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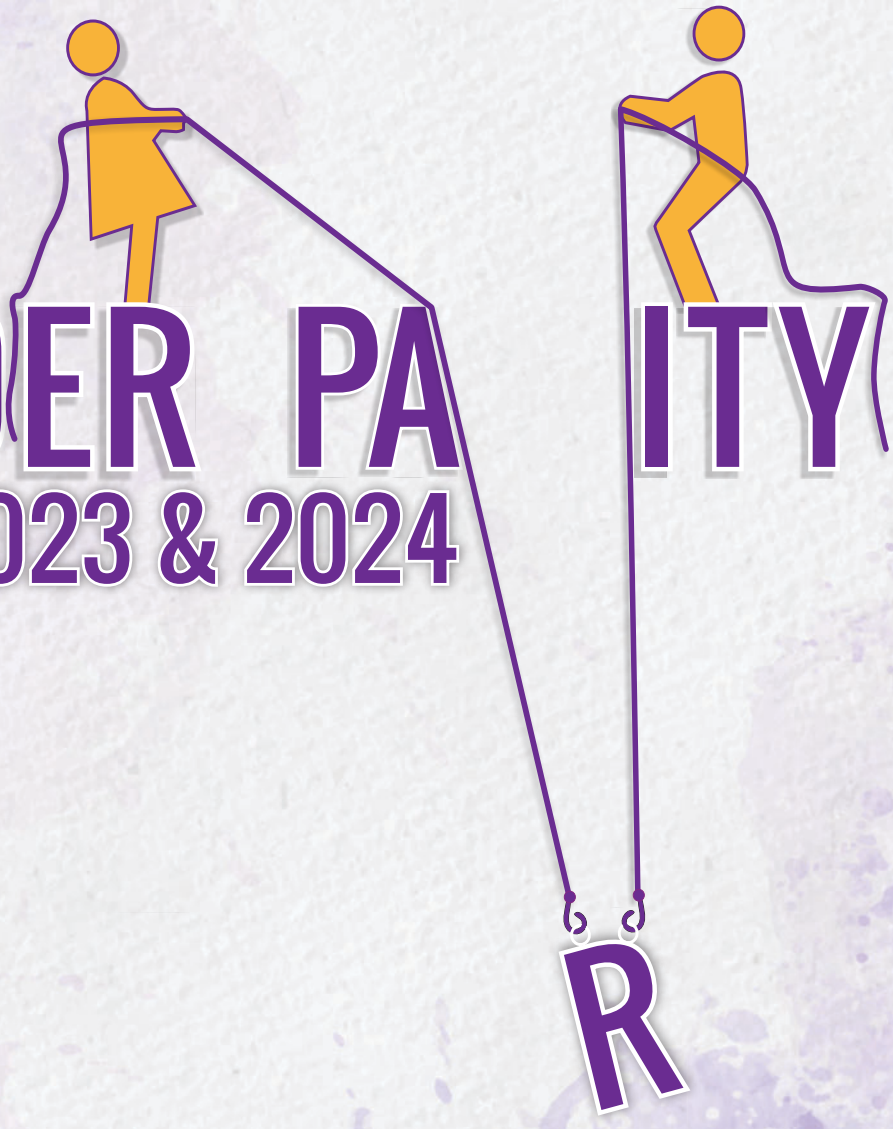
Punjab GENDER PARITY Report 2023 & 2024



PUNJAB COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
WOMEN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Punjab
Gender Parity
Report 2023 & 2024

PUNJAB COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

DISCLAIMER

The Punjab Gender Parity Report 2023 & 2024 is based on official data provided by Government Departments/Bodies, including Federal, Provincial and District-level offices. While the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women has verified data to the fullest extent possible, the responsibility of accuracy lies with the original providers of data.

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PREFACE

Monitoring women's progress is essential to understanding the effectiveness of development efforts and ensuring equitable, inclusive growth outcomes. Regular and systematic assessment of women's social, economic, and legal status enables governments to identify persistent gaps, track improvements over time, and respond through timely, evidence-informed policy actions. In Punjab, where social and economic outcomes vary significantly across districts and population groups, such evidence is particularly critical to ensuring that no woman or girl is left behind.

The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women is mandated to promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and advise public and private institutions on gender-responsive laws, policies, and programmes. As Secretary of the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, I consider this responsibility central to strengthening accountability and advancing gender-responsive governance across the province. In fulfilling this role, the Commission undertakes research, policy analysis, monitoring, and policy engagement to highlight gender disparities and strengthen institutional responses. Over the years, PCSW has produced a wide range of research studies, reports, and policy briefs that inform legislation, planning, and service delivery in Punjab. Among these, the Punjab Gender Parity Report remains the Commission's flagship publication, offering a comprehensive and periodic assessment of gender equality outcomes across the province. Now in its fourth edition, the report reflects PCSW's sustained commitment to consistent measurement and evidence-based policymaking.

PCSW's work is firmly anchored in Pakistan's national priorities and international development commitments. The Commission plays an important role in supporting the implementation and monitoring of national and international frameworks by generating evidence relevant to reporting obligations and policy compliance. Strong emphasis is placed on improving data systems and maintaining methodological consistency across reporting cycles. Indicators included in this report are regularly reviewed and refined through structured consultations with relevant government departments to ensure alignment with sectoral priorities, evolving policy needs, and the most reliable administrative and survey data available. The Punjab Gender Parity Report 2023 & 2024 further strengthens this continuity, providing updated insights at a time when evidence-based planning and targeted investments are increasingly critical.

The policy recommendations presented in this report are grounded in empirical evidence, national policy frameworks, and international best practices. They are intended to support policymakers, planners, legislators, and implementing departments in designing and prioritising targeted interventions to address structural inequalities and emerging challenges. The preparation of the Punjab Gender Parity Report 2023 & 2024 reflects the sustained efforts of PCSW's research, technical, and data teams, working closely with government departments and stakeholders to compile, validate, and analyse data with rigour and consistency. The Commission also acknowledges the continued technical and programmatic support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), whose collaboration has been instrumental in strengthening data systems, methodological rigour, and the overall quality of the report.

Such reports play a vital role in promoting transparency, accountability, and informed policy dialogue. By providing a credible and comprehensive evidence base, they support continuous learning, enable course correction, and contribute to sustained progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. PCSW remains committed to working with government partners, development actors, and civil society to ensure that the findings of this report translate into concrete policy actions and measurable improvements in the lives of women and girls across Punjab.

Ijaz Ahmad Joyia
Secretary
Punjab Commission on
the Status of Women (PCSW)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) extends its sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to the development of the 7th Punjab Gender Parity Report. We are particularly grateful to all federal and provincial departments and institutions of the Government of Punjab and district-level offices. They have consistently continued to respond to our data requests since 2016, providing critical information that has helped shape and strengthen this report.

We are deeply grateful to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its sustained technical and programmatic support to the Punjab Gender Parity Report since 2020. UNFPA's continued commitment and close collaboration have been instrumental in strengthening this flagship evidence product and enabled the preparation and publication of this year's double-feature Punjab Gender Parity Report 2023 & 2024, supporting informed policymaking and efforts to improve the lives of women and girls across the province.

We are also thankful to the Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) for its valuable operational support in the compilation and coordination of this report.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A
Add. IG: Additional Inspector General
ADP: Annual Development Programme
ADPP: Assistant District Public Prosecutor
AG:Accountant General
AHCs: Adolescent Health Centres
AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALP: Alternative and Accelerated Learning Programme
ANC: Antenatal Care
ASP: Assistant Superintendent of Police
ATM: Automated Teller Machine

B
BCG: Bacillus Calmette–Guérin
BDS: Bachelor of Dental Surgery
BECS: Basic Education Community Schools
BHUs: Basic Health Units
BISP: Benazir Income Support Program
BOP: Bank of Punjab

C
CCTP: Conditional cash transfer program
CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CJS: Criminal Justice System
CMSES: Chief Minister's Self Employment Scheme
CMW: Community Midwife
CNIC: Computerized National Identity Card
COE: Centre of Excellence
CPIs: Child Protection Institutes
CPUs: Child Protection Units
CRC: Child Registration Certificate (B-Form)
CRVS: Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
C-section: Caesarean Section
CTD: Counter Terrorism Department
CTP: Cash transfer Programme

D
D&C: Dilation and Curettage
DGHS: Director General Health Services
DHQs: District Headquarters Hospitals
DIG: Deputy Inspector General
DPP: Deputy Public Prosecutor
DPT: Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus Vaccine
DSP: Deputy Superintendent of Police
DWPO: District Women Protection Officer

E
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan
EPI: Expanded Programme on Immunization
EPR: Employment to Population Ratio

F
F/M Ratio: Female-to-Male Ratio
FHCs: Family Health Clinics
FIR: First Information Report
FP: Family Planning
FPTP: First Past the Post
FWCs: Family Welfare Centres

G
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GGGR: The Global Gender Gap Report
GPE: Global Partnership for Education
GPI: Gender Parity Index
GSMA: GSM Association
GSNI: Gender Social Norms Index

H
H&PD: Health and Population Department
HDI: Human Development Index
HepB: Hepatitis B Vaccine
HIV: Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HRCP: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
HTV: Heavy Traffic Vehicle

I
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
IFR: Infant Fatality Rate
IGP: Inspector General of Police
ILO: International Labour Organisation
IMF: International Monetary Fund
IMR: Infant Mortality Rate
IPD: Inpatient Department
IPV: Inactivated Polio Vaccine

J
IUCD: intrauterine contraceptive devices JTW: Junior Traffic Wardens

L
L&NFBED: Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department
LBW: Low Body Weight
LFPR: Labour Force Participation Rate
LFS: Labour Force Survey
LHS: Lady Health Supervisor
LHV: Lady Health Visitor
LHW: Lady Health Worker
LMICs: Low and Middle Income Countries
LTV: Light Traffic Vehicle

M
MAUs: Men's Advisory Units
MBB: Mobile Broadband
MBBS: Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
MCHCs: Maternal and Child Health Centres
MCV: Measles-Containing Vaccine
MICS: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMBS: Multan Metro Bus Service
MMR: Maternal Mortality Ratio
MNA: Member of National Assembly
MPA: Member of Provincial Assembly
MPDD: Management & Professional Development Department
MRV: Mobile Registration Van
MSUs: Mobile Service Units
MVA: Manual Vacuum Aspiration

N
NA: National Assembly
NADRA: National Database and Registration Authority
NCHD: National Commission for Human Development
NCSW: National Commission of the Status of Women
NFBES: Non-Formal Basic Education Schools
NFEFS: Non-Formal Education Feeder Schools
NGO: Non-Government Organisation
NGOs: Non-Governmental

Organisations
NIC: National Incubation Centre
NIH: National Institutes of Health
NPGP: National Poverty Graduation Programme

O

OOP: Out-of-Pocket
OOSC: Out of School Children
OPD: Out-patient Department
OPV: Oral Polio Vaccine

P

PA: Punjab Assembly
PCSW: Punjab Commission on the Status of Women
PCV: Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine
PDHS: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey
PDS: Punjab Development Statistics
PDSCEA: Punjab Daanish Schools and Centers of Excellence Authority
PEF: Punjab Education Foundation
Penta: Pentavalent Vaccine
PESSI: Punjab Employees Social Security Institution
PFA: Punjab Food Authority
PFSA: Punjab Forensic Science Agency
PGDP: Punjab Green Development Program
PGPR: Punjab Gender Parity Report
PHC: Punjab Healthcare Commission
PHC: Population and Housing Census
PIMH: Punjab Institute of Mental Health
PKR: Pakistani Rupee
PLRA: Punjab Land Record Authority
PMDC: Pakistan Medical and Dental Council
PNC: Postnatal Care
PNFEP: Punjab Non-Formal Education Project
PP: Public Prosecutor
PPFP: Postpartum Family Planning
PPIC-3: Punjab Police Integrated Command, Control & Communication Centres
PPSC: Punjab Public Service Commission
PR: Proportional Representation
PSCA: Punjab Safe Cities Authority
PSDF: Punjab Skill Development Fund
PSDP: Public Sector Development Programme
PSER: Punjab Social Protection and Economic Revitalization Program
PSIC: Punjab Small Industries Corporation
PSPA: Punjab Social Protection Authority
PSV: Public Service Vehicle
PTA: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority
PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PVTC: Punjab Vocational Training Council
PWD: Person(s) With Disability
PWDs: Persons with Disabilities
PWPA: Punjab Women Protection Authority

R

RHCs: Rural Health Centres
RTI: Right to Information

S

S&GAD: Service & General Administration Department
SAAS: Software as a Service
SBP: State Bank of Pakistan
SCR: Student-to-Classroom Ratio
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
SECP: Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan
SIM: Subscriber Identity Module
SMEDA: Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
SPIU: Strategic Planning & Implementation Unit
SPP: Senior Public Prosecutor
SPU: Special Protection Unit
SRH: Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRU: Strategic Reforms Unit
SSP: Sehat Sahulat Program
SSP: Senior Superintendent of Police
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI: sexually transmitted infections
SToR: Student-to-Toilet Ratio
STR: Student-to-Teacher Ratio
STW: Senior Traffic Wardens
SW&BM: Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal Department

T

TB: Tuberculosis
TDCP: Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab
TEVTA: Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority
THQs: Tehsil Headquarters Hospitals
TSKL: Taleem Sab Kay Liay
TTV: Tetanus Toxoid Vaccination
TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVF: Technology-facilitated Violence
TW: Traffic Wardens

U

UHC: Universal Health Coverage
UIPT: Urban Immovable Property Tax
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

V

VAW: Violence Against Women
VCCS: Virtual Center for Child Safety
VWPS: Virtual Women Police Stations

W

WB: World Bank Group
WBL: Women Business and Law
WDC: Women Development Centres
WDD: Women Development Department
WEF: World Economic Forum
WHO: World health organization
WPO: Women Protection Officer

Z

ZTBL: Zarai Taraqiati bank Limited

MESSAGES



Maryam Nawaz
Chief Minister, Punjab

The progress and prosperity of our country are closely connected to the empowerment, dignity, and full participation of women. A society cannot advance if half of its population faces structural barriers, limited access to opportunities, or social exclusion. We are committed to transforming this reality by placing gender equality at the centre of governance, policy formulation, and service delivery. This commitment is reflected in several important government initiatives. Targeted social protection programs, along with investments in girls' education, digital literacy, and technical and vocational training, are equipping young women with skills relevant to a modern economy. Reforms in the health sector focus on maternal health, nutrition, and reproductive care. While legal and institutional measures address gender-based violence, discrimination, and women's leadership in governance.

The Punjab Gender Parity Report supports our reform agenda through rigorous, evidence-based analysis of gender disparities. By identifying gaps and tracking progress, it enables targeted interventions, better resource allocation, and institutional accountability. The report establishes a credible baseline for measuring progress and promotes transparency and informed public discourse. It serves both as a reflection of ongoing efforts and a roadmap for accelerated action to advance dignity, security, and equal opportunity for women and girls in Punjab.

I commend the Women Development Department and the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women for their outstanding work in producing this report.



Zahid Akhtar Zaman

Chief Secretary, Punjab

The Government of Punjab reaffirms its commitment to advancing gender equality as a fundamental pillar of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. Ensuring women's meaningful participation across the economic, social, and governance spheres remains central to the province's development agenda. The Government continues to implement targeted reforms and initiatives to address structural barriers and expand opportunities for women across Punjab.

The PGPR 2023 & 2024 provides a robust evidence base to inform policy formulation, program design, and performance monitoring. Through comprehensive sector-wise analysis, the report identifies gaps, tracks progress, and supports gender-responsive planning across government departments. PGPR also highlights key legal, social, and economic challenges faced by women and reinforces the need for gender-sensitive policies to achieve balanced development outcomes. Its recommendations will support alignment with national priorities and global gender parity benchmarks.

I commend the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) and the Women Development Department for their efforts in compiling and analysing gender-disaggregated data. I am confident that this report will strengthen evidence-based decision-making and further advance women's empowerment in Punjab.



Sadia Temur

Parliamentary Secretary, Punjab

Women's economic empowerment lies at the heart of sustainable development. A thriving Punjab requires an economy in which women are not only active participants, but also innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders driving growth across sectors. Across the province, women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to household incomes, job creation, and local economies while continuing to navigate structural barriers, including limited access to finance, skills, technology, networks, and formal markets.

The Women Development Department's initiatives focus on strengthening women's entrepreneurial capacity through skills development, expanded financial inclusion, and stronger linkages with public and private sector platforms. Special emphasis has been placed on supporting women-led micro, small, and home-based enterprises, particularly in underserved and rural areas. Equally important is the integration of women into emerging economic sectors, including digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce, creative industries, and value-added agriculture.

The Women Development Department views the Punjab Gender Parity Report not merely as a research exercise but as a vital tool to inform policy, mobilise stakeholders, and unlock the economic potential of women across Punjab. By aligning data, policy, and implementation, we can move closer to an economy where women entrepreneurs are fully supported, fairly represented, and adequately rewarded for their contributions.



Usman Ali Khan

Secretary, Women Development Department, Punjab

The Women Development Department is mandated to promote gender equality and advance women's empowerment through inclusive policies, institutional coordination, and targeted interventions. A central element of WDD's work is close collaboration with public institutions, the private sector, and implementing partners. The Department implements a range of initiatives to equip women with skills and training, expand employment opportunities, and provide business support and access to financial services. Advancing gender equality remains central to the Department's mandate and to the Government of Punjab's broader development vision.

Over the years, the Punjab Gender Parity Report has served as a key resource for policymakers, supporting evidence-based policy formulation and enabling stakeholders to design targeted interventions. The initiatives documented in the report offer insight into both progress achieved and challenges that remain. By monitoring gender outcomes over time, the report strengthens accountability and supports assessment of policy effectiveness across sectors.

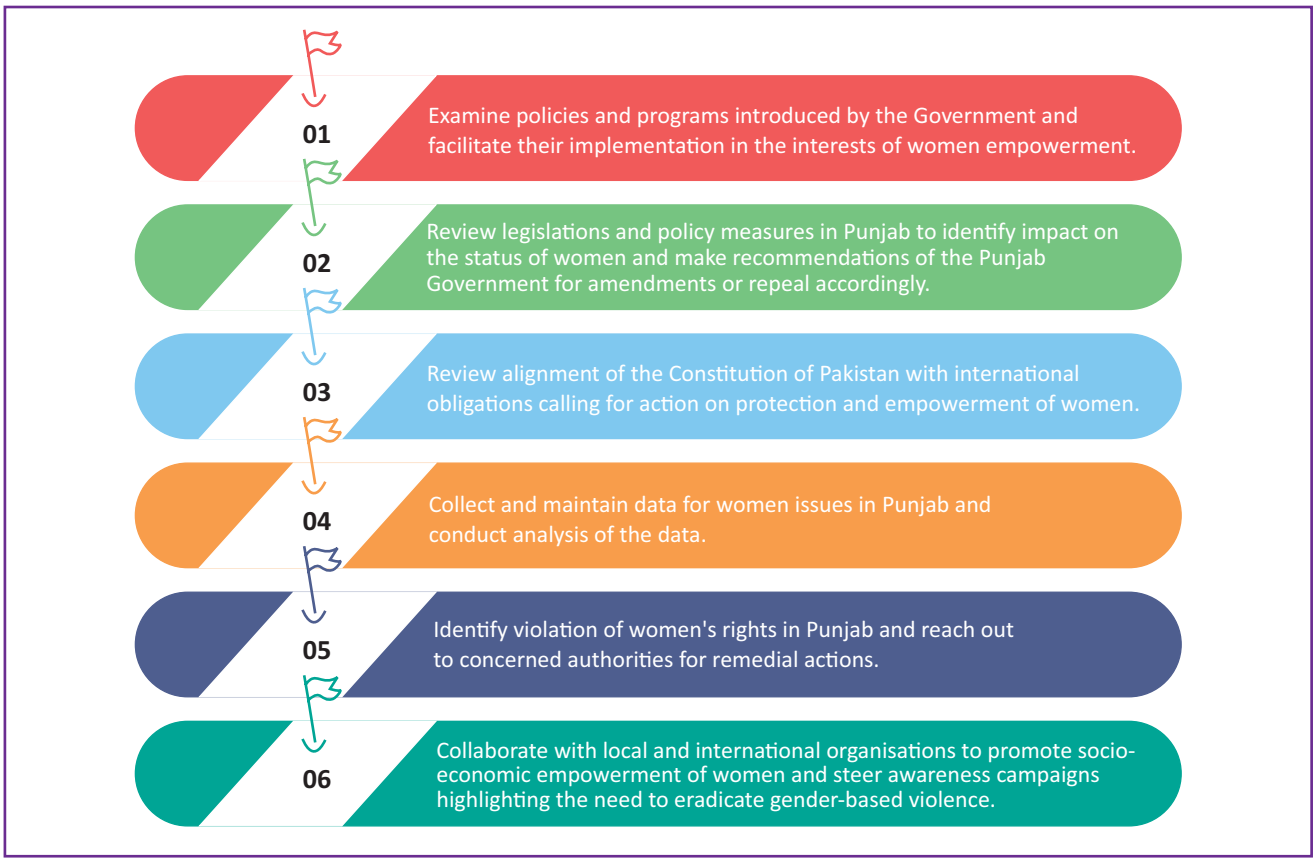
The preparation of PGPR 2023 & 2024 has been a rigorous and collaborative effort. I acknowledge the dedicated contributions of PCSW, GMIS, and all teams involved in compiling, validating, and analysing the data. I also thank UNFPA for its valuable technical and programmatic support in publishing this report. The Women Development Department looks forward to continued collaboration with all stakeholders to advance the shared goal of gender equality in Punjab.

INTRODUCTION TO PCSW

The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) was set up by the Punjab Assembly in 2014 under the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2014. The Commission is intended to contribute to women's empowerment through identification of socio-economic obstacles that hamper gender equality and addressing gender-based violence with policy initiatives and active campaigning.

It envisions the women in Punjab as equal, empowered and prosperous citizens and welcomes Government initiatives to uplift women in all spheres of life.

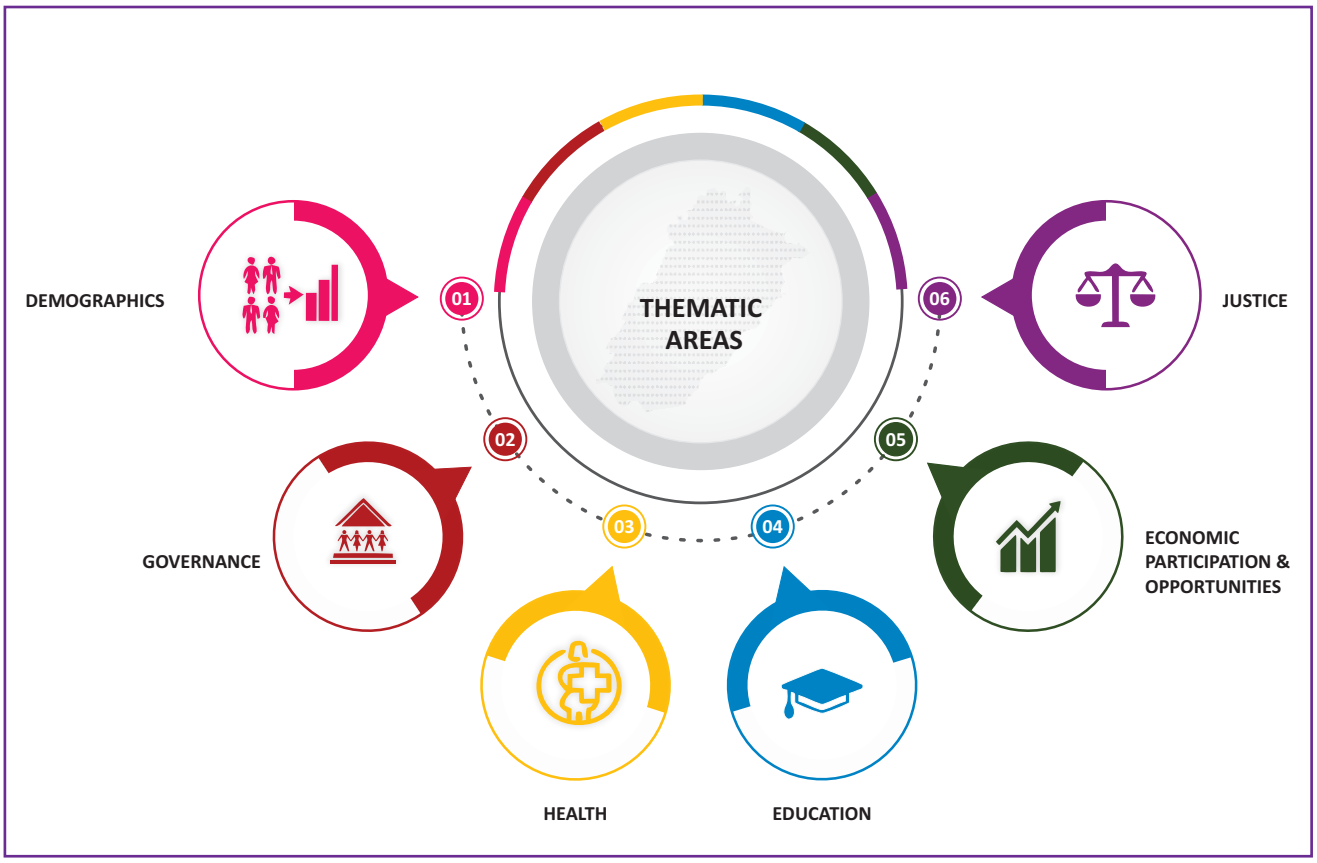
Under the PCSW Act, the Commission has the mandate to:



Since it was founded in 2014, the Commission has undertaken several projects for women empowerment and protection against violence. The Punjab Women's Toll-Free Helpline 1043 was set up under PCSW in 2014 to cater to women in distress. Women can call on the helpline 24/7 to inquire about their rights, lodge complaints (harassment, property related, etc.) and to receive psycho-social counselling. In 2016, PCSW launched the first Punjab Gender Parity Report. Successively, six subsequent PGPR editions have been published, with 7th edition (PGPR 2023 & 2024) being the latest.

PCSW has also successfully maintained the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) which is a database of gender disaggregated data against more than 300 indicators across 6 thematic areas; demographics, governance, health, education, economic participation, and justice. Data from GMIS is regularly collected, digitized and updated for use by policy- makers, academia, media persons, and the general public.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



DEMOGRAPHICS

The Population and Housing Census (PHC) 2023 records Punjab's population at 127.7 million, residing in 19.9 million households, with an average household size of 6.4 persons. Men constitute 51.3 percent of the population, women 48.7 percent, and transgender persons a very small proportion. The observed sex ratio of 95 women per 100 men, while broadly consistent with previous counts, warrants careful interpretation given known demographic, social, and enumeration challenges.

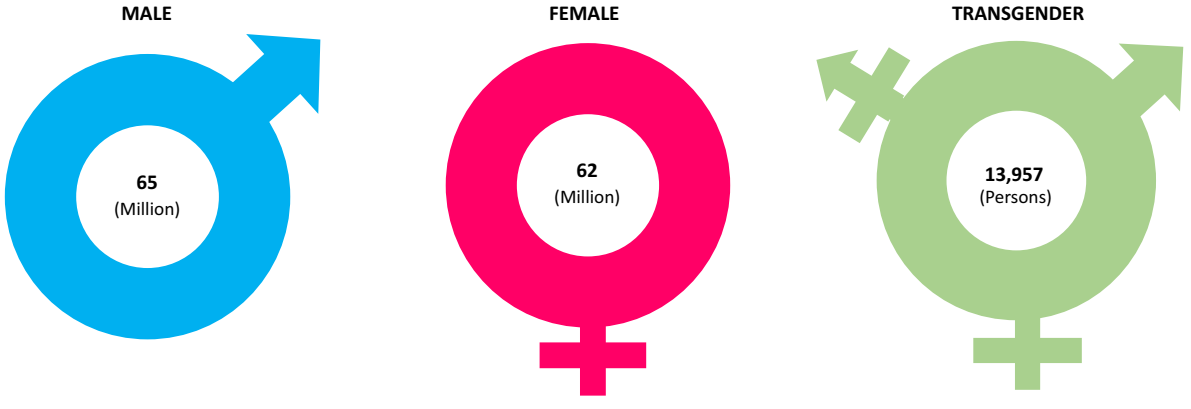
Punjab's age structure continues to reflect both dependency pressures and demographic opportunity, with 38 percent of the population under 15 years and 58 percent in the working-age group. Marriage remains the predominant marital status, alongside rising marriage and divorce registrations, which point to improved civil registration coverage and evolving household dynamics.

Data on disability reveal a notable gap between officially recorded disability and reported functional limitations, suggesting that a larger share of the population experiences constraints not fully captured in administrative classifications.

Persistent gender disparities remain evident across key structural indicators. Women's lower CNIC coverage, at 48 percent of valid cards compared to 52 percent for men, alongside limited asset ownership, where women account for just 4.2 percent of residential property owners, points to interlinked forms of economic exclusion and administrative invisibility.

Migration patterns further suggest differentiated gendered impacts, with rural women facing increased care responsibilities due to male out-migration, while urban women remain concentrated in insecure informal employment. Taken together, these findings reinforce the need for timely, gender-disaggregated demographic and administrative data to support targeted policy responses and advance progress towards gender parity in Punjab.

Population of Punjab (2023)



Source: Population & Housing Census, 2023

GOVERNANCE

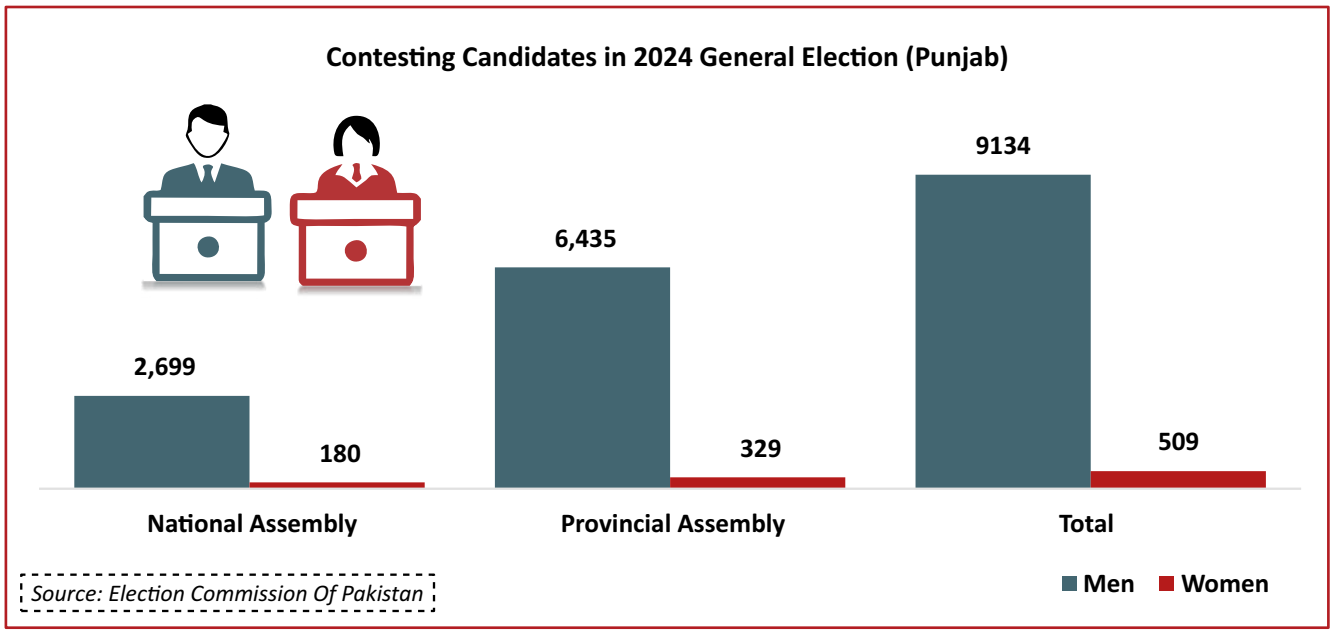
The governance and public sector findings point to persistent gender imbalances in political representation, electoral participation, legislative engagement, and public employment in Punjab and Pakistan. Women remain significantly underrepresented across legislative bodies. In the Senate, women account for 18 percent of members, while representation in the National Assembly remains limited, with only 12 women elected on general seats. In the Punjab Provincial Assembly, women comprise 21 percent of total members, yet their presence on general seats remains minimal, at around 3 percent.

Electoral participation data from the 2024 general elections further reflect gender gaps in civic engagement. Of the 37.3 million votes cast in Punjab, women accounted for 43 percent of ballots, and female voter turnout at 47 percent continued to lag behind male turnout at 55 percent, pointing to ongoing barriers in women's participation in electoral processes.

Public sector employment patterns reveal clear occupational segregation. Women constitute about 30 percent of employees in departments reporting to the AG Office and are largely concentrated in Health, Education, and Population Welfare, while most other departments continue to show limited female representation. Legislative activity within the Punjab Assembly also reflects gender disparities. In 2024, all 19 bills were introduced by men, and women contributed less than one-quarter of resolutions, indicating constrained influence over legislative agendas.

Recruitment data from the PPSC suggest a more positive trend, with women accounting for around 60 percent of selected candidates in 2023 and 2024. However, these gains remain concentrated in traditionally female-dominated sectors, reinforcing long-standing gendered patterns in public sector career pathways.

Taken together, these findings highlight structural constraints on women's political leadership, legislative agency, and participation in public administration, underscoring the need for targeted reforms to advance gender parity in governance and the public sector.



HEALTH

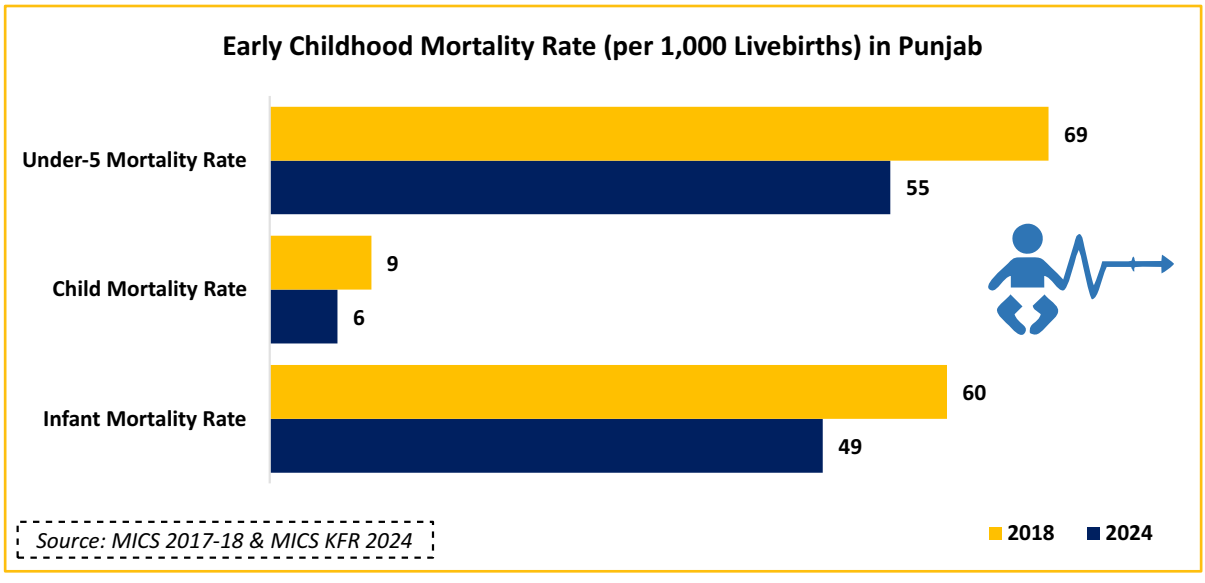
The health sector of Punjab reflects a complex interplay of improving access and utilisation of services and persistent structural inequities that continue to shape health outcomes across the province. There were around 8,195 public health facilities in Punjab, including 'clinics on wheels'. Despite this extensive infrastructure, overall utilisation patterns show mixed trends, with a decline in OPD visits alongside sustained demand for inpatient and maternal health services.

The private health sector also expanded rapidly, as evidenced by the 54 percent increase in registered healthcare facilities between 2023 and 2024. Concurrently, Punjab recorded a steady increase in registered doctors, with women comprising a higher proportion within the MBBS and BDS workforce; however, gender gaps persist at the specialisation level, reflecting ongoing vertical segregation within the health profession.

Analysis of RMNCH indicators indicates declining continuity of care in maternal health services. Completion of four antenatal care visits remained low, with fewer than half of pregnant women completing all four visits, while anaemia among pregnant women continued to be widespread. Tetanus toxoid vaccination coverage also declined in line with reduced facility utilisation. In contrast, postnatal care coverage remained relatively high, supported by follow-up visits, and family planning utilisation increased.

Child and newborn health outcomes showed improvement, with reductions in premature births, low birth weight, neonatal mortality, and under-five mortality. Nutrition analysis indicated higher levels of malnutrition among boys than girls, while immunisation coverage faced ongoing challenges due to dropout between doses.

The burden of non-communicable and communicable diseases continued to rise. Cancer cases increased notably, with women accounting for a higher share of diagnoses, while reported AIDS cases increased sharply between 2023 and 2024, particularly in urban areas. Although Punjab has improved in many health indicators, significant gender disparities still persist in access, utilization, and outcomes. Strengthening primary healthcare, improving continuity of care, addressing gender gaps within the health workforce, and institutionalising gender-responsive planning and data systems remain critical to advancing health equity and gender parity in the province.



EDUCATION

Education equips individuals with essential knowledge and skills, enabling them to participate productively in society. It is recognised as a fundamental right globally and is constitutionally guaranteed in Pakistan for all children between the ages of 6 and 16.

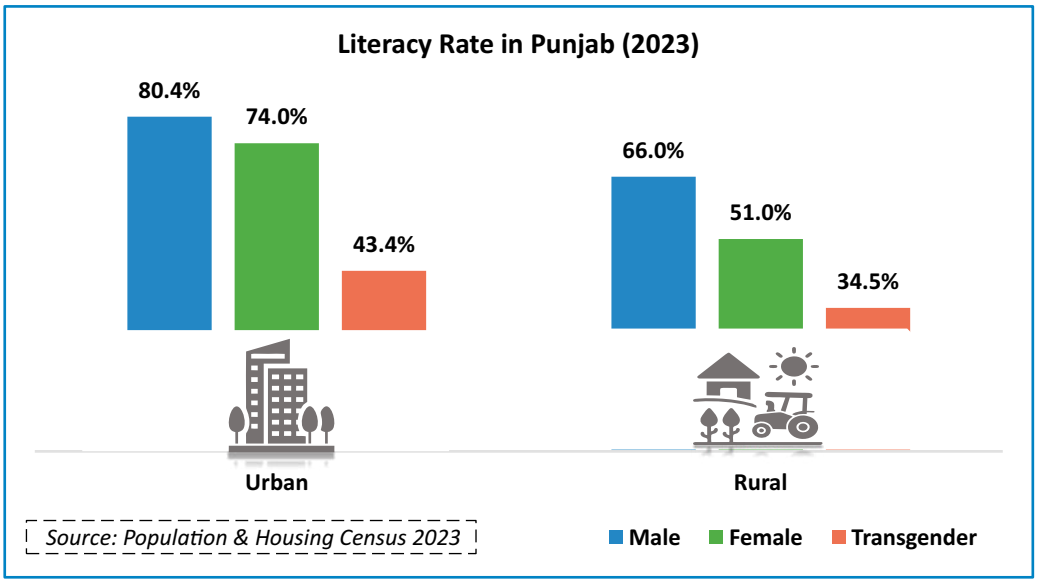
The state of education in Punjab shows a literacy rate of 66.3 percent, according to the Population and Housing Census 2023. Men's literacy stands at 72.0 percent, compared to 60.2 percent among women and 41.3 percent among transgender persons. While Punjab performs better than national averages across gender and area, significant gender gaps persist within the province, in both urban and rural contexts.

Data from the Punjab Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2024 show declining school attendance as children progress through the education system, from 66.7 percent at primary level to 47.5 percent at lower secondary and 35.4 percent at upper secondary levels, pointing to substantial attrition over the schooling cycle.

Women and girls remain disproportionately represented among under-schooled populations. Of the 72.3 million people in Punjab who have ever attended school, 40.0 million are men and 32.3 million are women. Conversely, among the 36.7 million who have never attended school, women account for a larger share than men, underscoring persistent gender disparities in educational access.

In 2023, Punjab had 48,473 formal public schools, including 22,935 boys' schools and 25,538 girls' schools. In 2024, the total number declined by 11.6 percent to 42,862 schools, with the reduction affecting mainly primary-level institutions. Enrolment trends during this period favoured girls: while overall enrolment declined by 12.0 percent, boys' enrolment fell more sharply than girls', narrowing gender gaps in formal schooling participation.

STEM education in Punjab remains male-dominated at the enrolment stage. In 2023, male enrolment in STEM programmes exceeded that of women and transgender students, a pattern that persisted in 2024 despite rising male enrolment and declining female participation. However, women continue to outperform men in STEM graduation outcomes, with a higher proportion of female graduates, particularly at public-sector universities.



ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND OPPORTUNITIES

The persistent gender gap in economic participation and opportunities continues to widen socio-economic disparities and poverty in Punjab. Analysis of economic and social indicators highlights wide-ranging gender disparities across labour markets, asset ownership, mobility, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion.

Labour force and employment data reveal significant gender gaps at multiple levels. While women constitute a comparable share of the working-age population, their employment participation remains substantially lower than men's. Although gender parity appears higher in rural employment, a large proportion of rural women are engaged as unpaid family workers in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

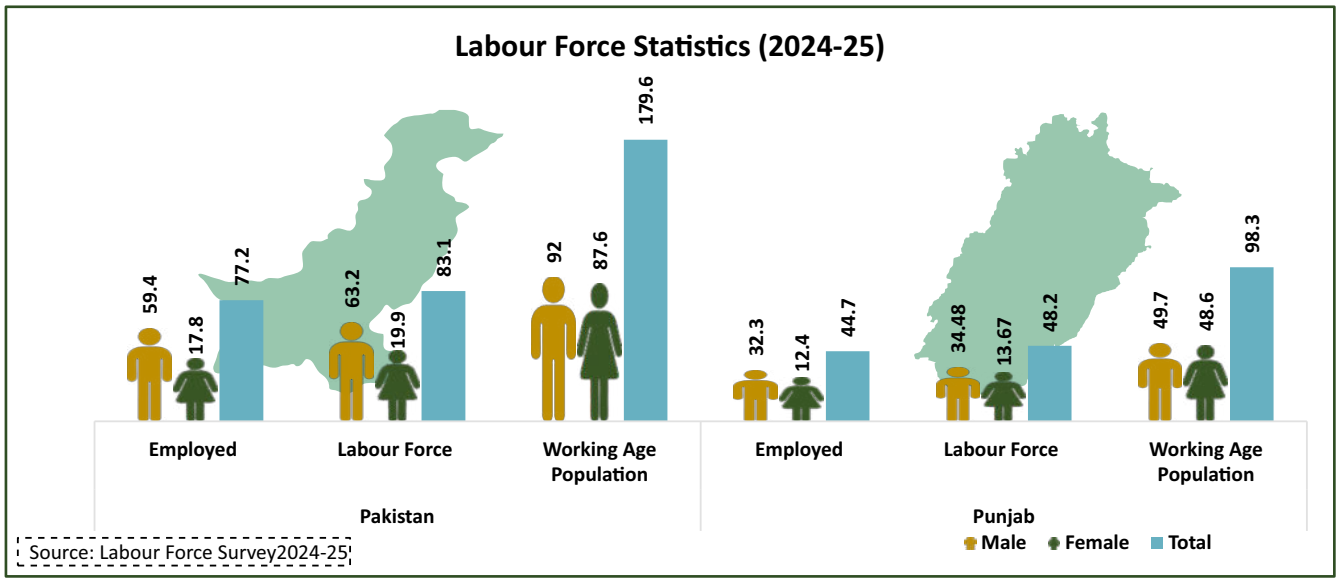
Women's Labour Force Participation Rate remains critically low at 28.1 percent and has shown little improvement over the past decade, while unemployment and underemployment rates continue to be higher for women. Labour migration remains overwhelmingly male-dominated, with women accounting for only 2.6 percent of emigrants, reflecting limited access to mobility and overseas employment opportunities.

Gender gaps are also evident in business ownership and entrepreneurship. Women comprise just 14.2 percent of shareholders and remain underrepresented in entrepreneurship support initiatives, including National Incubation Centres. Ownership of productive assets such as housing, land, vehicles, and property remains heavily concentrated among men. Female house ownership stands at only 4 percent, and women's average landholding is nearly six times smaller than that of men. Mobility constraints persist, with women holding only 1.6 percent of vehicle registrations and 2 percent of driving licences.

Financial inclusion shows mixed progress. While the number of female bank account holders has increased to 10.8 million, significant gender gaps persist, particularly in branchless banking and access to agricultural credit. Women remain underrepresented among borrowers of agricultural financial institutions such as ZTBL, though they account for a comparatively higher share of microfinance borrowers at 45 percent.

In agriculture, only 1.05 percent of households are headed by women, despite Punjab being the largest agricultural province. Gender disparities also extend to sports-related employment, where women account for just 26 percent of coaches, with several sports reporting no female representation.

Overall, the findings point to structural and institutional barriers that continue to constrain women's participation, mobility, asset ownership, and economic empowerment across Punjab.



Source: Labour Force Survey2024-25

JUSTICE

Access to justice is fundamental for human rights, safeguarding dignity and promoting gender equality. It allows individuals to live free from fear, discrimination, and interference. Yet, gender inequalities, violence, and institutional barriers still limit women's access to justice in Punjab. IG Police data show that reported GBV cases increased by 20.92 percent, rising from 28,721 cases in 2023 to 34,702 cases in 2024.

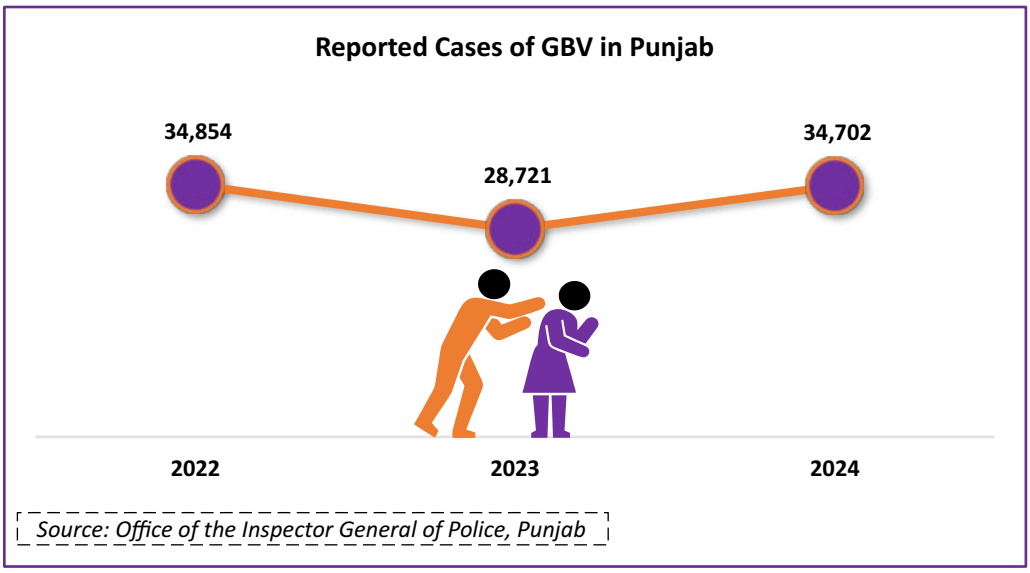
Reported patterns of violence point to sustained justice challenges. Kidnapping remains one of the most frequently reported crimes, increasing from 19,898 cases in 2023 to 24,225 cases in 2024. Among sexual violence cases, rape continues to be the most reported offence, followed by gang rape and incest, while reported domestic violence cases also increased during the period.

The expansion of reporting mechanisms has strengthened access points to justice. Digital reporting platforms and emergency response services have improved outreach, with the Punjab Safe City Authority recording over 235,000 GBV-related cases through virtual women police stations. Rescue 1122 also reported an increase in crime-related emergency cases, indicating greater reliance on first-response services. The Punjab Women Protection Helpline (1737), launched in 2024, registered approximately 1,300 GBV cases in its first year, reinforcing institutional support for survivors.

Despite improved reporting, justice delivery outcomes remain limited. Conviction rates declined from 5.49 percent in 2023 to 4.88 percent in 2024, highlighting a persistent gap between reporting and accountability. Gender imbalances within law enforcement and the judiciary further weaken responsiveness. In 2025, women comprised only 3 percent of senior-ranked police officers, while among the judiciary, just 18.53 percent of judges were women. Limited female representation reduces institutional sensitivity and undermines public trust.

Structural pressures continue to strain the justice system. Punjab's prisons remain severely overcrowded, with 70,069 inmates held against an authorised capacity of 38,214. At the same time, rising cases of workplace harassment and increased enrolment in Child Protection Institutes point to growing demand for justice and protection mechanisms.

Improving women's access to justice requires more than just expanding reporting; it needs institutional reform. Digital platforms help, but progress depends on better conviction rates, closing gender gaps, reducing delays, and prioritising survivor-centred justice. Enhanced access protects women's rights, upholds the rule of law, and promotes social cohesion in Punjab.



SECTION 01

01 INTRODUCTION

Overview

The concept of an egalitarian society, wherein everyone is equal in terms of status, opportunities and overall well-being, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, including gender, is a widely held ideal across the globe. Over the past century, many countries have pursued their ambitions to achieve an equitable and just world through international commitments, agreements, and treaties.

Among the most prominent of these is the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which has led to a measurable improvement in gender equality outcomes in education[1] as well as women's social, political, and legal rights.[2]

However, the continued success of CEDAW, or indeed its limitations in achieving positive change for women, relies heavily on countries' ratification and implementation of the treaty's core provisions, without reservations.[3]

A key focus of the international community's efforts on equality is gender parity; that is, achieving justice and equity, ensuring equal access to opportunities to live a fulfilling and happy life. The near-universal adoption of this goal has many underlying reasons, one of them being the nexus between gender parity and sustainable development. The interconnected nature of economic well-being and greater gender parity is also recognised by the international development agenda, as evidenced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs acknowledge the multidimensional nature of poverty and of the need to eradicate it. SDG 5 is dedicated to achieving "Gender equality and women's empowerment" globally.[4] Its targets encompass the various aspects of women's well-being, ranging from the elimination of discrimination, violence and harmful practices against women, to increased inclusion in politics and employment, with better access to healthcare and justice.

For a developing country like Pakistan, SDG 5 is particularly relevant. Despite sustained national and international commitments to gender equality, Pakistan continues to face persistent gender gaps across education, labour force participation, political representation, health outcomes, and access to justice. Punjab, which constitutes over half of Pakistan's population and economic output, plays a decisive role in shaping national gender outcomes. Progress, or lack thereof, in Punjab thus has direct implications for Pakistan's overall performance on gender equality and inclusive development.

1.1 Gender Parity and Development

Gender parity, in principle, is ethically crucial as it is a matter of fairness and justice, both of which are important for a society to thrive. However, there is now also a growing body of scholarly evidence on another key consequence of reducing gender-based inequalities: the link between gender parity and development.

This evidence generally points to a positive link, including in Asian countries such as Pakistan, whereby increasing gender parity in primary education, political participation, and employment, particularly in the service sector, increases GDP per capita.[5] Gender equality in general is considered favourable for economic growth,[6] as economic and gender inequalities are mutually reinforcing.[7]

Given its social, economic and ethical importance, gender parity must be at the forefront of the development agenda of Pakistan, where gender gaps exist despite the country's international commitments and constitutional guarantees to eradicate them.

The nature of these gaps ranges from structural issues, including significant gender gaps in employment and labour force participation compounded by unpaid domestic work and unequal access to education, to socio-legal challenges, such as poor access to health services and limited justice for gender-based crimes, and finally to political barriers, where women's representation in government remains low.

The reasons for the persistence of gaps range from weak enforcement of existing laws, rules, and regulations to unchanging social norms. It is, therefore, vital that conscious and active efforts be made to surface the gaps between men and women in society so that the transparency of these disparities leads to action. In Punjab, these challenges are

1 (Gevrek & Guner, 2023)
2 (Englehart & Miller, 2014)
3 (Kreutzer & Mitchell, 2024)
4 (United Nations, n.d.)
5 (Pervaiz, Akram, Jan, & Chaudhary, 2023)
6 (Mishra, Mishra, & Sarangi, 2020)
7 (Bennet, 2024)

further shaped by intra-provincial disparities between urban and rural districts, making district-level analysis essential for targeted policy interventions.



Figure 1.1

1.2 Role of Policies, Budgeting, and Gender Disaggregated Data

Government institutions and policies are crucial in reducing gender gaps when they are gender-sensitive. Scholarly evidence suggests that for gender parity to be realised, there needs to be a marked effort to make policies and legislations that effectively bridge gaps between genders, as well as giving leeway to official authorities/government bodies to enforce these policies.[8]

This requires policies and legislations to systematically take into account the different ways in which gender shapes individuals' roles, responsibilities, and access to resources in everyday life. When effectively implemented, gender-sensitive measures, such as paid maternity and paternity leave, childcare-related tax benefits, and family-friendly workplace policies, can help reduce structural inequalities between women and men.[9] Gender-responsive budgeting further strengthens these efforts by ensuring that public resources are planned, allocated, and monitored to address gender-specific needs and gaps.[10]

In Punjab, the effectiveness of gender-responsive policies depends heavily on implementation and capacity. Provincial government departments, autonomous and statutory bodies such as the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), and, local governments play a critical role in shaping service-delivery outcomes for women and girls. Strengthening these institutions through adequate resources, technical capacity, and gender-responsive planning tools is essential for translating policy commitments into tangible outcomes. In addition to the above, one of the most important parts of enacting policy initiatives to improve gender parity is the availability and monitoring of gender-disaggregated data.[11] [12]

8 (Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019)
9 (Parejo & Radulović , 2023)
10 (Blankenship & Kubicek, 2018)
11 (Ferrant & Nowacka, 2015)
12 (Moyo & Dhliwayo, 2019)

The availability and use of disaggregated data which provide detailed gendered statistics are central to advancing gender parity in society. By using distinct data points for men, women and transgender persons in policymaking, it is possible to:

1. Identify gender disparities, tailoring interventions to address them;
2. Assist well-informed decision-making by government officials;
3. Measure progress against any set targets and to also measure the impact of initiatives;
4. More efficiently allocate government resources;
5. Maintain transparency and accountability of various stakeholders by actively monitoring their progress against their commitments; and,
6. Advance social discourse on empowerment and gender justice.

Punjab has witnessed gradual improvements in the availability of administrative and survey-based gender-disaggregated data, creating new opportunities for evidence-based policymaking. However, the transparency of this data, such that it can be shared for independent analysis or monitoring as in the PGPR, remains lacking. This lack of transparency and data sharing limits independent monitoring and also prevents any new opportunities for evidence-based policymaking in Punjab. Areas where these evidence-based policies are most needed right now include, but are not limited to:

- Improving digital access and literacy for women and girls;
- Climate change resilience that takes into account the vulnerability of women and girls;
- Informal employment and the burden of unpaid care work.

Additionally, autonomous statutory entities such as the PCSW should have official direct access to every major management information system (MIS) within the Government of Punjab.

1.3 Issue in Focus: Gender Digital Divide

A great deal of research in the area of gender equality over the past decades has focused on matters connected to women's participation in the economic sphere.[13] The idea has been to highlight the utilitarian nature of advancing women's welfare as women's advancement results in the advancement of the economy.

However, pursuing gender justice as a means to an end has the potential to overshadow, and perhaps arguably, even undermine efforts in making a more gender-just society.[14] Additionally, it should also be noted that gender equality and parity have intrinsic social and ethical value[15] and should, therefore, be pursued on those merits alone.

Consequently, the Punjab Gender Parity Report (PGPR) 2023 & 2024 focuses on a very important issue: the gender digital gap. This issue is a prime example of why gender parity must be an end in its own right. It is a core part of current efforts towards sustainable development, and thus vital to any discussion of gendered justice and development.

13 (Belingheri, Chiarello, Colladon, & Rovelli, 2021)
14 (Bekana, 2019)
15 (Razavi, 2017)

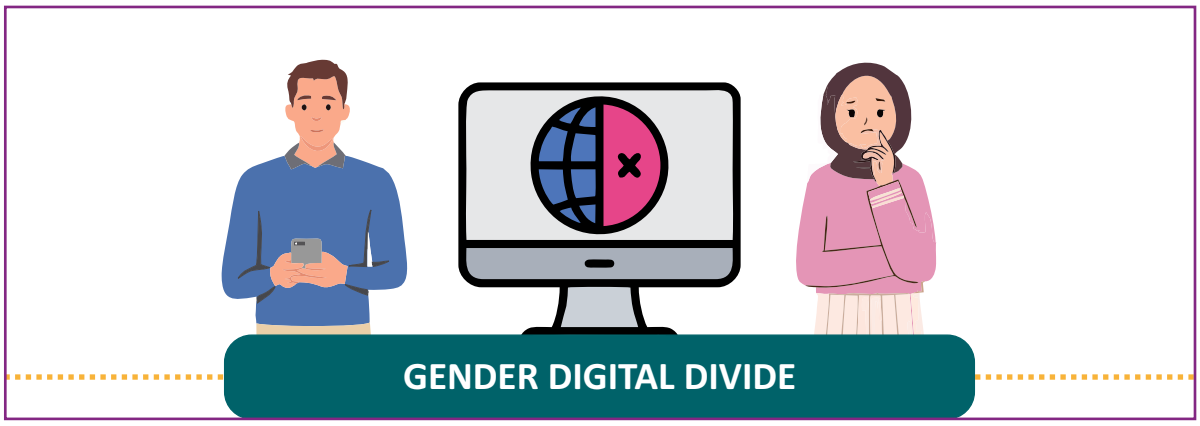


Figure 1.2

What is the Gender Digital Divide?

Over the past 30 years, the world has moved towards a greater use of technology and global connectivity, making digital inclusion an important aspect of modern life. Digital inclusion refers to a person's unrestricted access and ability, i.e. skill, to use information communication technologies (ICTs).[16] Such use of ICTs is an essential part of life in the digital age as it enables people to fully participate in modern society. It is also a key to ensure sustainable development.[17]

However, due to underlying socioeconomic disparities in developing countries like Pakistan, both the access and use of ICTs remain very unequal.[18] [19] This disparity between genders in digital inclusion is referred to as the Gender Digital Divide, whereby women have less access to ICT and also do not have the same level of skills in using them, when compared to men.

When speaking of the gender digital divide, the two ICTs that are most frequently focused on are the internet and mobile phones, as these are the most fundamental and immediate ICTs in the 21st century. In the developing world, there are significant gaps in between men and women in terms of their use of and even access to these ICTs.[20]

According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), around 90 percent of girls and women aged 15-24 around the world, do not use the internet; this is much higher than their male counterparts, of whom 78 percent do not use the internet.[21] For mobile phones, women in low and middle-income countries are eight percent less likely than men to have a cell phone, 14 percent less likely to own a smartphone and 14 percent less likely to use mobile internet.[22]

In the case of both ICTs, the South Asian region has one of highest recorded gender digital divides. Around 67 percent of the male population in the region has access to the internet, compared to just 40 percent of females.[23] For cell phones, women in South Asia are 18 percent less likely than men to own a cell phone, 40 percent less likely than men to own a smartphone and 32 percent less likely than men to use mobile internet.[24]

Notably, Pakistan has made great overall gains in mobile connectivity for women, [25] [26] but further progress seems to have stalled, just like in much of the remaining developing world.[27] In the case of the province of Punjab, female youth are 42 percent less likely than male youth to have digital skills, while women are 58 percent less likely than men to own a mobile phone.[28]

Due to this gender digital divide, and its implications for sustainable development, closing it and fostering gender digital inclusion is now also part of the global development agenda. As part of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), target 4.4 is tracked by the indicator "Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT)

16 (Acilar & Saebo, 2023)
17 (David & Phillips, 2022)
18 (UNICEF, 2023)
19 (Mathrani, Umer, Sarvesh, & Adhikari, 2023)
20 (Acilar & Saebo, 2023)
21 (UNICEF, 2023)
22 (GSMA, 2025)
23 (UNICEF, 2023)
24 (GSMA, 2025)
25 Ibid
26 (The Economist, 2022)
27 (GSMA, 2025)
28 (UNICEF, 2023)

skills."[29] This highlights the importance of improving digital skills for all genders in the developing world, integrating it into the subject of education (which is the overall focus of Goal 4).

The Implications of the Gender Digital Divide

The unequal use of the internet and mobile phones in modern times means women end up being excluded from the many transformational benefits of technology that they might otherwise enjoy.[30] They are unable to be fully independent individuals, unable to experience a complete sense of agency, and are also deprived of key opportunities.[31] Women's employment, and thus their economic participation, also suffers due to the digital divide.[32]

In theory, working remotely, especially in countries like Pakistan where women face obstacles in working outside the home, should be a boon for women's economic participation. However, if a woman does not have a mobile phone or laptop of her own and also access to the internet, she cannot, for example, search for and apply to jobs, much less work remotely. Remote work also becomes challenging for women if she has responsibilities at home[33] due to the time she has to allocate to unpaid care work at home.[34] Similarly, the lack of sufficient time and access to the internet or a computer can also impede women's education.

The above obstacles in employment and education are especially pertinent in a post-COVID-19 world, which widened the gender digital divide.[35] As the pandemic brought the whole world to a halt, working as well as studying was shifted from an in-person setting to a remote online setting. Globally, this negatively impacted marginalised people in particular, especially women and girls in rural areas,[36] who had little to no access to the internet, and a dedicated device to use during online classes/remote work. As the adoption of remote work increases, the gender digital divide exerts a negative influence on the many benefits it offers to all involved.

In addition to the above, the gender digital divide has implications for the financial inclusion of women. Financial inclusion is an important aspect of sustainable development,[37] one that has become inextricably linked to mobile phone usage in modern times.

If someone has a bank account, they need the internet and, at minimum, a smartphone to operate their bank account via online banking; or, they might need a smartphone to use phone-carrier payment methods (e.g. JazzCash and EasyPaisa in Pakistan) for making transactions. A lack of digital inclusion, therefore, precludes women from digital financial inclusion, which holds women back. [38] [39]

Additionally, with the increasing shift of social interaction and political discourse taking place online, the gender digital divide also sees women being more socially and politically isolated. Evidence suggests that women's wider exclusion from online political engagement follows from a general lack of digital competence/skills (i.e. a second-level digital divide in terms of gender).[40]

Overall, the biggest implication of the gender digital divide, especially within the context of developing countries, is that the gender digital divide amplifies inequalities between people of different genders. This happens through a combination of feedback loops between various types of inequalities.[41] The gender digital divide is thus an impediment to development itself.[42] [43]

Drivers of the Gender Digital Divide

While an empirical consensus on the drivers of the gender digital divide is currently lacking,[44] existing scholarly work suggests that the gender digital divide is an extension of existing real-world gendered inequalities into the digital realm, especially in

29 (United Nations, n.d.)
30 (Antonio & Tuffley, 2014)
31 (Fang, et al., 2018)
32 (Long, Hoang, & Simkins, 2023)
33 (Mumporeze & Prieler, 2017)
34 (Arroyo, 2020)
35 (Kastorff, Müller, & Greiff, 2025)
36 (Mathrani, Umer, Sarvesh, & Adhikari, 2023)
37 (Abdulkareem, Jimoh, Nofiu, & Akande, 2024)
38 (Mpofu, 2023)
39 (David & Phillips, 2022)
40 (Min, 2010)
41 (David & Phillips, 2022)
42 (Plan International, n.d.)
43 (Kerras, Sánchez-Navarro, López-Becerra, & de-Miguel Gómez, 2020)
44 (Nielsen & Makpor, 2022)

Socioeconomic status exerts great influence on the digital divide as it is a key driver of how well someone can use ICTs (i.e. second-level digital divide in terms of gender), or if they even have access to ICTs.[45] Additionally, a minimum of tertiary level education, along with a solid command of the english language, tends to determine a person's level of digital inclusion.[46] Moreover, the difference in access to and use of technology between men and women flows from gender relations and stereotypes that are already present in society.[47]

Preconceived notions around gender roles, and how these notions influence the environment in which people work, study and live, exert pressures on women to forgo the use of ICTs. Moreover, social attitudes may also influence women's perceptions of technical subjects as being male-oriented, i.e. an internalised gendered bias against themselves in technical fields that feeds into women's exclusion from these fields.[48] For example, in Rwanda, it was found that the underrepresentation of women in STEM fields likely has some influence on the gap between male and female access and use of ICTs.[49] This underrepresentation itself can be attributed to a perception that STEM fields are "for men."

In the case of Pakistan as well the role of social influence (as exerted by authority figures like teachers or family members, but also including media outlets and government institutions) has been documented to be a significant driver of women embracing technology and its use or not.[50] In other words, whether women in Pakistan use technology like the internet or cell phones may be a function of the institutional support they have in using these ICTs, or of prevailing social norms.[51] Additionally, wider perceptions in Pakistan are negative towards women's use of cell phones and the internet, along with affordability being a concern.[52]

Challenges in Closing the Gender Digital Divide

The issue of the gender digital divide is not just of access (i.e. first-level digital divide) to ICTs but also of skills and competence (i.e. second-level digital divide).[53] Furthermore, a core aspect of the divide isn't just the exclusion of women, but also inequalities even after the inclusion of women in the digital space (i.e. digital adverse incorporation).[54]

In Pakistan, even when women have access to the internet, they face disproportionately more negative and damaging treatment online as compared to men[55] in the form of harassment, misogyny and, ultimately, violence.[56] Women also face gendered disinformation, which itself is considered a form of technology facilitated gender-based violence.[57]

Adverse digital incorporation also affects women in terms of technical competence, as an inadequate level of skill in using ICTs makes women more vulnerable targets of illicit activities (e.g. scams, privacy breaches and device tampering/virus infections) conducted via ICTs.[58] All of the above necessitate multidimensional policy initiatives that target both increased access to and more competent use of ICTs by women.

Specifically, in addition to targeting better access by women to ICTs, policy measures should also address the social aspect of the digital divide, such as norms and perceptions. Moreover, the economic aspect of the digital divide should also be kept in mind: the affordability of devices, whether mobile phones or laptops, and also the cost of internet connections, especially in economically deprived areas.[59]

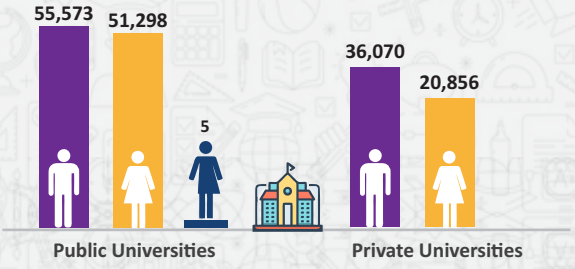
Affordability is directly connected to socioeconomic status, which is an important driver of the gender digital divide,[60] as previously noted. Age and lack of basic education are also factors that influence the digital divide.[61] Taken together, and keeping in mind the government's role and capability in development work, the subject to which the gender digital divide has the most relevance is education. This is in line with the SDG framework, as ICT skills development falls within target 4.4 (specifically, indicator 4.4.1) of the SDGs. This also aligns with scholarly evidence, which suggests tertiary education and english proficiency, or lack thereof, can be a driver of the gender digital divide.[62]

45 (Kastorff, Müller, & Greiff, 2025)
46 (Rashid, 2017)
47 (Peláez-Sánchez, Reyes, & Glasserman-Morales, 2023)
48 (Mumporeze & Prieler, 2017)
49 Ibid
50 (Barra, Grimaldi, Muazzam, Troisi, & Visvizi, 2024)
51 (Amber & Chichaibelu, 2023)
52 (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, 2024)
53 (David & Phillips, 2022)
54 (Heeks, 2022)
55 (Afzaal, Khan, Owaisi, & Tariq, 2024)
56 (Imran, Khan, Nazar, & Dad, 2025)
57 (Meedan, 2024)
58 (Long, Hoang, & Simkins, 2023)
59 (Fang, et al., 2018)
60 (Kastorff, Müller, & Greiff, 2025)
61 (Fang, et al., 2018)
62 (Rashid, 2017)

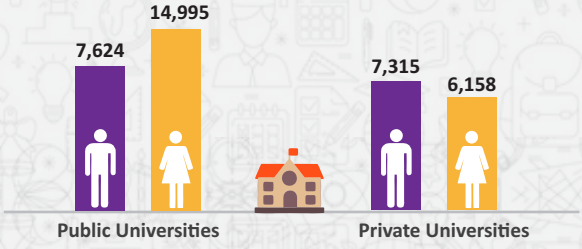
GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

STEM
SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | MATHEMATICS

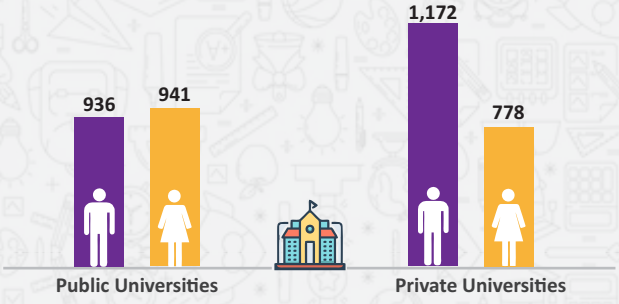
STEM Enrolment at HED Universities 2024



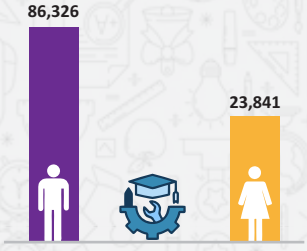
STEM Grads from HED Universities 2024



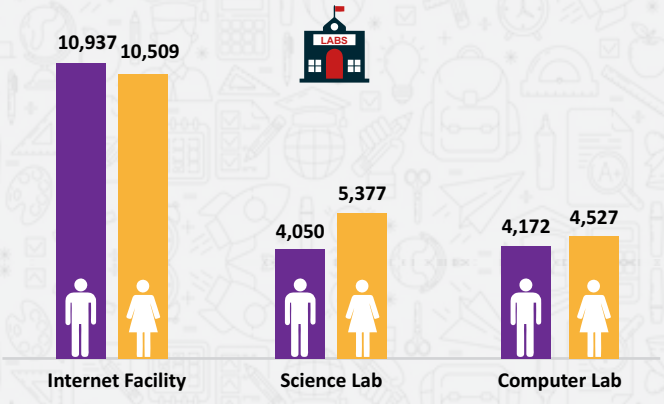
STEM Teachers at HED Universities 2024



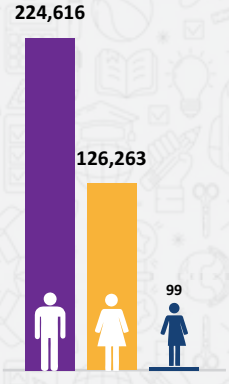
Vocational Institutes Enrolment 2022-2024



STEM Facilities in Schools 2023-2024



Enrolment under Digi Skills 2024

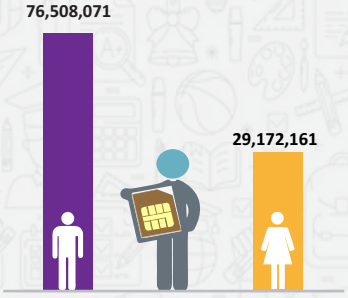


Source: Annual School Census Report 2023-24, HED, PVTC, TEVTA, IGNITE

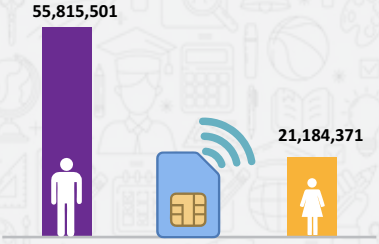
GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

Access and Utilisation of Digital Services

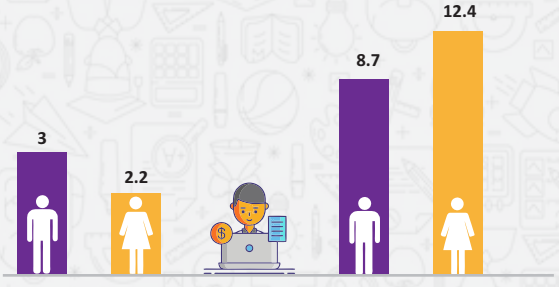
Cellular Subscribers 2024



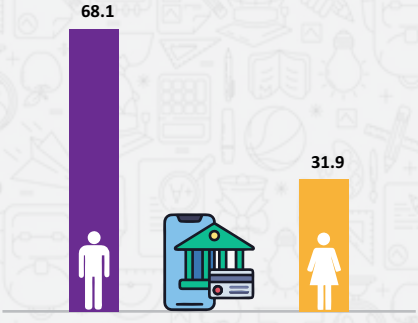
Mobile Broadband Users 2024



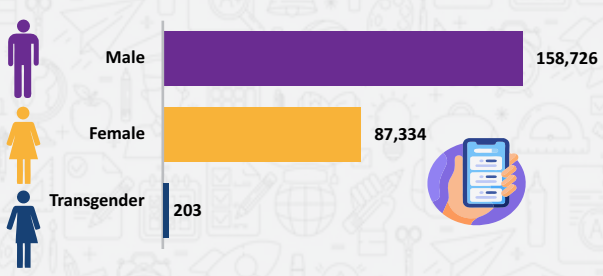
GIG Workers % 2025



Branchless Banking Share % 2024



Active Users of Punjab Police Women Safety App 2024



Active Users of Punjab Public Safety App 2024



Source: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)

1.4 Punjab Gender Parity Report: Methodology, Significance and Major Outcomes

The PGPR is a comprehensive analytical publication that takes stock of and highlights gender gaps across various social dimensions in all of Punjab. The data is collected from various government departments and secondary sources, i.e. international and national reports.

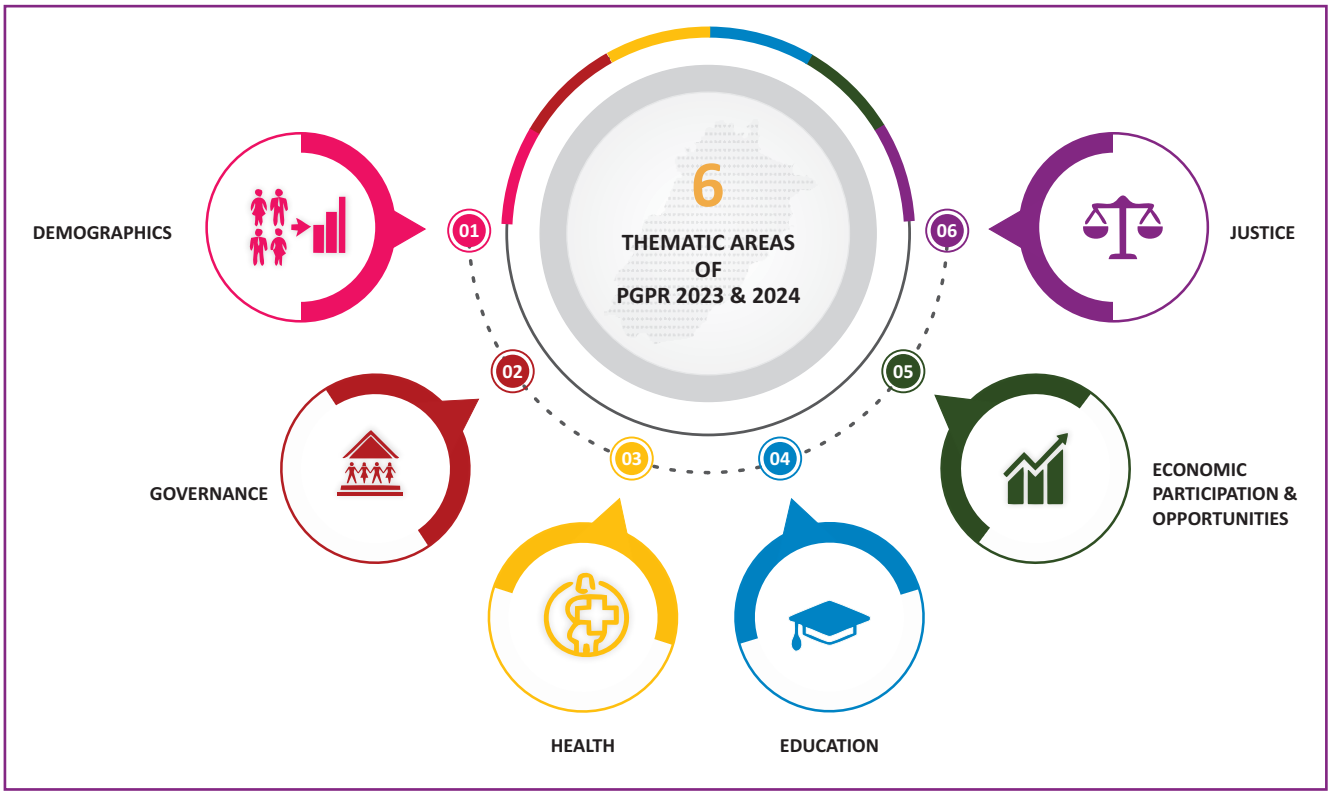


Figure 1.3

The PGPR was initiated in 2016 and has since sought to surface the parity, or lack thereof, in Punjab among women, men and, wherever data is available, transgender people. The goal of the report is to rely solely on data, whilst avoiding anecdotal evidence or taking any predetermined positions on any matter. To this end, the PGPR also does not subscribe to any partisan politics, adopting an unbiased and independent view of the gender gaps in Punjab.

The seventh edition of PGPR (2023 & 2024) collects data from online data repositories and published surveys as well as government departments/entities across all 41 districts of Punjab. The report uses 315 indicators to assess the relative social status of genders across six major areas of life: Demographics, Governance, Education, Health, Economic Participation & Opportunities and Justice. The PGPR also includes a chapter acknowledging the many Special Initiatives of the Government of Punjab to comprehensively address the government's efforts to uplift its citizens.

1.4.1 Methodology

The methodology underlying the PGPR is to take a comprehensive view of all gender-disaggregated statistics in an analytical and structured manner using the indicator framework. These statistics are sourced from primary as well as secondary sources. Using this data, a Gender Parity Index (GPI) is calculated for each indicator that is used in the PGPR. The calculation for the index is thus: (data for women/girls) ÷ (data for men/boys), rounded up to 1 decimal place. For example:

$$\text{GPI Of Student Enrolment In Primary School} = \frac{\text{Number of Girls Enrolled in Primary School}}{\text{Number of Boys Enrolled in Primary School}}$$

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In addition to the above, the PGPR also details findings of a novel administrative survey that is designed and conducted by the PCSW. This survey is intended to assess the extent to which government offices enable working women. Forms for this administrative survey are sent to all government departments, district offices, statutory bodies and autonomous bodies as part of the data requests for the PGPR. The forms ask about the availability of facilities for women (e.g., prayer areas and women-only washrooms) and about accommodations that affect their ability to participate in the workforce (e.g., maternity leave and age relaxation for government roles).

The goal of the data collection, from primary and secondary sources and from the aforementioned administrative survey, is to identify and highlight any gender-based gaps in Punjab, so that action may be taken to address them through policy measures, gender-sensitive budgeting, and other initiatives. In this way, each PGPR continues to build on a long-established methodology and maintains a consistent record of gender parity in the province of Punjab over several years.

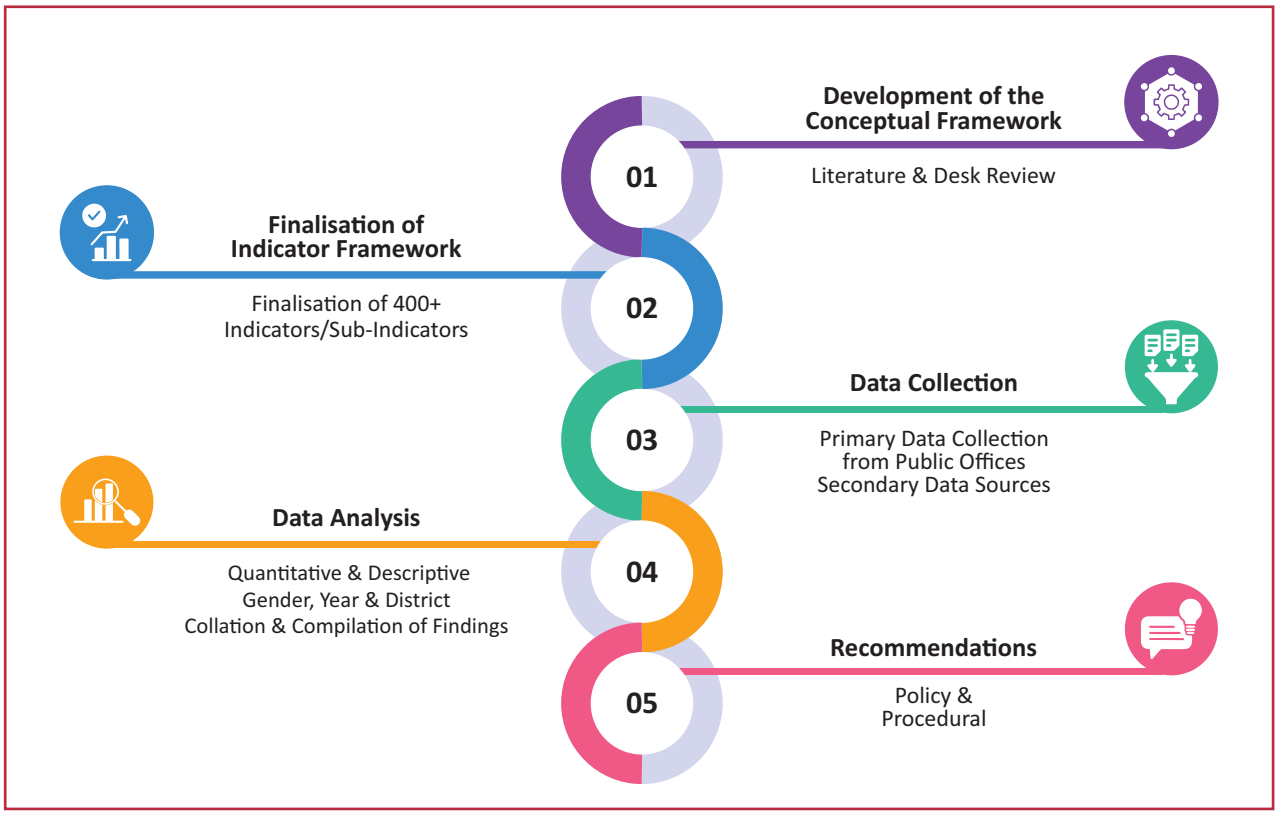


Figure 1.4

1.4.2 Nature of Data, Collection Method and Sources

Other than the secondary data used for the PGPR's analysis, the PGPR team at the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) designs a detailed proforma to be sent as a data request to various Provincial and District Offices of Punjab government entities across the province. These forms contain subject-specific indicators that are relevant to each department/public office.

A dedicated team of PCSW divisional coordinators follow-up with all the government departments. These follow-ups are both over phone, electronic mail and even in-person visits where feasible.

The information requested in the data call encompasses the following:

i. The number of employees/human resources in the government department (disaggregated by: male, female, transgender, cadre/grade);

ii. Disaggregation by locality (i.e. rural or urban area), year, district;

iii. Beneficiaries of services, by gender;

iv. Updates on the implementation statuses of policies;

v. Annual Development Program (ADP) schemes on gender and development.

Upon receiving the data, the PGPR team thoroughly validates the data. In case of any error, a follow-up is done with the relevant department to inform them of the need for corrections/clarifications.

After all the data is received, and all errors have been corrected, it is collated and organised by subject. Thereon, a chapter-wise analysis is done for the final report.

Data Scope

This report is a gender-parity monitoring exercise and is primarily descriptive. It draws largely on official public-sector administrative datasets, supplemented by selected population-based surveys where relevant, to track status, gaps, and trends across key gender indicators. Administrative data reflects service provision and utilisation within public systems and do not capture the full universe of outcomes, particularly in sectors such as health and education, where private sector provision is substantial. Consequently, indicators derived from administrative sources should be interpreted as measures of public-sector coverage and performance rather than population-wide access or behaviour. Survey-based indicators and administrative statistics are therefore presented for complementary purposes and are not directly comparable unless explicitly stated. Given these data characteristics, the report does not attempt causal analysis or behavioural inference; instead, it focuses on documenting disparities, patterns, and changes over time to support evidence-informed policy monitoring and planning.

Data Challenges

The PGPR faces several data-related challenges, including inconsistent data-sharing protocols across departments, institutional fragmentation and restructuring as well as delays in the publication of surveys and limitations in gender-disaggregated indicators. In the case of some departments, large volumes of data previously shared with the PCSW were not shared this year.

The fragmentation of departments, whereby some departments had multiple wings spread out across Punjab, led to a lack of data consolidation by these departments. The lack of timely designation for a department-specific focal person in these cases caused additional delays and communication issues.

Additionally, some departments experienced structural changes, which led to changes in how they collect, classify and

aggregate internal data. For example, in the case of the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department, all non-formal schools under the department's ambit were changed from their different categories (e.g. Non-Formal Basic Education Schools, Basic Education Community Schools, Taleem Sab Kay Liay schools, etc) into a single category, as non-formal schools. Similarly, the Population Welfare Department, Punjab was merged in the Health Department, Punjab to make the Health and Population Department; due to this, the PGPR team did not receive data for population welfare and on disease profiles.

The key issue was in the continued lack of disaggregated data, and especially data for for transgender persons, e.g in the data for health. Another challenge faced by the team is the collection of data from websites when departments do not provide requested information, such as the Lahore High Court and the Election Commission of Pakistan. Since the publication of the report is time-sensitive, delays in data provision make the review, compilation, and preparation of data for analysis particularly challenging.

Lastly, a series of crucial survey-based publications, such as the Labour Force Survey and the Punjab Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2024, have faced significant delays. These publications were not available at the time of compilation of this year's PGPR. Moreover, the Agriculture Census, the first one in 14 years, omits important data points, such as farmers' gender and ownership of livestock limiting in-depth analysis.

1.4.3 Significance of PGPR

The PGPR is an annual publication that provides the clearest available view of the state of gender parity in Punjab. A distinctive contribution of the PGPR is its systematic tracking of gender mainstreaming mechanisms within provincial governance structures. Through administrative surveys conducted by PCSW, the report monitors the existence and functioning of Gender Mainstreaming Committees, women's representation on boards and statutory bodies, and compliance with mandated thresholds such as a minimum of 33 percent representation of women. By presenting this information at the district level, the PGPR provides view of how institutional gender commitments are being operationalised across Punjab.

The thematic areas of the PGPR, and their indicators, are designed to align with the SDGs, specifically Goal 3 (Good Health & Well-Being), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth). In this way, the PGPR provides persistent monitoring of long-established themes that are aligned with the international development agenda, such as education, health, and economic participation. Additionally, this year's report introduces the dimension of women's and girls' digital inclusion, an issue that cuts across nearly all thematic areas of the PGPR.

PGPR is thus a vital annual documentation on the status of women in Punjab, as it helps government officials in identifying the gaps that need to be filled, and also any interventions and policy actions that needs to be pursued. Crucially, PGPR also collects and publishes gender disaggregated data for transgender people, which is a demographic that is still often excluded from data reporting across all of Pakistan.

Another key feature of the PGPR is that it acts as both a resource, since most government departments do not maintain their own data digitally, and a periodic reminder to all government officials of their commitment to advancing the well-being of women and girls in Punjab.

As a critical evidence product, the PGPR is also instrumental to the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and to its work on the National Gender Data Portal. Additionally, government officials across Punjab use the PGPR when designing projects.

Given its importance, PGPR is widely disseminated to lawmakers, relevant departments of the Government of Punjab and other relevant stakeholders. PGPR is also shared with various organisations, both national and international, including NGOs, think tanks, and advocacy and special-interest groups. The report is also available online for use by researchers, academics, journalists, and students.[63]

63 See Appendix A

1.4.4 Major Outcomes of PGPRs

The Punjab Gender Parity Report has, over successive editions, emerged as a key instrument of evidence and accountability within the Government of Punjab. Its most significant outcomes lie in strengthening data-informed policymaking, institutional gender monitoring, and transparency across sectors.

One of the most tangible outcomes of PGPR is its routine use in government planning and project formulation. The report is now commonly referenced by provincial departments and institutions when preparing feasibility studies and PC-1 and PC-2 documents for new initiatives. By providing district-wise, gender-disaggregated evidence across multiple sectors, the PGPR supports departments in identifying gender gaps and aligning proposed interventions with gender-responsive planning and budgeting requirements.

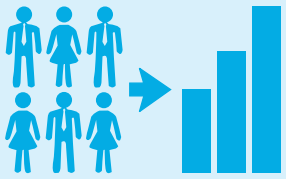
PGPR's sustained engagement with provincial- and district-level institutions has also contributed to greater recognition of the importance of systematic data for monitoring. As a result, several government entities have strengthened their internal data collection and record-keeping practices, particularly with respect to gender-disaggregated administrative data. Departments and institutions such as the Accountant General of Punjab, the Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Emergency Service 1122, and others have expanded or formalised their data systems, thereby improving the availability of gender-disaggregated information for governance and accountability.

Beyond governance and data systems, the PGPR has played an important agenda-setting role by consistently documenting gender gaps and sectoral trends. In sectors such as health, education, justice, and political participation, the report provides an evidence base that allows policymakers and stakeholders to observe changes in women's access, participation, and outcomes. For example, trends related to women's utilisation of health services, educational enrolment patterns, reporting of gender-based violence, and women's participation in electoral and public service processes are systematically compiled and analysed, enabling informed discussion and targeted policy responses.

Importantly, the PGPR does not attribute causality for these trends to a single intervention. Rather, its value lies in making such developments visible, comparable, and measurable across districts and overtime. By doing so, the report supports government institutions, civil society organisations, researchers, and development partners in assessing progress, identifying emerging challenges, and designing evidence-based interventions to advance gender equality in Punjab.

SECTION 02





DEMOGRAPHICS



02 DEMOGRAPHICS

KEY FINDINGS

- PHC 2023 recorded 127.7 million people living in 19.9 million households of Punjab province, with an average household size of 6.4 persons.
- In Punjab, the population comprises 65.45 million (51.3 percent) males, 62.23 million (48.7 percent) females, and about 14 thousand (around 0.01 percent) transgender persons where Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, and Gujranwala retained their positions as the most populous districts.
- Punjab's age structure reveals both opportunity and dependency: about 38 percent of the population is under 15, while 58 percent falls within the working-age group (15–64).
- In 2023, marriage remained the predominant marital status in Punjab. The province recorded 25.47 million males (95.7 percent) and 25.75 million females (90.5 percent) as married.
- According to PHC 2023, around 3.5 percent of individuals in Punjab were persons with disabilities. However, the total population with functional limitations in Punjab province is recorded as 13,507,697, which means that around 10.6 percent of the population reported at least one functional limitation.
- About 5.7% of Punjab's population lives outside their district of birth, with intra-provincial migration forming the majority.
- Of the total 19,505,124 residential units owned in Punjab, 18,687,527 (95.8 percent) were owned by men and 817,597 (4.2 percent) were owned with a GPI of 0.04.
- As per PTA, the number of cellular subscribers in Punjab increased from 103.48 million in 2023 to 105.68 million in 2024, with a significant gender gap among the subscribers.
- In 2024, 2,802,191 (50.8 percent) of the registered births were of boys compared to 2,716,211 (49.2 percent) girls.
- In 2024, 538,038 (64.9 percent) of the registered deaths were of men compared to 291,510 (35.1 percent) women.
- As per data received by NADRA, marriage registrations increased by 10.77 percent in the province, rising from 880,774 marriages registered in 2023 to 975,659 in 2024.
- The total number of divorce-related registrations in Punjab increased from 121,097 in 2023 to 141,708 in 2024.
- Among all valid CNICs in 2024, 40,722,759 (52 percent) belonged to men, 37,602,450 (48 percent) were of women while only 2,079 (0.003 percent) had a valid CNIC.
- In 2023, NADRA issued 393,643 CNICs with a disability logo which increased to 404,682 in 2024. of the total cards in 2024, 276,101 (68.2 percent) were issued to men, 128,576 (31.8 percent) to women, and only 5 were issued to transgender persons.

INTRODUCTION

Sex is a fundamental demographic characteristic recorded at birth. This binary categorisation accompanies an individual throughout life and in all its spheres, including everyday acts, due to pervasive gendered roles. This omnipresence is found in demography, where the indicators and their analyses are disaggregated by gender. However, the sex variable has long been regarded as natural evidence, with its social dimensions often overlooked.[64]

In recent decades, demography has been enriched by other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, prompting a rethinking of this category and leading to a broader understanding. This interdisciplinary engagement has led to a broader understanding of gender, as a social construct formed through relational processes and marked by power dynamics, most often against the feminine. The introduction of this perspective has renewed the study of traditional phenomena and opened up new themes. It also led to reflection on data collection and indicators, on changing their interpretation, and on imagining new ones.[65]

The world's population exceeded 8 billion in 2023, however, due to declining fertility rates and rising life expectancy, the rate of growth is slowing.[66] Global demographic trends are experiencing a significant shift, especially the rise in the working-age population relative to dependents, which is defined as the demographic dividend. This presents an opportunity for countries to benefit from this arising opportunity. However, achieving this dividend requires investment in human capital, gender equality, and inclusive labour markets. Statistics from East Asia, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa indicate that nations that combined demographic changes with empowering women and enhancing education experienced stronger, more sustainable growth.[67]

In Pakistan, the demographic transition is advancing but remains incomplete. The country's population exceeds 241 million[68], with a growth rate of 2.5 percent, one of the highest in South Asia.[69] However, despite the decline in fertility, the total fertility rate stands at 3.6, exceeding the globally accepted level and is still above the replacement level.[70] The result is a large youth bulge; nearly 38 percent of the population is under 15, while approximately 60 percent is of working age (15–64).[71] Pakistan's future prosperity hinges on converting its young population into a productive workforce through investments in education, skills, and health, especially for girls and women. However, female labour force participation is still under 25 percent, making it one of the lowest rates in the region. Without integrating women into the economy, the demographic dividend risks turning into a demographic burden.

Punjab sits at the centre of this demographic dynamic, being the most populous province of the country. With around 127 million people, more than half the country's total, the province represents both the challenges and opportunities of Pakistan's demographic future. Punjab's population density exceeds 622 persons per square kilometre, and it is now 41 percent urbanised, a significant increase from the 1998 Census.[72] Its age structure remains youthful, and its working-age share is expanding. Yet, gender disparities persist across nearly every demographic indicator, from access to identity registration and communication technologies to property ownership and vital event registration.

Unlocking Punjab's demographic potential requires recognising the gendered nature of demographic processes. Fertility, mortality, migration, and marriage patterns all shape women's lives differently from men's. Women's access to civil registration, health, education, and employment determines whether Punjab can translate its population growth into inclusive economic development. This chapter presents a demographic overview of Punjab with a gender lens, structured around five key areas: population profile, disability, migration, demographic characteristics (housing, household headship, information and communication access), and civil registration systems.

2.1 Population Profile of Pakistan

After six years since the Population & Housing Census (PHC) 2017, Pakistan carried out its 7th PHC in 2023. The country's population has grown significantly over recent decades, increasing from 132.35 million in 1998 to 207.68 million in 2017, and reaching 241.49 million by 2023. The average annual growth rate was 2.55 percent from 2017 to 2023, the

64 (Bauer, 2022)
65 (Barr, 2023)
66 (State of World Population 2023 - 8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities, 2023)
67 Ibid
68 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)
69 (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, 2019)
70 (State of World Population 2023 - 8 Billion Lives, Infinite Possibilities, 2023)
71 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)
72 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)

Organization of Analysis

Population Profile of Punjab
- Population by Districts of Punjab
- Population by Age Cohort
- Population by Marital Status
- Population by Nationality

Disability & Functional Limitations

Migration

Demographic Profile of Punjab
- Ownership of Houses
- Head of Households
- Types of Households
- Ownership of Mobile and SIM card
- Usage of Information and Communication

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
- Birth Registrations
- Death Registrations
- Marriage Registrations
- Divorce Registrations
- Registration of Widowers and Widows
- Computerized National Identity



highest in South Asia for 2023. This consistent rise indicates a steady demographic expansion, slightly surpassing the 2.40 percent recorded in 2017. The PHC 2023 data also shows a balanced gender distribution, with 124.3 million males and 117.1 million females, along with a small yet recorded transgender population.

While growth remains consistent at the national level, regional patterns vary, with provinces such as Balochistan and Sindh showing relatively higher growth rates, reflecting their youthful populations and migration trends. In contrast, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa exhibit signs of demographic transition, characterised by slower yet steady growth. While Islamabad's growth rate, though reduced to 2.81 percent, remained relatively high due to continued urbanisation and migration.

Population and Annual Growth Rate

Region/Province	Population			Annual Growth Rate (%)
	Male	Female	Transgender	2017-23
Pakistan	124,324,406	117,154,694	20,331	2.55
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	20,845,747	20,009,233	1,117	2.38
Punjab	65,448,376	62,226,589	13,957	2.53
Sindh	29,014,424	26,677,501	4,222	2.57
Balochistan	7,768,166	7,125,471	765	3.20
Islamabad	1,247,693	1,115,900	270	2.81

Source: Population & Housing Census, 2023

Table 2.1

PHC 2017 reported 21,774 transgender individuals, but challenges in data collection likely led to underestimation. However, the 7th Census recorded a decrease to 20,331, just 0.01% of the population. This decline probably reflects methodological and social factors rather than actual demographic change. The census uses a respondent-based approach, relying on household responses for data on demographics and other variables. Individuals concealing their transgender identity were recorded based on self-reported sex, which, while aiming for inclusivity, may contribute to the undercount in official stats.

2.2 Population Profile of Punjab

PHC 2023 recorded 127.7 million people living in 19.9 million households of Punjab province, with an average household size of 6.4 persons. The population grew from 110 million in 2017 (a 16.09 percent increase since 2017), reflecting a steady annual growth rate of 2.53 percent. Punjab alone accounts for over 50 percent of Pakistan's population, making it a central component of the country's demographic and socio-economic planning.

In Punjab, the population comprises 65.45 million (51.3 percent) males, 62.23 million (48.7 percent) females, and about 14 thousand (around 0.01 percent) transgender persons, and the sex ratio stands at approximately 95 females per 100 males.

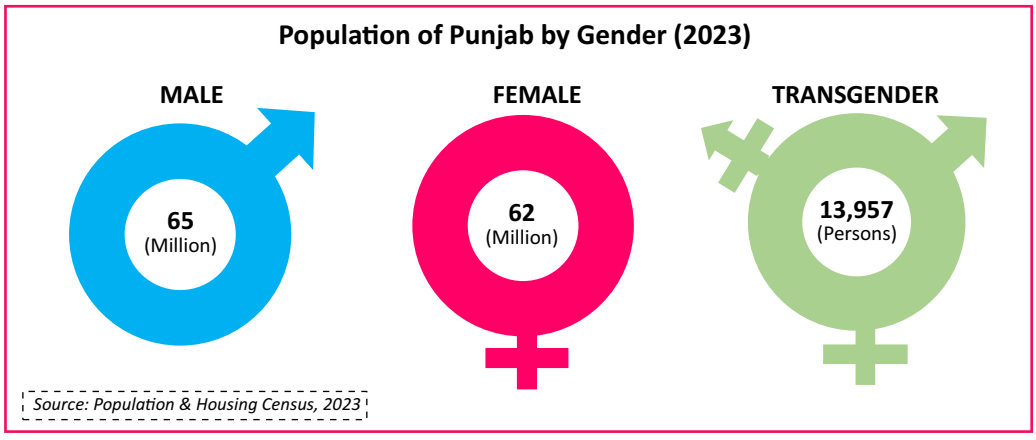


Figure 2.1

Rural areas of Punjab comprise 59 percent of the population, compared to 41percent in urban areas. The rural population is nearly balanced in terms of gender, with 38.6 million (30.25 percent) males and 37.1 million (29 percent) females, while urban areas host 26.8 million (21 percent) males and 25.1 million (19.7 percent) females. A small transgender population is recorded in both settings, with a slightly higher prevalence in urban regions. This distribution highlights Punjab's continuing rural dominance, though urbanisation is steadily increasing as cities expand and attract internal migration.

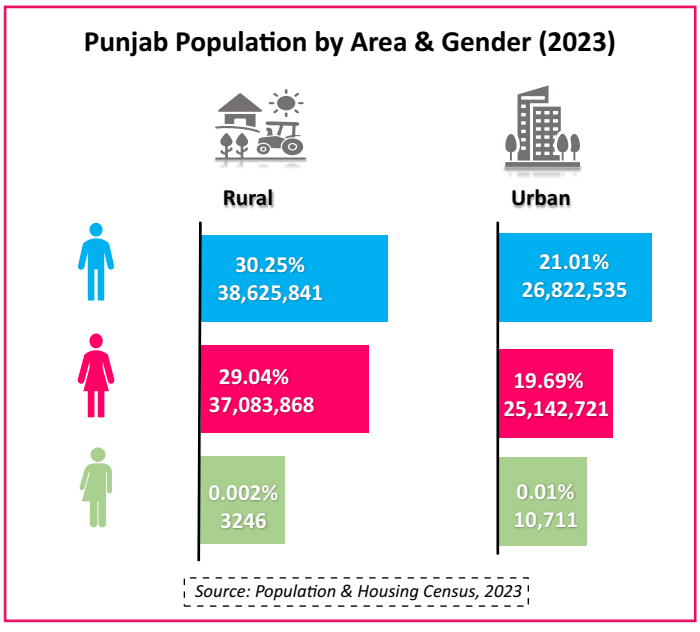


Figure 2.2

2.2.1 Population By Districts of Punjab

A district-wise analysis of Punjab revealed that Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, and Gujranwala retained their positions as the most populous districts, with 13.0 million (10.18%), 9.1 million (7.11%), 6.1 million (4.79%), and 6.0 million (4.67%) people residing in each district, respectively. Hafizabad, Jhelum, Khushab, and Chiniot were the least populous districts, with 1.3 million (1.03%), 1.4 million (1.08%), 1.5 million (1.18%), and 1.6 million (1.22%) people living in each district, respectively.

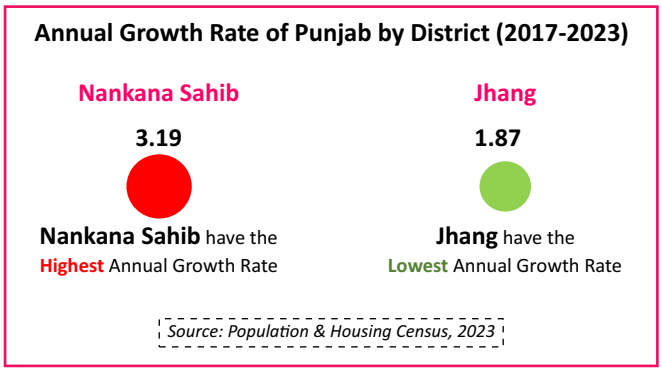


Figure 2.3

Lahore (0.889), Faisalabad (0.918) and Rahim Yar Khan (0.921) recorded the largest gender disparity, while Chakwal (1.008), Gujrat (1.002) and Mandi Bahauddin (0.995) exhibited the smallest gender gap (closest to parity).

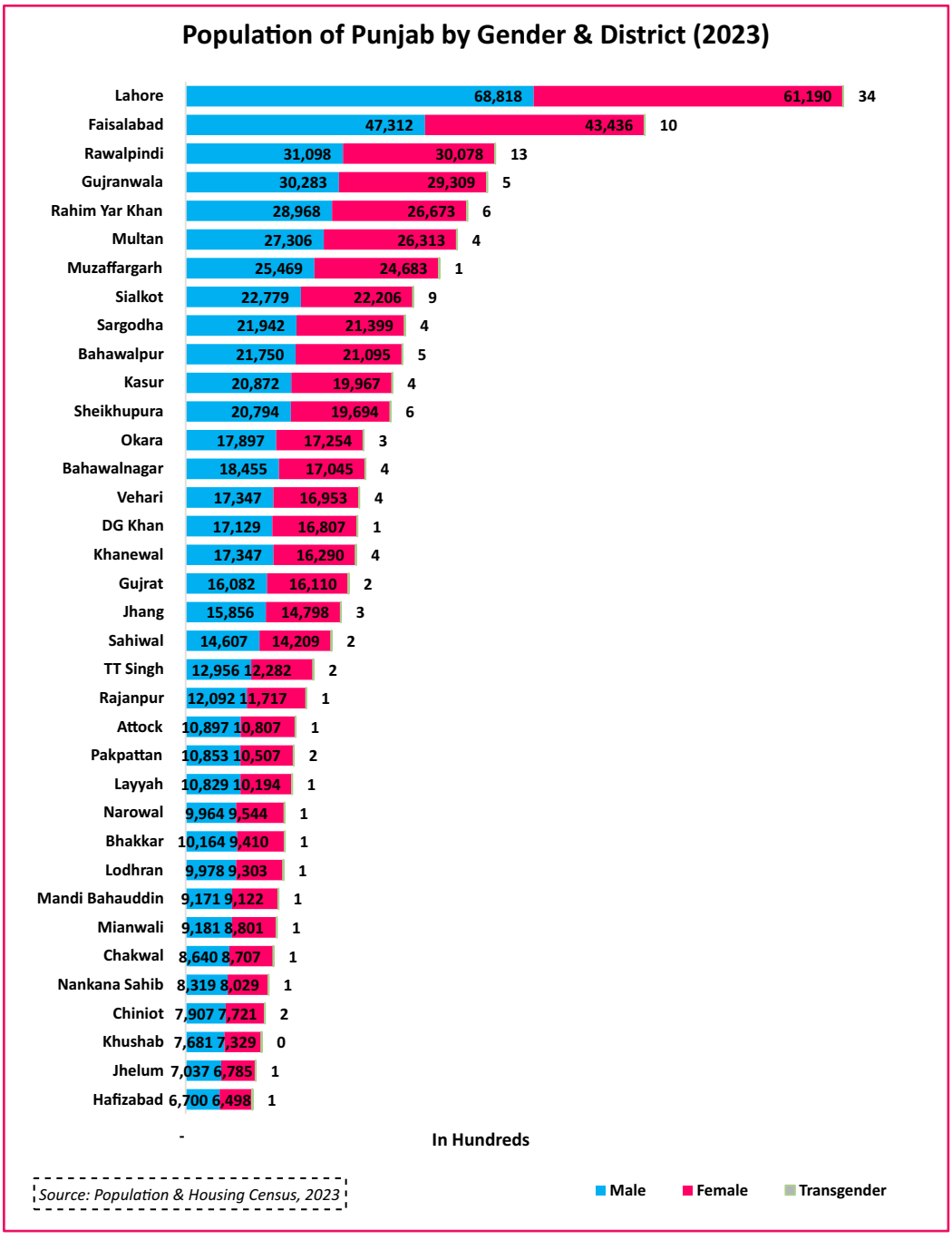


Figure 2.4

2.2.2 Population by Age Cohort

Punjab's age structure reveals both opportunity and dependency: about 38 percent of the population is under 15, while 58 percent falls within the working-age group (15–64). This expanding workforce could drive growth if matched by jobs, skills, and gender inclusion. For women, however, access to economic participation remains constrained by social norms and unequal educational attainment. Policies focusing on girls' secondary education, reproductive health, and youth employment are thus central to realising the province's demographic dividend.

