853	137,341
Middle	7,519	6,152	13,671	25,257	21,028	46,285	32,776	27,180	59,956
High	4,903	4,011	8,914	10,534	8,618	19,152	15,437	12,629	28,066
Total	35,486	29,035	64,521	140,263	115,122	255,385	175,749	144,157	319,906

Annexure-6**Enrollment in NFE, Technical, Vocational, and Religious Institutes**

Enrollment	Year 2021-22			Year 2022-23		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Enrollment in Non Formal Institutes	7,979	8,827	16,806	25,985	25,224	51,209
Enrollment in Technical Education Institutions	5,910	4,140	10,050	5,712	3,978	9,690
Enrollment in Vocational Education Institutions	3,439	5,166	8,605	3,506	5,315	8,821
Enrollment in Deeni Madaris/ Religious Institutes	29,476	14,095	43,571	27,382	13,822	41,204

Annexure-7**Enrollment in NFE, Technical, Vocational, and Religious Institutes**


Stage	2021-22			2022-23		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Primary	144	67	211	44	22	66
Primary	282	134	416	37	22	59
Middle	136	97	233	16	19	35
High	81	47	128	11	9	20
Total	723	369	1,092	108	72	180

Annexure-8**Teachers in NFE, Technical, Vocational, Special Education and Religious Institute**

Teaching Staff	Year 2021-22			Year 2022-23		
	Male/Boys	Female/Girls	Total	Male/Boys	Female/Girls	Total
Teachers in Non Formal (NFBE) Institutes	72	467	539	330	1,347	1,677
Teachers in Technical Education Institutions	71	48	119	73	53	126
Teachers in Vocational Education Institutions	335	128	463	338	131	469
Teachers in Special Education Institutes	26	74	100	8	19	27
Teachers in Deeni Madaris	1,629	763	2,392	3,010	657	3,667



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