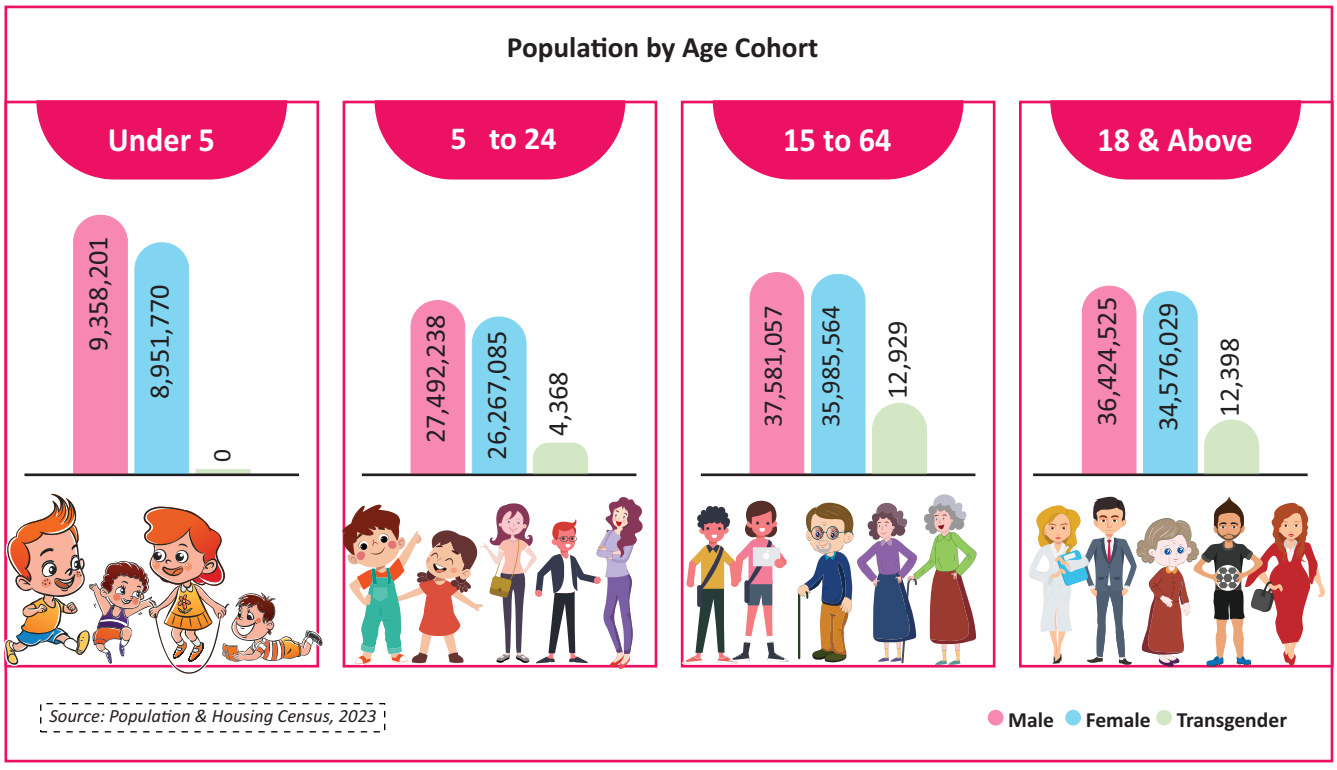


Figure 2.5

The age-wise population distribution of Punjab indicated that the province had a predominantly young and working-age population. The under-5 age group comprised 9.36 million males and 8.95 million females, with a 0.96 F/M ratio, reflecting a nearly balanced gender composition in early childhood. The 5–24 age group constituted a major segment, with 27.49 million males and 26.27 million females, showing a 0.96 F/M ratio, and highlighting the large youth base of the province.

The 15–64 age group, representing the working-age population, comprised 37.58 million males and 35.99 million females, with a 0.96 F/M ratio, indicating that for every 100 males, there were approximately 96 females in this economically active segment. The population aged 18 & above stood at 36.42 million males and 34.58 million females, with a 0.95 F/M ratio, suggesting a slight decline in the proportion of females in older age brackets.

15–49 Age Group

Comprising 31.60 million males and 30.74 million females, this group represents the core reproductive and productive population of Punjab and is crucial for gender and health analyses.

2.2.2.1 Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio is an age-population ratio which is calculated by dividing the population typically not in labour force (ages <15 and >64) by those typically in labour force i.e. ages 15-64.73 As per calculations from PHC 2023, the dependency ratio is around 73 percent in Punjab. This means that the working-age population in Punjab faces a higher potential burden of non-working age population.

73 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)

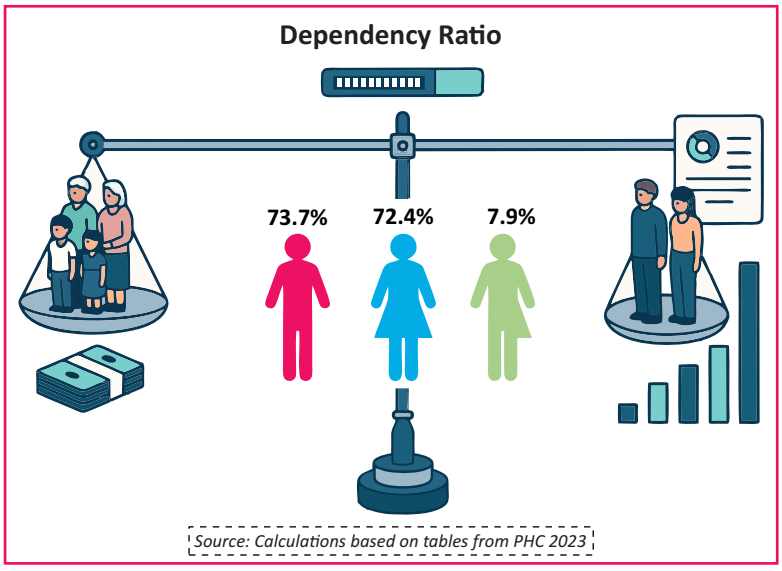


Figure 2.6

2.2.3 Population by Marital Status

In 2023, marriage remained the predominant marital status in Punjab. The province recorded 25.47 million males (95.7 percent) and 25.75 million females (90.5 percent) as married, forming the vast majority of the ever-married population. Only small proportions were widowed, divorced, or separated. Widowhood accounted for 0.96 million males (3.6 percent) and 2.38 million females (8.4 percent), reflecting higher female longevity and the tendency for women to marry older men.

Table 2.1

Population of Punjab by Marital Status & Gender (2023)

	NEVER MARRIED			MARRIED		WIDOWED		DIVORCED		SEPARATED	
Area	MALE	FEMALE	Trans	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
RURAL	7,593,112	5,407,647	3,080	14,957,095	15,363,592	593,141	1,416,634	74,993	148,806	42,150	49,824
URBAN	6,166,571	4,417,672	10,111	10,512,896	10,383,833	371,800	964,331	50,311	95,112	24,600	26,637
Punjab	13,759,683	9,825,319	13,191	25,469,991	25,747,425	964,941	2,380,965	125,304	243,918	66,750	76,461

Source: Population & Housing Census, 2023

Divorce and separation were less common but showed a consistent gender imbalance. Divorced males numbered 0.13 million (0.5 percent) and divorced females 0.24 million (0.9 percent), while separation was recorded for 0.07 million males (0.3 percent) and 0.08 million females (0.3 percent). Despite being a small fraction, divorce and separation were slightly more prevalent in urban areas, suggesting greater social acceptance and reporting.

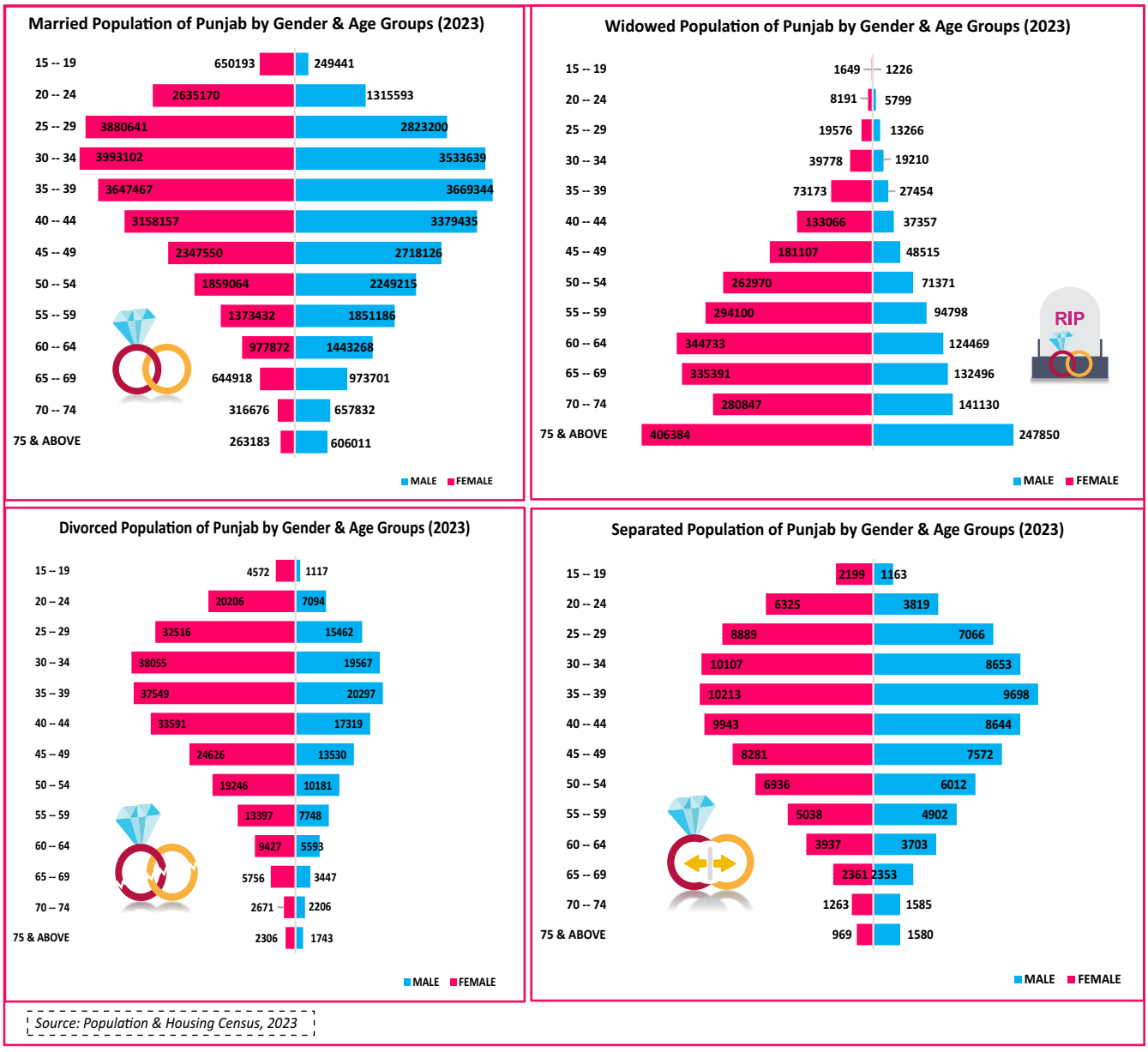


Figure 2.7

Among the ever-married population, 0.95 percent of males and 2.32 percent of females were aged 15–19 years, indicating that early marriage continued to affect females disproportionately. In absolute terms, this represented 249,441 males and 650,193 females within this age range. Widowhood, divorce, and separation were negligible but present, with small numbers recorded across both sexes.

2.2.4 Population by Nationality

According to PHC 2023, in Punjab, the non-Pakistani nationals represented only a minute fraction of the province's total population. Among them, Afghan nationals formed the largest group, numbering 160,401 males (51.6 percent) and 150,414 females (48.4 percent), followed by smaller populations of Bengali and Chinese nationals.

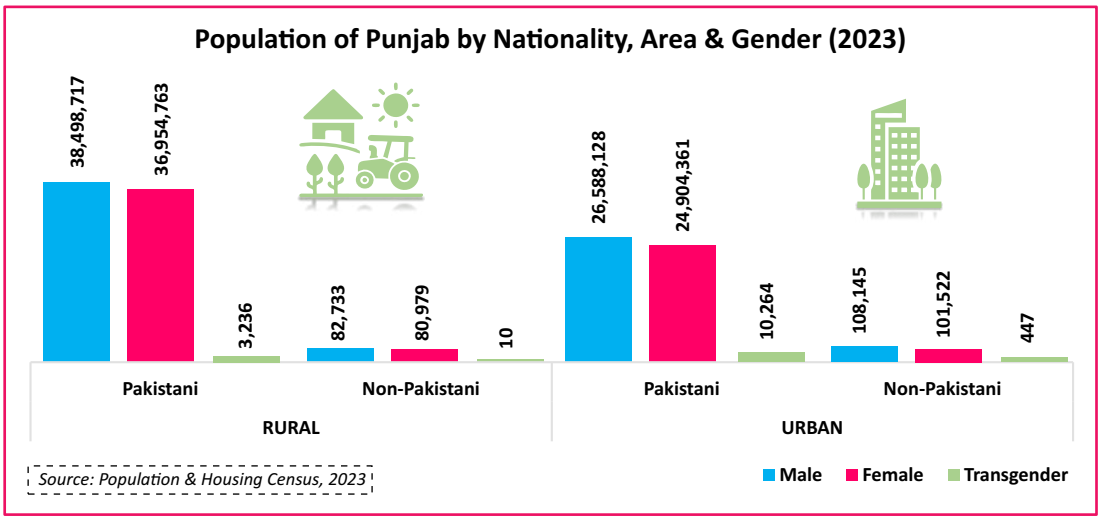


Figure 2.8

2.3 Disability & Functional Limitations

Persons with disabilities constitute a small but significant segment of Punjab's population. According to PHC 2023, around 3.5 percent of individuals in Punjab were persons with disabilities. The disability prevalence rate for males (disabled males as a percentage of the total male population) is 3.81 percent and for females it is 3.22 percent, with a GPI of 0.84. Rural areas show slightly higher prevalence, partly due to weaker health systems and delayed diagnosis.

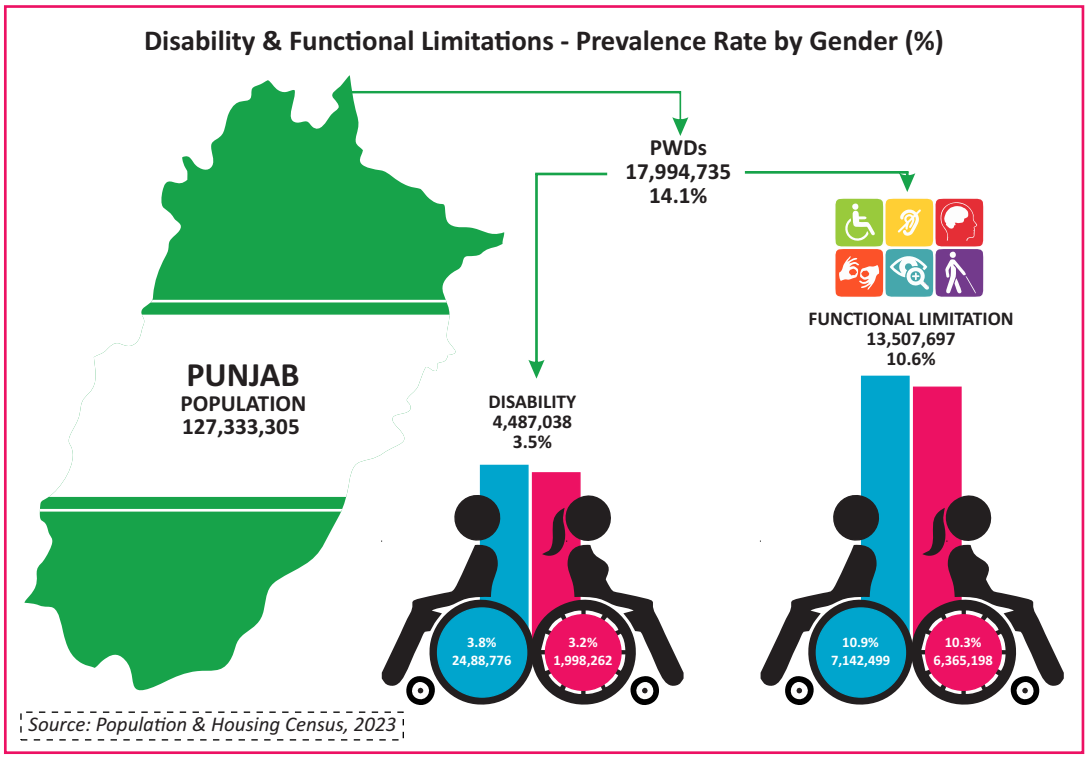


Figure 2.9

Functional Limitations

In addition to disability status, PHC 2023 separately reports functional limitation as a distinct indicator, capturing self-reported difficulty in performing daily activities. Functional limitation reflects how well an individual can manage their daily routines. It can be described as: a) a slight difficulty in carrying out activities, where some may experience minor challenges. b) Significant difficulty, requiring help or modifications to complete tasks effectively. c) Inability to perform certain activities independently, indicating a complete loss of function.[74]

74 7th Population and Housing Census-2023 Report

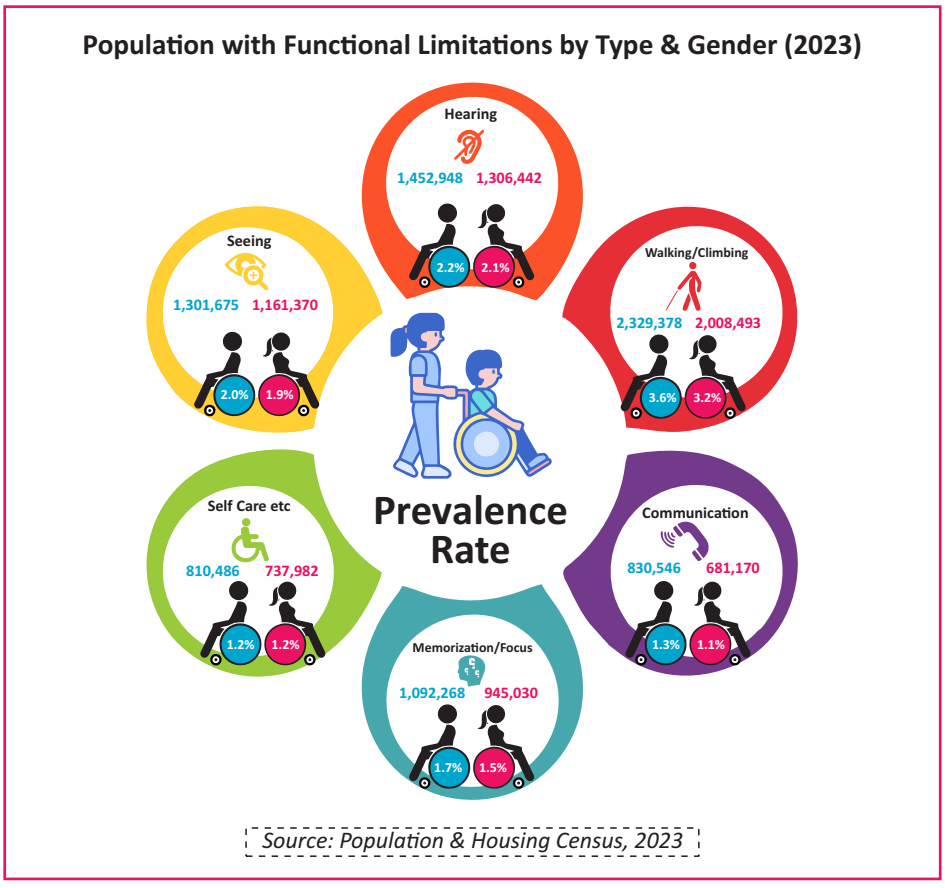


Figure 2.10

According to PHC 2023, the total population with functional limitations in Punjab province is recorded as 13,507,697, which means that around 10.6 percent of the population reported at least one functional limitation. The prevalence rate of at least one functional limitation for male population is 10.9 percent, slightly higher than 10.3 percent for female population, with a GPI of 0.94.

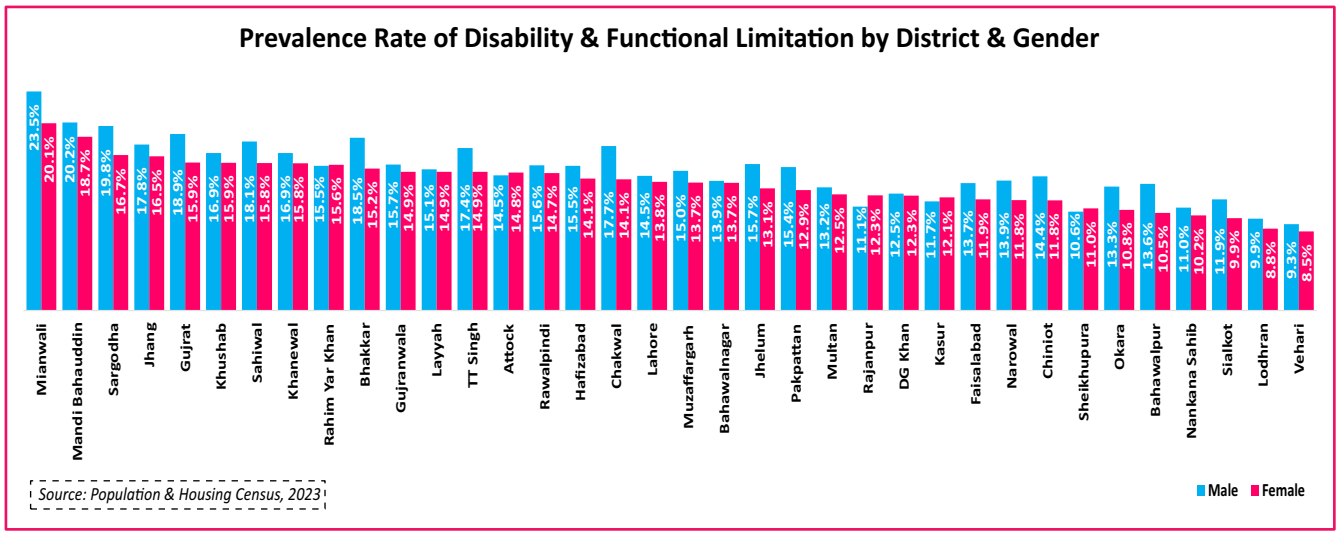


Figure 2.11

2.4 Migration

Migration refers to the movement of people across areas or regions, driven by social, economic, or environmental reasons. Gender influences the circumstances and motivations for migration, with men and women often experiencing different reasons, roles, risks, and outcomes process.[75]

Migration patterns within Punjab reflect internal mobility and demographic shifts. According to PHC 2023, about 5.7% of Punjab's population lives outside their district of birth, with intra-provincial migration forming the majority.

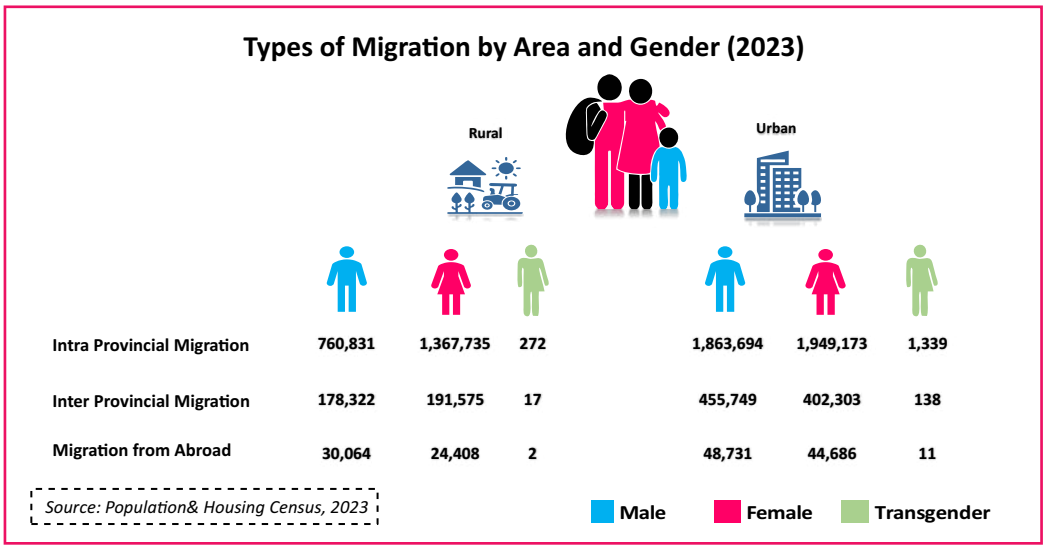


Figure 2.12

Men primarily migrate for employment or business, while women migrate mostly for marriage, accounting for nearly half of all female migration (45.7 percent). For women, migration often means relocation into a husband's household or relocation with family with limited economic participation.

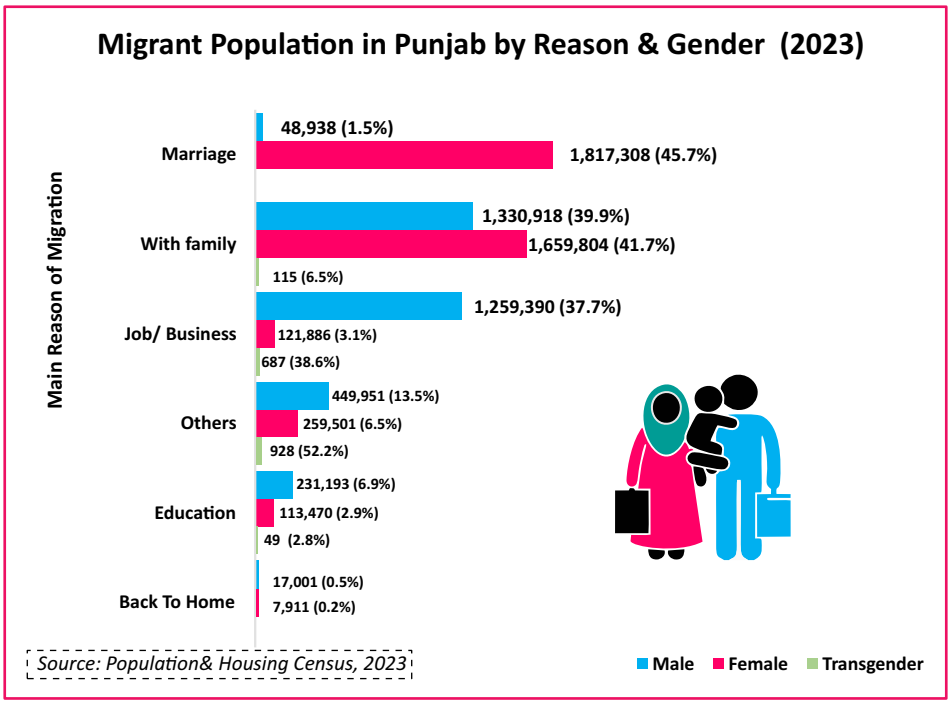


Figure 2.13

75 (Introduction to Migration Studies, 2022)

These gendered dynamics influence household structures and service needs in both origin and destination areas. Urban centres like Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad absorb large inflows of migrants, driving urban growth and demand for housing, health, and education.

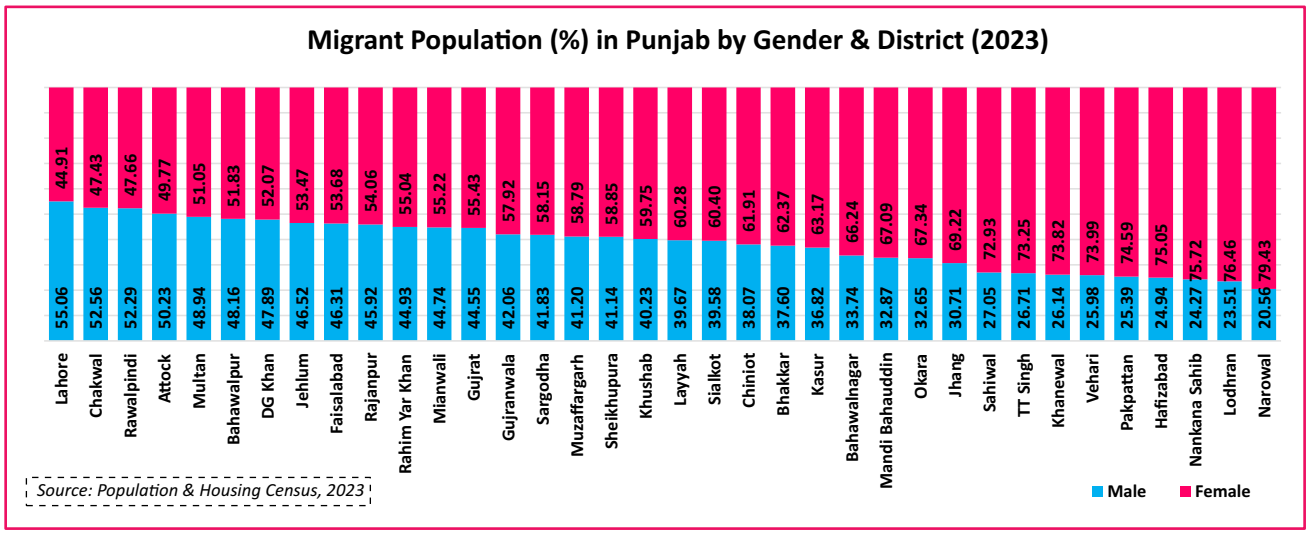


Figure 2.14

2.4.1 Migration and Urbanisation

Between the 2017 and 2023 censuses, Punjab's population continued its gradual transition toward urban living. The share of the population residing in urban areas rose from 38.1 percent to 40.6 percent, while the rural share declined. This movement, though moderate, highlights the persistence of urbanisation across the province.

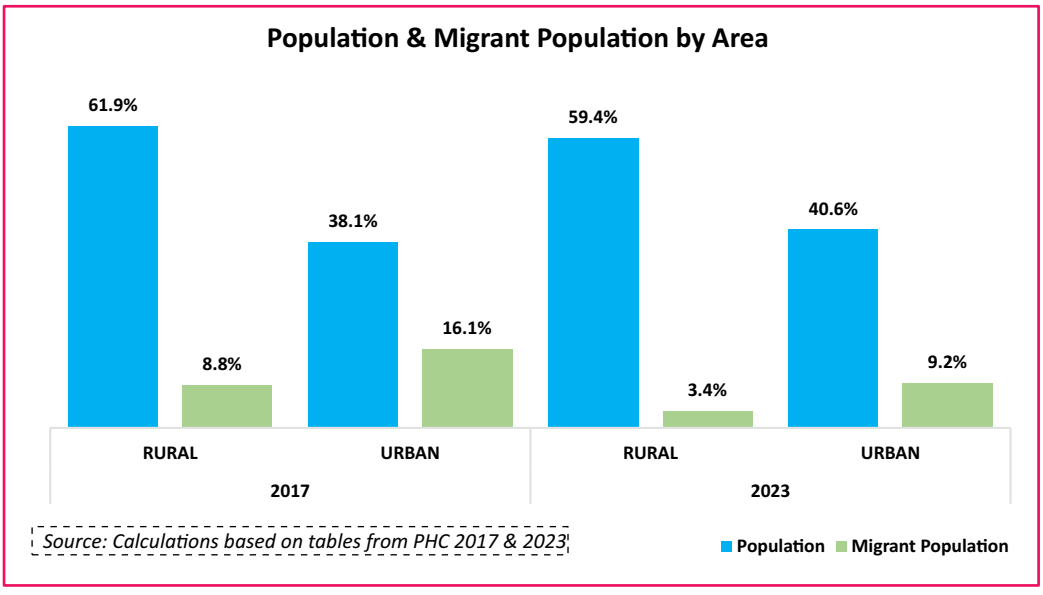


Figure 2.15

In terms of migration, a clear contraction is observed. The proportion of migrants within the rural population dropped sharply from 8.8 percent in 2017 to 3.4 percent in 2023, and within urban areas from 16.1 percent to 9.2 percent.[76] In this dataset, we noted that migration now accounts for a smaller share of Punjab's overall population growth than before. Interestingly, while urban areas continue to attract a higher proportion of migrants than rural ones, the overall decline in migration intensity suggests a slowing of internal mobility.

76 Shares of regional population ÷ provincial total for the given year. Migrant shares are migrants in the region ÷ regional population for the given year.

2.5 Demographic Profile of Punjab

2.5.1 Ownership of Housing Units

Home ownership is high in Punjab, especially in rural areas, where over 90 percent of households live in owned dwellings. On the other hand, around 70 percent of urban population live in their own house, and a significant chunk of the remaining population lives in a rented facility.

Yet, property titles overwhelmingly remain in men's names. Of the total 19,505,124 residential units owned in Punjab, 18,687,527 (95.8 percent) were owned by men and 817,597 (4.2 percent) were owned with a GPI of 0.04.

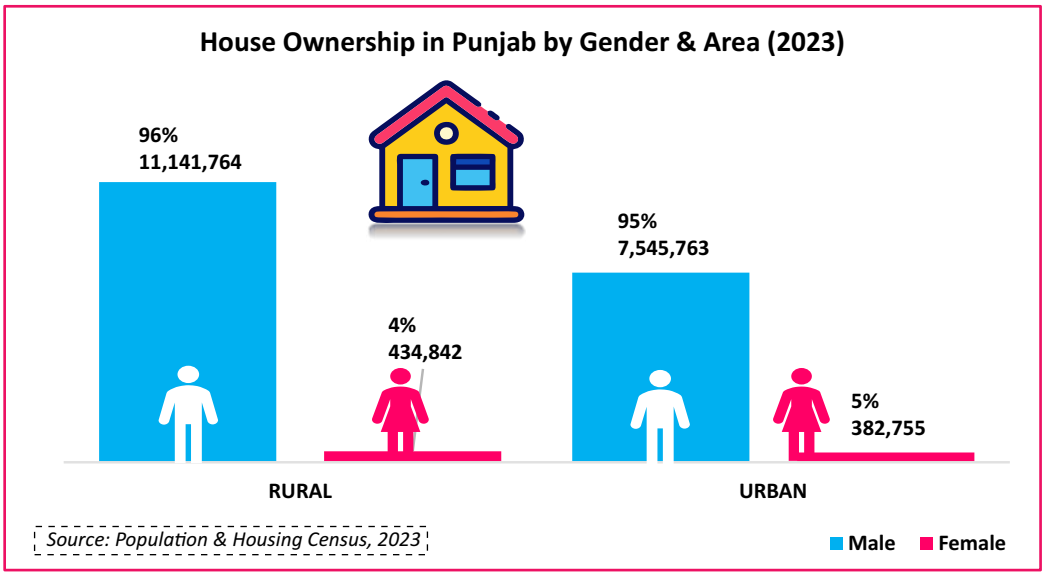


Figure 2.16

2.5.2 Head of Households

Punjab households are predominantly male-headed, though female-headed households, usually widows, divorced women, or single mothers, form an important minority. As per PHC 2023, Punjab recorded a total of 19.83 million individuals aged 15 years and above identified as heads of household. Of these, 18.55 million were male (93.5 percent), forming the overwhelming majority. Female heads of household numbered 1.28 million (6.4 percent), while only 3,626 transgender individuals (0.02 percent) were reported in this category. These households often face higher poverty risks and reduced access to social protection.

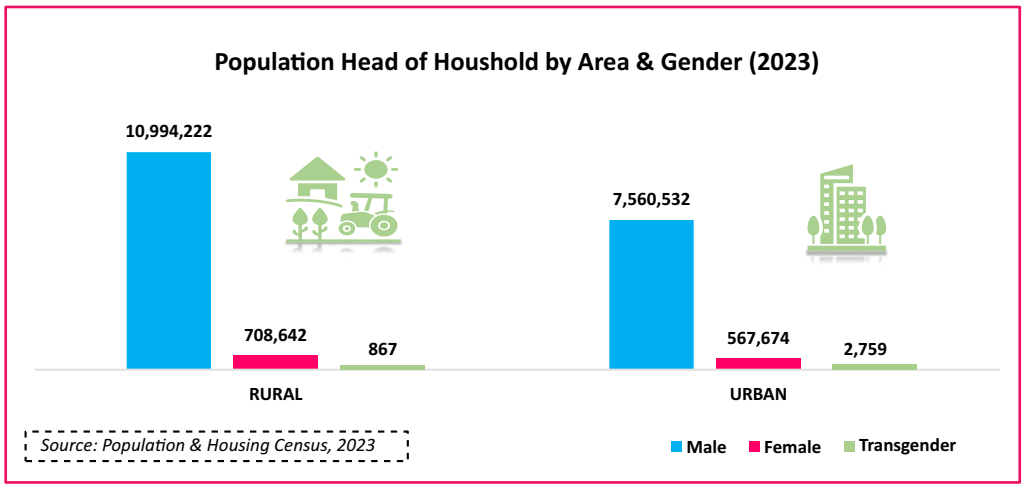


Figure 2.17

Interestingly, while female representation remains limited overall, it is slightly higher in urban areas, a possible reflection of changing social and economic dynamics, including greater female participation in employment and decision-making roles.

2.5.3 Types of Households

In 2023, the majority of Punjab's population resided in regular housing units. Overall, there were 64.91 million males (98.4 percent), 61.90 million females (98.5 percent), and 13,279 transgender persons (97.6 percent) living in such dwellings. Institutional housing accommodated a much smaller share; 0.29 million males (0.4 percent), 0.11 million females (0.2 percent), and 27 transgender persons (0.2 percent). A negligible proportion was recorded as homeless: 0.07 million males (0.1 percent), 0.03 million females (0.05 percent), and 651 transgender persons (2.2 percent).

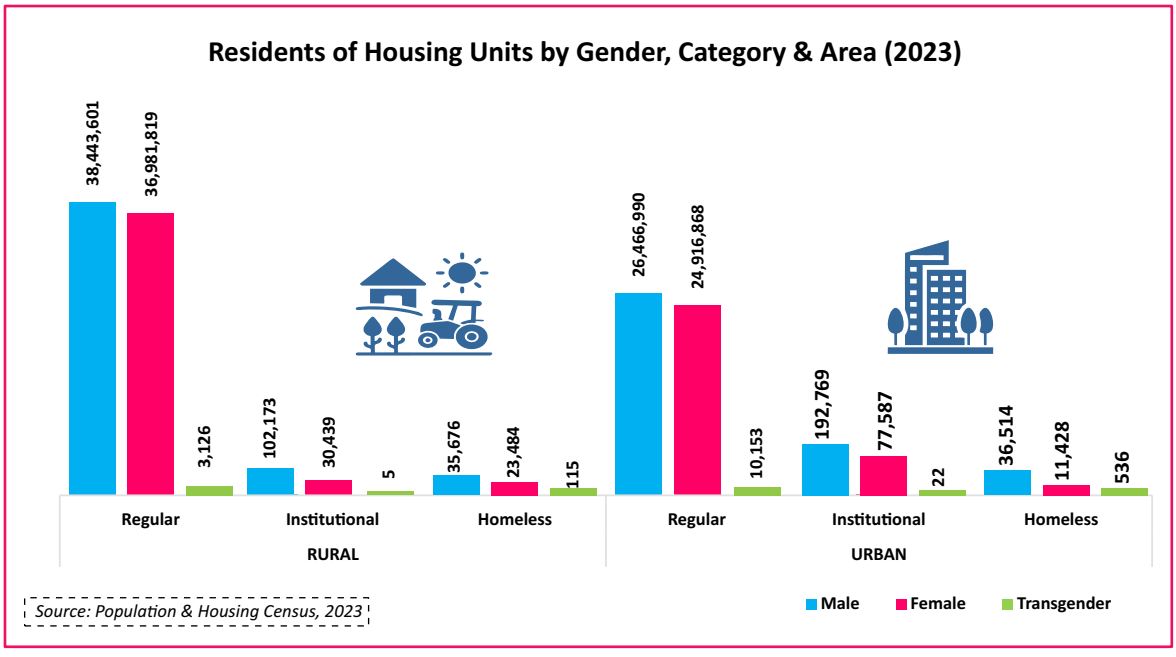


Figure 2.18

Rural–urban variation was evident, with regular housing dominating both areas. However, the urban share of institutional housing was slightly higher, particularly among males (192,769 compared to 102,173 in rural areas), reflecting the concentration of hostels, hospitals, and other collective living arrangements in cities. Conversely, rural areas had a marginally higher count of homeless males and females.

Recent studies in Pakistan have linked rural housing vulnerability to agricultural dependence, poverty, and limited access to essential services. For many households, seasonal migration or temporary displacement during agricultural off-seasons contributes to periods of housing instability within rural areas rather than permanent relocation to cities. This helps explain why a small but notable number of homeless males and females were recorded in rural Punjab, despite urban areas typically facing greater housing pressure overall.[77]

2.5.4 Ownership of Mobile and SIM card

Mobile phone ownership is nearly universal among men but lags severely for women. Since SIM registration requires a CNIC, women without IDs face additional exclusion. Limited phone access reduces women's connectivity to markets, emergency services, and e-governance.

The GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report 2025 shows that women in Pakistan face disadvantages at every stage of the mobile-internet journey. The largest gap appears at the very start, where only 58% of women own a mobile phone compared to 93% of men. While, Daily use and the ability to engage in diverse online activities remain much lower for women.

77 (Talpur, 2021), (Hamza, Shi, & Hossain, 2024)

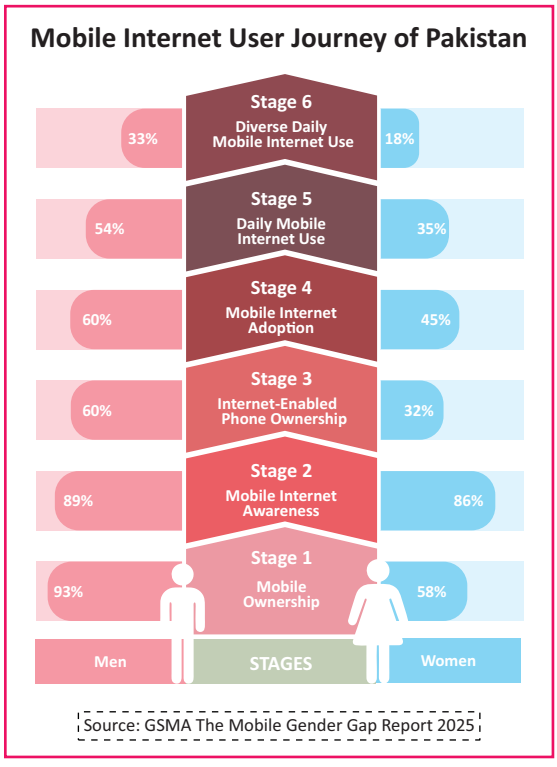


Figure 2.19

The data received from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) revealed that the number of cellular subscribers in Punjab increased from 103.48 million in 2023 to 105.68 million in 2024, with a significant gender gap among the subscribers. In 2024, 76.5 million (72.4 percent) men owned mobile subscriptions compared to only 29.17 million (27.6 percent) women, and these proportions were same as of 2023. This imbalance is reflected in the GPI, which stands at 0.38.

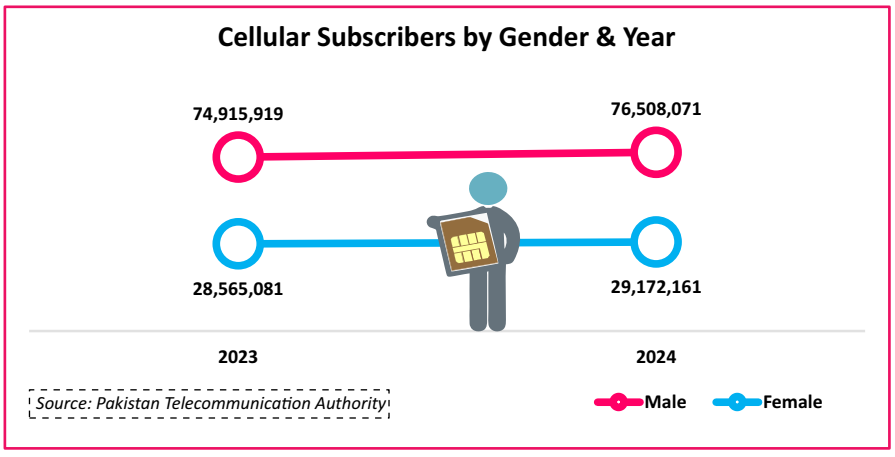


Figure 2.20

2.5.5 Usage of Information and Communication

Access to mass media remains gendered. While television and radio penetration are high, women's exposure is significantly lower than men's due to literacy and mobility barriers.[78] However, recent reports show that women's mobile internet usage in Pakistan jumped from 33 percent in 2023 to 45 percent in 2024 (as shown in figure 2.21).

78 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017–18

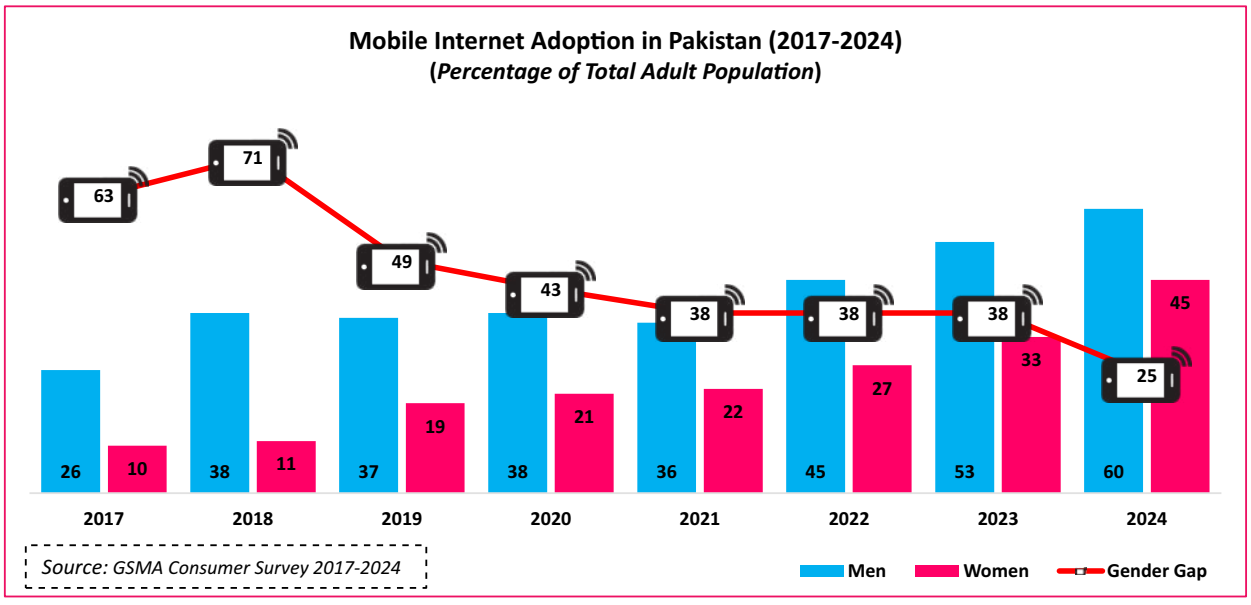


Figure 2.21

According to the data received by PTA, mobile broadband (MBB) usage also increased, rising from 70.96 million users in 2023 to 76.99 million in 2024. However, the gender divide remains substantial here as well. In 2023, 50.8 million men (71.6 percent) used MBB services compared to only 20.2 million women (28.4 percent). In 2024, the share shifted slightly to 72.5 percent male and 27.5 percent female, showing almost no improvement. The GPI for MBB dropped from 0.40 in 2023 to 0.38 in 2024, indicating a widening disparity.

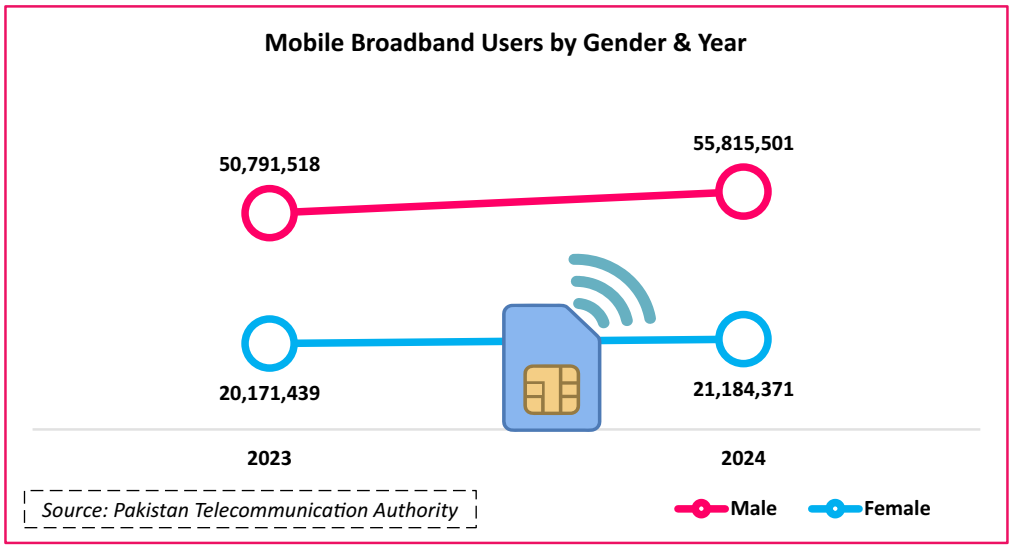


Figure 2.22

2.6 Civil Registration and Vital Statistics under NADRA

Civil registration systems (CRVS) are the foundation of demographic governance. In Punjab, NADRA oversees registration of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and issuance of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs). While registration coverage has improved significantly, gender disparities remain in completeness and accessibility.

2.6.1 Birth Registrations

Digital birth registration through hospitals and union councils has increased Punjab's coverage, with the number of registered births in the province rising from 5,415,152 in 2023 to 5,518,439 in 2024. In 2024, 2,802,191 (50.8 percent) of the registered births were of boys compared to 2,716,211 (49.2 percent) girls, while in 2023 boys accounted for 52.2 percent and girls 47.8 percent of the registrations. The GPI improved from 0.91 in 2023 to 0.97 in 2024. Transgender births represented a minimal share in both years (0.001% each in 2023 and 2024).

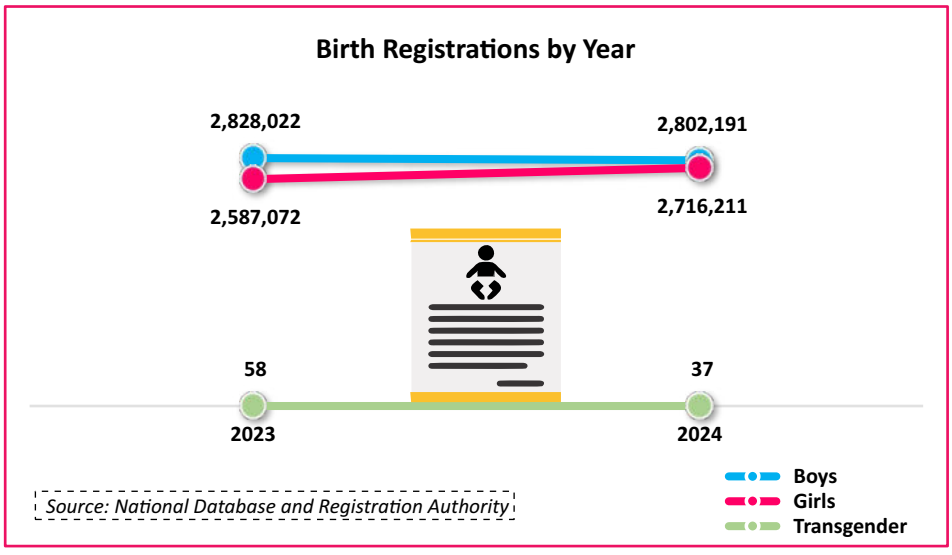


Figure 2.23

The district-wise illustration of birth registrations in Punjab is shown in the figure 2.24.

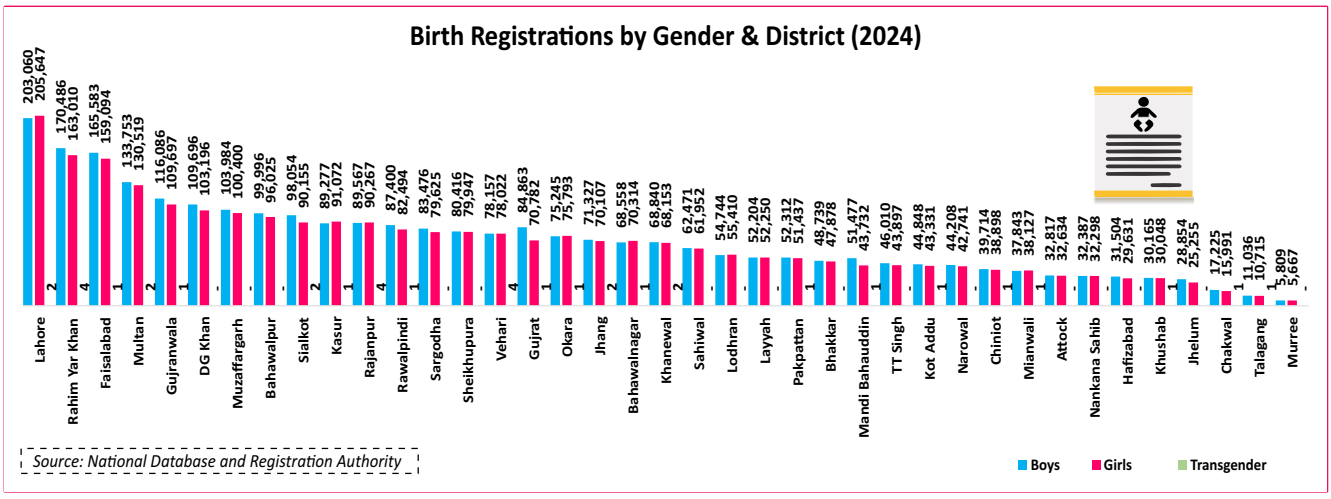


Figure 2.24

2.6.2 Death Registrations

The number of registered deaths increased from 744,027 in 2023 to 829,579 in 2024, showing continued growth in overall registrations and a persistent gender gap. In 2024, 538,038 (64.9 percent) of the registered deaths were of men compared to 291,510 (35.1 percent) women, and these proportions remained the same as in 2023. The female-to-male ratio stood at 0.54 in both the years. The transgender persons represented an extremely small share (0.003 in 2023 and 0.004 percent in 2024).

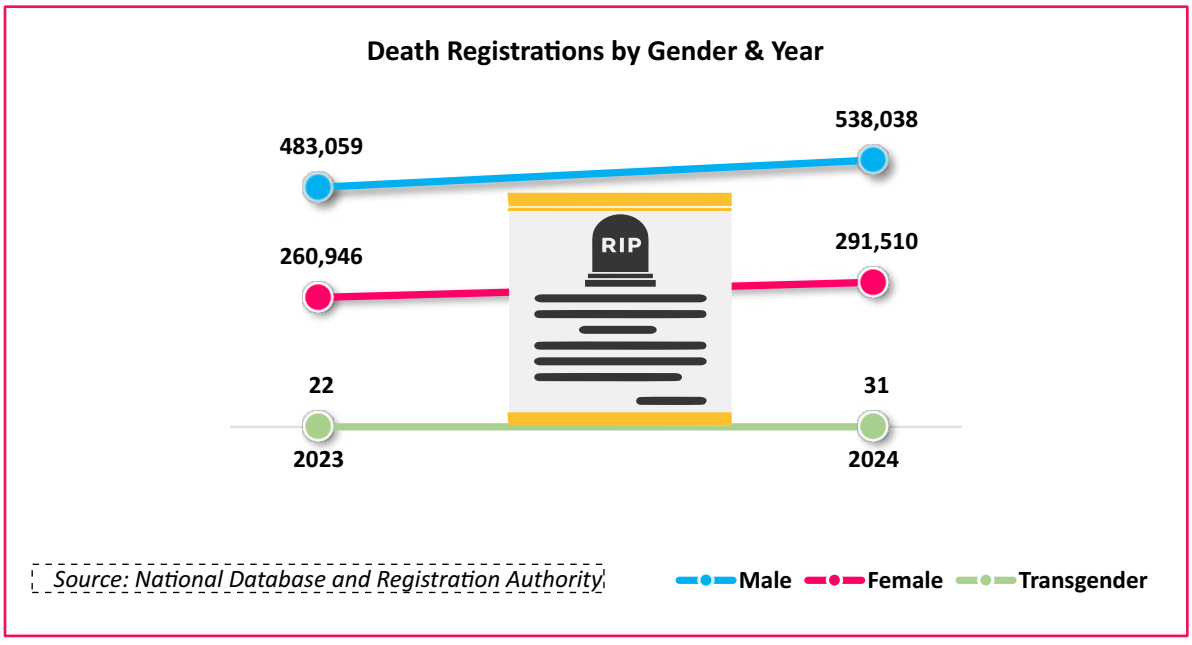


Figure 2.25

The highest proportion of death registrations among women was observed in Lahore and Faisalabad, while the lowest was in Talagang & Murree, most likely due to their comparatively smaller populations and their recent establishment as districts; a detailed district-wise analysis is presented in the figure 2.26.

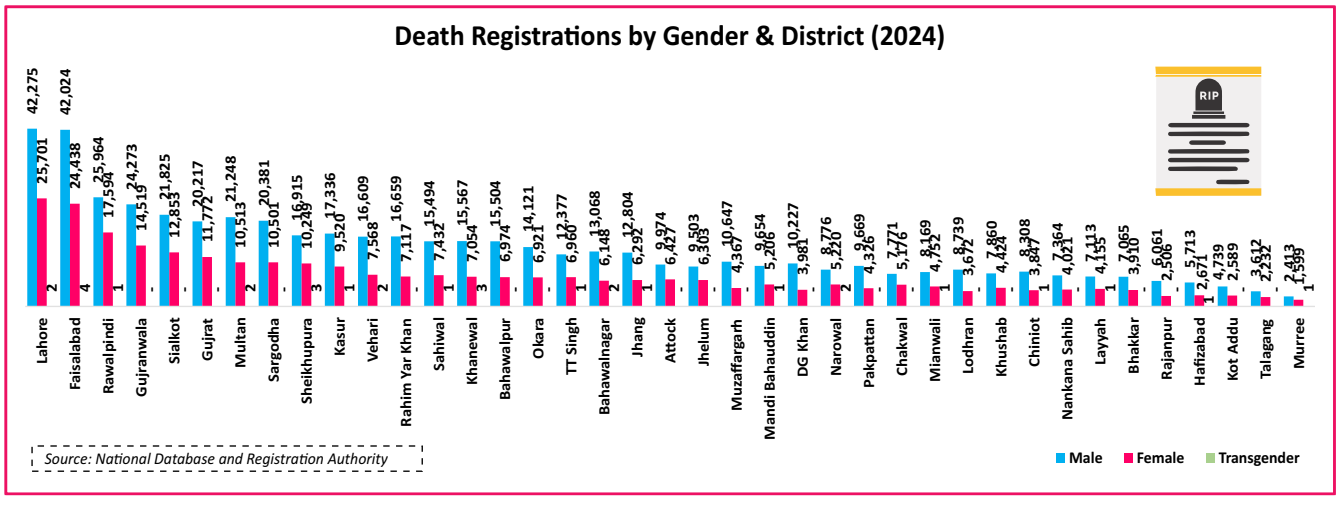


Figure 2.26

Flood-Related Mortality in Punjab (2023–2024)

In Pakistan, extreme events like floods and yearly heatwaves, especially in recent years, have threatened lives and livelihoods. The 2022 floods in Pakistan, which were caused by excessive rainfall and led to an estimated USD 30 billion in damages, could possibly be a norm if global emissions continue their current trajectory.

Monsoon Flood stricken areas in Punjab reported a significant rise in number of disaster related mortality in 2024. The highest proportion of deaths in both years (2023 & 2024) was of men, followed by women and children. Districts with highest number of deaths were Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Bahawalnagar & Rahimyar Khan.

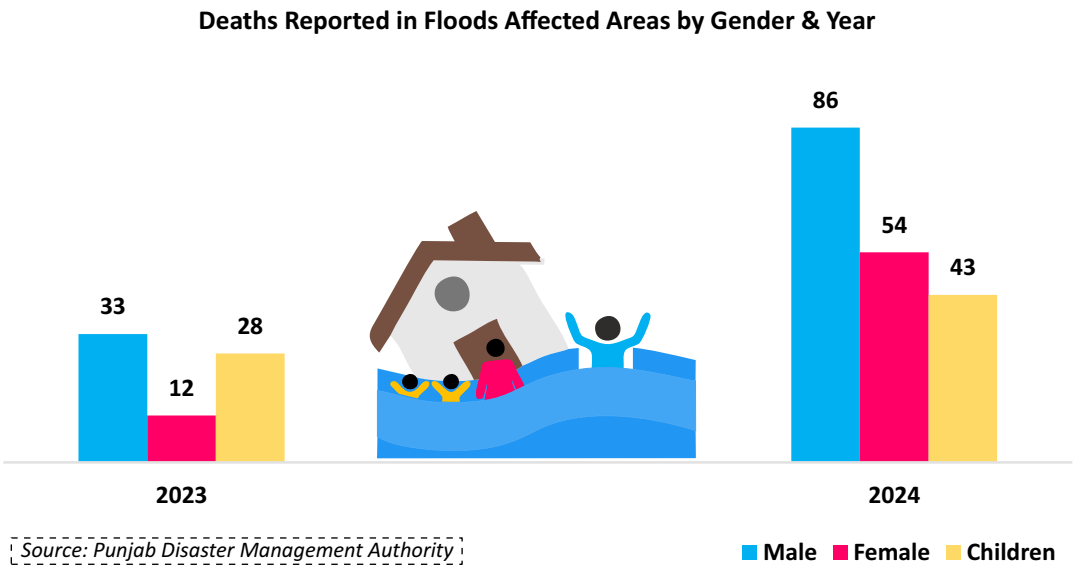


Figure 2.27

2.6.3 Marriage Registrations

Marriage registration has improved, with digital systems linking union councils and NADRA offices. As per data received by NADRA, marriage registrations increased by 10.77 percent in the province, rising from 880,774 marriages registered in 2023 to 975,659 in 2024.

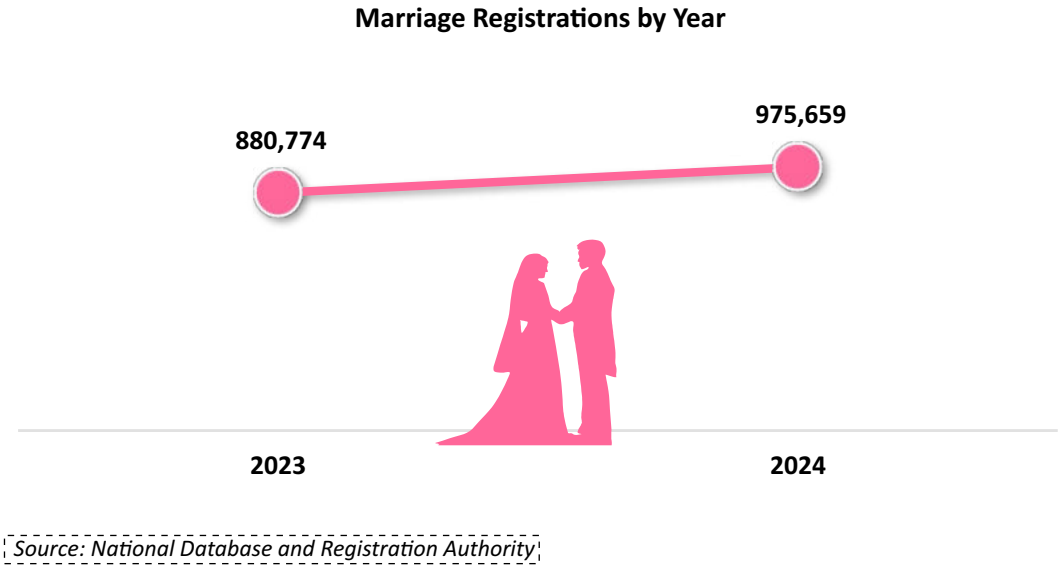


Figure 2.28

A detailed district-wise analysis illustrated in Figure 2.29 reveals that in 2024, the highest number of marriages were registered in Lahore while the lowest was registered in Murree district.

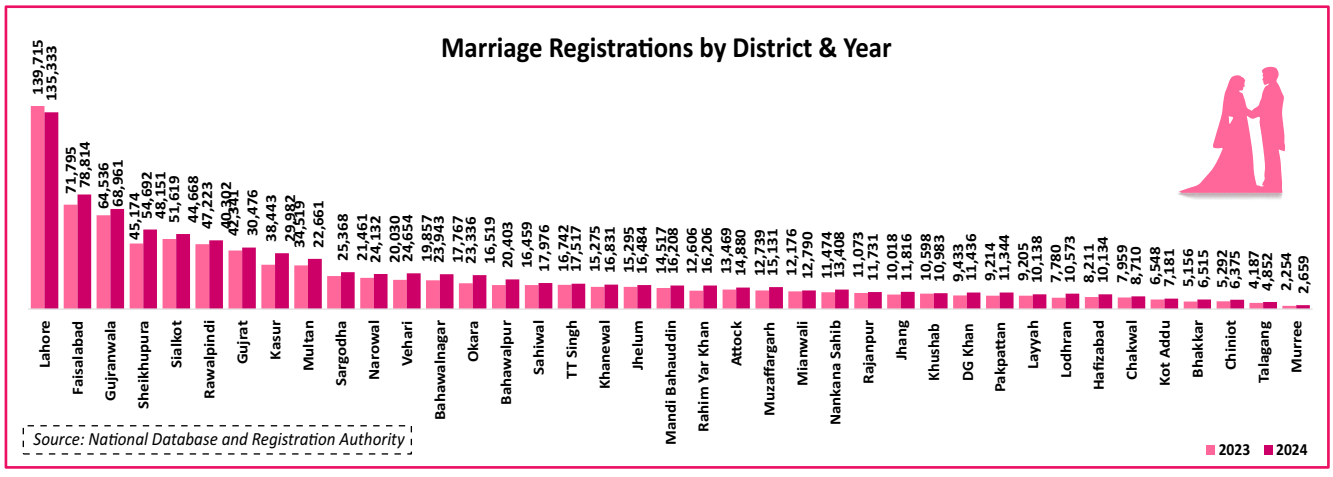


Figure 2.29

2.6.4 Divorce Registration

Formal registration protects women's rights to maintenance, inheritance, and remarriage. Social stigma still prevents many women from recording divorces. Registered divorces remain a small fraction of total marriages, but official data show a gradual increase in recent years.

The total number of divorce-related registrations in Punjab increased from 121,097 in 2023 to 141,708 in 2024. Registrations for Talaq-e-Tafweez, which constituted the largest share of all divorce cases (73 percent in 2024), increased by 12.9 percent, while, registrations for Khula rose significantly by 29.8 percent in 2024.

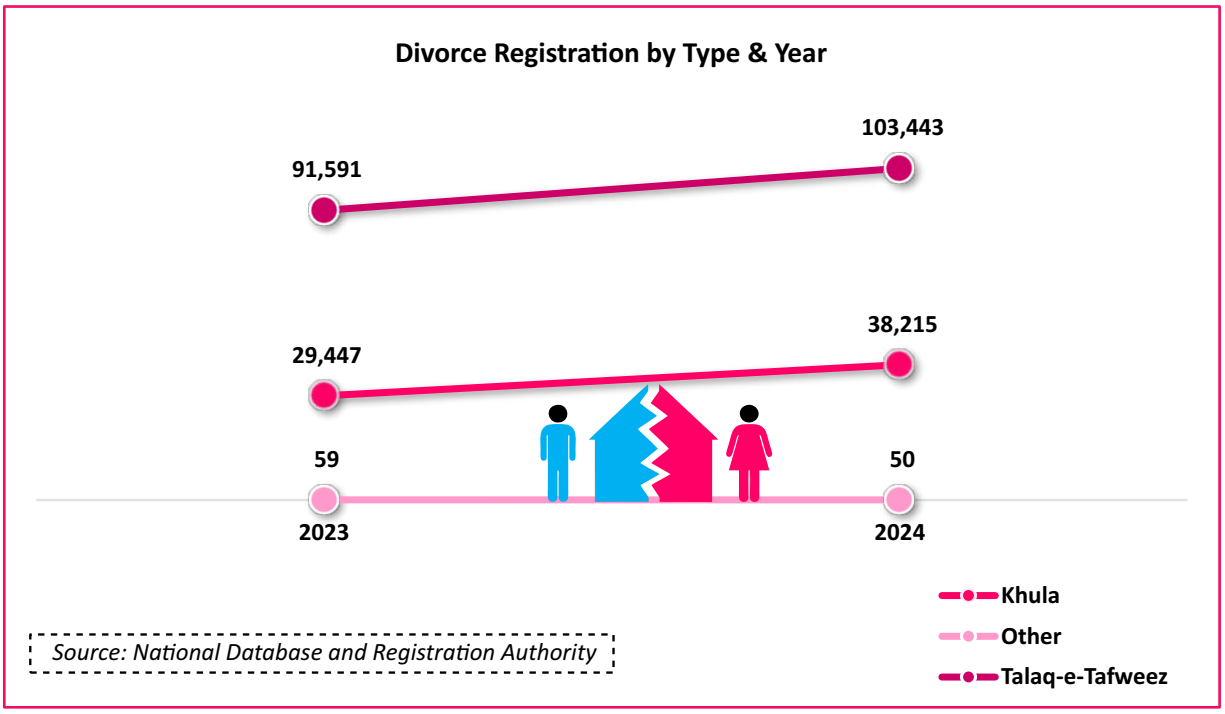


Figure 2.30

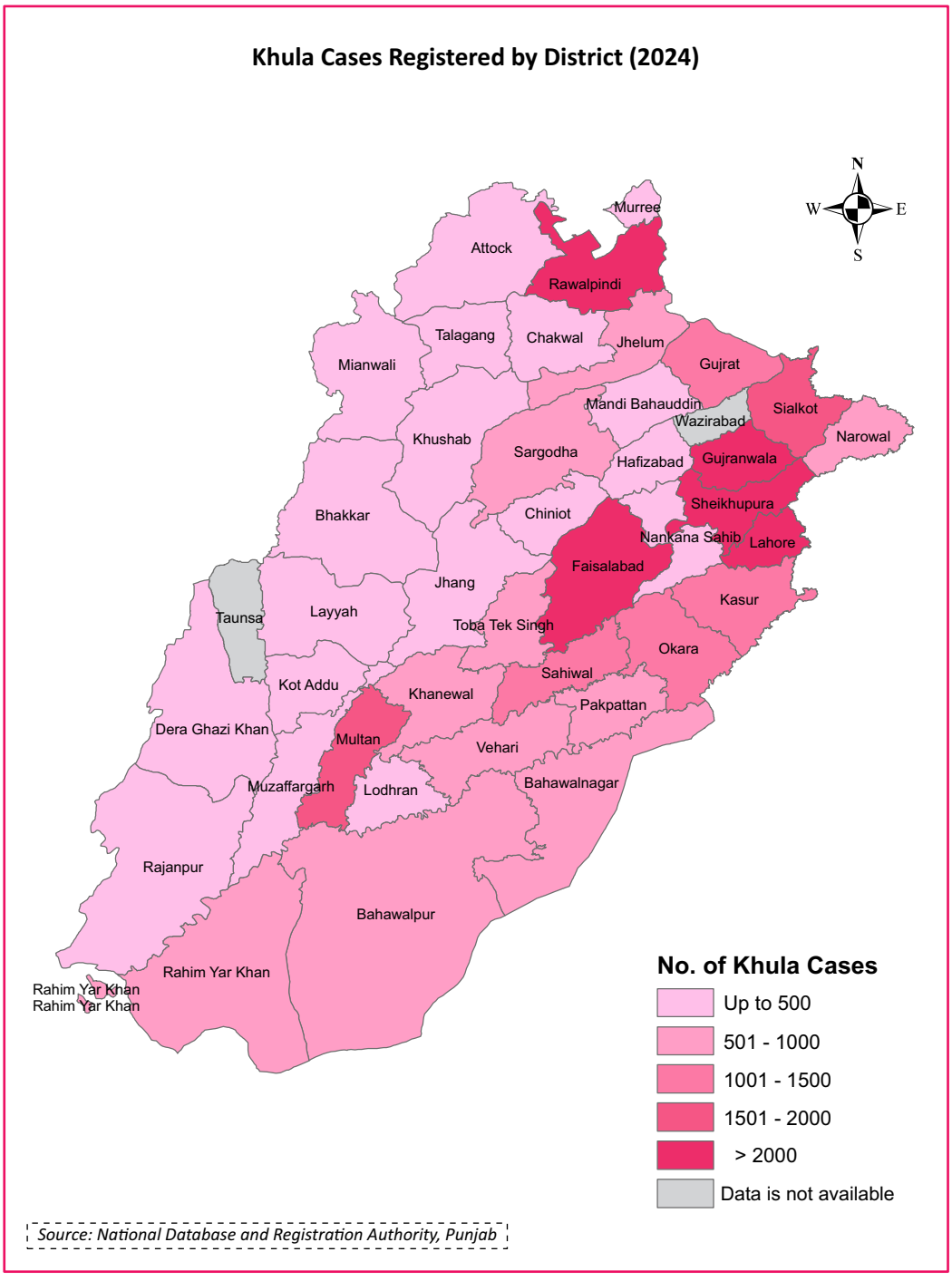


Figure 2.31

2.6.4.1 Registration of Widowers and Widows (Above Age 60)

Elderly widows/widowers are among the most vulnerable groups, often facing income insecurity, limited employment opportunities, and reliance on social support. Their registration provides verified identification for targeted social protection and support. Data show significantly more widows than widowers due to men's higher mortality; however, the registration of widows and widowers decreased by 56.5 percent from 2,909 in 2023 to 1,265 in 2024.

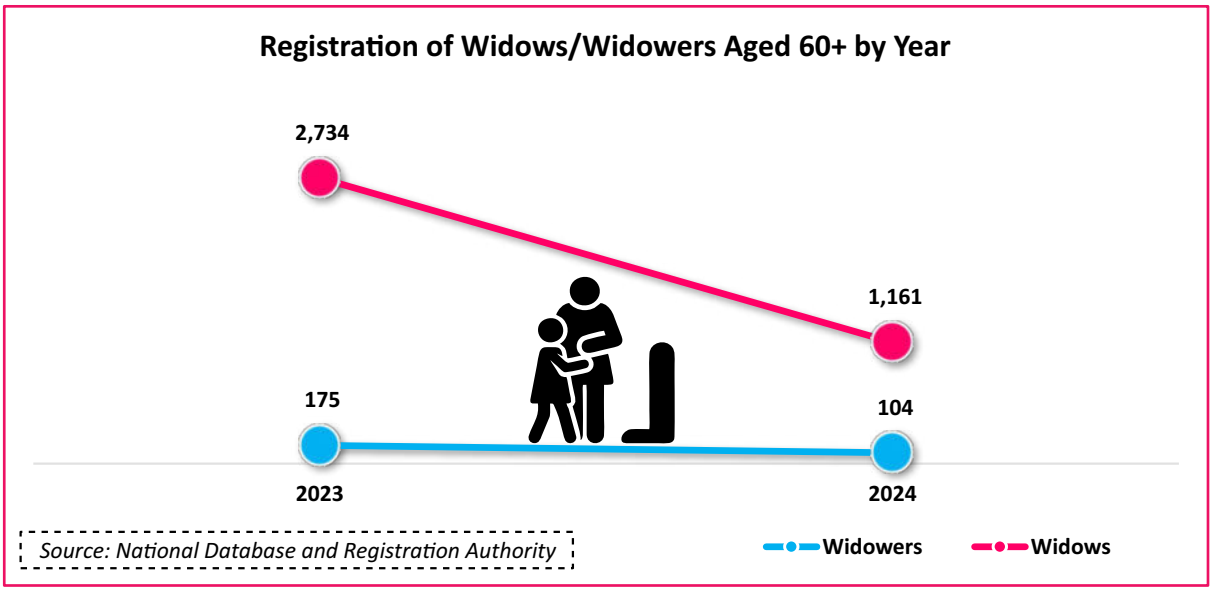


Figure 2.32

2.6.5 Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC)

The CNIC system has achieved nearly universal adult coverage in Punjab. CNICs are essential for accessing services, voting, and property ownership. Women's CNIC ownership has risen sharply through targeted mobile registration initiatives and local outreach. NADRA also issues special CNICs for persons with disabilities, and B-Forms for minors (CRC) to ensure early inclusion. Maintaining equitable access for rural women, through mobile vans, flexible office hours, and awareness campaigns, remains a key goal.

2.6.5.1 CNIC Holders

The number of valid CNIC holders (including minors) increased by 0.64 percent from 77,831,031 in 2023 to 78,327,288 in 2024 where the highest increase was among women. Among all valid CNICs in 2024, 40,722,759 (52 percent) belonged to men, 37,602,450 (48 percent) were of women while only 2,079 (0.003 percent) transgender persons had a valid CNIC. The GPI of valid CNIC holders in 2024 was 0.92.

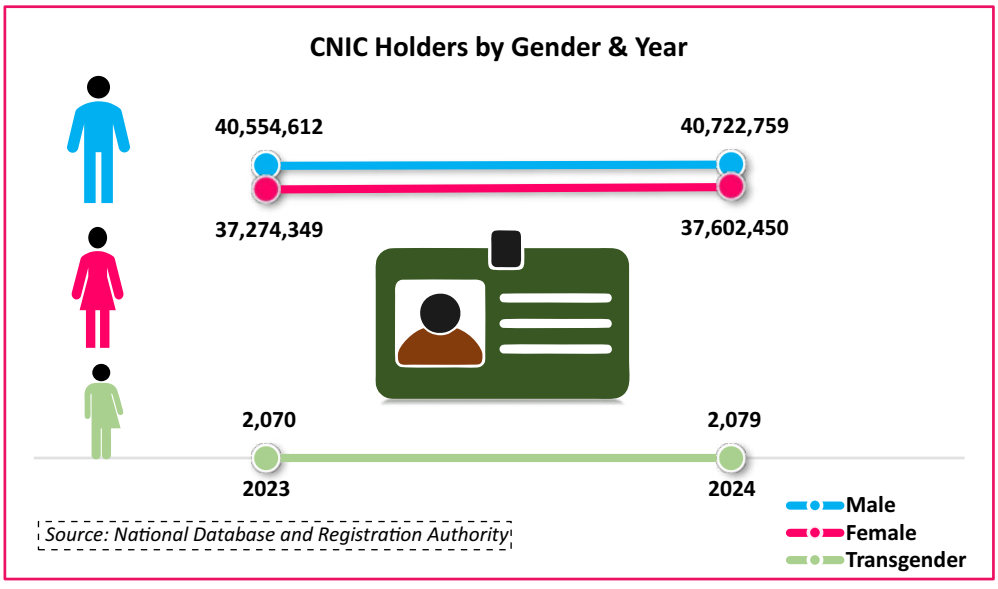


Figure 2.33

Figure 2.34 depicts a district-wise profile for adults holding a valid CNIC issued by NADRA.

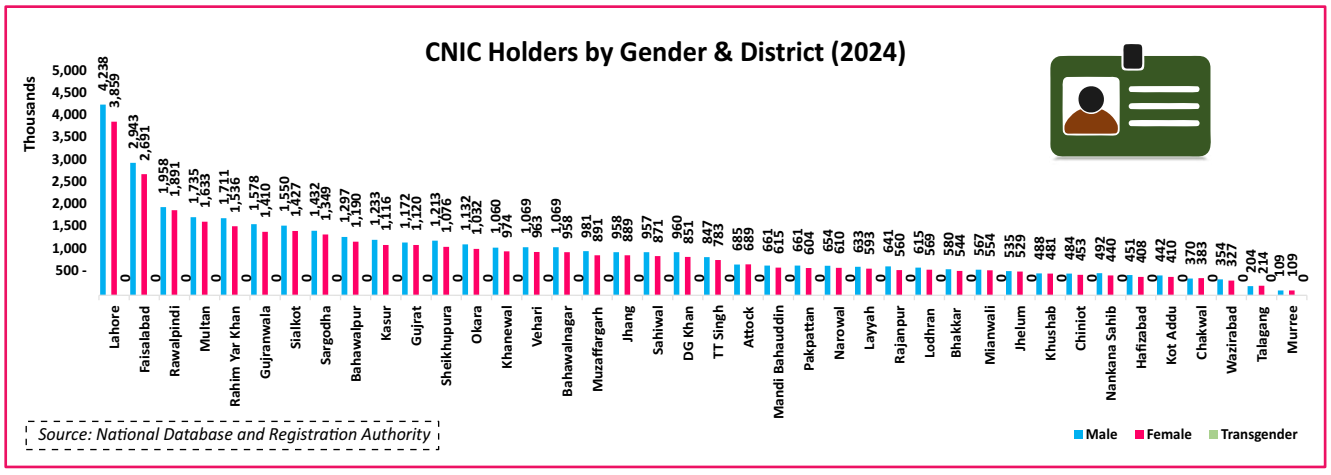


Figure 2.34

2.6.5.2 CNIC Registrations for Adults

A yearly comparison of CNIC registration for adults (aged 18 and above) in Punjab shows a mixed trend between 2023 and 2024, with a significant decline of approximately 46.2% from 923,268 in 2023 to 496,754 in 2024.

While the proportion of male registrants slightly increased from 32.0% in 2023 to 33.9% in 2024, the proportion of female registrants decreased from 68.0% to 66.1%, with a female-to-male ratio of 1.95 in 2024.

The registration of transgender persons, however, remained very low, with 22 registrations in 2023 dropping to 9 in 2024.

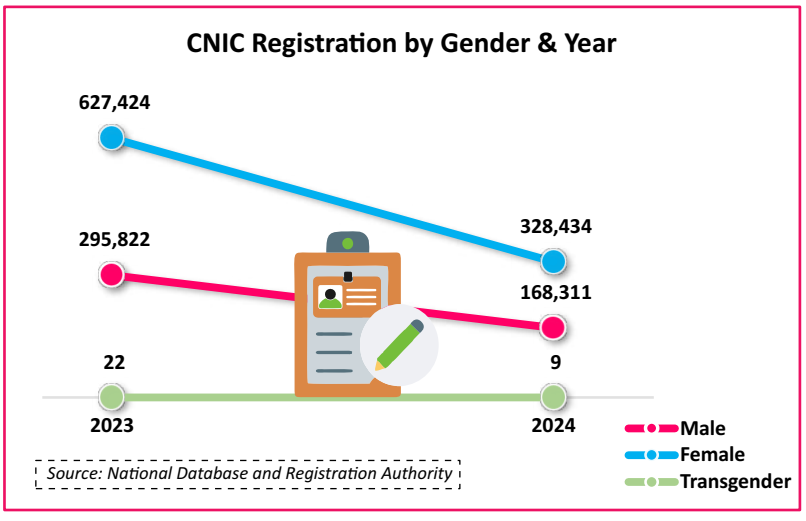


Figure 2.35

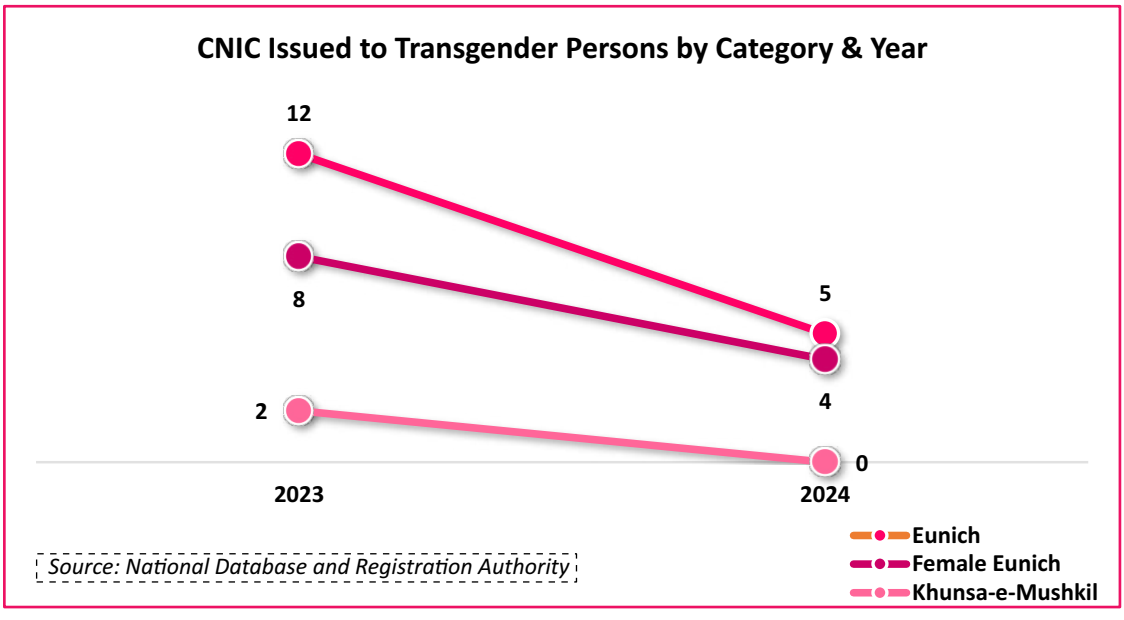


Figure 2.36

A district-wise view of CNIC registrations for adults is presented below in figure 2.37.

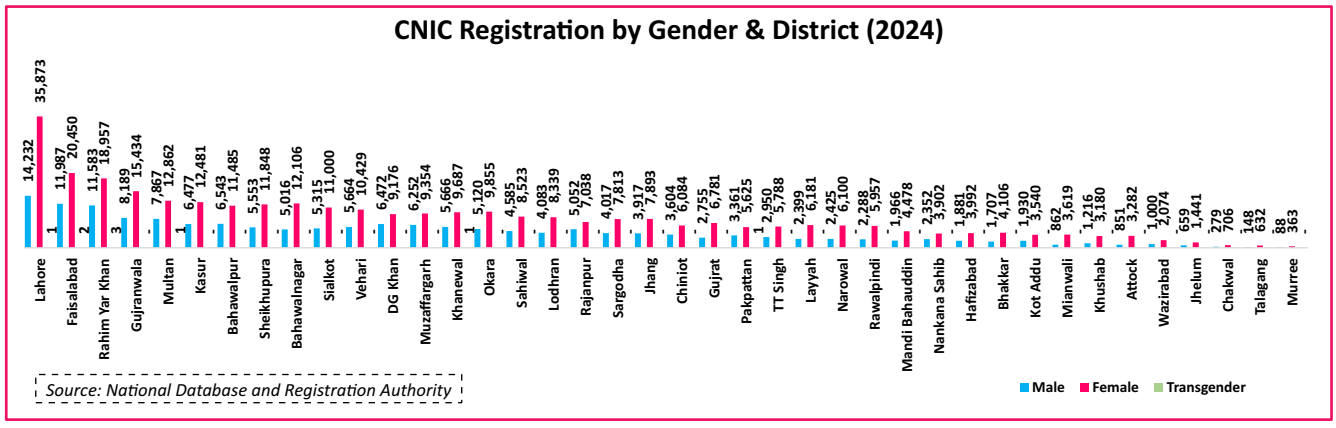


Figure 2.37

2.6.5.3 CNICs for Minors (CRC)

The registration of CNICs for minors increased by 4.5 percent for boys from 2,164,277 in 2023 to 2,262,832 in 2024. While that for girls increased by 6.3 percent from 2,038,198 to 2,167,532 (Figure). Of the total registrations in 2024, about 51 percent were boys, and about 49 percent were girls, with a GPI of 0.96.

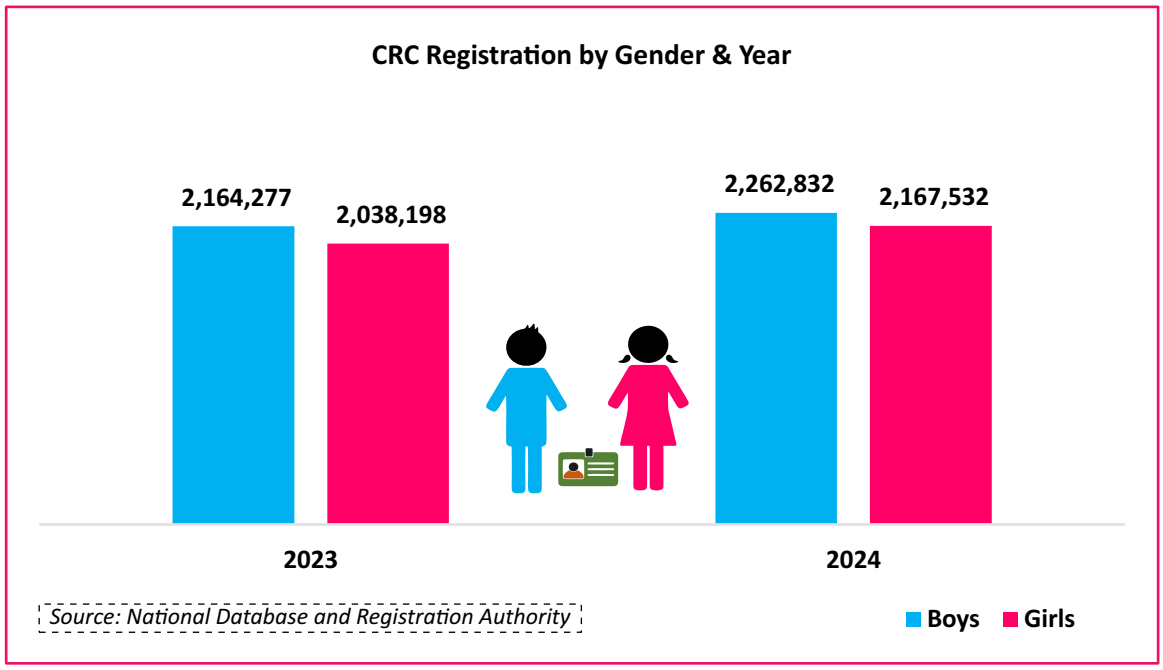


Figure 2.38

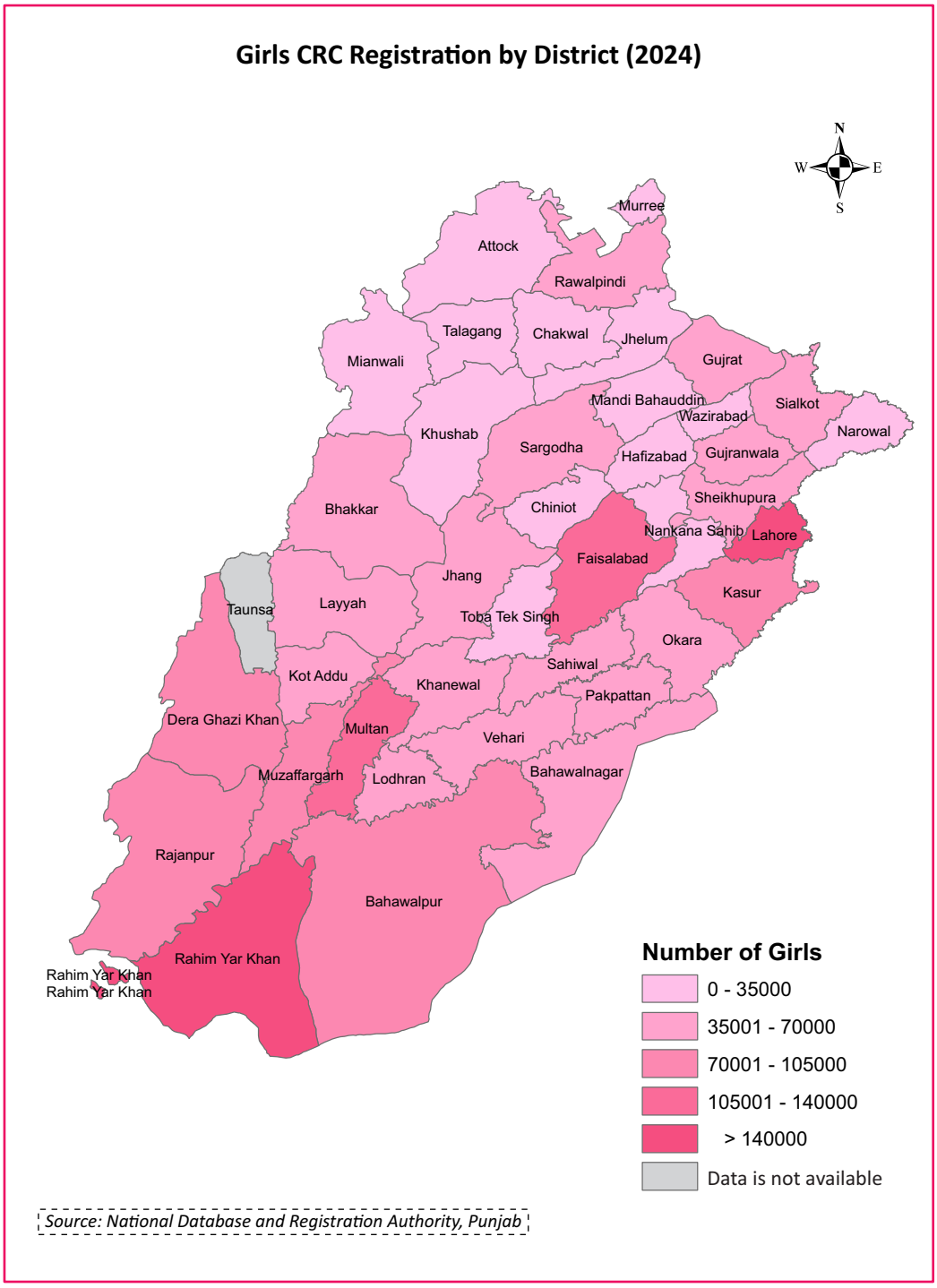

Girls CRC Registration by District (2024)
N
W
E
S
Murree
Attock
Rawalpindi
Talagang
Chakwal
Jhelum
Mianwali
Gujrat
Mandi Bahauddin
Wazirabad
Sialkot
Narowal
Khushab
Sargodha
Hafizabad
Gujranwala
Sheikhupura
Bhakkar
Chiniot
Nankana Sahib
Lahore
Faisalabad
Jhang
Kasur
Taunsa
Layyah
Toba Tek Singh
Okara
Sahiwal
Kot Addu
Khanewal
Pakpattan
Dera Ghazi Khan
Multan
Vehari
Muzaffargarh
Lodhran
Bahawalnagar
Rajanpur
Bahawalpur
Rahim Yar Khan
Rahim Yar Khan
Rahim Yar Khan
Number of Girls
0 - 35000
35001 - 70000
70001 - 105000
105001 - 140000
> 140000
Data is not available
Source: National Database and Registration Authority, Punjab

Figure 2.39

2.6.5.4 CNICs with Disability Logo

The introduction of a CNIC with a disability logo is a remarkable milestone towards formal recognition, which will enable access to quota-based employment, social security and welfare benefits. In 2023, NADRA issued 393,643 CNICs with a disability logo which increased to 404,682 in 2024. Of the total cards in 2024, 276,101 (68.2 percent) were issued to men, 128,576 (31.8 percent) to women, and only 5 were issued to transgender persons.

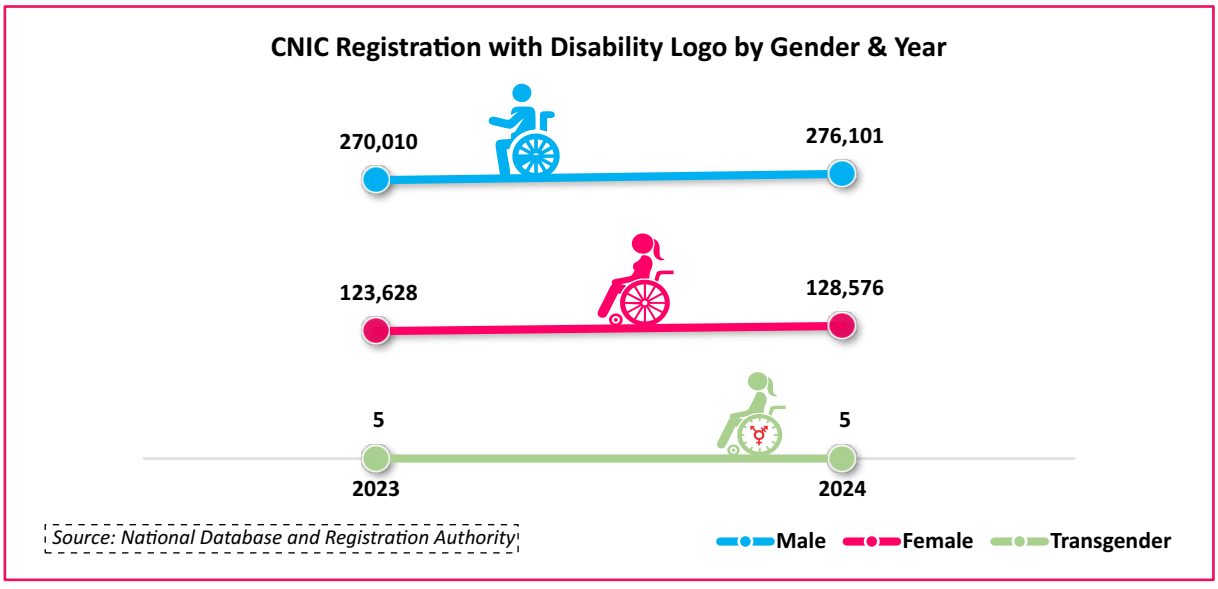


Figure 2.40

2.6.6 NADRA Mobile Van Registrations

NADRA operates Mobile Registration Vans (MRVs) to provide identity registration services for ease of access in far-flung areas throughout Pakistan. Data on MRVs indicate that more females than males benefited from the service in the years 2023 and 2024 as depicted in the figure 2.41.

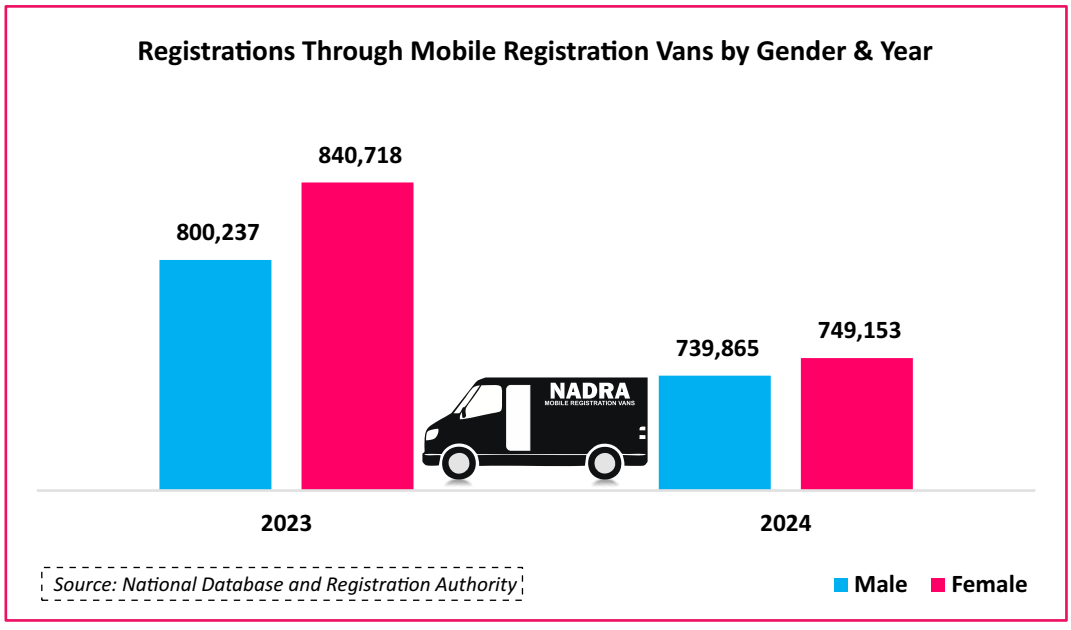


Figure 2.41

The district-wise view of registrations through MRVs reveals that the highest number of registrations was from Faisalabad and Okara, however, the lowest was from Attock and Taunsa.

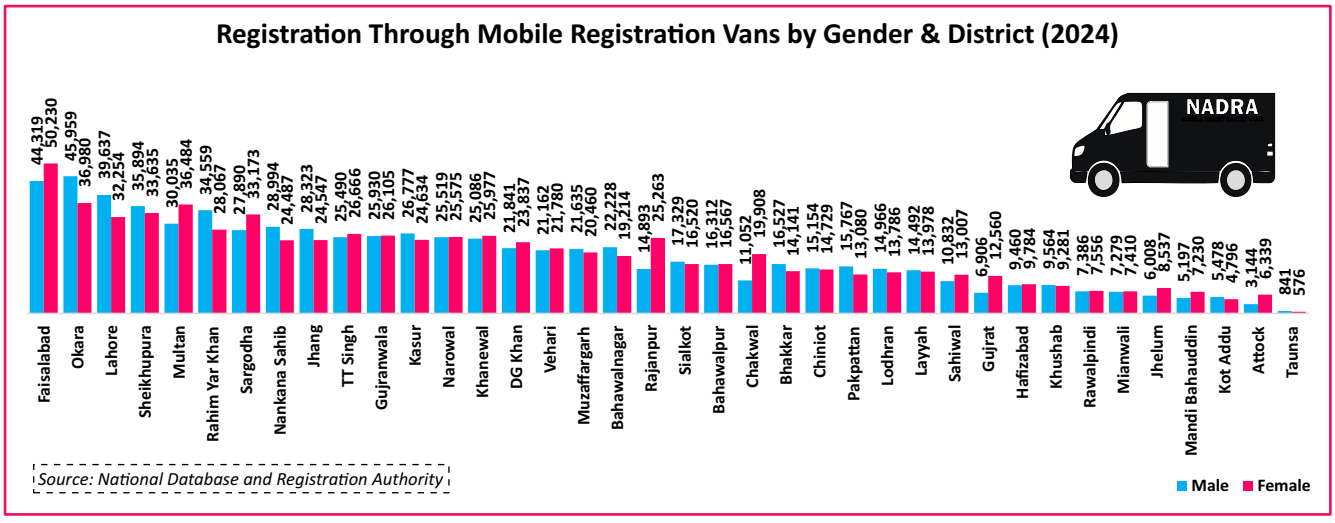


Figure 2.42

2.7 Conclusion

Punjab's demographic landscape offers both opportunities and responsibilities. Its youthful, expanding population and improving registration systems create strong foundations for inclusive growth. Yet, persistent gender disparities, especially in ownership, access and usage of information and communication, continue to limit the realisation of Punjab's demographic dividend. The province's ability to translate population growth into sustainable, gender-equitable development will depend on whether its women and girls are counted, educated, connected, and empowered.

2.8 Recommendations

Population structure reflects gendered undercounting rather than balance

Punjab's sex ratio and gender gaps in birth registrations hints at underlying issues such as possible undercounting of women, higher female mortality rates, and sociocultural biases, despite women's biological longevity.

- NADRA and PBS should strengthen female birth registration, gender-sensitive census and CRVS practices to correct structural invisibility of girls and women.
- Establish and expand NADRA-supported birth registration facilities within public spaces, including public hospitals, Union Council offices, and mobile registration units, to enable timely, on-site birth registration, reduce access barriers for families (especially women), and improve CRVS completeness and CNIC coverage.

Widowhood and divorce create gendered vulnerability

- Punjab Skill Development Department should introduce targeted skill development, livelihood training, and employment-linked programs for widowed and divorced women.
- The office of ombudsperson should provide legal aid to widowed and divorced women for inheritance rights
- Improve PSPA-led social protection for widowed and divorced women by prioritising their enrolment and easing documentation requirements.

CNIC gaps are a root driver of women's administrative, economic, and digital exclusion

- Scale up women-centred CNIC registration drives, particularly in underserved and remote areas, through NADRA mobile vans, ensuring predictable and regular presence.
- Reduce or waive CNIC registration and renewal fees for transgender, women and girls, particularly those from low-income households, to increase registration.
- Establish permanent or semi-permanent NADRA registration points in high-footfall public spaces such as public hospitals, maternity and child health centres, shopping malls, union councils etc.
- Strengthen community-level awareness and facilitation through lady health workers, community mobilisers, and local women's organisations.
- Ensure gender-responsive service provision at registration points, including the presence of women staff, privacy arrangements, and flexible hours.

Identity Gap for Transgender Persons

- PBS should strengthen the enumeration of transgender persons by revising census methodologies to reduce undercounting mainly due to proxy reporting and social stigma. This should include enhanced enumerator training on gender diversity, clearer guidance on asking and recording sex, and the integration of confidential, self-identification mechanisms within census instruments.
- NADRA should proactively address the gap between census recognition and legal identity by simplifying and standardising procedures for CNIC issuance to transgender persons.

Digital access remains sharply gendered

- WDD, through inter-agency coordination and public-private partnerships, should promote affordable smartphones, women-only digital literacy programs, and simplified SIM registration for women, especially widows, divorced women, and female-headed households.

Asset ownership is overwhelmingly male

- Govt of Punjab should enforce inheritance and property rights by mandating women's names on property records, expanding legal aid, and incentivising joint or female ownership in housing schemes.

Disability prevalence is under-measured, with women in rural areas particularly invisible

- Health Department to ensure early childhood screening through school programs and introduce women-focused disability screening through BHUs etc.
- NADRA should integrate functional limitations/disability in issuing CNICs with a functional disability/limitation marker, to ensure broader recognition and access to appropriate services, accommodations, and entitlements.
- Integrate functional limitation indicators (not just certified disability) into provincial planning, education, labour, and social protection policies.

Address female under-diagnosis and reporting gaps in disability and functional limitation

- LGCD should conduct community awareness campaigns to increase visibility of women and girls with disabilities, especially those with mental, psychosocial, and cognitive impairments.

Strengthen rural disability services with a gender lens

- Health Dept should expand rehabilitation, physiotherapy, and assistive device provision at tehsil and district levels.
- Ensure transport stipends or mobile services for rural women with disabilities who face mobility restrictions.

Link disability recognition to CNIC, social protection, and digital access

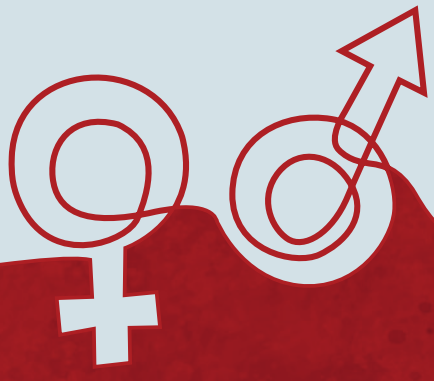
- Automate and link pathways from disability assessment to CNICs carrying a disability and/or functional logo and facilitate streamlined enrolment into relevant social protection programmes, including BISP, health insurance etc.
- Pakistan Telecommunication Authority & Punjab Information Technology Board should prioritise women with disabilities in SIM ownership, digital literacy, and e-government access programs.

Protect disabled women from economic and care-related vulnerability

- Punjab Social Protection Authority & Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal department should design caregiver support and cash transfers recognising unpaid care burdens borne by women with disabilities.
- Promote inclusive livelihoods (home-based, remote, cooperative models) tailored for women with physical or functional limitations.



GOVERNENCE



03 GOVERNANCE

KEY FINDINGS

- In the Senate of Pakistan, men accounted for 82 percent of members, while women comprised 18 percent, resulting in a GPI of 0.2.
- In the National Assembly, women's representation on general seats remained minimal, with only 12 women elected, while the majority entered through reserved seats. Overall, the GPI of National Assembly membership stood at 0.26.
- The Punjab Provincial Assembly comprises 371 members, including 297 general seats, 66 seats reserved for women, and 8 seats for minorities. Men constituted 79 percent of members and women 21 percent. Only 11 women were elected on general seats, representing 3 percent of general seat holders. The Assembly's GPI was 0.2.
- In Punjab, a total of 37.3 million votes were cast in the 2024 general elections. Male voters accounted for 57.1 percent, or 21.3 million votes, while women constituted 42.8 percent, or 16 million votes. Voter turnout was higher among men at 55 percent, compared with 47 percent among women.
- Public sector employment shows that men comprised 70 percent of government employees, totalling 677,067, while women accounted for 30 percent, or 293,849 employees, resulting in a GPI of 0.43. Female employment remained concentrated in the Health, Education, and Population Welfare departments, with limited representation across most other departments.
- In 2024, all 19 bills initiated in the Punjab Assembly were moved by male members. Of the 33 resolutions, 76 percent were initiated by men and 24 percent by women, resulting in a GPI of 0.32.
- PPSC recruitment trends show that women constituted 60 percent of selected candidates, compared to 40 percent men. However, women applicants were largely concentrated in the Health, Education, and Population Welfare departments.

INTRODUCTION

Governance is central to managing public policy and is defined as the process through which state and non-state actors interact to design and implement policies within a given set of formal and informal rules that shape and are shaped by power.[79] [80] It also refers to how public officials and institutions exercise authority to provide goods and services through policy formulation and implementation.[81] Varyingly defined and understood, governance primarily deals with democratisation, strengthening state institutions and developing human capital. Since 1989, this concept has been discussed in multiple scholarly studies, policies and international reports due to its complex nature and diverse scope both in theoretical and practical terms. Despite being a vaguely defined term/concept, governance has evolved into a dynamic concept, catering to the constantly changing needs of citizens and societies.[82]

The concept of governance is sufficiently broad to encompass government, private, corporate, state and also non-state entities. Government is the foundational structure that steers and decides policy dynamics. Good governance goes beyond that and adds layers of frameworks and checks on how things would be done.[83] The efficient, fair, honest, open, and responsible exercise of power is known as good governance.[84]

Theoretically and empirically, it is well established that the presence of women in leadership or senior management roles significantly and favourably affects the policy design and implementation process. Research shows women often bring different perspectives and priorities to public policy arena (greater emphasis on health, education and social services). Women contribute through a more humanistic, family-centred, and community-based viewpoint at political platforms.[85] Exclusion of almost half of the population (women) undermines key indicators of good governance, as principles such as inclusiveness, participation, responsiveness, contestation, and consensus-oriented decision-making are not fully realised.

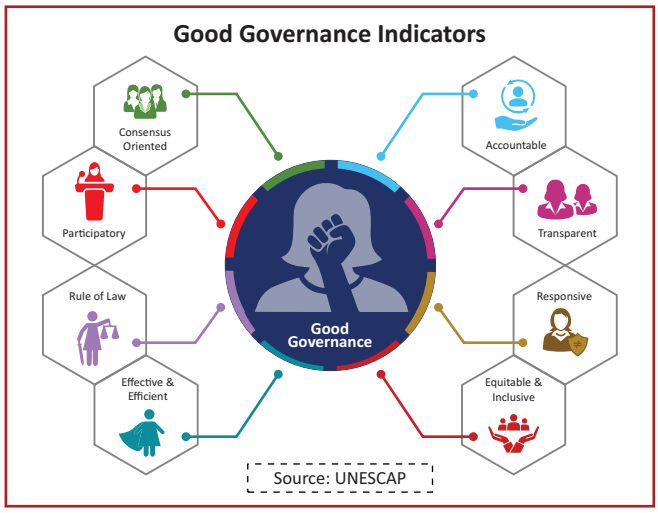


Figure 3.1

Nonetheless, orthodox gender portrayals and objectifying women in politics continue to prevail across societies and cultures. Politics is not merely the means through which societies regulate and organise themselves; it also determines who gets what, when and how.[86] Knowing who pays the highest or lowest price for policies and who benefits from them can help one understand politics.[87] Power dynamics and political structures continue to disproportionately affect women during the course of their political or leadership journey.

Article 7 of CEDAW specifically articulates the right of women to hold public office and participate in the formulation of government policy.[88] It explicitly directs states to empower women to perform all public functions at all tiers of government. The Beijing Declaration (1995), an aspirational policy framework that acknowledges women's access to and full participation in leadership or decision- making roles, is one of the fundamental principles of the rights-based movement to empower women.[89] It pledged to remove barriers and increase women's participation to 30 percent through diverse means of training, frameworks and strategies. While it was regarded as a significant milestone for women's inclusion and empowerment, its objectives remain largely unrealised. Women's greater involvement in political decision-making has been recognised as a specific objective that necessitates conscious state actions in the context of SDG-5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls).[90] SDG-5.5 highlights women's participation in politics and decision-making, whereas SDG target 16.7 intends to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory decision-making in state institutions.[91] Women's participation and representation in public governance,

79 (Thomas R. Dye, 2017). Public policy is what the government chooses to do and not to do)
80 (World Bank, World Development Report, 2017)
81 (World Bank Group, 1992)
82 (Valeriya Mechkova, 2022)
83 (Lee, Marshall, Rallis, & Matt, 2015)
84 (CGAI, 2016)
85 (Valdini,2019)
86 (Harold Laswell, 1958)
87 (James Q. Wilson, Political Organisation, 1995)
88 (CEDAW, 1981)
89 (Beijing Declaration, 1995)
90 (United Nations Development Programme, SDGs 2015)
91 Ibid

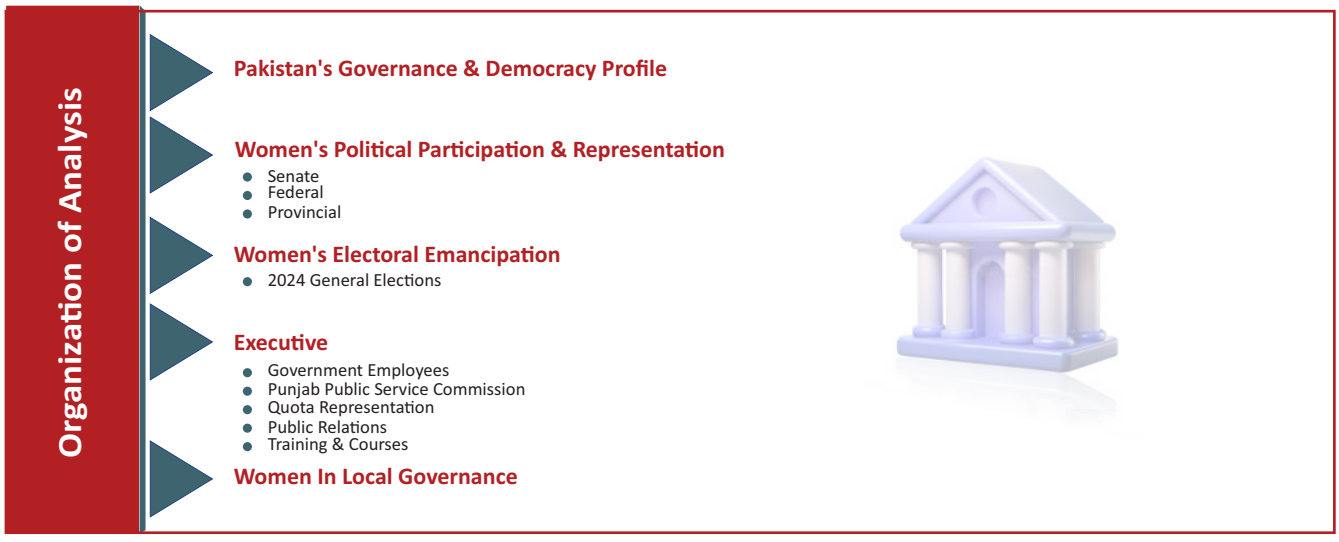
politics, policy formulation and decision-making have been highlighted through these goals.

Pakistan is a signatory to international conventions pertinent to women's empowerment and participation in the public sphere. The constitution of Pakistan, promulgated on August 14, 1973, takes gender equality into account and can be seen as a gender-sensitive document.[92] The constitution envisages everyone working for the betterment of the country as equal members of society. Article 32 articulates women's political participation at the grassroots level.[93] According to Article 34 of the Constitution, the state must take all necessary measures to ensure that women fully participate in all facets of national life.[94] Therefore, it can be presumed that the constitution makers were cognizant of women's political participation, crucial for nation-building and growth.

Despite having gender quotas and special provisions, there remains a significant gap in achieving women's political empowerment and inclusion in public governance. Unlike economic boom and bust cycles, the political and governance indicators are in a constant downward trajectory. Larry Diamond's theory of "democratic recession"[95] seems true in the case of Pakistan. Indicators of government effectiveness, control on corruption, and rule of law for good governance are in disarray. Multiple indices in terms of political empowerment, democracy, good governance and freedom have periodically highlighted the precarious situation of Pakistan.[96] Pakistan's democracy and governance profile compiled through multiple global institutions is provided to ponder upon the current state of affairs.

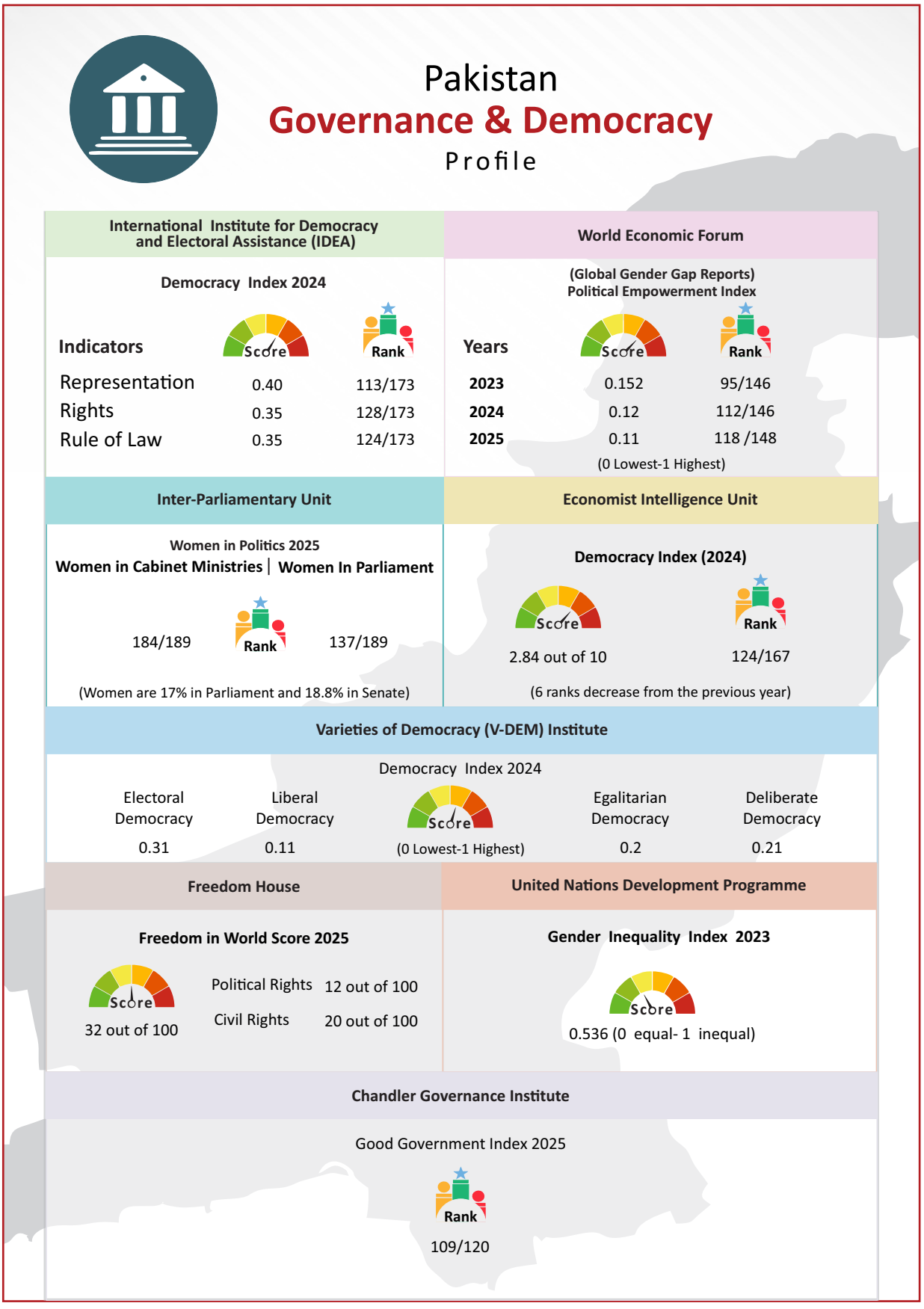
Women's quotas and minimum representation[97] thresholds are not intended as end goals but rather as transitional and corrective measures for women's empowerment at the entry level. *De facto* inequalities continue to prevail despite adopting quotas and minimum representation. True participation and decision-making power go beyond these measures, especially in the executive branch of government.[98] Pakistan needs to go beyond these minimum interventions to improve the current precarious state of governance, democracy, political stability, gender equality and empowerment.

Punjab is the largest province in Pakistan in terms of its population and share in the national assembly and senate. With a mere 21 percent of women's representation in the provincial assembly,[99] the governance and administrative structure continue to fail in terms of existing and emerging new challenges. A cursory look at the women's representation shows that the majority of the female representatives in the Punjab provincial assembly are elected through reserved seats, with only limited members elected through general seats. Female elected members on general seats were eight in 2017, which fell to seven in 2022. More than 60 female members in the Punjab assembly are elected through reserved seats.[100] [101] This shows the socio-economic, cultural, political and power dynamics structures in place that hinder true participation and representation of women at the decision-making level. Society as a whole needs to reflect on these patterns in order to move toward equitable, effective and just representation of women in the higher echelons of power.



92 (The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973)
93 Ibid
94 Ibid
95 (Larry Diamond, Facing up to the democratic recession, 2015)
96 (Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2022)
97 (A specific percentage of women, minorities, PWDs & quota's)
98 (Inter-Parliamentary Unit (IPU), 2025)
99 (Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2022)
100 Ibid
101 (Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2018)

3.1 Pakistan Governance & Democracy Profile



3.2 Women's Political Participation & Representation

Women emphasise different political agendas with more focus on health, infrastructure, education and human development. This indicates that women often have policy priorities distinct from those of men, and unequal political representation can distort policy balance by disproportionately prioritising certain sectors over others.

It is estimated that nations with 50 percent or higher representation of women in parliament, or those headed by female leaders score approximately 10 percentage points higher in the Women Business and Law (WBL) index. The score increases further by 17 points in the case of more females at ministerial positions, compared to the countries that have not achieved gender parity.[102] Nation-states with a higher proportion of women in government and decision-making bodies tend to exhibit stronger development outcomes globally.[103] In the case of the USA, women's suffrage in the 20th century resulted in a 35 percent increase in health expenditure within a year and a sharp decline (8-15 percent) in child mortality.[104]

For contexulisation Rwanda provides a compelling example of the potential impact of women's participation in governance within developing and conflict-affected contexts. The ethnic & political conflict in Rwanda during 1994 (between Tutsi & Hutu ethnicities) resulted in the killing of nearly 800,000 people, with widespread destruction in the country and the displacement of millions of people. Women's participation was strengthened through constitutional quotas, reformed laws (inheritance & property rights), grassroots social participation through Gacaca courts and women councils.[105] Women became key figures in reconciliation, democratisation and nation-building. Women's economic and political representation supported by these policies contributed to new social and political dynamics in post-conflict Rwanda.[106] [107]

Almost three decades later, Rwanda ranks 1st globally in the women's representation in parliament, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is the first country in the world to achieve 63.7 percent of women in parliament.[108] Moreover, Rwanda is among the fastest-growing, least corrupt countries in Africa, with an average GDP growth rate of 8 percent over the last two decades.[109] Recent evidence serves as a strong testament to women's role in reconciliation and nation-building, with relevance beyond Rwanda.[110]

The world average of women in parliament is a mere 27.2 percent, while the global share of women in cabinet ministries is 22.9 percent.[111] Moreover, portfolio allocation follows a typical gender stereotype with women being allocated low/medium-level or more "feminine" cabinet ministries.[112] The percentage share of men and women in parliament and government also depicts a very contrasting picture. Women comprise only 10 percent as heads of state or government of all nation-states.[113] It highlights the structural restrictions and barriers that limit women's access to political authority. Biases can be seen as deviations from shared international standards for gender equality and women's empowerment. A large proportion of people continue to believe that men are better leaders than women.[114] These entrenched social biases permeate voting behaviour, board meetings and interview panels. These social, cultural and ultimately political dynamics inhibit women's agency and political empowerment. It is estimated that, as per the current pace of reforms and legal frameworks, it would require 50 years to close the gender gap in legal rights.[115]

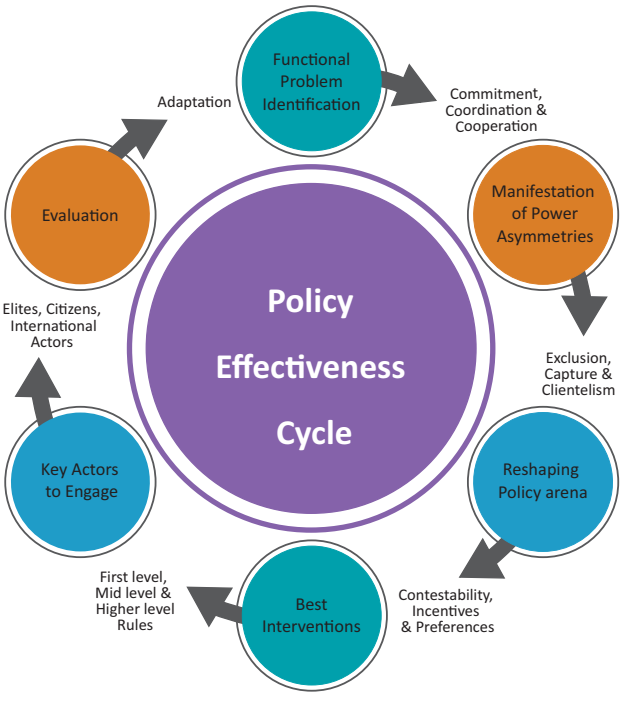
Constitutional provisions, international conventions, and enacted laws have been insufficient to create a conducive environment for women's political environment in Pakistan. The void for women's meaningful participation has remained consistently rampant. Pakistan remains among the bottom 25 percent of countries regarding gender equality, democracy, governance and access to justice. The percentage of women in parliament is a mere 17 percent and 18.8 percent in the Senate.[116] The governance dilemma of Pakistan is multifaceted and complex; inter alia, socio-economic, cultural, political and infrastructural factors. These issues continue to alienate women as voters, legislators, executives, policy makers and political workers/candidates.[117] The governance and political conundrums not only hinder women's engagement but also impede the advancement of those already part of the system. Entrenched gender norms often allow women's entry into positions of power only to fill political gaps rather than enable substantive leadership.[118] Power dynamics use women as a means of self-

102 (Women, Business and Law, 2023)
103 (World Economic Forum, 2023)
104 (Miller, 2008)
105 (Inclusive Security: How women helped rebuild Rwanda)
106 (Eszter Záborszky, Women Participation in Politics, 2017)
107 (Republic of Rwanda, 1994)
108 (IPU, Women in Politics, 2025)
109 ibid
110 (PEW Research Institute, 2021)
111 (IPU, Women in Politics, 2025)
112 (Krook & O Brien, 2012)
113 (IPU, Women in Politics, 2023)
114 (UNDP, Social Norms Index Report, 2023)
115 (Women, Business and Law, 2023)
116 (IPU, 2025)
117 (Jabeen, 2019)
118 (Ludice & et al, 2021)

aggrandisement without sustainable women's development. It is high time for Pakistan to overhaul its governance and political structure for enhanced, sustainable and meaningful inclusion of women in politics.

Policy Effectiveness Cycle

World Bank articulates commitment, coordination and cooperation; 3Cs in the policy effectiveness cycle. Moreover, pertinent to the manifestation of power asymmetries, exclusion of marginalised groups, capture by the elite and clientelism exist. For reshaping the policy arena this cycle, articulate the need for contestability and preferences. All of these factors, coordination, cooperation, inclusion and contestability, imply the representation of women in the policy arena. These factors necessitate the inclusion of all stakeholders irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity and economic background. Apropos to the best intervention mechanism, high-level rules and changes in the electoral system are proposed. Finally, women as citizens and international stakeholders (covenants of international conventions) are the key actors to engage for effective policy implementation. When this policy effectiveness cycle is seen in the context of gender equality, the importance of women's participation in policy dynamics is highlighted. The policy effectiveness cycle would not materialise, excluding half of the demographic (Women) in the policy arena.



Source: World Development Report, 2017

Figure 3.2

3.2.1 Legislature

3.2.1.1 Senate

The Senate is the upper house of the federal legislative structure of Pakistan, responsible for overseeing legislation and scrutinising the government's work. In March 2024, there were 82 percent male senators and 18 percent female senators with a GPI recorded at 0.2. Women's participation in 2024 showed a slight improvement as 9 percent (GPI: 0.09) women were senators in 2022.

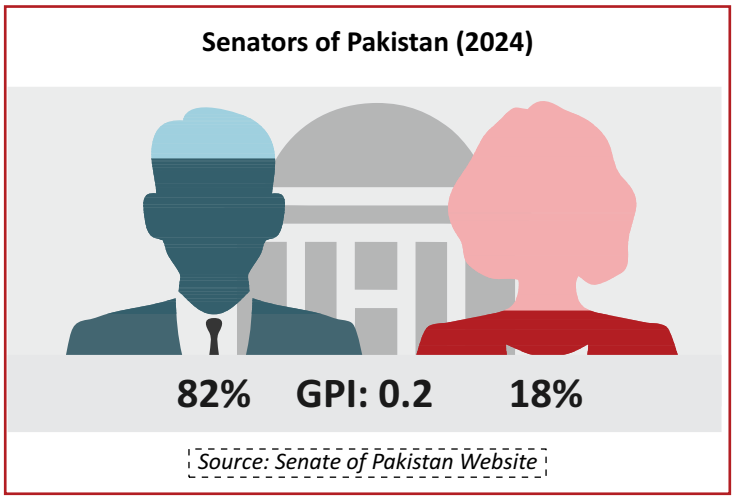


Figure 3.3

3.2.1.2 National Assembly

The National Assembly (NA) of Pakistan consists of 336 members, including 266 general members, 60 women, and 10 minority members. Punjab's share in NA is 173 members, with 141 on general seats (135 men, six women) and 32 on the women's quota. Thus, the GPI for general seats in NA was only 0.04, while the cumulative GPI, including the reserved seats, is 0.26.

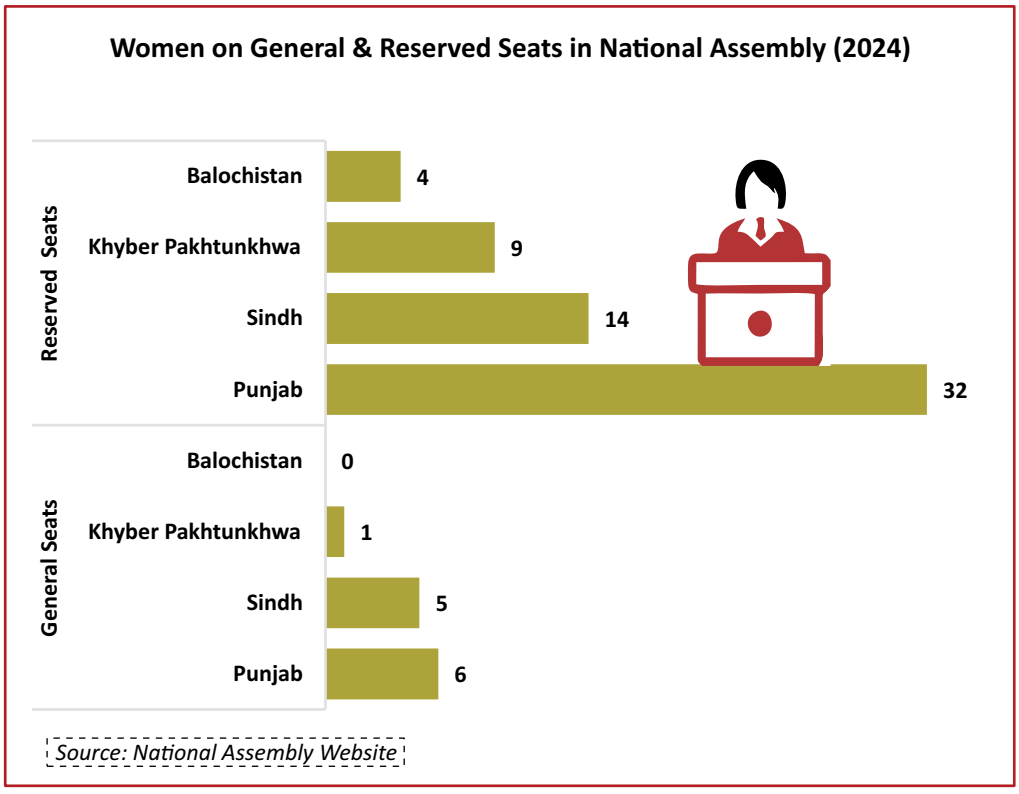


Figure 3.4

District-wise analysis of NA members shows that 33 districts had no elected women in the 2024 general elections. Vehari, Nankana Sahib and Layyah were the only districts with equal gender representation in the NA. One woman member was elected in Sialkot in comparison with four men NA members. Additionally, a woman was elected from Hafizabad's only NA seat.

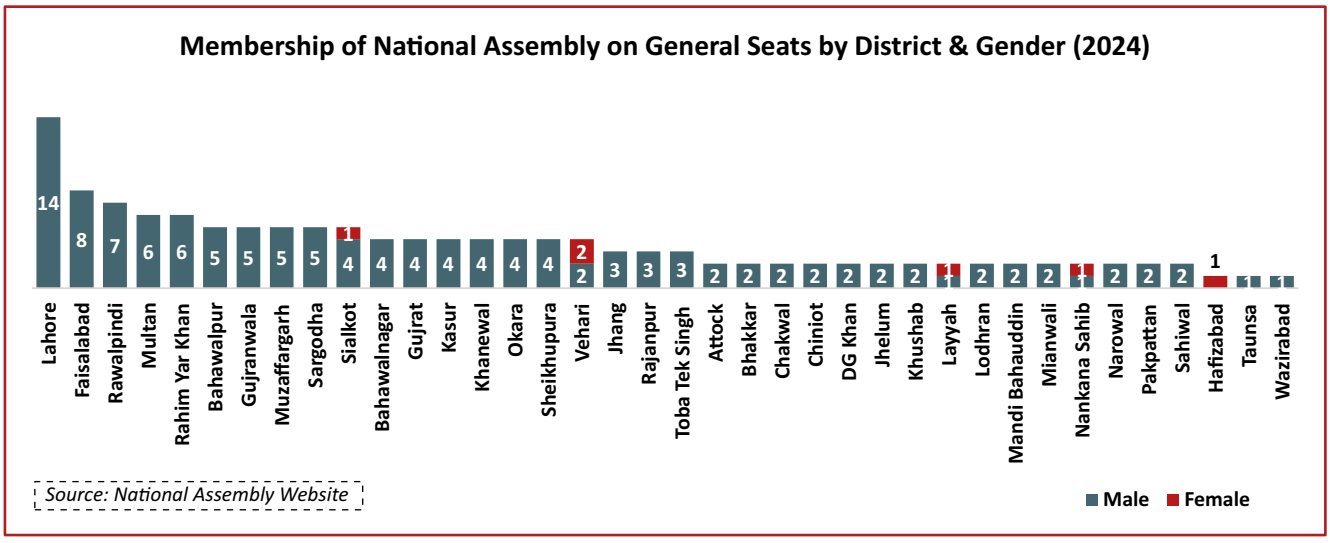


Figure 3.5

District-wise analysis shows that Lahore had the highest share (10) of women elected on reserved seats from Punjab. Sialkot and Rawalpindi each had three women members in the National Assembly. The graph given below shows that the majority of Punjab's districts (29 districts) had no share of women for reserved seats.

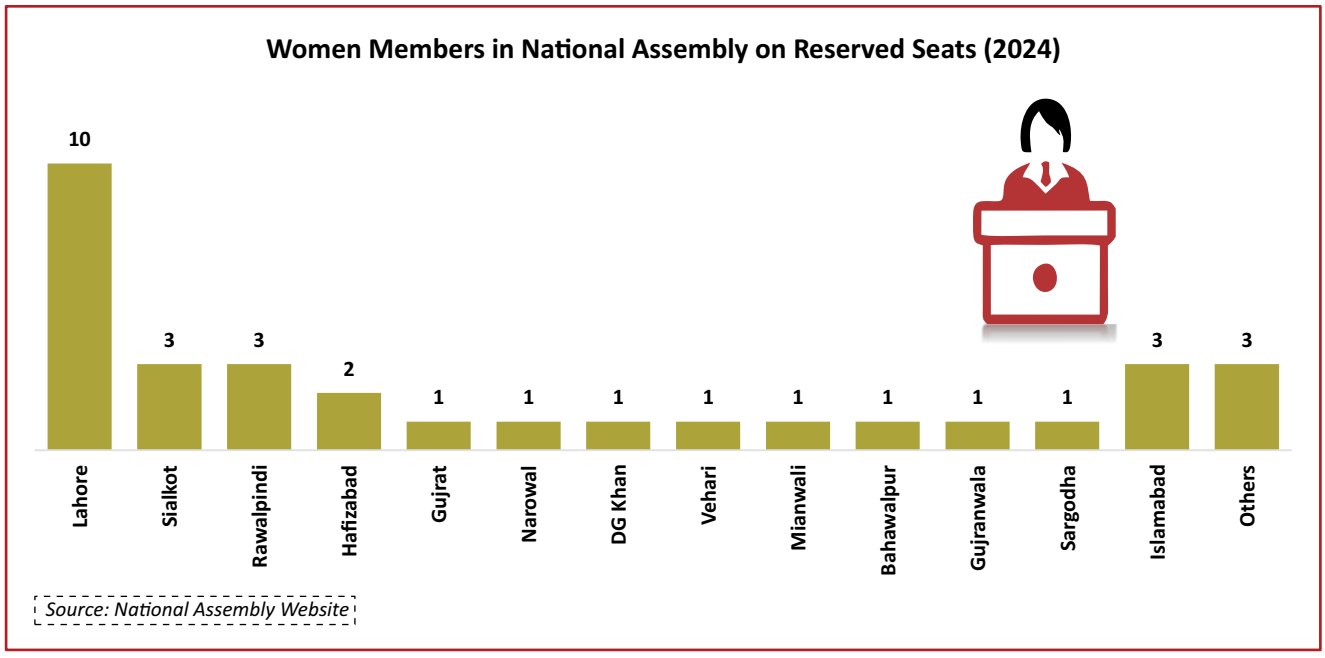


Figure 3.6

The details of the NA Cabinet and functionaries show that there were 30 male federal ministers and only one female minister. Statistics further reveal that there were only two female ministers of state and two female members of parliamentary committees. The percentage of females was the highest (33 percent) for parliamentary secretaries, while no female was working as special assistants to the Prime Minister.

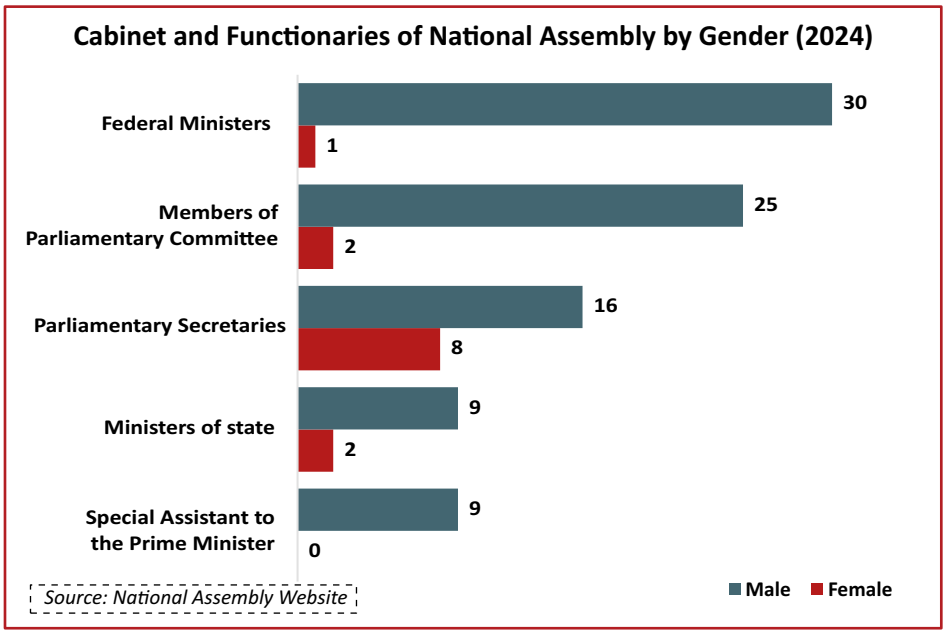


Figure 3.7

3.2.1.3 Punjab Assembly

The Provincial Assembly (PA) of Punjab consists of 371 members: 297 general seats, 66 for women, and 8 for minorities members. Overall, male members were 79 percent and female members were 21 percent in the Punjab PA. Eleven female PA members were elected on general seats with a percentage of only 3 percent. GPI of the Punjab Assembly was 0.2 in 2024.

Punjab is the 1st province to have a female Chief Minister since the inception of Pakistan.

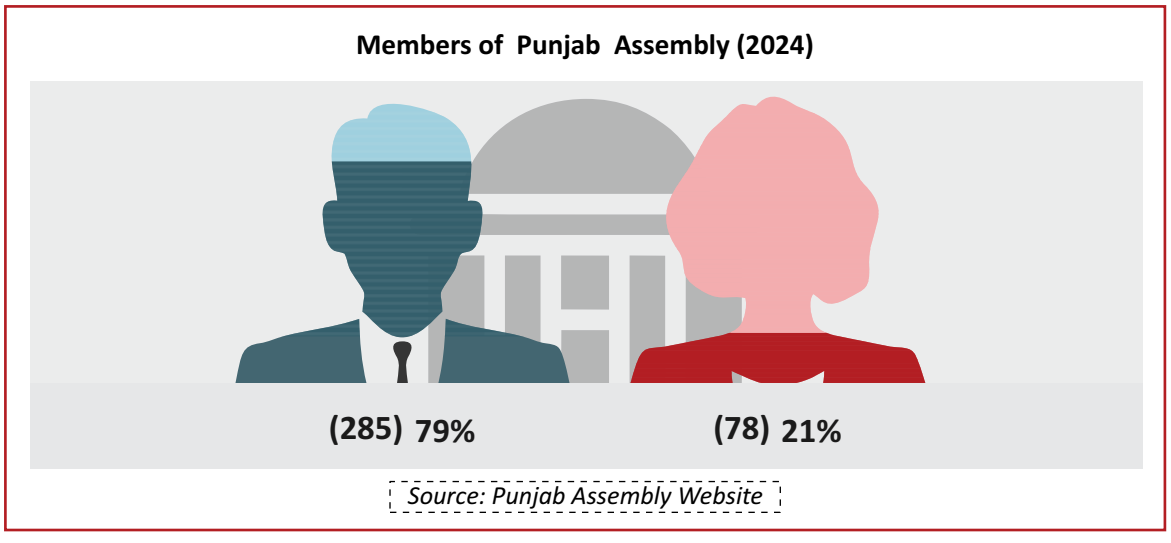


Figure 3.8

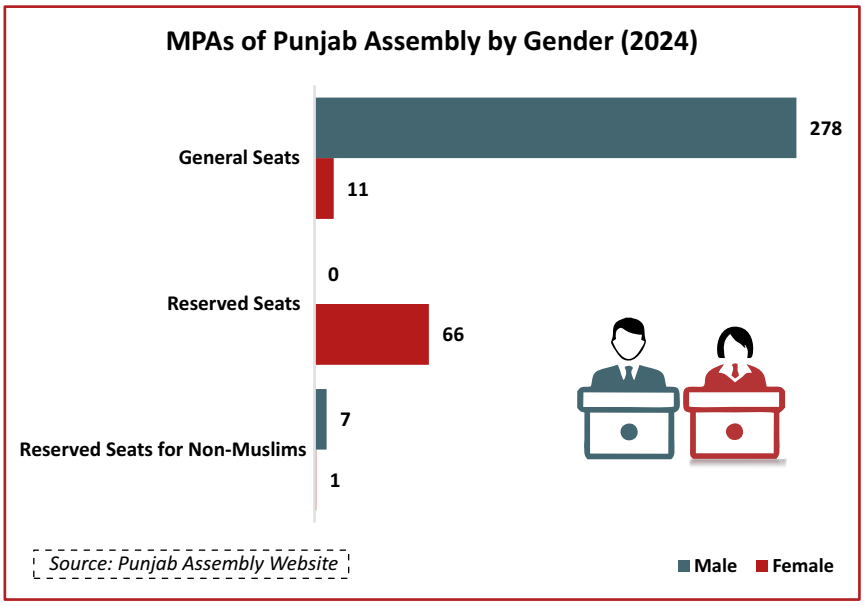


Figure 3.9

District-wise analysis of women MPAs elected on general seats in 2024 shows that there were only three districts, Lahore, Talagang and Mandi Bahaudin, with two assembly members. Six districts had one woman member, and the majority of districts (33) had no elected MPA on the general seat.

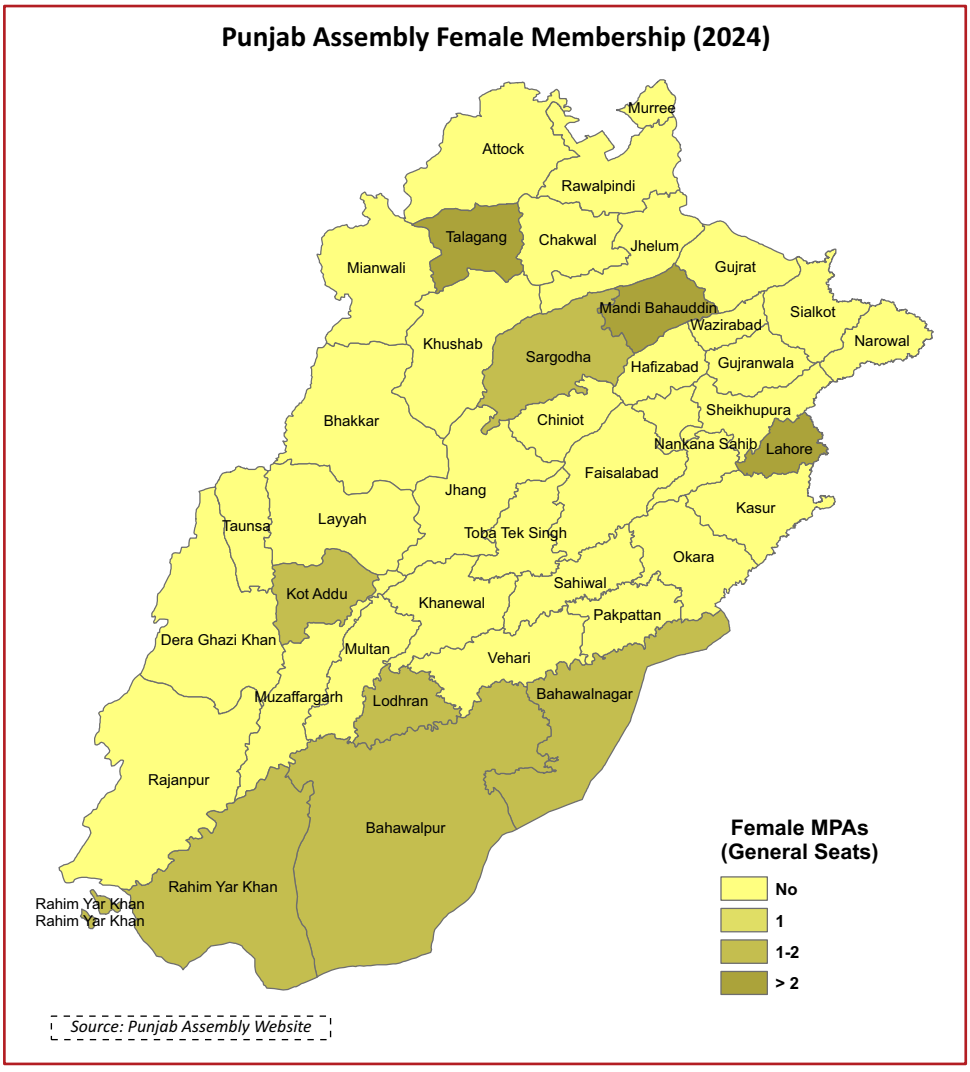


Figure 3.10

3.2.1.4 Women on Reserved Seats

All provinces of Pakistan have reserved seats for women in their respective assemblies. The highest number of seats is in Punjab with 66 members.

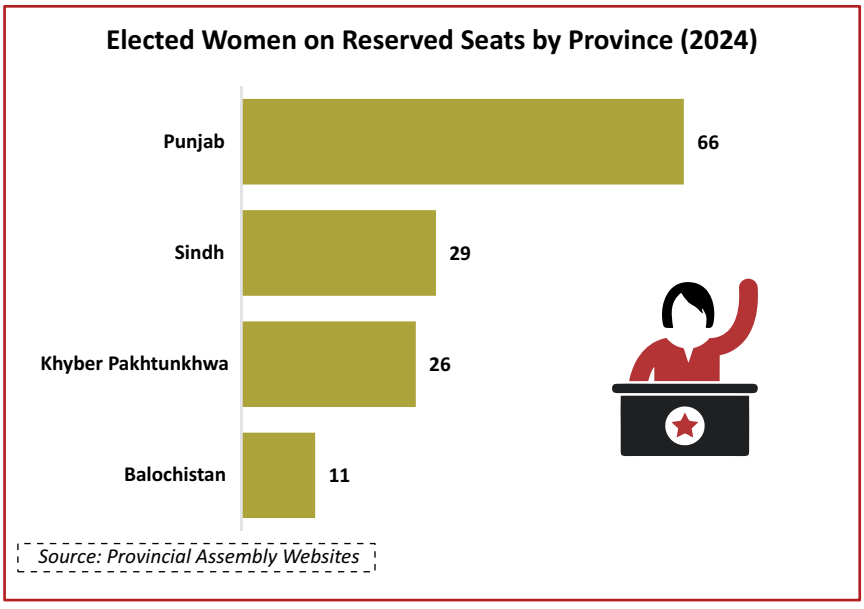


Figure 3.11

In 2024, 19 bills were initiated by male members, and none were moved by female members of the Punjab Assembly. Comparatively, 25 resolutions (76 percent) were initiated by male members and eight resolutions (24 percent) were presented by female members of the house, with the GPI of 0.32.

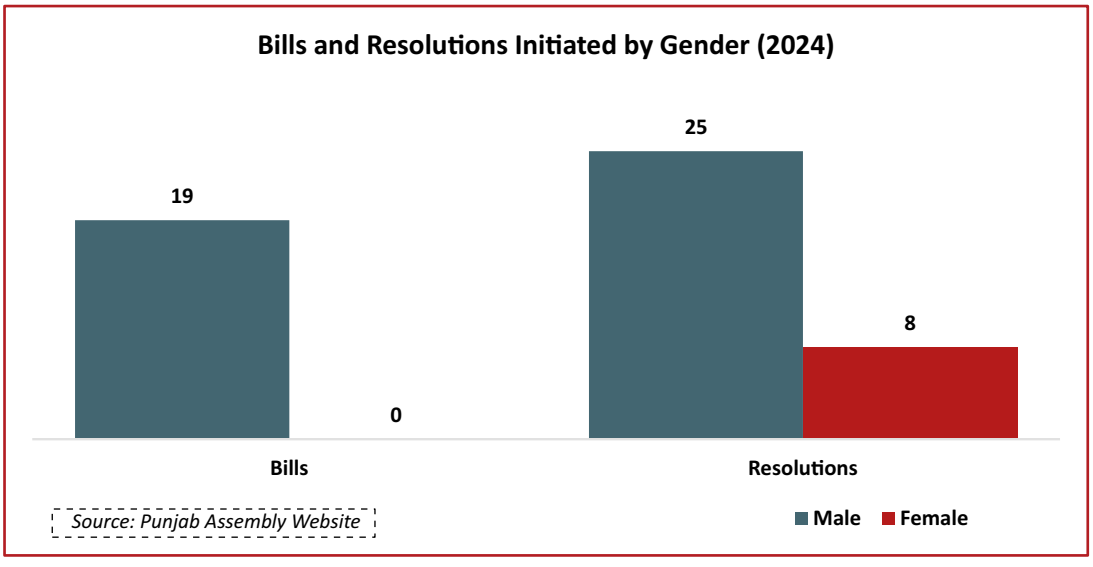


Figure 3.12

Currently, several of the senior executive and legislative positions, including the incumbent Chief Minister, senior ministers and special assistants of Punjab, are held by women. Similarly, parliamentary caucuses also have a higher proportion of women members than men. In the Punjab government's cabinet, 17 men ministers and two women ministers were working with the GPI of 0.05. Similarly, the GPI of parliamentary secretaries was 0.26 points. With regards to the standing committees, there were 436 men (85 percent) and 77 women (15 percent) with the GPI of 0.17. However, there were only two women chairpersons of the standing committees.

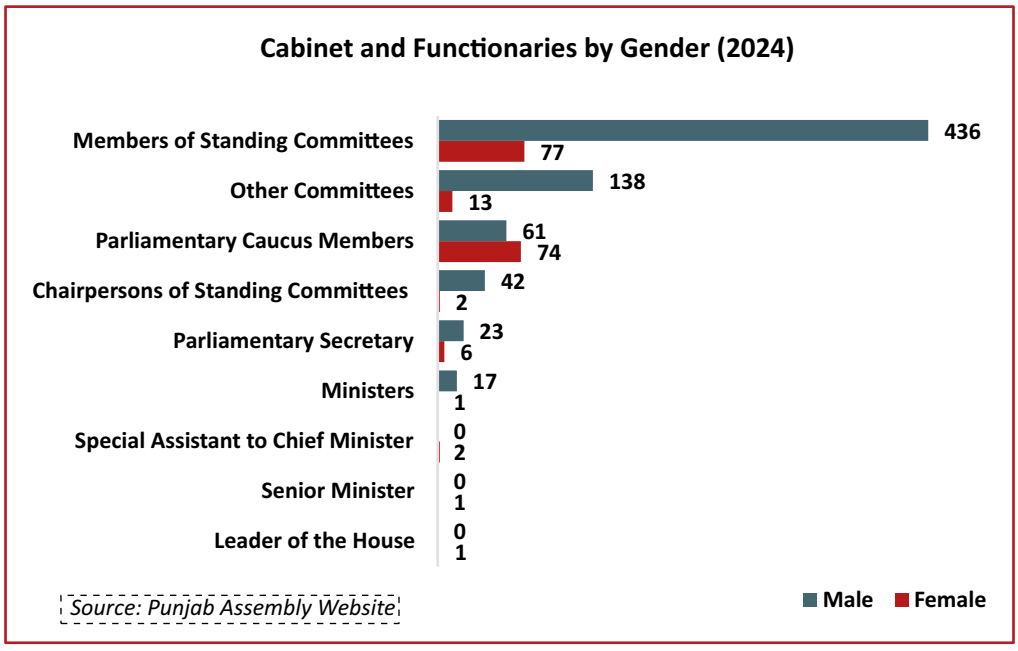


Figure 3.13

3.3 Women's Electoral Participation

Empowerment is an intentional and continuous process through which individuals gain opportunities and control over resources in a respectable, participatory and inclusive manner.[119] National Democratic Institute, working in over 100 countries, concluded that women, compared to men, were more likely to mediate on issues across parties, respond to constituents' needs and promote peace and democratisation.[120] Evidence suggests women's participation in politics results in better development policies related to health, education and sustainability.[121]

Despite the enormous potential for transformation of politics and governance through inclusion, women continue to be sidelined in corridors of power. Political parties use women's representation as "window-dressing" often to appease the international community and woo voters/public sentiment.[122] Female representatives could be recruited from the same political elite to safeguard their entrenched interests and provide room for manoeuvre, without the capability to reshape policy outcomes.[123] The problem is further exacerbated with patriarchal gender norms, a corrupt environment and women's weaker standing in society. These factors explain as to whether women support policy decisions as per their preferences or along party lines.[124]

The Election Law of Pakistan seems to be cognizant of women's participation and necessitates, less than 10 percent gap in the voters' list for the conduct of elections.[125] Political parties are bound to allocate at least five percent of tickets on direct seats to women. Moreover, a 10 percent turnout of women voters is mandatory for the election of a constituency.[126] Despite this, only six percent of women hold leadership positions as per the political parties' list, and often they have familial ties with the leadership.[127]

One crucial aspect, apropos to the systemic gender discrimination of women in politics, often ignored is the choice of electoral system design. Polity environment and power structures originate from the voting system in democratic states. The success of political systems depends on their adaptability to changes, emerging needs and challenges. The chances of achieving better governance increase exponentially if the electoral system takes these factors into account.[128]

Coalition governments supporting systems are associated with broader consensus, political stability and policy-making.[129] It

119 (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989)
120 (Koch-Mehrin, 2018)
121 (Kakepaki, M. Women in Governance, 2022)
122 (Valdini, 2019)
123 (Bjarnegard & et al, 2018)
124 (Stensota & et al, 2018)
125 (ECP, Election Act, 2017)
126 Ibid
127 (Anjum, A, 2023)
128 (Birkland, T, 2016)
129 Ibid

results in an improved impact on the country's governance. Most developing states rely on the plurality/majority electoral system design, while proportional representation systems are more prevalent in developed regions of the world.[130]

The electoral system in Pakistan is a mixed system with the First Past the Post (FPTP) system[131] for the parliament and proportional representation (PR)[132] for the Senate legislature selection. Socio-cultural dynamics of Pakistan put women in a highly disadvantageous position as FPTP systems remain vulnerable to gerrymandering and favouring the existing male-dominated political elite.[133] Although the constitution and election law provisions outline the need for women's representation but their participation remains dependent on quotas.

Though it is not always straightforward to change the electoral system and build consensus among multiple stakeholders while continuing with the FPTP system, Pakistan could adopt mechanisms such as the “Highest loser representation” and the “Rotating reserved general seats” to enhance women's political empowerment.[134] In the "highest loser representation system" for reserved seats, women with the highest number of votes on general seats will be allocated reserved seats, rather than political parties allocating them as per their quota. For "Reserved General Seats", constituencies would be explicitly fixed, for women on general seats, and these constituencies would continue to change in every upcoming election.[135] These mechanisms would bind political parties to support independent women legislators countrywide and sustainable women's empowerment.

The recent general elections in Pakistan were conducted in February 2024. The following subsection data of contesting candidates, registered voters, polling stations and voters' turnout were provided by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the 2024 Elections results (ECP Website).

3.3.1 General Elections 2024

In the 2024 general elections, 2,699 men and 180 women from Punjab contested for the seats of the national assembly with a GPI of 0.06. For the Punjab's PA, the number of men candidates was 6,435 (95.2 percent) and 329 women (4.8 percent). GPI for the provincial assembly contesting candidates remained 0.05 points.

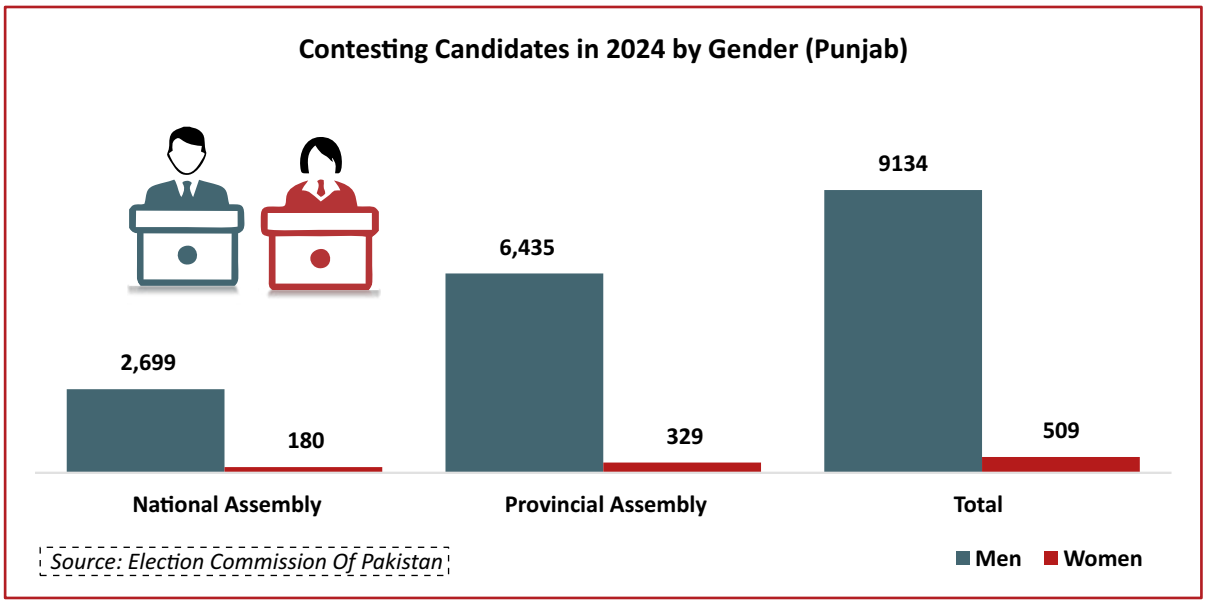


Figure 3.14

ECP and NADRA statistics of registered voters and CNIC holders before the conduct of General elections 2024 (As on 31st December 2023) show that there were 40.5 million men CNIC holders and 39.1 million registered voters in Punjab. Comparatively, women CNIC holders were 37.2 million and 34.08 million registered voters. Men's percentage of registered voters in comparison with CNIC holders was 96.47 percent while women's percentage was 91.45 percent. It shows lower female voter registration as compared with men.

130 (IDEA, Electoral system Design, 2008)
131 (Each voter marks one candidate as their favourite, or first-preference, and the candidate with more first-preference votes than any other candidate (a plurality) is elected.)
132 (Proportional representation (PR) is any electoral system under which subgroups of an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body.)
133 (IFES, Pakistan, 2024)
134 (IDEA, electoral system Design, 2008)

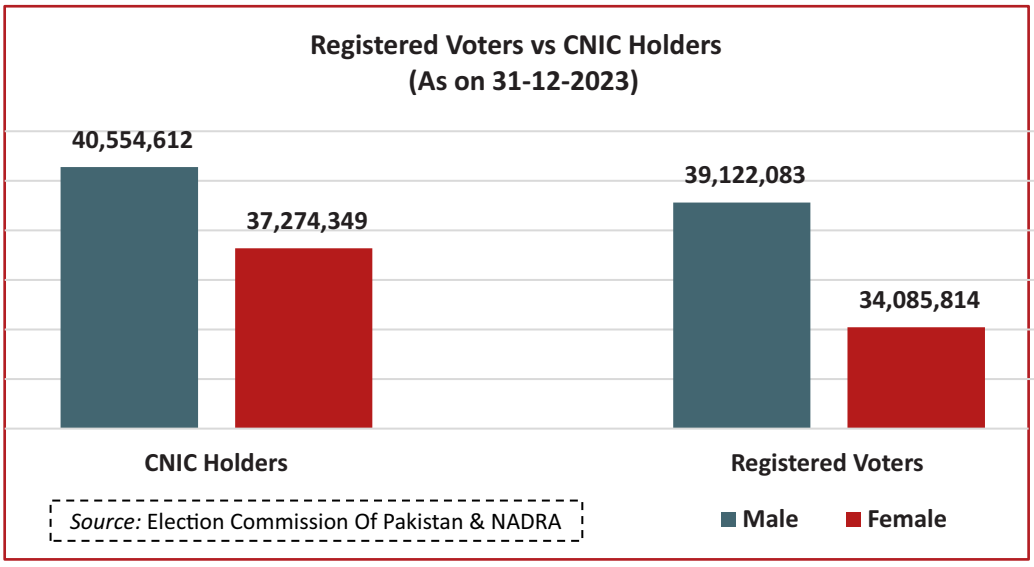


Figure 3.15

ECP statistics[136] reveal the highest GPI in terms of registered voters was found in the district of Chakwal (0.98), while the lowest was in Sheikhupura and Kasur (0.82) districts. The majority of the districts had a GPI of more than 0.85 points for registered voters.

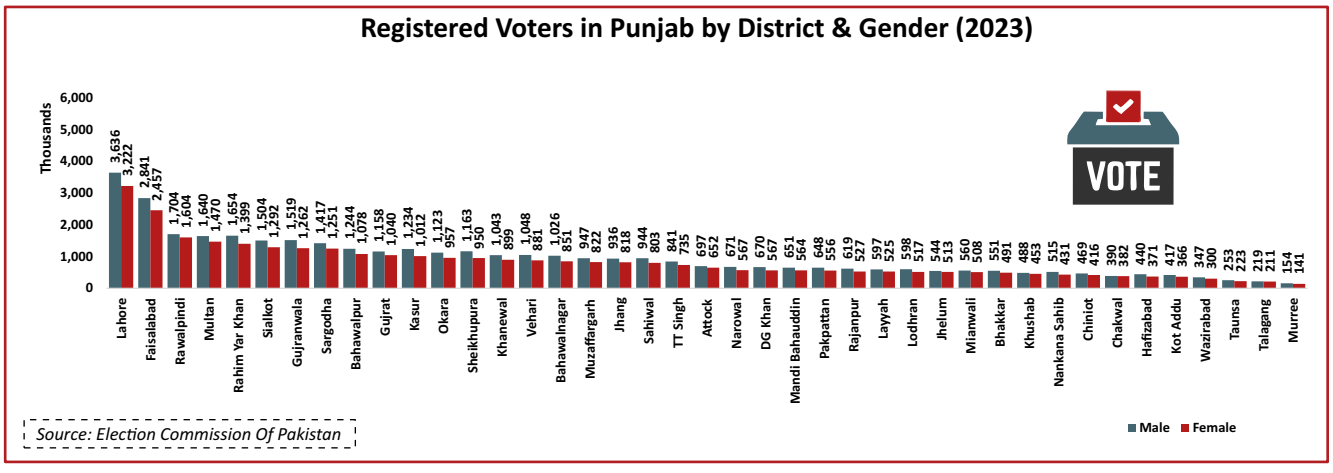


Figure 3.16

During the conduct of the 2024 general elections, 14,034 male, 13,519 female and 21,725 combined polling stations were arranged in Punjab. GPI of gender specific polling stations remained more than 0.9 points for all districts of Punjab.

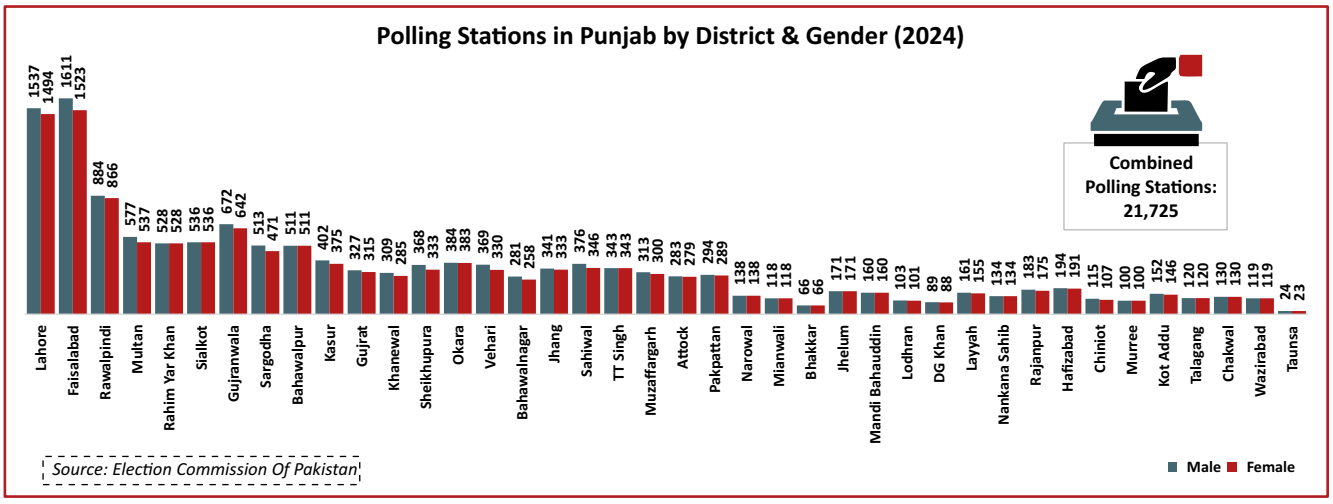


Figure 3.17

37.3 million votes were polled in Punjab for the 2024 general elections. Number of male votes was 21.3 million (57 percent) while female votes was 16 million (43 percent). The highest number of votes was polled in Lahore district with the GPI of 0.67.

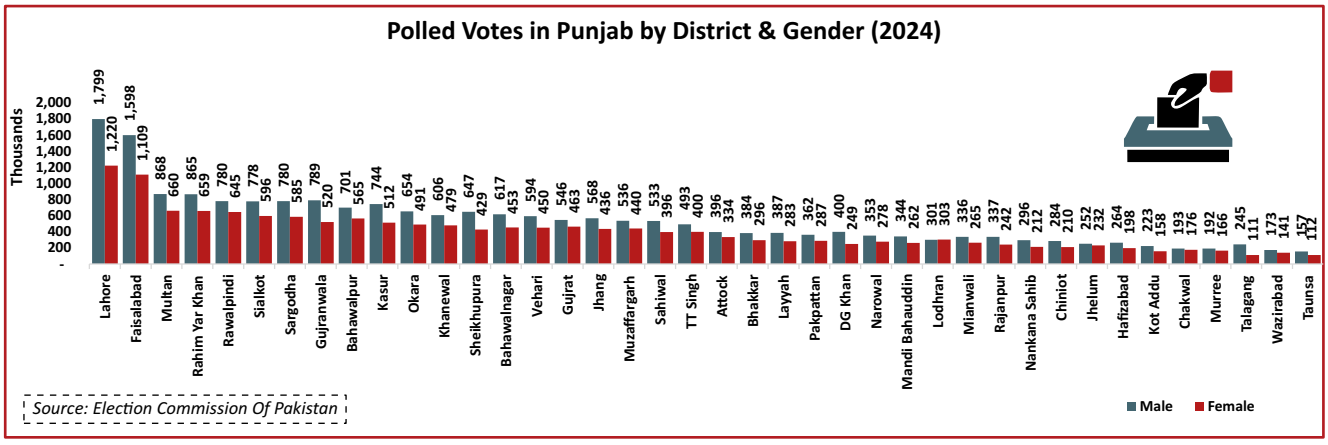


Figure 3.18

Voter turnout during the 2024 general elections remained 55 percent for males and 47 percent for females in Punjab. The highest male voter turnout was registered in Bhakkar (70 percent), Layyah and Khushab (65 percent) districts. Female voter turnout was highest in the Bhakkar and Lodhran districts, with 60 percent.

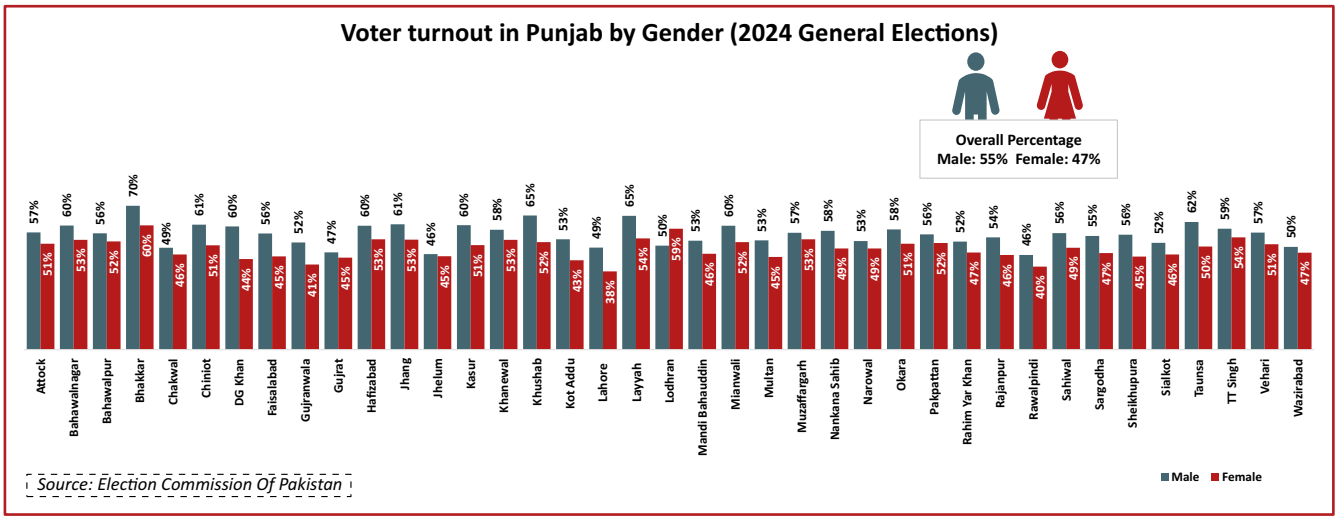


Figure 3.19

3.4 Executive

Executive functionaries of the state are key in the operations and decision-making of governments. Their gendered composition is therefore an important indicator of gender inclusion within the public sector, which is why public sector employees' data is particularly important for assessing gender representation.

3.4.1 Government Employees

According to the data received by the AG department, there were 677,067 male (70 percent) employees and 293,849 females (30 percent) with the GPI of 0.43. The highest number of employees was in the education department, with 55 percent males and 45 percent females, with a GPI of 0.84. Department-wise, females' highest percentage (54 percent) and GPI were in the Health Department. Statistics reveal that female participation was mostly centred in the Health, Education and Population Welfare departments, while the majority of other departments had lower female participation compared to males. Except for five to seven departments, female's participation in others was less than 10 percent. Energy, emergency services and communication departments had the lowest GPI of almost 0.2 points.

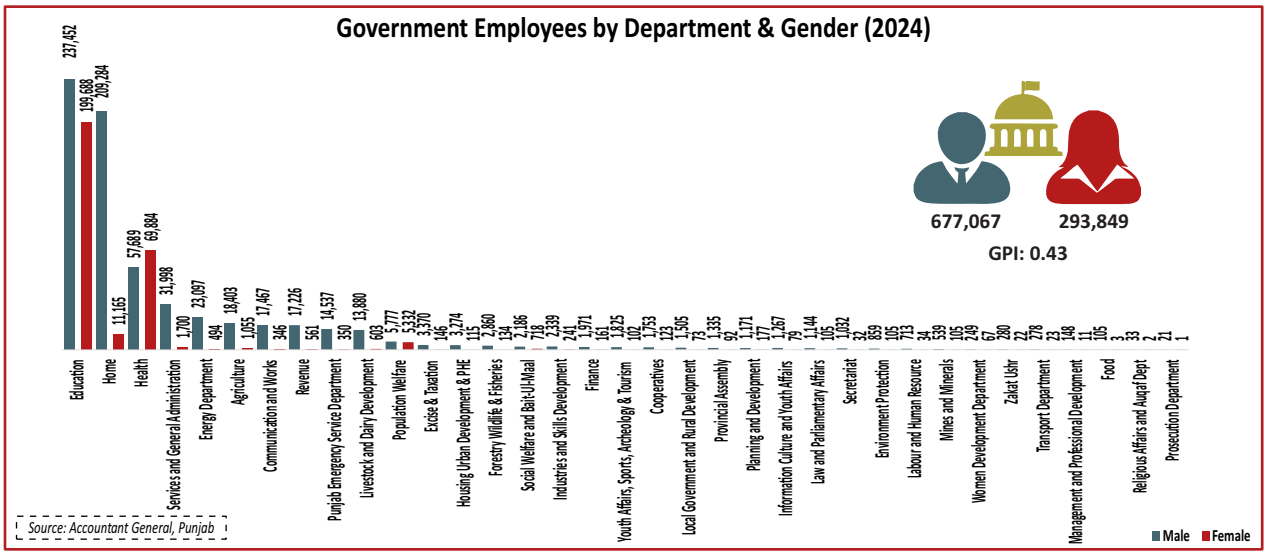


Figure 3.20

District-wise analysis of government employees showed that the highest number of employees was in Lahore district. The lowest GPI was also recorded in Lahore with 0.21 points. Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and Multan were other districts with a higher number of employees but low GPI scores. The highest GPI was recorded from Chakwal, Narowal and Sialkot districts with 0.7 points. District Chiniot had the lowest number (around 10 thousand) of government employees.

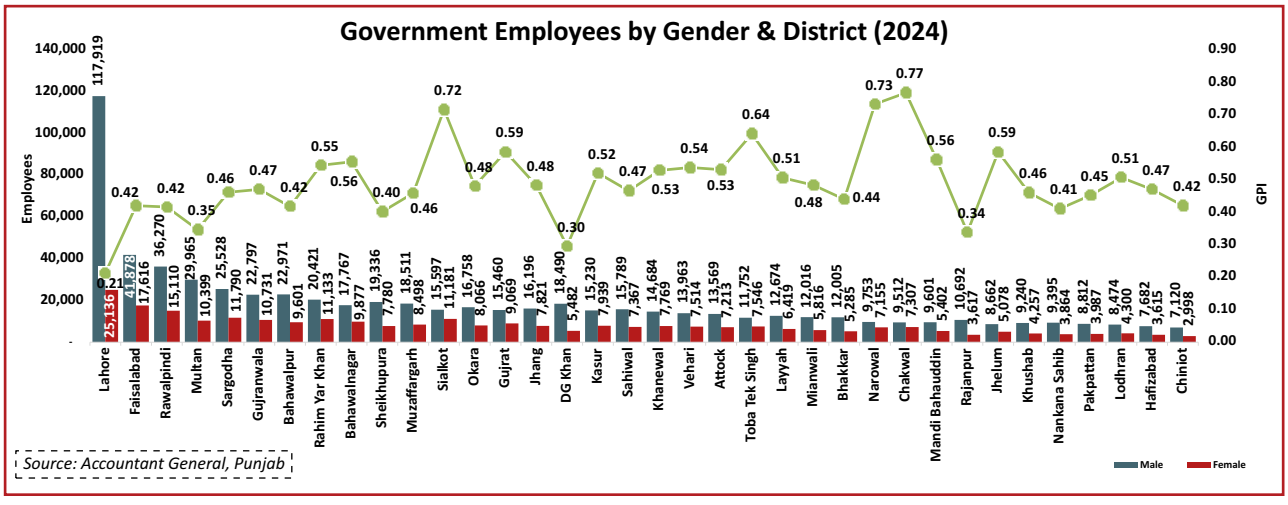


Figure 3.21

Grade-wise statistics of employees illustrate that the majority of women and the highest GPI were in BPS 8-16, with lower women's participation in both the upper and lower BPS scales. Additionally, one of the lowest GPIs was recorded for grades 21 and 22 with 0.04 points.

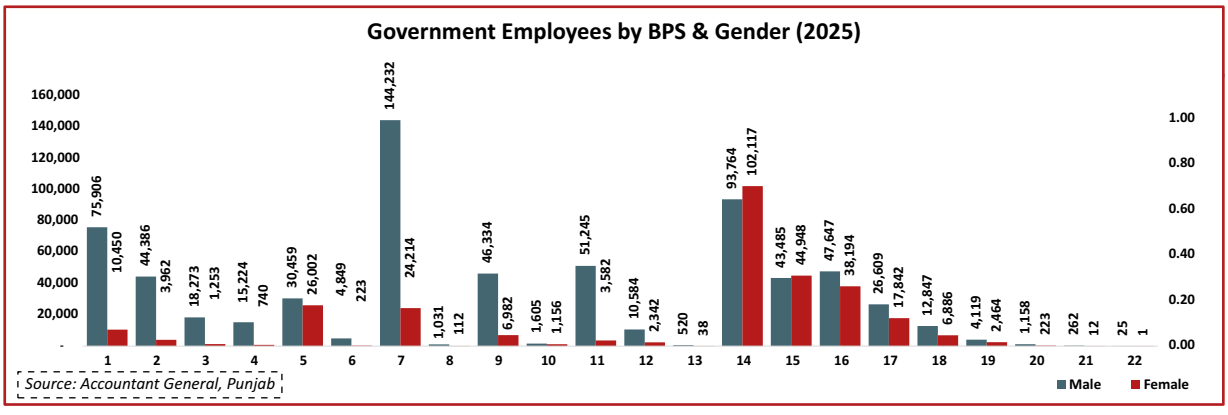


Figure 3.22

The number of both men and women PWD employees in provincial department offices decreased on yearly basis. In 2024, men PWD employees comprised 95.5 percent and women 4.5 percent, with the GPI of 0.04.

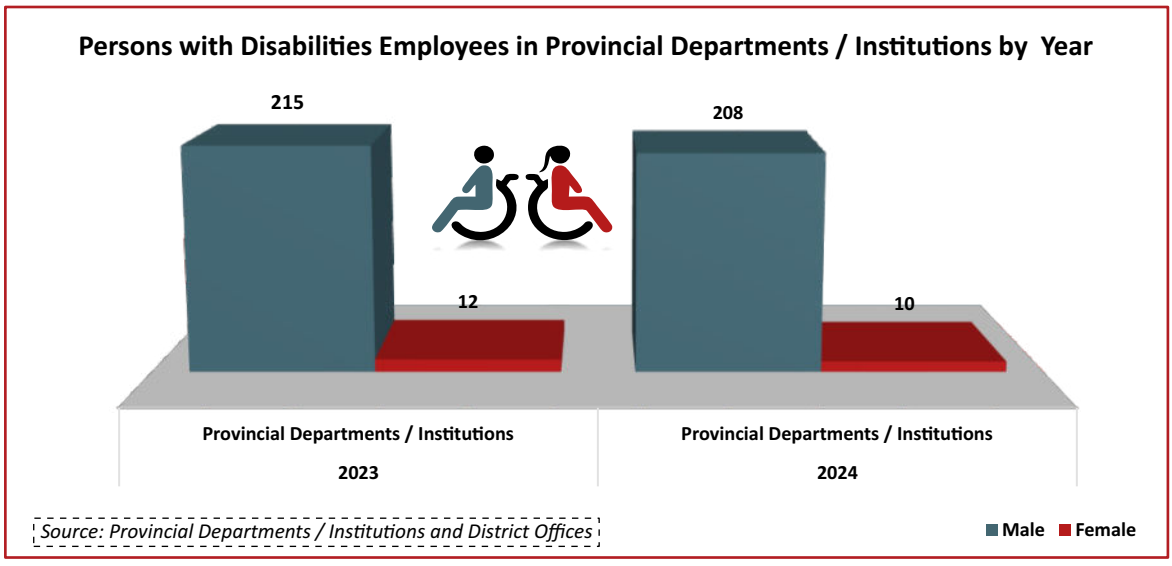


Figure 3.23

Service & General Administration Department (S&GAD)

S&GAD data of senior officers in service shows that there were 535 officers in 2023, which decreased to 509 in the following year. For both consecutive years, men remained at more than 91 percent and women at 8 percent, with a GPI of 0.09 points.

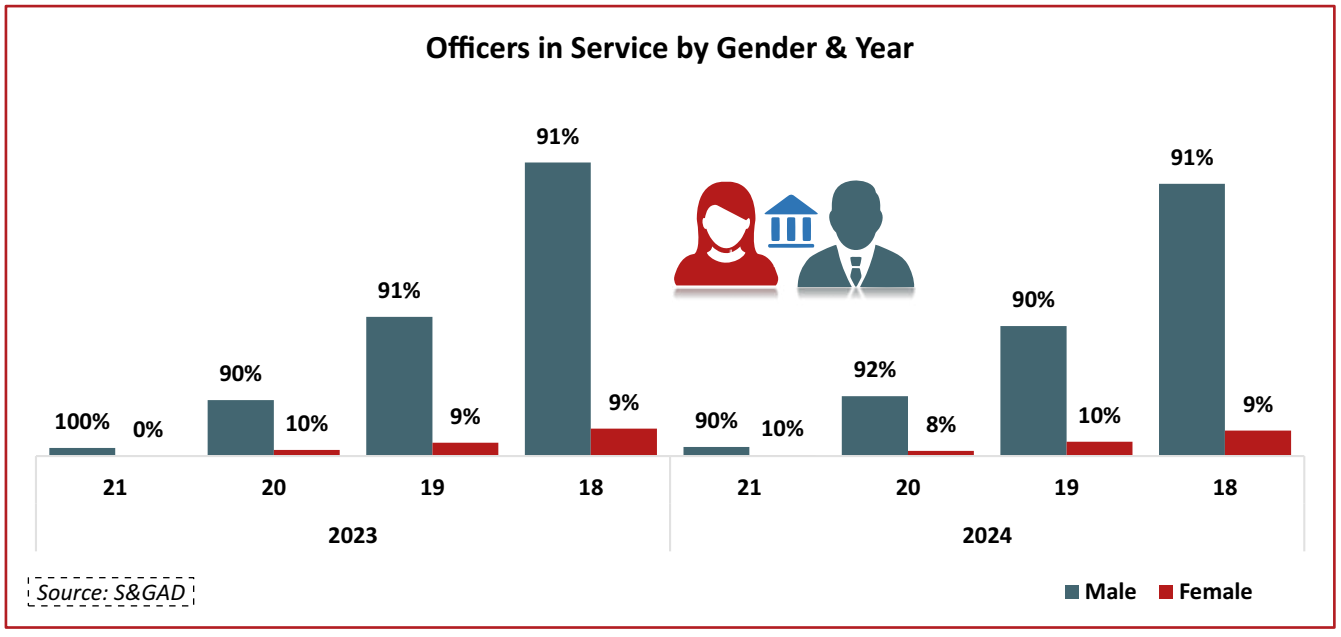


Figure 3.24

3.4.2 Public Relations

Public Relations department data for Punjab reveals that there were 882 male members in the department with only 64 (6 percent) female members in 2023. The number of male members increased to 1373 (93 percent) in 2024, while the female members almost doubled to 116 (7 percent) in 2024. These statistics show that female participation in the public relations department was less than 8 percent for both consecutive years.

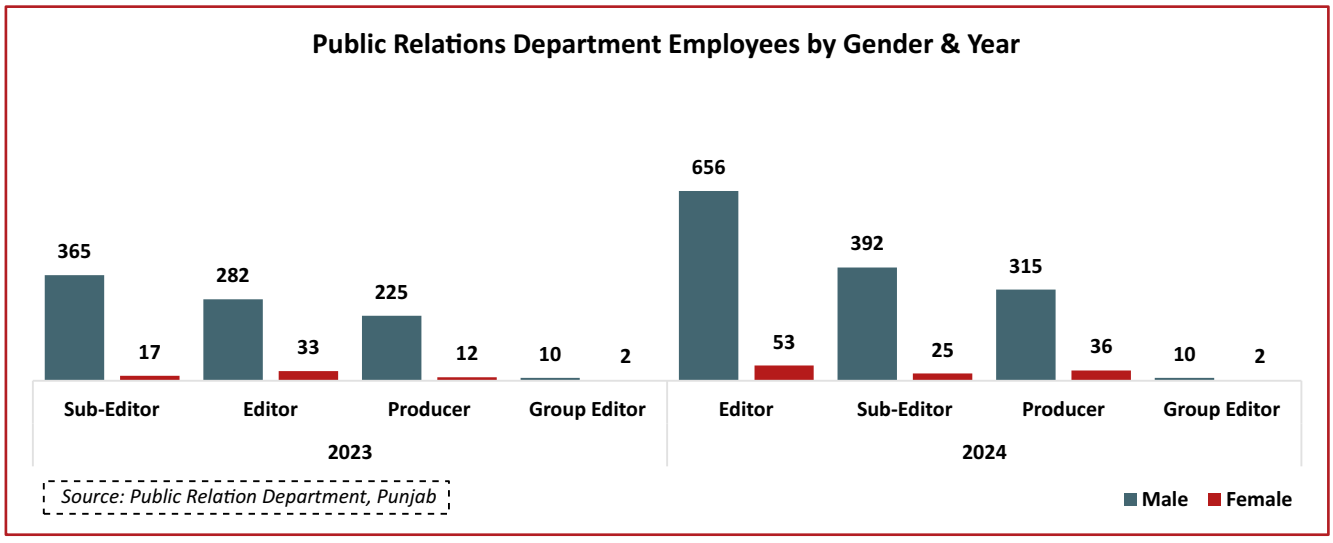


Figure 3.25

3.4.3 Training & Courses

Management & Professional Development Department (MPDD) conducts training of officers for promotion, post-induction and other short & demand-based courses. Post-induction courses, GPI remained 0.8 in 2023 and declined to 0.4 in 2024. In 2023, Promotion Courses GPI was recorded at 0.38, which decreased to 0.14 in the following year. Demand-based courses GPI was 0.18 in 2023. In 2024, it decreased substantially to 0.06 points. Short Courses/ Workshops conducted for different pay grade officers had the highest participation for both consecutive years. GPI remained 0.38 in 2023 and decreased to 0.25 in the subsequent year.

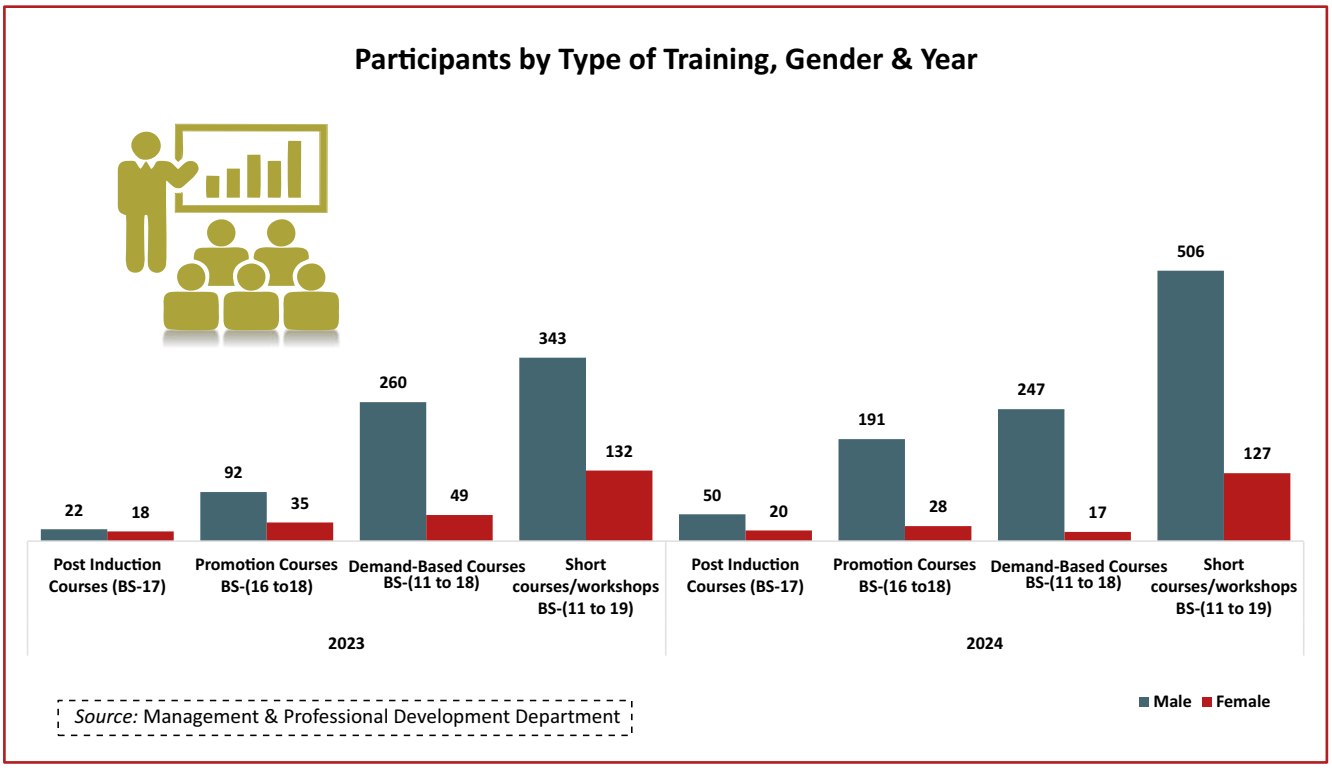


Figure 3.26

S&GAD training statistics of officers show that 47 officers were trained in 2023, which increased to 83 in the following year. For both consecutive years, men remained at more than 85 percent, and women were 15 percent, with a GPI of 0.1 points.

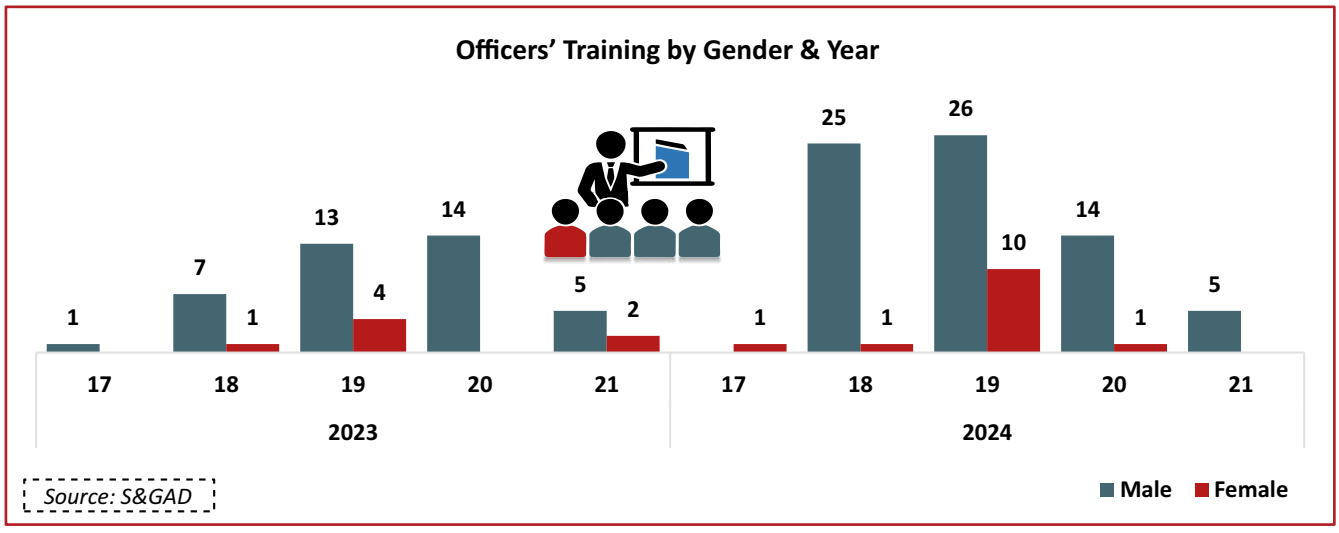


Figure 3.27

Provincial and district offices' training/workshop statistics reveal that female participation improved on a yearly basis. In 2024, provincial offices female participation remained 22 percent with the GPI of 0.2. For the district offices, there were more than 51 percent female officers in 2024.

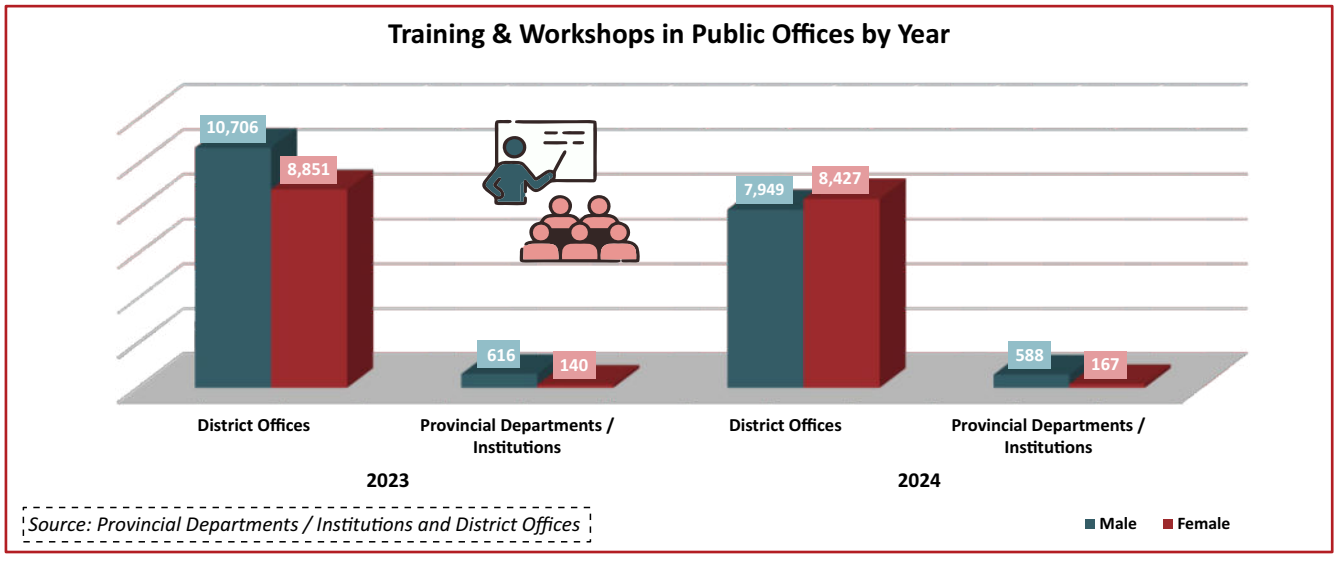


Figure 3.28

3.4.4 Punjab Public Service Commission

Punjab Public Service Commission's (PPSC) data of applicants and selected candidates shows that despite more male applicants in the PPSC, the success rate of female candidates was higher for 2023 and 2024. In 2024, cumulatively, there were around 52 percent fewer job applications than in 2023. The success rate of male candidates remained 0.9 percent and 1.22 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively. Moreover, the success rate of female candidates remained 1.9 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively. Of the total selected candidates over the last two years, almost 60 percent were females, while 39 percent were male. It shows that for every 100 male candidates selected, 154 females joined the Punjab public services.

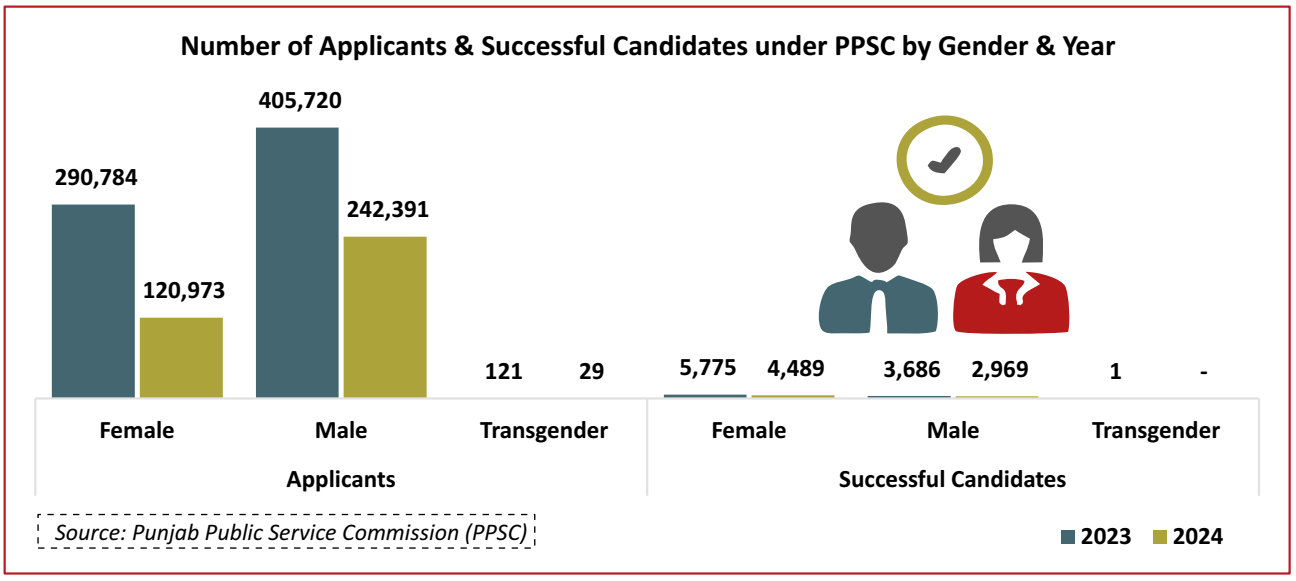


Figure 3.29

Department-wise applicants data reveal that Food, Agriculture and Local government received the highest number of applications from male candidates, while Education, Healthcare and Medical Education received the highest number of applications from female candidates. Applications for the departments show a gendered pattern as there remained limited female applications in the Police, Industry & Mines, Energy and S&GAD departments.

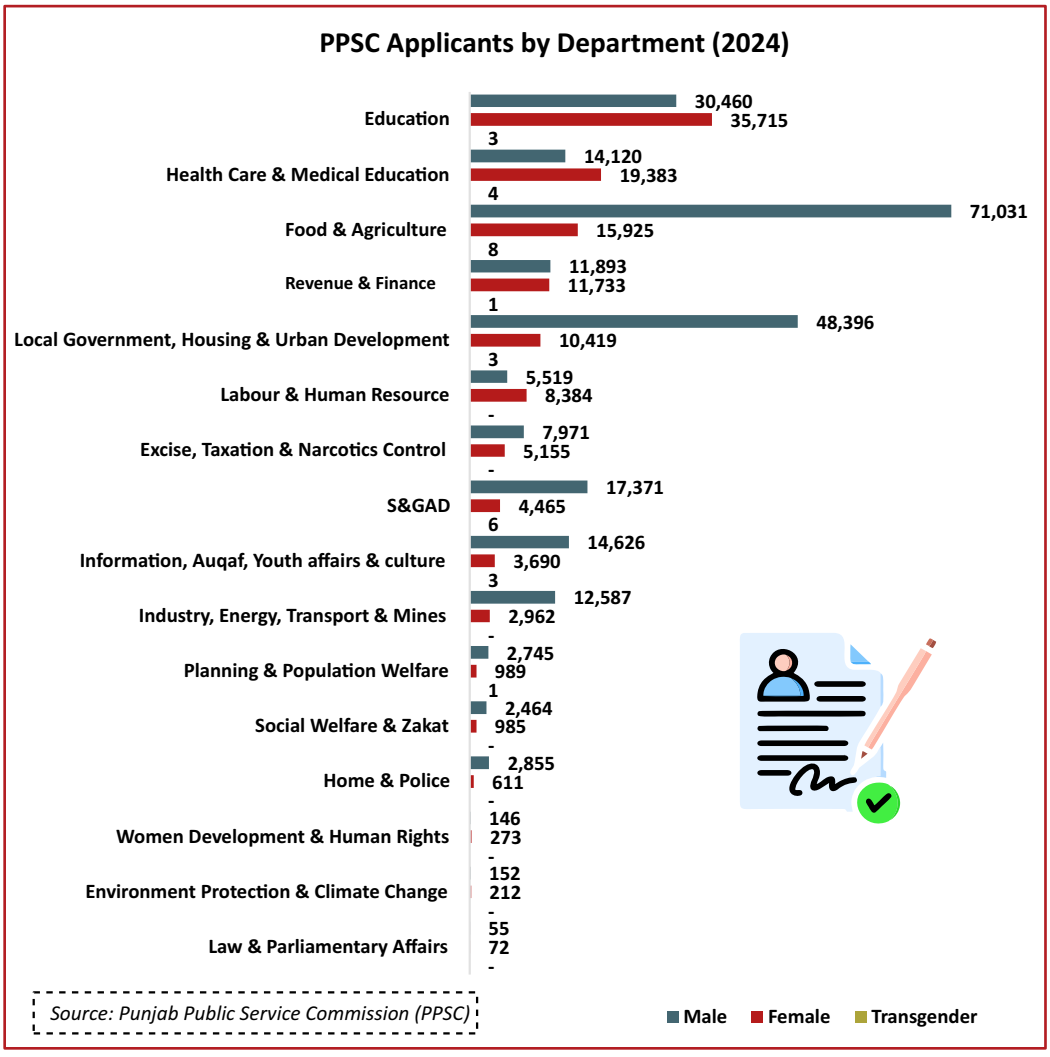


Figure 3.30

Data for successful candidates shows that while on average, more females joined the public services but their inclusion remained highly gendered in terms of departments. The majority of female candidates were selected in the education, healthcare, labour & human resource departments, while their participation in other departments remained quite lower than their male counterparts.

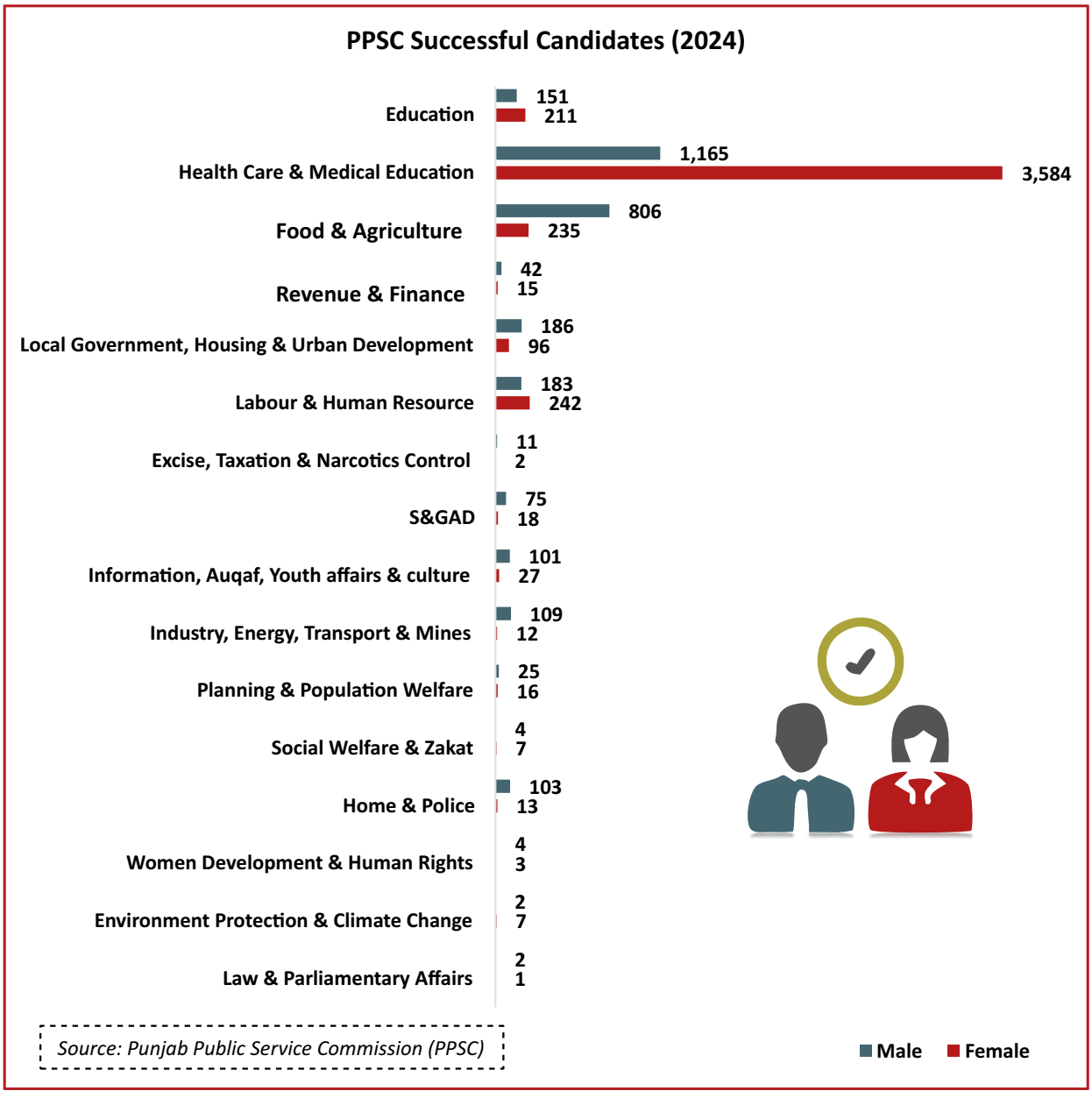


Figure 3.31

A district-wise analysis of male applicants and selected candidates revealed that Lahore, Faisalabad, and Muzaffargarh had the highest number of applicants, with the highest number of selected candidates from Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan districts. Kot Addu, Wazirabad, Talagang and Taunsa had the lowest number of applicants and selected candidates in Punjab.

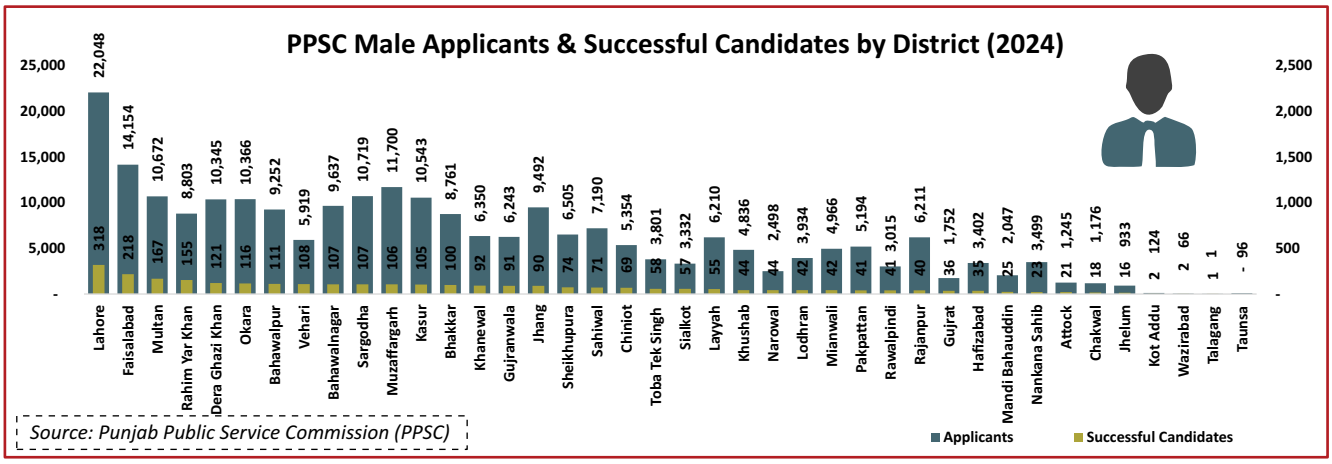


Figure 3.32

District-wise analysis of female applicants and selected candidates revealed that Lahore, Faisalabad, and Bahawalpur had the highest number of applicants, while the highest number of candidates was selected from Lahore, Faisalabad, and Muzaffargarh districts. Kot Addu, Wazirabad, Talagang and Taunsa again remained with the lowest number of female applicants and selected candidates in Punjab.

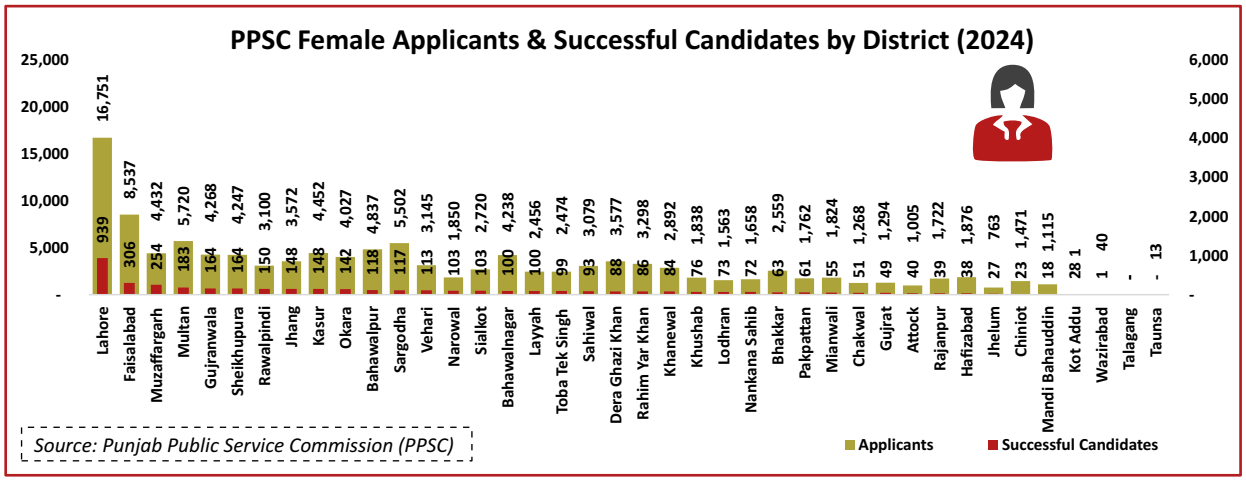


Figure 3.33

3.4.5 Quota-Based Representation

Government departments allocate a specific percentage of seats for women, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and minorities to ensure their representation. Provincial department seats filled against the 15 percent women quota were 47 percent against vacant positions in 2023. In the subsequent year, the number of filled seats decreased to 41 percent. Furthermore, the district offices' seats filled against the 15 percent women quota remained 55 percent against vacant positions. In 2024, filled positions increased to almost 58 percent.

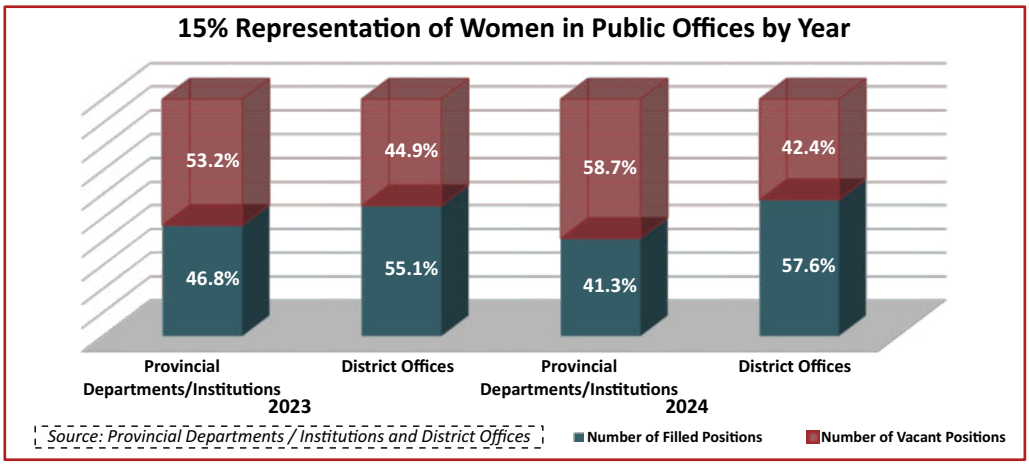


Figure 3.34

The number of PPSC candidates recommended against quotas was 847 in 2023, while 683 were recommended in 2024. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) recommended against the quota were 132 and 97 in 2023 and 2024, respectively. The number of minorities in the civil service was 304 and 235 for these years. Moreover, female candidates recommended against quota were 411 in 2023 and 351 in 2024.

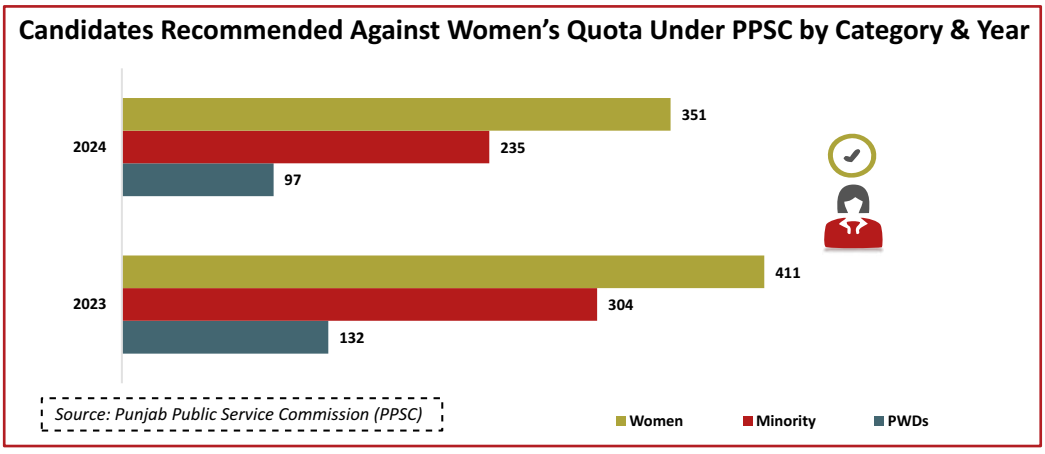


Figure 3.35

Department-wise analysis of the selected candidates against the quota showed that the highest number of candidates from the minority communities and PWDs joined healthcare and medical education. Additionally, local government, food, and agriculture attracted the most female candidates against the quota. Law & parliamentary affairs and environment protection received the fewest candidates against the quota, with only one female candidate each, and no minority or PWDs in these departments.

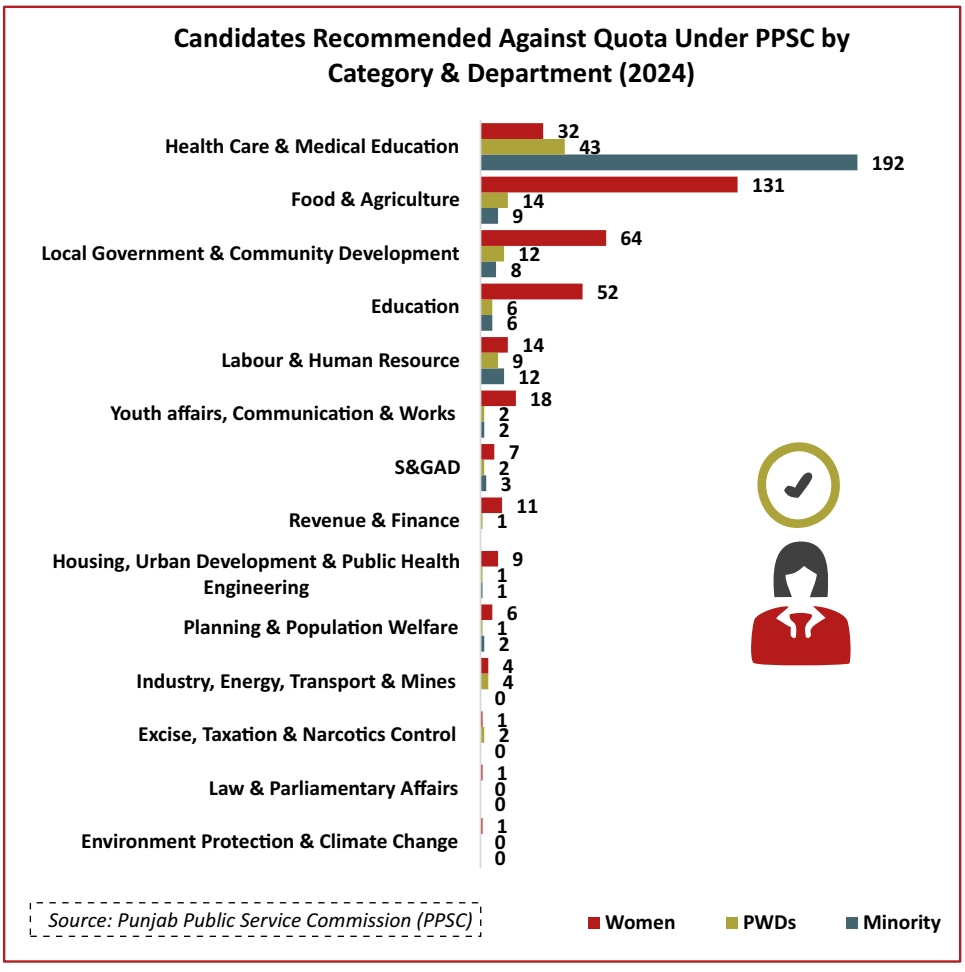


Figure 3.36

2024 district-wise statistics of PWDs and minority candidates recommended against quota reveal that Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala had the highest number of recommended candidates in these categories. While Bahawalpur, Pakpattan and Rajanpur had the lowest share of recommended candidates of PWDs and minority quotas.

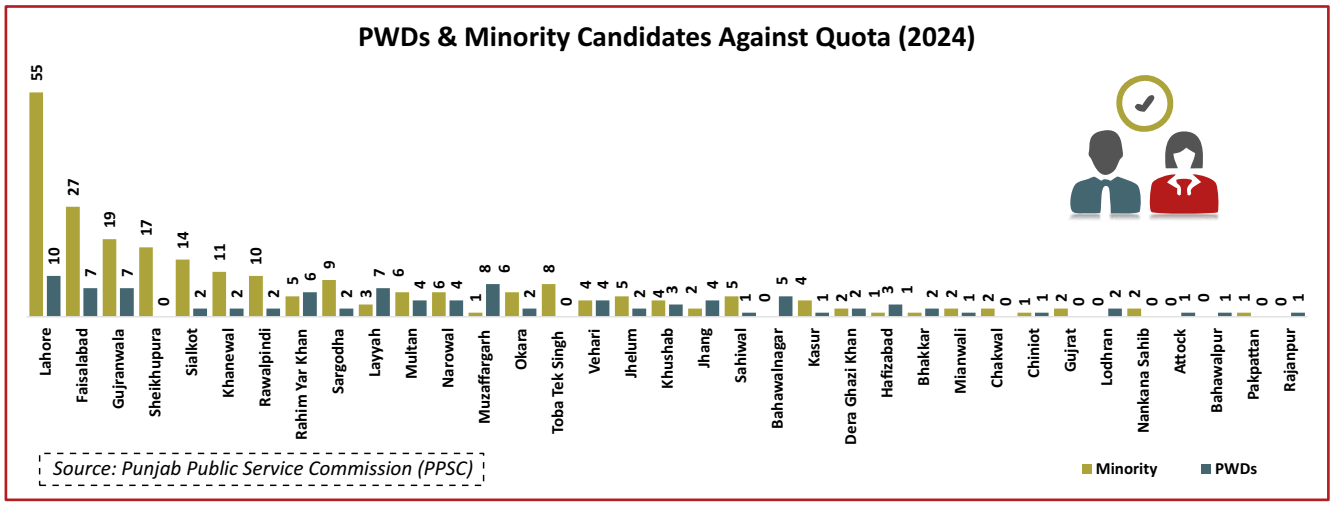


Figure 3.37

The Punjab district map of female candidates chosen against the quota shows that Lahore had the highest number, with 57 candidates, followed by Faisalabad, Okara, and Sargodha, each with 23. Mandi Bahauddin, Talagang, Taunsa, and Wazirabad districts had no female candidates recommended against the women's quota. Additionally, data for the Murree district was unavailable.

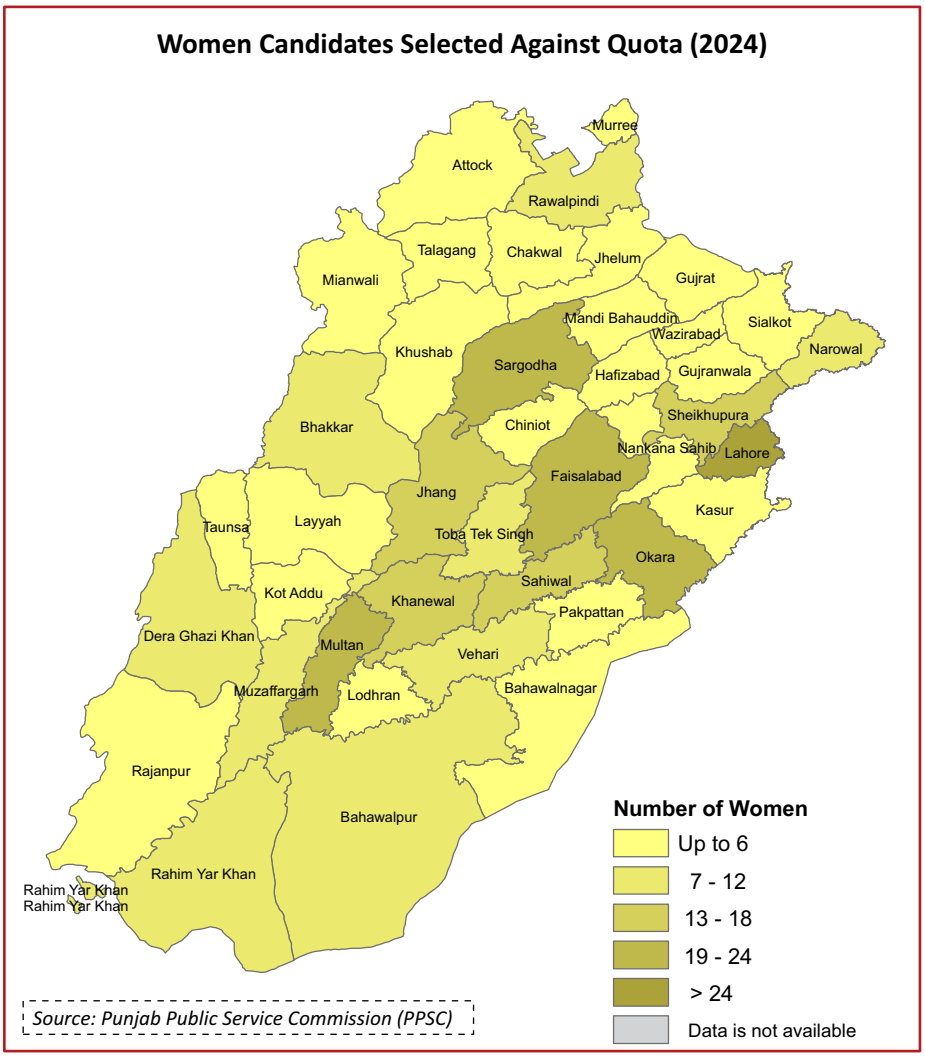


Figure 3.38

3.4.6 Provincial Contractual Employees

Contractual employees' data from provincial departments show that there were 682 males and 159 females in grade 17 or above in 2023. In 2024, the number of males decreased to 581, while the number of females increased to 168. GPI of grade 17 and above employees rose to 0.28 in 2024 from 0.23 in the previous year. The GPI of grade 1-16 contractual employees also increased to 0.07 in 2024 from 0.05 in 2023.

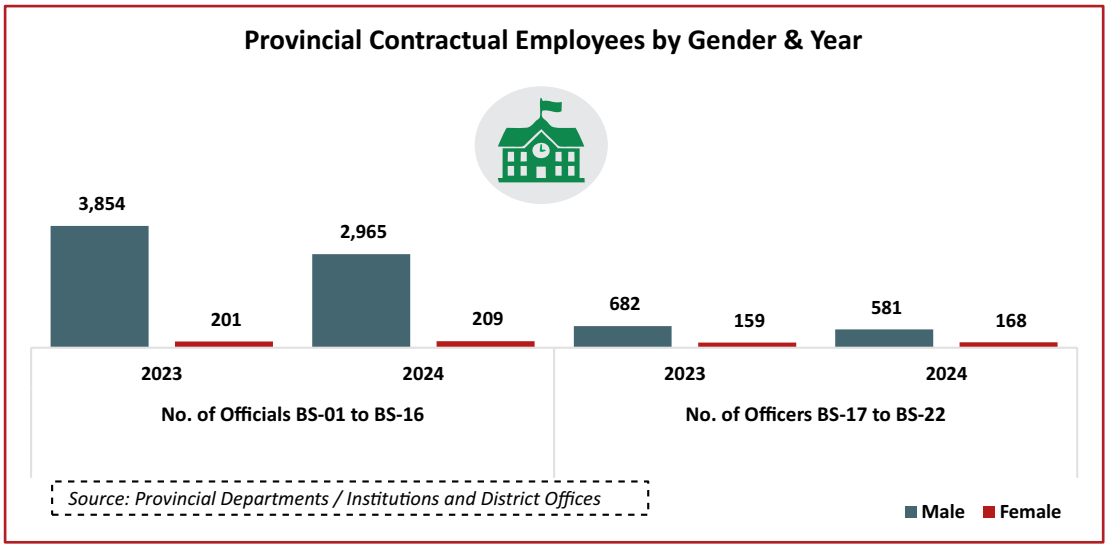


Figure 3.39

3.5 Women in Local Governance

A regional comparison further highlights the importance of women's representation in local governance. India has a population of almost 1.25 billion with an area of 3.3 million square kilometres and multiple ethnic, cultural, and religious demographics. Despite medium levels of poverty and literacy, the persistence of democratic culture is remarkable. Polity dynamics are associated with multiparty competition and coalition regimes, mostly at the state level. Comparatively, Bangladesh has a far smaller area with a homogenous ethnic, cultural and religious social fabric. Since 1971, it has seen political turmoil, violence, two presidential assassinations, thirteen heads of government, three military coups and nineteen failed attempts.[137]

The stark difference in democracy and political stability between these two South Asian states can be attributed to their local governance system. India has approximately 0.6 million villages and towns with financial autonomy at the local level, whereas Bangladesh's rural political base is weaker and its local government structure is underdeveloped.[138] From Montesquieu to John Locke, theorists have argued for a decentralised governance structure to instil participation, representation and transparency. Decentralisation deals with the multiple governance "structures", while devolution is the statutory delegation of power from upper to lower tiers of government. This process provides citizens multiple entry points and an opportunity to participate in the democratic process. This process reinvests governance mechanisms through social innovations and flexible experimentation. Devolution caters for the representation of marginalised segments of society and is associated with efficiency, effectiveness and equality.[139]

Pakistan lagged behind in developing an empowered and sustainable local governance structure. Article 140 (A) of The Constitution of Pakistan necessitates, by law, the establishment of local governments and devolving administrative, political and financial responsibility/authority to elected representatives.[140] Article 32 encourages the composition of local governments with special representation of peasants, workers and women. Despite these constitutional provisions, a lack of political will and capacity constraints has hindered the formation and function of local governments in Pakistan.[141]

The federal and provincial governments have controlled the local government tier in terms of administrative authority and

137 (Norris, P., Do power-sharing institutions work, 2008)
138 (Norris, P., Do power-sharing institutions work, 2008)
139 (Anjum, 2001)
140 (The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973)
141 Ibid

financial autonomy. Local governance dynamics are marred with patronage, nepotism, gender discrimination and poor performance.[142] Women are dissatisfied with government agencies in general and particularly with health, education, law enforcement and social welfare agencies.[143] Participatory and community-based mechanisms are thought to assist individuals in enhancing their capabilities for collective action. This can lead to significant advancements, including improved quality of life, access to necessities, and a decrease in social exclusion and inequality[144].

Punjab, with a population of almost 110 million, has remained without any local government representatives since 2019 to date. The Punjab Local Government Act (2019) provided decentralisation in terms of administrative structure, but simultaneously curtailed the administrative and financial autonomy of local representatives.[145] Women's empowerment and representation, which is one of the key objectives of local self-governance, has been taken into account, with just 20 percent of women's representation.[146] Effective and independent local governments are the need of the hour for peace, stability, effective service delivery and participation of marginalized segments of society. A robust, independent and representative local government system may go a long way to solve the governance and political challenges of Punjab.

3.5.1 District Offices Employees

Contractual employees' data from district offices show that there were 490 males and 274 females in grade 17 or above in 2023. In 2024, both male and female numbers slightly increased. GPI of grade 17 and above employees remained 0.5 for both

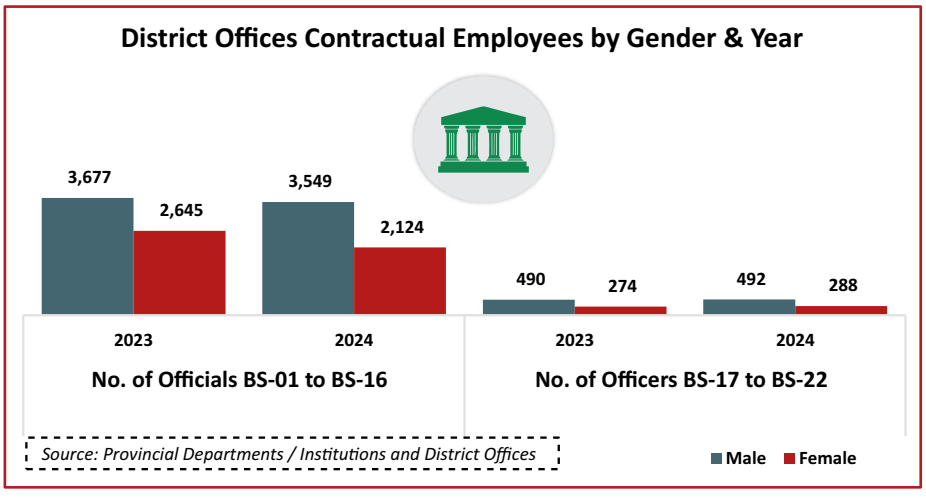


Figure 3.40

The number of both men PWD employees decreased and women PWD employees increased in district offices on a yearly basis. In 2024, men PWD employees comprised 83.2 percent and women 16.8 percent, with the GPI of 0.2.

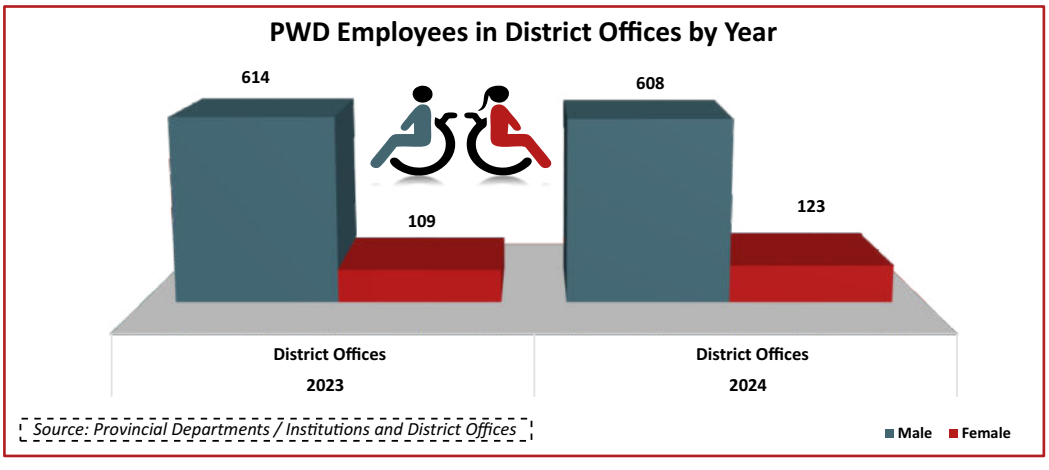


Figure 3.41

142 (Haque, 2012)
143 (UNDEF, Gender Governance Performance Report, 2012-13)
144 (Gutberlet, 2009).
145 (Azam K & et al, Importance of Devolution, 2022)
146 Ibid

3.5.2 Women's Participation in Statutory Boards/Committees

The number of selection and recruitment committees in the Provincial departments of Punjab was 55 for both previous years. Membership statistics of the committees reveal that there were 204 male (83 percent) and 43 female (17 percent) members in 2023. The number of both males and females slightly decreased in the following year. In 2024, the GPI of selection committee members also slightly decreased to 0.19 from 0.21 points.

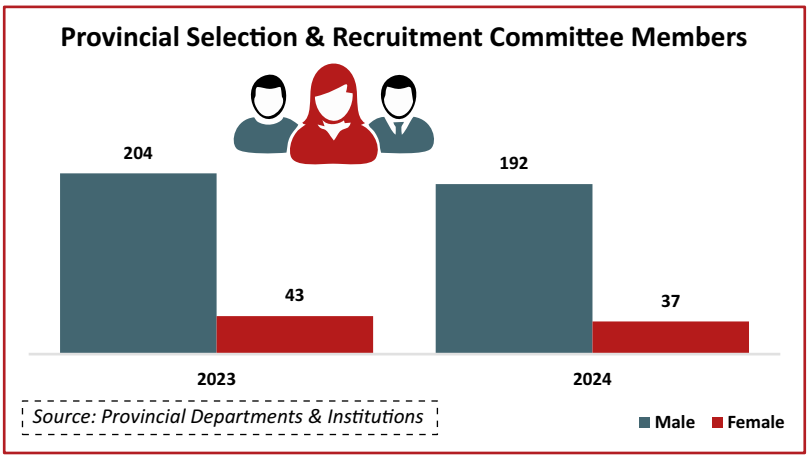


Figure 3.42

In Punjab's Provincial departments, there were 28 statutory boards in 2023 that increased to 30 in the subsequent year. Similarly, the number of statutory committees also increased from 79 to 88 yearly. Membership statistics of these statutory boards and committees are given below.

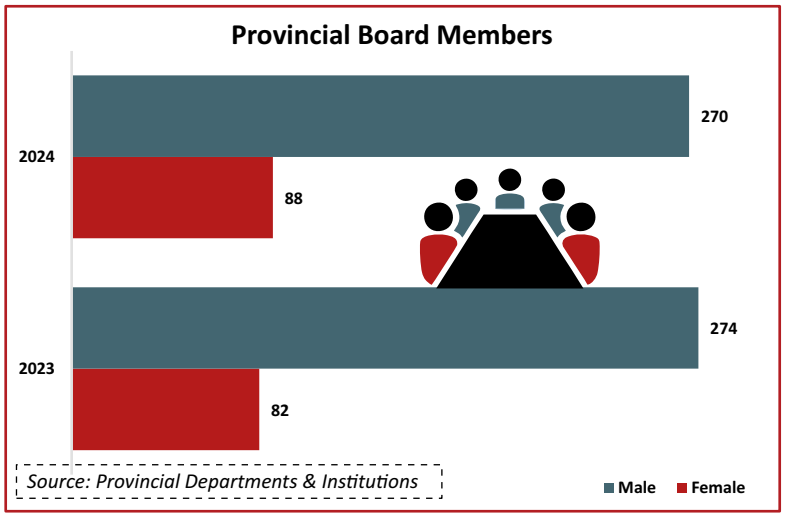


Figure 3.43

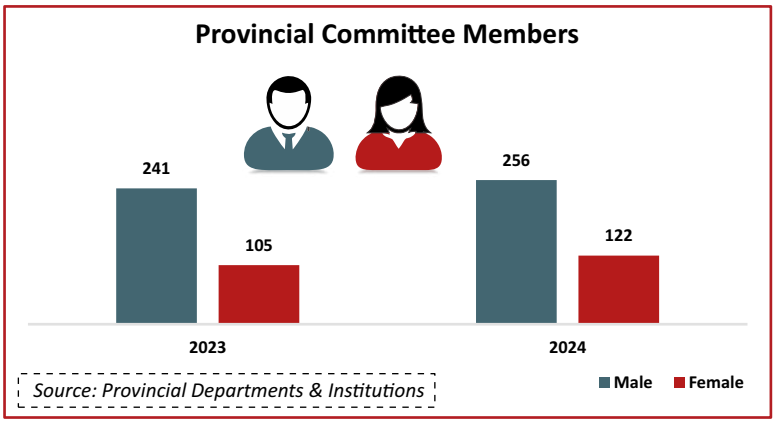


Figure 3.44

Provincial offices' compliance details for 33 percent women representation in selection and recruitment committees showed that only 19 percent of departments were in compliance in 2024. Similarly, in compliance, district offices were 24 percent for the same year.

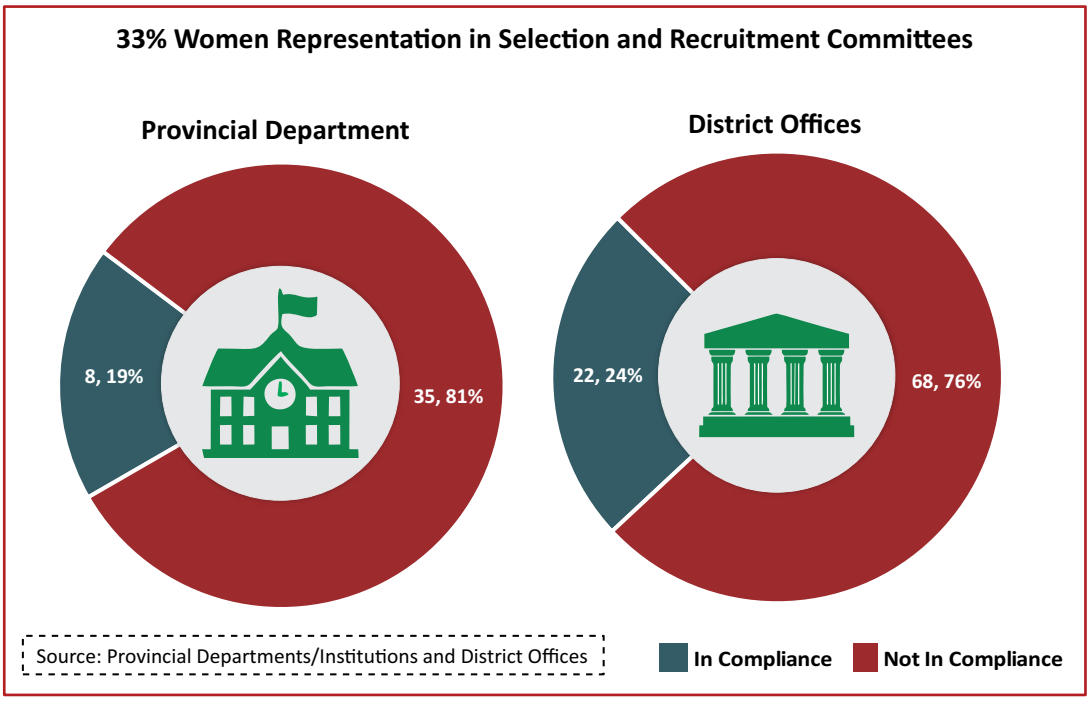


Figure 3.45

Provincial offices' compliance details of at least one women member in selection and recruitment committees showed that only 41 percent of departments complied in 2024. Similarly, in compliance, district offices were 25 percent for the same year. It shows that while one woman's representation compliance was slightly better than 33 percent representation in recruitment and selection committees, many public offices were still lagging in incorporating women in selection and recruitment boards.

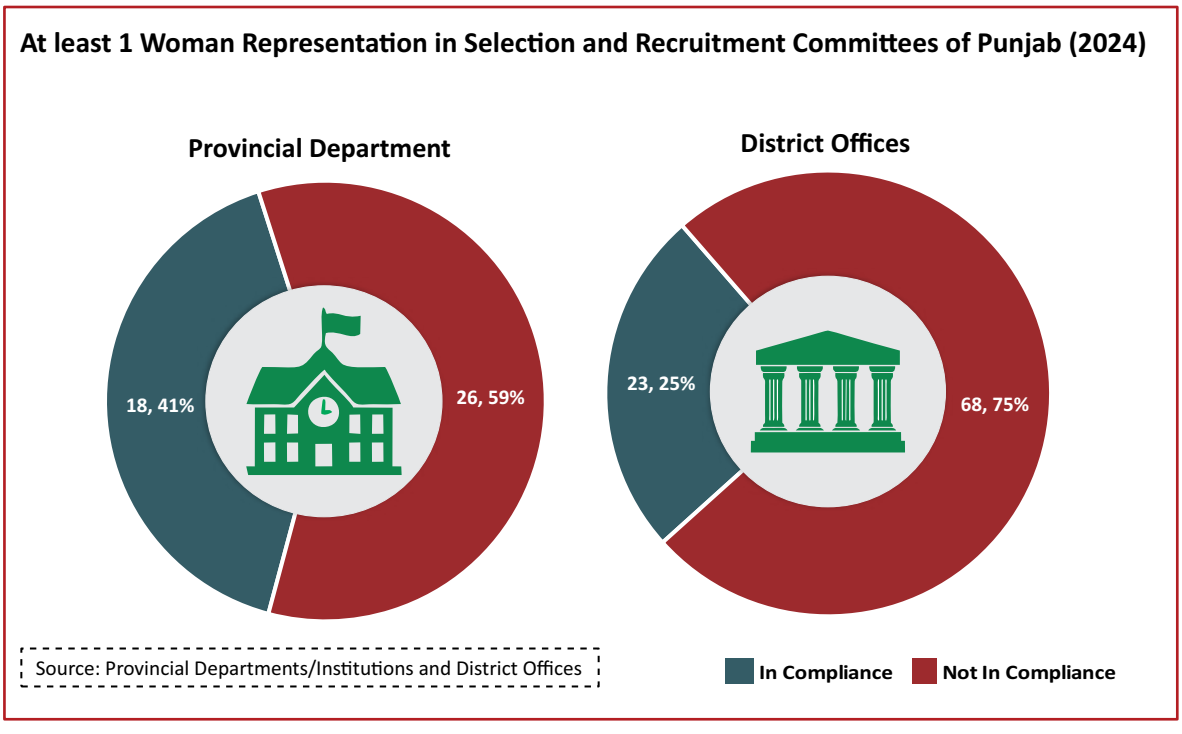


Figure 3.46

3.6 Conclusion

Research studies show that nation-states with a higher proportion of women in government and decision-making bodies tend to be more prosperous.[147] Nonetheless, women continue to face challenges and lack agency inpolitical empowerment, similar to other spheres of life.

Pakistan relies on quotas for women's participation in political and public service offices. Women quotas and minimum percentage representation are not intended as end goals but rather as transitional and corrective measures to facilitate women's entry into political institutions.. De facto inequalities continue to prevail despite adopting quotas and minimum representation models. True participation and decision-making power go beyond these measures. Pakistan therefore needs to move beyond these minimum interventions to address the current precarious state of governance, democracy, political stability, gender equality and empowerment.

Statistics from the 2024 General Elections reveal that only a few women were elected to general seats, with the majority continuing to depend on quotas for representation at national and provincial levels.The mechanism for allocating reserved seats is outdated and hinders women's participation at the grassroots level. Government employment statistics reveal that women's participation is relatively higher only in Health, Education and Population Welfare departments. The majority of government departments have very few women employees, and the majority of them also depend on quotas. There is a need for a comprehensive strategy for true, representative and inclusive political empowerment of women in Pakistan.

3.7 Recommendations

Enhance Women's Political Representation

Gender parity in the legislature at the national and provincial levels is significantly lower. Women's representation is highly dependent on quotas and reserved seats.

- ECP should ensure strict adherence to Article 206 of the Election Act, 2017, for 5 percent women representation on general seats for all political parties.
- Amendment in election laws may be introduced to adopt the "Highest Loser Representation" and the "Rotating Reserved General Seats" mechanism for women's reserved quota seats for the legislature. In the "Highest Loser Representation "for reserved seats, women with the highest number of votes on general seats will be allocated reserved seats, rather than political parties allocating them as per their quota. For "Rotating Reserved General Seats", constituencies would be explicitly fixed, for women on general seats, and these constituencies would continue to change in every upcoming election.
- Political finance transparency and audits are crucial to provide a level playing field for contesting parties. ECP should ensure political finance transparency and publicly available data to reduce cost barriers that disproportionately affect women and contesting parties.
- Political parties should provide campaign financing support through political party funds to women candidates. Moreover, there is a need to adopt women's wings with decision-making powers at the parliamentary and grassroots level.
- Punjab has remained without any local governments for more than 7 years. Local governments are critical for grassroots women's representation and need to be immediately revived without delay for women's political representation.

Strengthen Legislative Participation of Women Members

- Women-initiated bills and resolutions remain low in the Punjab Assembly. The Punjab Assembly should provide technical and research support units dedicated to women parliamentarians for bill drafting and policy analysis.

147 (Inter-Parliamentary Unit (IPU), 2025)

- Legislation at provincial and national levels may be adopted for women's caucuses to collaborate on legislation, gender mainstreaming and other emerging issues.
- 33 percent women's representation needs to be ensured in working groups and committees in the Senate, National & Provincial assemblies.

Increase Female Voter Turnout and Civic Participation

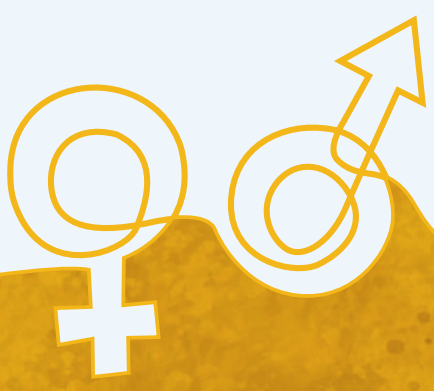
- ECP and the Government of Punjab should launch targeted awareness campaigns addressing cultural and social barriers to women's voting.
- ECP should give special attention to expanding female-friendly polling arrangements. Moreover, the presence of female polling staff in every polling needs to be ensured.
- NADRA needs to strengthen mobile CNIC and voter registration vans targeting women in remote and low-turnout districts.
- Minimum female representation needs to be ensured in local government structures (Union Councils, Tehsil Councils, and District Councils). Moreover, training may be provided to newly elected women councillors on budgeting, planning, public speaking, and governance.

Promote Gender Inclusiveness in Public Sector Workforce

- More than 75 percent of provincial and district offices have not complied with the 33 percent women representation in recruitment and selection committees. The government of Punjab needs to ensure that all public offices comply with the 33 percent women representation directive. Moreover, the Government of Punjab needs to ensure 15 percent women's representation in public offices.
- The Government of Punjab should introduce gender-sensitive recruitment targets across departments with low female representation. Moreover, women's recruitment into low gender parity departments (e.g., law, administration, IT, police, revenue) should be encouraged through awareness campaigns.
- The Government of Punjab should introduce hybrid working arrangements and flexible working hours to strengthen women's participation in the public and private sectors.
- Women's access to senior leadership positions in bureaucracy within each BPS scale should be ensured by creating structured pathways of promotion, recruitment and rotation by the Government of Punjab.
- Government of Punjab needs to ensure gender-balanced representation in departmental staffing, key provincial committees, commissions, and boards. Moreover, women members' representation in selection and recruitment committees for regular and contractual employees should be ensured.



HEALTH



04 HEALTH

KEY FINDINGS

- The infant mortality rate (IMR) declined from 60 to 49 deaths per 1,000 live births. Similarly, child mortality declined from 9 to 6 deaths per 1,000 live births, while the under-five mortality rate fell from 69 to 55 per 1,000 live births.
- In 2025, Punjab had 8,190 public health facilities and 4,190 private health facilities.
- A total of 2,223 service centres, namely, Adolescent Health Centers, Family Health Clinics, Family Welfare Centers, Men Advisory Centers, and Mobile Service Units, were located across 36 districts of Punjab.
- The number of OPD visits declined by 11.93 percent from 116.9 million in 2023 to 103.03 million in 2024, with women reporting a higher frequency of visits than men.
- The highest percentage of patients treated in IPD were women, mainly due to maternal health conditions, which accounted for 48.83 percent of health conditions treated in IPD in 2024.
- There were 167,117 registered doctors in Punjab, of whom 127,371 were MBBS doctors, 15,907 were BDS doctors, and 23,839 were specialised doctors. Overall more doctors were female, except among specialists, where men were the majority .
- A total of 62,847 field and clinical staff were reported under public health facilities, comprising LHWs, medical officers, nurses, LHVs, community midwives, lady health supervisors and ayas/dais.
- On average, the number of overall ANC visits increased slightly from 2.77 million in 2023 to 2.82 million in 2024. However, only 42.94 percent of pregnant women had completed at least four ANC visits, representing a decline in the number of follow-up visits.
- Around 6.86 million pregnant women received nutrition screening in 2023 and 7.02 million in 2024.
- Among pregnant women who attended ANC-1 from the public health facility, 15 percent were diagnosed with anaemia.
- There were 2.33 million pregnant women who received Tetanus Toxoid Vaccination in 2023, and approximately 2.25 million in 2024.
- A total of 994,231 postnatal care visits were reported in 2023, which increased to 996,768 in 2024.
- The number of induced abortion cases declined by 19.96 percent from 24,985 in 2023 to 19,966 in 2024. The most common procedure reported was Dilation and Curettage (D&C) for an induced abortion.
- There was a decline of 5.08 percent in facility-based delivery cases in public healthcare facilities, decreasing from 1.31 million deliveries in 2023 to 1.23 million in 2024. In 2024, approximately 98.83 percent of deliveries resulted in live births.
- The normal delivery cases decreased from 1.07 million in 2023 to 995,559 in 2024. On the other hand, a total of 236,261 caesarean surgeries were performed in 2023, and the number increased to 252,042 in 2024.

- In Punjab, family planning visits increased by 17.18 percent from 2.20 million in 2023 to 2.57 million in 2024.
- The total number of babies born with low birth weight was 24,288 in 2023 and 19,136 in 2024.
- There were 6,850 premature births recorded in 2023, and the number decreased to 5,567 cases in 2024.
- The neonatal mortality rate declined from 41 to 33 deaths per 1,000 live births, with higher rates reported among boys than girls.
- Coverage for hepatitis B. birth dose declined notably, with 1.96 million doses administered in 2023 compared with 1.30 million in 2024.
- There was a significant increase in the number of mental health counselling sessions from 3,749 in 2023 to 8,612 in 2024.
- There were 14,921 cases of cancer recorded in 2023, which increased to 17,828 cases in 2024. Among the reported cases of 2024, 42.32 percent of men and 57.68 percent of women were diagnosed with cancer.
- There was 15.96 percent increase in the number of AIDS cases, increasing from 40,268 in 2023 to 46,694 cases in 2024. The urban regions recorded the highest number of infections, with men disproportionately affected.

INTRODUCTION

International development organisations have recognised health as central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Health cannot be regarded as a standalone goal; rather, it is an essential component underpinning all three pillars of the SDGs, economic development, environmental sustainability, and gender equality. These pillars are intrinsically connected, with health serving both as a prerequisite and as an outcome for measuring the success of a country's sustainable development.[148]



Source: WHO Background Paper, 2017

Figure 4.1

Continuous global efforts have focused on reducing mortality and morbidity, with particular emphasis on improving access to quality health services for marginalised populations, especially women, children, and young people. However, health disparities linked to income, education, and geography continue to pose significant challenges to achieving the SDGs. Decentralisation of health services was implemented to reduce the burden on hospitals by expanding access to care. Nevertheless, more than half of the global population continues to face challenges in accessing basic healthcare services, primarily due to geographical inequalities.[149] This inaccessibility also hinders progress towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which aims to ensure access to quality and affordable health services for all. The UHC coverage index reached 68 in 2019, reflecting a three-point increase, and remained at this level through 2021. This indicates that approximately 4.5 billion people lacked access to essential health services, while out-of-pocket expenditures pushed 344 million people further towards extreme poverty.[150]

Access to health services is not equally available to all, and gender remains a major determinant shaping individuals' interaction with the health system. Women's ability to make informed decisions and access services is often constrained by cultural and structural barriers arising from prevailing gender disparities. For instance, patriarchal norms frequently grant men decision-making authority over women's health and mobility.[151] Structural disparities are also reflected in hospital admissions.

148 (Nunes, Lee, & T, 2016)
149 (Bishen, 2023)
150 (Tracking Universal Health Coverage: Global Monitoring Report, 2023)
151 (Panezai, Morshed, & Saqib, 2017)

In developed countries, men and women are admitted to hospitals and emergency departments at nearly equal rates; however, in low- and middle-income countries, women are less likely to access medical care under similar circumstances. This suggests that even when the prevalence of illness is comparable across genders, socially constructed gender roles continue to shape disparities in healthcare access.[152] Gender bias in the health sector remains widespread and is predominantly directed at women. It is also reflected in the attitudes and stereotypical views held by health practitioners, researchers, and administrators. Such biases undermine the performance and effectiveness of health systems, ultimately leading to poorer health outcomes.[153]

Addressing inequalities in healthcare access therefore requires a focus beyond the expansion of medical services alone, as both biological differences and socially constructed factors contribute to unequal opportunities. Women's health has frequently been narrowly framed through the lens of sexual and reproductive health (SRH), which significantly underrepresents the full scope of their health burden. While women's health includes maternal conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome, endometriosis, premenstrual syndrome, and ectopic pregnancy, it also encompasses a broad range of general conditions that affect women disproportionately or differently than men. Studies reveal that SRH accounts for only five percent of the overall health burden among women (see figure no 4.2).[154] Moreover, although female life expectancy is higher than that of males, this advantage is offset by higher morbidity rates among women.[155]

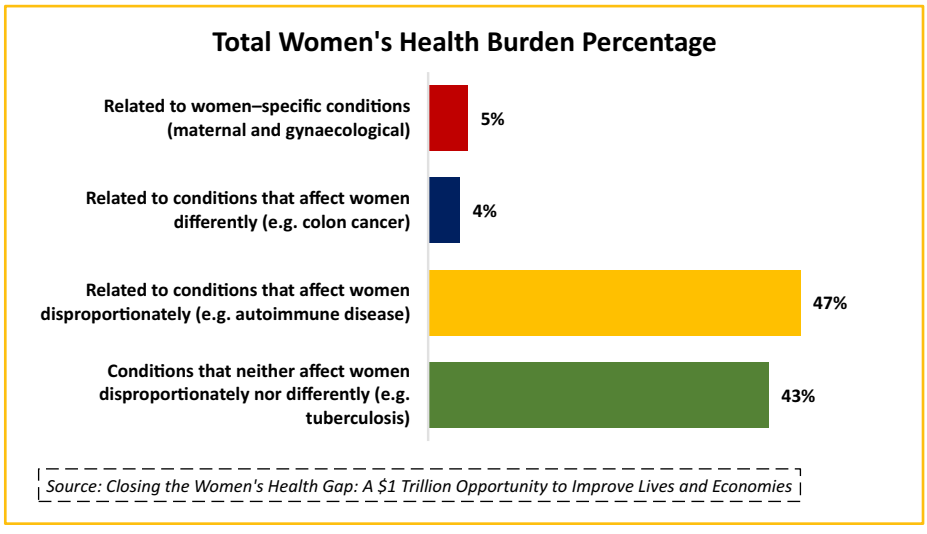


Figure 4.2

This gendered burden of disease is closely linked to the capacity of national health systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as Pakistan, the world's fifth most populous country, with Punjab accounting for nearly half of its total population.[156] In Pakistan, healthcare is a devolved subject following the 18th Constitutional Amendment. The Federal Government provides strategic direction and coordination, including national programmes and regulations, while provincial governments are responsible for the planning, financing, and delivery of health services. In addition to public health services, a substantial proportion of healthcare is delivered by the private sector. The cost of private healthcare is largely covered through out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures. While private facilities are often preferred due to perceived better quality, economically disadvantaged households are unable to utilise these services because of high OOP costs, which account for approximately 56 to 60 percent[157] of total health expenditures. This places additional pressure on already strained public health facilities, pushes low-income households further into poverty, and undermines patient care for those unable to afford private services.[158]

To address these financial barriers, Pakistan undertook several initiatives, including the implementation of the Sehat Sahulat Program (SSP). Under this programme, financial support of up to PKR 1 million per household is provided annually.[159] In addition, community health programmes such as Lady Health Workers (LHWs), the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), and the Maternal Health Program were launched to reach underserved populations. These initiatives contributed to improvements in key health indicators, including life expectancy at birth, which increased from 65.6 years to 67.6 years.[160] To

152 (Azad, Charles, Ding, Tricky, & Wren, 2020)
153 (Villines, 2021)
154 (Ellingrud, Pérez, Petersen, & Sartori, 2024)
155 (World Health Statistics 2025: Monitoring Health for the SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals, 2025)
156 (Tahir, Ch, Farooq, Mubin, & Kataria, 2024)
157 (Shaikh & Ali, 2023)
158 (Ali & Zaidi, 2024)
159 (Shaikh & Ali, 2023)
160 (Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-2024)

ensure progress towards universal health coverage, it is essential to allocate a substantial proportion of public expenditure to the health sector. For FY 2023–24, the Government of Punjab allocated PKR 118 billion to health, covering the Primary and Secondary Health Department, the Specialised Medical Health and Education Department, and the Population Welfare Department.[161]

Progress across health indicators reflects government efforts to raise awareness and improve knowledge and access to healthcare services. However, Pakistan continues to lag behind other South Asian countries.[162] Improvements in immunisation coverage, antenatal care (ANC), and skilled birth attendance have largely been attributed to increased utilisation of private-sector services, which remain heavily dependent on OOP expenditures. Maternal and infant mortality rates are declining gradually, yet they remain the highest in the region.[163] According to the latest Global Gender Gap Report, Pakistan has closed 95.9 percent of the health and survival subindex, reflecting a slight decline from the 96.1 percent recorded in both 2023 and 2024 (see figure no 4.3).[164] One contributing factor to this trend is the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the suspension of outpatient services and disrupted health service delivery.[165]

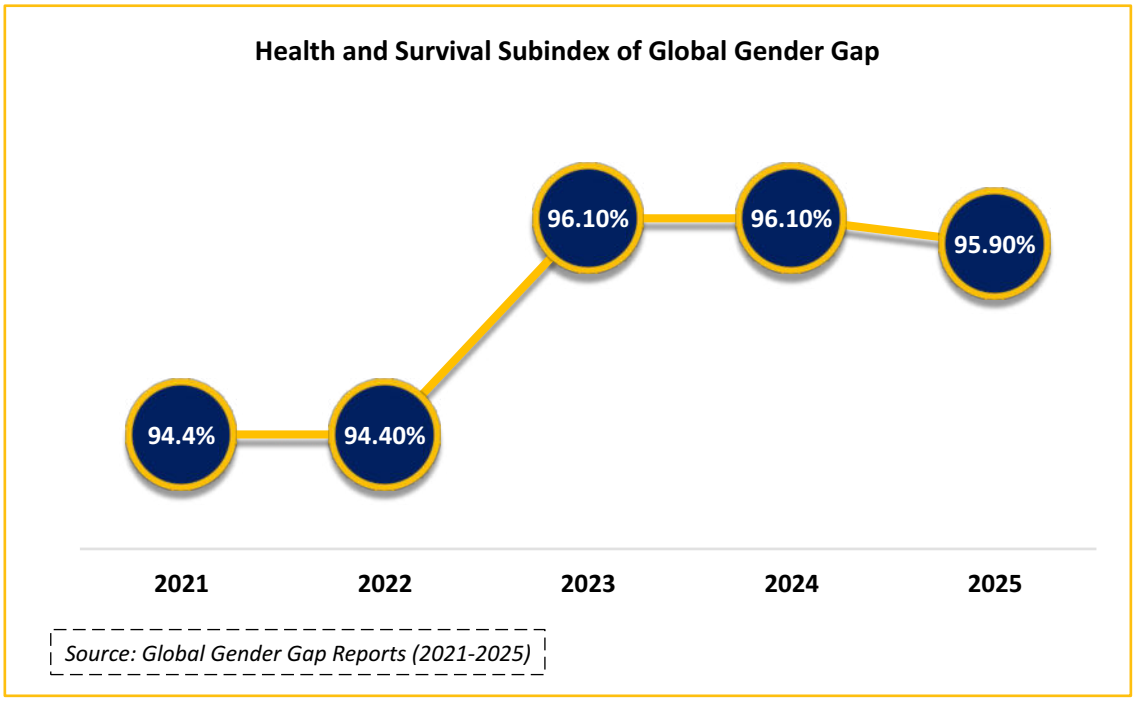


Figure 4.3

Globally, similar setbacks were experienced after years of progress across multiple dimensions of population health, including improved access to clean water, reductions in smoking prevalence, increased facility-based births, declines in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-related mortality, and improvements in infant survival. Collectively, these gains contributed to declining mortality across a wide range of causes.[166] The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this momentum, compromising countries' capacity to meet health-related targets by 2030 and exacerbating existing social, economic, and environmental challenges.[167] Pakistan has demonstrated a strong commitment to the SDGs agenda and possesses the potential to achieve these targets; however, substantial and fast track efforts will be required.[168] Given these challenges, integrating a gender perspective into health policy is no longer optional.[169] Gender shapes health inequalities through power relations and privilege, and addressing these disparities requires an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.[170]

161 (ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2023-24)
162 (World Health Organization, 2022)
163 (Khan, Asif, Aslam, Khan, & Hamza, 2023)
164 (Global Gender Gap Report, 2025)
165 (Khan, Asif, Aslam, Khan, & Hamza, 2023)
166 (World Health Statistics 2025: Monitoring Health for the SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals, 2025)
167 (Yuan, et al., 2023)
168 (Shaikh & Ali, 2023)
169 (Morgan, et al., 2016)
170 (World Health Organization, 2024)

Organization of Analysis

Pakistan Health Profile

Punjab Health Profile

Access to Healthcare Services

- **Healthcare Facilities in Punjab**
  - Public Health Facilities
  - Number of Beds
  - Patients Attended by Public Health Facilities
  - Private Healthcare Facilities
- **Healthcare Professionals in Punjab**

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- Antenatal Care
- Anaemia among Pregnant Women
- Tetanus Toxoid Vaccination
- Nutrition Screening of Pregnant Women
- Abortion
- Delivery
- Postnatal Care
- Family Planning

Child Health and Survival

- Live Births
- Babies with LBW
- Premature
- Stillbirth
- Early Childhood Mortality
- Neonatal Mortality
- Child Immunisation
- Child Malnutrition



Mental Health Services

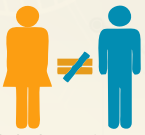
Health Surveillance

- Cancer
- AIDS
- Hepatitis Cases
- Malaria & Dengue
- Psychiatric Diseases

PAKISTAN HEALTH PROFILE



53.9%



Global Gender Gap Health and Survival Index

0.95%



Health Sector PSDP Allocation

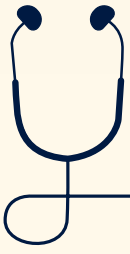
PKR 25.3 Billion



Annual DALYs Lost per 100,000 Population

36,296

PAKISTAN HEALTH WORKFORCE





Lady Health Workers

85,216



Registered Doctors

317,449



Registered Nurses

113,329



Lady Health Visitors

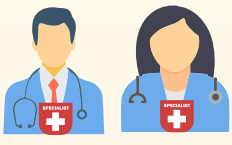
24,561

01 02 03 04



Dentists

30.6% 69.4%



Physicians & Specialists

49.5% 50.5%

HEALTHCARE OUTCOMES



Life Expectancy at Birth

Est. 65.8 years



Maternal Mortality Rate

Est. 155 per 100,000 Births



Tuberculosis Incidence (2022)

258 per 100,000



Infant Mortality Rate

52.8 per 1,000 Live Births



Prevalence of HIV in Population Aged 15–49 Years (2022)

0.2%



Unmet need for Family Planning

17%

Sources: Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2023 Global Monitoring Report (2023), Global Gender Gap (2025), Pakistan Health Workforce Snapshot (2025), Pakistan Economic Survey (2023-24), PDHS (2017-18), World Health Observatory (2025).

PUNJAB HEALTH PROFILE

SERVICE DELIVERY & WORKFORCE



Lady Health Workers
29,193



Registered Doctors
167,117



Public Health Facilities
8,190



Private Health Facilities
4,190

HEALTHCARE OUTCOMES



Neonatal Mortality Rate
33 per 1,000 Live Births



Infant Mortality Rate
49 per 1,000 Live Births



Under-5 Mortality Rate
55 per 1,000 Live Births



Underweight
20.9%



Stunted
27.3%



Wasted Children
10.2%



Women Who Completed ANC IV Visits
1,709,871



Anaemia among Pregnant Women
627,532



Tetanus Toxoid Injections
2.25 Million



C-Section Delivery Cases
252,042



Live Births
1,235,324



Stillbirths
1,940



Hepatitis Birth Dose
1.30 Million



HIV/AIDS
46,694



Cancer Cases
17,828

Sources: MICS KFR (2024), DG Health Services, Punjab (2024), Punjab Healthcare Commission (2024), EPI (2024), Punjab Cancer Registry (2024), Punjab Aids Control (2024)

4.1 Access to Healthcare Services

The access to services shows the extent to which people can reach to that service at the time of need. Because the purpose of a healthcare system is compromised when a person is unable to access health services when needed. Thus, the timely utilisation of health services is crucial as any delay can be consequential.[171] For equitable access to healthcare, primary healthcare has emerged as a reliable and effective approach. It mitigates the socio-economic determinants of poor health through the provision of healthcare services at the primary level.[172] Furthermore, the Punjab Healthcare system has been operating at multilayered levels discussed in detail in the subsections below, to improve healthcare accessibility, especially among marginalised communities.

Healthcare Facilities

4.1.1 Public Health Facilities

The public health system of Punjab is three-tiered, which is further supported by various community-based healthcare interventions. The primary level of care comprises Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centres (RHCs), followed by the secondary level. It consists of Tehsil Headquarter Hospitals (THQs) and District Headquarter Hospitals (DHQs), which provide inpatient services. They are supported by tertiary-level facilities, which include teaching hospitals. Within this framework, maternal and child health (MCH) services and community outreach programs are integrated, such as the LHW program.[173]

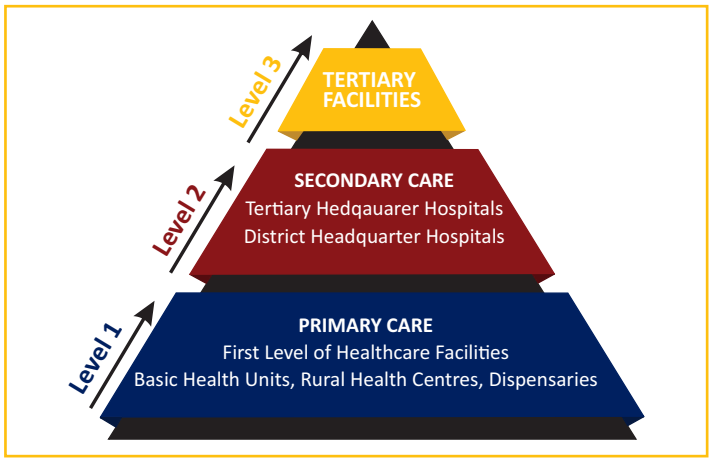


Figure 4.4

In Punjab, the total number of public health facilities was 8,190 in 2025, and among them, the highest proportion of facilities was of Maryam Nawaz Health Clinics followed by BHUs and Dispensaries. Mobile Clinics, named clinics on wheels, were introduced to increase the outreach of health services in urban slums. In addition, there were 102 centres categorised as other, which included diagnostic centres, paraplegic centres and clinics.

To achieve the objective of universal health coverage, it is essential to expand and improve the primary healthcare system of Punjab. However, the data showed that the number of healthcare facilities, such as BHUs, decreased from 2,587 in 2021 to 2,366 in 2025. Similarly, the number of RHCs decreased from 378 in 2021 to 324 in 2025, and dispensaries decreased from 1,411 in 2021 to 1,312 in 2025. [174]

171 (Integrated health services analysis: district and facility levels , June 2021)
172 (Gizaw, Astale, & Kassie, 2022)
173 (Mashhadi, Hamid, Roshan, & Fawad, 2016)
174 DG Health Services, Punjab, provided the data on the number of public health facilities in 2025, as there was no available data for the years 2023 and 2024 to draw a comparison.

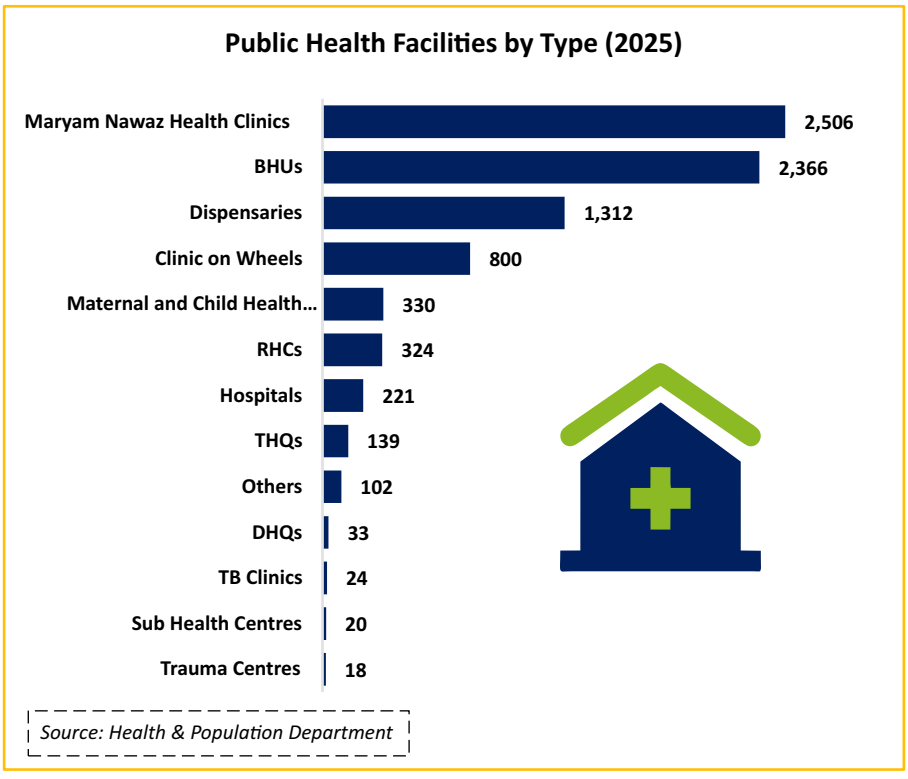


Figure 4.5

4.1.2 Service Centres Under Health and Population Department

In addition to general health facilities, there were 2,223 service centres established under the Health and Population Department in 2025.[175] Among these centres, Family Welfare Centres (FWCs) constituted the majority (1,985, 89.29 percent); followed by Family Health Clinics (FHCs) (128, 5.76 percent); Family Health Mobile Units (62, 2.79 percent); Mobile Service Units (MSUs) (33, 1.48 percent); Adolescent Health Centres (AHCs) (10, 0.45 percent); and Men Advisory Units/Centres (MAUs) (5, 0.22 percent).

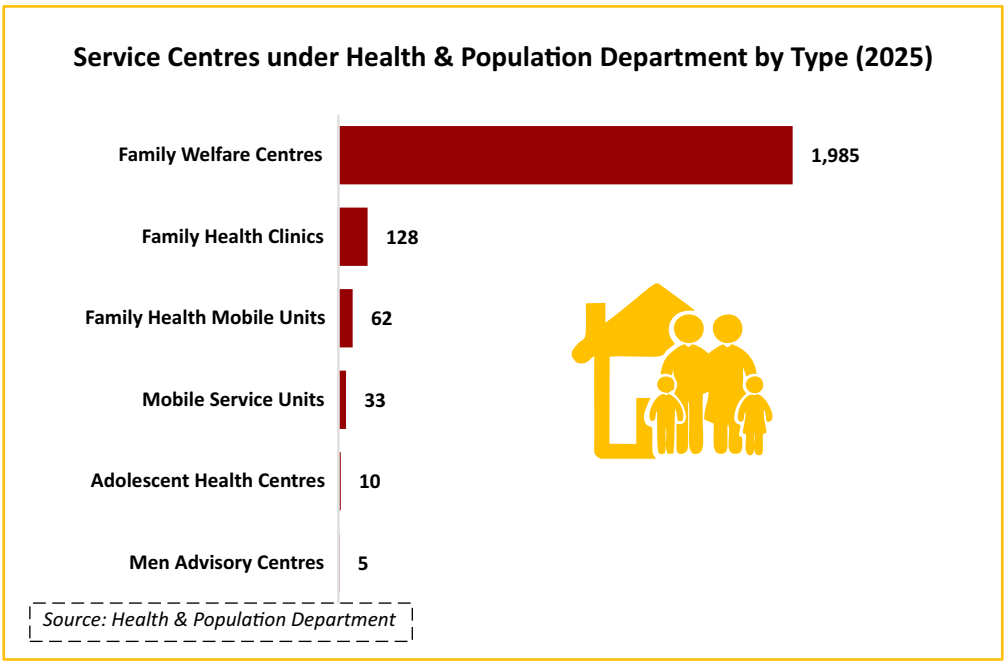


Figure 4.6

175 DG Health Services, Punjab, provided the data on the number of public health facilities in 2025, as there was no available data for the years 2023 and 2024 to draw a comparison.

4.1.3 Number of Beds

The provision of quality health services is dependent on the availability and condition of basic health infrastructure, including the number of sanctioned beds. According to the Punjab Development Statistics (PDS) Report (2024), the number of beds within the public healthcare facilities increased by 13.41 percent from 73,394 in 2022 to 83,238 in 2023. Facility-wise analysis showed that the number of beds in hospitals increased from 61,350 in 2022 to 71,334 in 2023. During the same period, an increase was observed in the number of beds in RHCs from 6,377 to 6,536, in trauma centres from 207 to 231 and in TB clinics from 105 to 118. Whereas the number of beds in dispensaries remained the same, a decline in the number of beds was observed in BHUs.

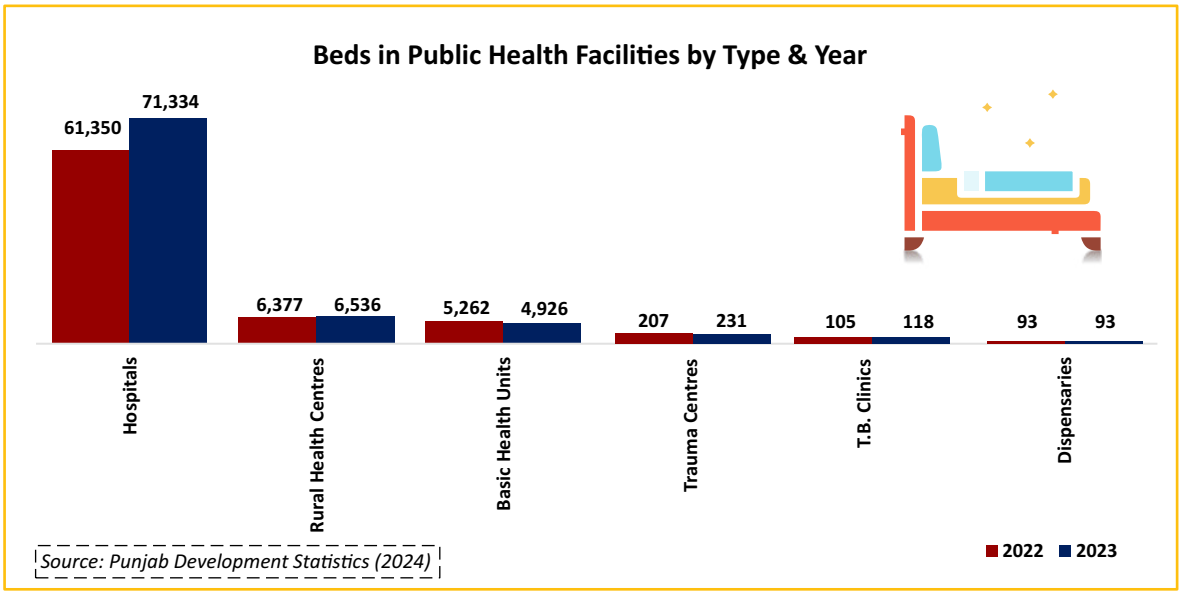


Figure 4.7

4.1.4 Patients Attended by Public Health Facilities

The overall number of outpatient department (OPD) visits recorded in 2023 was 116.9 million. The number of OPD visits decreased to 103.03 million in 2024. In the same year, it was observed that the frequency of visits was higher among women as compared to men, indicating increased healthcare utilisation among women. The gender disaggregated data of OPD visits is presented in figure 4.8 below.

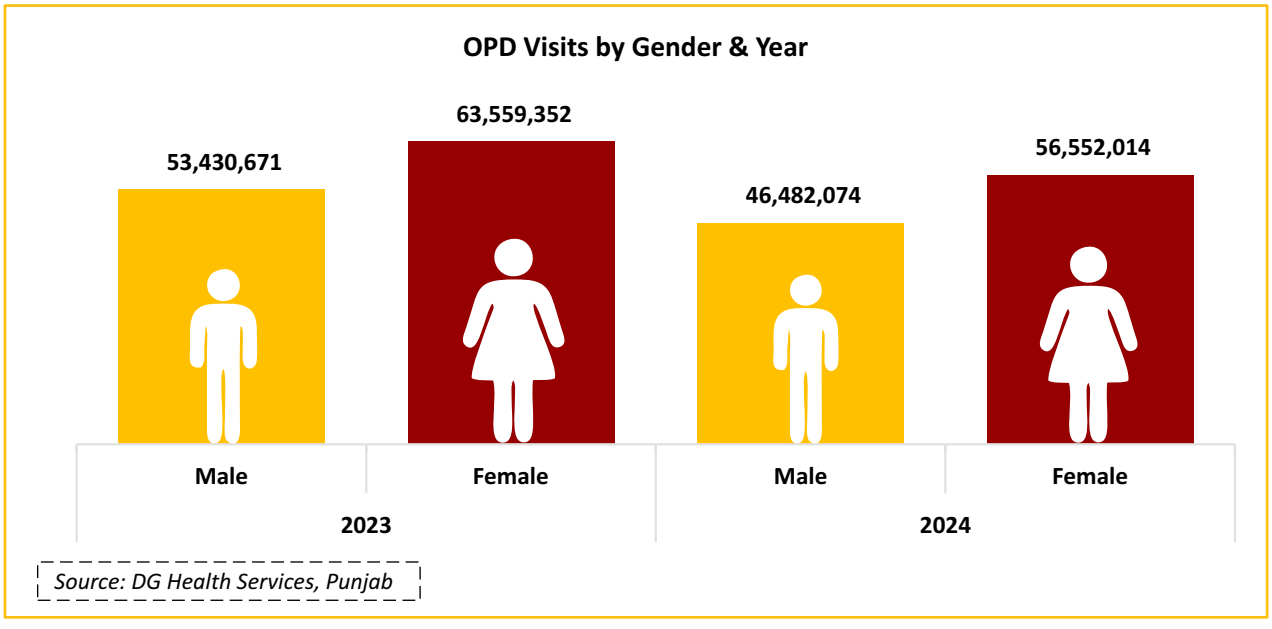


Figure 4.8

Age-specific analysis showed that the highest number of OPD visits was recorded among patients in the 15–49-year age group, whereas the lowest number was recorded among patients in the 0-4-year age group during 2023 and 2024.

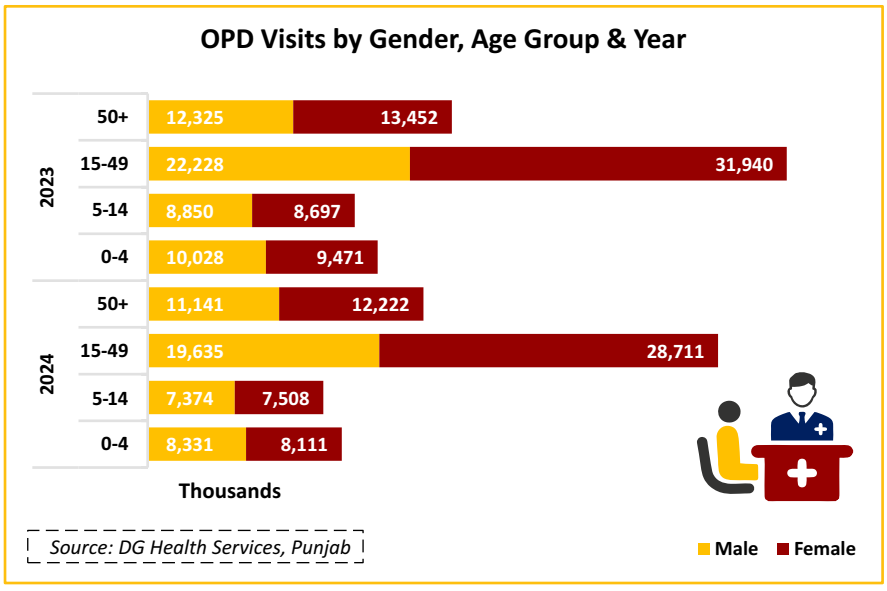


Figure 4.9

In 2023, the inpatient department (IPD) treated a total of 390,509 patients, whereas in 2024, this number decreased to 306,199 in Punjab. Of those treated in 2024, 26.65 percent were men, and 73.35 percent were women. The higher proportion of female patients was largely attributed to maternal health conditions such as antepartum and postpartum haemorrhage, abortions, ectopic pregnancies and obstructed labour, etc. The data of Director General Health Services, Punjab (DGHS) showed that the percentage of women treated for maternal conditions among other health issues was 48.83 percent in 2024.

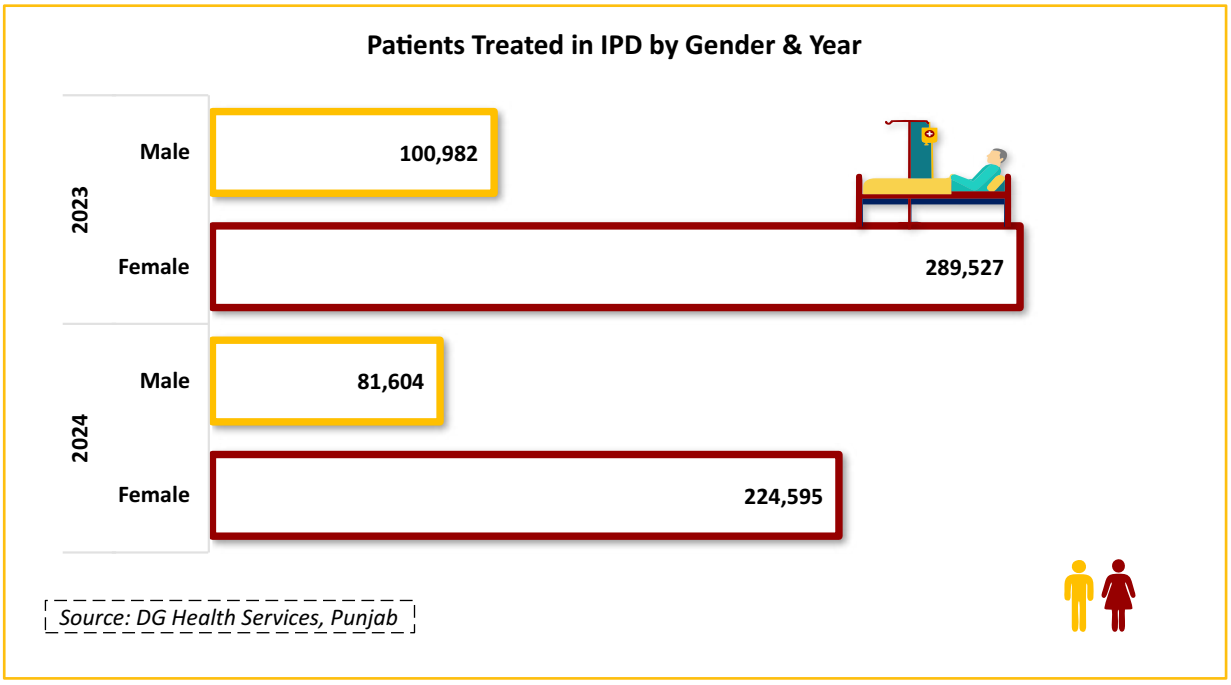


Figure 4.10

The age-specific analysis of IPD patients showed a trend similar to that observed in OPD visits. The highest number of patients treated in IPD was in the 15-49-year age group, whereas the lowest proportion of patients was in the 0-4-year age group in 2024.

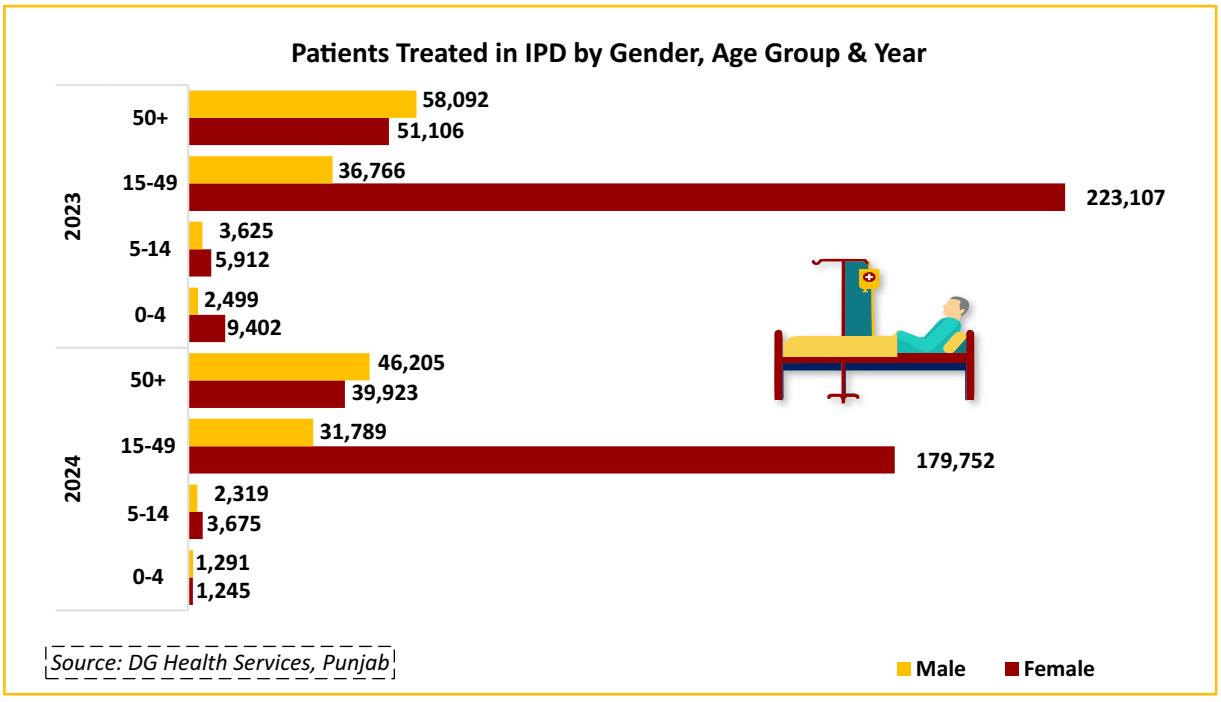


Figure 4.11

4.1.5 Private Healthcare Facilities

Private healthcare facilities are operating independently of government control and include a diverse range of providers such as doctors, pharmacists and traditional healers.[176] It is commonly perceived that private healthcare facilities offer better quality of care, with the availability of essential drugs, diagnostic services and greater responsiveness to patients' needs. It is estimated that approximately 70 percent of services are delivered by the private sector, with the financial burden largely falling on patients through out-of-pocket payments.[177] As reported by the Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC), the number of private health facilities increased from 2,711 in 2023 to 4,190 in 2024, reflecting a 54.55 percent increase. For the years 2023 and 2024, medical clinics had the highest proportion among private health facilities, while the lowest proportion was of diagnostic centres. The year-wise comparison by type of facility is presented in figure 4.12.

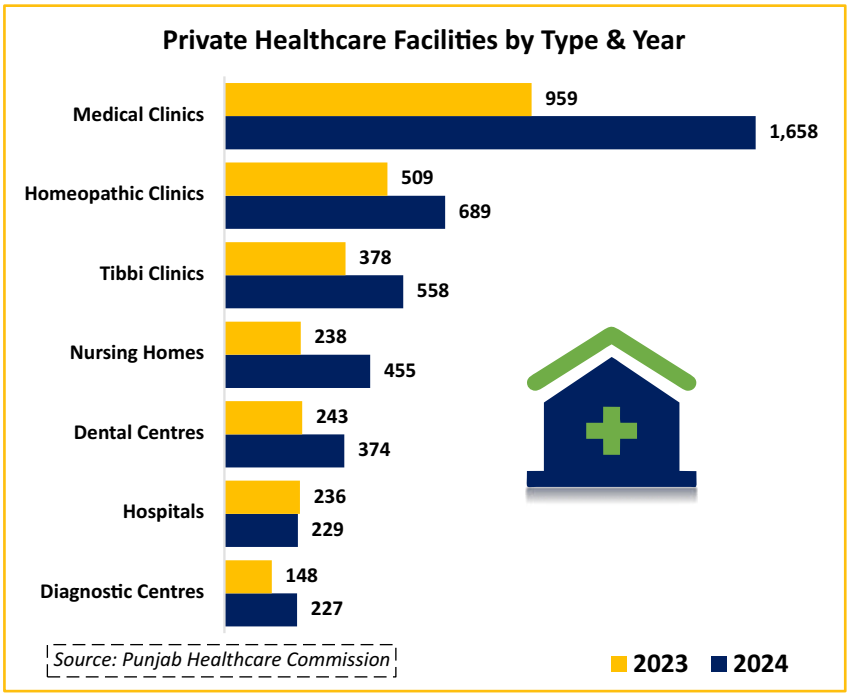


Figure 4.12

176 (Mashhadi, Hamid, Roshan, & Fawad, 2016)
177 (Shaikh B. T., 2015)

The total number of hospital beds decreased from 5,819 in 2023 to 4,393 in 2024, which is due to a reduction in the number of registered hospitals during this period.

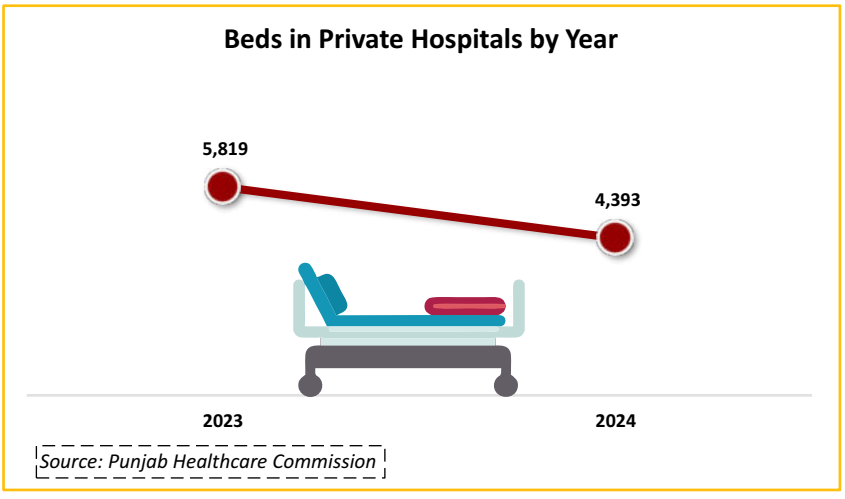


Figure 4.13

4.2 Healthcare Professionals

4.2.1 Registered Doctors

Overall, there has been a steady increase in the number of registered doctors. In Punjab, a total of 167,117 doctors were registered, including 127,371 MBBS doctors, 15,907 BDS doctors, and 23,839 specialised MBBS doctors (See figure 4.14)

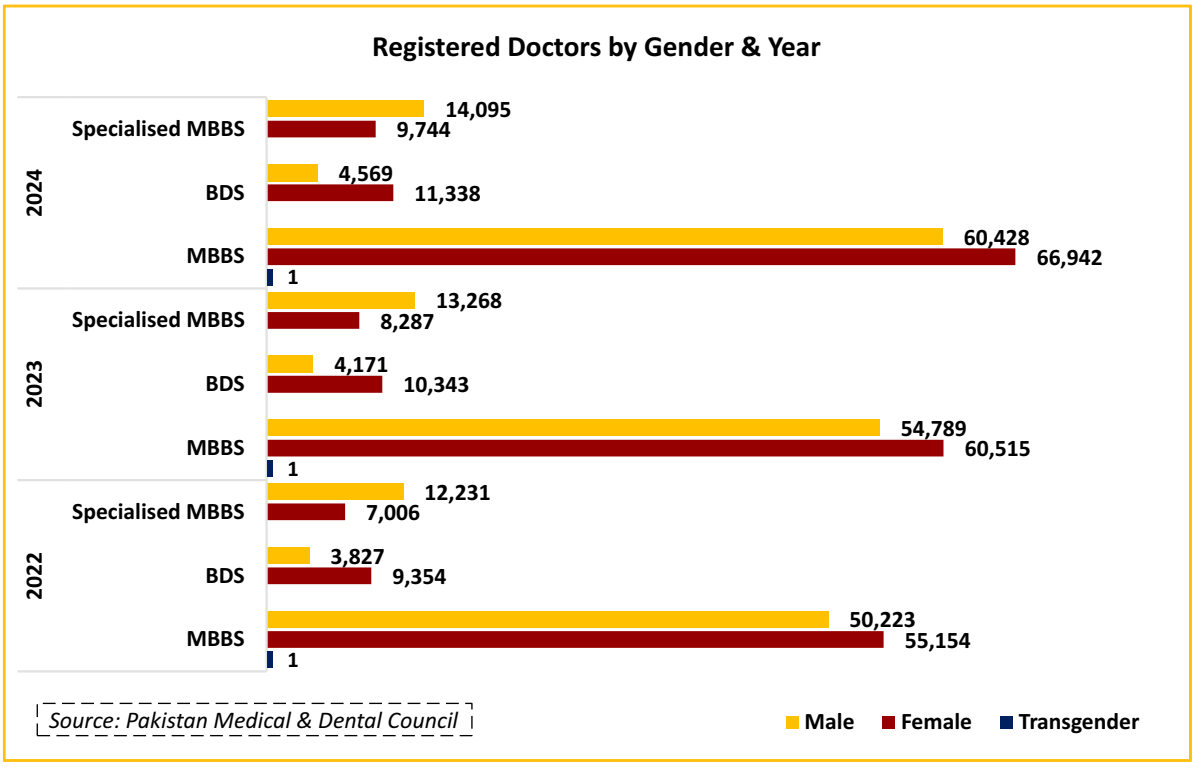


Figure 4.14

Among the registered MBBS doctors, the number increased from 9,927 in 2023 to 12,066 in 2024, with a higher proportion of female than male in the workforce. For example, in 2023, among the registered MBBS doctors, 45.99 percent were male and 54 percent were female, resulting in a GPI of 1.17. Similarly, in 2024, 46.73 percent were male and 53.26 percent were female among registered doctors, with a GPI of 1.13.

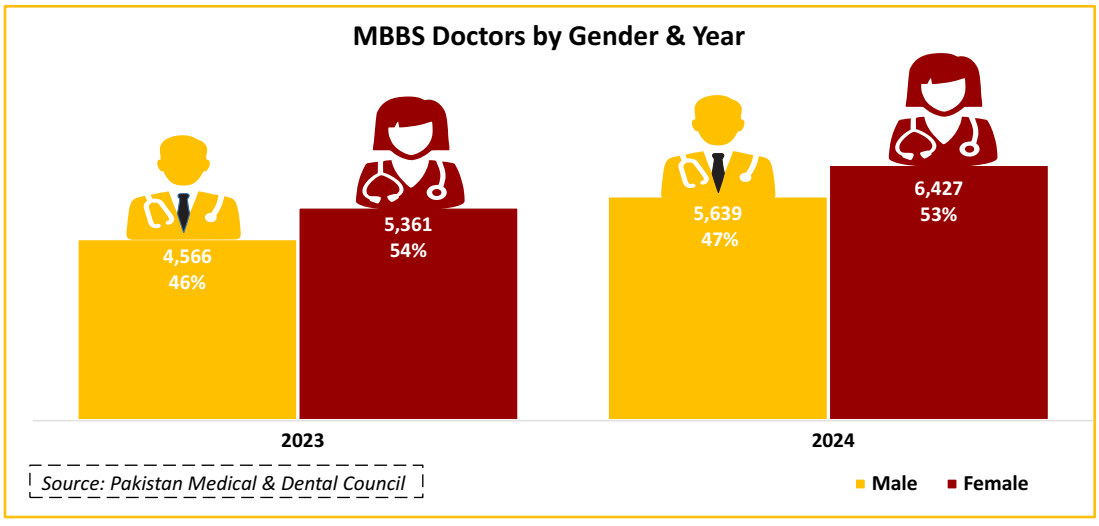


Figure 4.15

In the field of dentistry, the number of registered BDS doctors increased from 1,333 in 2023 to 1,393 in 2024. In 2024, 28.57 percent of BDS doctors were male and 71.34 percent were female, resulting in a GPI of 2.5.

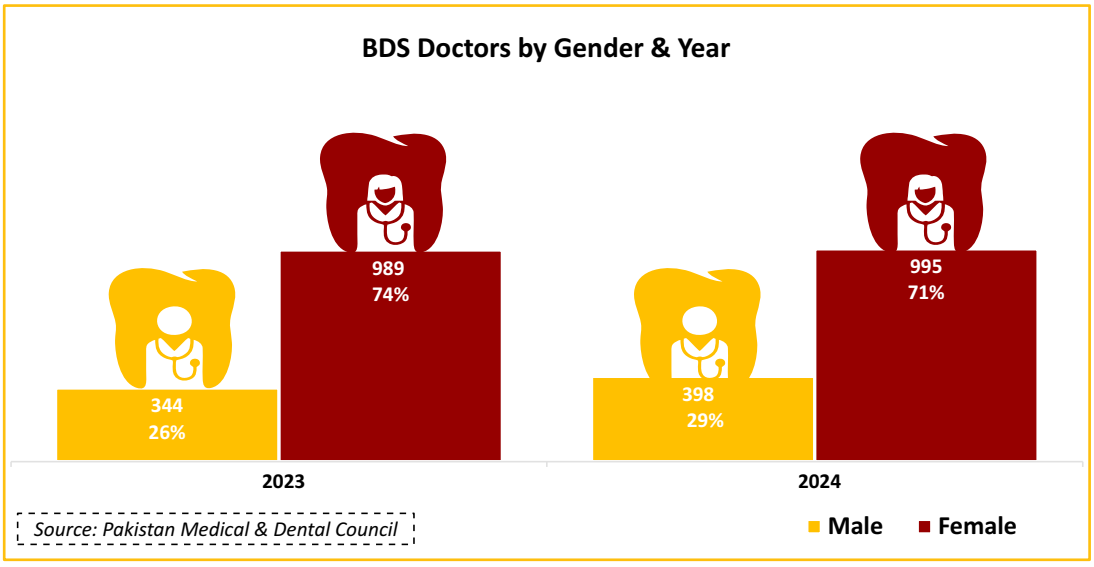


Figure 4.16

Registration of specialised MBBS doctors showed a slight decline from 2,318 in 2023 to 2,284 in 2024. However, the year-wise comparison showed that the women constituted the highest proportion among specialised MBBS doctors. The figure 4.17 below shows the number of specialised MBBS doctors registered in 2023 and 2024.

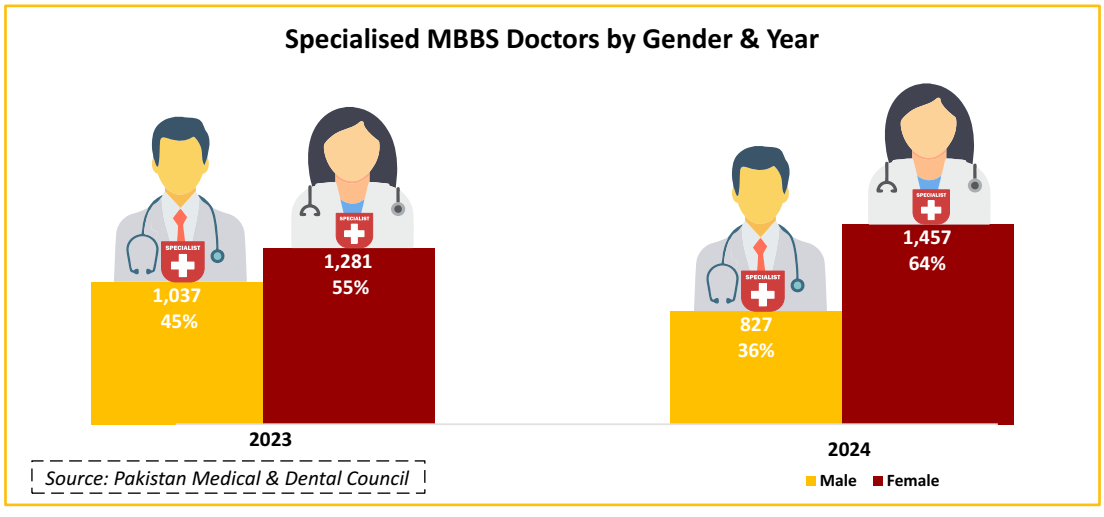


Figure 4.17

The number of specialised BDS doctors remained relatively low compared with MBBS specialists. Overall, the number of registered specialised BDS doctors declined from 203 in 2023 to 167 in 2024, with female comprising the majority of the workforce.

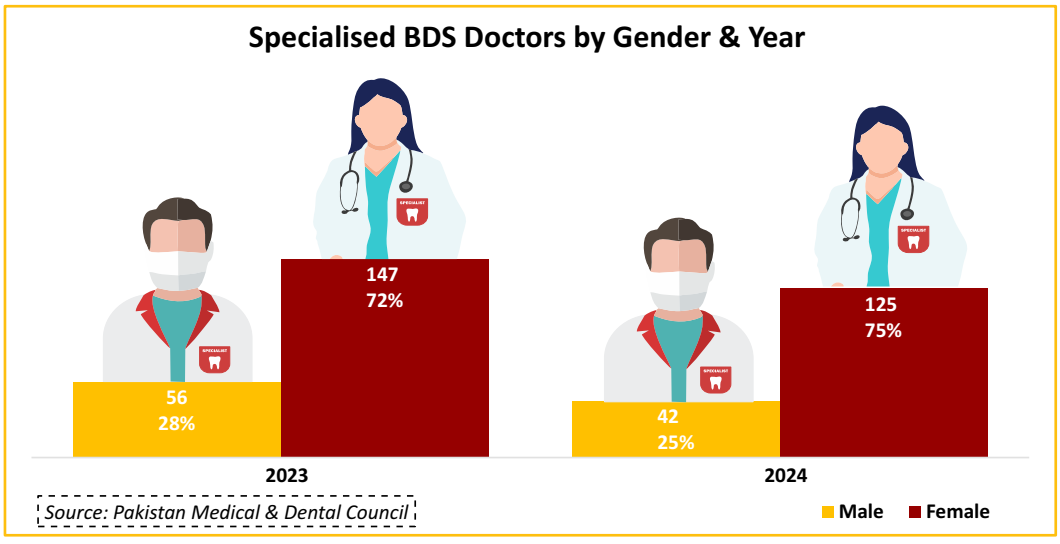


Figure 4.18

4.2.2 Staff under Health & Population Department

Under the Health and Population Department (H&PD), a total of 62,847 field and clinical staff were employed. Among them, 29,193 were LHWs, 9,514 were medical officers, 8,842 were nurses, 7,147 were lady health visitors (LHVs), 4,814 were community midwives (CMWs), 1,687 were lady health supervisors (LHSs), and 1,650 were ayas/dais.

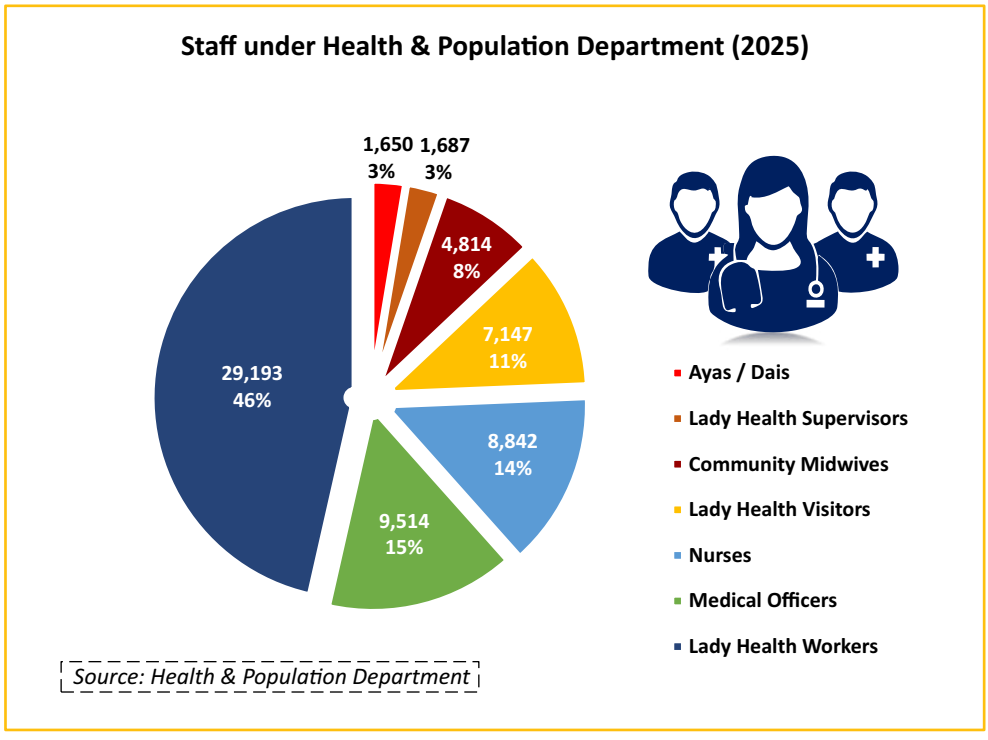


Figure 4.19

4.3 Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) encompasses a wide range of essential services, which include maternal care, newborn care, family planning (FP) and prevention against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). As a core component of UHC and a fundamental human right, a state must ensure equitable access to SRH services for all individuals especially young people.[178] Because improving services related to maternal health (delivery care, antenatal and postnatal services) can save millions of women who die essentially from preventable causes related to pregnancy complications.[179]

4.3.1 Antenatal Care

Antenatal Care (ANC) includes a wide range of services provided by healthcare professionals to ensure that the mother and newborn are healthy and safe. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended a minimum of eight ANC visits to monitor the mother and foetus for early detection of any complications, such as anaemia and hypertension. [180] Because mere survival through childbirth does not equate to maternal care, it requires a holistic approach to prevent maternal injury and promote long-term well-being.[181] On average in LMICs, only 61 percent of pregnant women make four or more ANC visits.[182] While in Pakistan, only 51 percent of pregnant women had completed four ANC visits.[183]

Analysis of data from DGHS indicated that the number of women who attended ANC-I visit decreased from 4.63 million in 2023 to 3.98 million in 2024. Similarly, there was a downward trend observed among pregnant women who completed four ANC visits, as shown in figure below. Only 88.08 percent of pregnant women completed at least two ANC visits, 53.14 percent attended three visits, and just 42.94 percent completed the four visits in 2024. However, on average, the number of overall ANC visits increased slightly from 2.77 million in 2023 to 2.82 million in 2024.

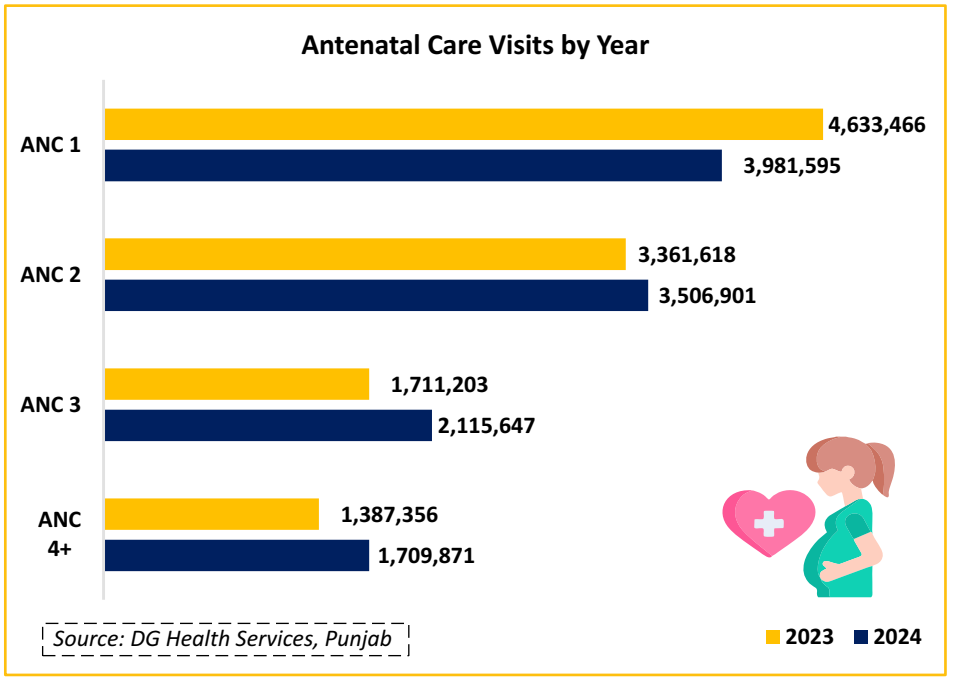


Figure 4.20

On average, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and Sialkot recorded the highest number of ANC visits, while Khushab recorded the lowest in 2024.

178 (Rodriguez, 2021)
179 (Kifle, Azale, Gelaw, & Melsew, 2017)
180 (WHO recommendations on antenatal care for a positive pregnancy experience, 2016)
181 (Kifle, Azale, Gelaw, & Melsew, 2017)
182 (Sully, et al., 2020)
183 (Pakistan Demographic Health Survey , 2017-18)

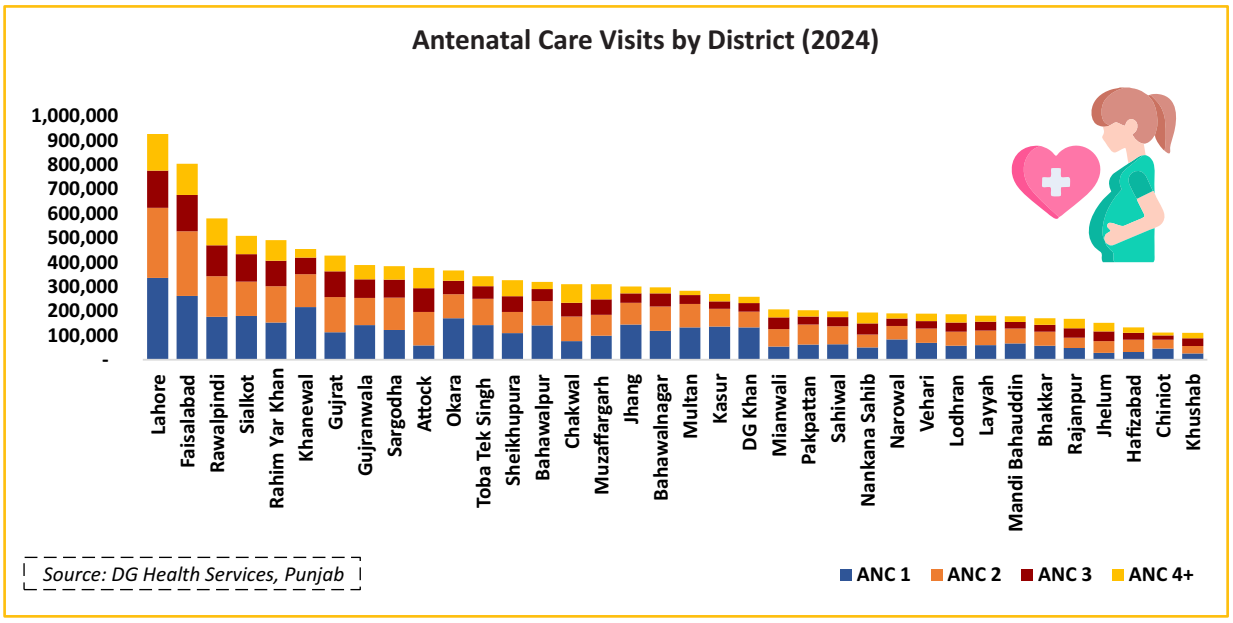


Figure 4.21

4.3.2 Anaemia among Pregnant Women

Anaemia is one of the public health concerns that disproportionately impacts women, especially in pregnancy and postpartum periods. In pregnancy, women are at a higher risk of developing anaemia, which could lead to poor health outcomes such as preterm delivery, maternal mortality and babies born with low birth weight (LBW).[184] A total of 700,360 pregnant women were diagnosed with anaemia in 2023 and 627,532 in 2024.

Among pregnant women who attended ANC-I at any public health facility, 15.76 percent were diagnosed with anaemia (DG Health Services, Punjab)

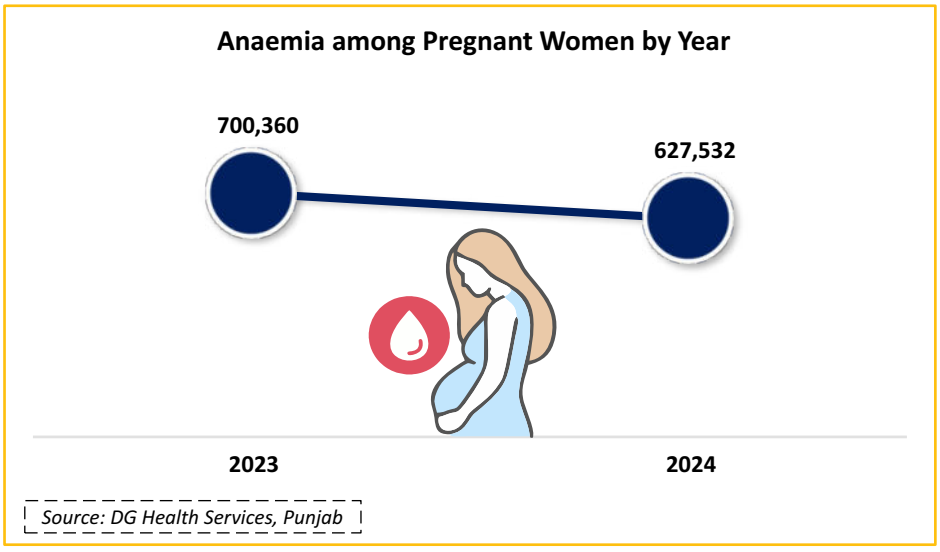


Figure 4.22

The highest number of anaemia among pregnant women was reported in Lahore (72,067), followed by Faisalabad (46,668), Okara (31,178), T.T Singh (30,623) and Sialkot (30,466). Whereas the lowest number of cases was recorded in Khushab (2,454) in 2024.

184 (Anaemia, 2025)

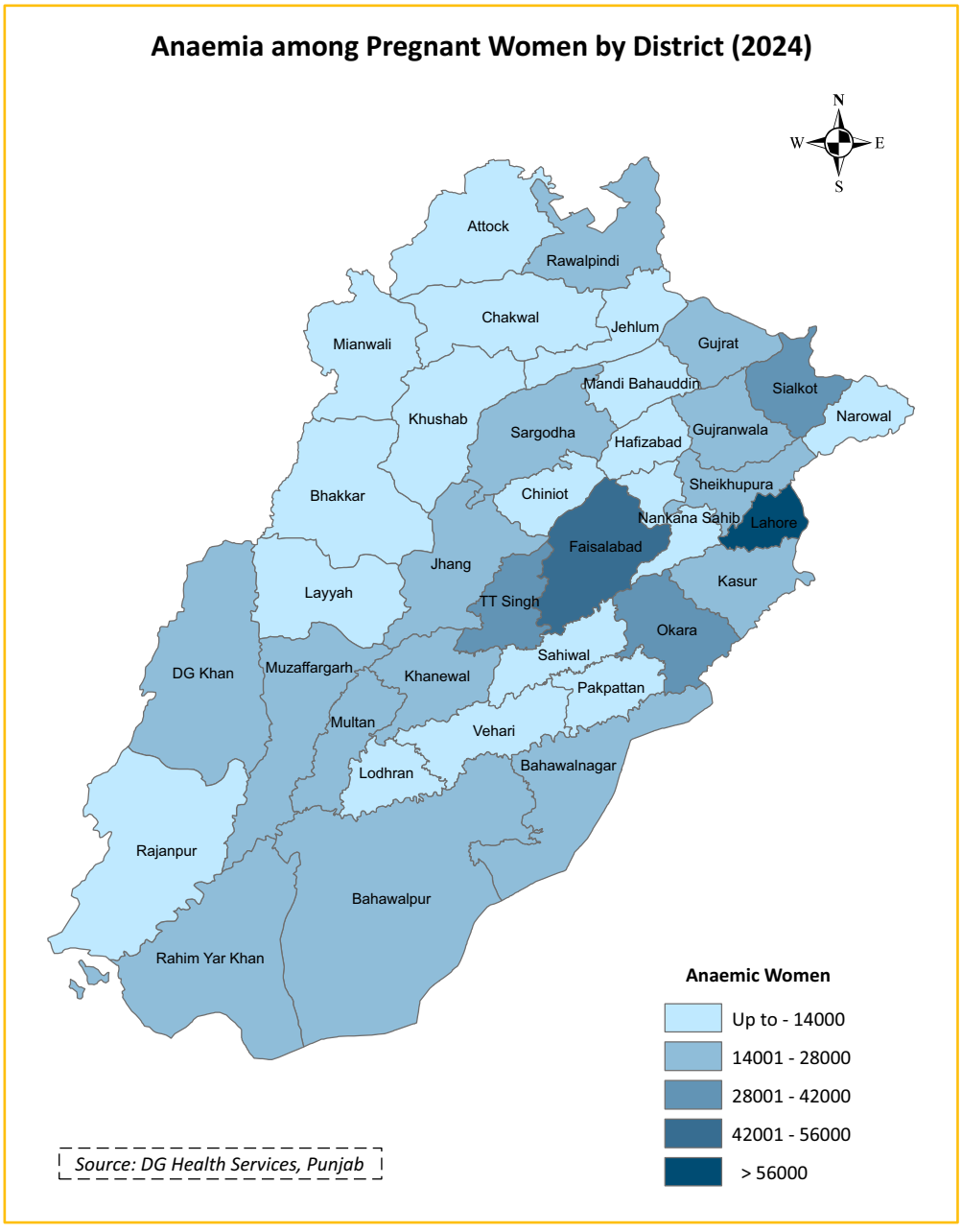


Figure 4.23

4.3.3 Tetanus Toxoid Vaccination

Every mother must be protected against tetanus. Therefore, maternal health programs must continue screening pregnant women to confirm if they are fully immunised and administer the required Tetanus Toxoid (TT) injections for long-term protection. Overall, 2.33 million pregnant women were administered TT vaccination in 2023, and the number declined to 2.25 million in 2024. It should be noted that these figures reflect only the numbers reported by DGHS.

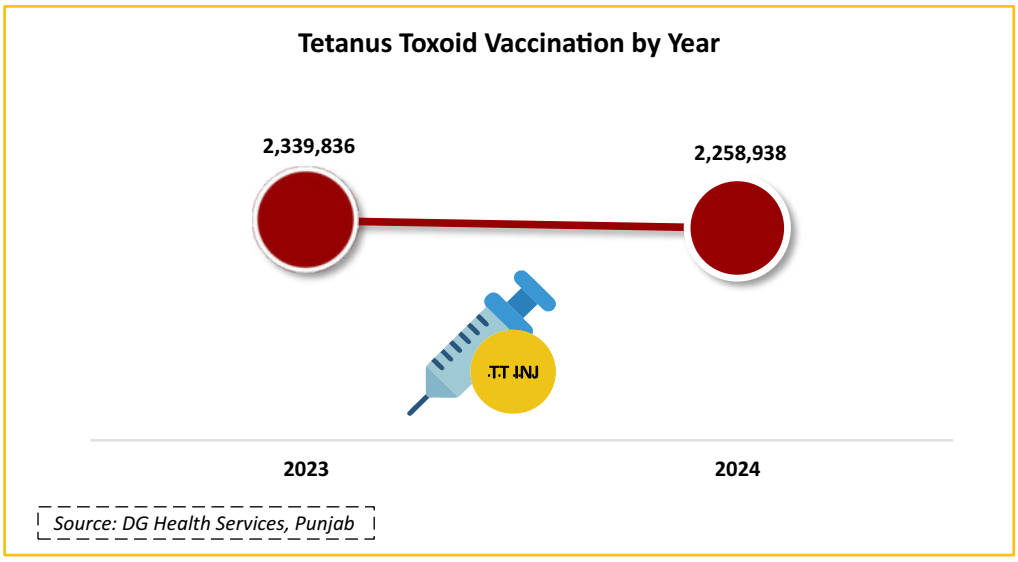


Figure 4.24

District-wise analysis showed that the highest TT vaccination coverage was reported in Rahim Yar Khan (172,335), followed by Faisalabad (116,841) and Bahawalpur (115,753). The lowest coverage was observed in Nankana Sahib (22,942) in 2024.

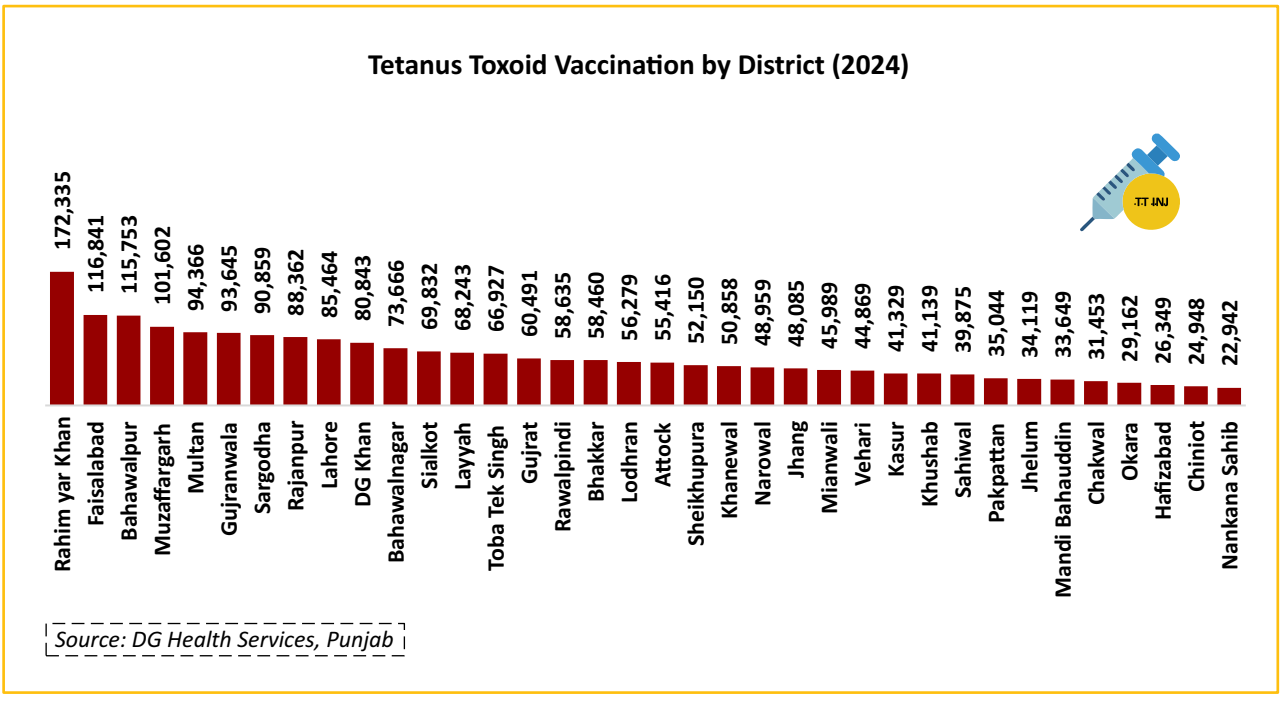


Figure 4.25

4.3.4 Nutrition Screening of Pregnant Women

Women's nutrition is a matter of their survival and well-being, especially during pregnancy. Malnutrition among women remains significantly high, affecting millions worldwide. Malnourished pregnant women are at high risk of gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia and caesarean section, and the consequences extend towards their children as well. Approximately 20 million babies were reported to be born with low birth weight globally.[185] Considering the importance of maternal nutrition, DGHS has been providing nutrition screening to pregnant women. A total of 6.86 million pregnant women received nutrition screening in 2023 and 7.02 million in 2024.

185 (UNICEF Programming Guidance. Prevention of malnutrition in women before and during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, 2021)

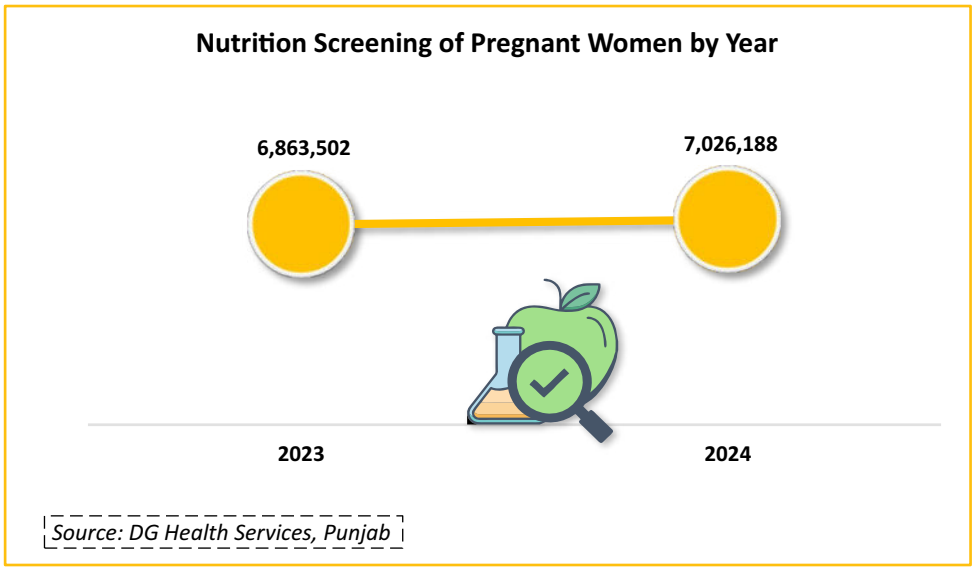


Figure 4.26

The highest coverage of nutrition screening was recorded in Faisalabad, followed by Attock and Gujrat. However, Lahore, Multan, and Narowal reported the lowest coverage despite being the highly populated areas in 2024.

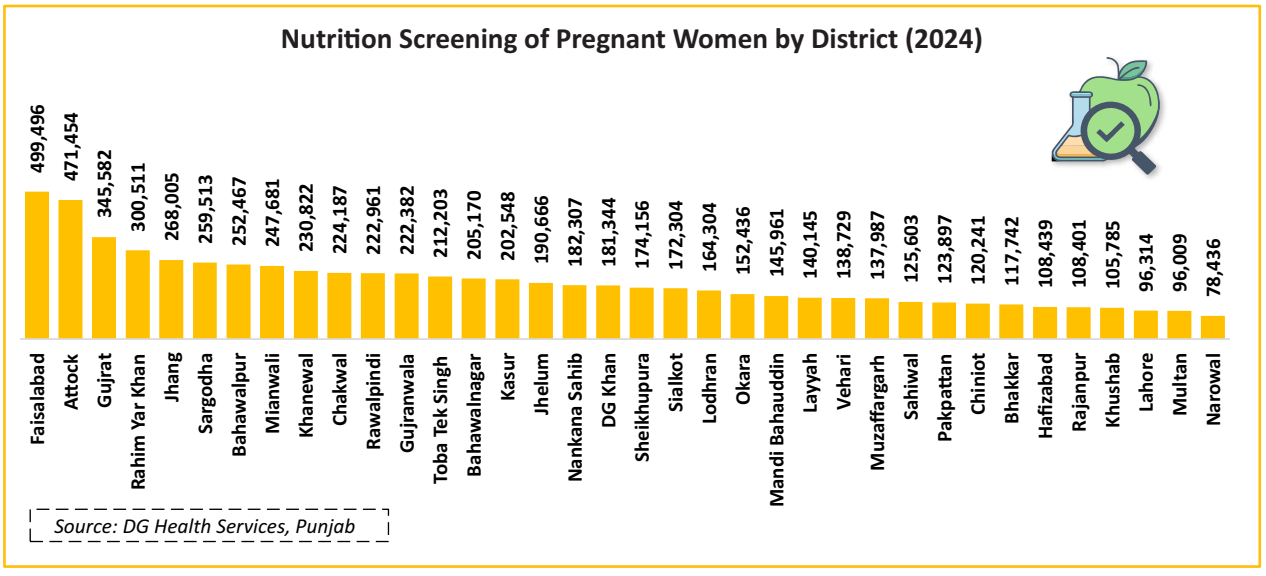


Figure 4.27

4.3.5 Abortion

Abortion is recognised as a healthcare intervention that can be done through medication or a surgical procedure, depending on the gestational age. Global strategy for health of women and children emphasises the provision of abortion and post abortion care and has prioritised the elimination of unsafe abortions.[186] According to DGHS, the number of induced abortion cases reported was 24,985 in 2023 and 19,966 in 2024. For induced abortions, Dilation and Curettage (D&C) was a commonly used method followed by misoprostol and Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA). The figure 4.28 below shows the types of induced abortion cases.

186 (Abortion care guideline, 2022)

The figure 4.28 below shows the cases of induced abortion by type.

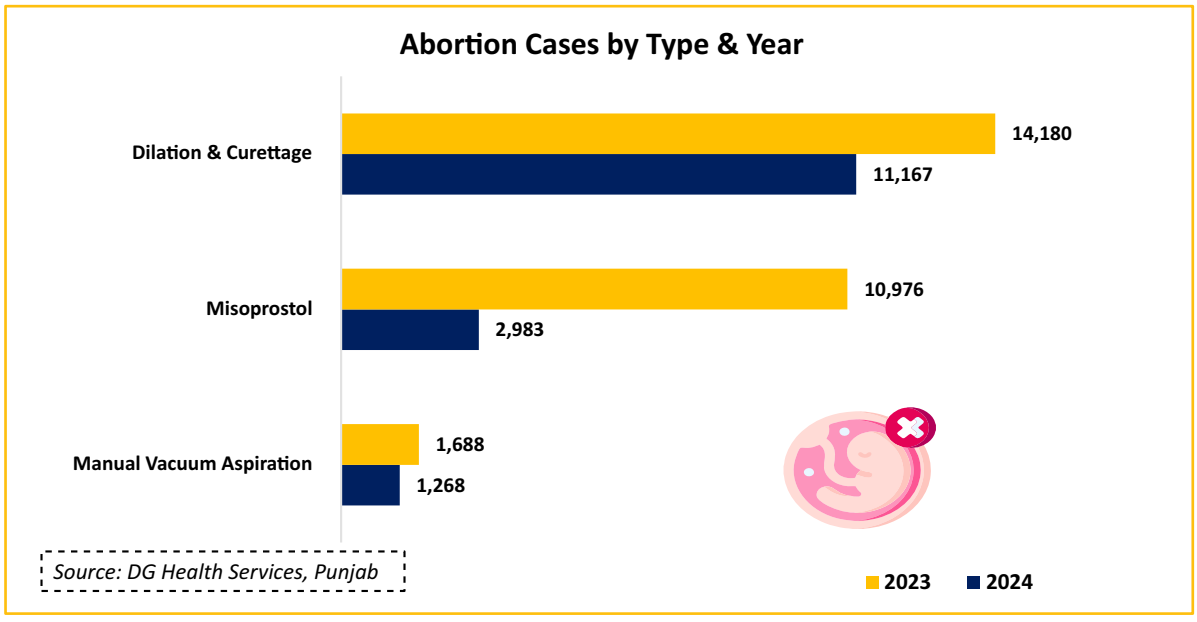


Figure 4.28

Across Punjab, Rahim Yar Khan (2,050) had the highest proportion of induced abortion cases, followed by DG Khan (1,597) and Rawalpindi (1,254). The lowest number of cases was recorded in T.T. Singh (14) in 2024.

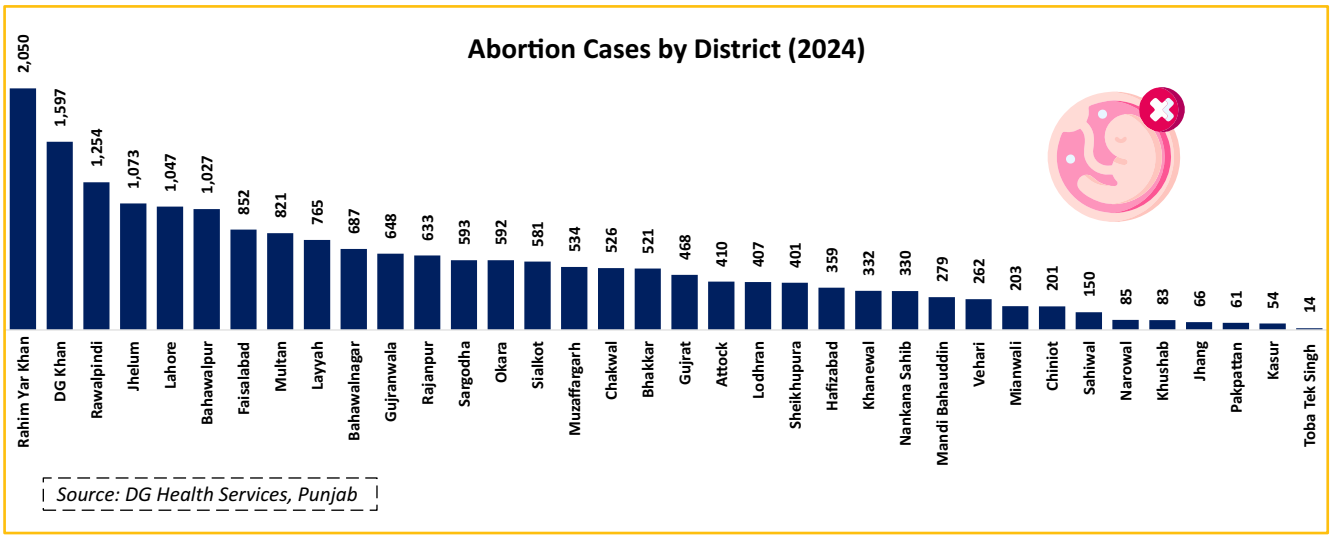


Figure 4.29

4.3.6 Facility Based Delivery Cases

In Pakistan, around 50 percent of all childbirths occur among women younger than 20 years of age. Early marriages and closely spaced pregnancies put women at high risk of various health issues.[187] This affects not only the mother but also the infants born to young mothers, causing congenital anomalies and birth asphyxia, etc. Globally, pregnancy-related complications are among the second leading causes of death among young girls. Therefore, ensuring access to safe delivery care is critical, along with the availability of appropriate equipment, medicines and skilled personnel to manage any complications.[188] In Punjab, public health facilities reported 1.31 million deliveries in 2023, and the number slightly declined in 2024 to 1.24 million.

187 (Mir, et al., 2024)
188 (Campbell, et al., 2016)

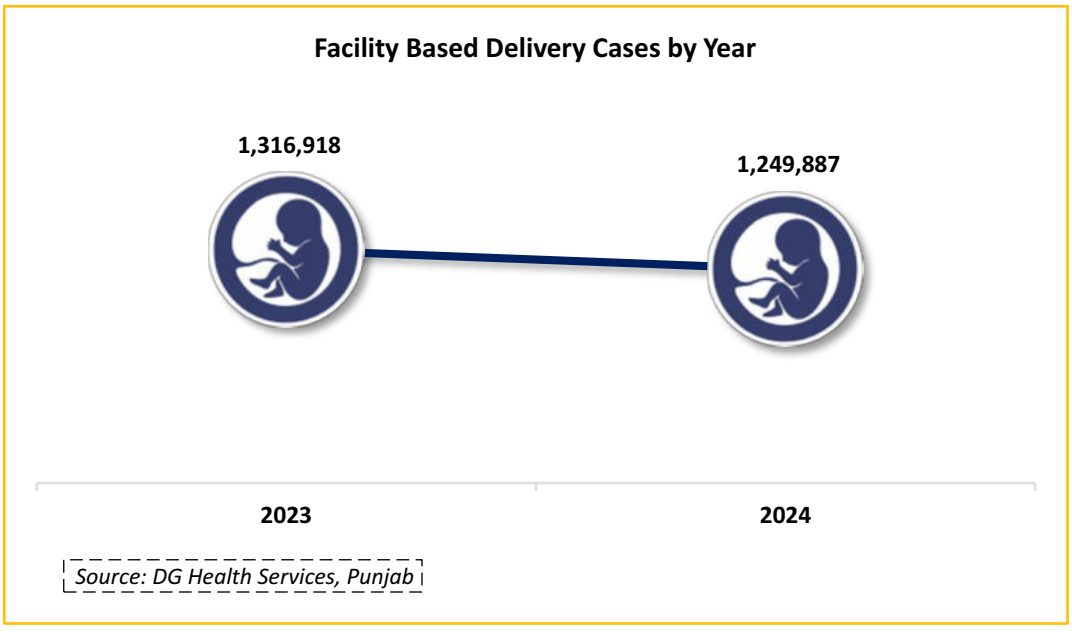


Figure 4.30

District-wise analysis showed that Lahore had recorded the highest facility-based delivery cases (109,945), followed by Faisalabad (78,802) and Rahim Yar Khan (65,594). However, Chiniot (13,439) had the lowest reported facility-based delivery cases in 2024.

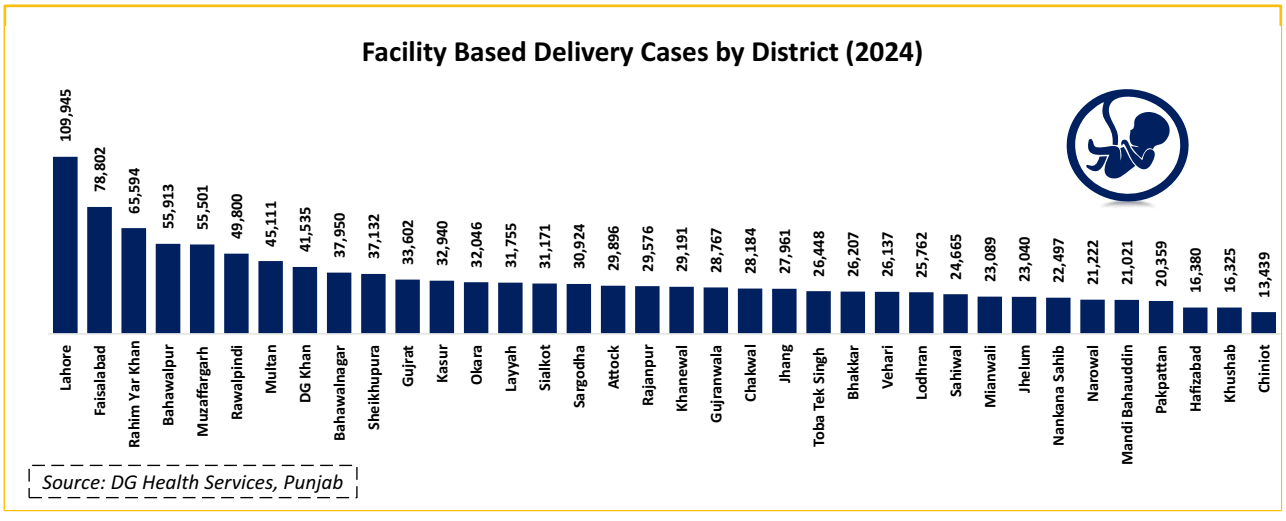


Figure 4.31

4.3.6.1 Normal Delivery Cases

Followed by the decline in the number of deliveries, there was also a 7.5 percent decrease in the number of normal delivery cases from 1.07 million in 2023 to 995,559 in 2024.

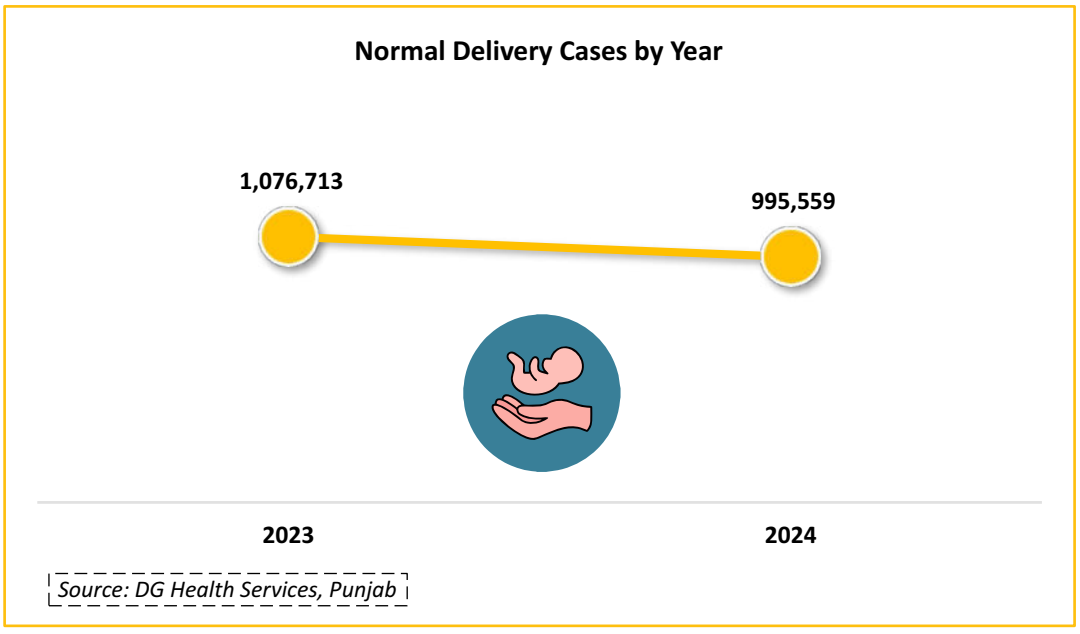


Figure 4.32

Similar to the number of facility-based deliveries, Faisalabad and Lahore recorded the highest number of normal delivery cases. Whereas Chiniot had the lowest number of reported cases, with only 12,225 cases of normal deliveries in 2024.

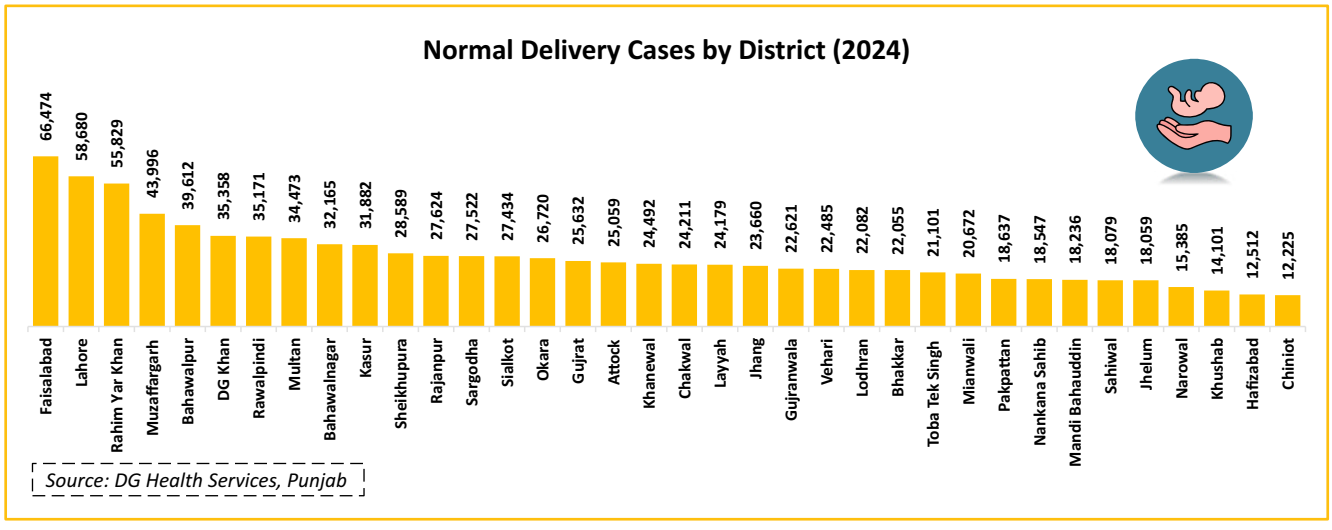


Figure 4.33

4.3.6.2 Caesarean Delivery Cases

Caesarean section (C-Section) deliveries can help reduce certain maternal complications; however, WHO has suggested not performing this surgery unless medically necessary. In Pakistan, caesarean accounts for approximately 22 percent of all births.[189] According to the data received by DGHS, 236,261 caesarean delivery cases were reported in 2023. In 2024, there were 252,042 caesarean delivery cases reported, which accounted for 20.17 percent of all deliveries.

189 (Pakistan Demographic Health Survey , 2017-18)

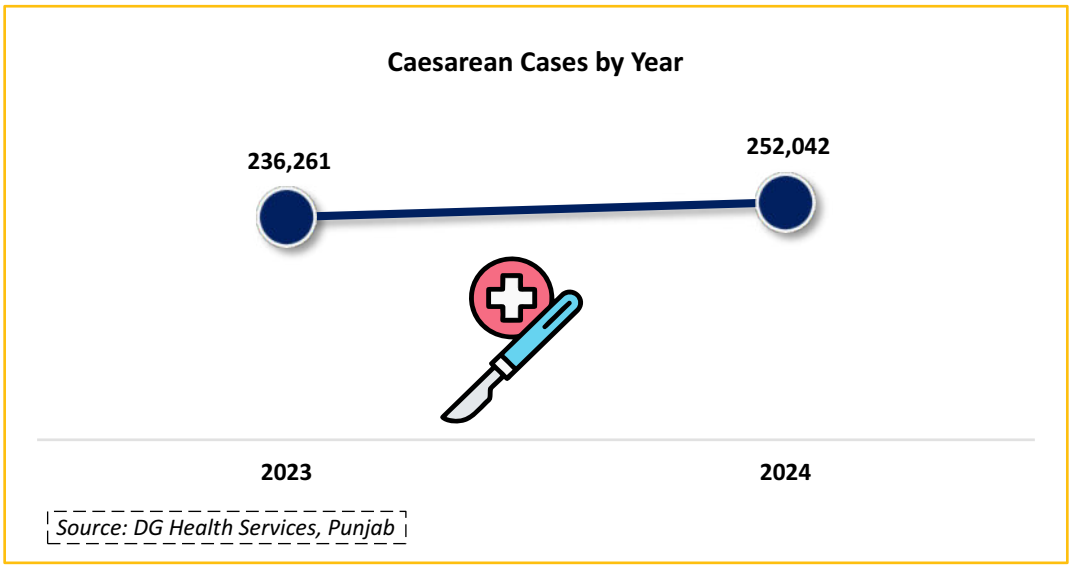


Figure 4.34

The highest proportion of C-section cases was recorded in Lahore (51,160), followed by Bahawalpur (16,264) and Rawalpindi (14,215). On the contrary, the lowest number of cases was reported in Kasur (1,038) in 2024.

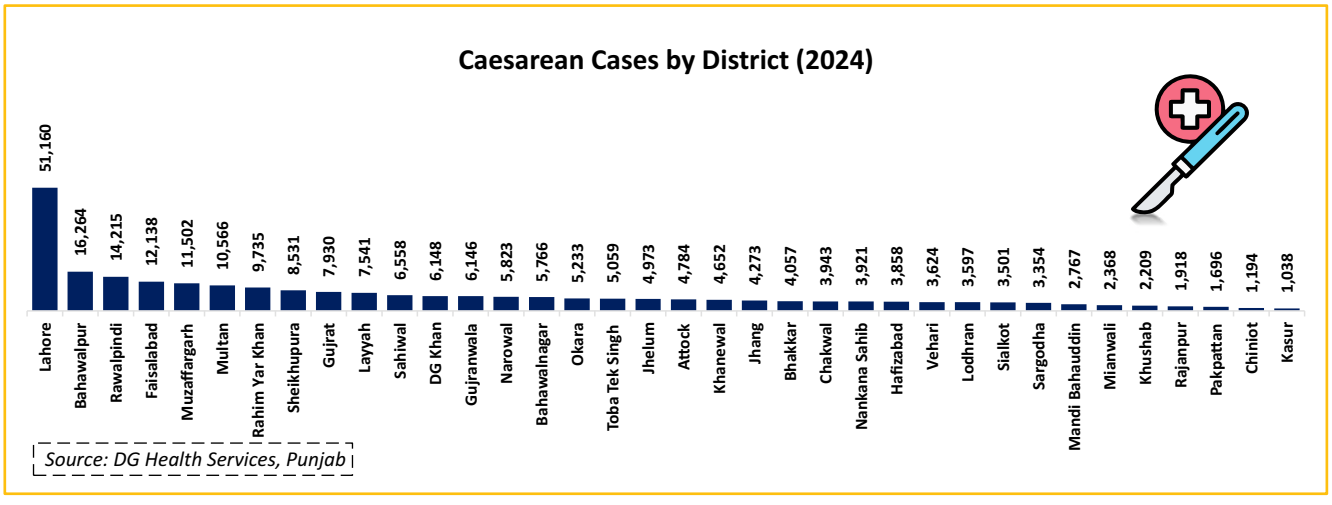


Figure 4.35

4.3.7 Postnatal Care

Postnatal care is essential to avoid life-threatening complications after delivery, such as postpartum haemorrhage. The first 42 days following the delivery fall under the postnatal care period.[190] Worldwide, it has been reported that only 36 percent of mothers in LMICs receive postnatal care.[191]

In Pakistan, 62 percent of women received postnatal check-ups within 2 days after childbirth.[192] According to DGHS data, there were 994,231 women who received postnatal care in 2023, and among them, 92.60 percent had a follow-up visit. In 2024, 996,768 women received postnatal care, of whom 91.23 percent had a follow-up visit.

> Among women who had a delivery in public healthcare facilities, 79.75 percent reported attending a postnatal check-up (DG Health Services, Punjab)

190 (WHO recommendations on maternal and newborn care for a positive postnatal experience, 2020)
191 (Sully, et al., 2020)
192 (Pakistan Demographic Health Survey, 2017-18)

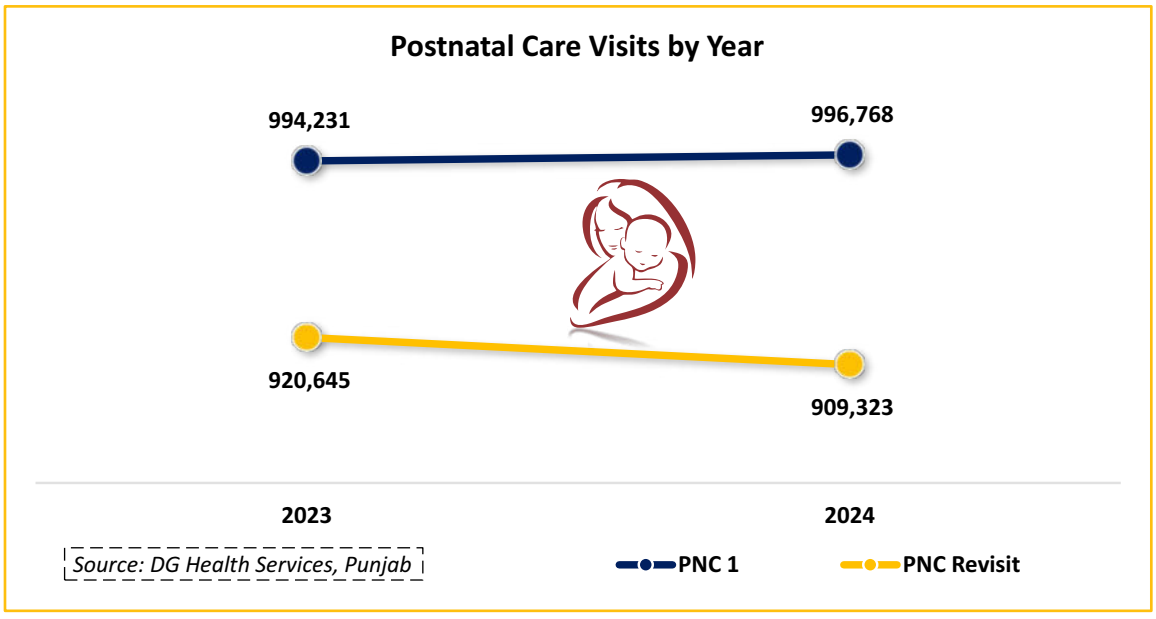


Figure 4.36

On average, the highest proportion of postnatal check-up visits was reported in Faisalabad, Rahim Yar Khan and Muzaffargarh, while Chiniot had recorded the lowest. It is to be noted that several districts recorded less than 50 percent of PNC revisit, among them were Mandi Bahauddin (49.29 percent), Lodhran (47.05 percent), Sahiwal (44.03 percent), Gujranwala (38.06 percent), Multan (31.22 percent), Kasur (26.65 percent), Bhakkar (22.27 percent) and Vehari (20.28 percent).

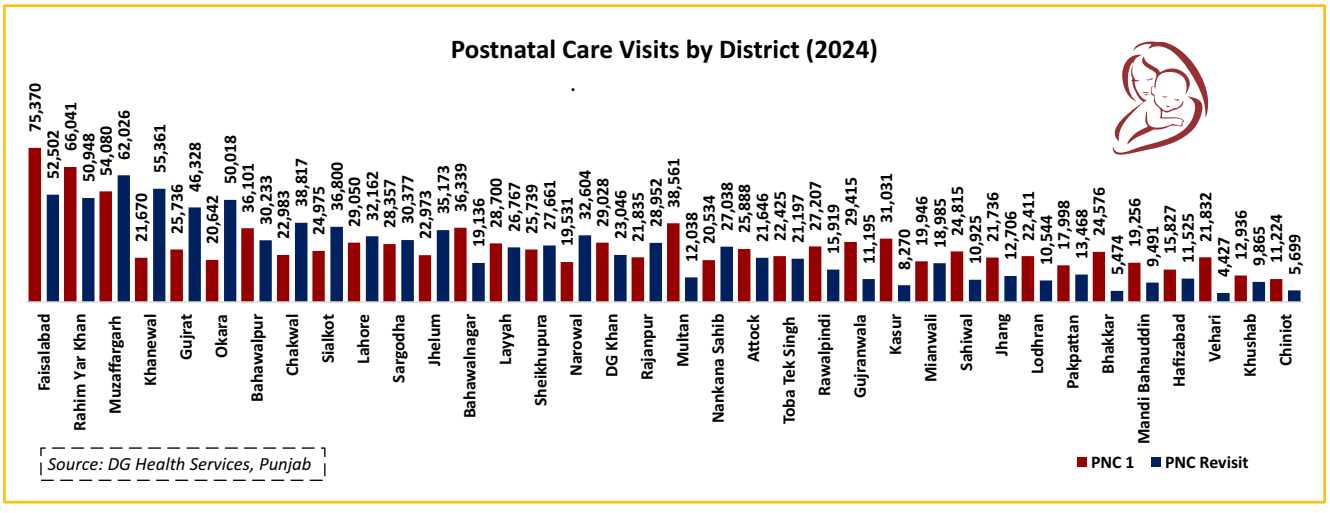


Figure 4.37

4.3.8 Family Planning

Family Planning (FP) is the process of making an informed decision about reproductive health by deciding the preferred number of children and healthy intervals between each pregnancy using any method of contraception. This not only prevents unintended pregnancies but also reduces pregnancy-related complications arising from closely spaced births especially among young girls.[193] Within the continuum of essential reproductive healthcare, contraception has emerged as an integral component interconnected with maternal and child health.[194] In Punjab, family planning visits increased by 17.18 percent from 2.20 million in 2023 to 2.5 million in 2024. The number of FP counselling decreased from 560,696 in 2023 to 434,495 in 2024.

According to the FP 2030 commitment, Pakistan pledged to improve the contraception prevalence rate to 60 percent.
(FP2030 National Commitements)

193 (Family planning/contraception methods, 2025)
194 (Starrs, et al., 2018)

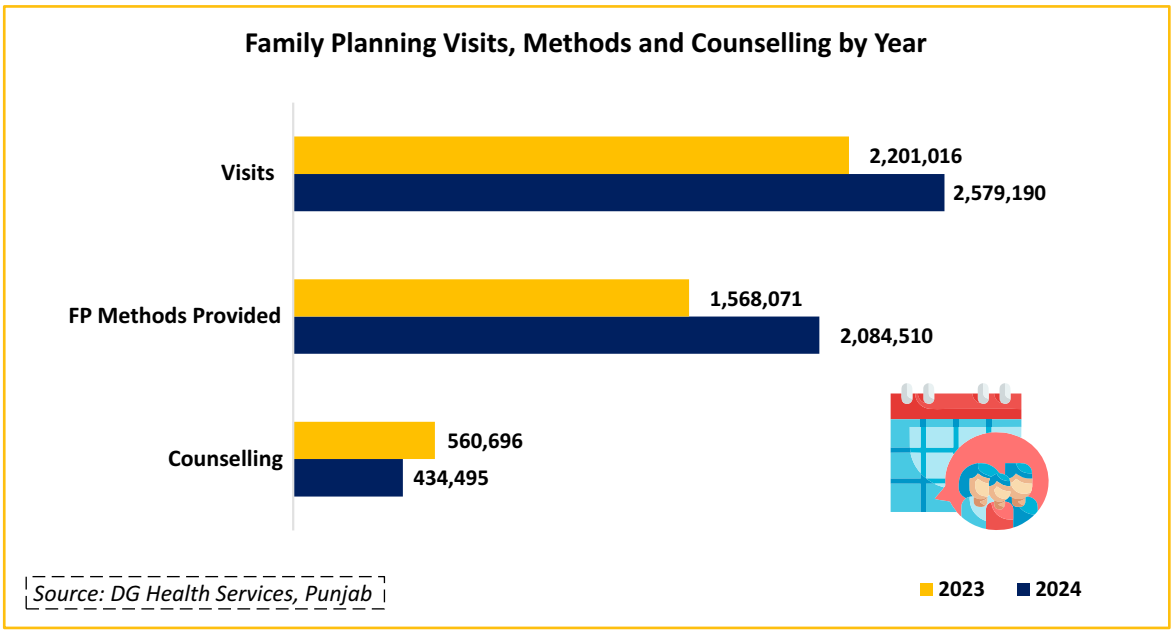


Figure 4.38

The analysis of method mix showed that short-term methods (such as condoms, pills and injections) were preferred as compared to long-term methods (such as intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUCD) and implants). It should be noted that the long-term methods showed individual users, while the short-term methods include follow-ups as well.

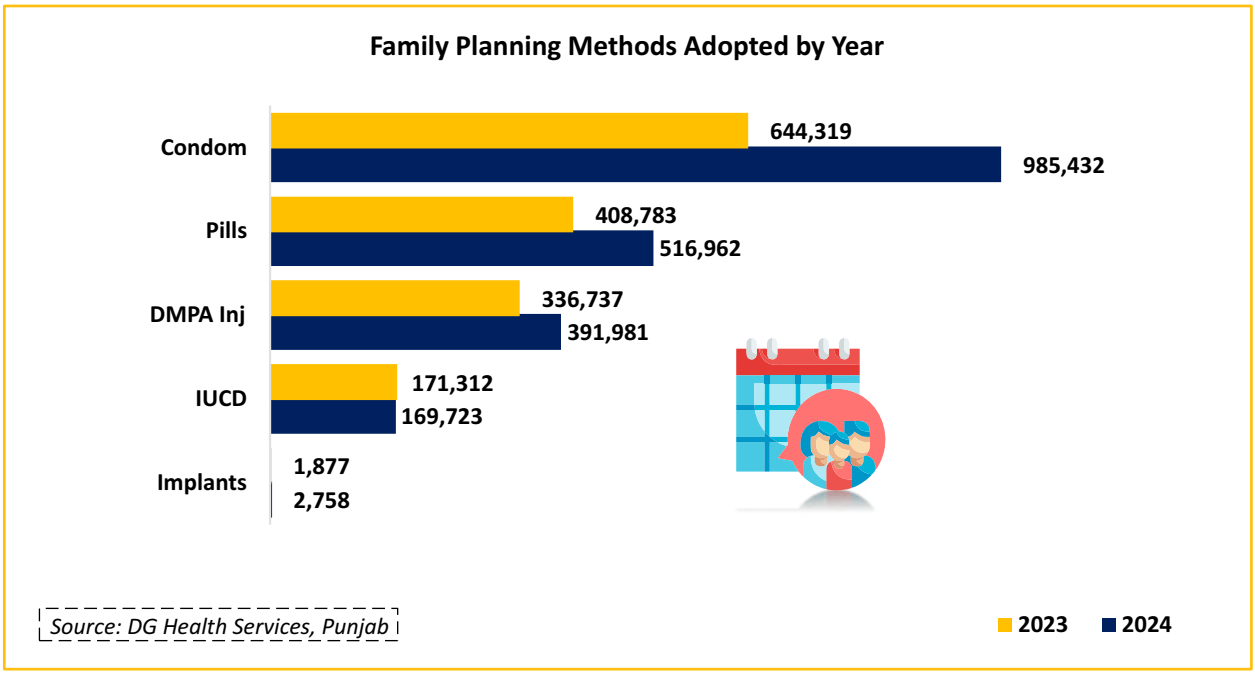


Figure 4.39

District-wise analysis of FP users showed that the highest uptake of FP methods was recorded in Chakwal (185,239), followed by Sialkot (177,376), Rahim Yar Khan (131,908), Multan (104,098) and Lahore (99,121). On the contrary, Chiniot (14,158) recorded the lowest uptake of FP methods in 2024.

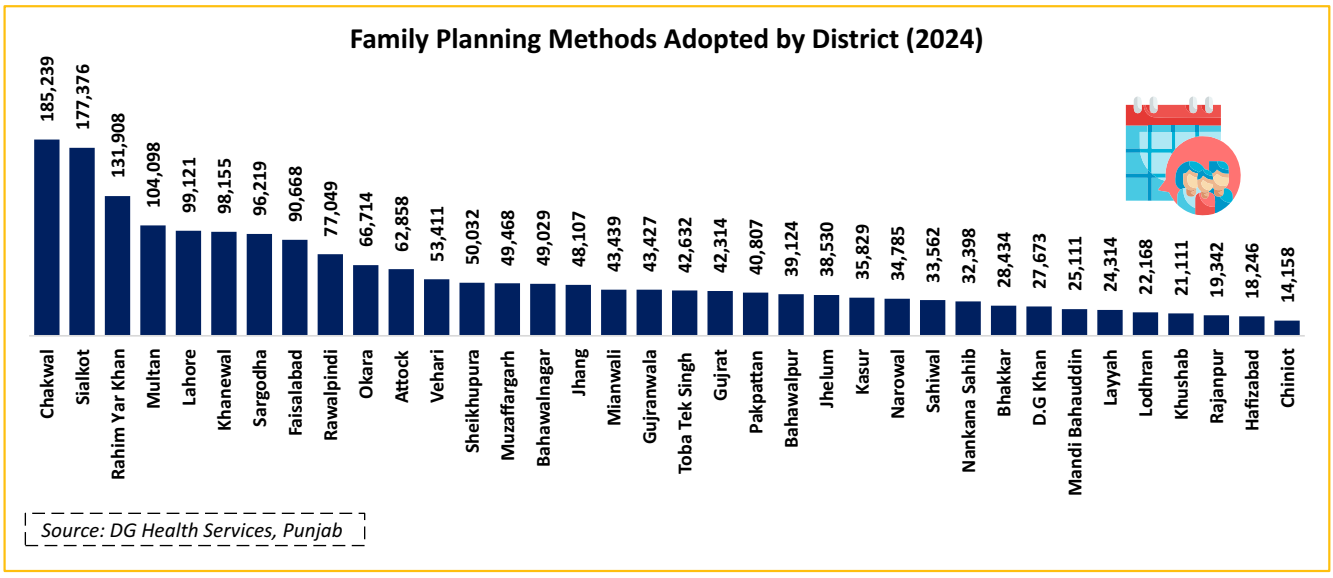


Figure 4.40

FP counselling is also provided during the postpartum period, as it is highly effective in raising awareness on the benefits of birth spacing and reaching couples at a health facility. In 2023, a total of 107,946 women received postpartum FP (PPFP) counselling, and the number increased to 122,752 in 2024.

4.4 Child Health and Survival

The disparities in child health and survival are one of the major concerns, as a large proportion of children in Pakistan continue to suffer the consequences of malnutrition due to limited health coverage. Continued inequities in the utilisation of public health services exist due to socio-economic and gender related barriers. High infant and neonatal mortality rates showed that a child's survival is compromised from the very beginning of their lives. A country needs to ensure that children remain healthy and well-nourished, as adolescent survival reflects the nation's capacity to achieve its sustainable development goals.[195]

4.4.1 Live Birth

A total of 1.24 million live births were recorded in 2023 and 1.23 million in 2024. These live births accounted for 98.83 percent of deliveries in 2024. The decline in live births is associated with the decrease in deliveries across public health facilities.

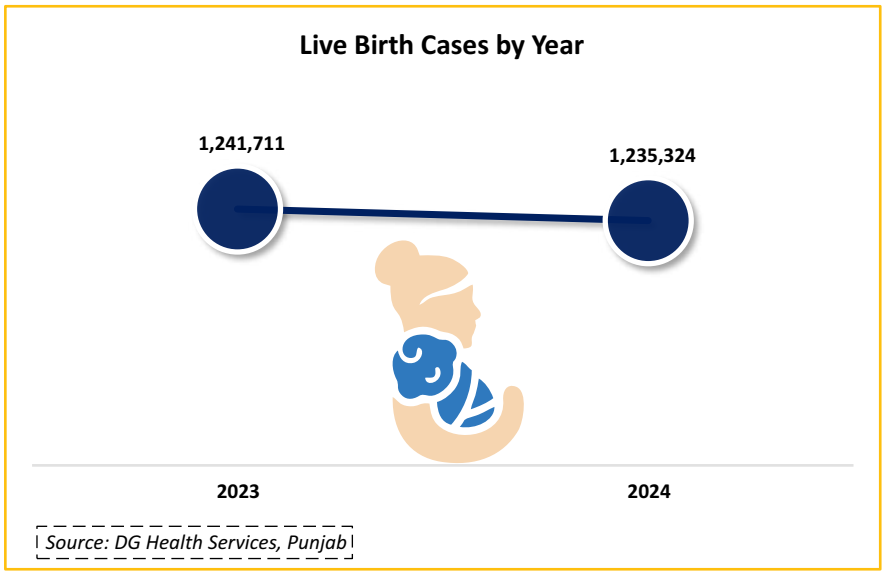


Figure 4.41

195 (Situation Analysis of Children in Pakistan, 2017)

As evident from the district-wise analysis of delivery cases in Punjab, Lahore, Faisalabad and Rahim Yar Khan recorded the highest number of live births, while Chiniot reported the lowest in 2024.

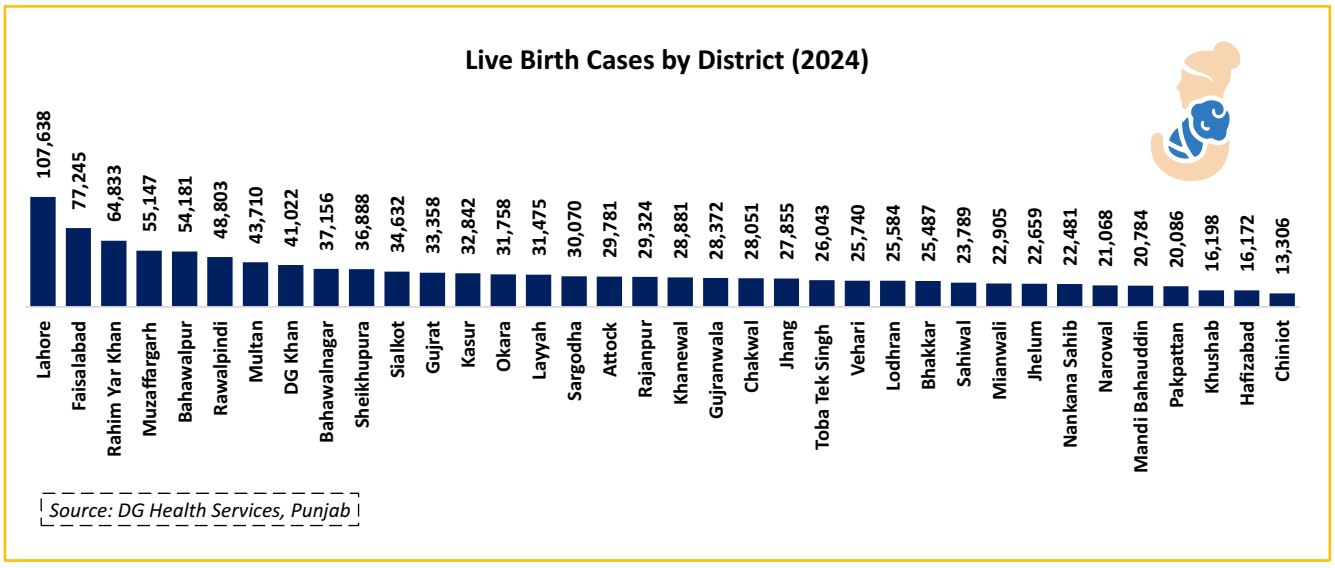


Figure 4.42

4.4.2 Babies with Low Birth Weight (LBW)

Babies born with a weight of less than 2500 grams are classified as low birth weight (LBW) babies. Monitoring of this health indicator is essential in preventing children from developing complications that could lead to mortality.[196] The total number of live births with LBW was 24,288 in 2023 and 19,136 in 2024. These cases accounted for 1.55 percent of the live births in 2024. This marks a steady downward trend since 2021, showing that provincial efforts to improve child health are yielding results.

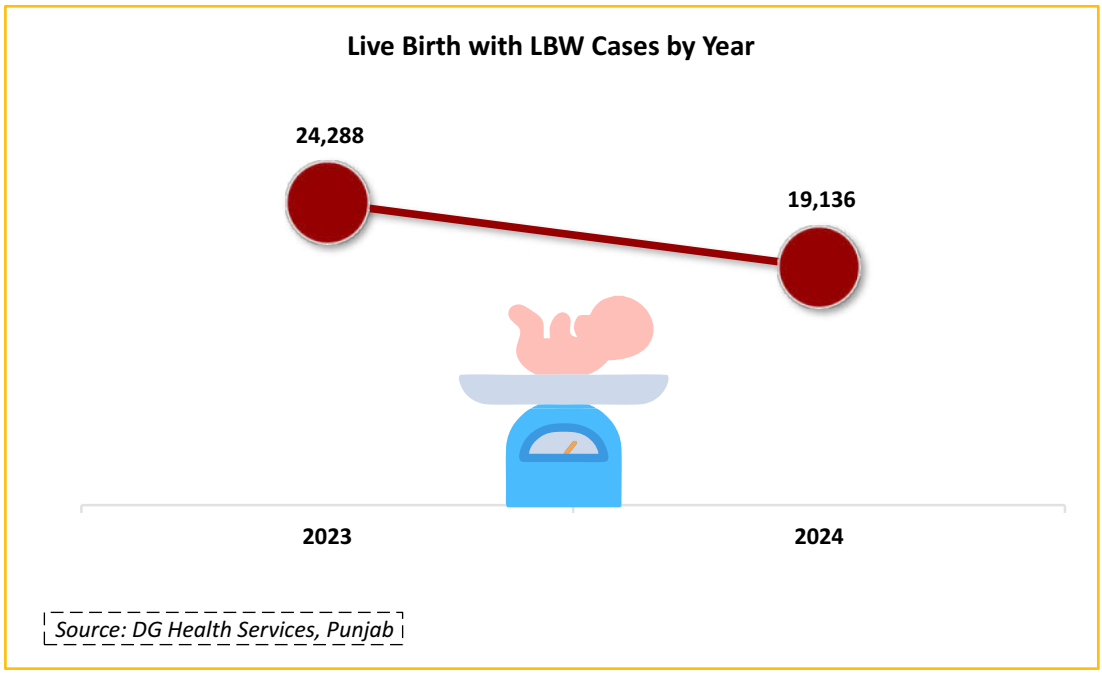


Figure 4.43

The highest number of live births with LBW was reported in Multan (3,721), followed by Faisalabad (2,795) and Lahore (2,778). On the contrary, Khushab (31), T.T. Singh (32) and Narowal (13) reported the lowest number of cases in 2024.

196 (Abbas, Kumar, Mahmood, & Somrongthong, 2021)

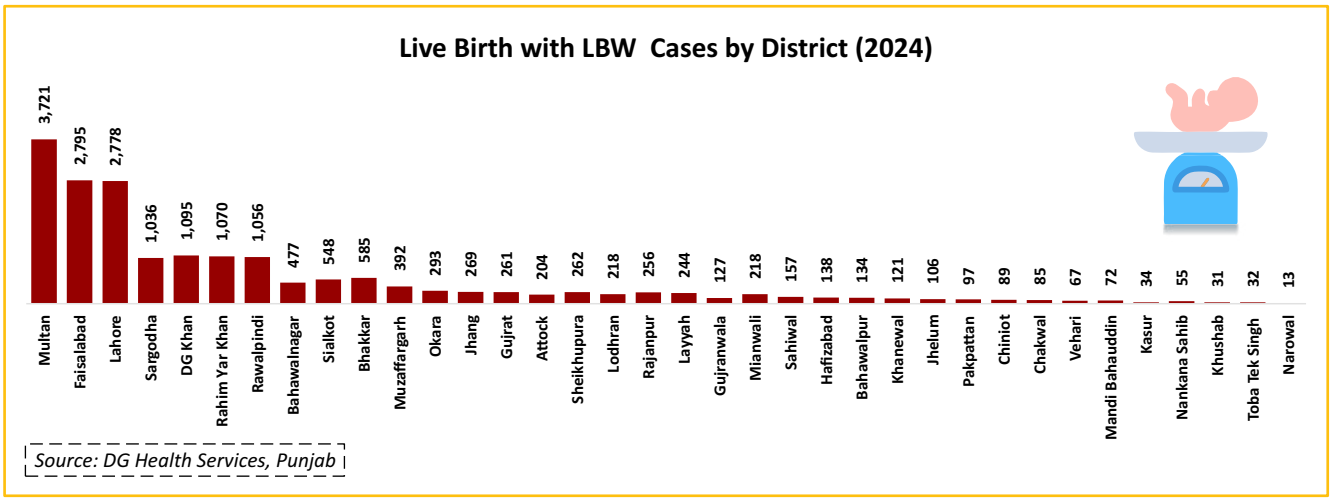


Figure 4.44

4.4.3 Premature Birth Cases

Childbirth before the completion of 37 weeks of gestation is classified as a preterm birth, which is also a health concern for the survival of babies, especially those under five. It also contributes to short-term and long-term consequences, including but not limited to poor health, impaired growth, intellectual disabilities and an increased risk of early onset of chronic diseases.[197] There were 6,850 premature births recorded in 2023, and the number decreased to 5,567 cases in 2024. Premature birth cases in 2024 accounted for 0.45 percent of live births.

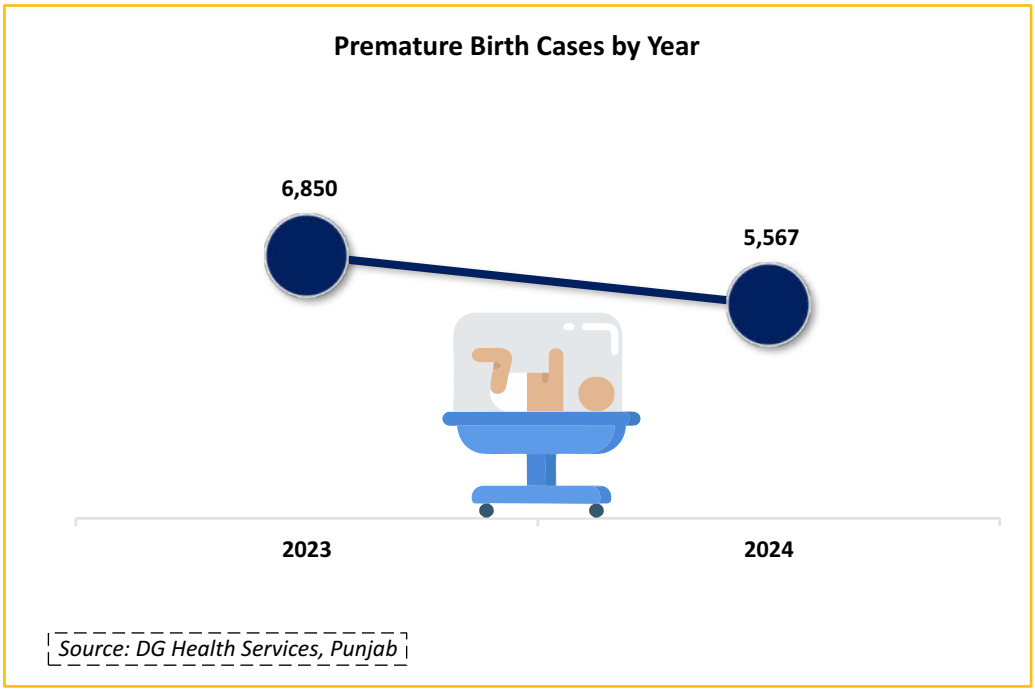


Figure 4.45

Faisalabad recorded the highest premature births, while Mandi Bahauddin reported only three cases in 2024. Furthermore, it was observed that approximately 20 districts across Punjab reported fewer than 50 premature birth cases, as presented in figure 4.46.

197 (Ohuma, et al., 2023)

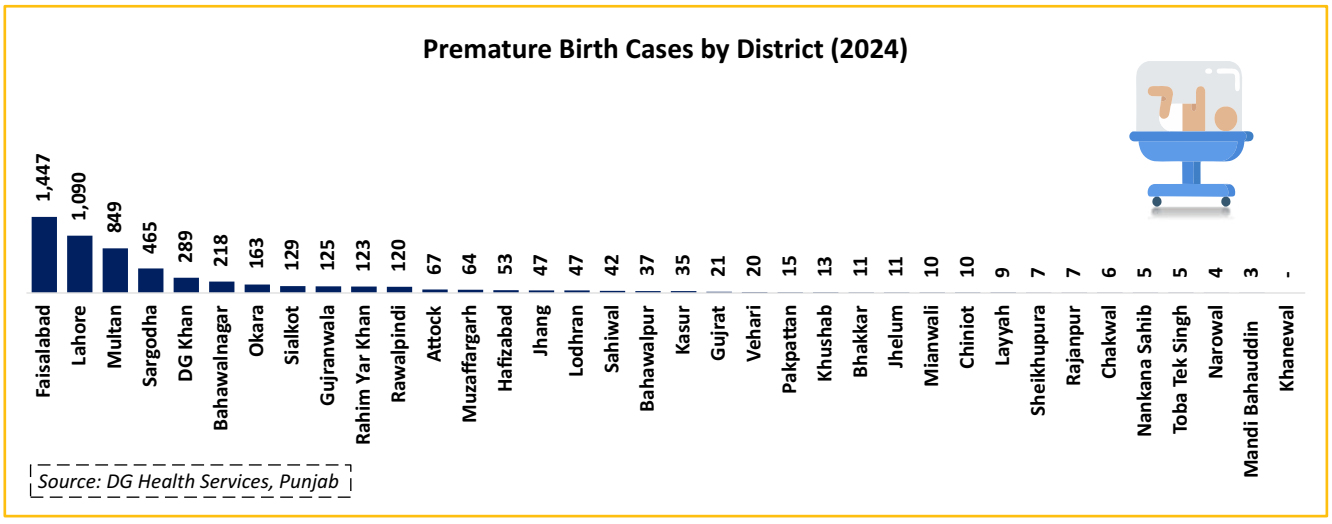


Figure 4.46

4.4.4 Stillbirth

According to the WHO, a baby who dies after 28 weeks of pregnancy but before or during labour is considered a stillborn. The prevention of stillbirths is highly contingent upon the mother and child having access to a continuum of care. It is also supported by a study which stated that 46 percent of all stillbirths during labour could be averted through the provision of high-quality care.[198] Research showed that approximately two percent of pregnancies resulted in stillbirths in Pakistan.[199] Overall, the reported cases of stillbirth declined by 35 percent from 2,999 cases in 2023 to 1,940 in 2024 in Punjab. A downward trend was observed since 2021, indicating the positive impact of efforts to curb stillbirth cases.

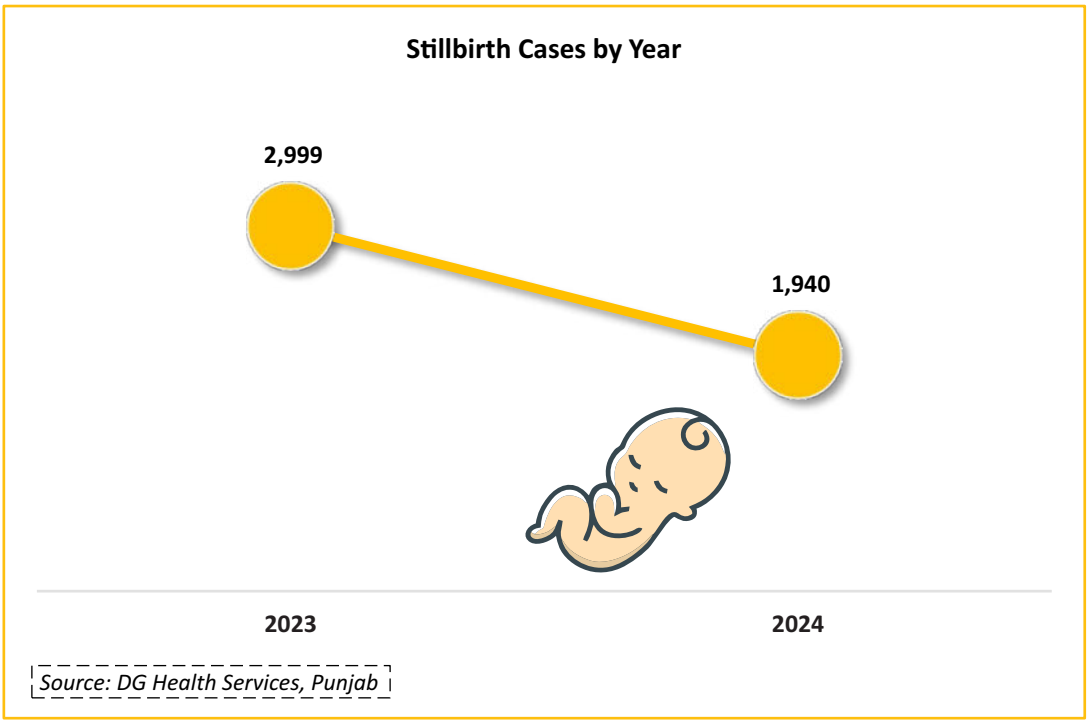


Figure 4.47

At the district level, Bahawalpur (454) reported the highest number of stillbirths, while Muzaffargarh and Nankana Sahib reported the lowest number, i.e., one case each in 2024.

198 (Standing up for Stillbirth Current estimates and Key Interventions, 2024)
199 (Pakistan Demographic Health Survey, 2017-18)

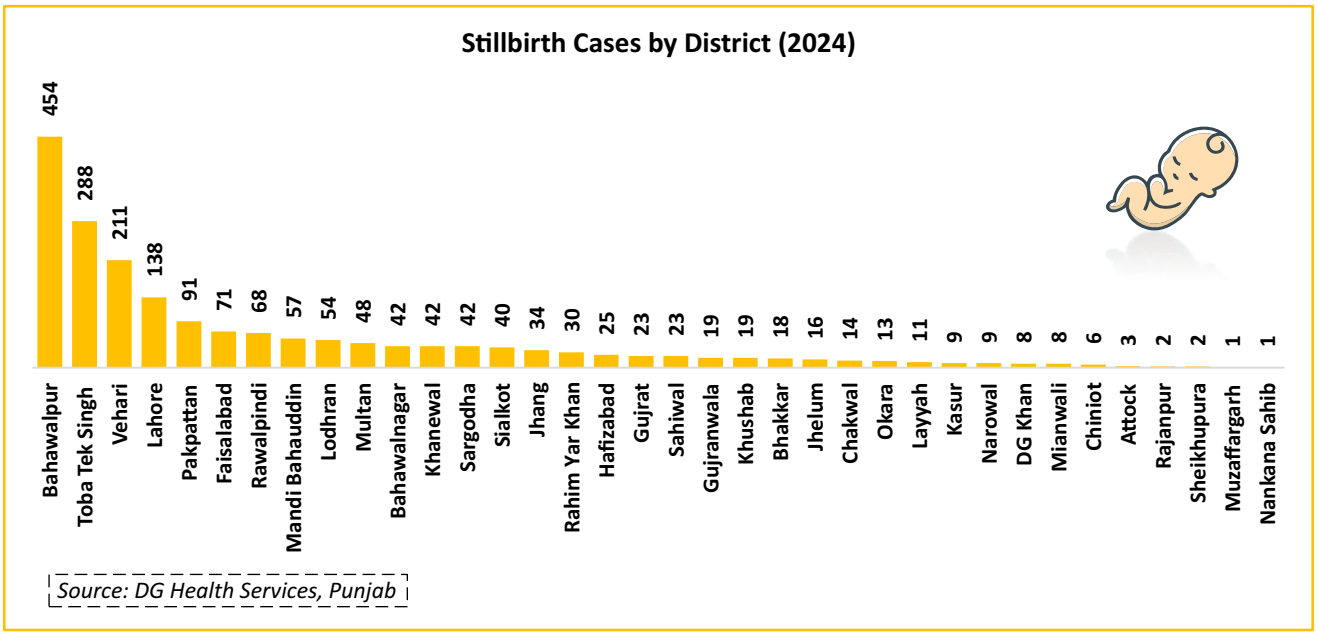


Figure 4.48

4.4.5 Early Childhood Mortality

According to the Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey key finding report (MICS KFR) 2024, it was observed that the infant mortality rate (IMR) declined from 60 to 49 deaths per 1,000 live births. Similarly, child mortality declined from nine to six deaths per 1,000 live births, while the under-five mortality rate fell from 69 to 55 per 1,000 live births.

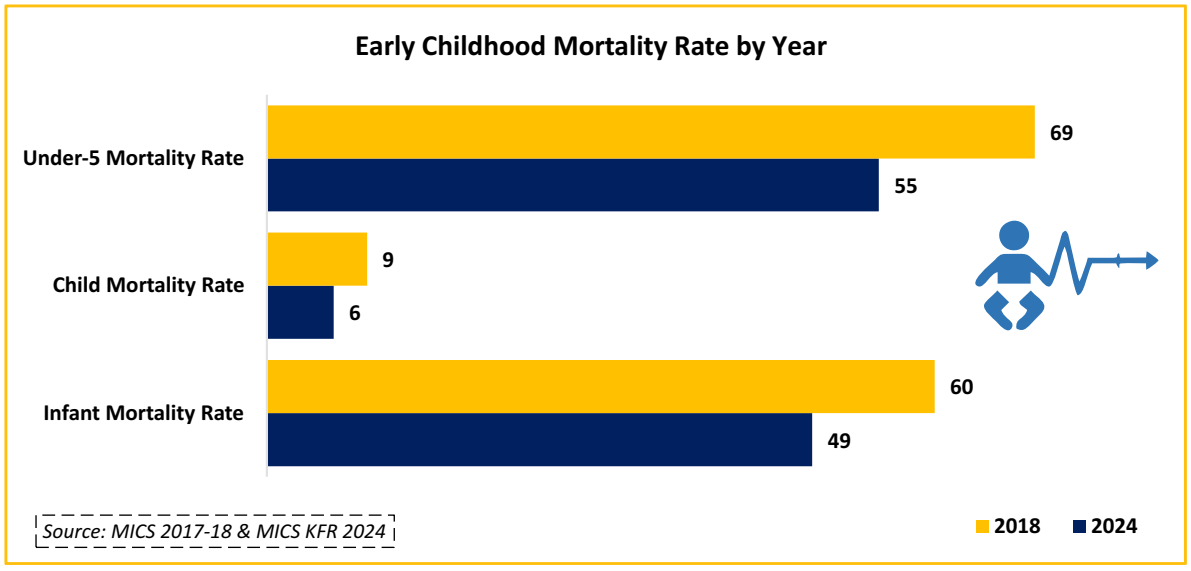


Figure 4.49

The mortality rate was higher among boys than girls, except for child mortality, which was same among both genders. Additionally, the mortality rate was highest among children born to mothers younger than 20 years.

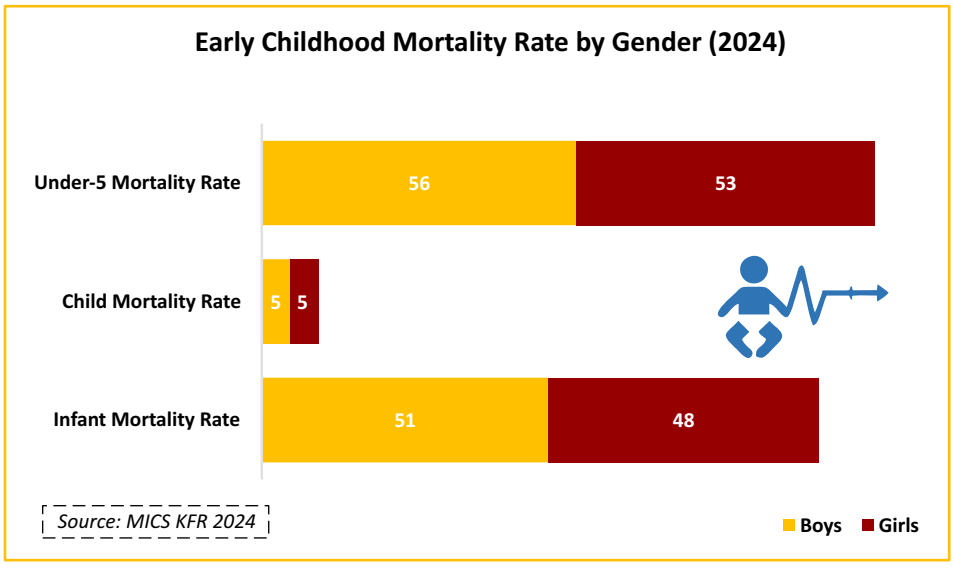


Figure 4.50

4.4.6 Neonatal Mortality

The death of a baby within the first 28 days after birth is known as neonatal mortality. It accounts for 46 percent of all child deaths.[200] According to MICS KFR 2024, the neonatal mortality rate declined from 41 to 33 deaths per 1,000 live births, with rates higher among boys than girls. There was also a slight decline observed in the mortality rate with the mother's age.[201] Adequate nutrition plays a crucial role in a baby's growth and helps reduce their vulnerability to infections. Therefore, providing children with essential nutrients and strengthening newborn care are both vital strategies in effectively reducing the neonatal mortality rate.[202]

DGHS data showed that neonatal deaths declined sharply from 52,272 neonatal death cases in 2023 to 19,526 in 2024. The leading causes of neonatal deaths in 2024 were birth asphyxia (5,138), followed by prematurity (3,379), bacterial sepsis (2,799), hypothermia (838), birth trauma (221), and congenital abnormalities (206).

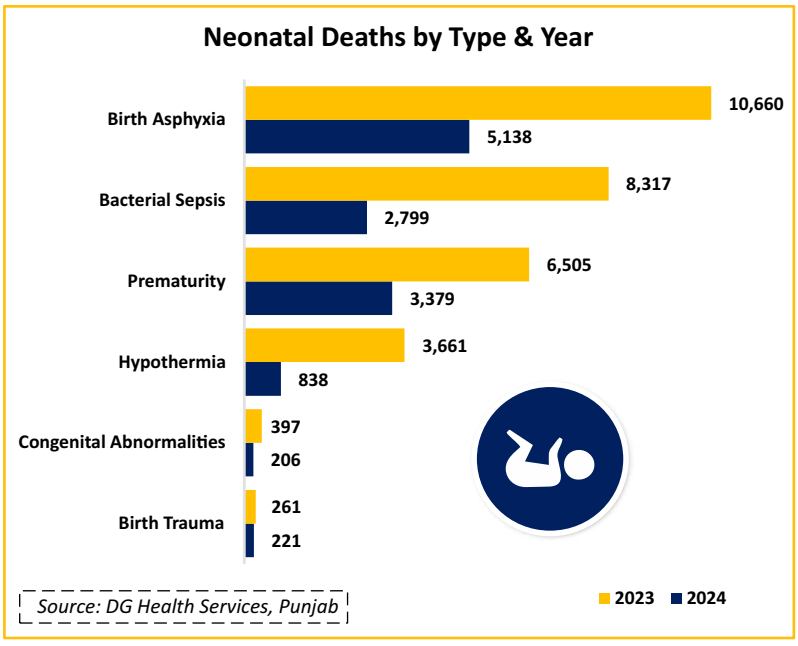


Figure 4.51

200 (Imdad, et al., 2021)
201 (MICS Key Finding Report, 2024)
202 (Situation Analysis of the State of Children, 2022)

District-wise analysis indicated that Lahore recorded the highest number of neonatal death cases. In contrast, T.T. Singh recorded only two cases, while Nankana Sahib, Khanewal, and Bahawalpur reported zero cases in 2024.

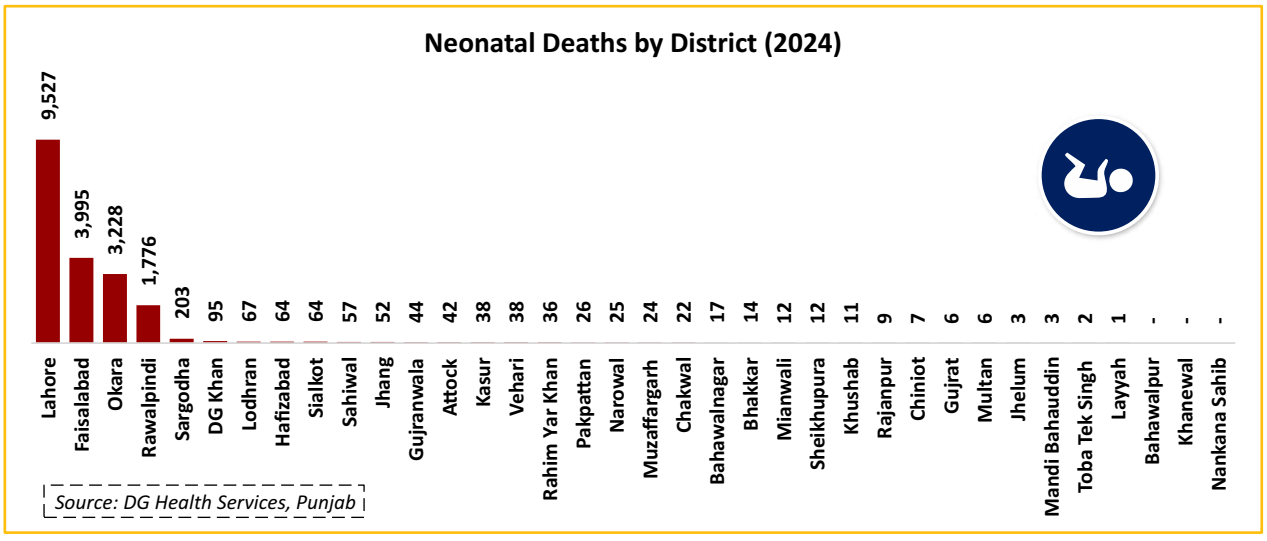


Figure 4.52

4.4.7 Child Immunisation

To reduce infant and child mortality, it is pertinent that children are immunised against six common vaccine-preventable diseases: measles, tetanus, polio, pertussis, tuberculosis, and diphtheria. In Pakistan, 66 percent of children between the ages of 12 and 23 months have received all basic vaccinations under the Expanded Program on Immunisation (EPI).[203]

In Punjab, the analysis of routine immunisation for single-dose vaccines indicated mixed trends across vaccine types. Coverage for hepatitis B. birth dose declined notably, with 1.96 million doses administered in 2023 compared with 1.30 million in 2024. In contrast, the number of Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccinations increased from 3.71 million in 2023 to 4.06 million in 2024. Similarly, coverage for the Typhoid conjugate vaccine (TCV) increased from 3.31 million doses in 2023 to 3.68 million in 2024.

For multiple-dose vaccines, the data highlighted dropouts between first and subsequent doses. For instance, the dropout rate of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) stood at 10.72 percent in 2023 and 10.17 percent in 2024. A similar pattern was observed for other vaccines such as pentavalent, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13), rotavirus and inactivated polio vaccine (IPV). While no dropouts were recorded for the measles and rubella (MR) vaccine in 2023, a 1.99 percent dropout rate was reported in 2024. These findings indicated ongoing challenges in ensuring follow-ups and continuity within the immunisation program.

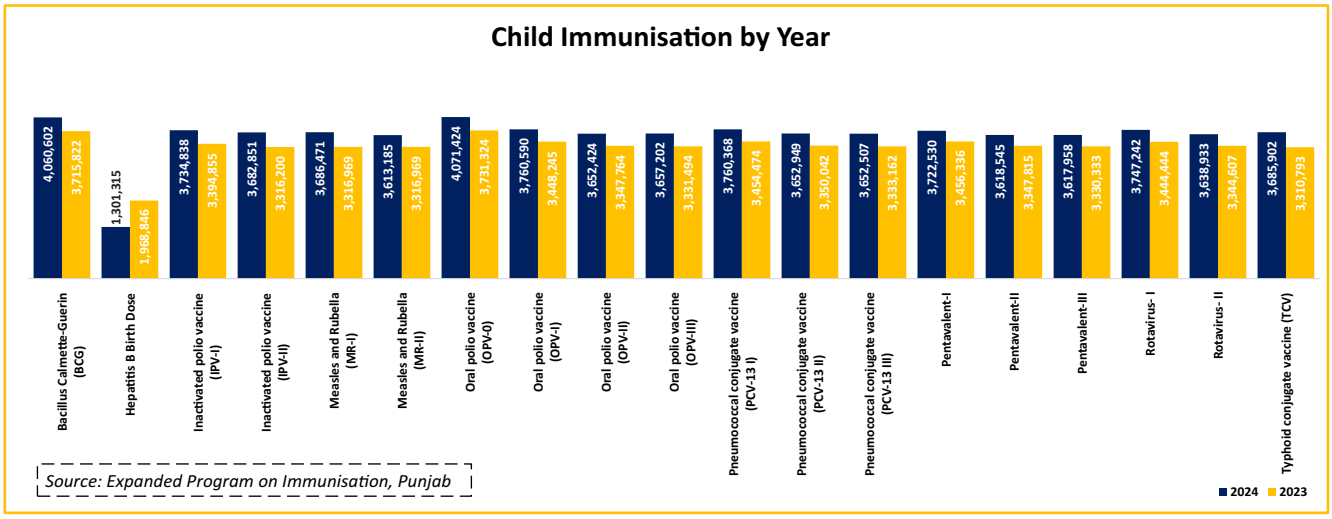


Figure 4.53

203 (Situation Analysis of the State of Children, 2022)

4.4.8 Child Malnutrition

Child malnutrition is gauged through the prevalence of underweight, wasting and stunting among children under the age of five years.[204] According to the latest MICS KFR report, the prevalence of underweight and stunting declined over the years; however, the prevalence of wasting increased from 7.5 percent in 2018 to 10.2 percent in 2024.[205]

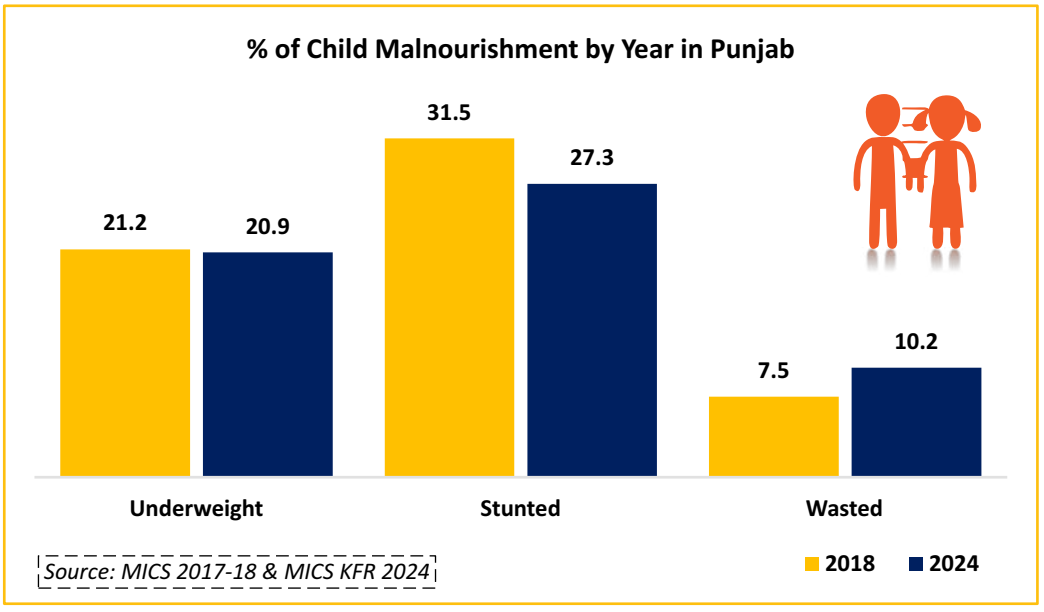


Figure 4.54

The analysis of the nutritional status of children by gender showed that more boys than girls were malnourished. The prevalence of malnutrition was higher in rural areas as compared to urban. Furthermore, malnutrition status decreases with the mother's education and wealth quintile.[206]

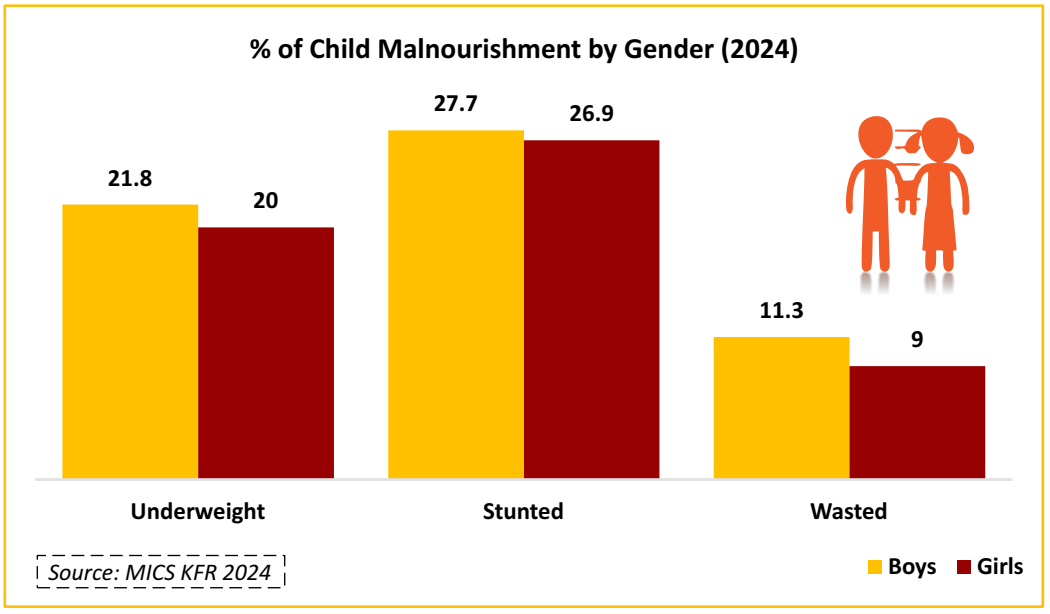


Figure 4.55

204 (Situation Analysis of Children in Pakistan, 2017)
205 (MICS Key Finding Report, 2024)
206 Ibid

4.5 Mental Healthcare Services

Overall health and wellness of an individual also include mental health. It varies between an optimal psychological well-being to differing levels of emotional distress. Having emotional wellness allows people to form relationships, cope with daily stressors and thrive in their lives. However, mental health issues continue to affect people, with over 350 million people suffering from depression alone globally. In Pakistan, psychological diseases account for four percent of the total global health burden.[207] The subsection below presents the analysis of mental health services in Punjab.

4.5.1 Number of Clinical Staff

There were 19 clinical psychologists (two male and 17 female) employed in the institute in both years 2023 and 2024. The number of psychiatrists declined from five in 2023 to four in 2024. In both cadres, male staff were fewer than female staff.

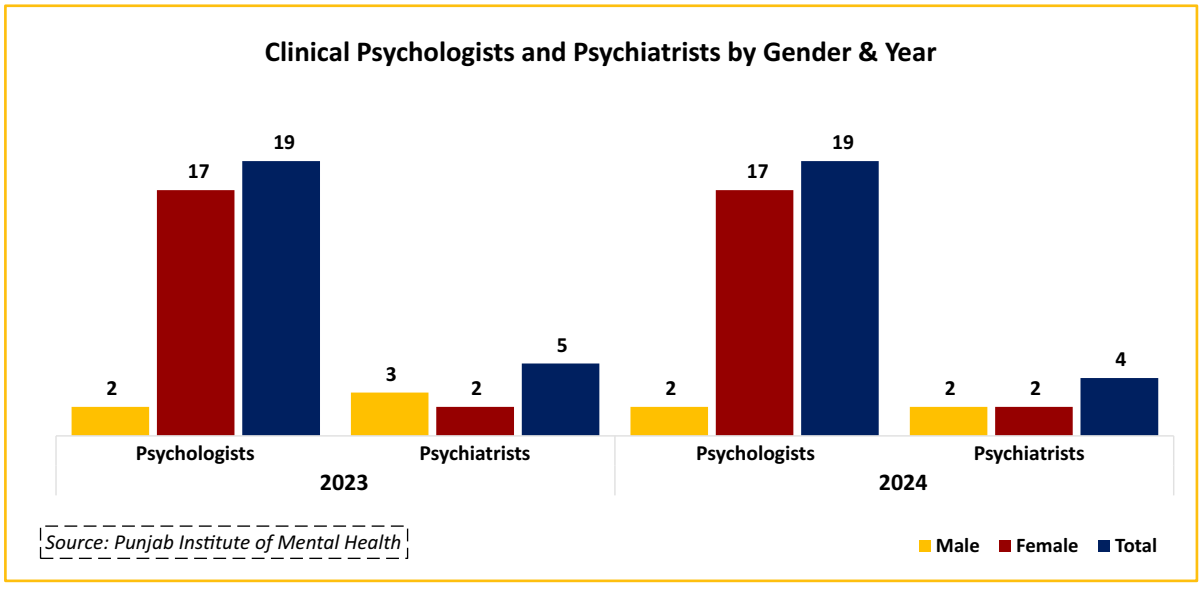


Figure 4.56

4.5.2 Mental Health Counselling

The department had provided counselling services to 3,749 clients in 2023, and the number increased to 8,612 in 2024.

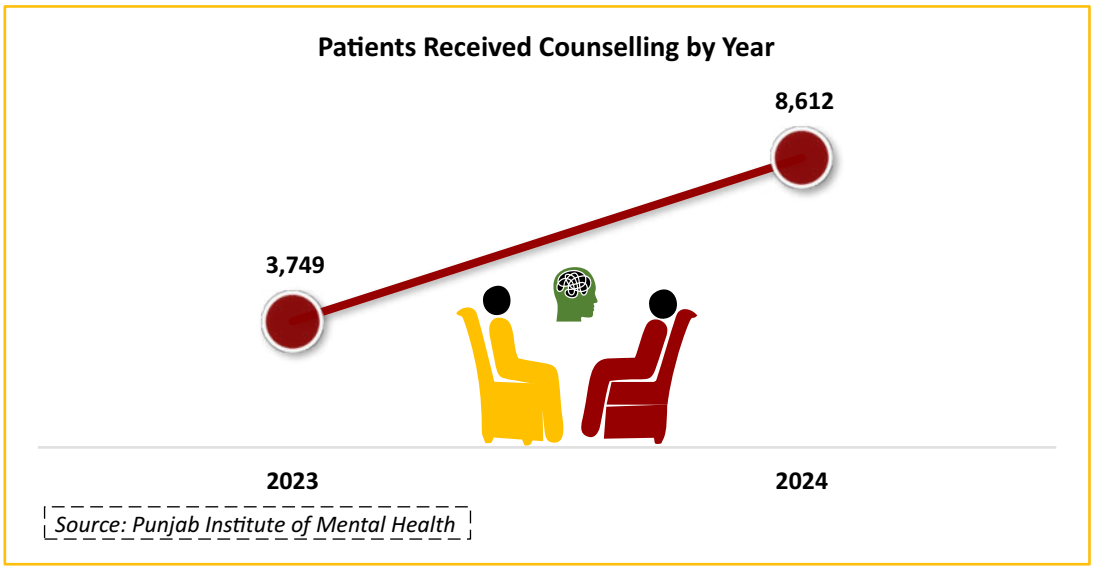


Figure 4.57

207 (World Health Organization, 2021)

4.5.2.1 Number of Patients

Gender analysis of inpatients showed that more men than women were admitted for the treatment of any mental health issue in 2023 and 2024. For example, 755 men received mental health services, while only 21 women did in 2024. Similarly, there were 164,362 outdoor patient visits reported in 2023 and 204,662 in 2024. For both years, the percentage of men was higher than women. The detailed gender-wise analysis of outdoor patients is presented in figure 4.58 below.

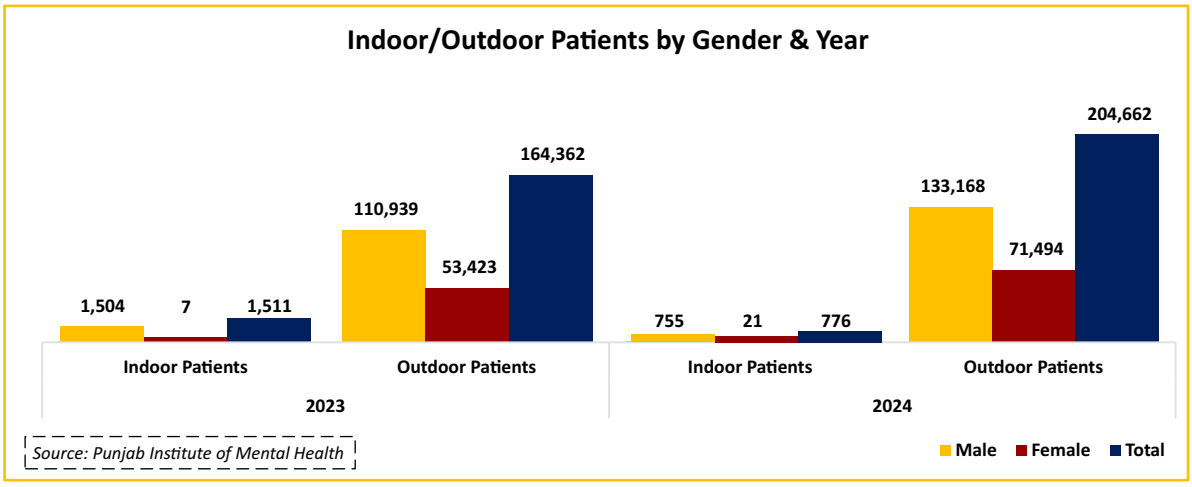


Figure 4.58

The age-specific data showed that the highest proportion of patients seeking mental health services belonged to the 15-49-year age group, followed by those 50 years and above. The 5-14-year age group had the lowest proportion among the number of patients seeking mental health services.

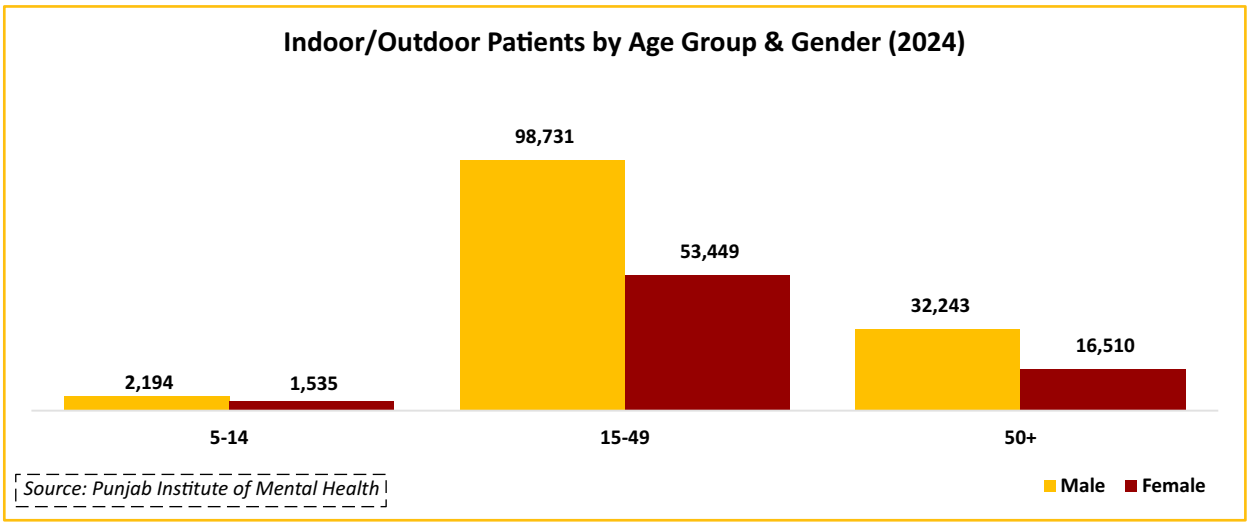


Figure 4.59

According to OPD data from DGHS, the number of patients diagnosed with mental health issue was 612,011 in 2023 and the number decreased to 597,149 in 2024. In both years, the percentage of men was higher than that of women (see figure 4.60).

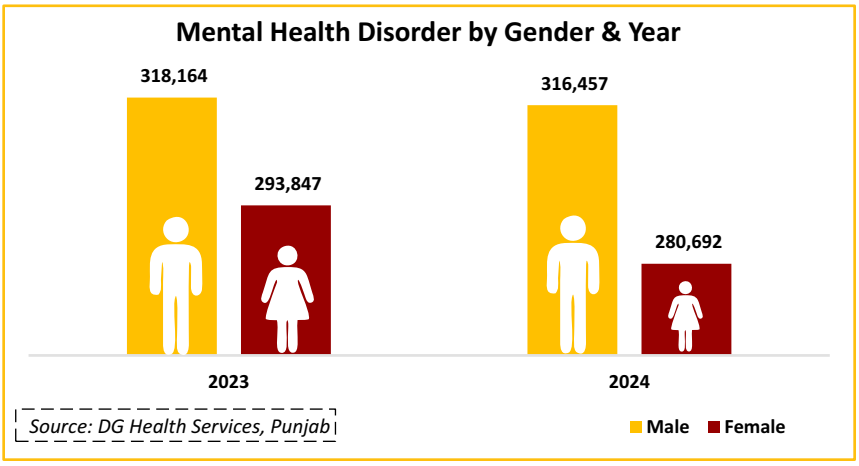


Figure 4.60

4.6 Health Surveillance

Pakistan is grappling with the issues of the double burden of disease affecting the marginalised populations disproportionately. Around half of this burden arises from communicable disease, maternal health complications and malnutrition. The country remains one of the three in the world where polio is still endemic, alongside the widespread prevalence of hepatitis B and C. Pakistan is among the top five countries with the highest burden of Tuberculosis (TB) and has concentrated Human Immunodeficiency Viruses (HIV) among key populations.[208] In this regard, continuous monitoring of health indicators and diseases is essential. Health surveillance includes regular collection, analysis and dissemination of the data to take action. The success of disease control programmes relies largely on the utilisation of such data in designing preventive strategies, raising awareness and implementing evidence-based interventions.[209]

The section below provides the analysis of the reported diseases within the Punjab.

4.6.1 Cancer

Cancer is the second leading cause of death. The global burden of cancer is expected to increase over the next two decades.[210] By 2050, there will be approximately 35 million new cancer cases, which is 77 percent more than the estimation made in 2022. It is due to the unhealthy lifestyles, environmental changes and exposure to various risk factors.[211] According to Global Cancer Observatory data, Pakistan has 185,748 new cases of cancer, among them 87,568 were reported in men and 98,180 in women.[212]

In Punjab, there were 14,921 cases of cancer recorded in 2023, which increased to 17,828 cases in 2024. Among the reported cases in 2024, 42.32 percent of men and 57.68 percent of women were diagnosed with cancer.

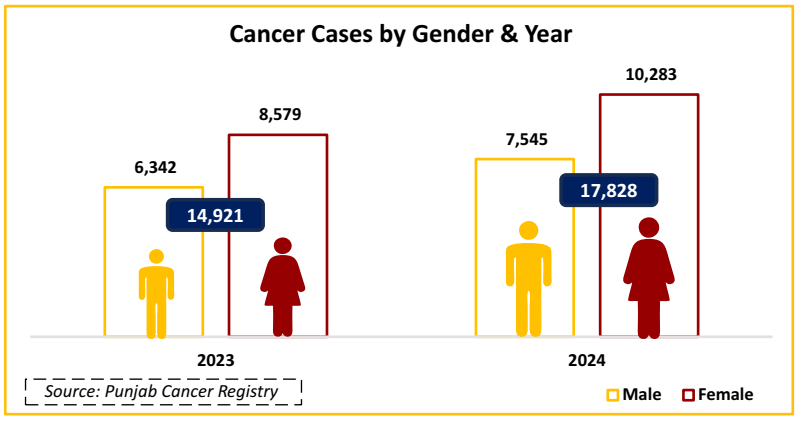


Figure 4.61

208 (Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, 2016)
209 (World Health Organization, n.d.)
210 (Wu, Xia, & Lin, 2024)
211 (Global cancer burden growing, amidst mounting need for services, 2024)
212 (Ferlay, et al., 2024)

The highest proportion of cancer cases was found among individuals aged 40-59 years (42.57 percent), followed by those in the 60-79 age group (27.68 percent) and individuals aged 20-39 years (18.34 percent). Only 2.18 percent of individuals above 80 years had cancer.

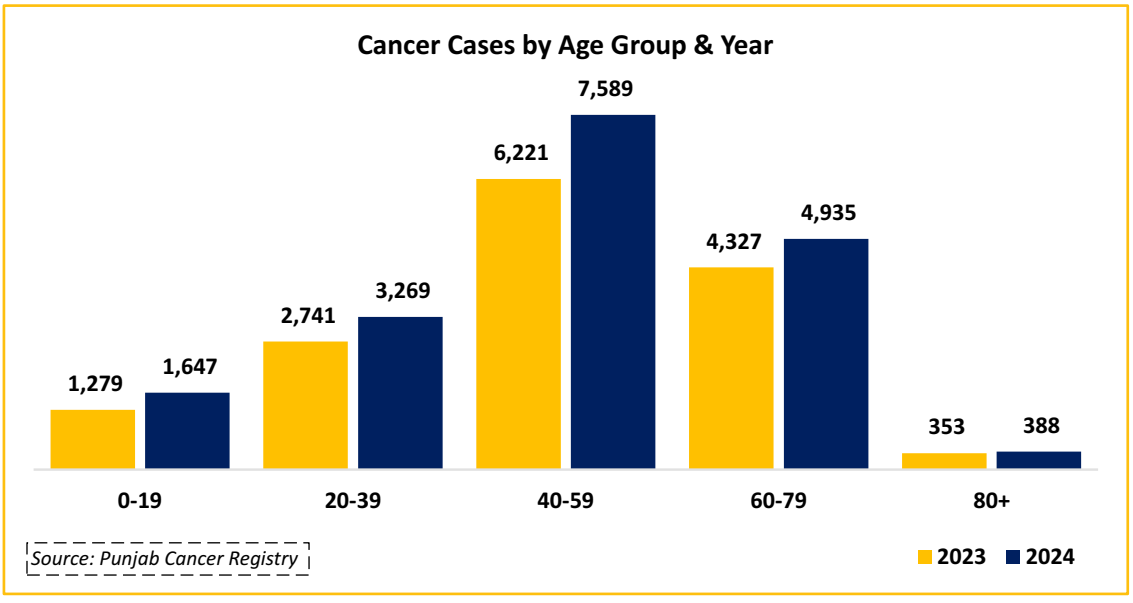


Figure 4.62

Gender wise analysis of cancer cases in 2024 showed distinct patterns between men and women. Among men, the most common types of cancer were of the liver and intrahepatic bile ducts, colon and rectum and lip and oral cavity.

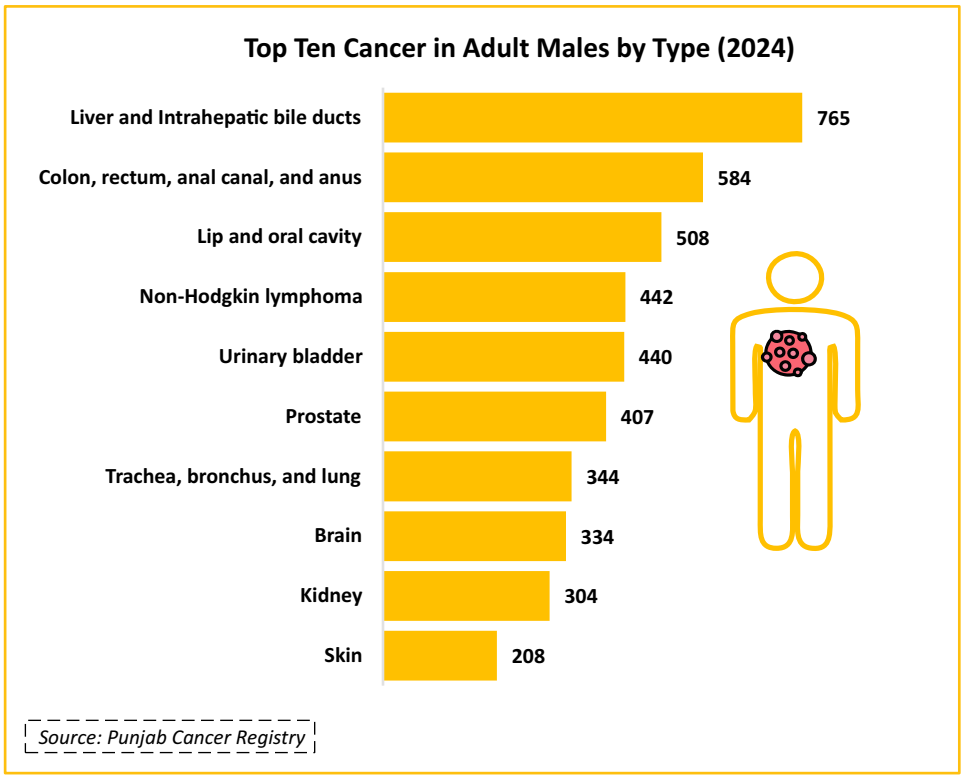


Figure 4.63

In women, the most commonly diagnosed cancer was breast cancer, followed by cancer of the corpus uteri and ovary.

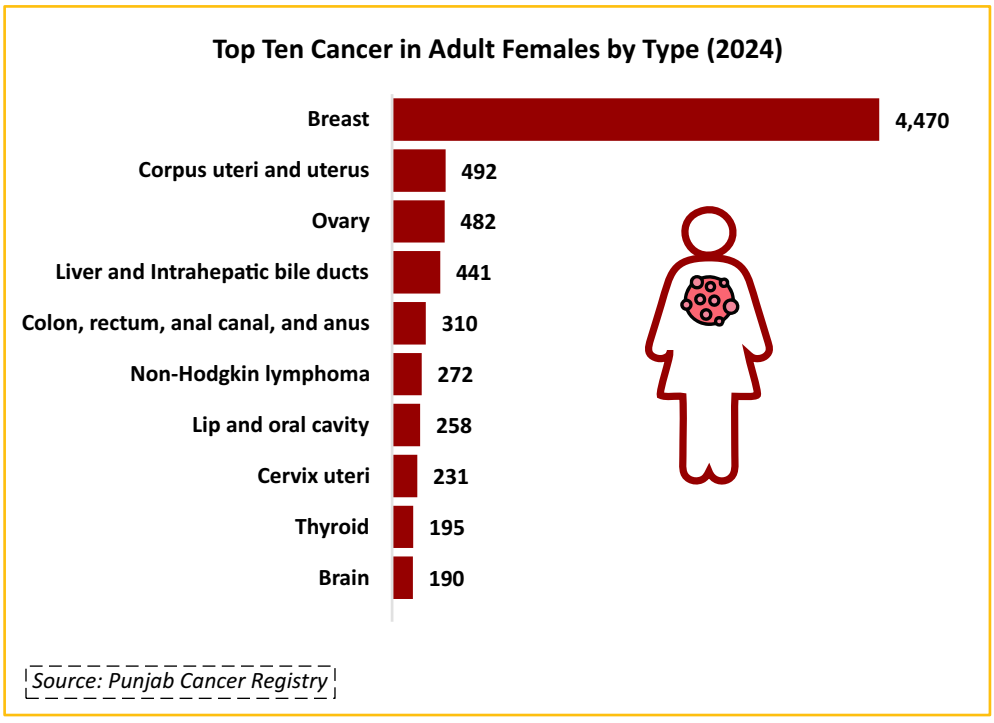


Figure 4.64

Districts with the highest recorded cases of cancer were Lahore (7,156), Faisalabad (2,458) and Sialkot (1,107). Whereas the lowest cases were recorded in the Gujrat (385) and Jhang (378) in 2024.

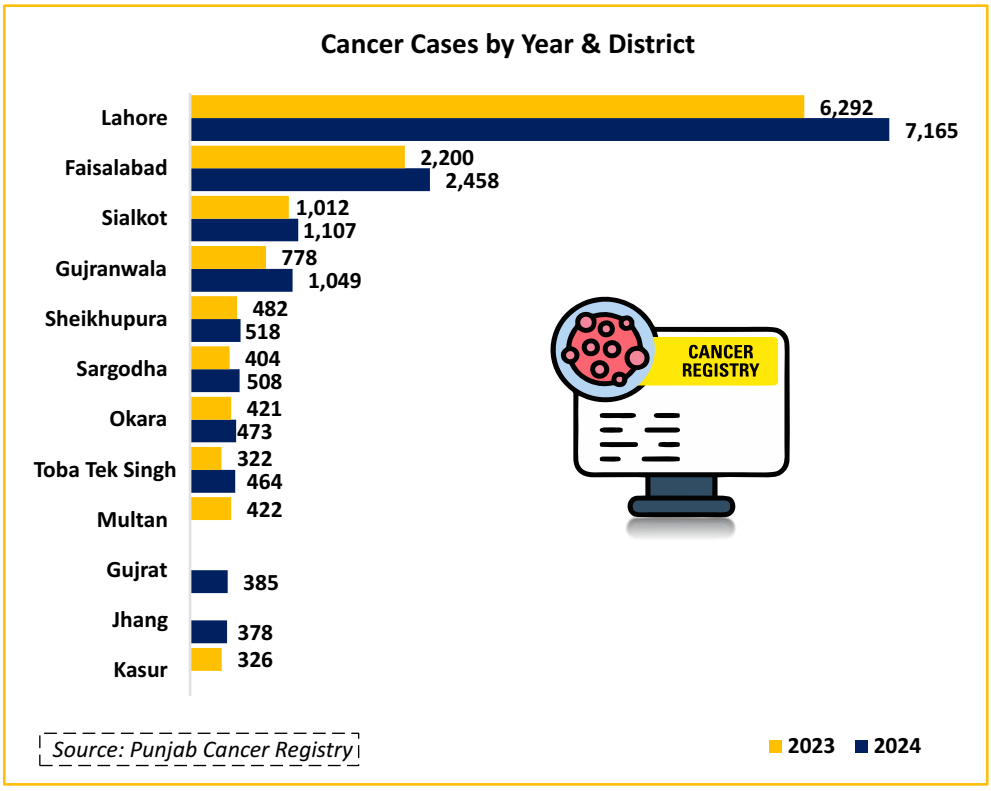


Figure 4.65

Paediatric cancer, which occurs in individuals aged 18 years or younger, was diagnosed in 1,024 individuals in 2023 and 1,252 in 2024. Among them, the most common types of cancer were leukaemia, glioma and hodgkin lymphoma.

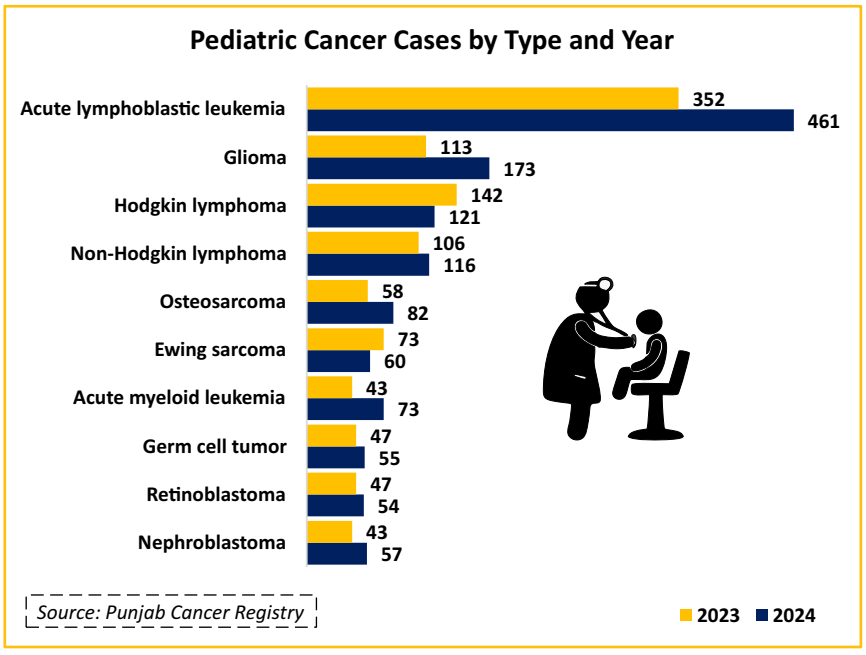


Figure 4.66

4.6.2 Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

Due to the increasing global response towards preventing AIDS, the number of AIDS related deaths has decreased by 51 percent since 2010 in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of reported infections has also decreased in 2023 as compared to any time in the late 1980s. More people are also opting for antiretroviral therapy to suppress the virus, contributing to increased treatment coverage and a decline in AIDS related deaths. [213]

Pakistan has also launched programs, including community outreach, to raise awareness on the prevention of HIV and ensure equal access to treatment. It is estimated that around 183,740 people were living with HIV, among them 69 percent were men, 21 percent were women, and 3 percent were children less than 14 years old in 2020.[214]

In Punjab, there was 15.96 percent increase in the number of AIDS cases from 40,268 cases reported in 2023 to 46,694 in 2024. Among them, the highest number of infections was recorded in urban regions as compared to rural regions. Gender disaggregated data showed that more men than women were infected with AIDS. For instance, 36,094 men were infected with AIDS, 8,950 women and 1,650 transgender persons in 2024.

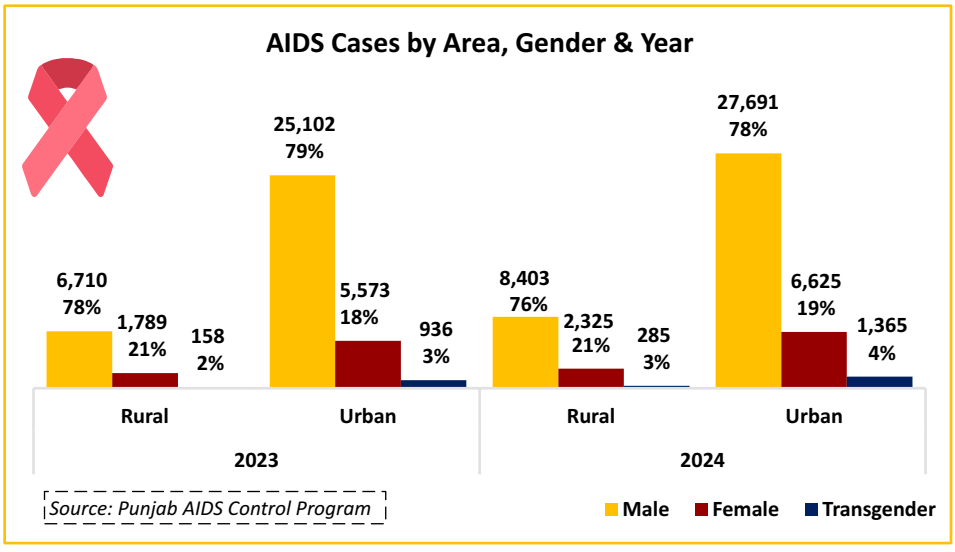


Figure 4.67

213 (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2024)
214 (UNAID, 2020)

Among districts, the highest number of AIDS cases were reported in Lahore (11,580), Faisalabad (4,816) and D.G Khan (3,874). While the lowest cases were reported in Rajanpur (54) in 2024.

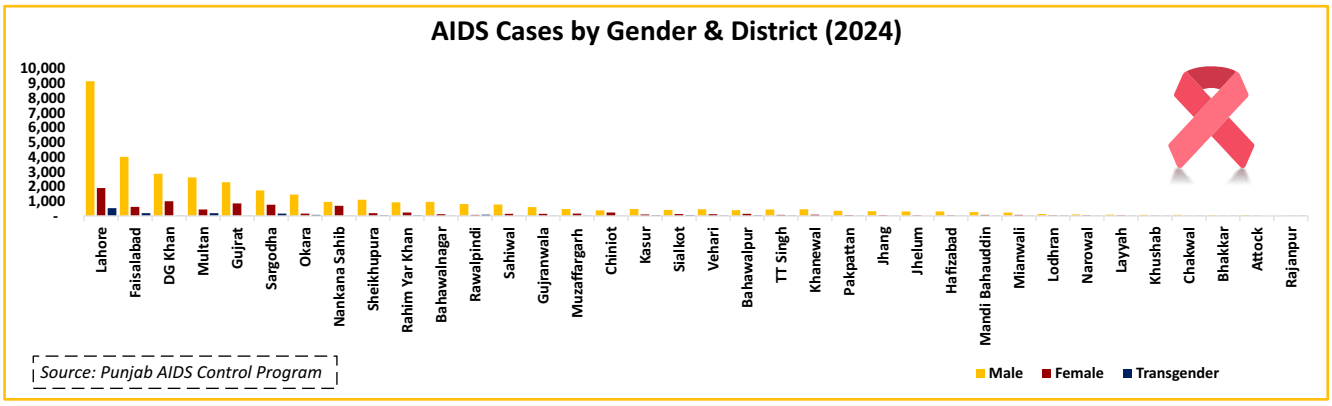


Figure 4.68

4.6.3 Hepatitis Cases

Hepatitis is one of the public health concerns and has five major types, each causing liver diseases but varying in severity, transmission and treatment. Countries are putting efforts to curb the hepatitis cases, yet it still takes the lives of around 1.3 million people globally each year. Especially, LMICs carry 85 percent of the global mortality burden due to hepatitis.[215] In Punjab, the overall incidence rate of suspected hepatitis is 2.8 per 1,000 people.[216]

According to the DGHS, the number of patients treated for Hepatitis in IPD in 2023 was 20,397, among them 10,596 were men and 9,801 were women. The reported number of hepatitis cases in 2024 was 10,821, among them 5,596 cases were of men, and 5,216 were of women.

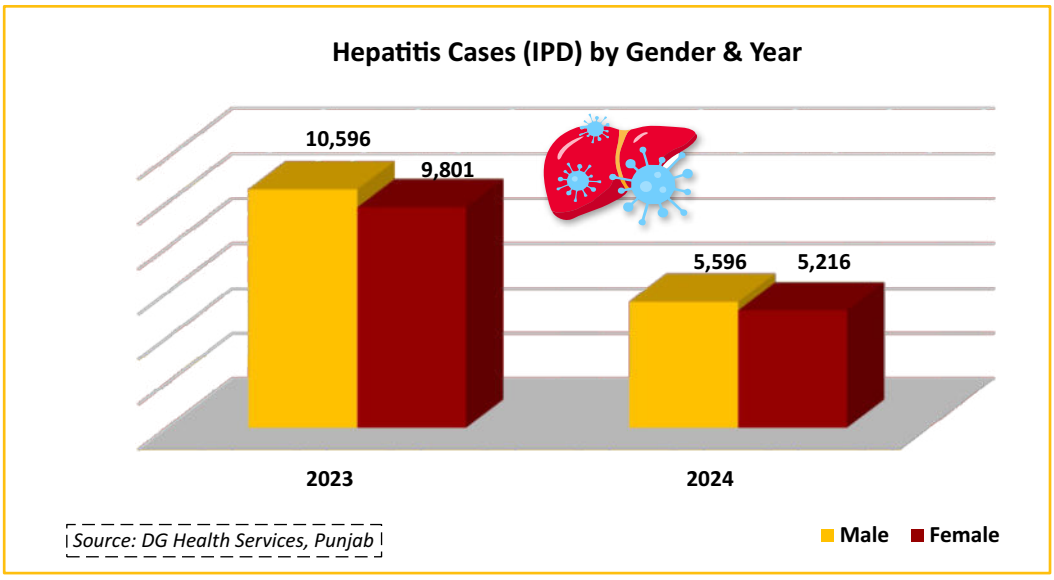


Figure 4.69

District-wise analysis showed that the districts with a high number of hepatitis cases were reported in Faisalabad (5,007), Lahore (1,738) and Mandi Bahauddin (555). Whereas Khanewal reported the lowest number of cases (10).

215 (Viral hepatitis B and C burden of disease, WHO policy adoption status in countries, 2024)
216 (DG Health Service Punjab, 2024)

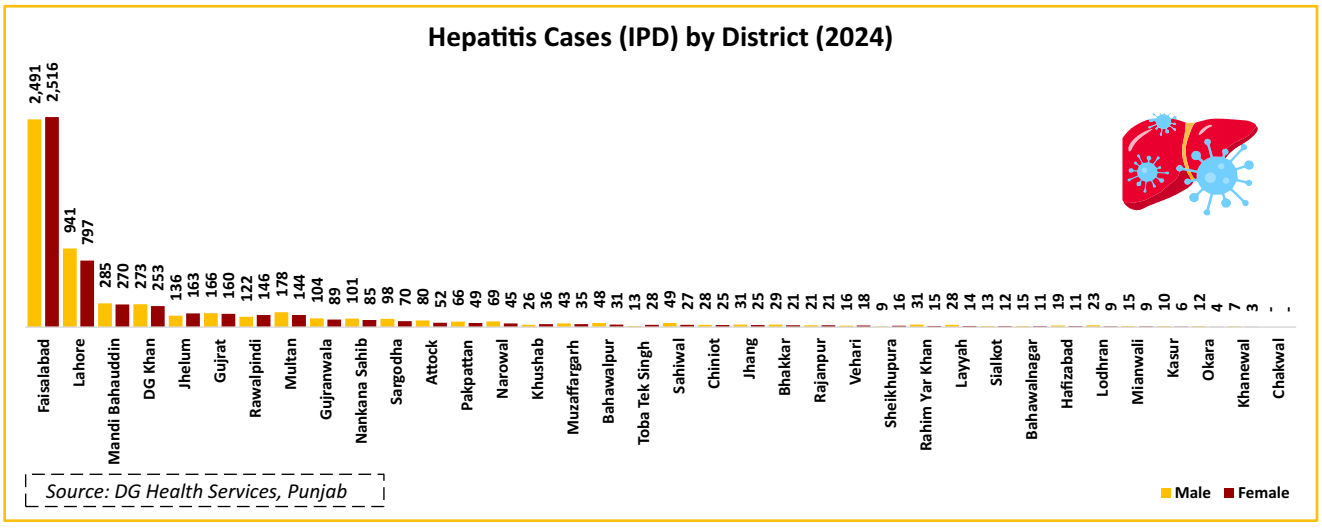


Figure 4.70

4.6.4 Malaria and Dengue Cases

Malaria and dengue fever remain under control in Pakistan, but it still witnesses major outbreaks, especially after the monsoon season. The government has implemented several measures to manage this disease, which include free diagnostic tests and residual spraying. But it is still endemic, with over 350,000 reported cases of malaria and 49,000 cases of dengue fever in 2021 alone. It shows that despite continuous efforts, there are gaps which continue to pose a public health risk.[217] Based on the DGHS IPD data, there were 4,663 cases of malaria reported in 2023 and 2,372 in 2024. In 2024, 57.63 percent of malaria cases were reported among men and 42.37 percent among women.

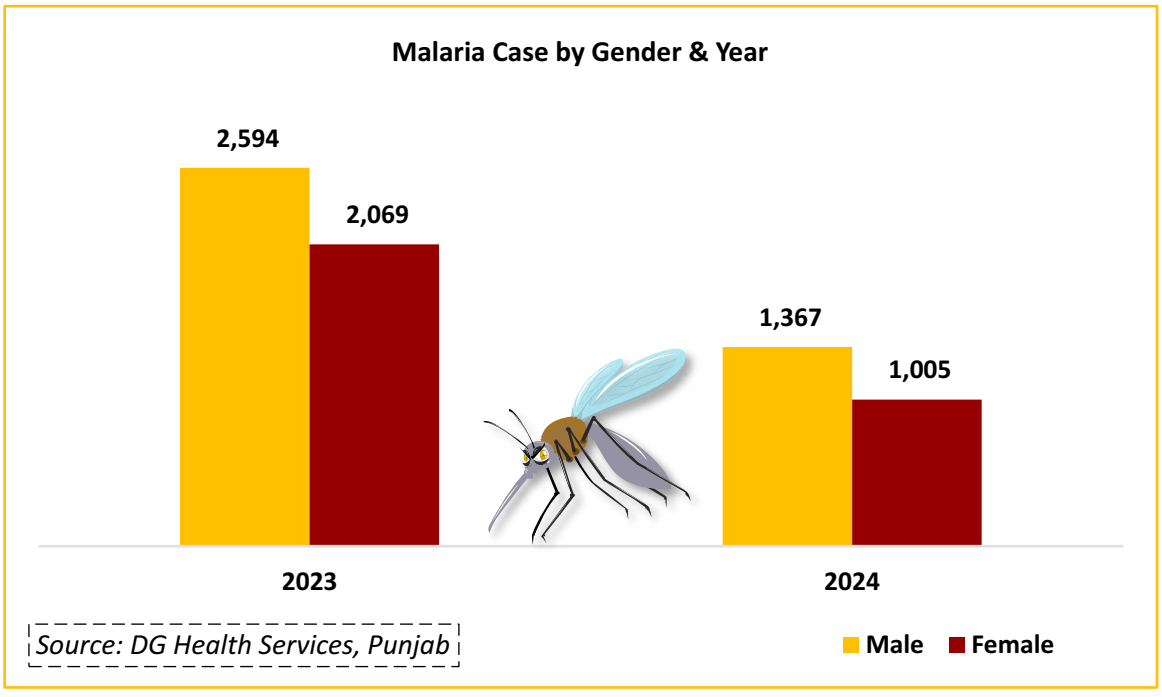


Figure 4.71

Rajanpur, DG Khan and Attock were among the districts with the highest reported cases of malaria, while Faisalabad, Narowal and Nankana Sahib recorded the lowest in 2024.

217 (Arshad, Wajahat, Jabeen, & Ali, 2022)

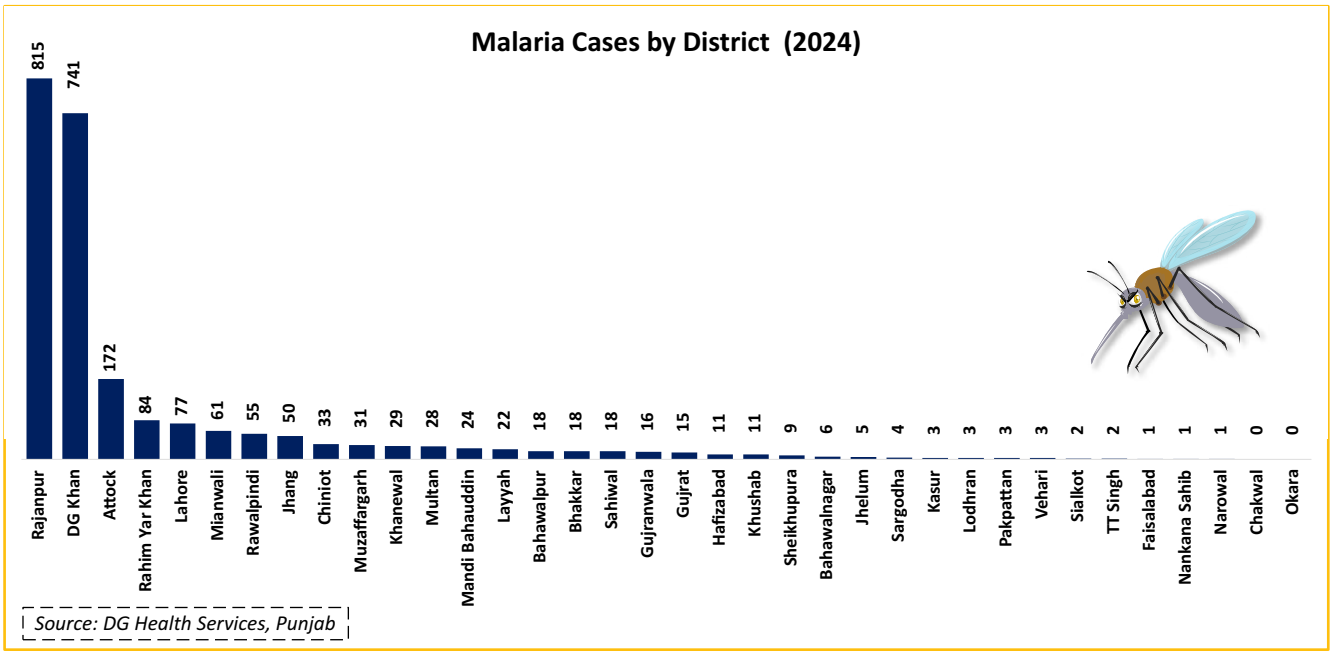


Figure 4.1

In the case of dengue, there were 7,911 cases recorded in 2023 and 6,128 in 2024. Of these patients, 3,858 (62.96 percent) were men, and 2,270 (37.04 percent) were women in 2024.

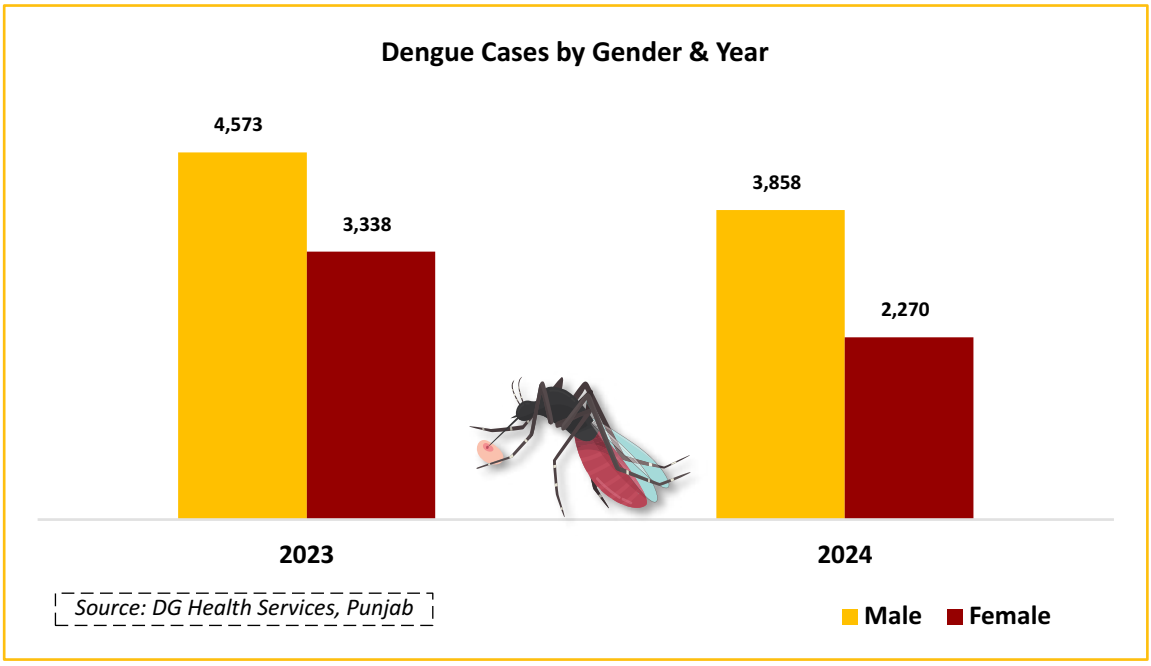


Figure 4.72

The highest number of dengue in-patient cases were reported in Rawalpindi, Lahore and Attock. On the contrary, Chiniot, Okara and Narowal recorded one case each in 2024.

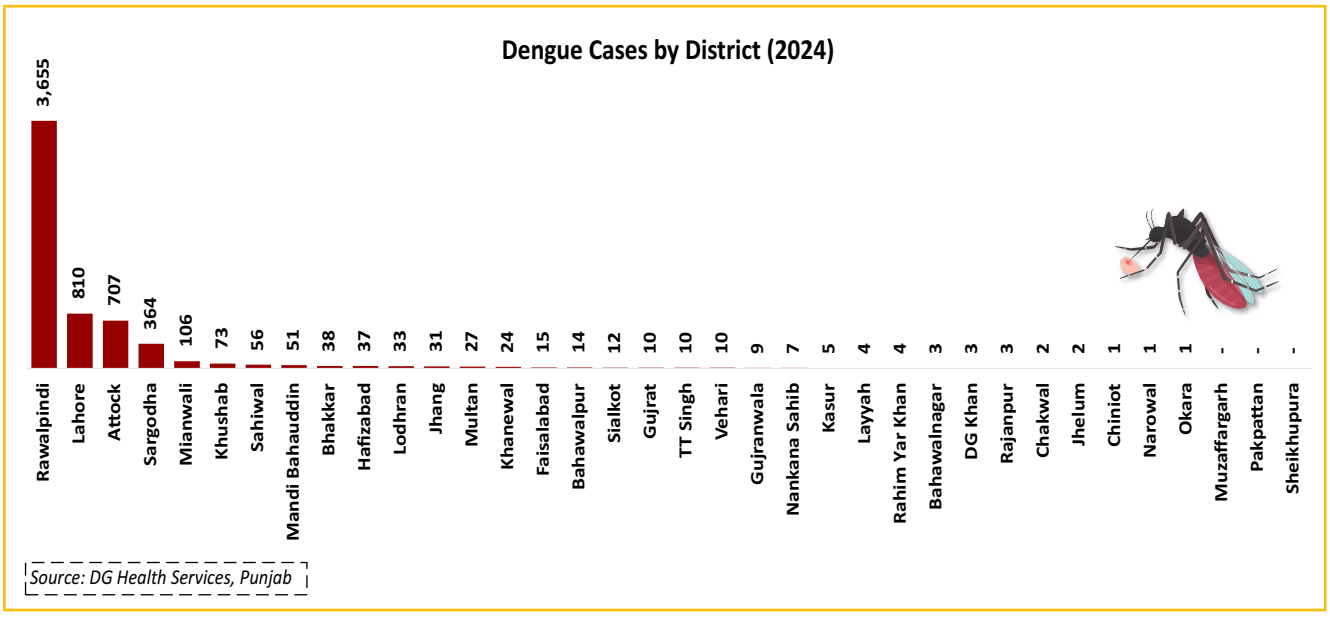


Figure 4.73

4.7 Conclusion

The analysis highlights that, beyond biological factors, gender differences in health outcomes are shaped by a range of social and systemic influences, including access to services, provider composition, and women's autonomy in health-seeking decisions. Punjab has made meaningful progress in expanding health service delivery and improving maternal, newborn, and child health outcomes, supported by a wide network of health facilities and a substantial workforce. Higher utilisation of health services by women, particularly for maternal and reproductive care, reflects both improved access and the central role of women's health needs within the health system.At the same time, the evidence points to persistent and emerging challenges that require policy attention. Gaps in continuity of care, uneven service coverage, and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases alongside infectious illnesses highlight the need to strengthen primary healthcare, improve follow-up mechanisms, and design targeted interventions. Addressing these inequalities requires health interventions grounded in a rights-based approach that places women, girls, and children at the centre of policy and programme design. Strengthening health surveillance systems is also critical for tracking disease burden, identifying emerging risks, and ensuring that health facilities are adequately equipped to respond to population needs. This will require effective coordination among government institutions, non-governmental organisations, development partners, and healthcare providers. Overall, while health outcomes in Punjab continue to improve, sustained commitment to evidence-based and proven practices remains essential to closing gender gaps and ensuring equitable, high-quality healthcare for all, regardless of gender, income, or social background.

4.8 Recommendations

It is crucial to ensure that all individuals, especially marginalised populations such as women, young people and transgender persons, have access to essential health services. Efforts of government interventions have been integral in improving the utilisation of health services; however, disparities still exist in terms of gender, area, and socio-economic status, which call for targeted interventions with an intersectional approach to sustain the progress made and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strengthening of healthcare infrastructure

- To ensure equitable healthcare access, the government has expanded public health facilities and introduced clinics on wheels to improve the outreach. However, it is essential to expand the existing primary healthcare facilities, which have declined by 8.5 percent in 2025. DG Health Services (DGHS) should continue to expand the basic health units and rural health centers to strengthen primary healthcare.

- With the growing population of Punjab, i.e. 2.53 percent annually, it is pertinent to strengthen the health infrastructure, such as expanding rural access to healthcare, upgrading primary and secondary health facilities for 24/7 care and better resources, enhancing specialised centres such as mother and child health hospitals and ensuring availability of essential equipment and medicines.

Addressing gender disparities within the health workforce

- The prevalent gender imbalance within medical specialisation is deeply rooted in socio-cultural factors that hinder women from pursuing it. To meet the demand for female doctors, the Government of Punjab needs to organise community sessions focused on social and behaviour change communication strategies to increase family support. Additionally, at the institutional level, flexible working hours, better incentives & promotion opportunities, family-friendly posting and childcare facilities need to be ensured to encourage women to pursue specialisation.

- For better resource allocation planning, it is pertinent to analyse the number of medical professionals who are also practising. Therefore, it is recommended that the Punjab Medical and Dental Council update and report the data of Healthcare Practitioners, which is readily available for stakeholders.

Expansion of the lady health worker program

- The LHW program has proven to be effective in reaching out to marginalised populations and improving their knowledge regarding health services. However, only 60 percent of the population in underserved areas is covered by LHW. DGHS to expand the LHW program in the uncovered rural areas and districts with high maternal mortality rate.

- LHW, being the frontline workers, are vulnerable to security concerns; therefore, DGHS must take measures to ensure the safety and security of community workers.

Capacity building of healthcare providers and workers

- DGHS and Punjab Healthcare Commission to organise workshops for healthcare providers and workers to strengthen their capacity to provide services centred on patient safety and quality care.

Strengthening of sexual and reproductive health services

- To standardise the antenatal care reporting, DGHS must revise antenatal care reporting to record a minimum of eight visits for pregnant women, aligning with WHO guidelines.
- The data of public health facilities indicated the dropouts between ANC visits among pregnant women. DG Health Services must implement an intervention focused on targeted counselling and follow-up by engaging community workers to encourage pregnant women to complete at least four visits.
- The observed decline in tetanus toxoid vaccination among pregnant women necessitates stronger counselling during ANC visits and systematic follow-up to improve coverage.
- DGHS to expand the services of post abortion care to meet the needs of women with complications and reduce the negative impacts of inadequate quality, coverage and timeliness of post-abortion care on women's health and survival.
- To address the 17 percent unmet need of family planning, DGHS to ensure consistent supply and availability of a wide range of contraceptives, including long-acting reversible methods, at all public health facilities.
- DGHS to include psycho-social and psychological screening to prevent and manage postpartum depression and anxiety, alongside comprehensive contraceptive counselling and services within routine postnatal visits. It is also recommended to integrate mental health screenings at adolescent health centers and LHW home visits.
- DGHS is currently providing nutrition screening to pregnant women; hence, it is recommended to expand the services in remote, underserved areas. Moreover, they need to ensure nutrition screening throughout the life course of women and transgender persons to address gender disparities.
- DGHS to organise health camps in underserved, hard-to-reach areas to improve access and utilisation of services.
- DGHS to implement monitoring mechanisms which include standardised classification of caesareans, regular clinical audits and alignment of financial incentives to discourage procedures without medical necessity.

Adolescent sexual and reproductive health services

- Adolescent Health Centers account for only 0.44 percent of the Health and Population Department’s service centres. The youth bulge in Punjab cannot be served by such a small percentage of specialised facilities. Therefore, it is recommended that the Health and Population Department expand its network of adolescent health centres along with community outreach and referral for SRHR services.
- Health and Population Department to organise the community sessions for young people who lack access and knowledge to essential SRHR services to reduce social stigma and debunk myths and misconceptions around reproductive health.

Improve coverage of immunisation of children

- The dropouts between vaccination doses among young children highlight the need for better utilisation of the LHW program for community outreach, referral and follow-up. EPI to ensure collaboration with the LHW program so the workers can participate in the immunisation campaign and engage in community-based surveillance activities.

Mental health services

- Punjab Institute of Mental Health (PIMH) must address the shortage of mental health professionals and ensure a gender-balanced workforce.

- PIMH to organise social awareness campaigns to increase social support for mental health issues and reduce stigma around them.

- Complete health is not just physical but also includes mental health. Therefore, the Government of Punjab should adopt and institutionalise the Employee Assistance Program within the workforce, encouraging companies to sponsor benefits such as providing counselling, referrals, and resources to improve well-being and productivity.

Disease and health surveillance

- DGHS ensure the routine collection, analysis and reporting of data disaggregated by gender, age, area and type of institute.

- For better resource allocation, the District Health Information System (DHIS) to mandatorily record data of transgender persons in OPD and IPD to enable inclusive health planning and accountability.

- DGHS to take urgent steps in response to the increasing number of AIDS cases by expanding HIV testing, strengthening surveillance, scaling up treatment access and implementing gender-responsive prevention strategies

- The digital client tracking system, including RMNCH registers, SMS reminders and mobile applications, should be expanded to flag missed ANC and PNC visits and enable real-time monitoring.

- Punjab Healthcare Commission to report the provincial data of facility based live births. It is recommended that the live births data should be digitised to create a tracking system in collaboration with NADRA.

Expansion of telehealth services

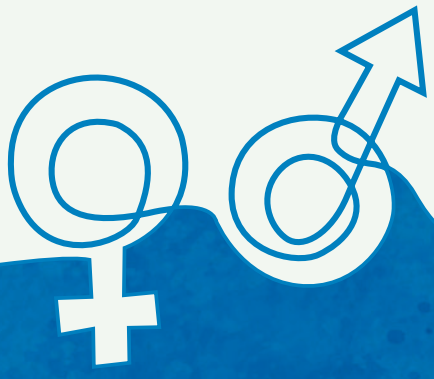
- Telehealth platform should be introduced and expanded to improve access to healthcare, allowing anonymous consultations, access to reproductive health information, and improved communication among health workers.

Expansion of health coverage under the Sehat Sahulat Program

- The Punjab health initiative management company must ensure the inclusion of family planning services within the Sehat Card to expand coverage for marginalised communities. It is also suggested to develop a monitoring framework with guidelines to have an oversight on maternal complication cases, along with female vs male card utilisation and maternal health complications covered.



EDUCATION



05 EDUCATION

KEY FINDINGS

- Punjab's literacy rates for each gender group are better than the national level: 71.2 percent literacy for men, 60.2 percent for women and 41.3 percent for transgender people.
- MICS Key Findings Report (2024) shows that school attendance declines as children age and move through the education system: from 66.7 percent at primary school, to 47.5 percent at lower secondary school and 35.4 percent at upper secondary school.
- At each age group in the MICS (2024), school attendance for girls is higher than for boys, and is more sensitive to changes in wealth quintiles and area of residence.
- In Punjab, more men than women have attended school: out of the 72.3 million people in the province who have ever attended school, 40.0 million are men and 32.3 million are women.
- Women are over-represented among those who have never been to school: out of the 36.7 million people in Punjab who have never been to school, about 16.0 million are men while 20.8 million are women.
- The rural-urban divide in education persists in every aspect and largely puts girls in rural areas at a disadvantage. There are 2.7 million children in urban areas who are out of school, compared to 6.9 million in rural areas (151.2 percent higher). School attendance is higher in urban areas and lowest among girls in rural areas.
- There are more formal public schools for girls than there are for boys: 22,935 boys' schools versus 25,538 for girls' schools in 2023 and 20,231 boys' schools versus 22,632 girls' schools in 2024.
- Enrolment of girls is also higher in formal public schools: 5.9 million boys compared to 6.1 million girls in 2023 and 5.0 million boys compared to 5.5 million girls in 2024.
- There is a significantly higher number of non-formal schools for girls 2,846 for boys versus 17,492 for girls. However, enrolment in these schools is comparable, suggesting significant over-crowding in non-formal schools for boys.
- Across all public formal schools in Punjab, there were 333,008 teachers, of which 43.8 percent were male teachers and 56.2 percent were female teachers.
- The student to teacher ratio in formal public schools is highest in higher secondary schools, at 39 students per teacher; this ratio is worse for higher secondary girls' schools (42 students per teacher) than boys' schools (36 students per teacher).
- The student to classroom ratio suggests that girls' schools become more crowded than boys' schools as school level rises: from 36 boys per classroom and 34 girls per classroom at the primary level, to 46 boys per classroom and 59 girls per classroom at the higher secondary level.

- The overcrowding issue also affects sanitation facilities, and it affects girls' schools more: the student to toilet ratio rose from 36 boys per toilet and 34 girls per toilet at the primary level, to 58 boys per toilet and 72 girls per toilet at the higher secondary level.
- Over time, the transition rate of girls from Grade 8 to Grade 9 has fallen more than it has for boys: from 97.0 percent for boys and girls in 2021; to 96.0 percent for boys but 92.0 percent for girls in 2022; and then in, 2023, to 95.0 percent for boys but 88.0 percent for girls.
- Higher Education Department data for the 36 public universities shows that 55.7 percentage of enrolled students in 2023 and 54.6 percent of students in 2024 were female; there were no transgender students enrolled.
- In contrast, in the 28 general private universities under the HED, 47.8 percent of enrolled students in 2023 and 47.9 percent in 2024 were female.
- In 2024-2025, enrolment in all 783 public colleges under the Higher Education Department stood at 720,288 students, of which 64.1 percent were female students.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process whereby a person acquires essential knowledge and skills by way of informal and formal learning through structured pedagogy at accredited institutions. Education enables individuals to be functional and productive members of society. For this reason, education has long been considered the backbone of a prosperous, equitable and just society, as it is the foundation upon which social progress and people's well-being rests.

In the modern world, education is considered the first rung on the ladder of economic development, in developed countries[218] [219] [220] as well as in developing countries.[221] While education is an important intellectual and ethical pursuit in its own right, it enables employment which has the additional positive effect of empowering individuals. Employment also leads to poverty reduction over time,[222] and that in turn has multiple positive externalities.

Education helps improve people's health[223] because of the employment (i.e. income) benefits resulting from acquiring essential skills, but also because education provides people with the cognitive ability to be better aware of their health[224] [225] [226] and thus to take necessary measures to maintain it. Education also has a marked effect on improving social cohesion,[227] promoting social justice for marginalised segments of society[228] and in increasing upward mobility.[229]

It is for all these reasons that education is recognised as a fundamental human right across the world. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework prominently features SDG 4 which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."[230] The SDG framework was created to help UN member countries operationalise their efforts in realising meaningful people-centric development. The framework has a total of 17 SDGs, all of which recognise the intersectionality and multi-dimensional nature of development issues. Universal education, therefore, is part and parcel of the global development agenda.

Crucially, gender parity in education is one of the most significant elements in achieving gender equality, especially in developing countries. In fact, a gendered view is critical in understanding the role education plays in improving society, as education's benefits can often only be realised when there is educational parity between genders.

Scholarly evidence suggests that education can enhance economic growth in developing countries, including in Pakistan,[231] when women's education is improved/increased; this, in turn, is key for women's empowerment in Pakistan,[232] just as it is elsewhere in South Asia.[233] Increased education among women can also improve family health outcomes,[234] in addition to positive effects on overall health[235] and economic development.[236] [237]

Education contributes to economic development only if the gender education gap is bridged[238] and women's education is advanced.[239] The quality of education needs to be high, otherwise increasing education access merely serves the function of schooling without learning, and thus magnifies already-existing gender inequalities.[240]

Similarly, evidence suggests that education's positive effect on social mobility can be negated in cases where girls aren't allowed to be educated,[241] or if gender bias/discrimination, as a barrier to education access, is not removed or reduced.[242] Additionally, while formal education, especially higher education, seems to have a more direct role in the education-

218 (Agasisti & Petrenko, 2024)
219 (Adamopoulos, 2023)
220 (Runde, Bandura, & McLean, 2023)
221 (Lemmon & Vogelstein, 2017)
222 (World Bank, 2025)
223 (Aboyadana, 2022)
224 (Long, Liu, & Yi, 2020)
225 (Fonseca, Michaud, & Zheng, 2020)
226 (Dilmaghani, 2020)
227 (Hughes & Loader, 2021)
228 (Karina, 2024)
229 (Kupfer, 2015)
230 (United Nations, n.d.)
231 (Shafiq, et al., 2025)
232 (Ullah, Daraz, & Kamal, 2024)
233 (Kabeer, 2016)
234 (John & Singh, 2017)
235 (Jaysawal & Saha, 2022)
236 (Rogoz, Sart, Bayar, Danilina, & Gavriletea, 2025)
237 (Weitzman, 2017)
238 (Shafiq, et al., 2025)
239 (Ullah, Daraz, & Kamal, 2024)
240 (Alfoul, Bazhair, Khatatbeh, Arian, & Al-Foul, 2024)
241 (Tang, 2022)
242 (Tochhawng, et al., 2024)

development nexus with regards to gender, evidence suggests that vocational education is particularly crucial in improving employment outcomes for women, and thus to the uplift of women in society.[243]

Therefore, it is important to identify, recognise and duly address any gaps that exist in terms of education between genders to maximise the benefits of education.

In Pakistan, although the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan recognises education as a fundamental right, and Pakistan was among the first countries in the world to adopt the SDG framework through unanimous parliamentary approval in 2016, there are significant gender gaps in education.

As per the Population and Housing Census 2023 (PHC 2023),[244] the prevailing literacy rate in the country is 60.7 percent, with a literacy rate of 68.0 percent for men, 52.8 percent for women and 40.2 percent for transgender people.[245] This reveals that men's access to schooling in Pakistan outpaces their representation in the total population, whereas the reverse is true for women in Pakistan.

The PHC 2023 also reports that out of the 121.1 million people (50.2 percent of the national population) who have ever attended school in Pakistan, 69.6 million are men (56.0 percent of the national male population), 51.6 million are women (44.0 percent of the national female population) and 6,705 are transgender people (33. 0 percent of the national transgender population).

Women are also higher among those in Pakistan who have never attended school. Out of the 82.8 million people (34.3 percent of the national population) in Pakistan who have never attended school, 35.5 million are men (28.6 percent of the national male population), 47.3 million are women (40.4 percent of the national female population) and 13,626 are transgender people (67.0 percent of the national transgender population).

This helps explain why the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (GGPI) has consistently placed the Global Gender Parity Index of Educational Attainment in Pakistan among the lowest ranked positions in the world. The GGPI equates "educational attainment" with the literacy rate in a country, gender disaggregated literacy rates and gender-disaggregated enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

From a ranking of 135 out of 146 countries in 2022 in Educational Attainment, Pakistan's ranking slipped to 138 out of 146 in 2023 and then 139 out of 146 in 2024. It improved somewhat in 2025 to 137 out of 148. Notably, Pakistan's Educational Attainment gender parity index value increased throughout this period: from 0.825 in 2022[246] to 0.851 in 2025. [247]

According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2023 Gender Inequality Index, compared to 48.4 percent of men, only 27.8 percent of Pakistani women aged 25 or older have at least some secondary education. Additionally, according to the UNDP's 2023 Gender Development Index, men in Pakistan are expected to have 8.6 years of schooling, whereas Pakistani women are expected to have 7.3 years of schooling. Similarly, men have 4.6 mean years of schooling in Pakistan, but Pakistani women have 4 mean years of schooling.[248]

While national trends reveal wide gender gaps in educational attainment, the provincial snapshot offers more nuanced insights, especially for Punjab.

In Punjab the overall literacy rate is 66.3 percent; 72.0 percent for men, 60.3 percent for women and 41.3 percent for transgender people.[249]

Similar to the national level, men in Punjab also have better access to education than women in Punjab. However, the gap is not as wide as at the national level. Out of the 72.3 million people (56.6 percent of Punjab's population) who have ever attended school in the province, 40.0 million are men (61.2 percent of Punjab's male population), while 32.3 million are women (52.0

243 (Heiniger & Imdorf, 2018)
244 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)
245 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)
246 (World Economic Forum, 2022)
247 (World Economic Forum, 2025)
248 (United Nations Development Programme, 2023)
249 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)

percent of female population), and 4,899 are transgender people (35.0 percent of Punjab's transgender population).

Women are also disproportionately represented among people in Punjab who have never attended school. Out of the 36.7 million people (28.8 percent of the province's population) who have never been to school, 16.0 million were men (24.4 percent of the provinces male population) while 20.8 million were women (33.4 percent of the province's female population) and 9,058 were transgender people (65.0 percent of the province's transgender population).

These gaps in Punjab exist despite, as of 2024, higher enrolment of girls in formal schools (5.5 million girls) as compared to boys (5.0 million boys) and more formal public schools for girls (22,632 girls' schools) than for boys (20,241 boys' schools).[250]

These aforementioned gaps in education outcomes and the higher enrolment of girls suggest that the issue of girls' education in Punjab isn't one of access but of structural and cultural issues. These issues range from low-income status/living in remote areas[251] to girls' early marriages,[252] lack of basic facilities in schools or a lack of safe means of transportation to and from schools.[253]

The gendered education gap in Punjab is a particularly important area of focus due to Punjab's unique position in the Pakistani context. Consequently, the Government of Punjab has taken proactive steps towards ensuring gender parity in education across the province.

This can be partially seen from the Government of Punjab's budgeting around the subject of education in the table below. [254]

Education Affairs & Services Budget by Government of Punjab

Education Affairs & Services	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024
	Billion PKR	*Billion PKR*	*Billion PKR*
Budget Estimate	77.2	88.6	120.3
Revised Estimate	77.5	88.0	107.7
Development Budget	54.2	56.7	57.7
Total (Revised + Development)	131.7	144.7	165.4

Source: Compiled from Finance Department Budget Documents 2021 - 2024.

Table 5.1

The Government of Punjab has also launched many schemes targeting education for girls and women, both across formal education and non-formal education institutes. Additionally, to help keep its efforts in line with the SDGs, the Government of Punjab took the lead by setting up a SDGs Support Unit embedded within the Punjab Planning & Development Department, in collaboration with the UNDP.

250 Data from School Education Department
251 (World Bank, 2024)
252 (Pakistan Population Council, 2022)
253 (Shoaib, 2025)
254 This table was compiled using data from publicly available Smart Books, Annual Budget Statements and Budget White Papers from the Finance Department of the Government of Punjab, from the years 2021 - 2024

Organization of Analysis

National Education Profile of Pakistan

Provincial Education Profile of Punjab

- Structure of Education
- Literacy Rates
- Level of Schooling
  - School Attendance among Primary School-Aged Children
  - School Attendance among Lower Secondary School-Aged Children
  - School Attendance among Upper Secondary School-Aged Children
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  - Overview of Formal School Enrolment
  - Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) Schools
- Non-Formal Public Schools
  - Schools under the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department (L&NFBED)
  - Punjab Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence (COEs)
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    - Public Colleges under HED
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  - Vocational Education Institutes in Punjab
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- Teacher Availability
  - Teachers in Formal Public Schools
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  - Student-to-Teacher Ratio (STR) in Public Schools
  - Teacher in Various Department-specific Schools
- Facilities in Formal Public Schools
  - Basic Facilities
  - Student-to-Classroom Ratio (SCR) in Public Schools



5.1 National Education Profile of Pakistan

Education is codified in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a fundamental right, whereby every citizen aged 5-16 years old is entitled to receive free education from the state. Despite this, Pakistan faces significant challenges concerning education.

Pakistan has the second-highest number of out-of-school children (OOSC) in the entire world,[255] with 25.6 million children who do not go to school, as of the latest national estimates.[256] Pakistani children also lag in terms of mean years of schooling. According to UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) 2023, children in Pakistan receive 4.4 mean years of schooling as of 2022, compared to 6.6 years in South Asia as a whole; lower even than the 4.7 mean years of schooling for all low HDI countries.[257]

Additionally, in 2023, the Planning Commission of Pakistan conducted the first-ever comprehensive performance evaluation of the education system in 134 districts across Pakistan. The assessment revealed that educational performance in Pakistan is "low," meaning Pakistan has "a dysfunctional education delivery system, requiring urgent attention to address gaps in basic requirements for [better] education outcomes." [258]

These challenges are further complicated by socioeconomic disparities, especially Pakistan's gender gap in education. Of the total OOSC in the country, 35 percent are boys whereas 42 percent are girls,[259] with a nearly 25 percent higher primary school enrolment of boys compared to girls; this figure rises to around 28 percent even after the transition from primary to lower secondary, during which enrolment of boys drops the sharpest.[260]

One useful insight into the cause of these disparities is cultural norms. UNDP's Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) provides a view of the cultural underpinnings of gender biases with respect to education. This index compiles the findings from a survey that uses seven questions across four dimensions, which are politics, education, economic welfare and physical safety/bodily rights, to track biases against women around the globe.[261]

According to the 2023 GSNI report, 60.38 percent of the surveyed population in Pakistan expressed a bias against women in education. Moreover, of the surveyed people in Pakistan, 67.84 percent of men and 52.33 percent of women expressed bias against women in education.

Overall, at the national level, for progress to take place in Pakistan's education sector, there is an urgent need for various measures, such as reforming the method of assessing students, targeting numeracy and reading proficiency, and even putting in place better data collection [262] and sharing mechanisms. However, higher budgetary allocations as well as more targeted and efficient budgetary expenditures are perhaps the biggest need of the hour.

In Pakistan, government expenditure on education has ranged between 1.7 to 2.4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 2015 to 2023. This spending has been consistently lower than that in the entire region of South Asia, except in 2023, when the education expenditure in Pakistan was 1.9 percent of GDP and 1.8 percent overall in the region of South Asia.[263]

Higher budgetary commitments can help tackle issues of perception and social norms. The high prevalence of OOSC in the country suggests a low demand for education, which is a key barrier to education outcomes that increased access to education alone cannot solve. This demand could perhaps be improved with public campaigns, that aim to improve parents' confidence in public schools, and perhaps even transform their view of education as being essential in itself.

The issue of federal spending on education as a supplement to provincial efforts is especially relevant, as education is not a federal subject and thus falls within the provincial domain. The federal government can, therefore, help create a general environment in which provincial efforts can be more beneficial.

255 (UNICEF, n.d.)
256 (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, 2023), cites Population and Housing Census 2023
257 (United Nations Development Programme, 2024)
258 (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, 2023)
259 (Ministry of Finance, 2025)
260 (UNICEF, n.d.)
261 (United Nations Development Programme, 2023)
262 (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, 2023)
263 (World Bank, 2025)

5.2 Provincial Education Profile of Punjab

5.2.1 Structure of Education

Since 2010, the subject of education has been devolved to the provincial level, making it every provincial government's duty to ensure the fulfilment of education as an essential right of every citisen.

In Punjab, the public school system, as outlined in the table below, is broadly divided into formal and non-formal education.

Punjab Public School System

Official Age	Grade	Formal Education			Non-Formal Education			
16 15	12 11	High Secondary Level Two Streams: Academic or Technical		Formal TVET				
14 13	10 9	Secondary Level Two Streams: Arts or Sciences	Special Education		ALP (8-14 Years)			
12 11 10	8 7 6	Middle Level						
9 8	5 4					NFBES (5-9 Years)	BECS (5-9 Years)	NCHD (5-7 Years)
7 6 5	3 2 1	Primary Education			NFFS (5-7 years)			
4		Katchi (Pre-School)			Katchi	Katchi		

Source: Reproduced from Punjab Education Sector Plan 2019 - 2024

Figure 5.1

Formal schooling is when students enrol at accredited institutions to learn a pre-planned curriculum, taught by qualified/certified teaching professionals, through structured pedagogy and with regular assessments.

In Punjab, formal schooling starts from the katchi level, i.e. pre-school, progressing through middle and to higher secondary school, which ends in grade 12. After higher secondary, students go on to higher education institutes like universities and colleges. Punjab's formal schooling also encompasses special education as well as technical, and vocational education and training (TVET).

Non-formal education in Punjab, primarily overseen by the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department (L&NFBED), consists of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (NFBES), Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) and also Alternative and Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs); the latter is for children who missed their early schooling and are thus unable to integrate into formal education.

The L&NFBED in Punjab also oversees adult literacy programmes across the province as well as schools that were previously run by the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) in Punjab.

5.2.2 Literacy Rates

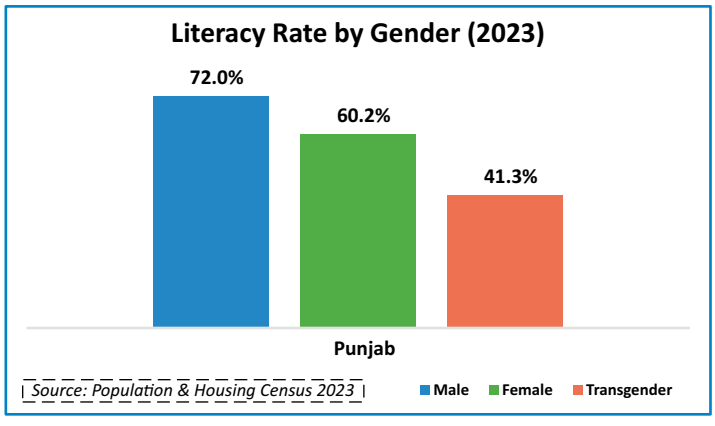


Figure 5.2

The literacy rate in Punjab was 66.3 percent, with a 72.0 percent literacy rate for men, 60.2 percent for women and 41.3 percent for transgender people.[264]

Punjab's literacy rates for each group, both in terms of gender and area, are better than the national level. However, within Punjab itself, there are gendered gaps in literacy, in both urban and rural areas, just as at the national level. Furthermore, this divide is particularly sharp in rural areas when compared to urban areas.

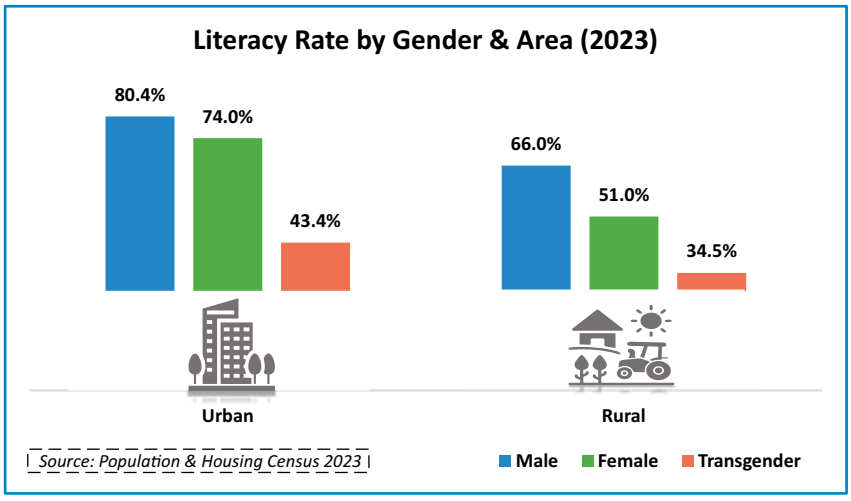


Figure 5.3

The urban literacy rate in Punjab was 77.3 percent, 80.4 percent for men, 74.0 percent for women and 43.4 percent for transgender people in Punjab. The rural literacy rate in Punjab was 58.4 percent, 66.0 percent for men, 51.0 percent for women and 34.5 percent for transgender people in Punjab.

5.2.3 Level of Schooling

The Punjab Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Key Findings Report (2024)[265] details school attendance among children of primary school age, lower secondary school age, and higher secondary school age. These findings also provide data on the wealth quintile to which the children belonged.

The following sub-sections discuss all of these findings, with the exception of data related to children who are currently attending school, but do so at a level that is not age-appropriate (e.g. primary school-aged children still in early childhood education, or lower secondary school-aged children still in primary school, etc).

5.2.3.1 School Attendance among Primary School-Aged Children

According to the Punjab MICS 2024, the adjusted net attendance rate for primary school-aged children in Punjab was 66.7 percent, while 14.9 percent of these children were out of school.

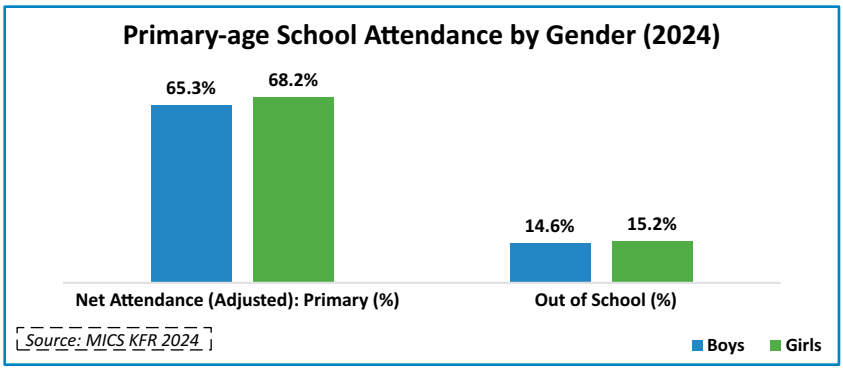


Figure 5.4

264 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023)
265 (Punjab Bureau of Statistics, 2024)

Disaggregating by gender shows that the adjusted net attendance rate for primary school-aged boys in Punjab was 65.3 percent whereas that for girls was 68.2 percent. Additionally, 14.6 percent of boys and 15.2 percent of girls in this age group were out of school.

Net attendance for both genders also differs based on areas of residence, i.e. urban vs. rural, and appears to affect girls' attendance more than boys.

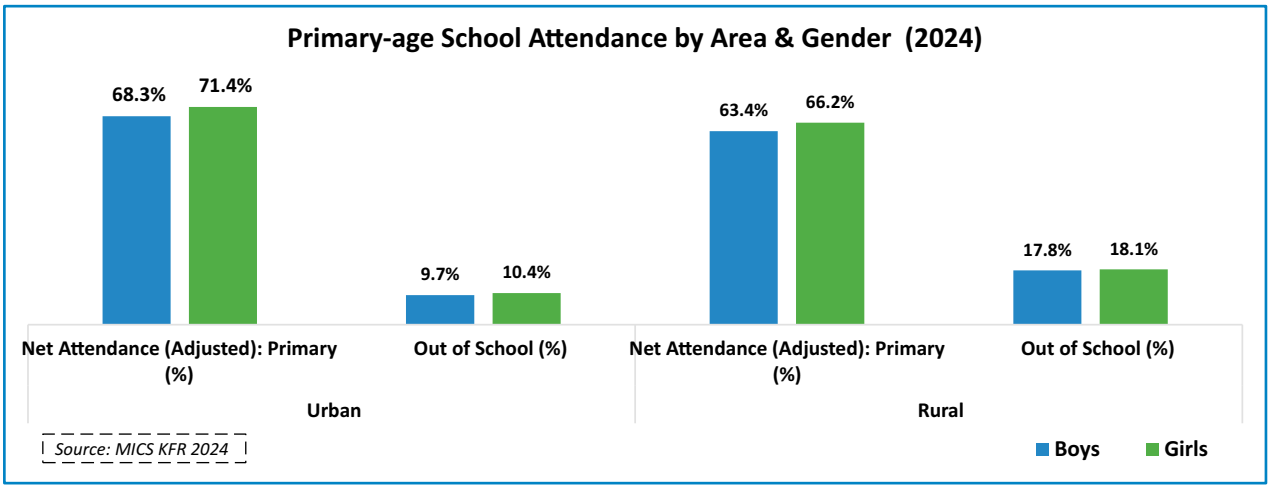


Figure 5.5

School attendance can be affected by the wealth index quintile to which a child belongs and the data indicates this: primary school-aged children belonging to the poorest wealth index quintile have the lowest adjusted net attendance and the highest out-of-school rate among all quintiles. Disaggregating by gender, the data suggest that the primary school-aged children's wealth quintile index also appears to affect girls more than boys.

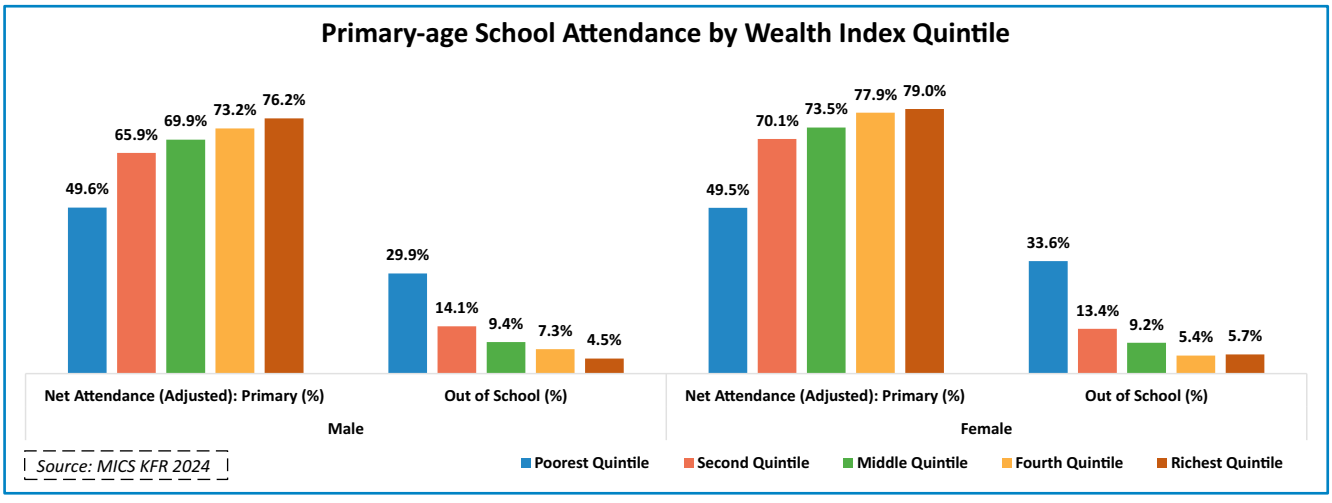


Figure 5.6

5.2.3.2 School Attendance among Lower Secondary School-Aged Children

School attendance appears to be much lower among children who were of secondary school age, as less than half of these children attend school. Additionally, nearly a quarter of children from this age group were out of school.

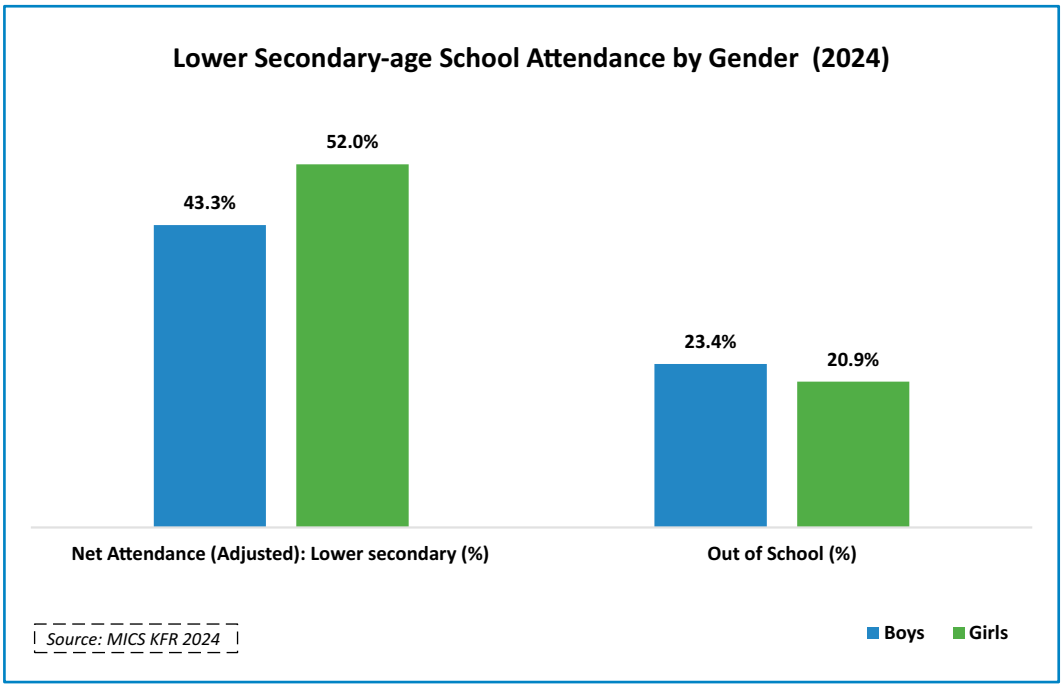


Figure 5.7

The adjusted net attendance rate for lower secondary school-aged children in Punjab was 47.5 percent, 43.3 percent for boys and 52.0 percent for girls. Around 22.2 percent of lower secondary-aged children, 23.4 percent of boys and 20.9 percent of girls, were out of school in 2024.

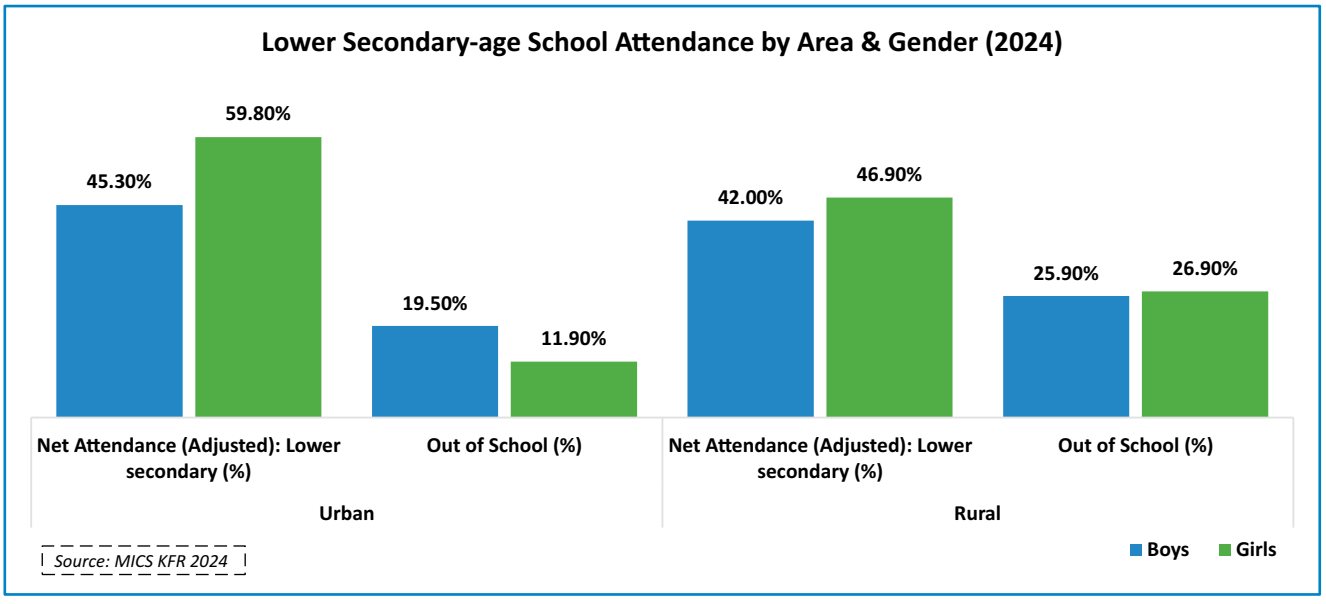


Figure 5.8

Just like children of primary school age, net attendance and out of school rates for both genders differs based on areas of residence, i.e. urban vs. rural. Here too, girls appear to be affected more than boys, but to a greater degree than in the case of primary school-aged children.

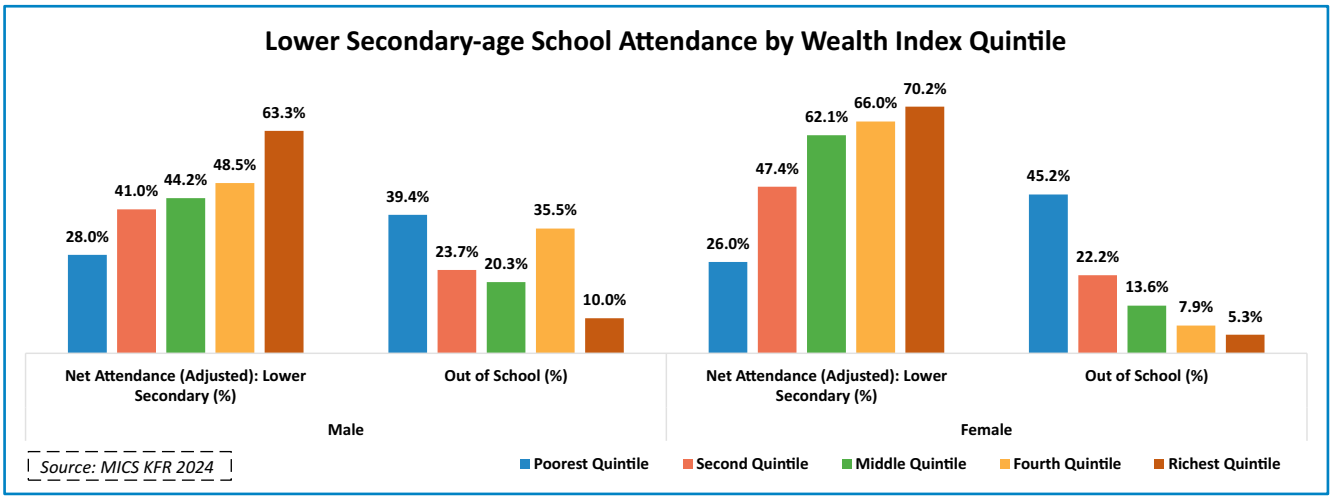


Figure 5.9

Punjab MICS (2024) data show that lower secondary school-aged children's wealth quintile index appears to impact boys more than girls.

5.2.3.3 School Attendance among Upper Secondary School-Aged Children

According to the Punjab MICS (2024) data, the adjusted net attendance rate for upper secondary school-aged children in Punjab was 35.4 percent, while 36.8 percent of this age group children were out of school.

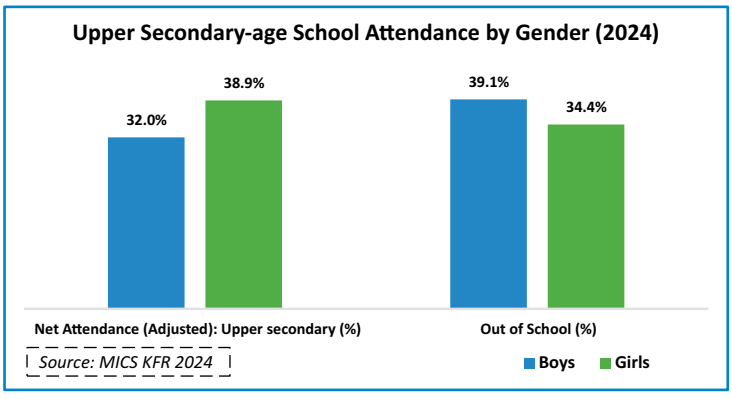


Figure 5.10

Gender disaggregated analysis show that the adjusted net attendance rate for upper secondary school-aged boys in Punjab was 32.0 percent whereas that for girls was 38.9 percent. Additionally, 39.1 percent of the boys of this age group and 34.4 percent of girls were out of school.

Yet again, when observing urban vs. rural differences in net attendance, area of residence appears to affect girls' attendance and out-of-school rate to a greater degree than in the case of boys.

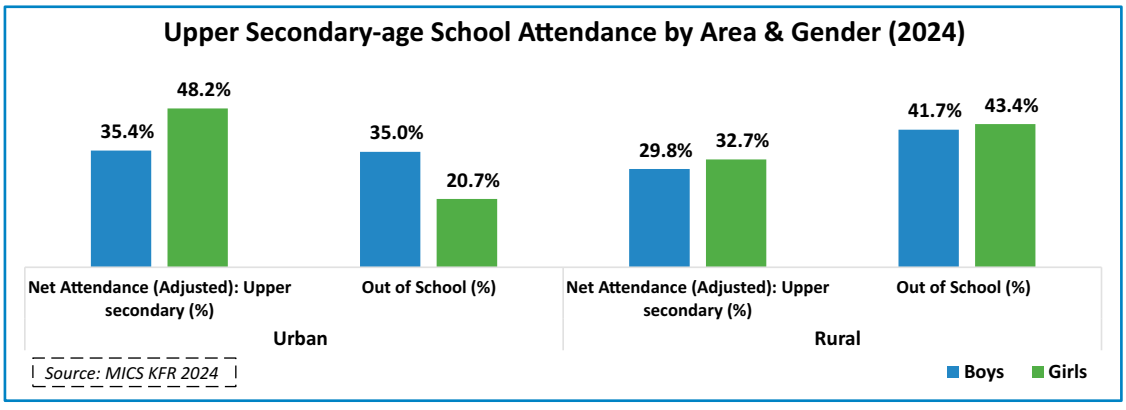


Figure 5.11

Upper secondary school-aged children belonging to the poorest wealth index quintile have the lowest adjusted net attendance and the highest out of school rate among all quintiles.

Disaggregating by gender, the data suggest that upper secondary school-aged children's wealth quintile index also appears to have less impact on girls.

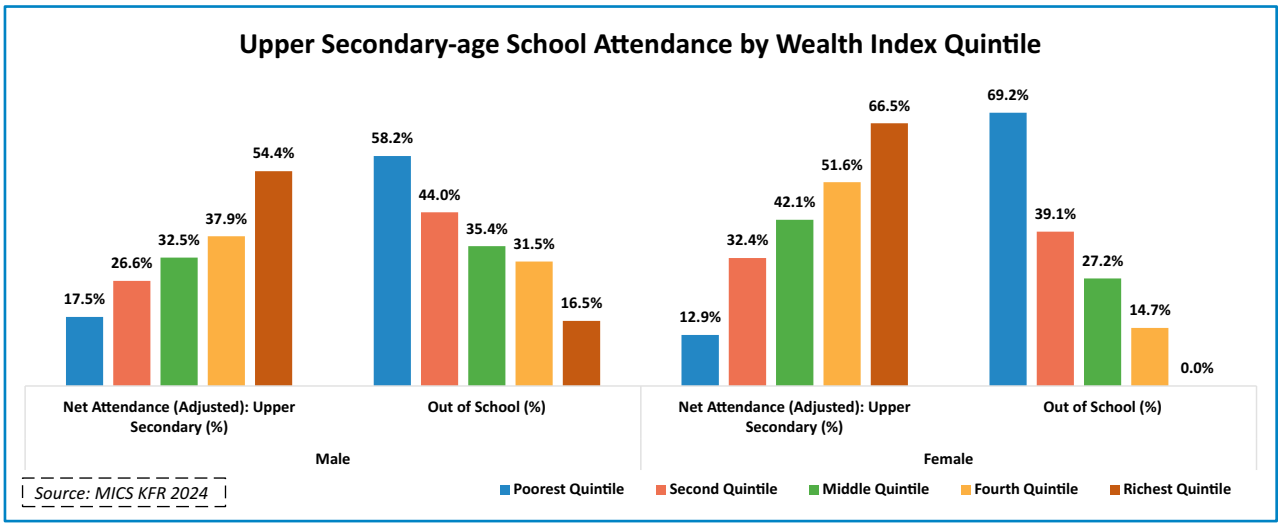


Figure 5.12

5.2.3.4 Ever-Attended School and Never-Attended School Population

The PHC 2023 carried out by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics collects information on various education-related indicators, such as the number of individuals who have ever attended school and those who have never attended schools, referred to as ever-attended and never-attended, respectively.

The total number of people in Punjab who have ever been to school stands at 72.3 million people (56.6 percent of Punjab's population). Out of all of these people, about 40.0 million were men (61.1 percent of Punjab's male population), while 32.3 million were women (52.0 percent of Punjab's female population), and 4,899 are transgender people (35.0 percent of Punjab's transgender population). The Gender Parity Index (GPI), i.e. the number of females as a proportion of males, for people who have ever attended school in Punjab is 0.8.

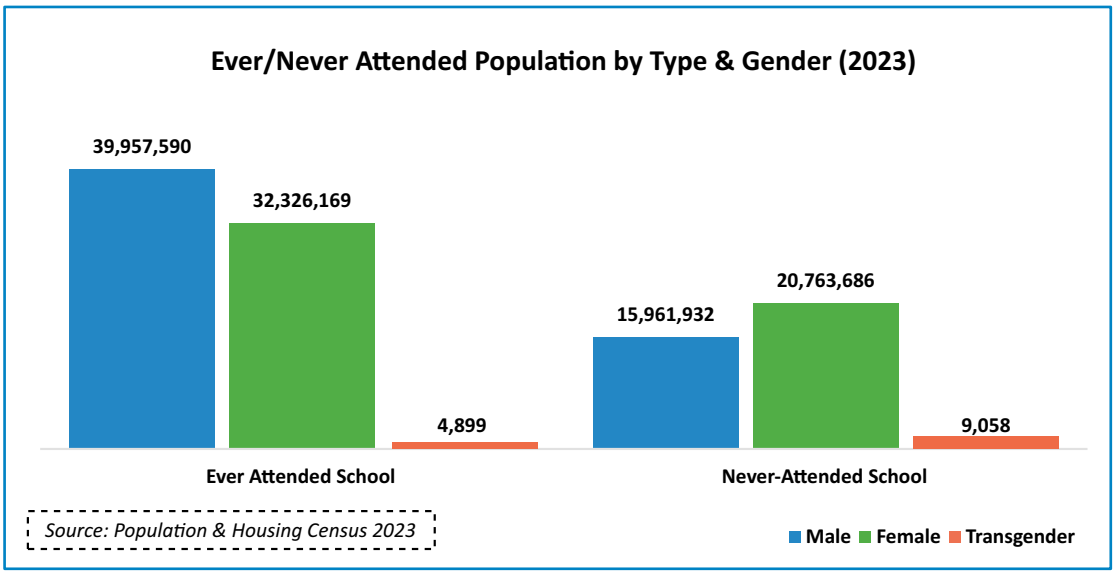


Figure 5.13

In contrast, out of the 36.7 million people (28.8 percent of the province's population) who have never been to school, about 16.0 million were men (24.4 percent of the province's male population) while 20.8 million were women (33.4 percent of the province's female population) and 9,058 were transgender people (65.0 percent of the province's transgender population). The GPI for never-attended people in Punjab was 1.3. In addition to the above, an urban vs. rural divide also holds true for those who have ever attended school and for those who have never attended school in Punjab.

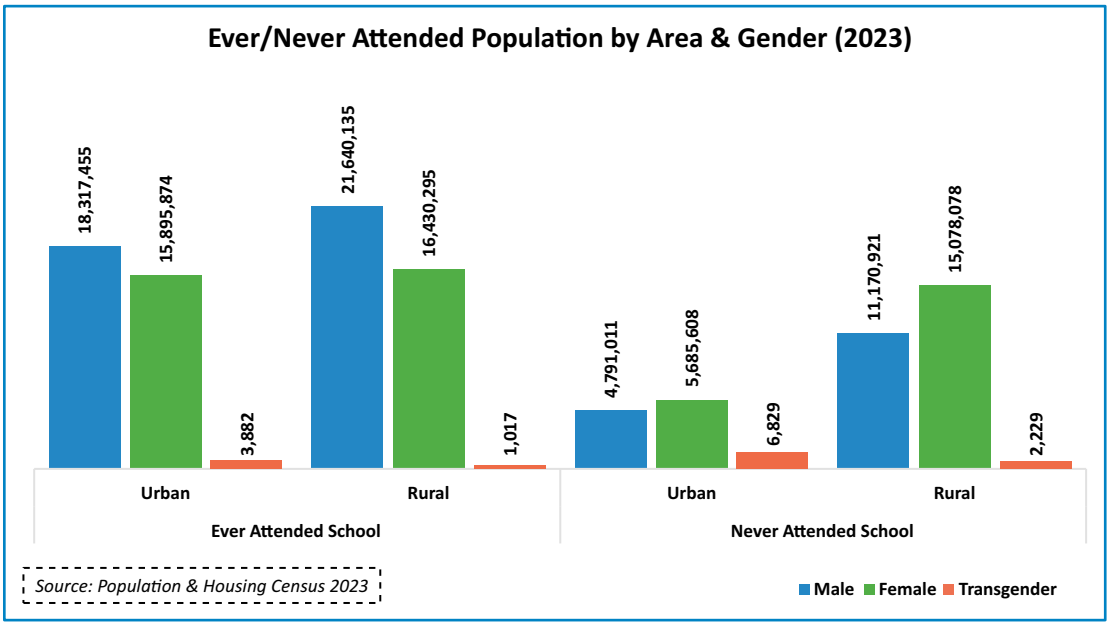


Figure 5.14

The urban ever-attended GPI in Punjab was 0.9 and the urban never-attended GPI was 1.2. In contrast to urban areas, Punjab's rural ever-attended GPI was 0.8, while the rural never-attended GPI was 1.4.

5.2.3.5 School Dropouts

There are a multitude of social, economic and even logistical constraints that may cause a child to leave school prematurely. As such, school dropouts represent a significant gap in Pakistan's education sector whereby a school-aged child is not retained by the education system.

The analysis below examines the data from PHC 2023 on school dropouts for children in Punjab aged 5 to 16 years.

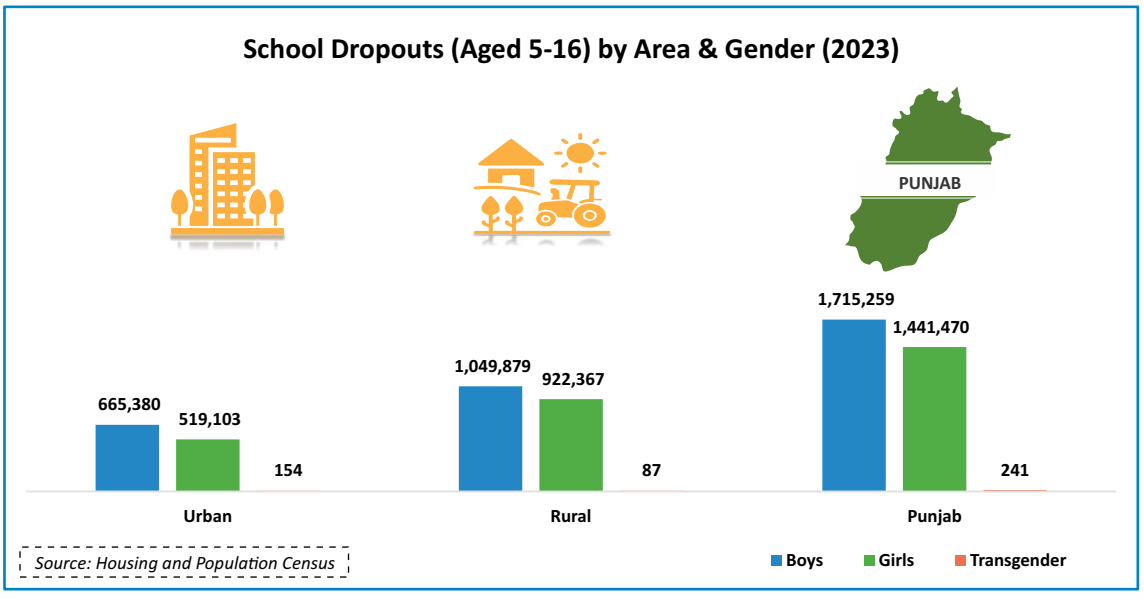


Figure 5.15

The total number of school dropouts stood at 3.2 million, which was 8.9 percent of all children aged 5 to 16 years old in Punjab. The number of boys who dropped out of school was 1.7 million (9.4 percent of boys aged 5-16 years in Punjab) and the number of girls was 1.4 million (8.3 percent of girls aged 5-16 years in Punjab). The female-to-male GPI for school dropouts in Punjab was 0.8, indicating that more boys have dropped out of school than girls.

Notably, 241 transgender children also dropped out of school, which is 18.2 percent of all transgender children aged 5-16 years in Punjab.

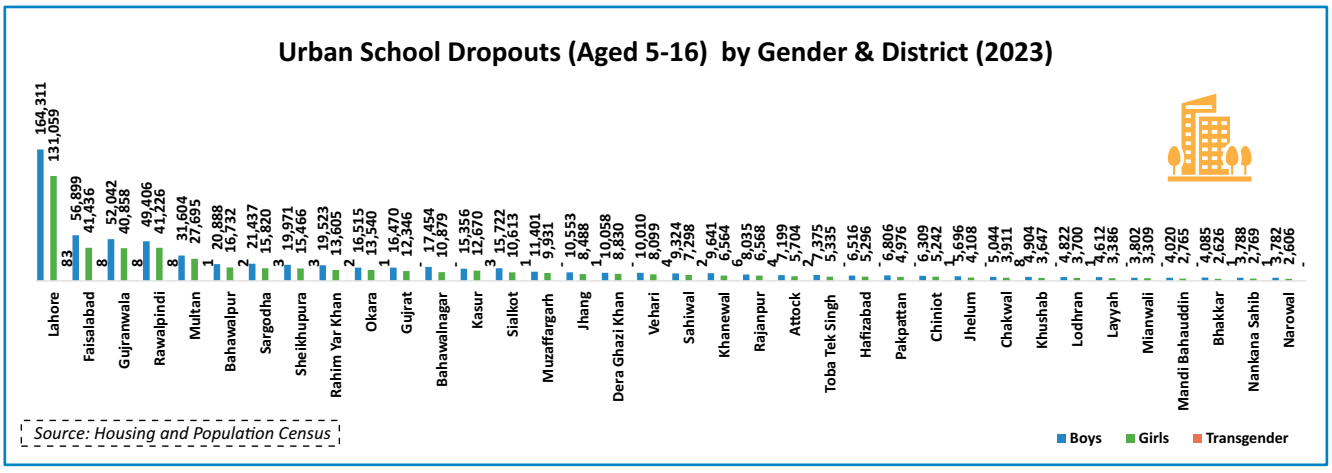


Figure 5.16

Punjab's overall urban dropout GPI was 0.8, and the districts with the highest dropouts were Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala, with dropout GPIs of 0.8, 0.7 and 0.8, respectively.

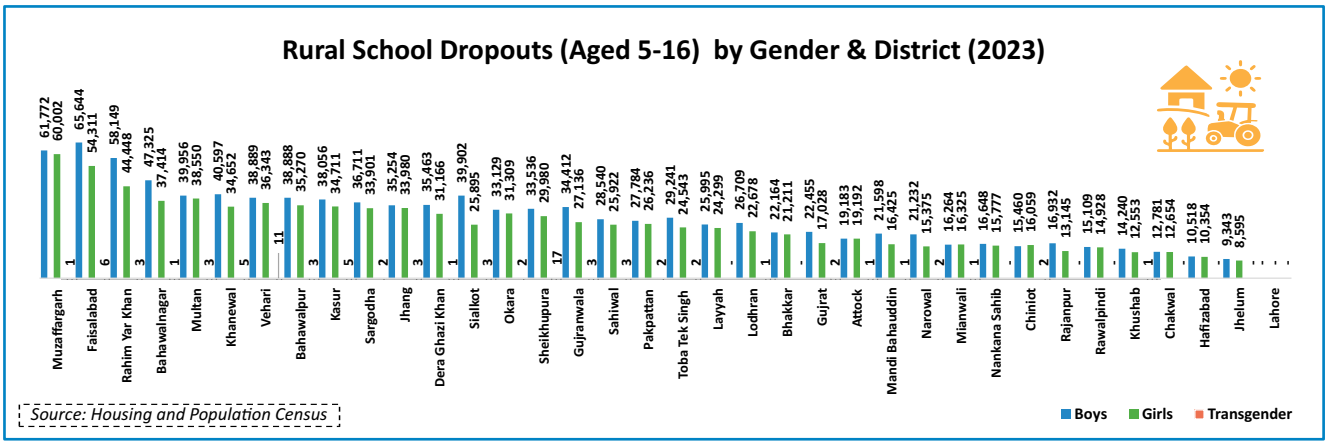


Figure 5.17

In Punjab's rural areas, the dropout GPI was 0.9, and the districts with the highest rural dropouts were Muzaffargarh, Faisalabad and Rahim Yar Khan, with dropout GPIs of 1.0, 0.8 and 0.8 respectively.

5.2.3.6 Out of School Children

Out of school children (OOSC) represent a major issue in education system of Pakistan, one that is well-documented and often discussed. In Punjab, according to PHC 2023, there were 9.6 million children (7.5 percent of Punjab's total population aged 5-16 years old) who were out of school at the time of the census. The figure 5.18 shows the number of OOSC in Punjab by gender and locality.

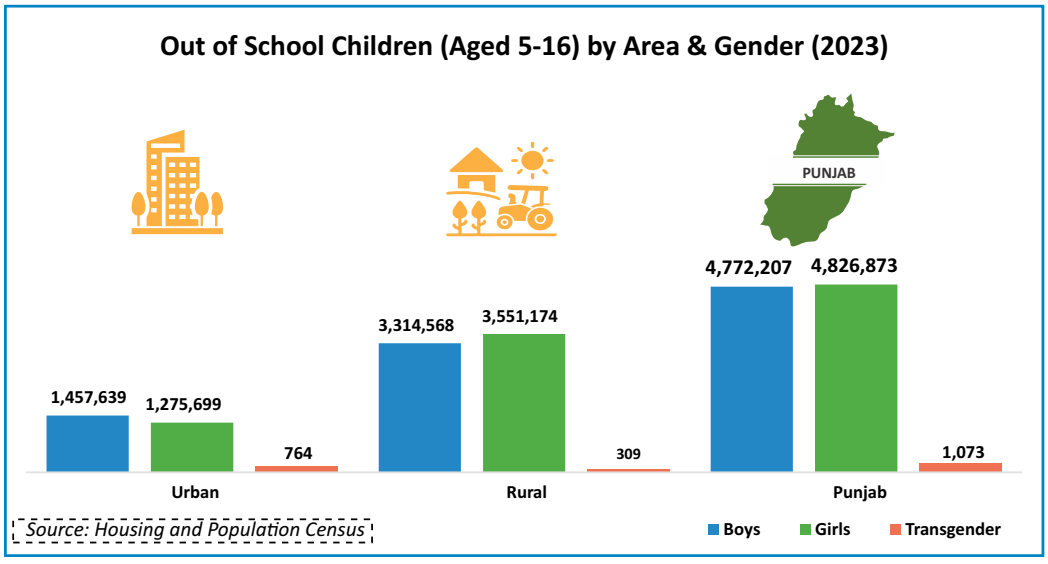


Figure 5.18

There is a rural-urban divide in the prevalence of OOSC in Punjab. The OOSC disparity between boys and girls appears to be higher for girls in rural areas and higher for boys in urban areas. In other words, OOSC is yet another metric that shows the disadvantaged position that rural girls face when it comes to education access.

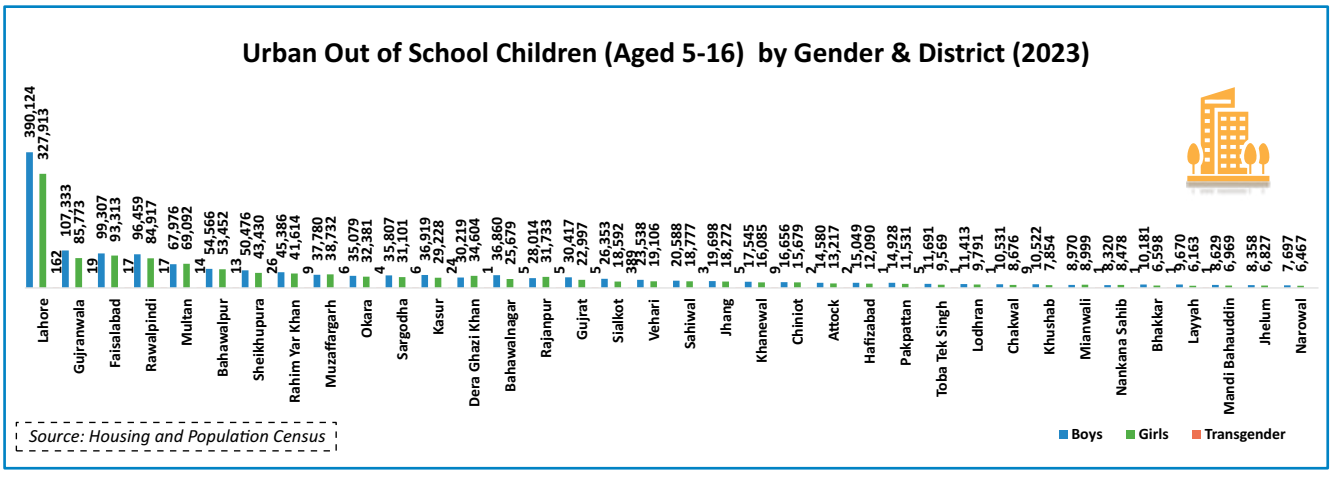


Figure 5.19

In Punjab's urban areas, the overall GPI for OOSC was 0.9, and the districts with the highest urban OOSC were Lahore, Gujranwala and Faisalabad, with OOSC GPIs of 0.8, 0.8 and 0.9 respectively. These districts also account for about 26.0 percent of all transgender OOSC.

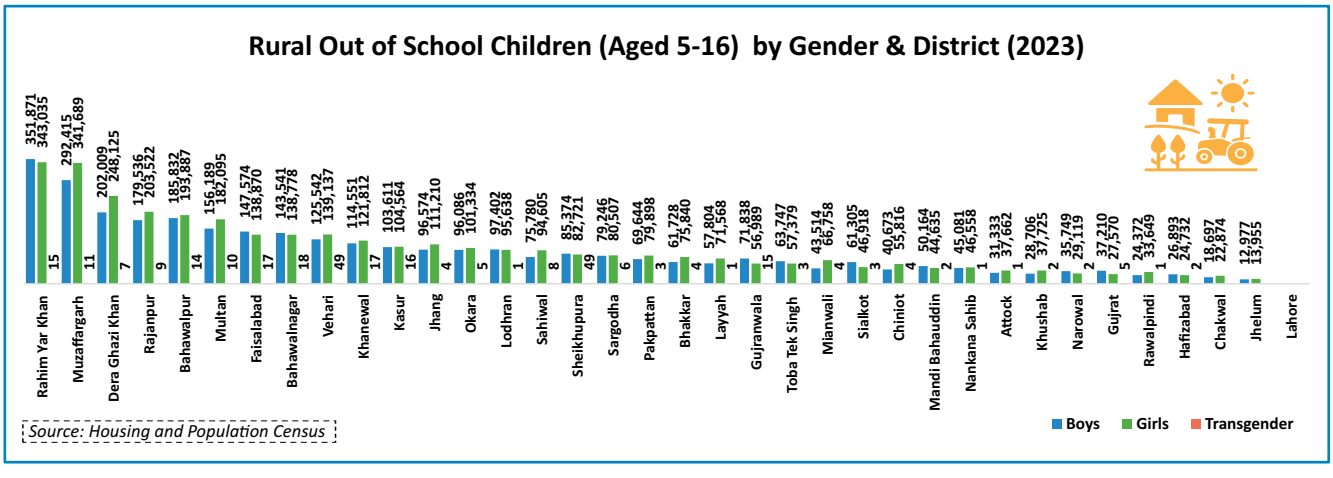


Figure 5.20

In Punjab's rural areas, there are more out of school girls and the districts with the highest number of rural OOSC were Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan, with OOSC GPIs of 1.0, 1.2 and 1.3, respectively.

In addition to girls, transgender children are also greatly disadvantaged. The vast majority of 5-16-year-old transgender children in Punjab (81.6 percent of all transgender children aged 5-16) are currently not in school. Moreover, it appears that there is a higher prevalence of transgender OOSC in urban Punjab (85.0 percent of urban transgender children aged 5-16) than in rural Punjab (72.2 percent of rural transgender children aged 5-16).

5.3 Access to Education in Punjab

The following sections detail data from the Punjab Annual School Census Report 2023-2024, which contains data for Punjab's public schools for the year 2023. For 2024, district-wise data was received from the School Education Department, but only for enrolment, teachers and number of formal public schools. Therefore, for 2024, other data points from the School Education Department, e.g. sanctioned vs. filled teaching positions, basic facilities in schools, student-to-teacher ratios, and many others, are not part of the report in the following sections.

5.3.1 Enrolment and Number of Formal Public Schools

Formal schooling is the learning of a pre-determined/set curriculum taught by certified teaching professionals through structured pedagogy and with regular assessments. The purpose of this structure is to impart a rigorously developed curriculum in a suitable learning environment.

In 2023, the total number of formal public schools in Punjab, encompassing primary schools, middle schools, high schools, higher secondary schools and Masjid Maktabs was 48,473; of these, 22,935 schools were for boys and 25,538 schools were for girls.

In 2024, the total number of formal public schools decreased by 11.6 percent to 42,873 schools, of which 20,231 schools were for boys (11.7 percent less than in 2023) and 22,632 schools were for girls (11.4 percent less than in 2023).

The decrease mainly affected primary schools, as depicted in the figure below, which presents all schools by level. It should be noted, however, that primary schools still form the bulk of all formal public schools in Punjab, for boys and for girls.

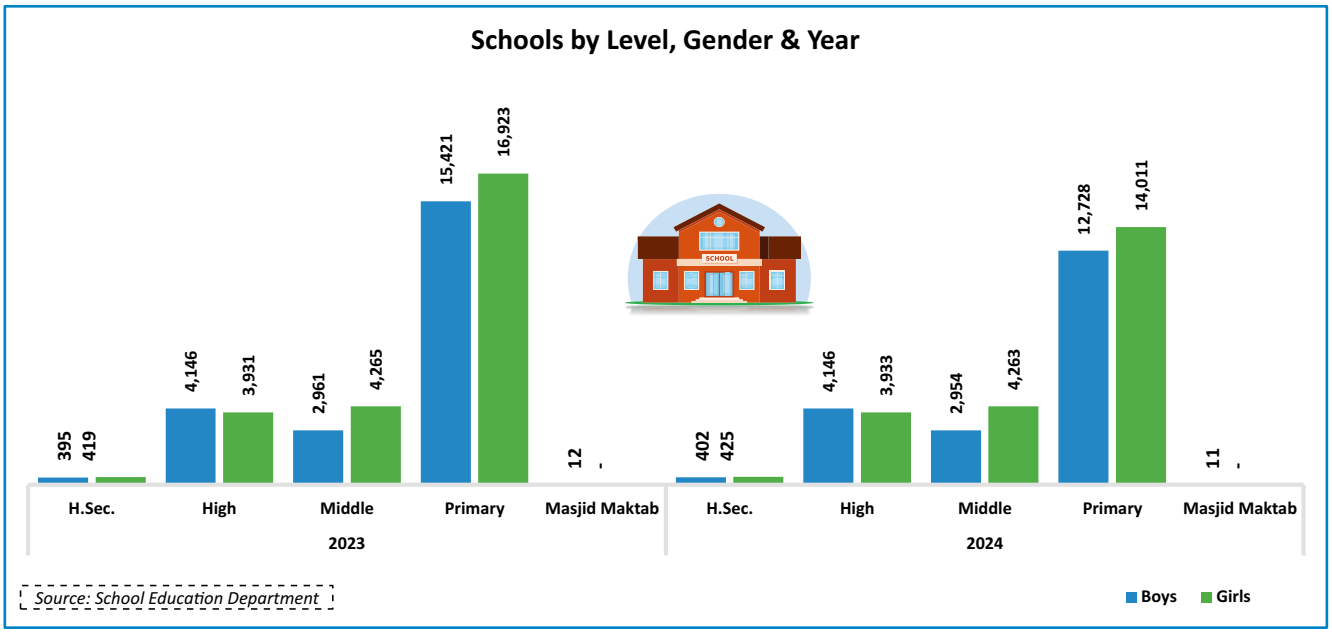


Figure 5.21

In 2023, there were 32,344 public primary schools in Punjab: 15,421 for boys and 16,932 for girls (GPI of 1.1). In 2024, the total number of public primary schools fell by 17.3 percent to 26,739 schools, of which 12,728 schools were for boys and 14,011 schools were for girls (unchanged GPI of 1.1). Changes in the number of all other schools from 2023 to 2024 were minor.

Punjab had 11 operational Masjid Maktabs in 2024. Masjid Maktab Schools, or mosque schools were established in 1979 as part of the Education Policy and Implementation Programme.[266] They were devised as a way to achieve universal primary-level education by allowing community leaders to establish schools within neighbourhood mosques.[267] Over time, many of these schools have either been converted to formal schools or have closed across Punjab as other formal schools have become operational.[268]

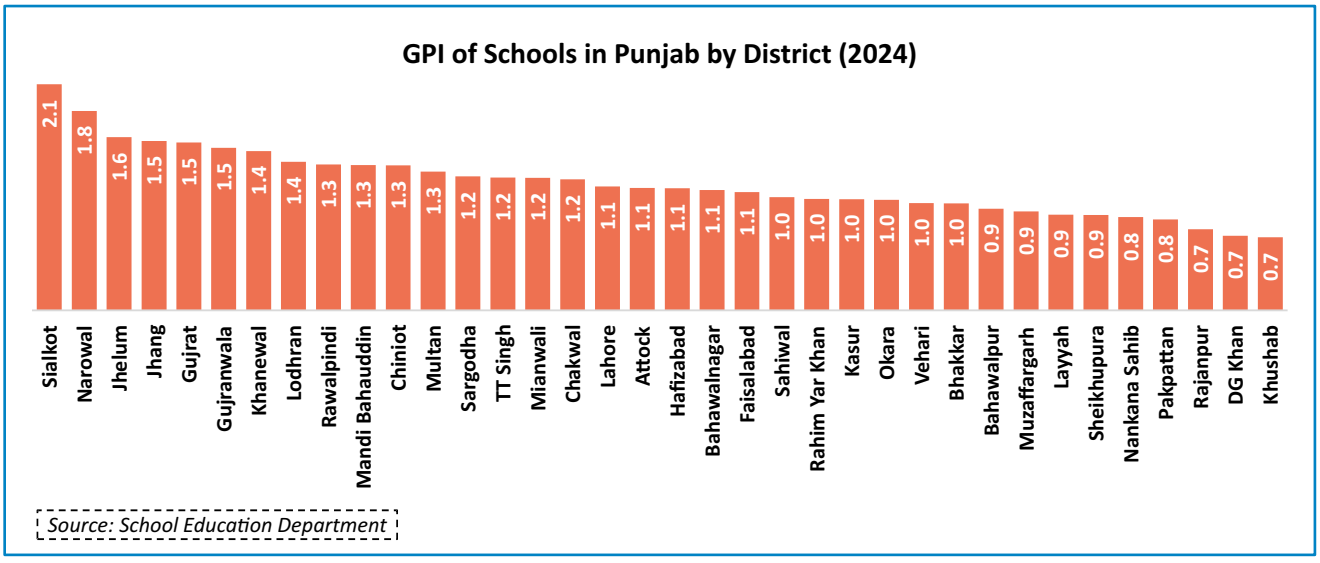


Figure 5.22

A district-wise GPI breakdown of total schools reveals varying gender parity of schools across Punjab where Sialkot, Narowal and Jhelum had the most parity in boys' and girls' schools, with GPIs of 2.1, 1.8 and 1.6 respectively. The districts with the lowest GPIs in terms of total public schools in Punjab were Rajanpur (0.7), D.G. Khan (0.7) and Khushab (0.7).

5.3.1.1 Overview of Formal School Enrolment

From 2023 to 2024, girls enrolment in Punjab's public schools was higher, as measured by GPI. However, as the discussion below will detail, this is only because enrolment for boys dropped much more than it did for girls.

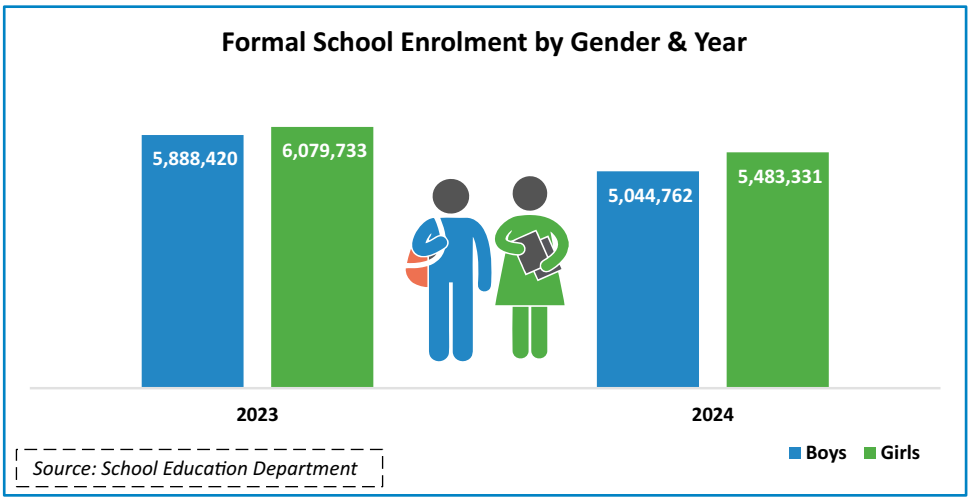


Figure 5.23

266 (DAWN, 2004)
267 (Yousafzai, 2018)
268 (DAWN, 2004)

In 2023, total enrolment in formal public schools across Punjab, encompassing primary, middle, high, and higher secondary schools, was 12.0 million students; out of these students, 5.9 million were boys and 6.1 million were girls (GPI of 1.0).

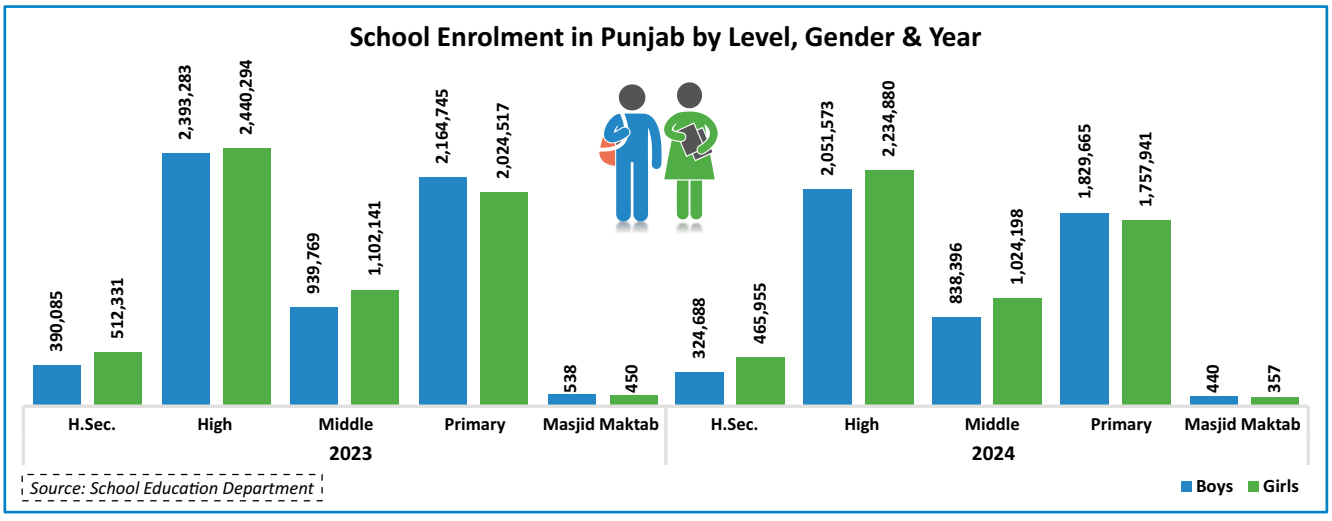


Figure 5.24

In 2024, enrolment in formal public schools fell by 12.0 percent, to 10.5 million students, of which 5.0 million were boys and 5.5 million were girls. Male enrolment in formal public schools, which decreased by 14.3 percent, fell more than female enrolment, which decreased by 9.8 percent. This relative difference in the reduction in male and female enrolment was reflected in the enrolment of all schools.

As previously stated, the reduction in the total number of formal public schools impacted the number of public primary schools the most. Consequently, enrolment in public primary schools was also the most impacted. Even so, primary schools, along with high schools, account for the bulk of enrolment in formal public schools across Punjab.

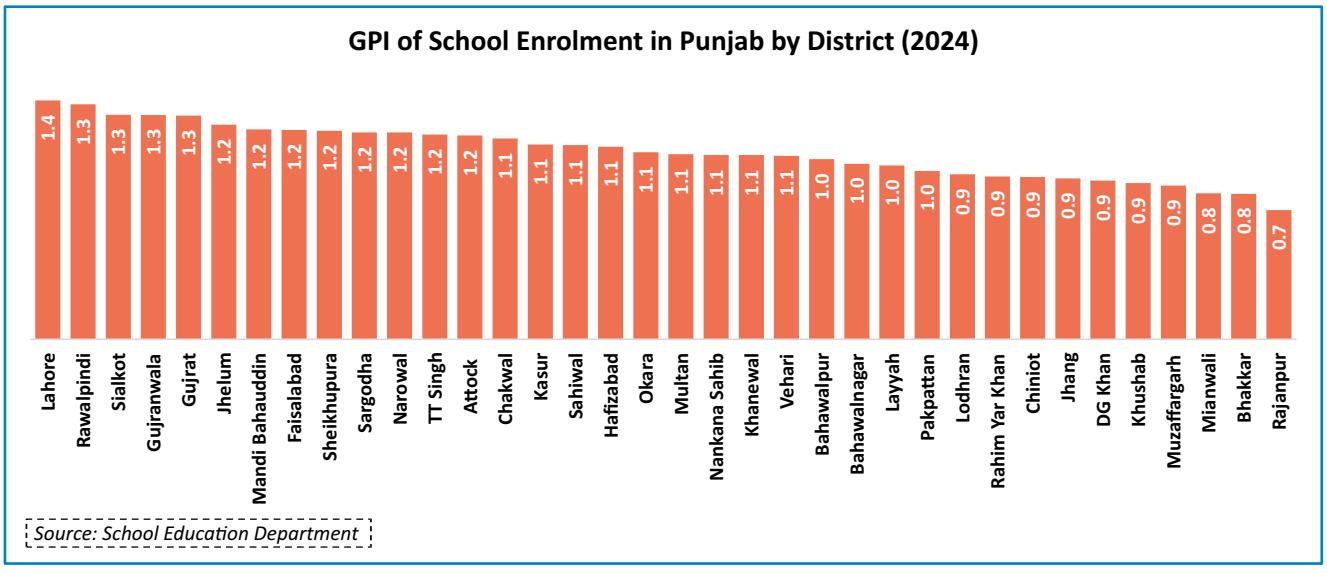


Figure 5.25

A district-wise view of parity in enrolment reveals that Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot had the highest GPIs in overall formal public-school enrolment in Punjab, with GPIs of 1.4, 1.3 and 1.3, respectively. The districts with the lowest GPIs in terms of total public-school enrolment in Punjab were Mianwali (0.8), Bhakkar (0.8) and Rajanpur (0.7).

5.3.1.2 Punjab Education Foundation Schools

The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) is an autonomous government body tasked with improving education for less privileged children through public-private partnerships. [269]

269 (Punjab Education Foundation, n.d.)

The PEF runs schools in all districts of Punjab. The number of PEF schools in the province increased by 3.9 percent from 7,346 schools in 2023 to 7,636 schools in 2024. PEF primary schools increased from 1,289 schools in 2023 to 1,365 schools in 2024, a 5.9 percent rise. While PEF middle schools increased from 3,307 schools in 2023 to 3,591 schools in 2024. The number of PEF high schools declined, falling from 2,750 schools in 2023 to 2,679 schools in 2024.

The majority of PEF's schools were located in rural areas and their number increased further in 2024. From 5,390 schools in 2023, PEF schools in rural areas increased by 5.4 percent to 5,679 schools in 2024.

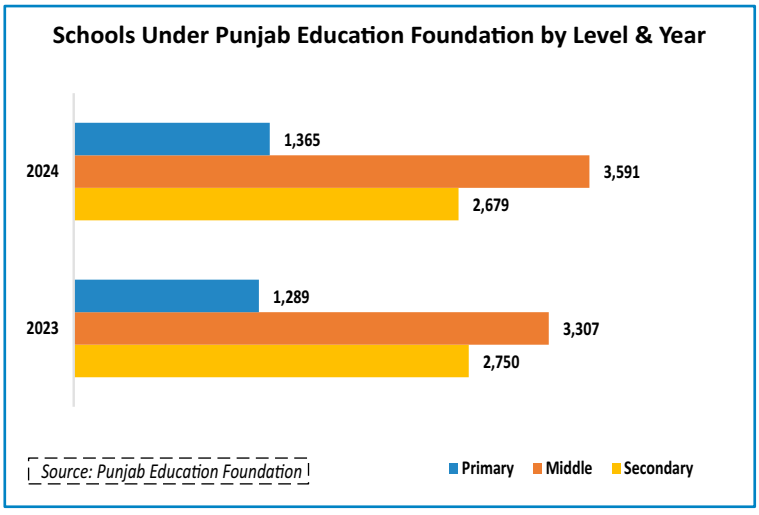


Figure 5.26

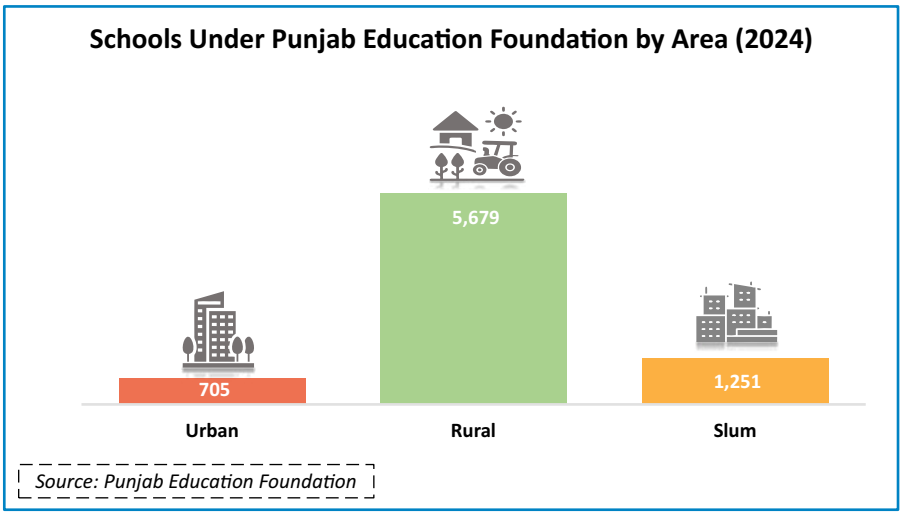


Figure 5.27

PEF schools in slum areas increased by 74.0 percent, from 719 school in 2023 to 1,251 schools in 2024. However, PEF schools in urban areas declined by 43.0 percent.

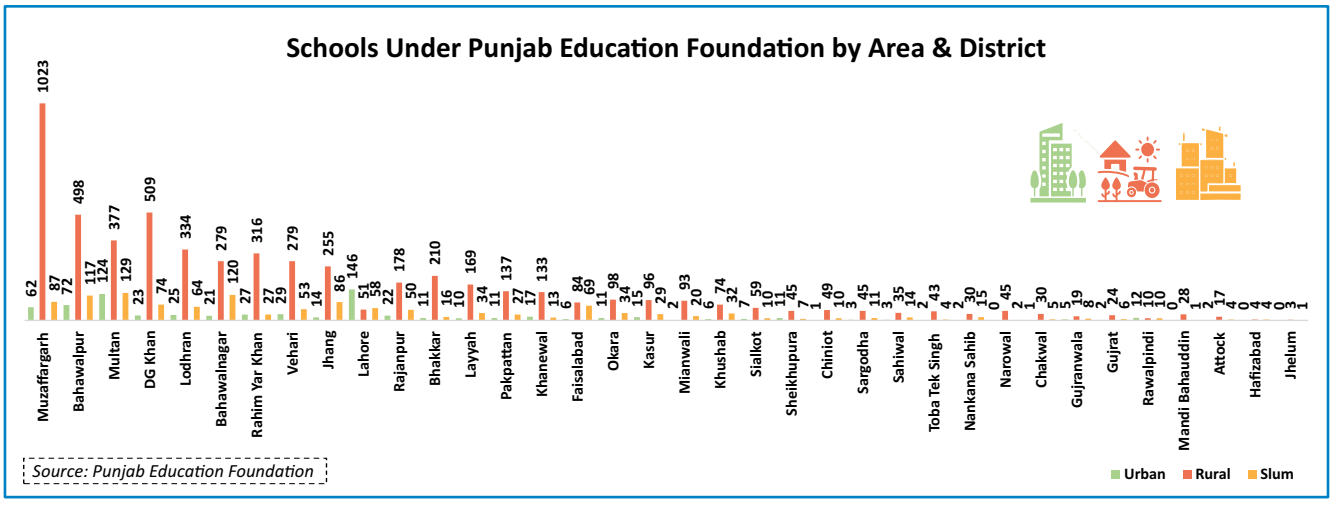


Figure 5.28

In 2024, the districts with the highest number of PEF schools were Muzaffargarh, Bahawalpur and Multan, whereas the districts with the least number of PEF schools were Attock, Hafizabad and Jhelum.

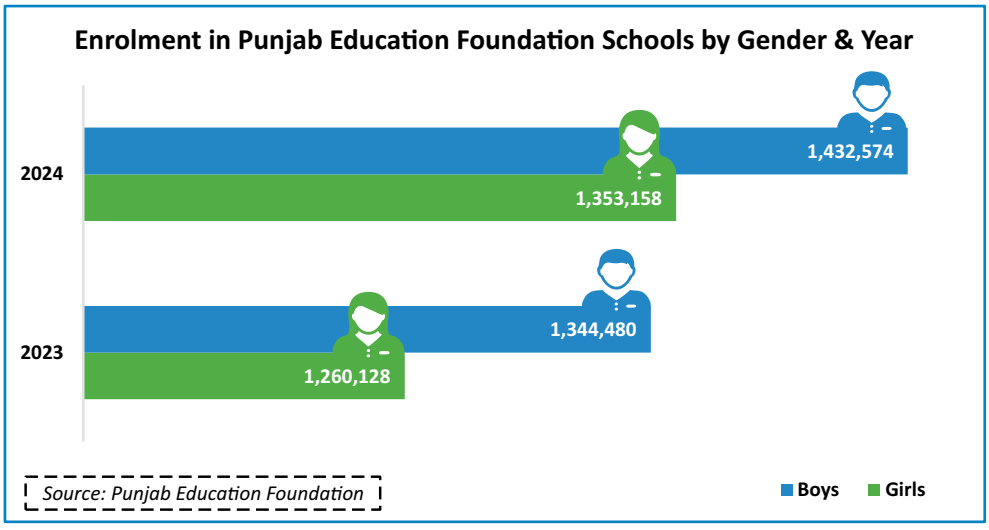


Figure 5.29

Student enrolment in PEF schools saw a modest increase of 7.0 percent, from 2.6 million students in 2023 to 2.8 million students in 2024. In terms of the gender breakdown, the increase of the number of female students was slightly higher than for male students (6.6 percent for boys and 7.4 percent for girls); however, the gender parity index in PEF schools remained 0.9 in both 2023 and 2024.

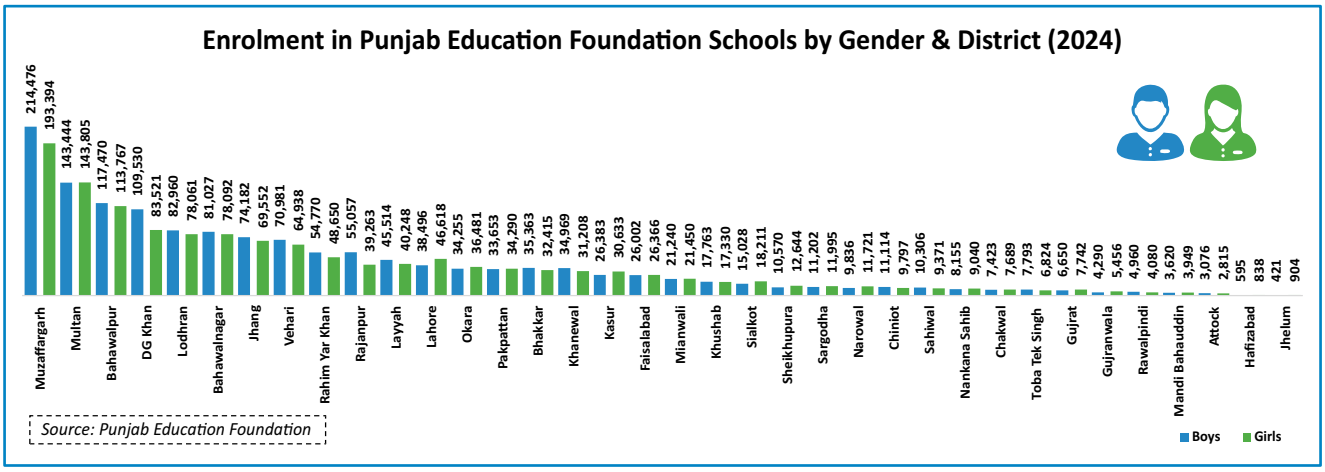


Figure 5.30

Enrolment in PEF schools mirrors the number of institutions, i.e. the same districts that have the highest number of PEF schools have the highest enrolment. In 2024, the districts with the highest PEF enrolment were Muzaffargarh, Multan and Bahawalpur. The districts with the lowest PEF enrolment in 2024 were Attock, Hafizabad and Jhelum.

5.3.2 Non-Formal Public Schools

Aside from formal education, there is also non-formal education (NFE). NFE is termed non-formal because of the more flexible and pragmatic teaching methodology at its core.

The focus of NFE schooling is to help educate those who have hitherto been left out of the education system. As such, NFE entails imparting basic literacy to children, adolescents and even adults. It also encompasses vocational training through structured courses, workshops and seminars.

The various NFE schools under the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department (L&NFBED) are as follows:

i. Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) schools

ii. Non-Formal Education Feeder Schools (NFEFS)

iii. Global Partnership for Education (GPE) schools

iv. Punjab Non-Formal Education Project (PNFEP) schools

v. Taleem Sab Kay Liay (TSKL) schools

vi. Basic Education Community Schools (BECS)

vii. National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) schools

Starting in financial year 2024-2025, all of the above schools have been integrated into the L&NFBED as a single-category of school.

5.3.2.1 Schools under the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department

The data provided by the L&NFBED covers the period of 2024-2025.

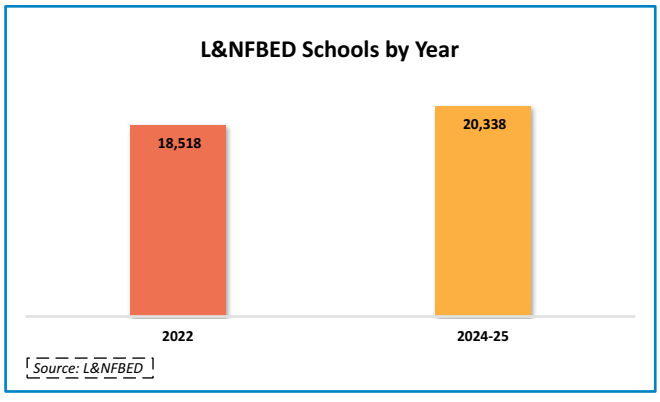


Figure 5.31

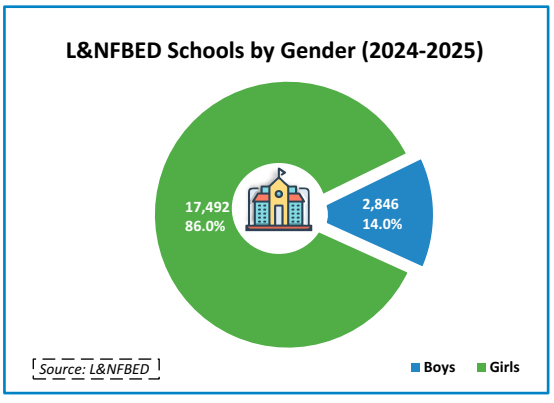


Figure 5.32

Compared to 2022, the number of schools under L&NFBED increased by 9.8 percent, from 18,518 schools in 2022 to 20,338 schools in 2024-2025.

Out of the 20,338 schools in 2024-2025, 2,846 schools were for boys and 17,492 schools were for girls (GPI: 6.1).

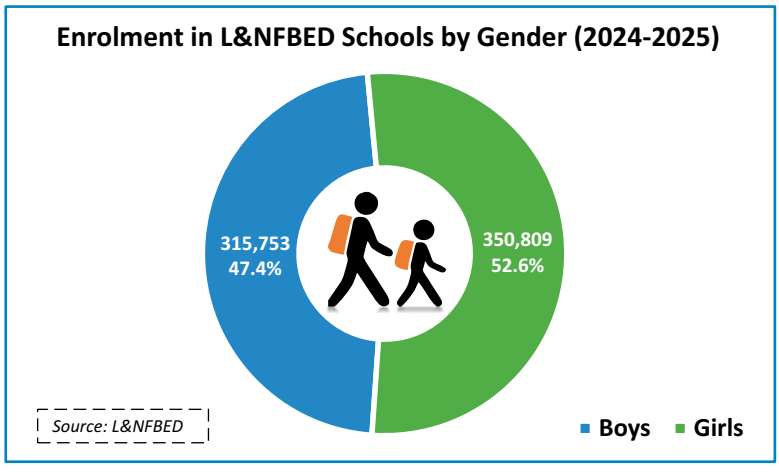


Figure 5.33

Total enrolment in schools of the L&NFBED stands at 666,562 students, of which 315,753 were boys and 350,809 were girls; this makes a non-formal enrolment GPI of 1.1. It is evident that, though there were far fewer non-formal schools for boys than for girls, the boys' schools cater to a much larger number of students than the girls' schools.

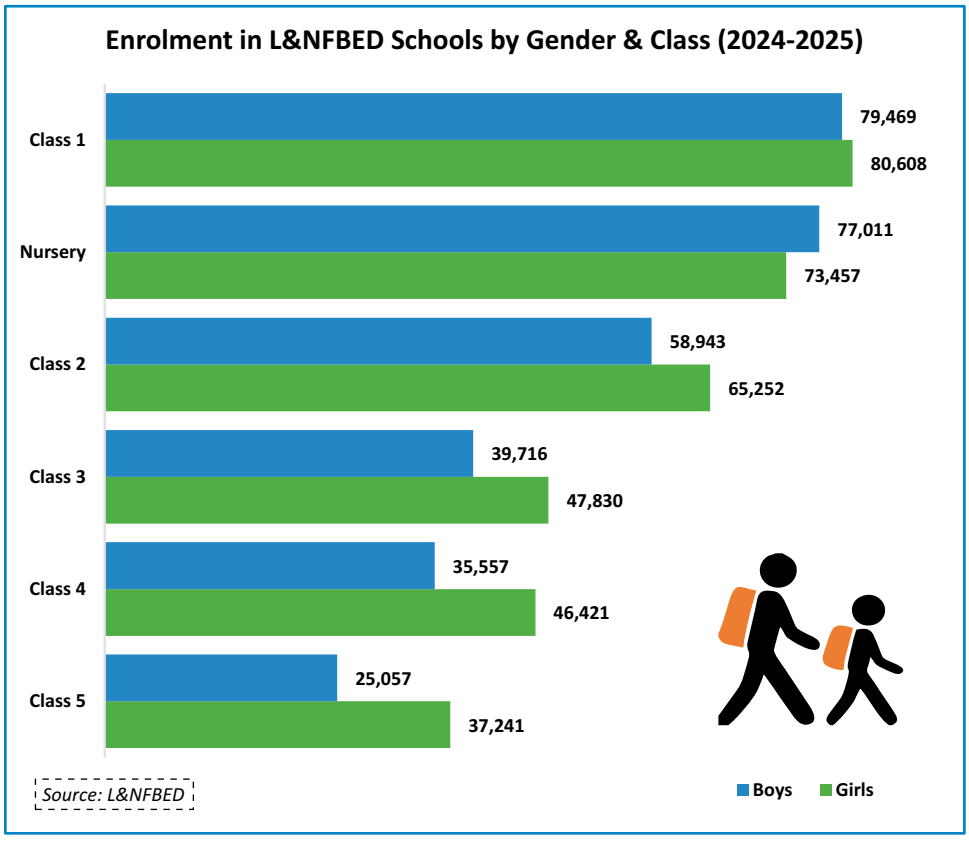


Figure 5.34

A class-wise disaggregation of non-formal enrolment show that as the class level advanced, enrolment decreased: starting in nursery and peaking in class 1, enrolment consistently declined from class 2 and onwards.

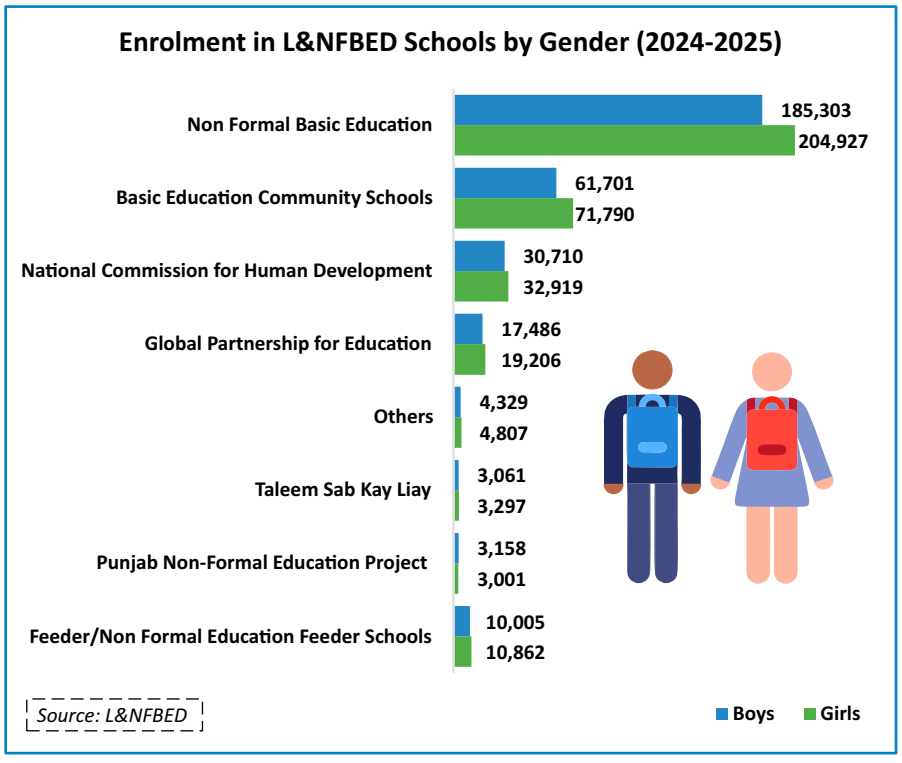


Figure 5.35

Examining enrolment by type of schools revealed that enrolment was highest in NFBE schools, among all L&NFBED institutions.

The districts with the highest number of L&NFBD students were Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur. Total enrolment in Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur stood at 51,202, 49,978 and 35,952 students, respectively.

The districts with the lowest L&NFBED enrolment were Mandi Bahauddin, Chakwal and Gujrat, with almost 8,000 students.

5.3.2.2 Punjab Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence

Daanish schools and Centres of Excellence (COEs) are educational institutes established under the remit of the Punjab Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence Authority (PDSCEA). [270] [271] These schools are set up in remote, underprivileged areas of Punjab and provide education from elementary level all the way to the higher secondary level.

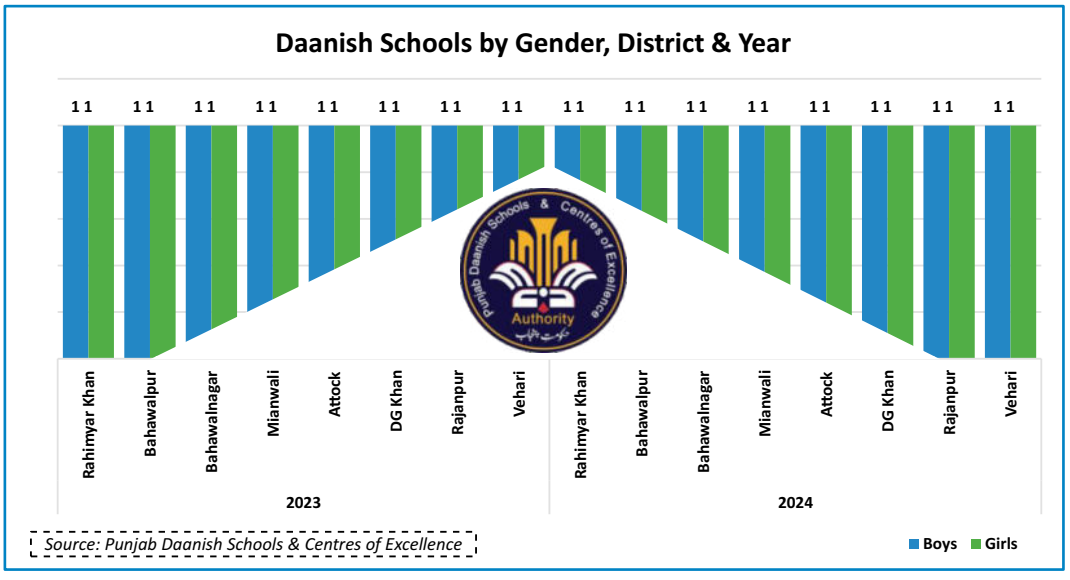


Figure 5.36

There were 16 Daanish schools across Punjab, 8 schools each for boys and for girls, all of them in rural parts of the province. This number remained the same in both 2023 and 2024.

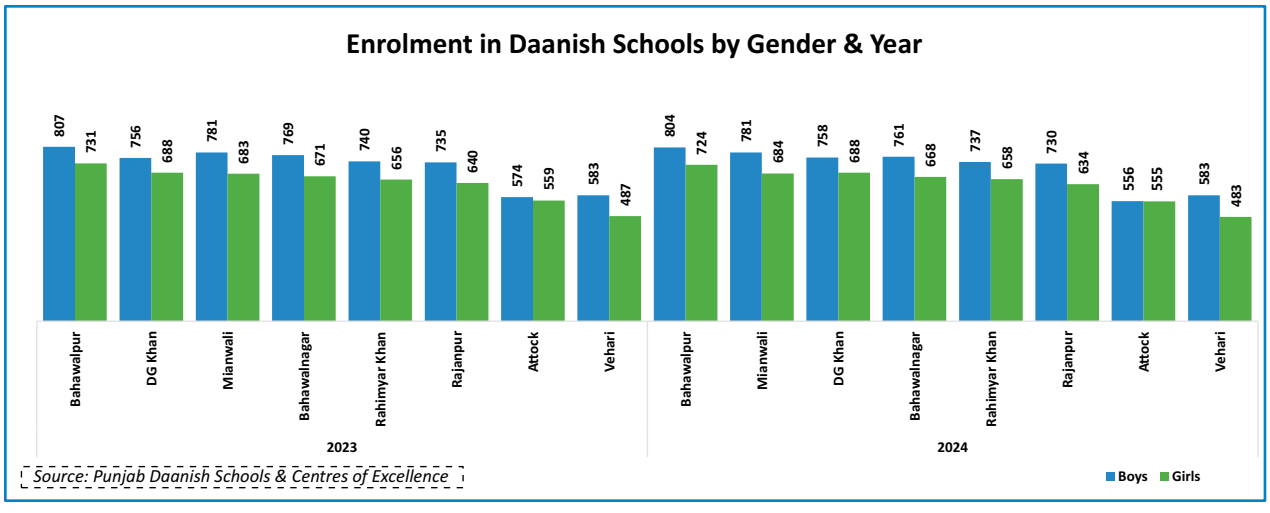


Figure 5.37

270 (Punjab Daanish Schools & Centres of Excellence Authority, n.d.)
271 (Punjab Daanish Schools & Centres of Excellence Authority, 2010)

Enrolment at Punjab's Daanish schools remained almost the same, seeing a decline of only 54 (or 0.5 percent) students between 2023 and 2024: from 10,860 students in 2023 to 10,804 students in 2024. The enrolment GPI for Daanish schools was 0.9 for both years. Additionally, there were no transgender students enrolled at any Daanish school in Punjab for both years.

COEs are secondary schools which are transferred from the Punjab School Education Department's remit to that of the PDSCEA. The PDSCEA is tasked with designating these schools as COEs and to provide new facilities (e.g. IT labs, new furniture, etc) as well as qualified teaching staff.[272]

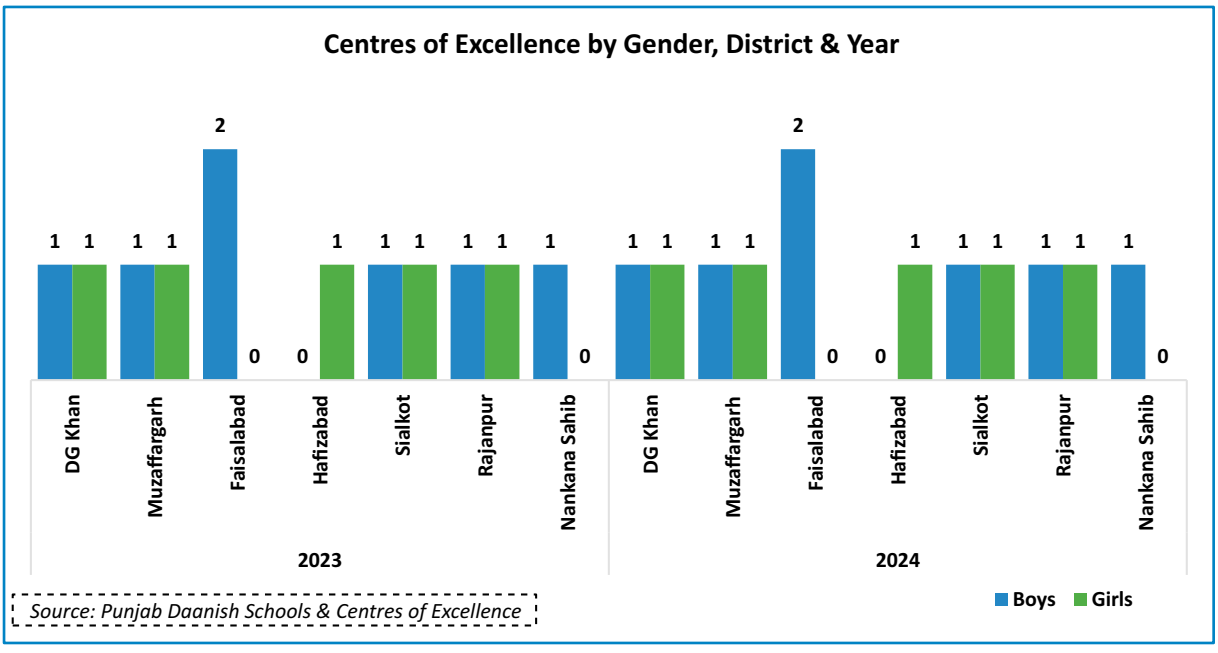


Figure 5.38

Like Punjab Daanish schools, the number of COEs in Punjab remained the same in 2023 and 2024: 7 boys' COEs and 5 girls' COEs across seven districts in Punjab.

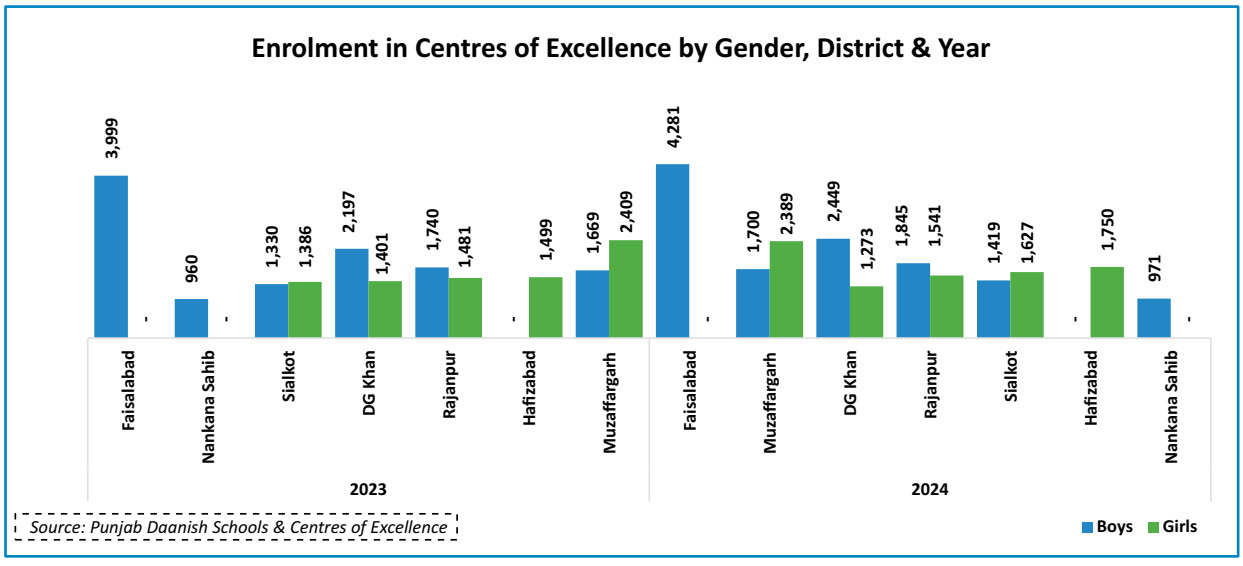


Figure 5.39

Overall enrolment at COEs increased by 5.8 percent, from 20,071 students in 2023 to 21,245 students in 2024. In each year, male students at COEs in Punjab outnumbered female students, with the GPI of 0.7 in both years.

272 (Punjab Daanish Schools & Centres of Excellence Authority, n.d.)

5.3.3 Special Education Schools

Special education schools are meant for students with disabilities, impairments or a diverse range of other needs that are either physical and/or psychological in nature (e.g. learning disabilities).

As such, special education schools fulfil a crucial need, serving children who are differently abled so that they aren't in danger of marginalisation. For these children, it is imperative that they receive education that targets their needs and is imparted by specially trained teachers in purpose-built facilities.

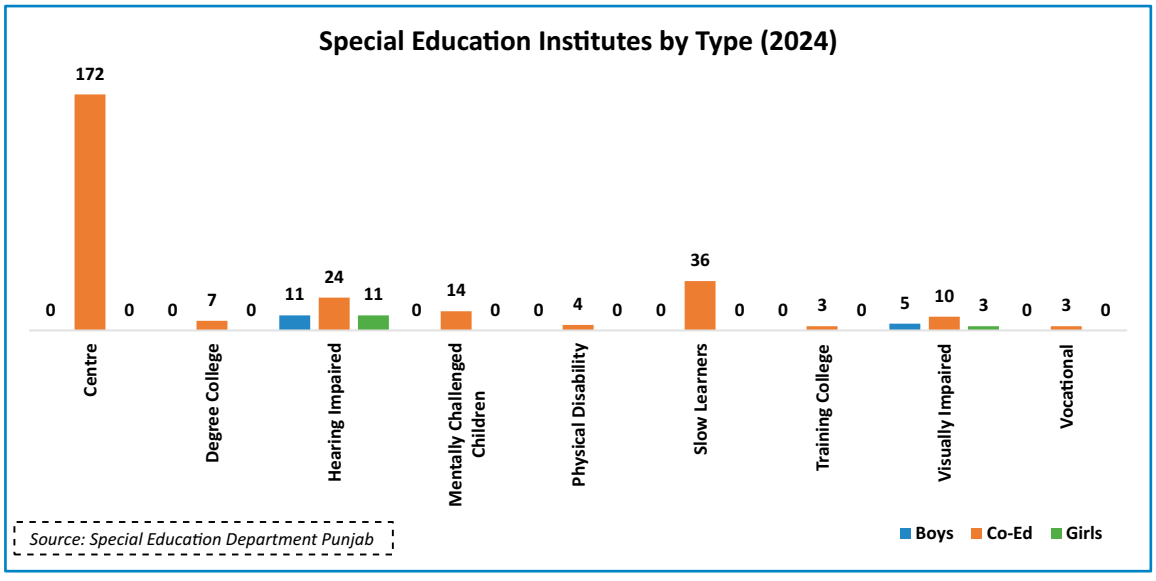


Figure 5.40

There were 303 educational institutes meant for children with disabilities across Punjab, a number that remained the same in 2023 and 2024. A majority of these institutes are co-education centres. Additionally, most special education institutions in Punjab are primary or middle schools.

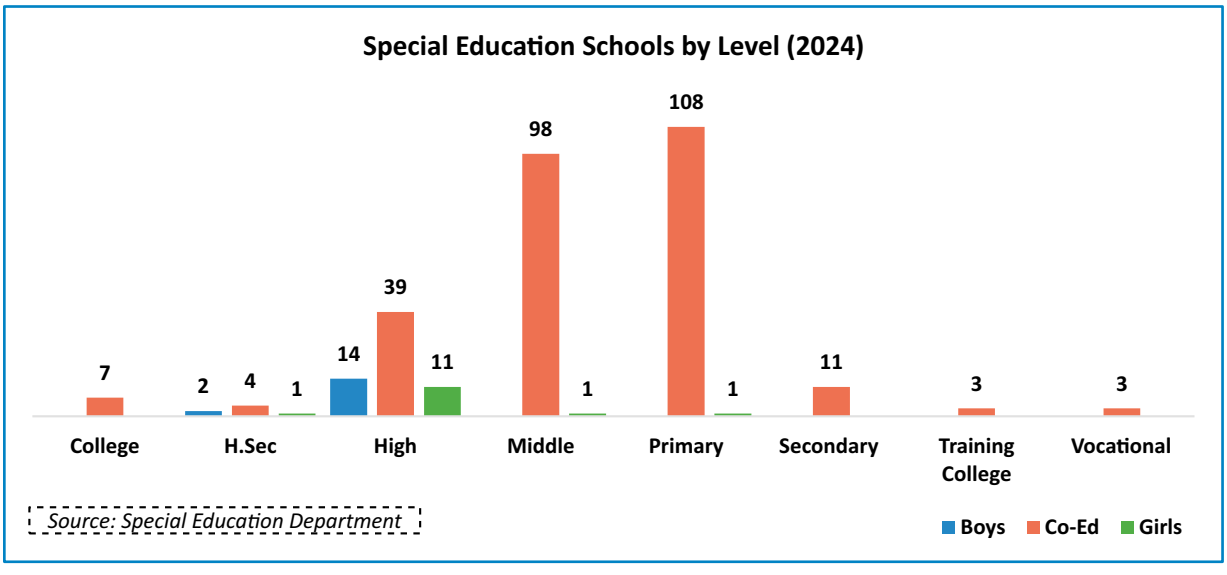


Figure 5.41

Out of 303 schools in 2024, 108 (35.6 percent) were primary schools, while 98 (32.3 percent) were middle schools.

Only a small number of special education school in Punjab are single-gender schools: 16 (or 5.3 percent) are for boys only, while another 14 (or 4.6 percent) are for girls only. All remaining 273 schools are co-education schools.

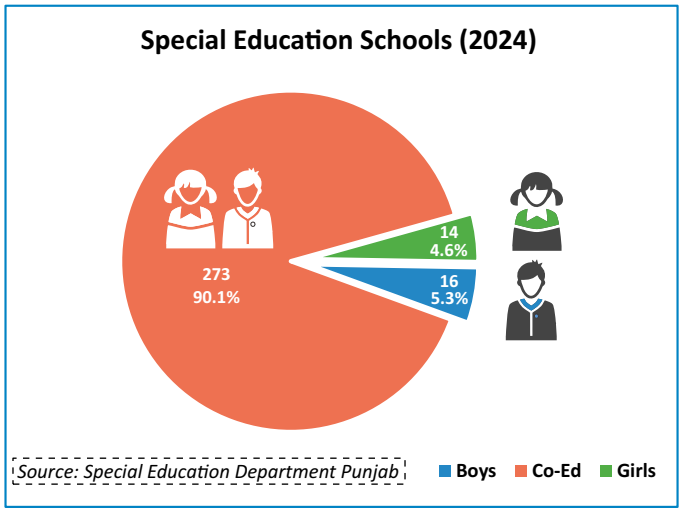


Figure 5.42

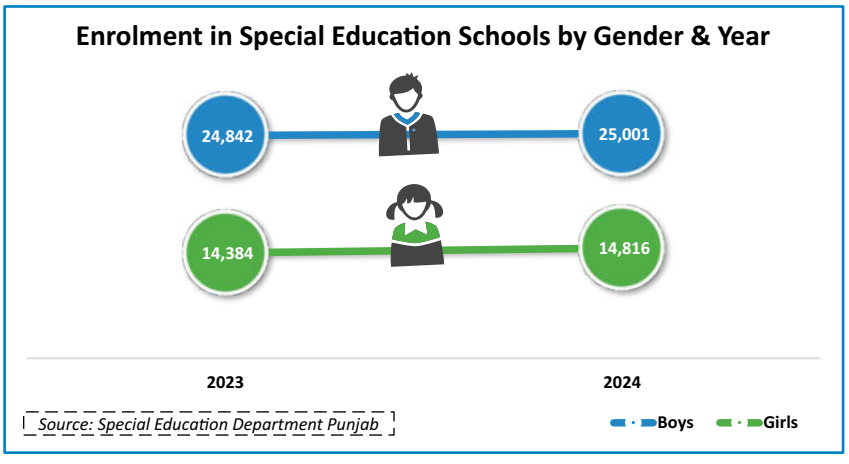


Figure 5.43

Enrolment of children with disabilities in special education institutes remained similar in 2023 and 2024, increasing only by 1.5 percent from 39,226 students in 2023 to 39,818 students in 2024.

A disaggregation of enrolment in special education institutions by disability shows that, in both 2023 and 2024, the highest enrolment was of students with hearing impairments.

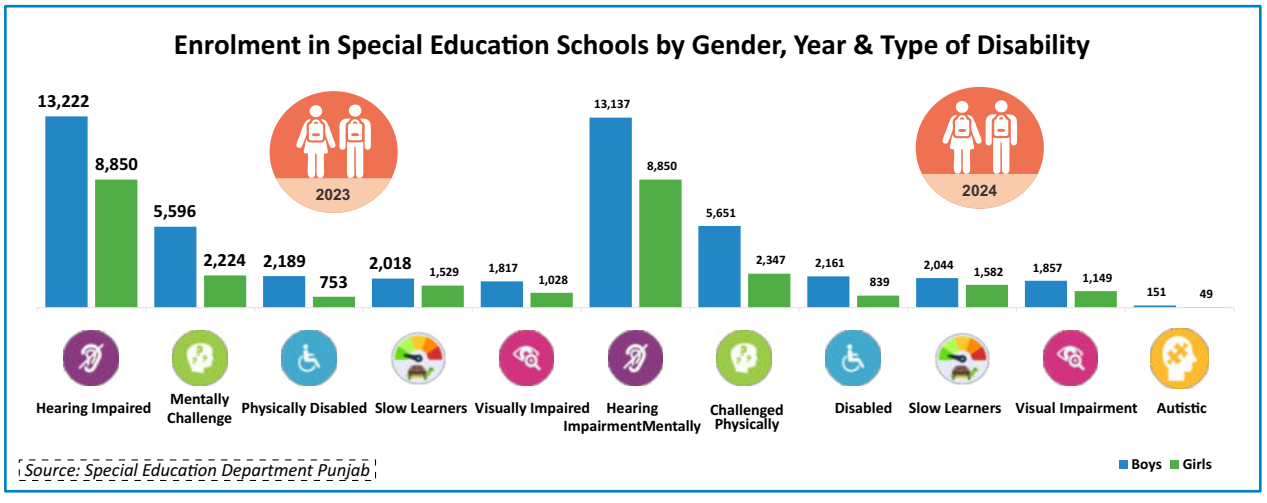


Figure 5.44

The number of boys enrolled in special education institutes across Punjab increased by 6.4 percent, from 24,842 boys in 2023 to 25,001 boys in 2024. The number of girls in special education institutes increased by 3.0 percent, from 14,384 girls in 2023 to 14,816 girls in 2024. The enrolment GPI of special education students in Punjab remained 0.6 for both years.

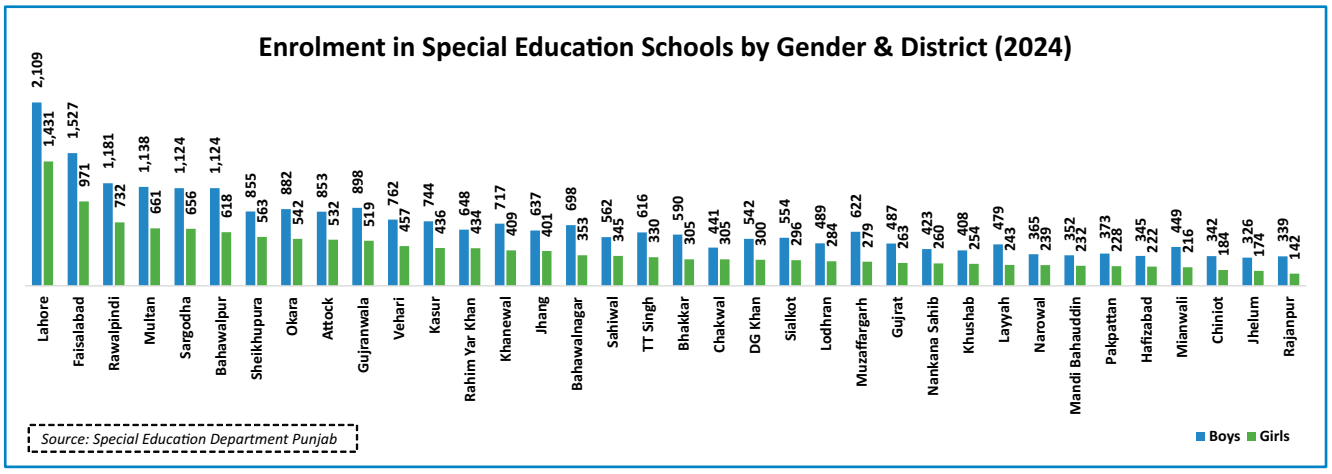


Figure 5.45

A district-wise disaggregation of enrolment of special education institutes shows that Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi had the highest enrolment in special education institutes. The districts with the lowest enrolment in special education institutions were Chiniot, Jhelum and Rajanpur.

5.3.4 Public & Private Higher Education Institutes under the Punjab Higher Education Department

Across Punjab, the HED oversees 36 general (i.e. non-medical and non-technical) public universities, 28 general private universities and 783 public colleges. The data for public and private universities under the HED is from 2023 and 2024; however, the data for public HED colleges is for the period of 2024-25.

5.3.4.1 Public Colleges under Higher Education Department

Out of the 783 public colleges under HED, 236 were male-only, 441 were female-only, and 106 were co-education institutions.

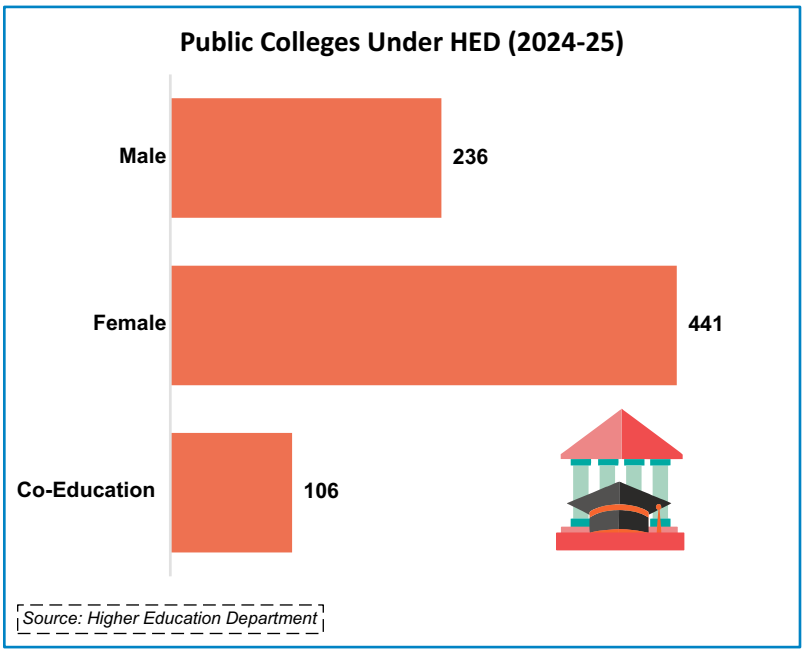


Figure 5.46

Additionally, the colleges are further categorised into associate colleges (387 institutions), graduate colleges (316 institutions), commerce colleges (76 institutions) and autonomous colleges (4 institutions).

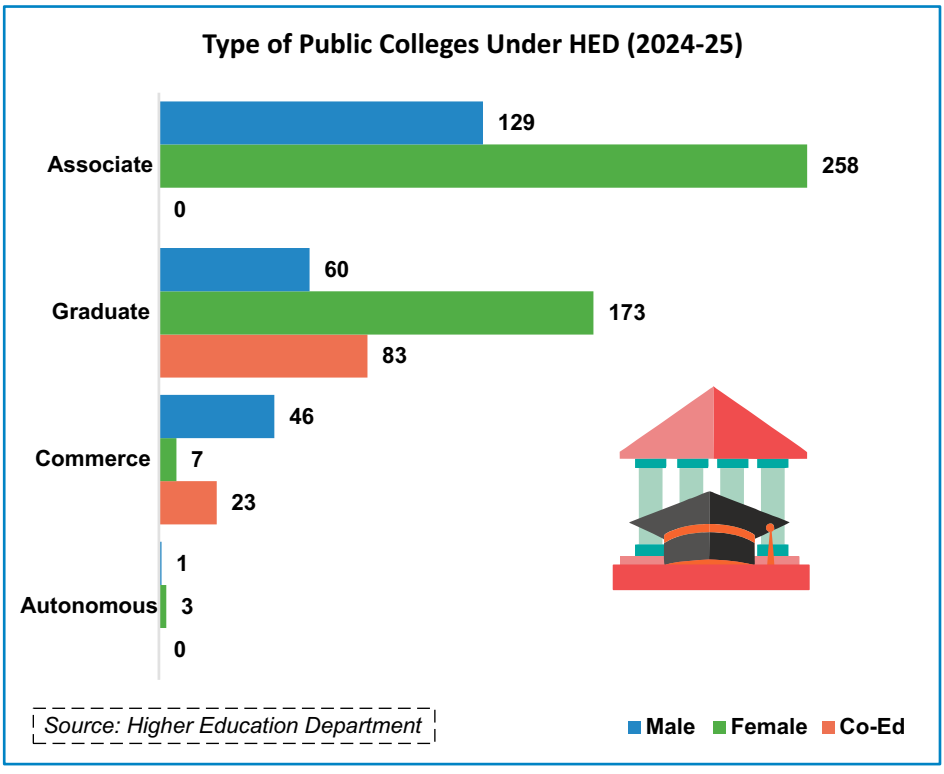


Figure 5.47

Most commerce colleges were male-only institutions; however, a large proportion of associate and graduate colleges were female-only.

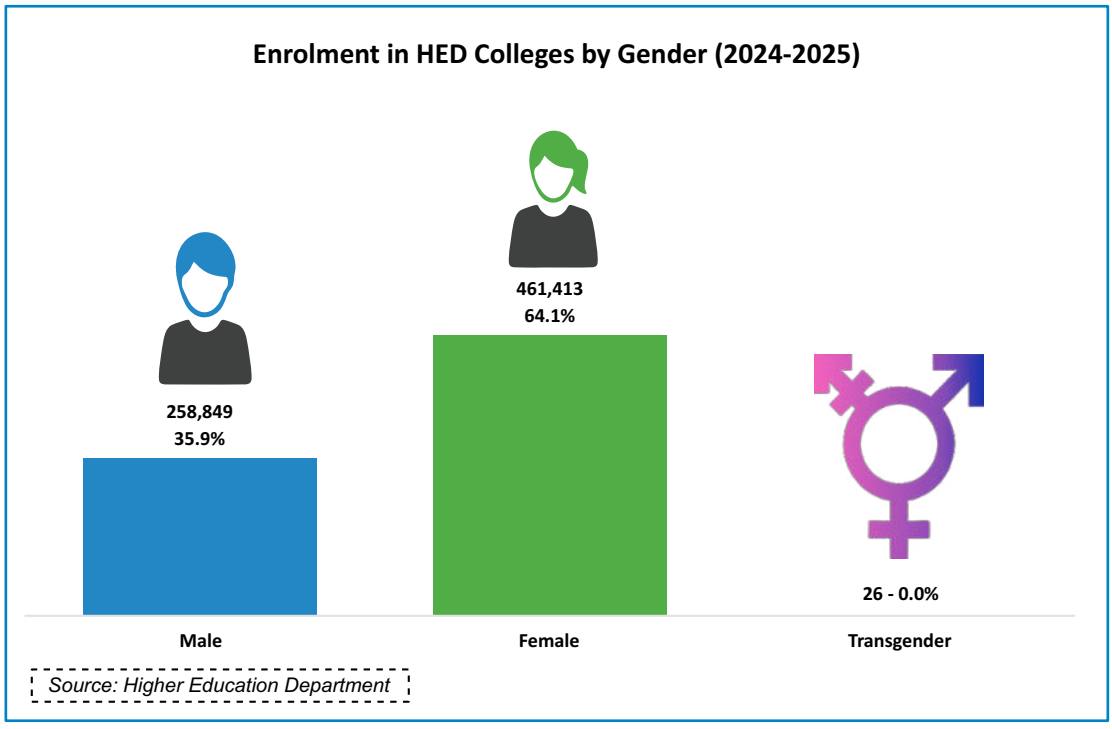


Figure 5.48

Enrolment in HED colleges stood at 720,288 students, of which 258,849 were male students and 461,413 students were female (GPI of 1.8); transgender students only made up 0.004 percent of all HED college students.

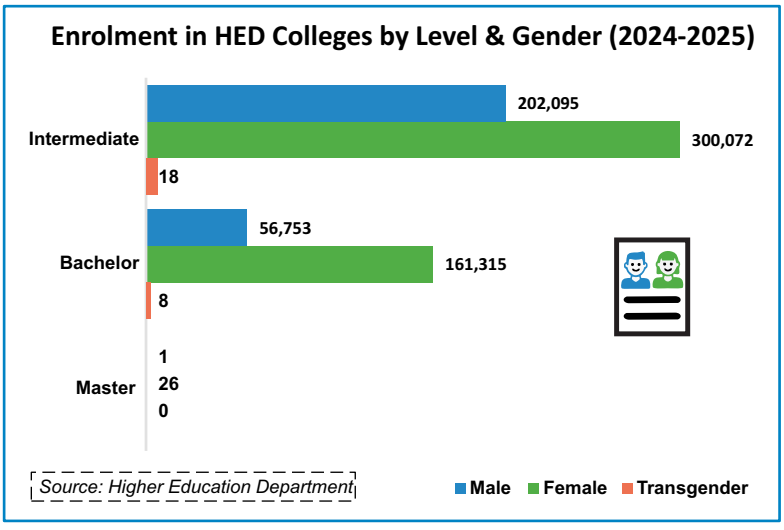


Figure 5.49

Additionally, around 69.7 percent, or 502,185 students, out of all HED college students were enrolled into intermediate programs; the intermediate enrolment GPI was 1.5.

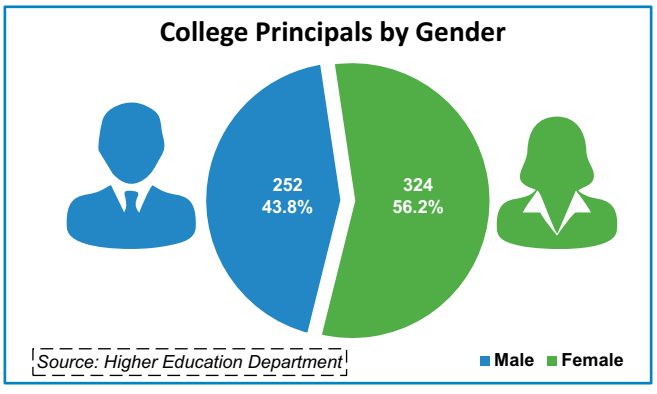


Figure 5.50

There were 576 principals across all 783 public colleges of the HED across Punjab, with a GPI of 1.3.

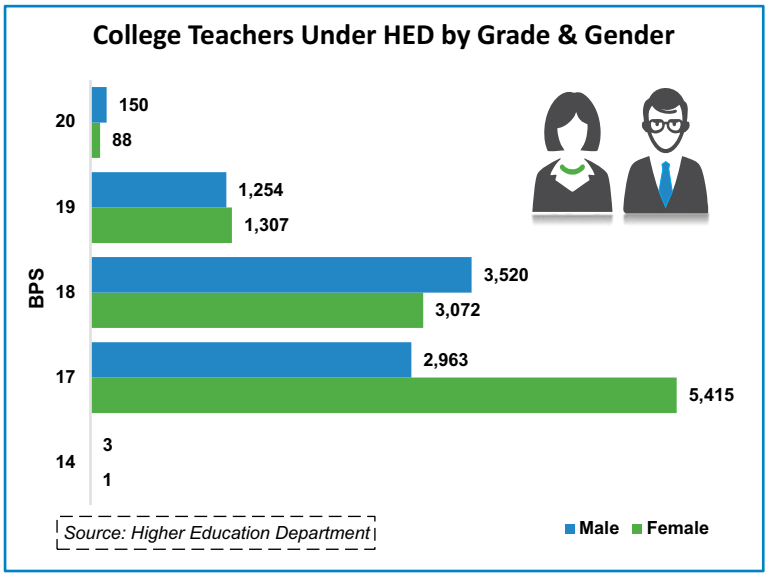


Figure 5.51

Across the 783 public colleges under the HED, there were 17,773 teachers, with a GPI of 1.3. However, at the lowest and highest grades, i.e. BPS-14 and BPS-20, there were more male teachers than female teachers. The GPI of BPS-20 teachers was 0.6.

5.3.4.2 Public and Private Universities under Higher Education Department

All of the 36 public universities,[273] along with the 28 private universities, under the HED are general universities, of which 28 public universities as well as all the private universities are co-education institutions. There are 8 female-only institutions, which are public universities.

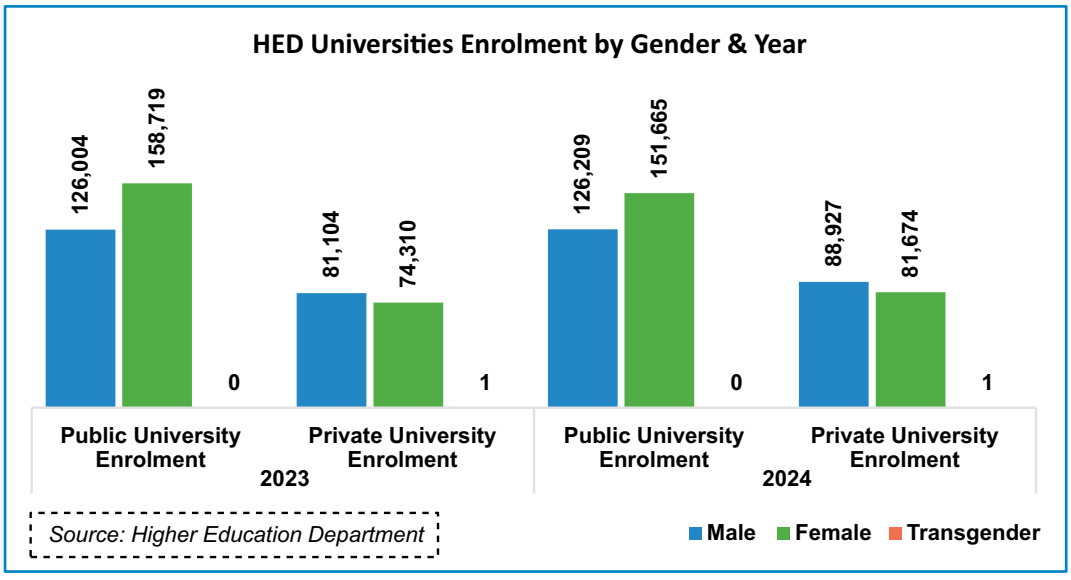


Figure 5.52

Enrolment in the public universities under the HED decreased by 2.4 percent, from 284,723 students in 2023 to 277,874 in 2024. In 2023, the enrolment GPI was 1.3, whereas in 2024, male enrolment increased by 0.2 percent and female enrolment declined by 4.4 percent. Notably, no transgender students were enrolled in any public university under the HED.

In the private universities under HED, enrolment increased by 9.6 percent overall, from 155,415 students in 2023 to 170,604 students in 2024. The enrolment GPI at private universities remained at 0.9 from 2023 to 2024. Additionally, only one transgender student was enrolled in the private universities under the HED in both years.

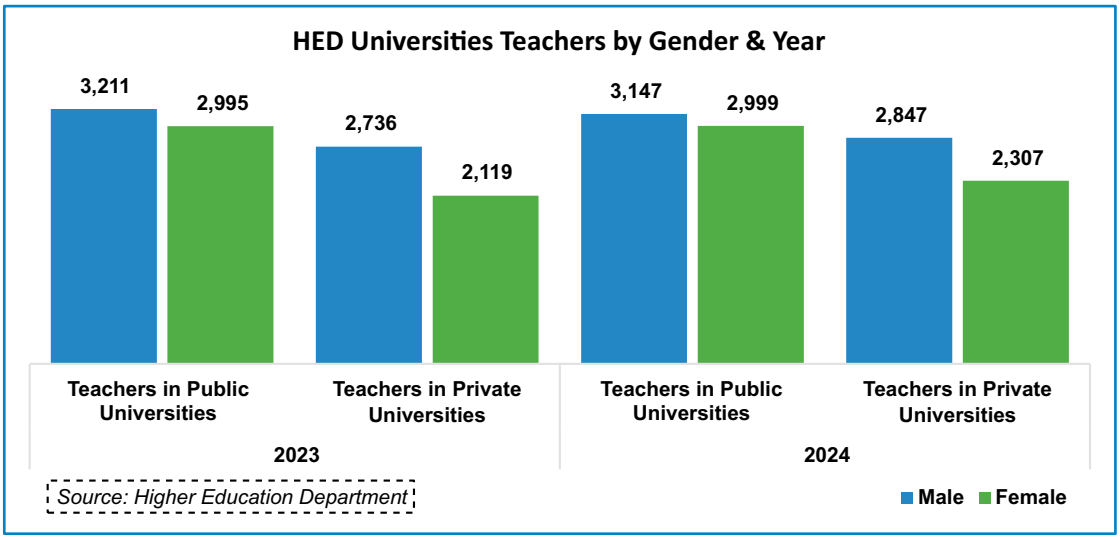


Figure 5.53

273 The analysis in this sub-section will discuss the data for 35 of the 36 HED public universities, excluding data for the University of Mianwali, and 27 of the 28 private HED universities, excluding data for the University of Wah. For both institutions, a gender-breakdown of enrolment was not provided by HED.

The number of teachers at public HED universities fell by 1.0 percent, from 6,206 teachers in 2023 to 6,146 teachers in 2024. The number of male teachers at these universities decreased by 2.0 percent while the number of female teachers fell by only 0.1 percent. The teacher GPI in public HED universities in 2023 was 0.9, but increased to 1.0 in 2024. There were no transgender individuals in teaching positions in public HED universities.

The number of teachers at private HED universities rose by 6.2 percent, from 4,855 teachers in 2023 to 5,154 teachers in 2024. The teacher GPI in private universities was 0.8 in both years. There were no transgender individuals in teaching positions in private HED universities.

5.3.5 Vocational Education

5.3.5.1 Technical & Vocational Training Authority

The Technical & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) was established in 1999 as a corporate entity[274] and then reorganized in 2010 through the Punjab Technical & Vocational Authority Act, 2010.

TEVTA is tasked with the "proper provision of technical education in the Province" of Punjab[275] and offers: i) technical education, through four-year Bachelors of Science degrees in Engineering Technology and three-year Diplomas of Associate Engineering, at Government Colleges of Technology across the province; ii) vocational training in practical/marketable skills and trade crafts at Government Technical Training Institutes and Government Technical Training Centers.

5.3.5.1.1 TEVTA Institutes

In 2023-2024, there were a total of 387 TEVTA institutes across Punjab, of which 219 (56.6 percent) were for male students and 168 (43.4 percent) were for female students.

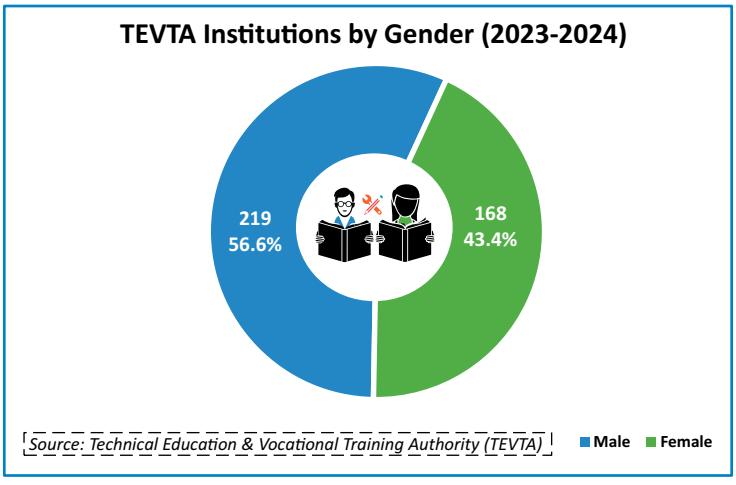


Figure 5.54

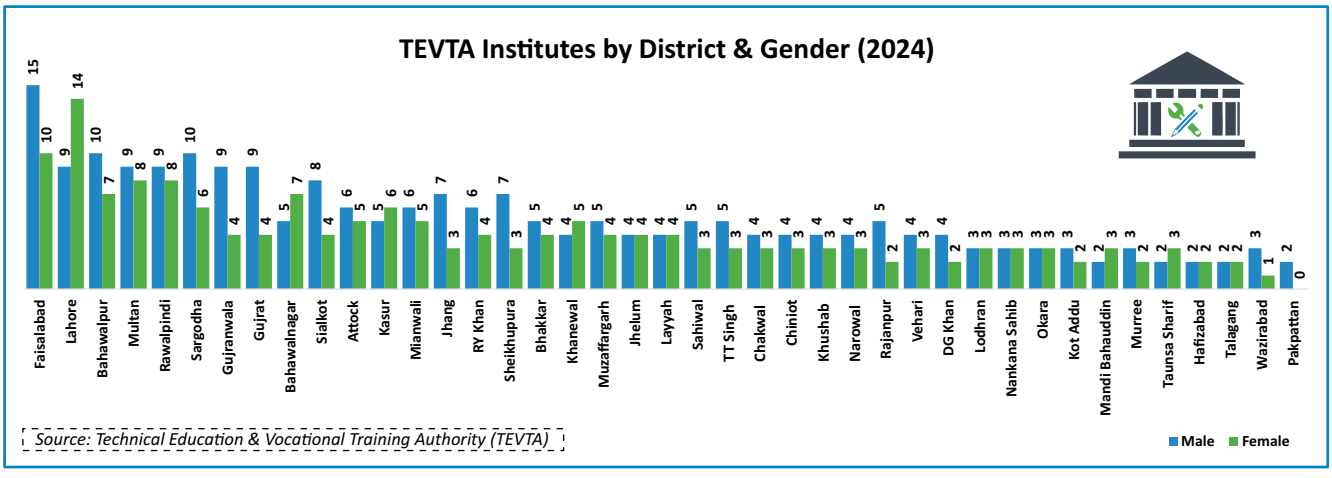


Figure 5.55

A district-wise breakdown shows that three districts with the highest number of TEVTA institutes were Faisalabad, Lahore and Bahalwapur. The districts with the fewest TEVTA institutes were Talagang, Wazirabad and Pakpattan.

274 (Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority, 1999)
275 (Technical & Vocational Education Training Authority, 2010)

5.3.5.1.2 Courses Offered at TEVTA Institutes

As per available data, TEVTA offered more than 250 courses during the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24.[276]

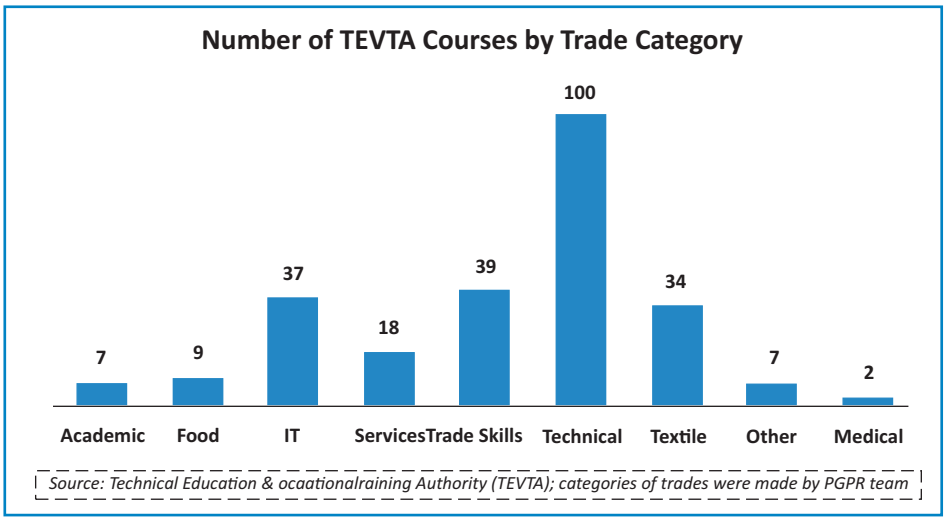


Figure 5.56

The "technical" category consists of courses that teach engineering, mechanical, electrical and home appliance repair and automobile-related skills. The "trade skills" category included skills like plumbing, fitting, glass & ceramic work, architectural drafting, woodworking and more.

The "IT" category includes all courses that taught skills related to computers, such as general computer operation training, cybersecurity, web design, game development and ChatGPT prompt engineering. This category also includes courses that teach other skills that require the use of computers (e.g. graphic design), as well as courses that teach the use of specific computer applications (e.g. AutoCAD).

Lastly, the "textile" category includes all courses that teach skills related to clothing, for example dress designing and making, tailoring, fabric printing, fashion design, etc.

5.3.5.1.3 Enrolment in TEVTA Institutes

Overall enrolment in TEVTA institutes increased between 2022-23 and 2023-24: from 16,038 students in 2022-23, enrolment in TEVTA institutes increased by a staggering 383.8 percent in 2024 to 77,596 students.

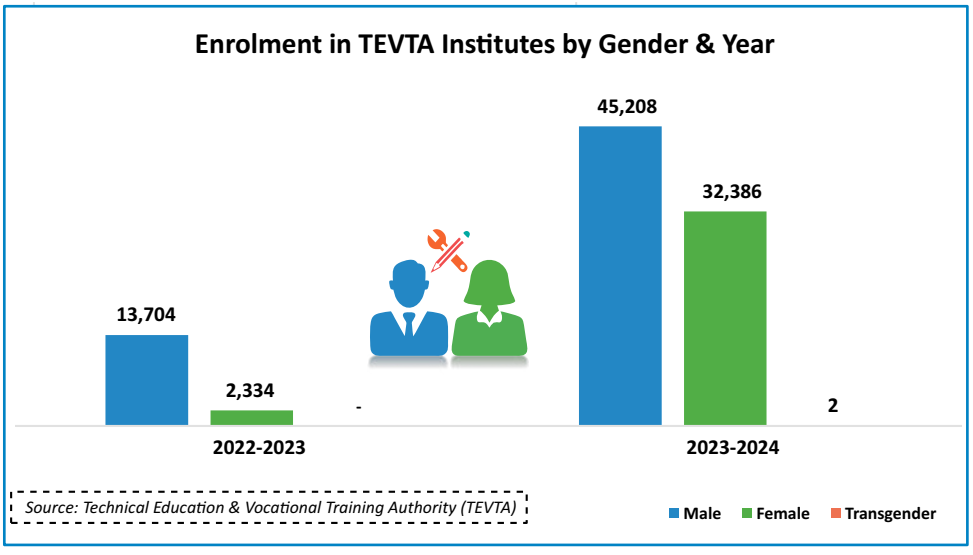


Figure 5.57

276 These courses were aggregated by the PGPR team into different categories for a more streamlined analytical view.

The GPI of total enrolled students also improved. In 2022-23, the GPI of total students enrolled in TEVTA institutes was 0.2. In 2023-24, this GPI rose to 0.7. Transgender enrolment saw very little change, as only 2 transgender students were enrolled in 2023-24, up from zero in 2022- 23.

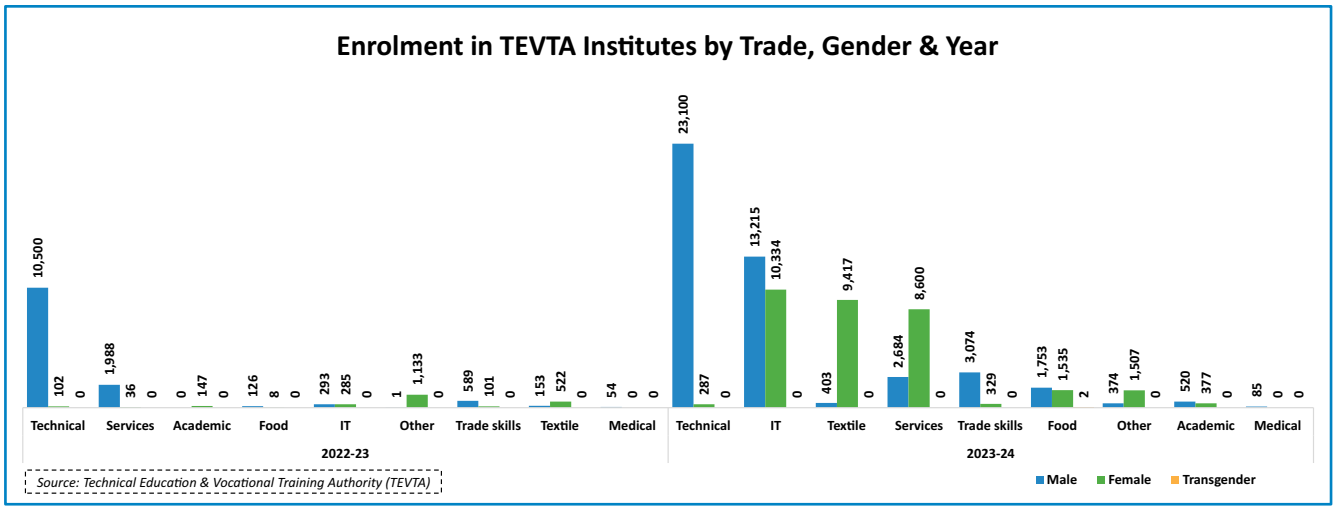


Figure 5.58

In both years, the trade with the highest enrolment was the technical category, enrolment in which rose by 120.6 percent, from 10,500 students in 2022-23 to 23,100 students in 2023-24 with majority of male students. However, IT courses saw the largest increase in enrolment.

In technical and medical skill courses of TEVTA, women have very little representation. Instead, women are engaged in courses for skills related to textiles, services, and academic-oriented fields, areas that have traditionally/socially been associated with women's work. This pattern reflects structural and cultural norms rather than inherent differences between men and women on the basis of capability or interest.

In all other areas, enrolment GPIs for women either fell or remained low and unchanged. This aligns with issues observed in academic literature, which note that whether women in Pakistan use technology like the internet or cell phones may be a function of the institutional support they have in using these ICTs, or even prevailing social norms. [277] [278]

5.3.5.1.4 Graduates of TEVTA Institutes

The data provided for graduates from TEVTA institutions was by calendar year, instead of by financial years. Therefore, graduates' data is not directly comparable to the data for enrolled students to assess, for example, what percentage of students enrolled in TEVTA institutions (by course, district, gender, etc) actually graduated.

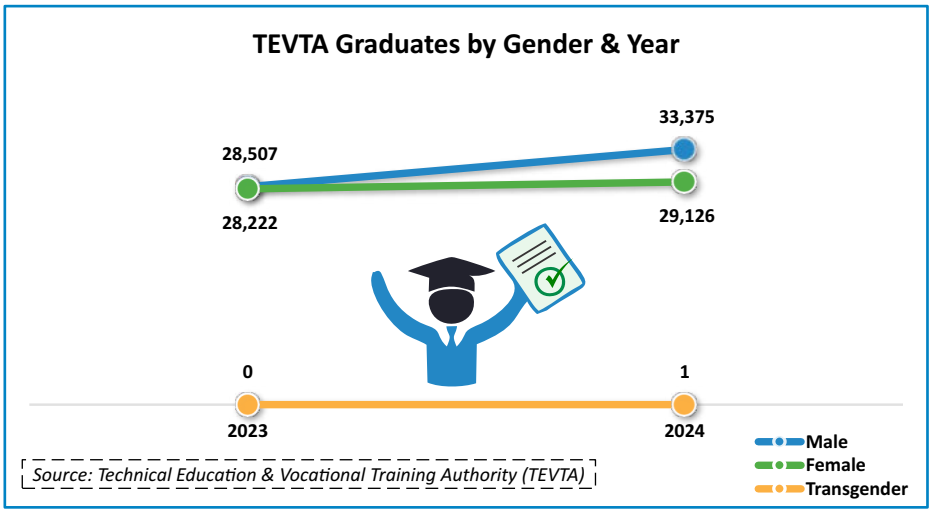


Figure 5.59

277 (Barra, Grimaldi, Muazzam, Troisi, & Visvizi, 2024)
278 (Amber & Chichaibelu, 2023)

The number of graduates from TEVTA institutes increased by 10.2 percent, from 56,729 graduates in 2023 to 62,501 in 2024. The number of male graduates during this period increased by 17.1 percent, from 28,507 graduates to 33,573 graduates. In contrast, the number of female graduates increased by just 3.2 percent, from 28,222 graduates in 2023 to 29,126 graduates in 2024. Consequently, the TEVTA graduates GPI decreased from 1.0 in 2023 to 0.9 in 2024.

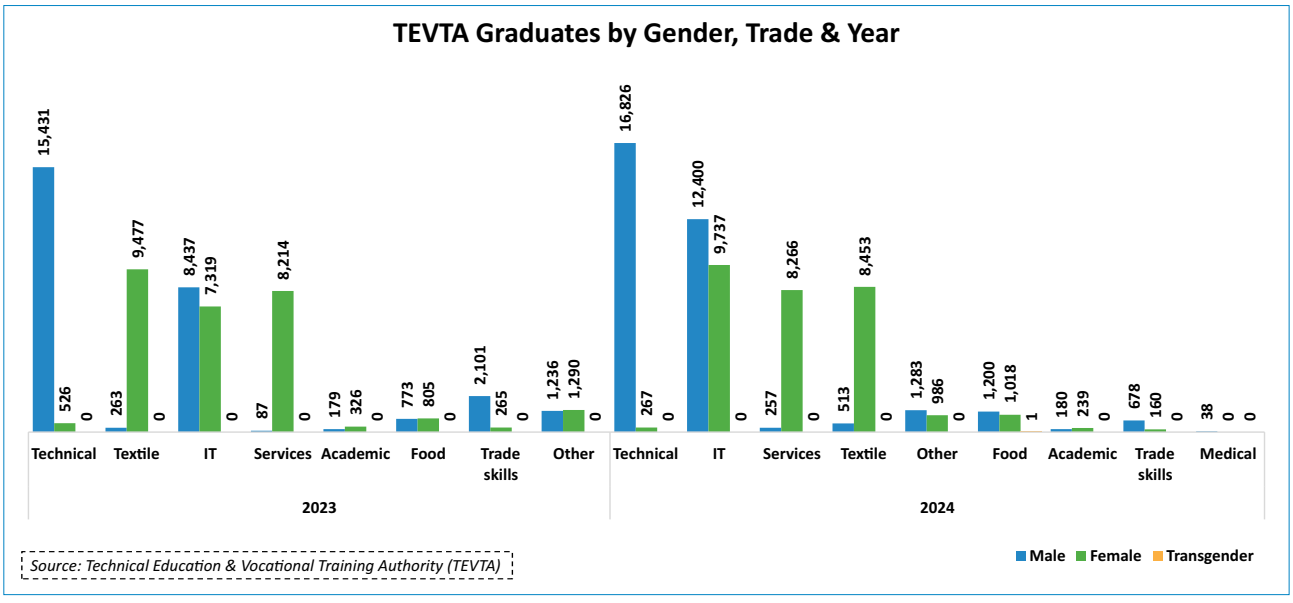


Figure 5.60

While the data for TEVTA graduates is not directly comparable to the data for TEVTA enrolment, the figure above nevertheless suggests that graduation rates, when examined by trade, were broadly in line with enrolment by trade.

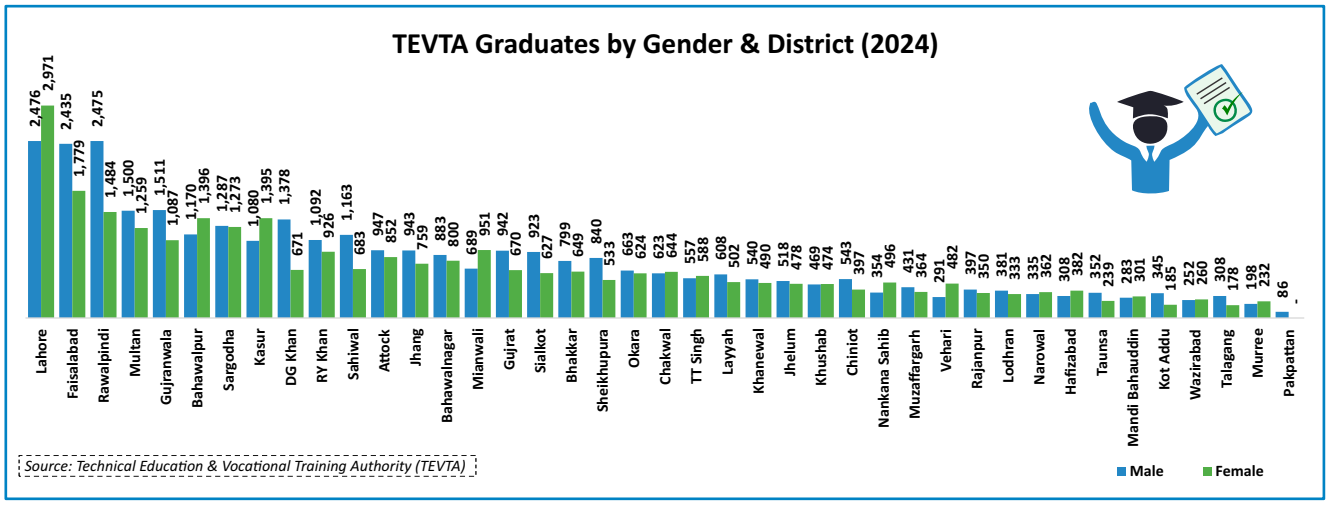


Figure 5.61

Disaggregating TEVTA graduates by district shows that the three districts with the highest graduates from TEVTA institutions in 2024 were Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi. The districts with the least number of graduates from TEVTA institutions were Talagang, Murree and Pakpattan.

5.3.5.2 Punjab Vocational Training Council

The Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) is the largest provider of vocational training in Punjab, with a mission to improve employability among Punjab's youth through various skill training programs as well as micro-finance support for aspiring entrepreneurs.[279]

279 (Punjab Vocational Training Council, n.d.)

5.3.5.2.1 PVTC Vocational Training Institutes

The PVTC operates Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs) in all districts across Punjab. The number of VTIs under the PVTC declined by 12.7 percent, from 213 VTIs across Punjab in 2023 to 186 VTIs in 2024.



Figure 5.62

Accordingly, enrolment in VTIs fell by 12%, from 48,889 students in 2023 to 43,063 students in 2024.

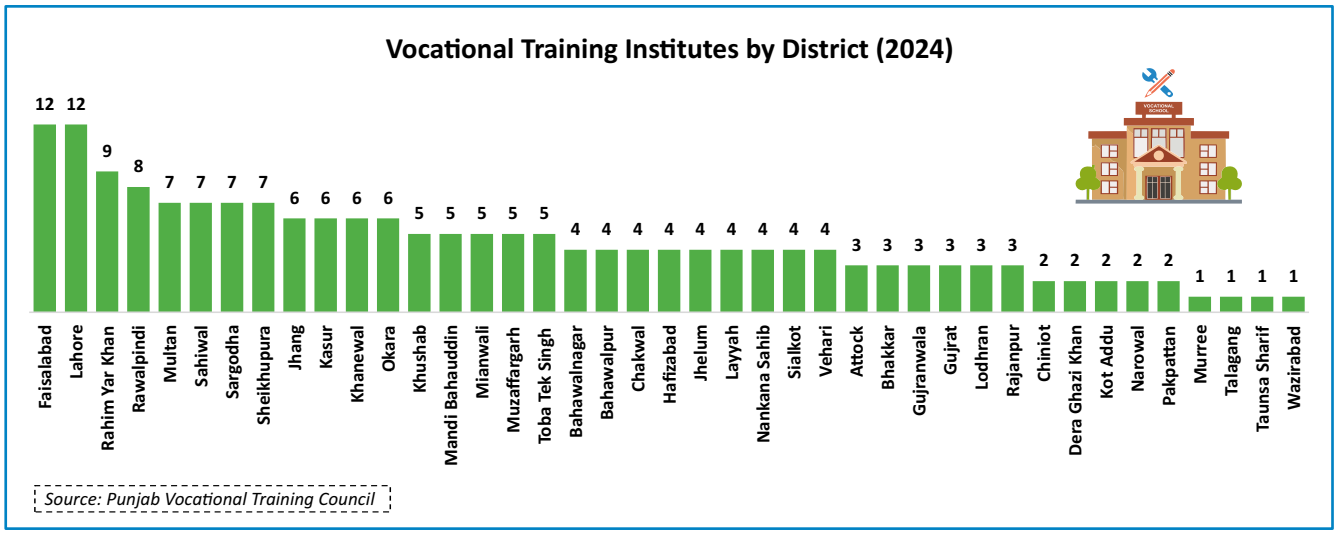


Figure 5.63

Lahore and Faisalabad had the highest number of VTIs, 12 each, followed by Rahim Yar Khan with 9 VTIs. Talagang, Taunsa Sharif and Wazirabad had the fewest VTIs at 1 each.

5.3.5.2.2 Enrolment in PVTC Vocational Training Institutions

The number of male students enrolled in VTIs across Punjab stood at 23,812 in 2023 and in 2024, this number fell by 12.5 percent to 20,832 male students. Similarly, the number of female students enrolled into VTIs across Punjab stood at 25,077 in 2023 and in 2024, this number fell by 11.5 percent to 22,198 female students.

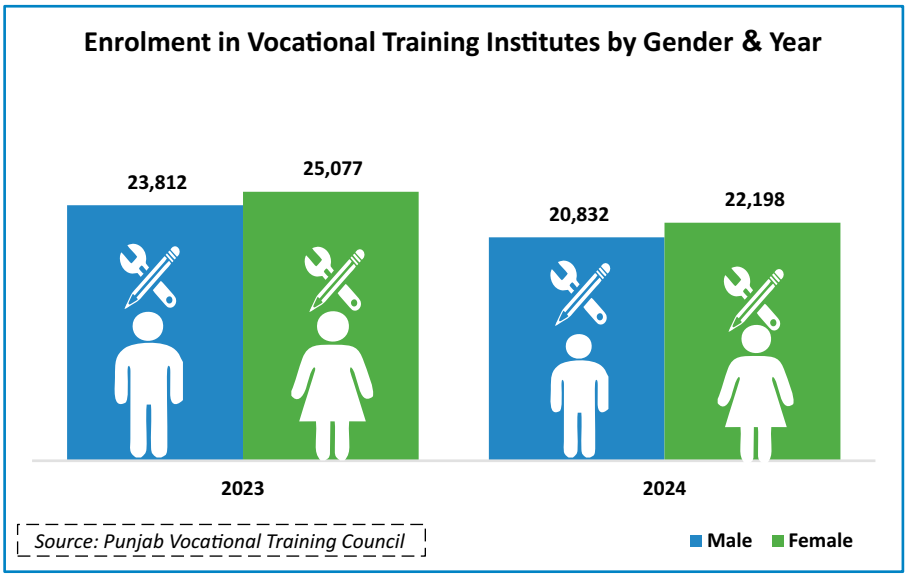


Figure 5.64

Despite the above, female enrolment in the VTIs under the PVTC was higher than male enrolment in 2023, there were 1,265 more female students than male students in VTIs across Punjab, and the GPI was 1.1. This number increased by 5.4 percent in 2024 to 1,333 more female students than male students in VTIs across Punjab.

5.3.5.2.3 PVTC Enrolment by Trade Category

The PVTC's skill training programs cover a diverse range of fields, from courses in electronics, machine lathing and clinical/dental assistant certifications, to various trade skills in embroidery and textiles, food service and the IT sector.

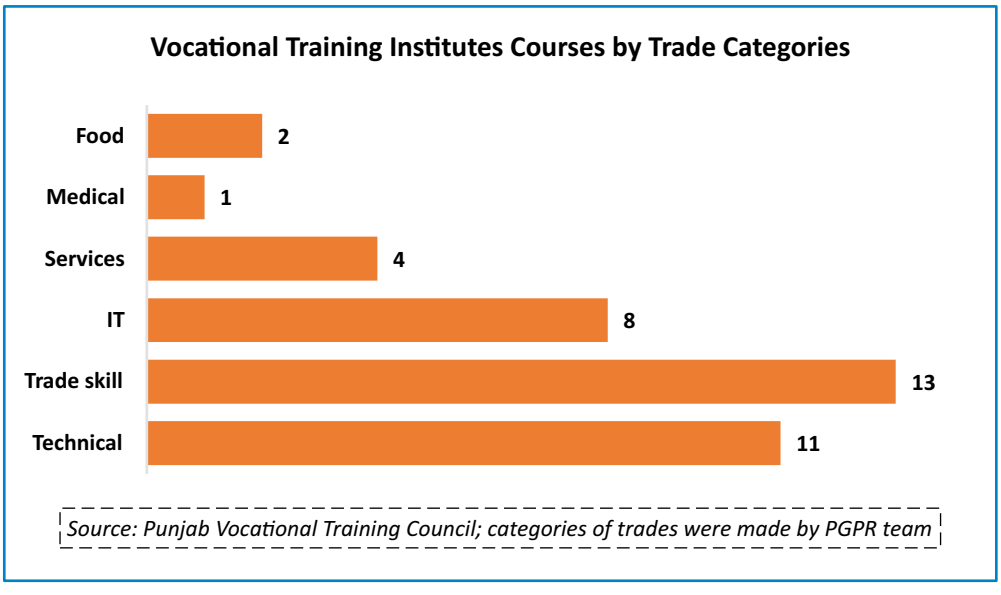


Figure 5.65

The "technical" category includes courses on electronics, automobile repair, mechanical and industrial electronics. The "IT" category includes courses on teaching the use of computer applications for business, computer soft skills, general IT certificates, web design, etc. The "trade skills" category includes courses on machining & lathing, pipe-fitting and welding.

The "textile" category includes courses on dress-making, embroidery, fashion design, weaving, stitching and more. The "services" category includes beautician training courses as well as courses on assorted clerical work. The "medical" category includes courses on dental and clinical training; and, lastly, the "food" category contains one course on halal butchery and one on cooking.

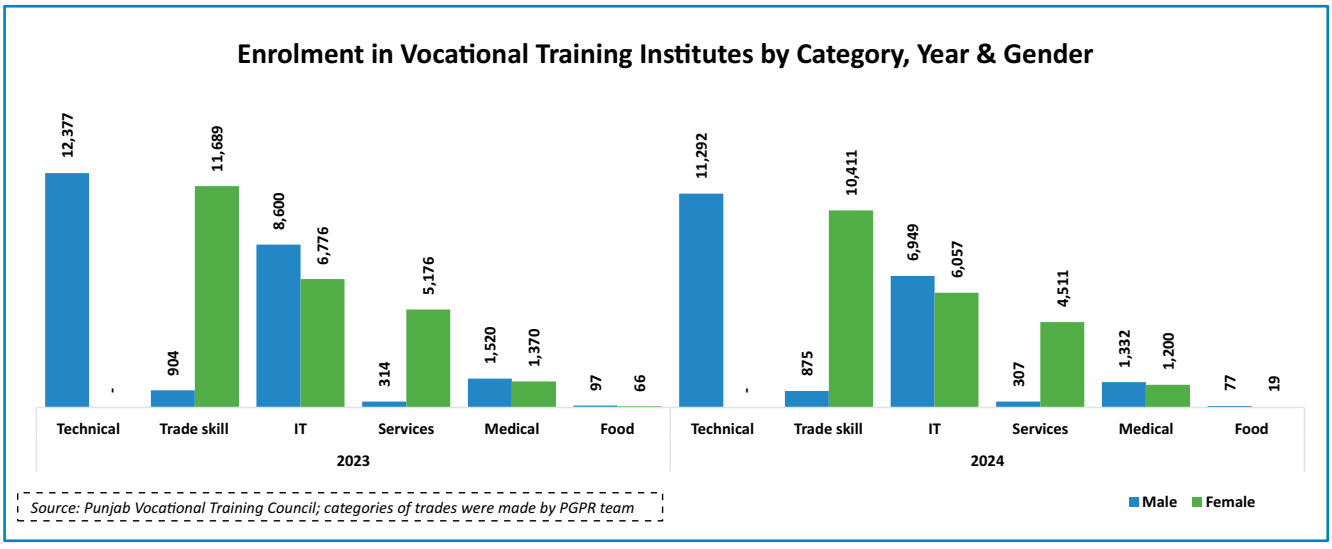


Figure 5.66

In both 2023 and 2024, none of the courses in the technical categories had any female students enrolled.

Additionally, there was a decrease in the enrolment of women in IT-related courses. In 2023, there were 8,600 male students enrolled IT-related courses, and 6,776 female students (GPI of 0.8). In 2024, there were 6,949 male enrolled students and 6,057 female enrolled students (GPI of 0.9).

Although total enrolment in IT-related courses declined, in line with the overall reduction in enrolment in PVTC's courses, the gender gap in enrolment improved slightly.

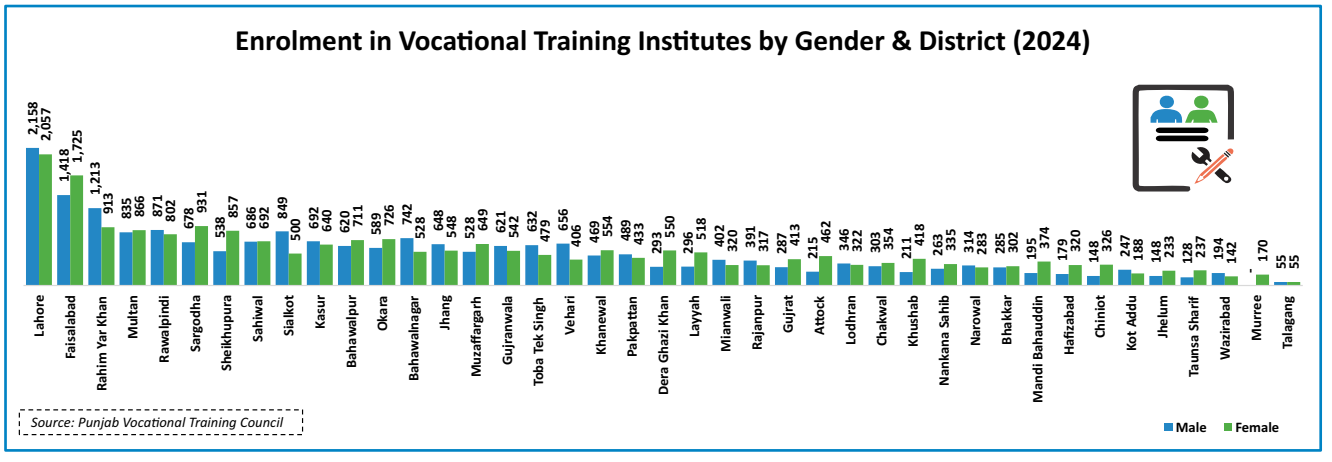


Figure 5.67

The districts with the highest enrolment in VTIs were Lahore, Faisalabad and Rahim Yar Khan. While the districts with the lowest VTI enrolment were Wazirabad, Murree and Talagang.

5.3.5.2.4 Graduates from PVTC Vocational Training Institutes

The overall number of graduates from PVTC's courses has declined by 26.6 percent, from 45,284 graduates in 2023 to 33,227 graduates in 2024.

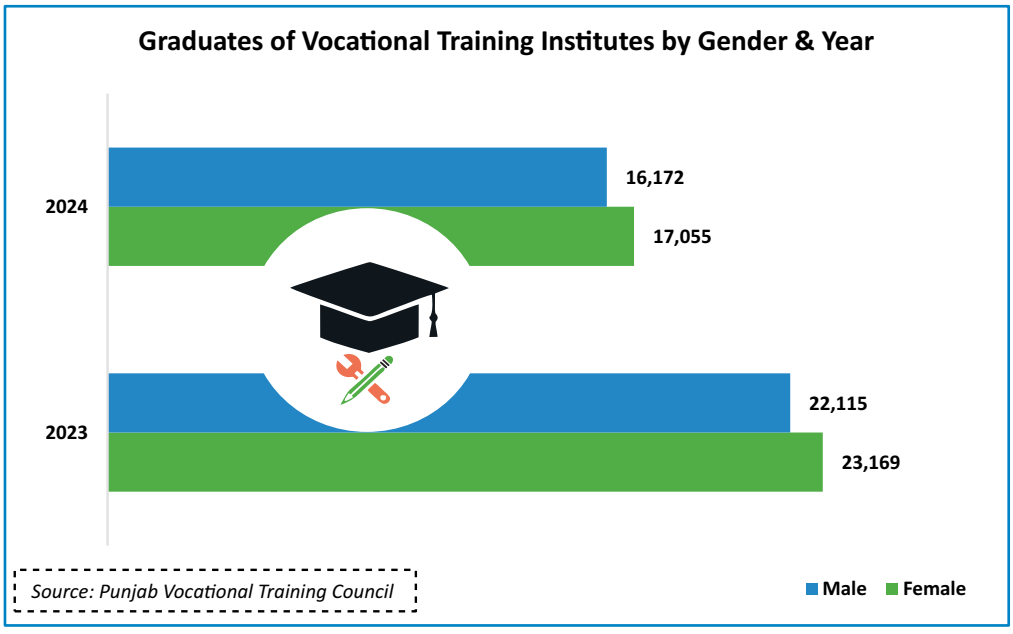


Figure 5.68

The number of male graduates declined by 26.4 percent, from 23,169 male graduates in 2023 to 17,055 male graduates in 2024. The number of female graduates declined by 26.9 percent from 22,115 female graduates in 2023 to 16,172 female graduates in 2024.

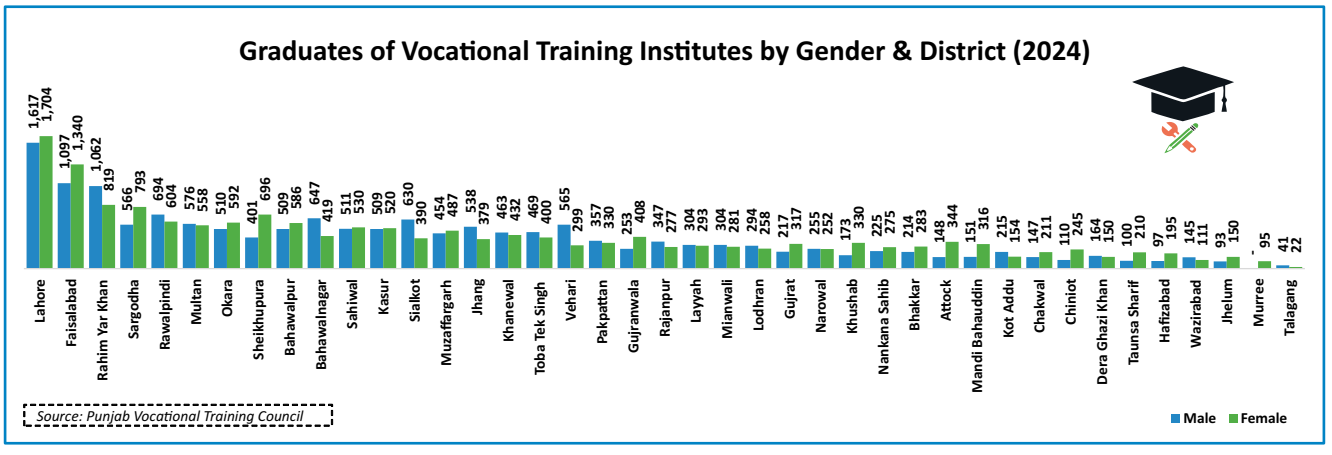


Figure 5.69

However, the GPI of PVTC graduates only changed marginally, going from 1.0 in 2023 to 1.1 in 2024. In 2024, GPI in favour of male students was highest in Vehari, where there were 266 more male graduates of PVTC than female graduates (GPI of 0.5); the GPI was most in favour of women in Sheikhupura, where there were 295 more female PVTC graduates than male graduates (GPI of 1.7).

The districts with the highest number of graduates were Lahore, Faisalabad and Rahim Yar Khan, whereas the districts with the fewest graduates were Jhelum, Murree and Talagang.

5.3.6 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education relates directly to the special issue highlighted in PGPR 2023 & 2024: the gender digital gap. Education for STEM-related courses covers ICT access and literacy, as well as a host of other technical areas, such as engineering, mathematics, natural sciences and computer sciences.

This section will examine the data available on STEM education as it is imparted across Punjab's various government and some private institutions.

5.3.6.1 ICT and STEM-Centric Facilities in Public Schools

An important component of schools' facilities are those that cater to STEM education, such as labs for physics, biology and chemistry. Also important are ICT facilities, namely internet access and computer labs, that have a bearing on the gender digital divide.

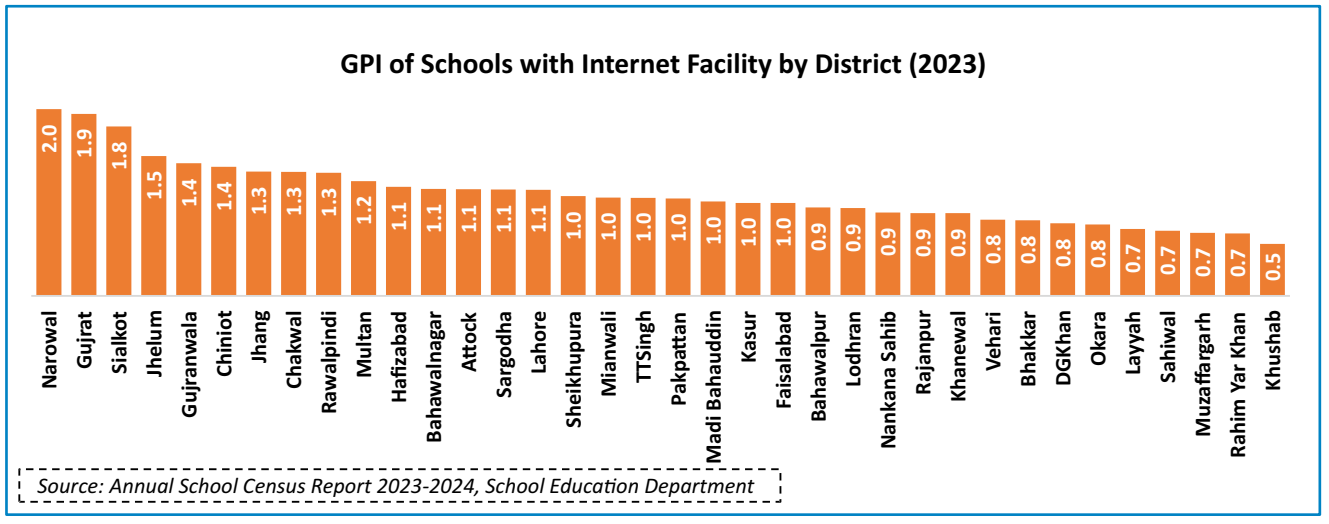


Figure 5.70

In Punjab, internet connectivity is available at all levels of public schools, i.e. from primary, all the way up to higher secondary schools. However, out of all Masjid Maktabs, only one in Sheikhupura had access to the internet.

The GPI for public school internet access was highest overall in the districts of Narowal, Gujrat and Sialkot, with internet access GPIs of 2.0, 1.9 and 1.8, respectively. This GPI was lowest in Muzaffargarh, Rahim Yar Khan and Khushab, with GPIs of 0.7, 0.7 and 0.5, respectively.

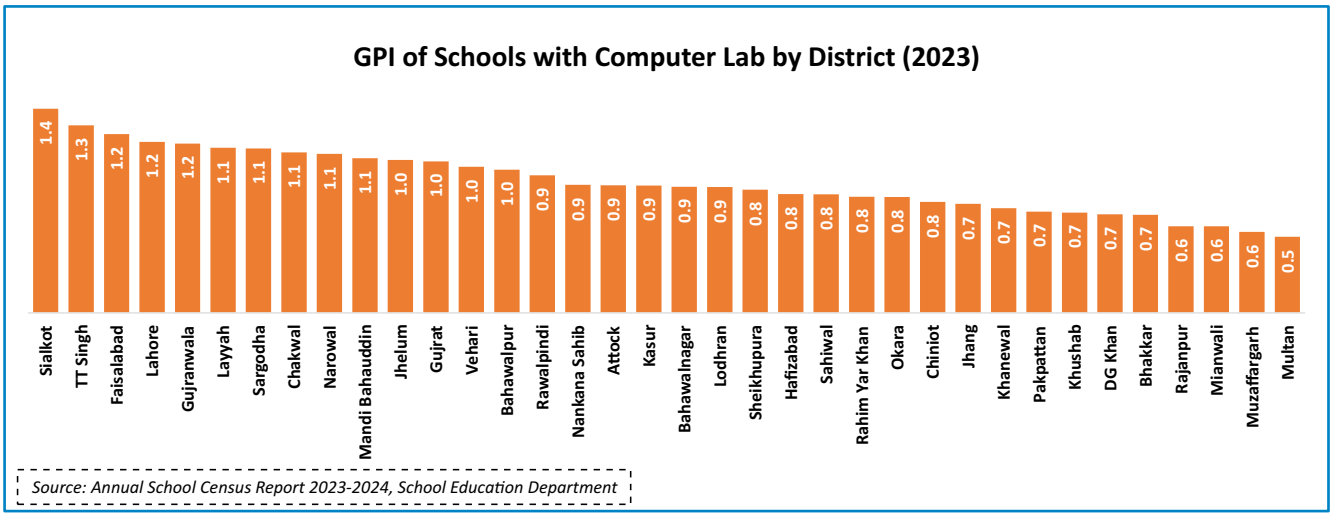


Figure 5.71

Unlike internet access, computer labs were not available in any public primary school or in any Masjid Maktab in Punjab.

The districts with the highest GPI for public school computer labs were Sialkot (1.4), Toba Tek Singh (1.3) and Faislabad (1.2). This GPI was lowest in Mianwali (0.6), Muzaffargarh (0.6) and Multan (0.5).

All STEM facilities, namely labs for the natural sciences,were available only in high and higher secondary schools in Punjab.

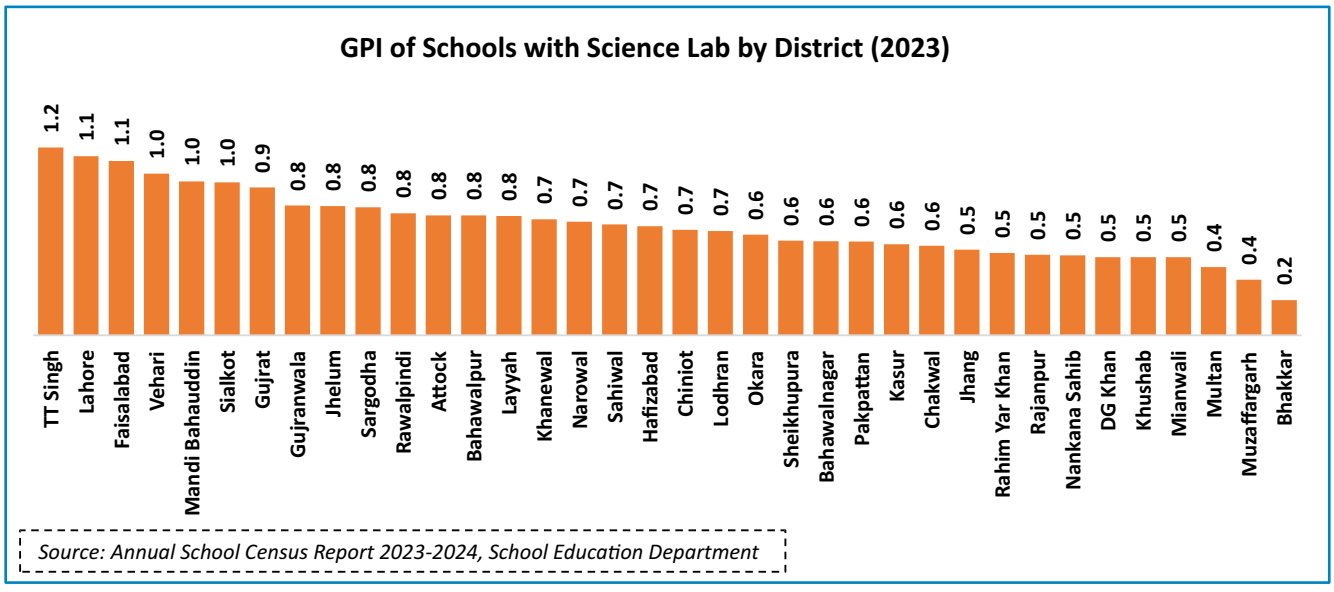


Figure 5.72

The districts with the highest GPIs for the availability of science labs in public schools were Toba Tek Singh (1.2), Lahore (1.1) and Faisalabad (1.1), while lowest GPI districts were Multan (0.4), Muzaffargarh (0.4) and Bhakkar (0.2).

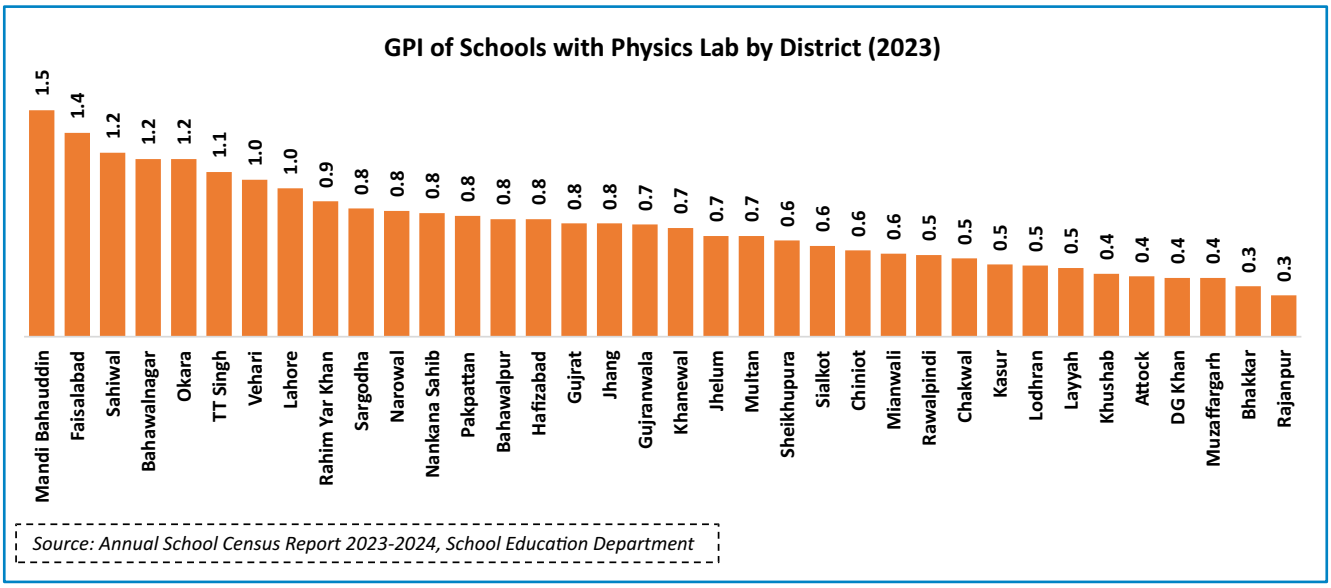


Figure 5.73

The districts with the highest GPIs for the availability of physics labs in public schools were Mandi Bahauddin (1.5), Faisalabad (1.4) and Sahiwal (1.2) while lowest GPI districts were Muzaffargarh (0.4), Bhakkar (0.3) and Rajapur (0.3).

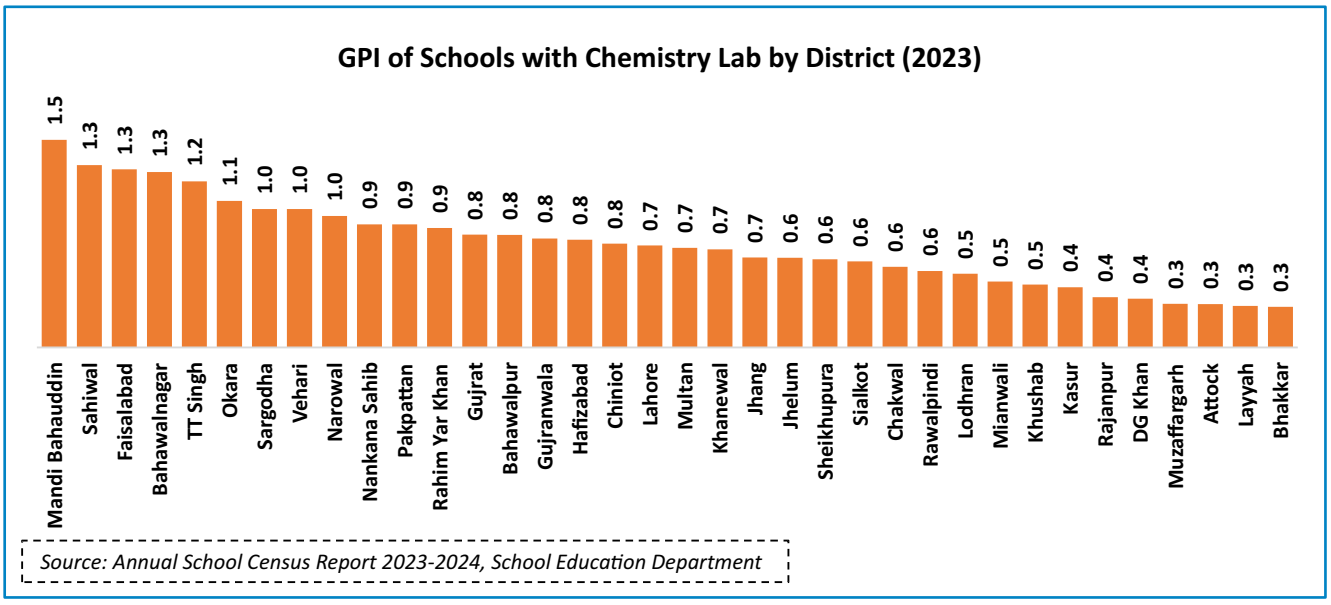


Figure 5.74

The districts with the highest GPIs for the availability of chemistry labs in public schools were Mandi Bahauddin (1.5), Sahiwal (1.3) and Faisalabad (1.3), while lowest GPI districts were Attock, Layyah and Bhakkar, of which had a GPI of 0.3.

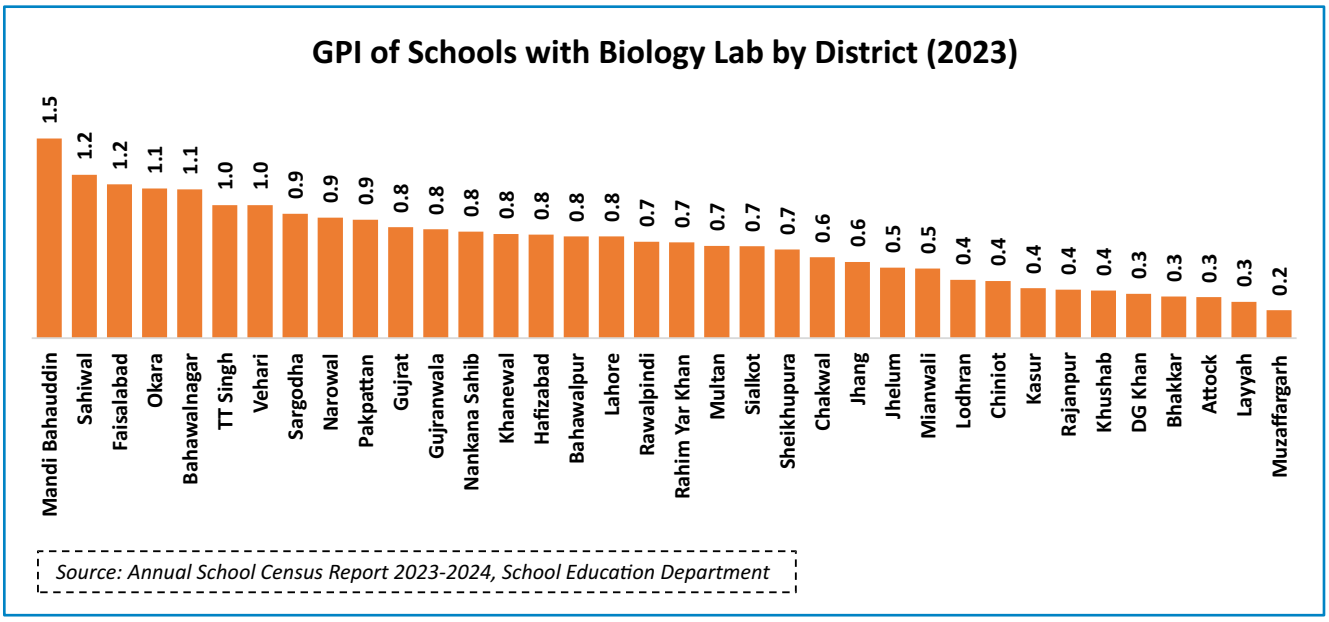


Figure 5.75

The districts with the highest GPIs for the availability of biology labs in public schools were, once again, Mandi Bahauddin (1.5), Sahiwal (1.2) and Faisalabad (1.2), while lowest GPI districts were Attock (0.3), Layyah (0.3) and Muzaffargarh (0.2).

5.3.6.2 STEM at Public Higher Education Department Colleges

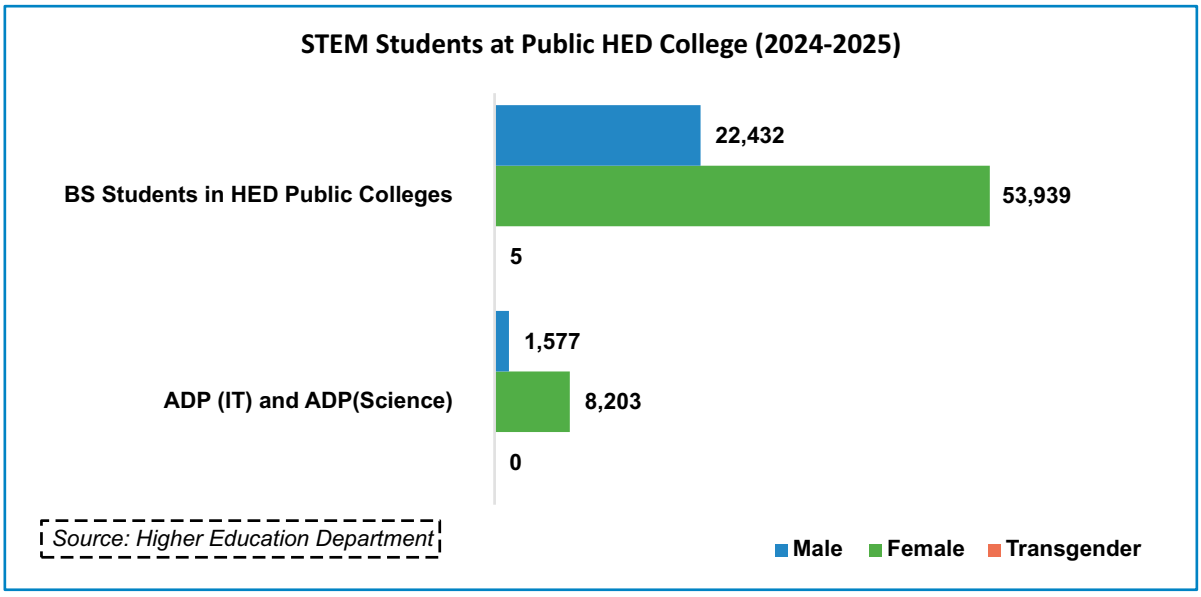


Figure 5.76

In 2024-2025, there were 86,156 students at public colleges under the HED who were taking STEM-relevant courses. Out of these students, 24,009 were male and 62,142 were female students (GPI of 2.6). The vast majority of these students (76,376 students, or 88.7 percent) were receiving this STEM education as part of B.S. programs.

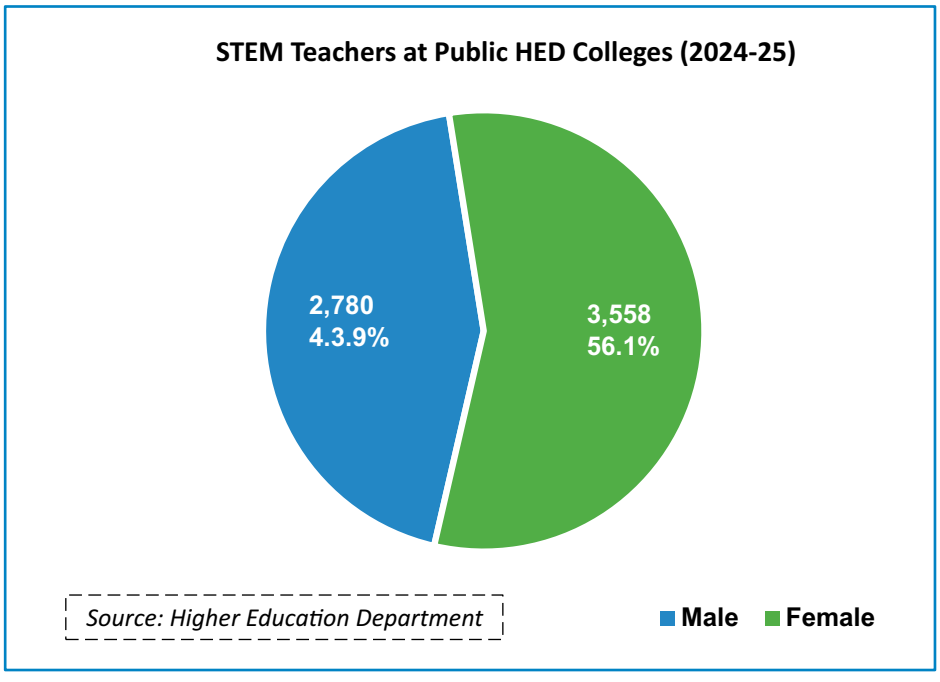


Figure 5.77

The number of teachers that taught these STEM subjects stood at 6,338 teachers, of which 2,780 were male and 3,558 were female.

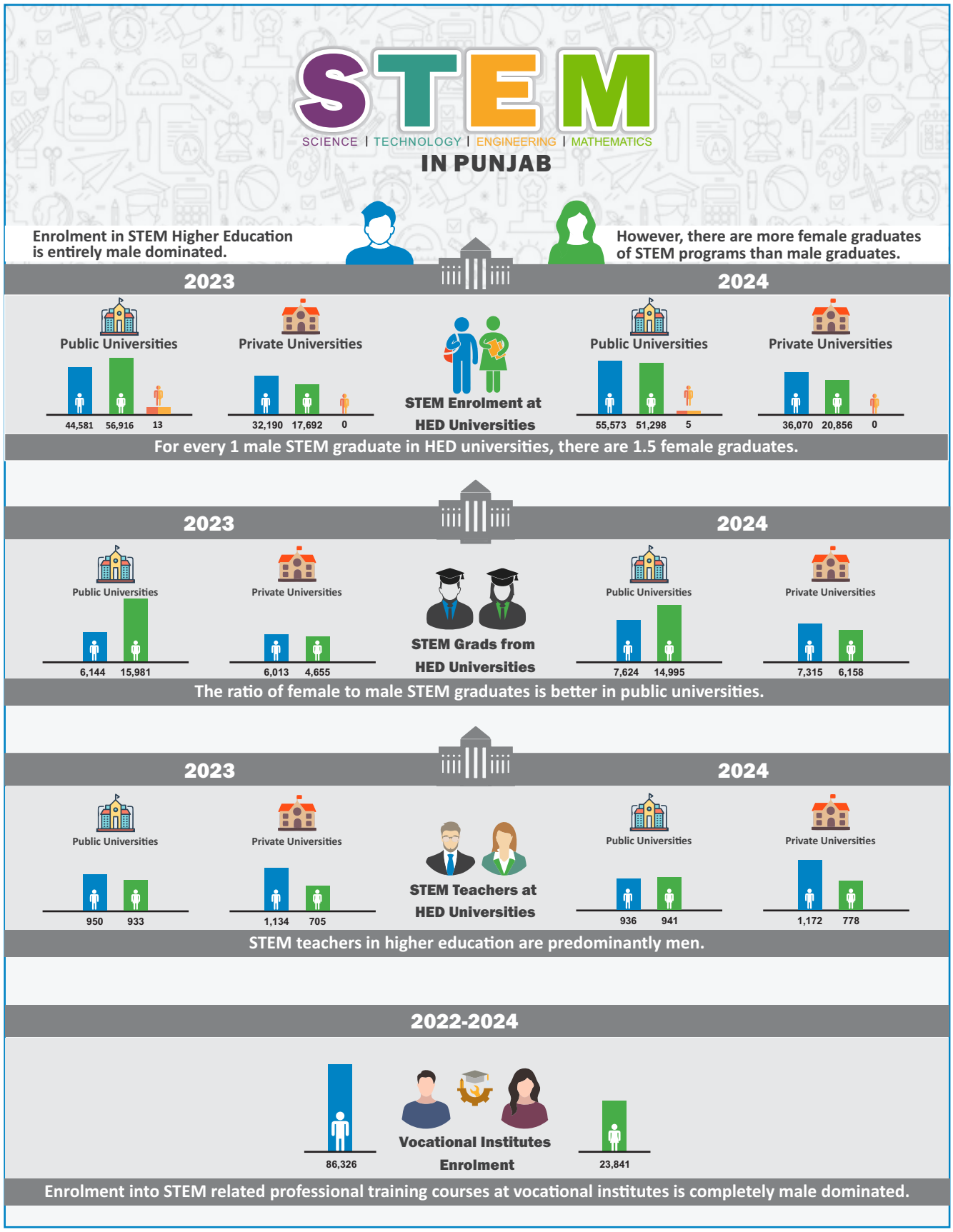

STEM
SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | MATHEMATICS
IN PUNJAB
Enrolment in STEM Higher Education is entirely male dominated.
However, there are more female graduates of STEM programs than male graduates.
2023
2024
Public Universities
Private Universities
44,581 56,916 13
32,190 17,692 0
STEM Enrolment at HED Universities
55,573 51,298 5
36,070 20,856 0
For every 1 male STEM graduate in HED universities, there are 1.5 female graduates.
2023
2024
Public Universities
Private Universities
6,144 15,981
6,013 4,655
STEM Grads from HED Universities
7,624 14,995
7,315 6,158
The ratio of female to male STEM graduates is better in public universities.
2023
2024
Public Universities
Private Universities
950 933
1,134 705
STEM Teachers at HED Universities
936 941
1,172 778
STEM teachers in higher education are predominantly men.
2022-2024
86,326
Vocational Institutes Enrolment
23,841
Enrolment into STEM related professional training courses at vocational institutes is completely male dominated.

Figure 5.78

5.3.6.3 STEM Education and Vocational Training

As part of the Chief Minister Skill Development Initiative, the following demand-driven IT-centric courses were offered by TEVTA during 2023-24, with each course lasting three months.

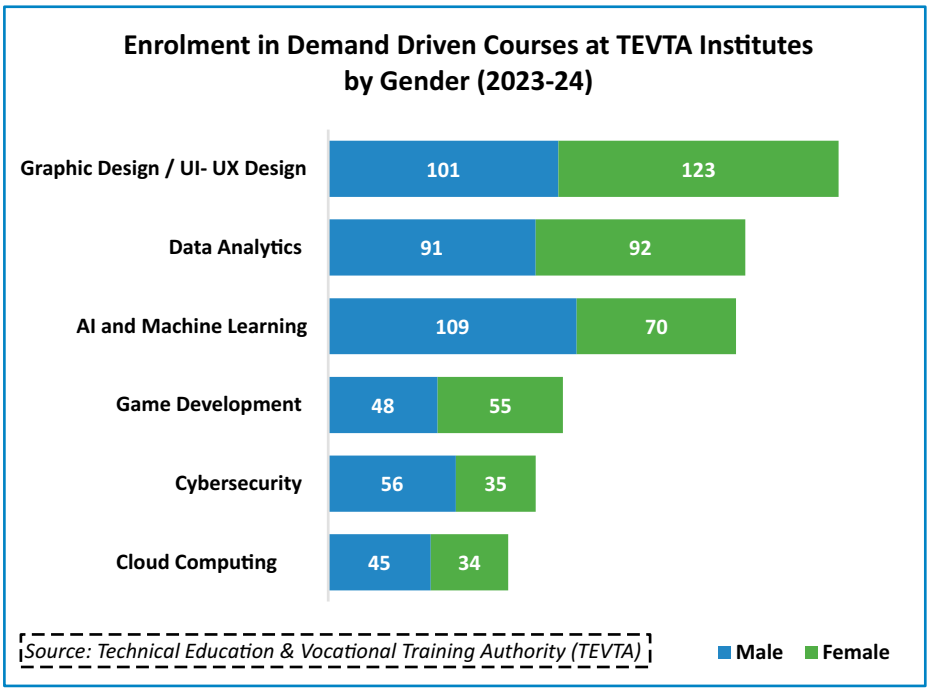


Figure 5.79

In the case of these demand-driven courses , progress in bridging the gender digital gap in Punjab is mixed, as the overall GPI for all six courses was 0.9, with a total of 450 male students and 409 female students.

5.4 Quality of Education in Punjab

5.4.1 Transition and Retention Rates in Public Schools – 2021 to 2023

School transition is when a student moves from one level of schooling to the next.

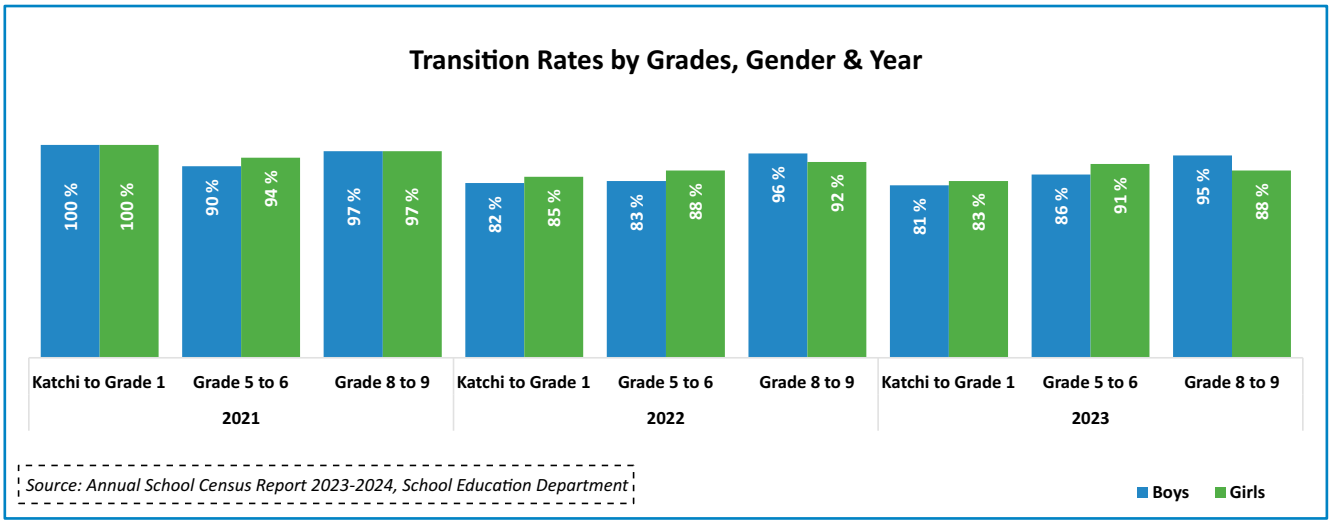


Figure 5.80

In Punjab, there are three school transitions that are officially recorded: from Katchi to Grade 1, from Grade 5 to Grade 6 and then from Grade 8 to Grade 9.

The official data on all transition rates shows that they have declined across the board, from 2021 to 2023. At the first two levels, the transition rates for boys and girls are similar or equal. However, the transition rate from Grade 8 to Grade 9, has fallen more for girls than for boys. This suggests worsening gender parity in public schools during the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9.

In contrast to school transition, school retention is the ability of the education system to keep a student attending school until they graduate.

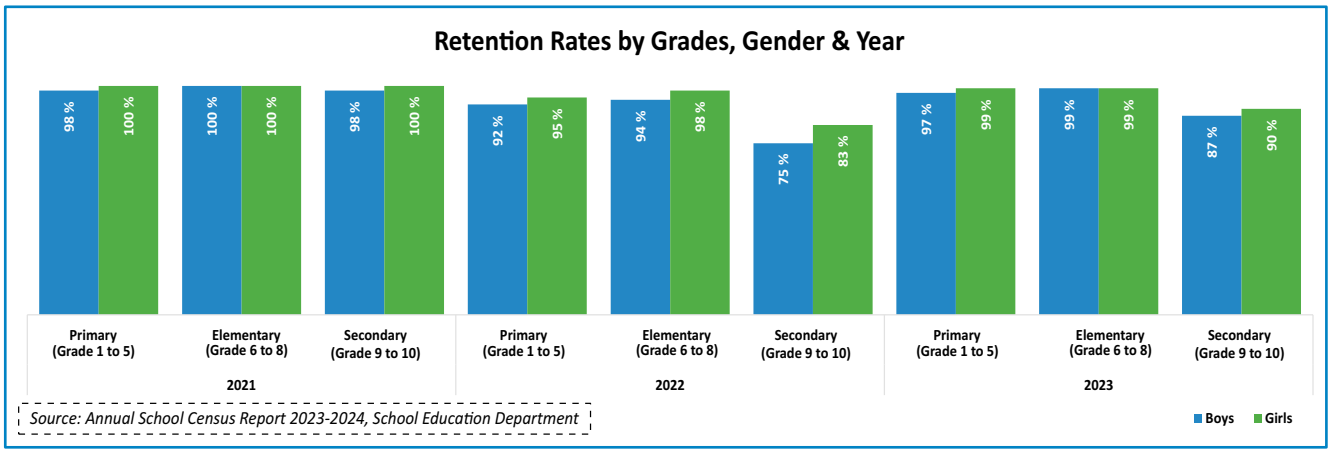


Figure 5.81

For school retention as well, there are three levels officially recorded by Punjab: Primary, Elementary and Secondary.

Just as in the case of school transition, school retention in public schools across Punjab appears to have declined from 2021 to 2023. However, unlike school transition rates, school retention rates appear to be higher for girls at every level, throughout the stated period.

Taken together, then, the data indicates that girls tend to slip through the cracks of the education system more than boys; but the girls who stay in school, see it through to graduation.

5.4.2 Learning Levels

Data for students' overall level of learning in various subject comes from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Punjab 2023, which surveys children aged 5-16 years and measures their learning levels in Urdu, English and Arithmetic.

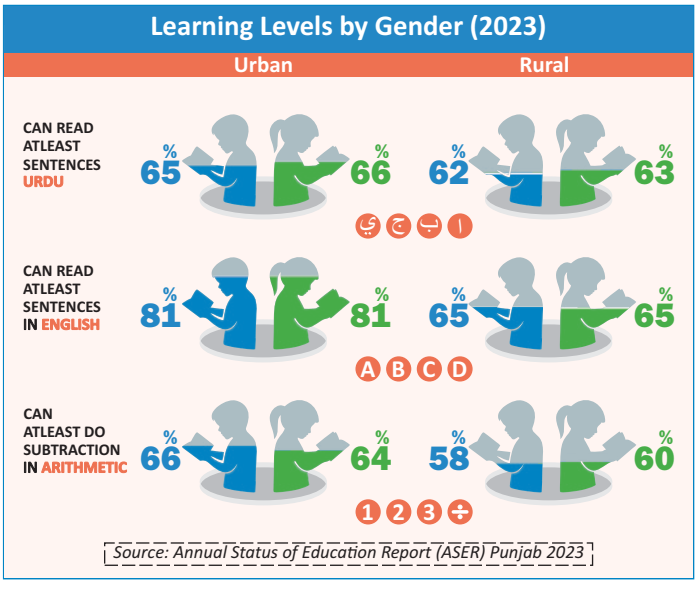


Figure 5.82

5.4.3 Teacher Availability

5.4.3.1 Teachers in Formal Public Schools

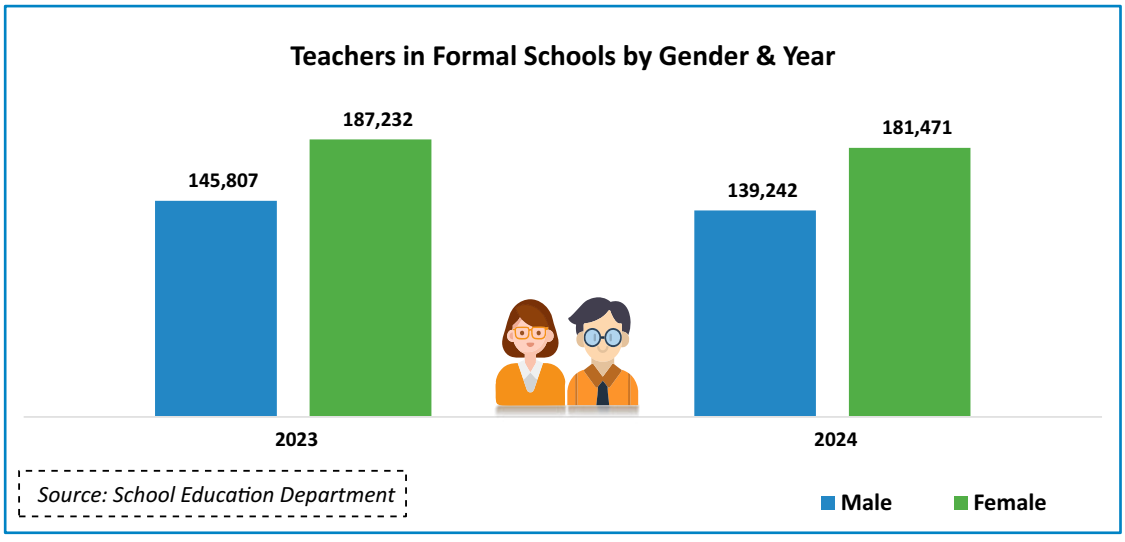


Figure 5.83

In 2024, the total number of teachers in Punjab's public schools decreased by 3.7 percent to 320,684 teachers, 139,217 of which were male (4.5 percent less than in 2023) and 181,467 were female (3.1 percent less than in 2024). The GPI for teachers in 2024 was 1.3, the same as in 2023.

The reduction in the total number of formal public schools in Punjab between 2023 and 2024 impacted public primary schools the most. Consequently, enrolment in public primary schools was also the most impacted.

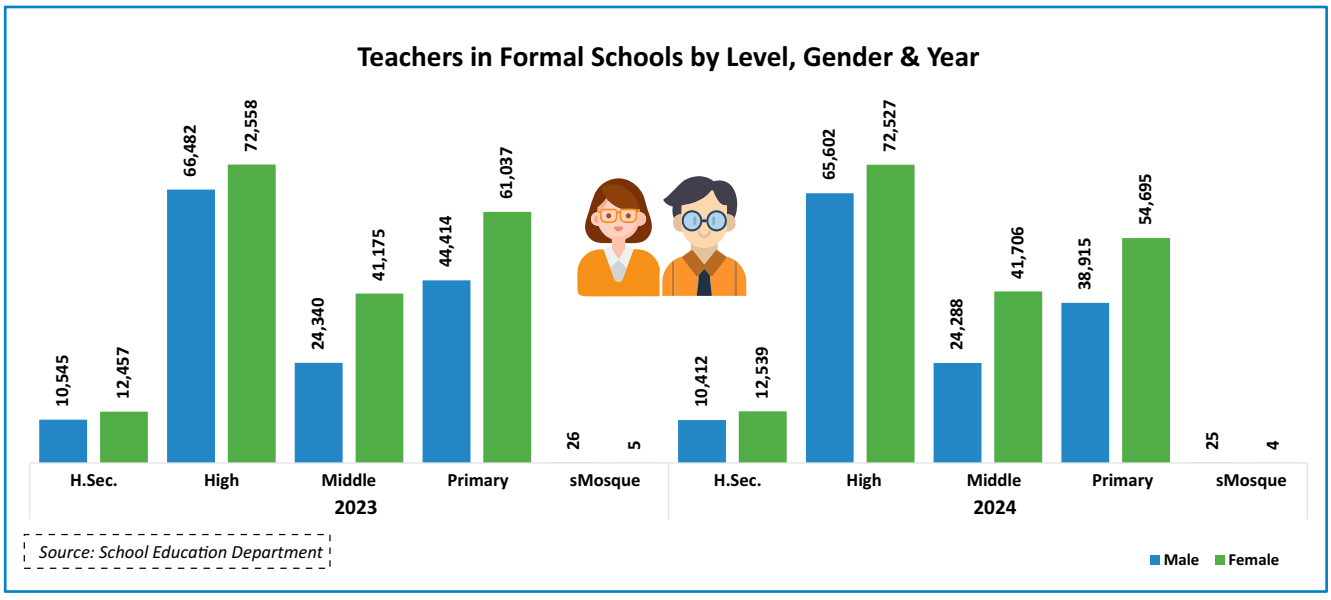


Figure 5.84

The number of primary school teachers in Punjab's public schools fell by 11.2 percent, from 105,451 teachers in 2023 to 93,610 teachers in 2024. In 2024, the number of male teachers fell by 12.4 percent to 38,915 teachers, whereas the number of female teachers fell by 10.4 percent to 54,695 teachers; the teacher GPI, however, remained unchanged at 1.4. Overall teacher availability at public middle schools, high schools and higher secondary schools was minimally affected in 2024 compared to 2023.

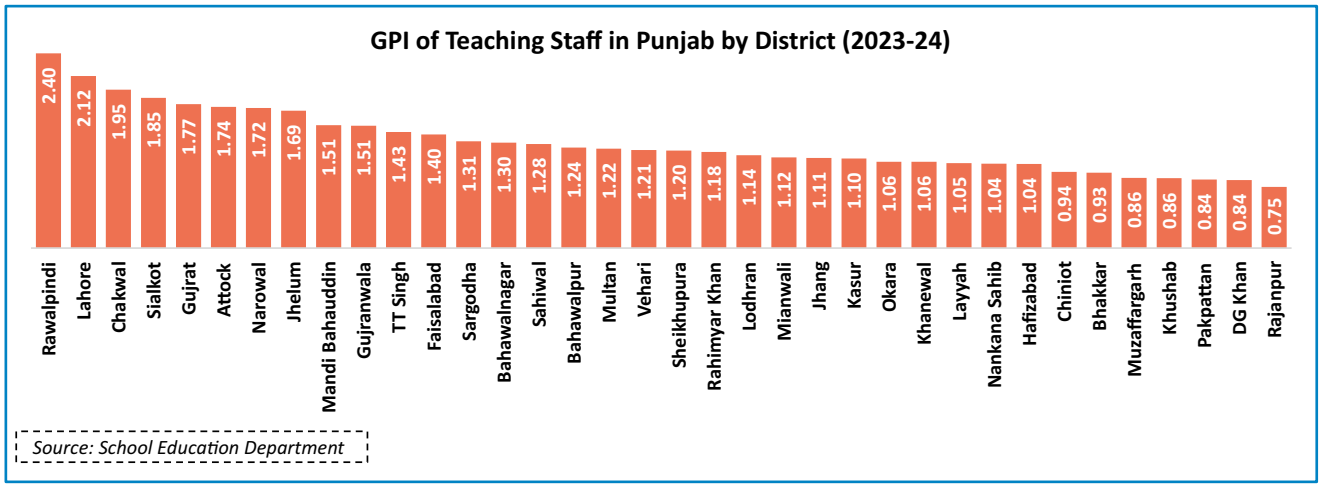


Figure 5.85

A district-wise view of parity in teacher availability reveals that Rawalpindi, Lahore and Chakwal had the highest GPIs in overall public-school teaching staff in Punjab. The districts with the lowest GPIs were Pakpattan (0.8), D.G. Khan (0.8) and Rajanpur (0.8).

5.4.3.2 Qualifications of Public School Teachers

Examining the data on teacher qualifications for 2023 reveals that there were 329,158 qualified public-school teachers in Punjab, which was 98.8 percent of all 333,039 public school teachers in Punjab.

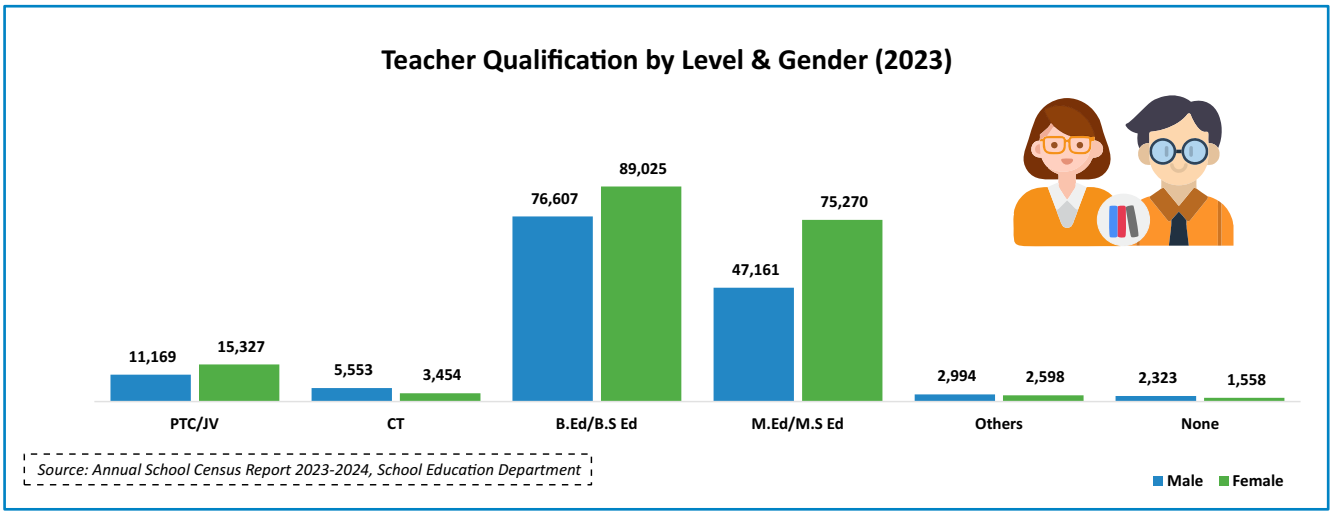


Figure 5.86

The most common qualification among public school teachers across Punjab was B.Ed./B.S. Ed., or an undergraduate degree in the area of education. Around 165,632 teachers had this qualification (50.3 percent of all qualified teachers), of whom 76,607 were male teachers and 89,025 were female teachers (GPI of 1.2).

The second most common qualification among public school teachers was M.Ed./M.S. Ed, which is a postgraduate degree in the field of education. A total of 122,431 public school teachers were qualified at this level (37.2 percent of all qualified teachers). There were 47,161 male teachers with this qualification and 75,270 female teachers with this qualification, i.e. a GPI of 1.6.

It should be noted that around 1.2 percent of all teachers, or 3,881 out of a total of 333,039 teachers, have no qualifications. Out of these latter teachers, 2,323 are male and 1,558 teachers are female (GPI of 0.7).

5.4.3.3 Vacant Teaching Position in Public Schools

Another important aspect of public-school teaching positions is the difference between vacant and sanctioned positions.

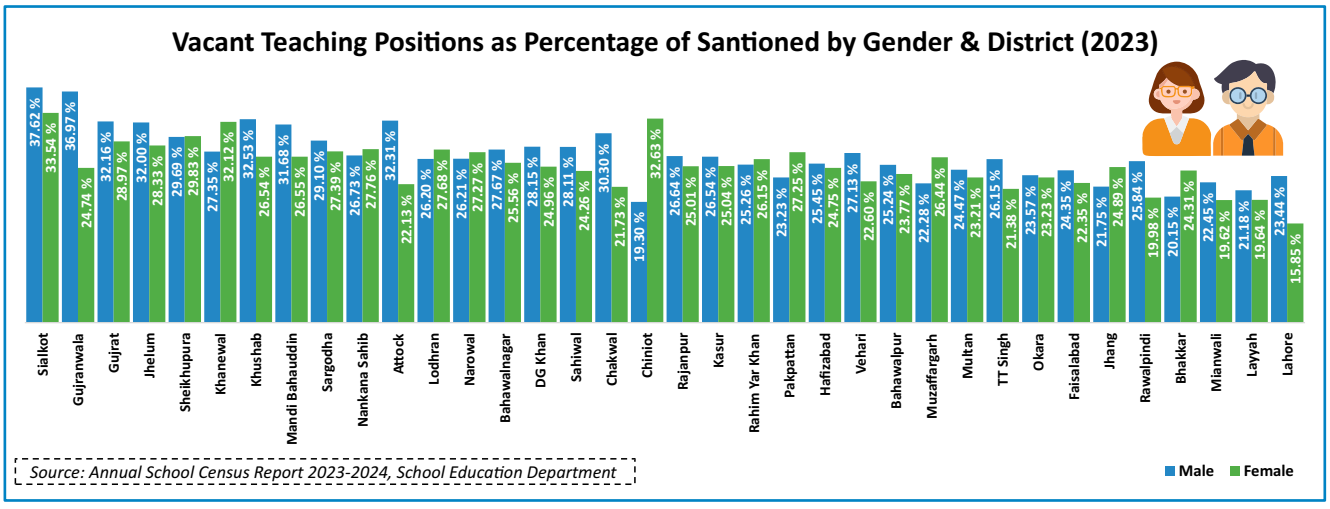


Figure 5.87

In Punjab, the districts in 2023 with the most vacant teaching positions as a proportion of sanctioned positions were Sialkot (35.1 percent vacant teaching positions), Gujranwala (30.8 percent vacant teaching positions) and Gujrat (30.4 percent vacant teaching positions).

The districts with the least vacant teaching positions were Mianwali, Layyah and Lahore, with 21.1 percent, 20.5 percent and 19.2 percent vacant teaching positions, respectively.

5.4.3.4 Student-to-Teacher Ratio in Public Schools

The student-to-teacher (STR) is a widely used metric, backed by scholarly research,[280] in assessing the quality of education systems; it measures the number of students per one teacher. The reasoning behind the STR is that the more students an individual teacher has to attend to, the less attention each students receives, thus limiting the impact of a teacher's efforts; meaning, the lower the ratio, the better.

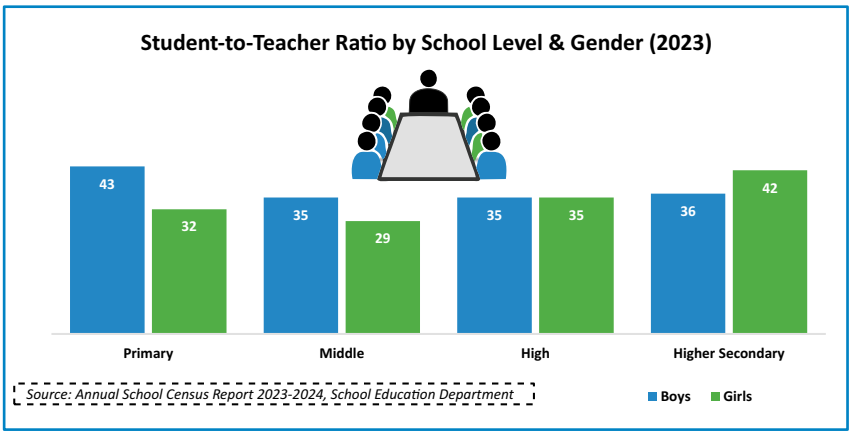


Figure 5.88

In Punjab's formal public schools, there are gendered differences in the STR. In public primary schools, the STR for boys is 43 students per teacher, whereas that for girls is 32 students per teacher. In public high schools, the STR for boys and girls was the same. However, in public higher secondary schools, there were 36 male students per teacher whereas there are 42 female students per teacher.

Disaggregating official STR data by district shows that Chakwal had the lowest overall STR at the primary (20 students per teacher), middle (19 students per teacher) and high school (25 students per teacher) levels. However, at the higher secondary level, Rawalpindi had the lowest STR, at 28 students per teacher; at this level, Chakwal's overall STR is 30 students per teacher.

280 (Koc & Celik, 2015)

Student-to-Teacher Ratio by School Level, District & Gender (2023)

	Primary		Middle		High		Higher Secondary	
District	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Attock	55	25	36	22	31	28	33	37
Bahawalnagar	40	35	29	23	31	30	37	44
Bahawalpur	40	24	26	19	30	29	34	35
Bhakkar	33	32	31	29	36	34	37	37
Chakwal	35	15	28	16	28	23	28	31
Chiniot	39	51	36	42	41	50	38	58
DG Khan	40	32	33	25	35	39	48	54
Faisalabad	55	36	45	36	40	43	44	49
Gujranwala	48	34	38	31	33	38	28	48
Gujrat	45	32	35	24	32	36	33	45
Hafizabad	33	34	33	28	35	37	32	51
Jhang	37	39	35	27	36	38	35	47
Jhelum	34	27	29	23	29	30	32	32
Kasur	45	41	35	34	41	44	43	56
Khanewal	45	64	36	39	36	40	36	48
Khushab	33	23	27	25	29	32	29	46
Lahore	75	30	70	32	45	38	33	34
Layyah	40	29	31	26	34	36	41	44
Lodhran	35	32	26	25	30	30	41	39
Mandi Bahauddin	46	31	40	33	35	40	35	53
Mianwali	35	27	31	24	34	33	30	46
Multan	41	37	35	30	31	34	32	35
Muzaffargarh	42	36	34	26	33	29	44	35
Nankana Sahib	43	31	29	32	30	31	35	42
Narowal	29	25	28	21	27	31	38	33
Okara	40	35	35	33	36	42	30	45
Pakpattan	47	41	37	38	37	40	33	52
Rahim Yar Khan	50	34	38	28	38	36	40	42
Rajanpur	36	30	37	27	37	40	57	49
Rawalpindi	57	18	35	18	32	25	28	29
Sahiwal	57	38	40	34	35	36	36	42
Sargodha	37	39	37	31	33	35	31	44
Sheikhupura	46	31	38	36	38	42	36	65
Sialkot	32	30	28	26	32	34	36	41
TT Singh	49	38	35	35	33	36	44	45
Vehari	43	34	36	29	33	34	34	39

Source: Annual School Census Report 2023-2024

Figure 5.89

The districts with the lowest STR for girls at the primary level are Chakwal (35 boys vs. 15 girls per teacher), Rawalpindi (57 boys vs. 18 girls per teacher) and Khushab (33 boys vs. 23 girls per teacher). The districts with the highest STR for girls at the primary level are Pakpattan (47 boys vs. 41 girls per teacher), Chiniot (39 boys vs 51 girls per teacher) and Khanewal (45 boys vs. 64 girls per teacher).

For middle schools, the districts with the lowest STR for girls are Chakwal (28 boys vs. 16 girls per teacher), Rawalpindi (35 boys vs. 18 girls per teacher) and Bahwalpur (26 boys vs. 19 girls per teacher). The districts with the highest STR for girls at the middle school level are Pakpattan (37 boys vs. 38 girls per teacher), Khanewal (36 boys vs. 39 girls per teacher) and Chiniot (36 boys vs. 42 girls per teacher).

For high schools, the districts with the lowest STR for girls are Chakwal (28 boys vs. 23 girls per teacher), Rawalpindi (32 boys vs. 25 girls per teacher) and Attock (31 boys vs. 28 girls per teacher). The districts with the highest STR for girls at the high school level are Faisalabad (40 boys vs. 43 girls per teacher), Kasur (41 boys vs. 44 girls per teacher) and Chiniot (41 boys vs. 50 girls per teacher).

For higher secondary schools, the districts with the lowest STR for girls are Rawalpindi (29 boys vs. 29 girls per teacher), Chakwal (28 boys vs. 31 girls per teacher) and Jhelum (32 boys and 32 girls per teacher). The districts with the highest STR for girls at the higher secondary school level are Kasur (43 boys vs. 56 girls per teacher), Chiniot (38 boys vs. 58 girls per teacher) and Sheikhupura (36 boys vs. 65 girls per teacher).

5.4.3.5 Teachers in Various Department-specific Schools and Institutions

5.4.3.5.1 Teachers in Punjab Education Foundation Schools

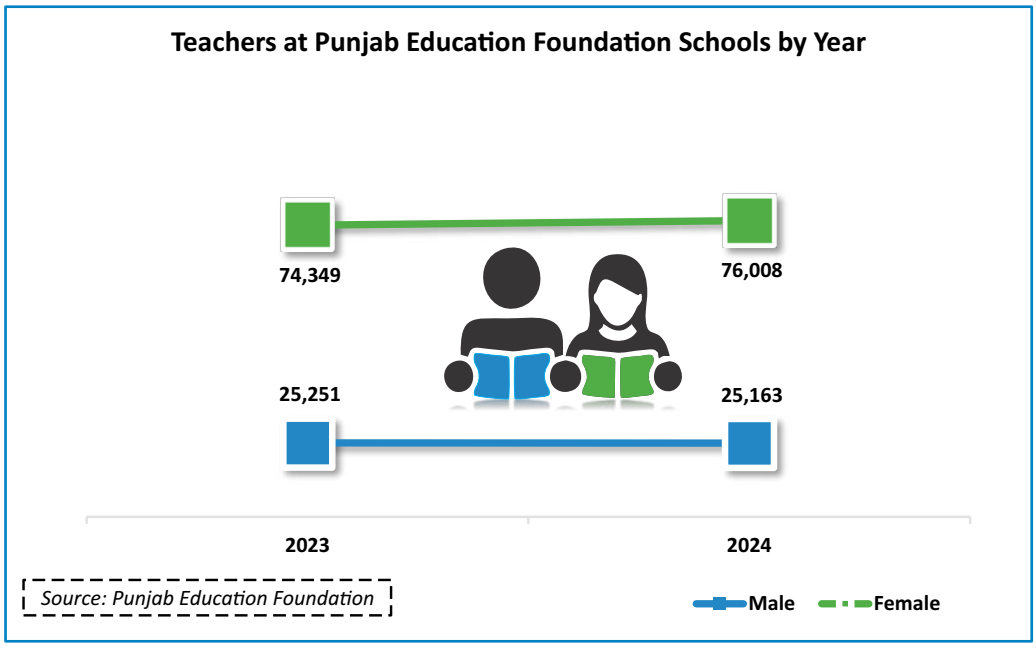


Figure 5.90

The number of teachers in PEF schools across Punjab increased by 1.6 percent, from 99,600 teachers in 2023 to 101,171 teachers in 2024. In both years, female teachers outnumbered male teachers. In 2023, the GPI of teachers at PEF schools was 2.9, which increased to 3.0 in 2024.

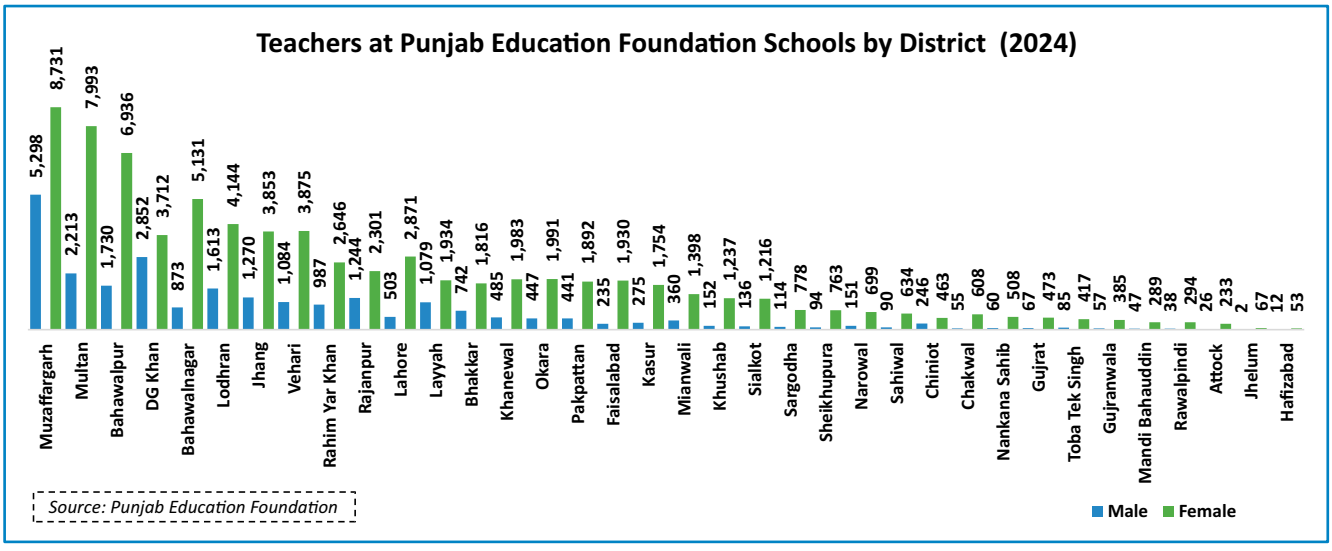


Figure 5.91

The districts with the most PEF teachers were Muzaffargarh, Multan and Bahawalpur. The districts with the least number of PEF teachers were Attock, Jhelum and Hafizabad.

5.4.3.5.2 Teachers in Daanish Schools and Centers of Excellence

The number of teachers in Daanish schools across Punjab increased by 11.5 percent, from 487 teachers in 2023 to 543 teachers in 2024. There was a 14.3 percent increase in the number of male teachers in Daanish schools, from 238 male teachers in 2023 to 272 male teachers in 2024.

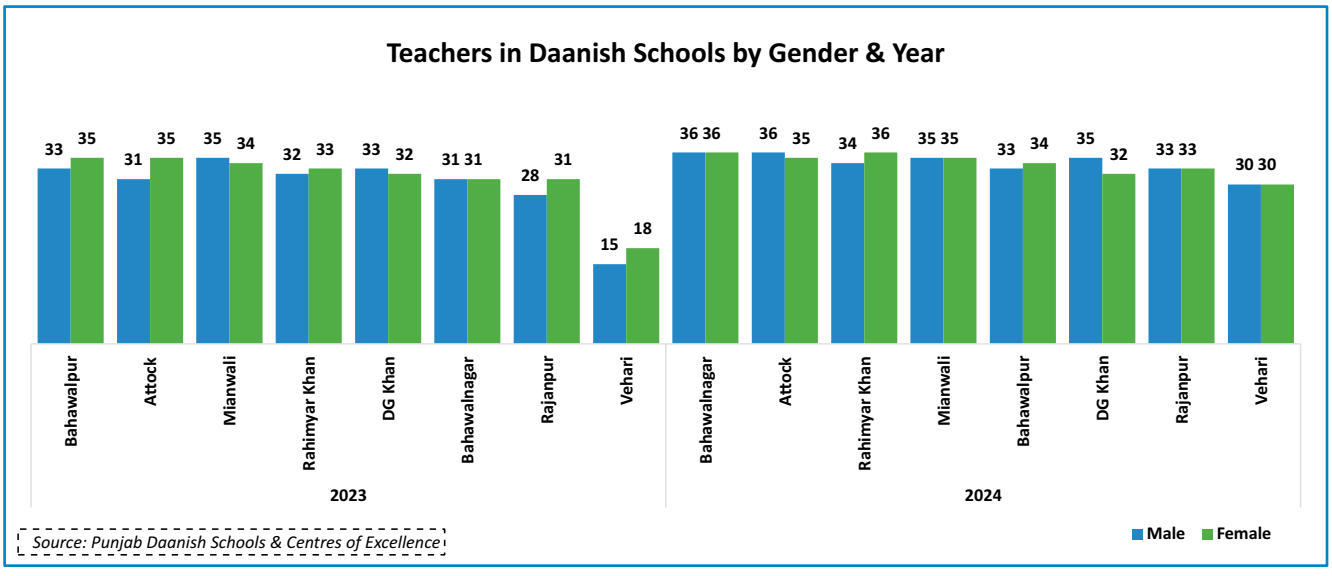


Figure 5.92

The number of female teachers increased by 8.8 percent with a GPI of 1.0 for both years.

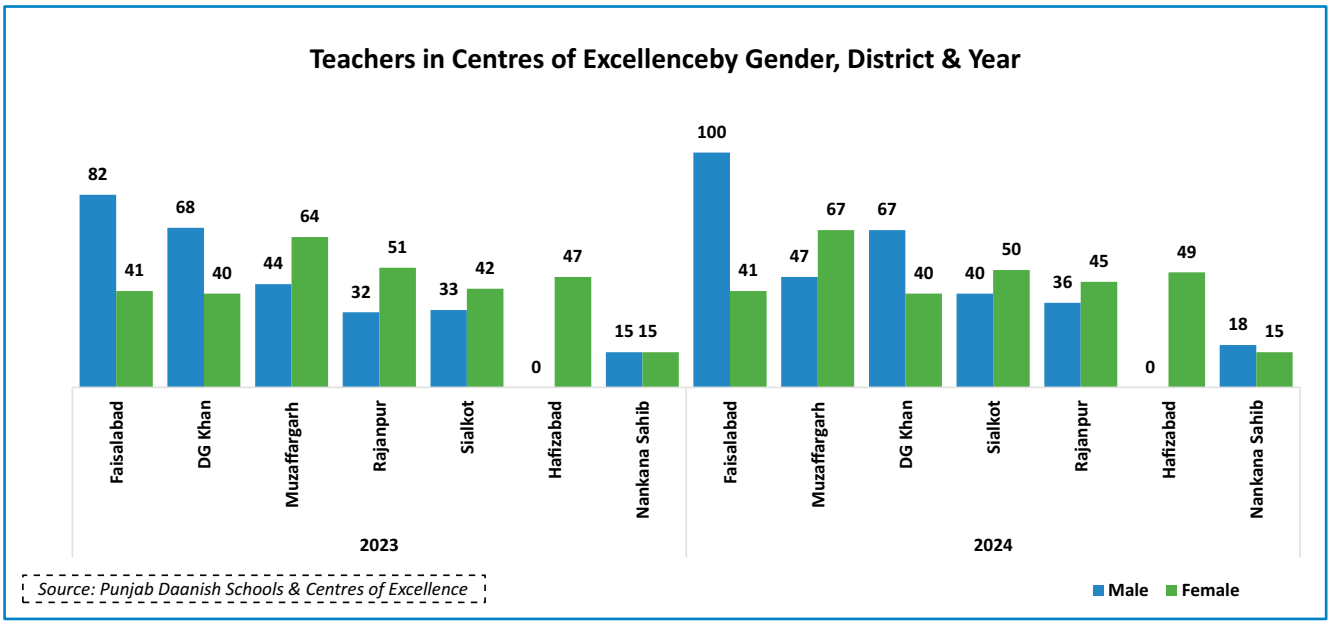


Figure 5.93

The number of teachers at COEs in Punjab increased by 7.1 percent, from 574 teachers in 2023 to 615 teachers in 2024.

5.4.3.5.3 Teachers in Special Education Department Schools

The total staff in schools overseen by the Special Education Department, which includes teaching and non-teaching staff, remained virtually unchanged between 2023 and 2024. Total staff in 2023 was 6,587 people, which fell by a mere 0.5 percent in 2024 to 6,552 people.

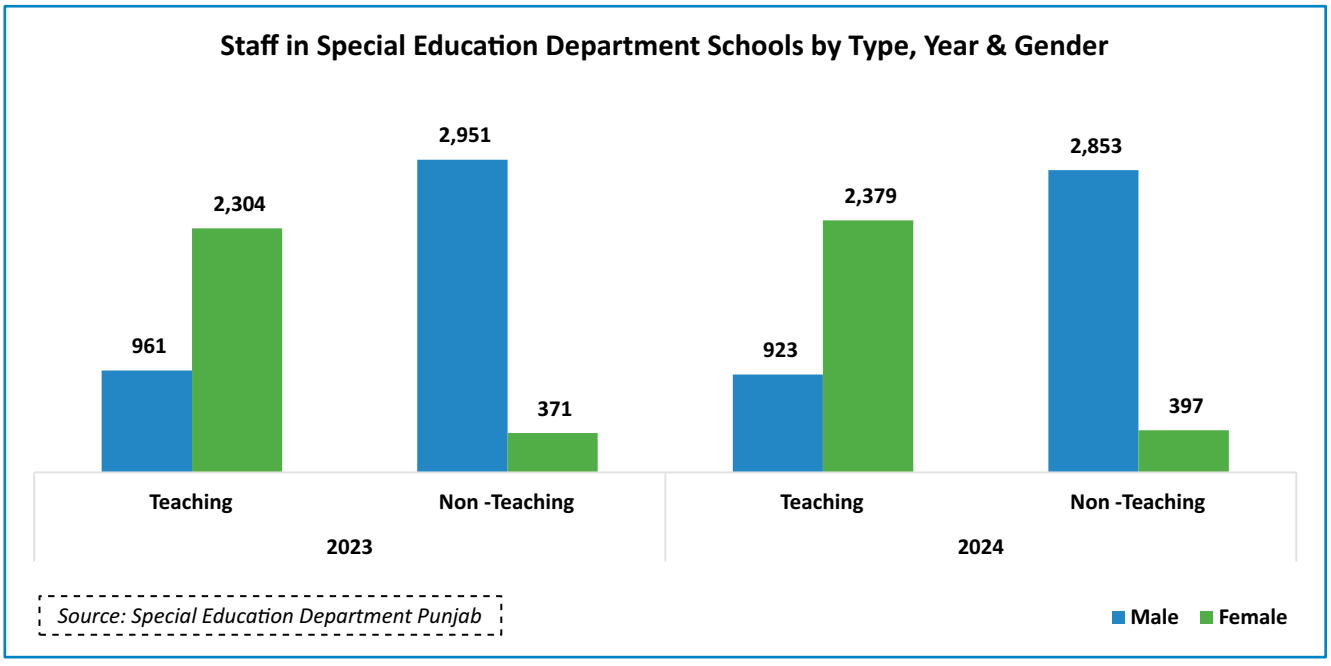


Figure 5.94

A gender breakdown of this data shows that, in both years, the overwhelming majority of non-teaching staff in Special Education Department schools was male, while the opposite was true of teaching staff. Additionally, overall, more male staff was working in Special Education Department schools than female staff with an overall staff GPI of 0.7 in both 2023 and 2024.

In 2023, the teachers' GPI for 2023 came out to 2.4, whereas the non-teaching staff GPI was 0.1. In 2024, the teachers' GPI in 2024 increased to 2.6, but the non-teaching staff GPI remained unchanged at 0.1.

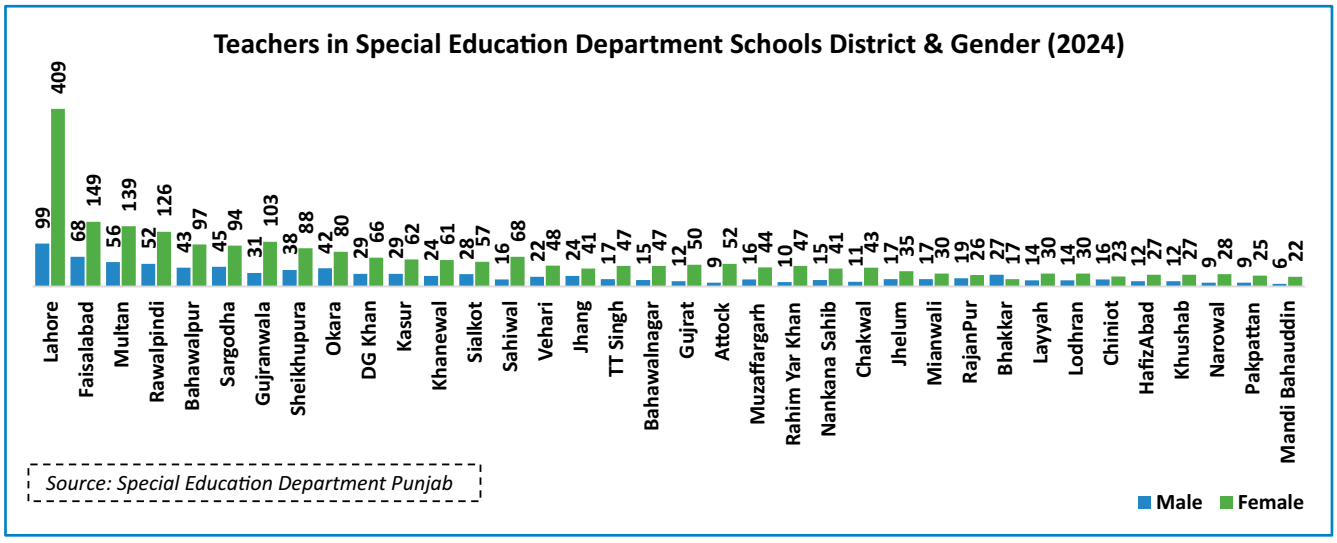


Figure 5.95

The number of teaching staff of the Special Education Department was highest in Lahore, Faisalabad and Mutlan; it was lowest in Narowal, Pakpattan and Mandi Bahauddin.

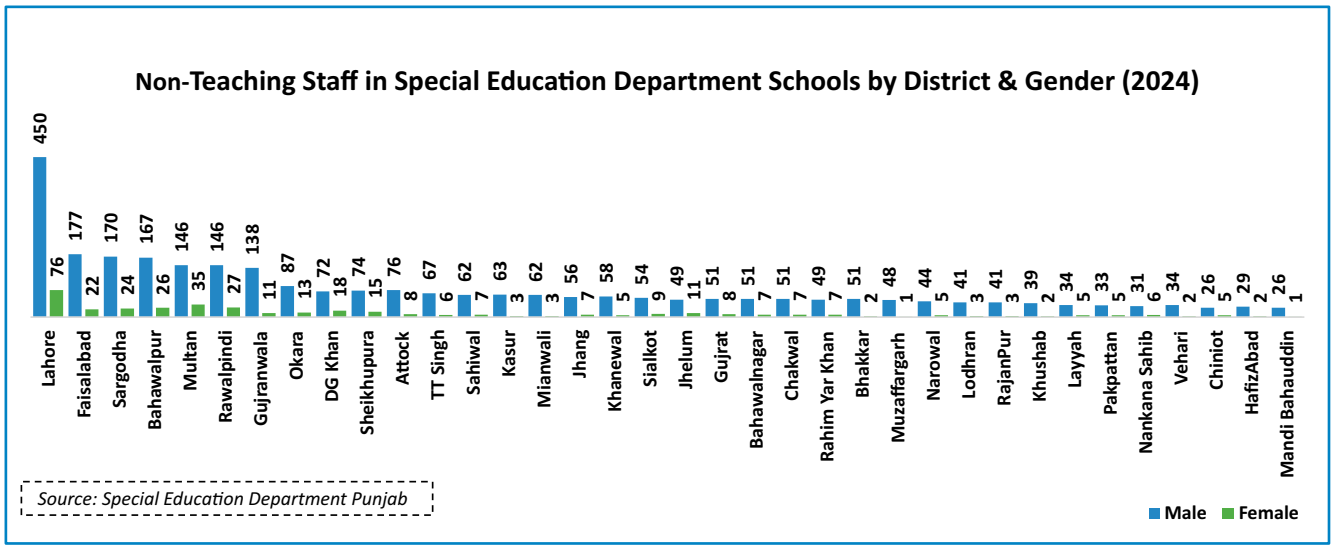


Figure 5.96

On the other than, the number of non-teaching staff employed by the Special Education Department was highest in Lahore, Faisalabad and Sargodha. This number was lowest in Chiniot Hafizabad and Mandi Bahauddin.

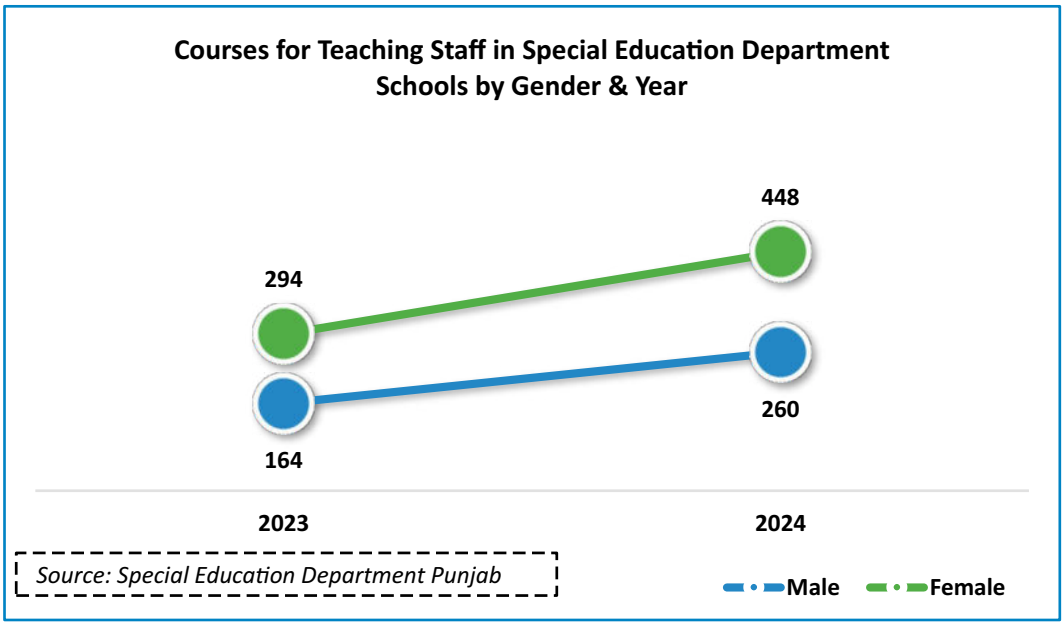


Figure 5.97

The Special Education Department also offers trainings to its staff. The number of staff members who were offered training increased by 54.6 percent, from 458 staff members in 2023 to 708 staff members in 2024. Additionally, the training GPI in 2023 was 1.8 that fell to 1.7 in 2024.

5.4.3.5.4 Teachers in Schools of the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department

According to the data by the L&NFBED, there is one teacher per school in all of their schools. This makes it so that the data for teachers and the data for schools, by type and gender, is the same.

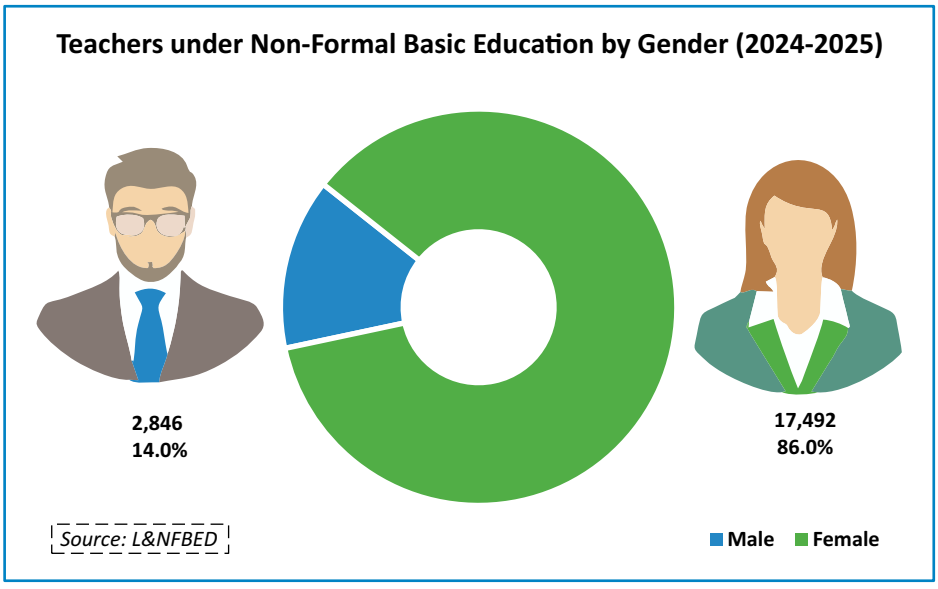


Figure 5.98

Just as for the schools under the L&NFBED, a majority (62.6 percent) of around 12,737 school were NFBE and NFEFS teachers; out of these, 1,614 were male teachers, whereas the remaining 11,123 were female teachers. This makes the non-formal teacher GPI of 6.9.

Disaggregating by district, we see that the districts with the highest number of L&NFBED teachers were Rahim Yar Khan (1,423 teachers), Muzaffargarh (1,262 teachers) and Bahawalpur (1,008 teachers).

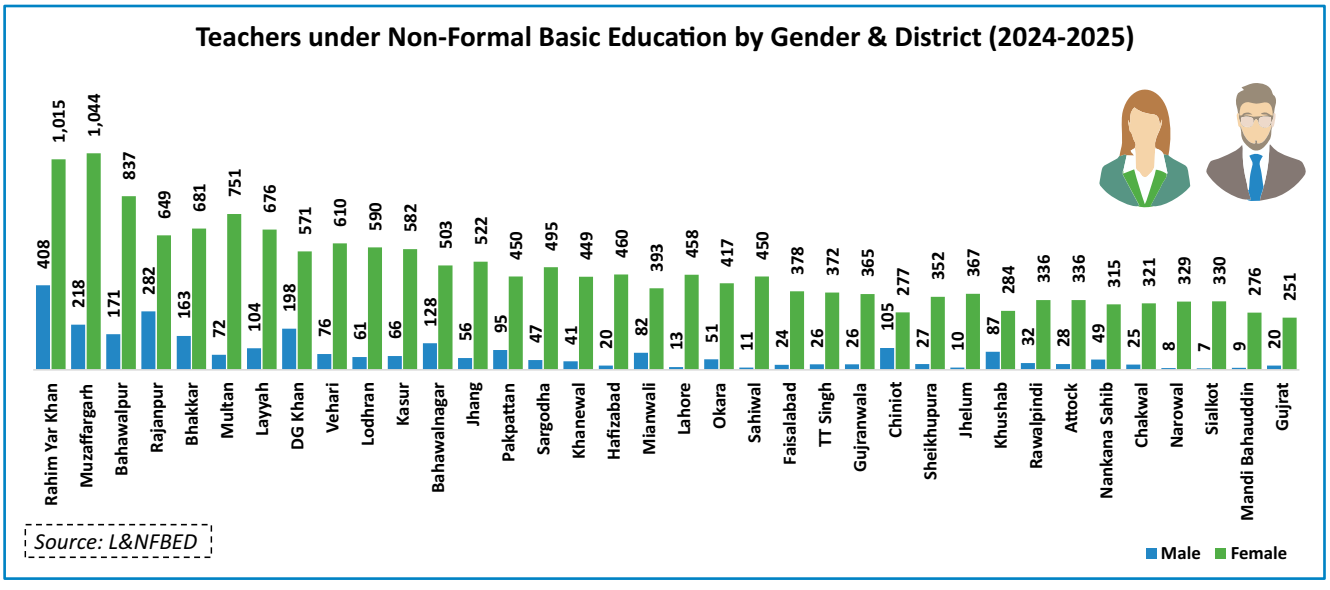


Figure 5.99

The districts with the lowest number of L&NFBED teachers were Gujrat (271 teachers), Mandi Bahauddin (285 teachers) and Sialkot (337 teachers). Notably, the teacher GPIs of these districts show that female teachers far outnumber male teachers.

5.4.3.5.5 Teachers in TEVTA Institutes

The number of teachers available at TEVTA institutes across Punjab saw a decrease of 4.1 percent, from 7,477 teachers in 2023 to 7,168 teachers in 2024.

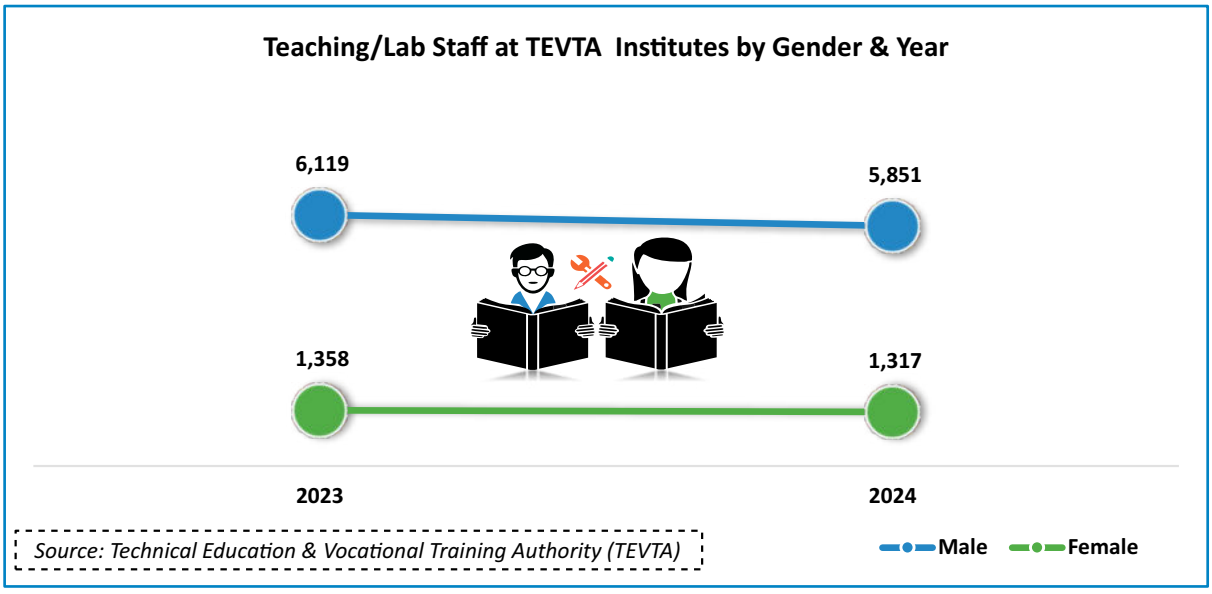


Figure 5.100

The number of male teachers fell by 4.4 percent, from 6,119 male teachers in 2023 to 5,851 male teachers in 2024. The number of female teachers fell by 3.0 percent, from 1,358 female teachers in 2023 to 1,317 female teachers in 2024. The GPI of teachers at TEVTA institutes was 0.2 in both 2023 and 2024, meaning men far outnumber women in teaching roles at TEVTA institutes.

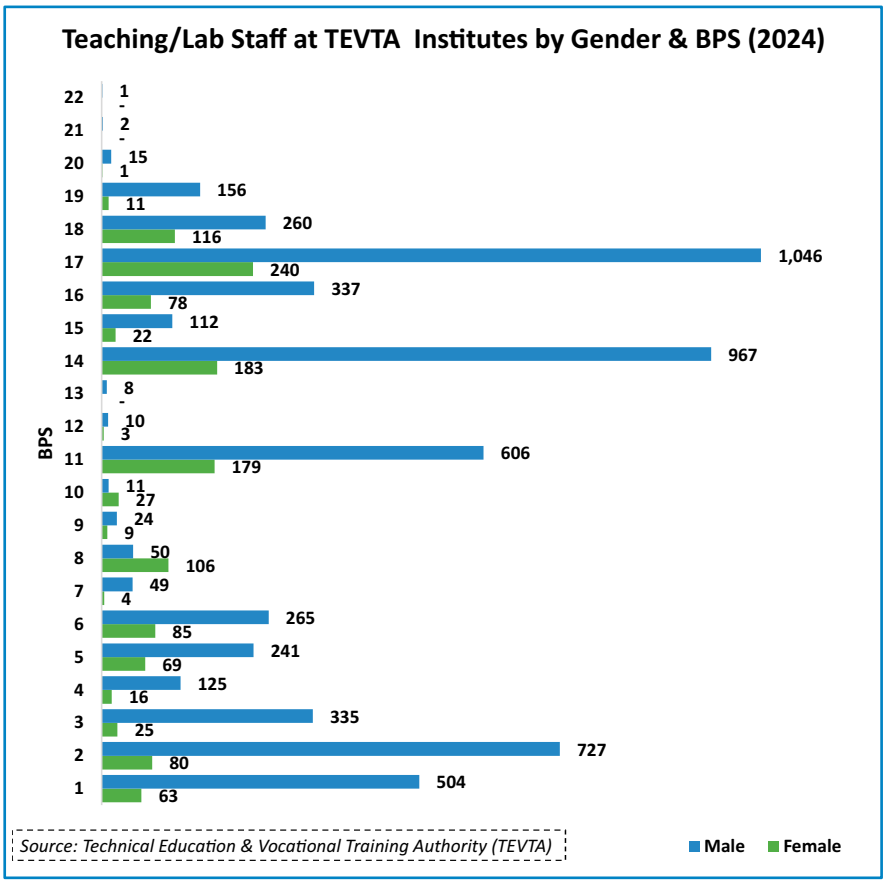


Figure 5.101

Examining data for teachers by pay scale also reveals that at every scale from BPS-1 to BPS-22, male teaching staff far outnumber female teaching staff. The only exceptions to this are BPS-8, where the teacher GPI is 2.1, and BPS-10, where the teacher GPI is 2.5.

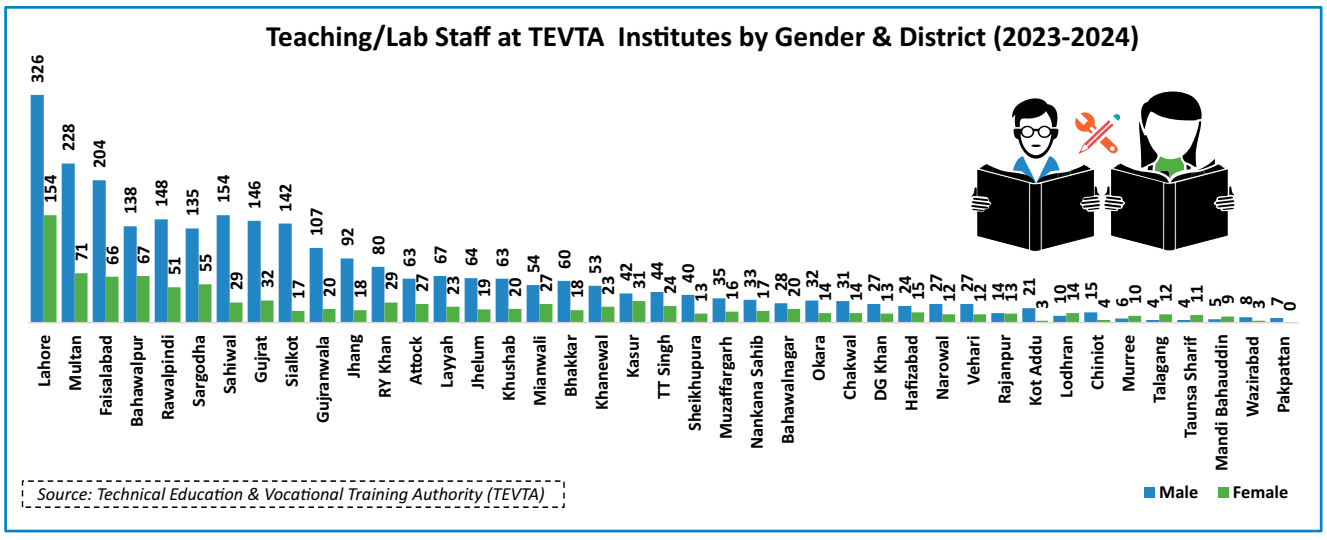


Figure 5.102

The districts in 2024 with the most teaching staff at TEVTA institutes were Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad, with teacher GPIs of 0.7, 0.3 and 0.3, respectively. The districts with the least number of TEVTA teachers are Mandi Bahauddin, Wazirabad and Pakpattan, with teacher GPIs of 1.8, 0.4 and 0.0 (Pakpattan does not have any female TEVTA teachers), respectively.

5.4.3.5.6 Teachers in PVTC Vocational Training Institutes

The number of teachers at PVTC's VTIs across Punjab fell by 3.1 percent, from 1,024 teachers in 2023 to 992 teachers in 2024. In each year, the GPI of teachers at PVTC VTIs was 0.9.

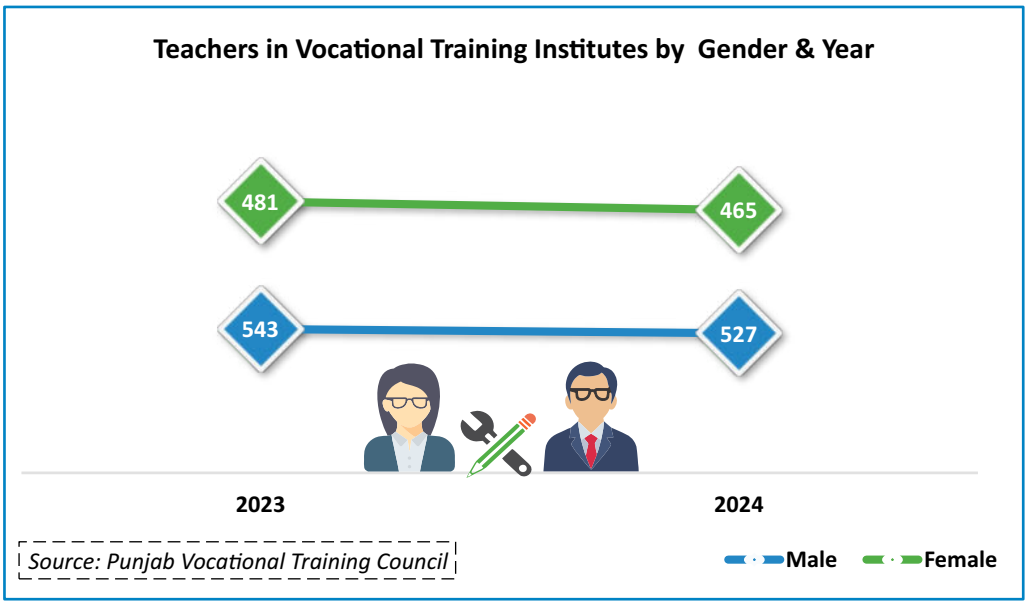


Figure 5.103

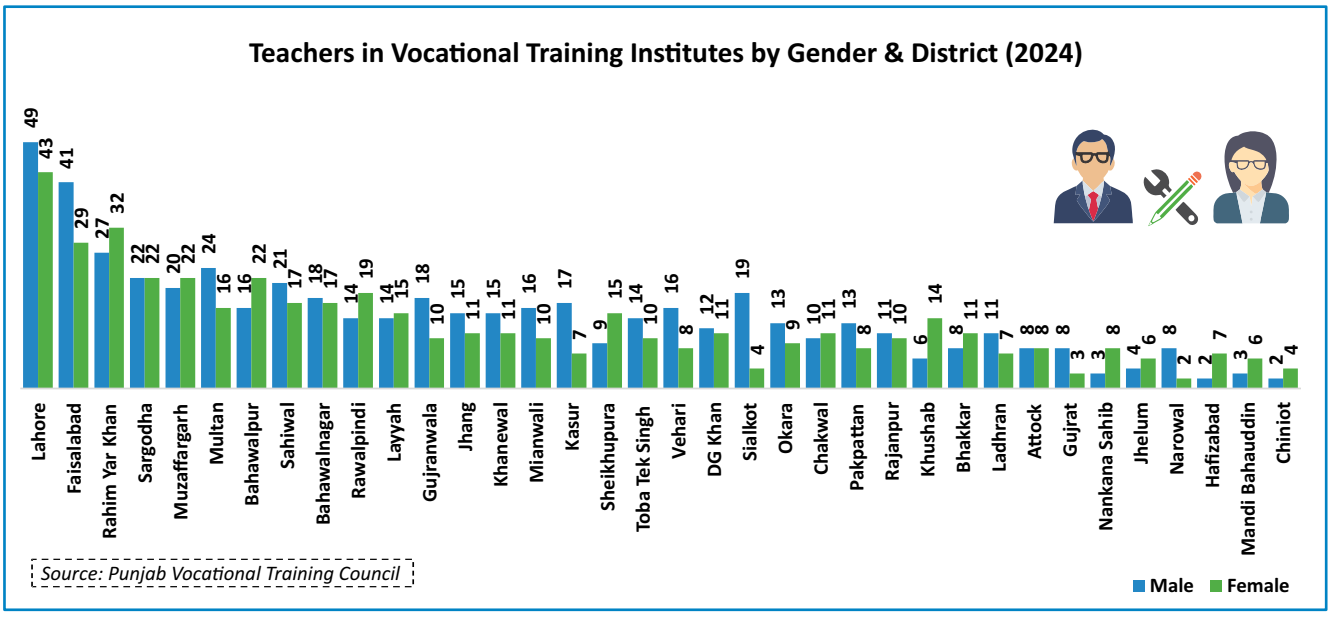


Figure 5.104

A district-wise breakdown of the teachers in PVTC VTIs shows that, in 2024, the districts with the most PVTC teachers were Lahore, Faisalabad and Rahim Yar Khan. The districts with the lowest number of PVTC teachers were Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin and Chiniot.

Training for teachers under PVTC VTIs declined significantly, from 6,653 teachers trained in 2023 to 3,623 teachers in 2024, which is a 45.5 percent reduction. In each year, more male teachers were trained by the PVTC than female teachers, with a GPI of 0.5 in 2023 and an even lower GPI of 0.4 in 2024.

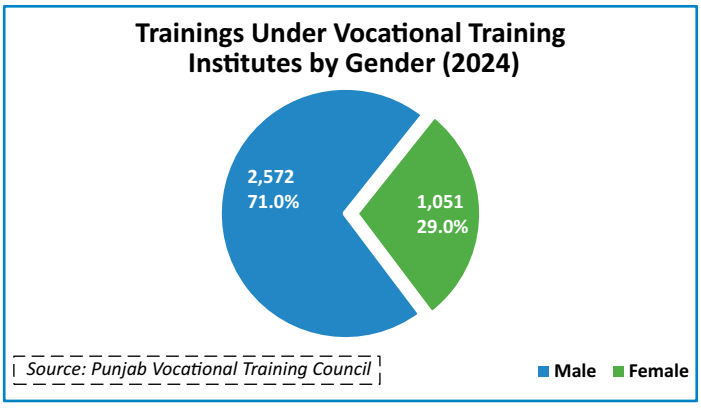


Figure 5.105

5.4.4 Facilities in Formal Public Schools

Historically, public schools across all of Pakistan have often lacked basic facilities. These facilities range from boundary walls, the availability of drinking water, electricity, toilets or even school premises, whereby student sit outdoors instead of in classrooms.

Consequently, a key aspect of education development is to monitor the availability of such facilities and others, so that their unavailability can be highlighted as a gap to be filled. In this regard, the School Education Department and PMIU's Annual School Census 2023-2024 provides a rigorous and detailed view of the availability of a number of facilities in Punjab's public schools.

5.4.4.1 Basic Facilities

Basic school facilities are school buildings, boundary walls, availability of drinking water, availability of electricity and the presence of toilets.

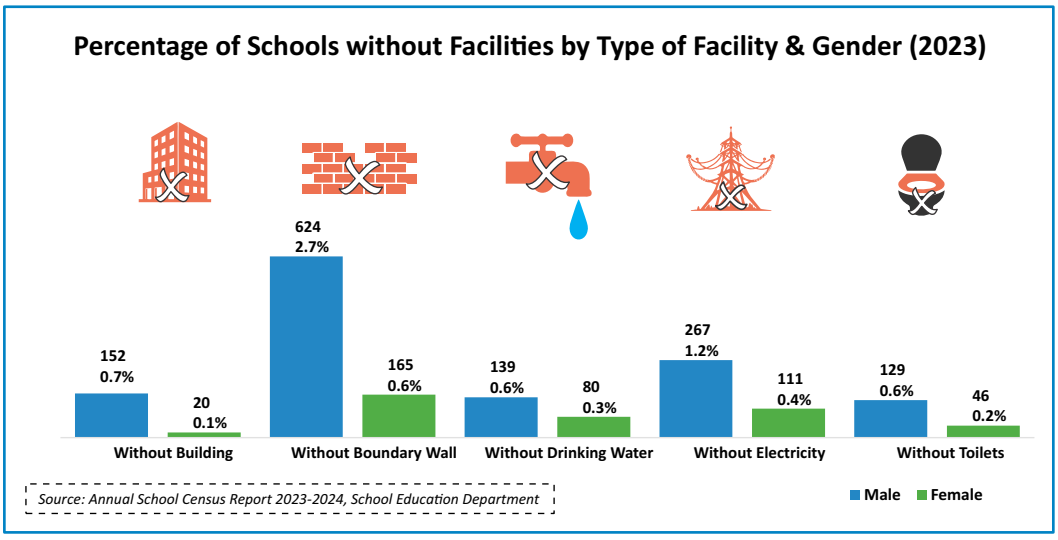


Figure 5.106

In the case of each of these facilities, most public schools across Punjab, both male and female ones, appeared to have the facilities available to them, as only a small proportion of schools were missing these facilities. Notably, of the schools that did not have these facilities, a majority appeared to be boys' schools, with boundary walls being the most missing basic facility.

In the case of toilets, it is crucial to examine not just their availability but also how many students have to share these facilities. For this, the Annual School Census 2023-2024 also takes into the student-to-toilet ratio (SToR) in Punjab's public schools.

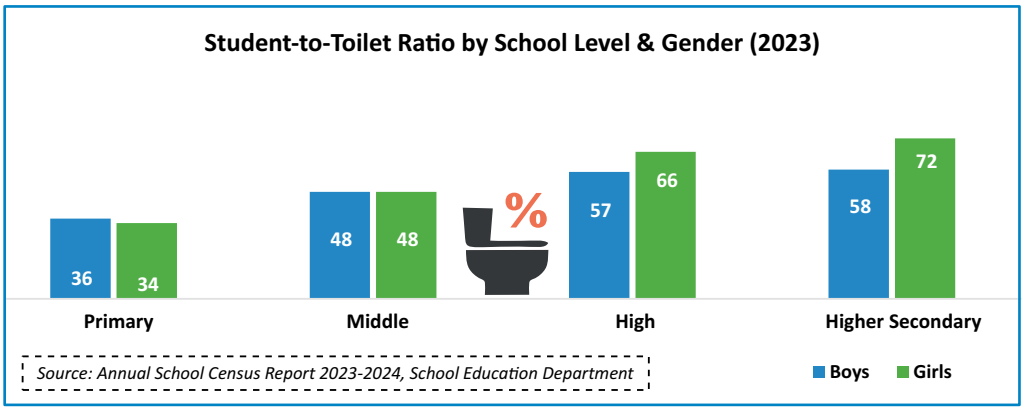


Figure 5.107

5.4.4.2 Student-to-Classroom Ratio in Public Schools

The student-to-classroom ratio (SCR) looks at how many students are in one class room.

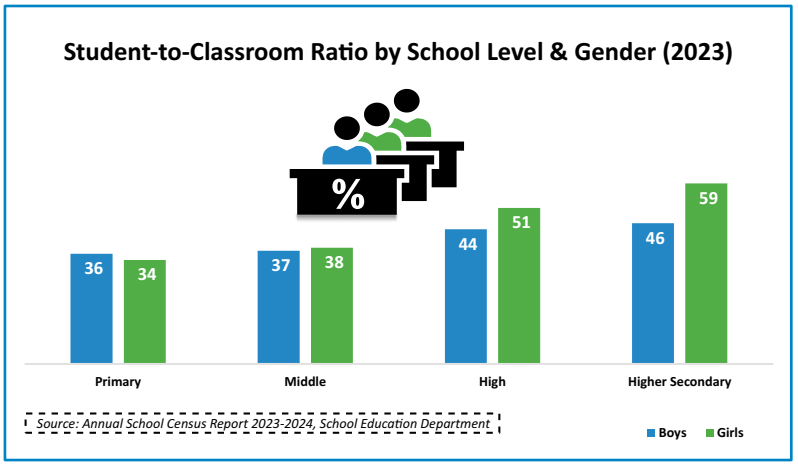


Figure 5.108

There is a very clear divide in SCR at lower levels of public schooling, versus higher levels of public schooling in Punjab. At the primary and middle schools across the province, the SCR for girls and boys remains squarely within the 34-38 student range. However, at the high school level, the SCR for boys jumps to 44 students per classroom, compared to 37 students per classroom in middle school and 36 students per class in primary school level.

For girls, the SCR was worse than for boys. The SCR for girls in public high schools jumped to 51 students per classroom (7 more girls than boys at this level), and 59 female students per classroom in higher secondary schools (13 more girls than boys at this level). In other words, as children advance through the public school system in Punjab, they might end up in progressively more crowded classrooms, depending on their gender, whereby girls are more disadvantaged than boys.

5.5 Conclusion

There has been continued progress towards gender parity in education in Punjab.

Literacy rates have improved in the province, and Punjab's literacy rates, both by gender and by area, are higher than at the national level. Additionally, access to education continues to increase for girls. There is higher enrolment of girls than boys at every level across formal public schools as well as in higher education institutes under the HED. Despite the above positive signs in gender parity, overall progress remains slow.

In public schools, past the middle school level, all metrics suggest that girls either drop out of the education system or face an overall worsening education experience. School attendance drops drastically going from primary school-aged children to lower secondary school-aged children and further on, from Grade 8 to Grade 9, the transition rate for girls has fallen more than it has for boys.

There are clear signs of inadequate facilities in schools. At high school and higher secondary schools, more girls have to share toilets which greatly diminishes girls' access to sanitation. This is an issue that contributes to girls' absence from school. There are also more girls per classroom than there are boys, which suggests significant overcrowding in public schools for girls. The student-to-teacher ratio is also worse for girls' formal public schools at higher level of schooling than it is at boys' schools. In other words, as girl age and move through the education system, the quality of their educational environment deteriorates significantly.

All of the above is on top of persistent challenges in education in Punjab that still show no signs of abating. For example, despite improvements in literacy rates in Punjab, there are gendered gaps in literacy in rural and urban areas, just as at the national level. Additionally, more men have attended school than women, overall, in all of Punjab, while more women are among those who have never attended school.

In terms of OOSC, more girls are out of school in Punjab than boys, with rural girls being the most affected. Moreover, girls and women still lag behind in STEM and overall technical training.

Various districts from South Punjab, namely Muzaffargarh, Mandi Bahauddin, Rahim Yar Khan, Bhakkar, Pakpattan, Khanewal and Rajanpur, still appear to be lagging behind in gender parity the most; it is possible that the cause of this is the overall economic deprivation in these districts, though additional data points are needed to conclude this for certain.

Lastly, there is a growing lack of transparency around data sharing for schools and lessening clarity on gendered budgeting for education in the Province. The latter stand to not only slow further progress in education gender parity in Punjab, but also to weaken the hard-fought gains made in the last few years.

Overall, despite commendable progress, the historical challenges regarding education quality and targeted interventions still remain.

5.6 Recommendations

Strengthen and streamline the provincial education infrastructure

The education sector is fragmented across multiple government departments with different structures and differing objectives.

- Due to the fragmented nature of the education structure in Punjab, the Government of Punjab should engage all education departments (School Education Department, Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department, the National Rural Support Programme, Punjab Education Curriculum Training and Assessment Authority, Higher Education Department, etc) to collaborate and streamline the education sector along common goals and consolidate/synchronise their mechanisms.

- To ensure gender-sensitive budgeting for education, the School Education Department and the Punjab Planning & Development Department should work together and review the allocation of the education budget with a gendered lens.

- All non-formal public schools in Punjab have been integrated under the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department as a single category of school (i.e. instead of having Non-Formal Basic Education Schools, Taleem Sab Kay Liay schools, feeder schools, Basic Education Community Schools, etc). This has reduced the space for targeted intervention in non-formal schooling in Punjab. The Government of Punjab should reassess this integration and take a more targeted, goal-oriented approach to non-formal schooling.

- School Education Department, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, should analyze the best practices policies for promoting gender parity in education from other developing nations, especially neighboring South Asian countries, for replication. A few examples of such policies are:

    - Financial incentives/cash transfers made to girls from low-income households to continue education after primary school, all the way to the end of secondary school. This is because the wealth quintiles of students, especially girls, affect their school attendance and dropout rates, according to the Punjab Multiple Indicator Survey 2024. In order to tackle this, financial incentives can be optimised for girls, by linking students from low-income backgrounds with BISP benefits.;

    - Alternatively, by linking girls to BISP benefits, girls could be provided financial assistance at various stages of their education (start of Class 1, start of Class 9, end of higher secondary school, etc);

    - School dropout rates can also be lowered if girls are offering remedial/extra teaching support if they are struggling academically;

    - Findings of the Punjab Multiple Indicator Survey 2024 also suggest that a mother's education impacts girls' school attendance and dropping out. Therefore, mothers of school-age girls should be encouraged, perhaps via offering monetary incentives, to enrol in and complete adult literacy courses.

Improve school attendance, transition and retention rates, while reducing dropouts and out of school children

School enrolment in Punjab has remained steady over time, indicating good access to schooling; however, school attendance is low, as is the attrition in attendance, transition and retention rates as schooling level rises. Additionally, too many children are still out of school. The net disadvantage of all of these things is for girls and transgender children.

- Many girls do not attend school, or otherwise drop out, due to a number of unmet non-academic needs pertaining to, for example, health and nutrition. The Health Department and School Education Department should work together to provide nutritionist-certified in-school meals and a school nurse to address students' needs.

- In order to improve girls' reproductive health knowledge, which should be a core element of girls' education at Grade 8 or higher, basic health services should be present in schools.

- To reduce the prevalence of girls never attending schools, or dropping out of school, the School Education Department should take the following actions:

    - Academic: Weekend and afternoon school programs and other education support to target any academic difficulties that students are having;

    - Non-academic: extra-curricular activities, basic health services, including mental health and psychological as well as nutritional support.

- Due to parents' well-founded concerns around the safety of their daughters, establishing safe school transportation for girls should be a priority. Therefore, School Education Department and the Higher Education Department should collaborate with the Transport Department and the Punjab Mass Transit Authority to create a special student program that allow students to travel for free on public transport. The student T-Cash card can be used for this, but should allow students unlimited free rides for the duration of their semester/term, rather than only two free rides per day for 5 days per week.

- Due to overcrowding in girls' schools at high and higher secondary level, the School Education Department must double its efforts in ensuring functional and adequate facilities. This is especially applicable to toilets in girls' schools, which the School Education Department should mandate to be menstrual hygiene-friendly (e.g. providing private disposal bins, emergency pads, water inside bathroom stalls, etc).

- To increase the low enrolment of girls and transgender children in rural areas and low-income households, the School Education department and the Punjab Rural Support Programme should launch campaigns and interventions targeting specifically girls and transgender children from these backgrounds. These campaigns/interventions should also ideally dovetail recovery programs to bring all students who have dropped out of school back into the education system

- Education inequality often flows from social, economic and political inequality that is already being experienced by students outside of school. For education to succeed, marginalisation should be actively tackled. Therefore, in order to make Punjab's education sector more inclusive, the School Education Department, the Special Education Department and all other relevant stakeholders should work together to ensure that there are even more learning opportunities for children with disabilities than there are currently. The School Education Department must add ease of access/disability friendly facilities to its list of "basic school facilities." Additionally, the definition of "person with disability" should be expanded to include children with functional difficulties.

- To improve inclusivity in the education sector, children from marginalised communities (such as religious minorities) should also receive improved access to quality education.

- All the interventions outlined above should also target transgender children who, along with girls, are disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of education.

Further enhance data collection to include transgender people and also improve data sharing/transparency

Data collection regarding education should be regularised across all relevant departments, and should not be withheld from the public. This collection should also ensure that data for transgender students and teachers is collected, even if there are no transgender students and teachers, as the lack of visibility of transgender people in education is a regrettable gap.

- In order for improved transparency and public accountability, the School Education Department must regularly collect and publish data on key indicators of education to monitor progress towards international treaties. Additionally, statutory monitoring bodies should be given direct access to the Education Management Information System to be able

to use this data, rather than having to request this data from the School Education Department.

- Data on learning levels should be collected and shared by the School Education Department, providing a detailed disaggregation by gender (male, female, transgender), age, area (urban/rural) and district, of proficiency in English, Urdu and Arithmetic.

- For the Punjab Gender Parity Report 2023-2024, the School Education Department did not provide data that was made available previously, despite multiple data requests and meetings urging the department to provide data. The department should endeavour to provide more data every year, rather than less.

- Similarly, the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department did not provide any data on Adult Literacy Centres, or data for non-formal schools for the years 2023 and 2024 (instead providing data for financial year 2024-2025). The department should collect and share up-to-date data on Adult Literacy Centres and also maintain data for the missing years of 2023 and 2024.

- The gender and age disaggregation of data needs further improvement, but still remains lacking in various areas. The School Education Department should remedy this by collecting and publicly sharing gender- and age-disaggregated data on all important indicators. Additionally, data on transgender students and teachers should also be actively collected.

Create a better teaching experience in public schools

Create a better teaching experience and learning environment in public schools, along with an enhanced school curriculum

There should be a high demand in Punjab's public education system for highly qualified educators, to improve student outcomes and also reduce student-to-teacher ratios. A concerted effort should be made to made to attract the best teaching talent, to retain them and to incentivise the highest performance from them in public schools. Additionally, students' learning environment and school curriculum should be enhanced to help them grow into more empowered individuals.

- All relevant education departments, i.e. School Education Department, Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department and the Higher Education Department, should offer market competitive salaries to teachers to attract the best talent. These salaries should, at the very least, be higher than the legal minimum wage in Punjab.

- Due to the high instance of overcrowding in high and higher secondary schools, the student to-teacher ratios in these schools exceed 30 students per one teacher. Therefore, the School Education Department should hire more teachers to ensure that the student-to-teacher ratio does not exceed 30 for both male and female teachers.

- To increase teacher accountability, the School Education Department should conduct regular performance evaluations, perhaps through an external evaluating partner organisation via a public-private partnership.

- Vacant teaching positions in Punjab's public schools range from 15.9 percent of sanctioned positions (in Lahore) to 37.6 percent of sanctioned positions (in Sialkot). The School Education department should redouble its efforts to fill these vacant teaching positions with highly qualified teachers.

- The School Education Department should collaborate more closely with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to update curriculum for grades 6 to 10 in Punjab's public schools to include Life Skills Based Education (LSBE), covering reproductive health, consent, and rights to delay marriage for girls in grades 6 to 10. LSBE focuses on developing interpersonal, social, cognitive, digital, and wellness skills to equip students to be better prepared for the world. At present, as students move through the education system, they drop out and or their attendance suffers, an issue that affects girls more than it does boys. By incorporating LSBE in earlier school levels, students can still receive vital life skills training until such time as school attrition improves.

- On the subject of non-academic education of students, such that they grow into empowered adults in the future, the School Education Department should also make a practice of encouraging student councils in high and higher secondary schools. Membership of student councils allows students to take ownership of their learning environment and gives them a voice in how it should be shaped, teaching leadership, responsibility and accountability to student council position holders.

Close the gender digital gap by improving digital literacy, along with access to and affordability of Information & Communication Technology

There is a large gendered gap in Punjab in the access and use of information and communication technology (ICT). This is reflected in the data for education, including technical and vocational educational training (TVET). This gender digital gap harms the prospects of women and girls to be fully independent and empowered members of modern society.

- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in Punjab is still male-dominated. In order to tackle this, the School Education Department along with all relevant stakeholders should make a concerted effort to start rolling out Middle Tech and Matric Tech schools, especially for girls. Similarly, the Higher Education Department and Higher Education Commission can collaborate to provide remedial academic support for young women in order to encourage more women to enrol in STEM-related degrees.

- A key focus of TVET should be on creating with ICT, and not just using ICT with a high level of proficiency.

- In order to improve the technical competence/skills of girls and young women in using ICT, which is the second-level divide of the gender digital gap, the School Education department should also develop dedicated courses/classes for public schools that teach ICT use, from Grade 5 onwards that should focus on mobile-first digital literacy. The Higher Education Department and Higher Education Commission should also work together to develop and add similar courses in in colleges and universities. These courses should also be offered by institutions of the Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority and Punjab Vocational Training Council, at affordable prices, to the general public instead of just to students with previous education in technical/computer subjects.

- Similarly, the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission should continue offering specialised vocational training programmes for women in ICT, such as freelancing, but also add improve TVET in general by adding courses on e-commerce, digital advertising, green skills, the gig economy, etc.

- Women and girls in Pakistan face more cyber-bullying and cyber-violence, more than their male counterparts, i.e. adverse digital incorporation. While tackling this negative online treatment is a complex task, one that the government cannot fully own, the Government of Punjab can still undertake educational interventions to tackle adverse digital incorporation:

  - School, university or TVET courses on ICT should focus on safe online behaviour on social media and also on self-protection from viruses and scams (especially given the proliferation of generative-AI image and voice tools), where and how to report online crimes and online harassment (e.g. to the Federal Investigation Agency or Virtual Police Stations), etc.

  - Courses like these may, on the one hand, empower women and girls to be able to protect themselves better from adverse incorporation (i.e. unwanted or unequal treatment) of women in ICT-enabled spaces; and, on the other hand, these courses may help close the divide in technical/IT vocational courses.

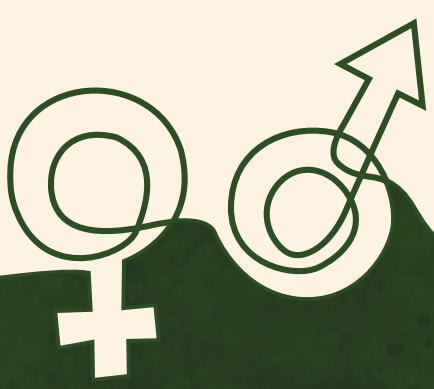
- Adult Literacy Centres, including those in jails, should also teach basic ICT skills and should also provide students access to the internet.

- To improve women's and girls' access to ICT, the Punjab Information & Technology Board, and the School Education Department should collaborate to create community-embedded libraries. These libraries can be spaces for women to work and study in, with free access to the internet. Additionally, access to digital libraries for academic research should also be provided to anyone using community-embedded libraries.

- In order to maintain gender parity in all basic facilities, the School Education Department should increase access to the internet at formal public schools for boys, on par with access for girls' schools, which is currently higher.



ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION & OPPORTUNITIES



06 ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION & OPPORTUNITIES

KEY FINDINGS

- In 2024–25, Punjab's Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) was 69.4 percent for male, compared to only 28.1 percent for female.
- According to LFS 2024–25, the men unemployment rate increased to 6.3 percent, while the women unemployment rate rose by 1.2 percentage points to 9.6 percent. Underemployment in Punjab stood at 1.6 percent for men and 2.1 percent for women, reflecting greater economic vulnerability among women.
- In 2024, a total of 403,472 individuals emigrated abroad. Of these, 97.3 percent were men (392,607) and only 2.6 percent were women (10,847). The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for emigrants remained 0.02 for the past two years.
- In 2024, 87.5 percent of registered shareholders were men (23,709), while 14.2 percent were women (3,947). The GPI for shareholder participation stood at 0.16, reflecting a wide gender disparity in business ownership.
- Gender analysis of the registered entrepreneurs from National Incubation Centre (NIC) shows improvement in women's participation, with the GPI increasing from 0.47 in 2023 to 0.61 in 2024.
- House ownership is overwhelmingly male-dominated, with 96 percent of houses owned by men and only 4 percent by women in Punjab. The GPI for house ownership is extremely low: 0.03 in rural areas and 0.05 in urban areas.
- Punjab Land Record Authority data showed average male landholding at 5,419 sqm (1.33 acres), while average female landholding was 2,182 sqm (0.54 acres). Although the number of female landowners was nearly half that of men, the land area owned by women was almost six times smaller, demonstrating major gender inequality in land ownership.
- District-wise analysis reveals that mortgaged land area for women (1.7 acres on average) slightly exceeds that of men (1.6 acres), which may indicate women's increased reliance on collateral-based financing.
- In 2024, men accounted for 98.4 percent of vehicle registrations and 98 percent of driving licences issued. Women represented only 1.6 percent of registered vehicles and 2 percent of licences, demonstrating significant mobility and access constraints.
- Excise and Taxation Department data show that 75.4 percent of property tax registrations were by men, while women accounted for 24.5 percent, indicating persistent gender gaps in taxable property holdings.
- Men owned 97 percent of registered factories and commercial establishments, whereas women owned only 3 percent, resulting in a GPI of 0.03.
- SBP Bank Account ownership statistics revealed that male bank account holders increased to 37.9 million (an increase of 0.8 million), while female account holders rose by 2 million to reach 10.8 million yearly.

- In Punjab, State Bank of Pakistan data shows that men hold 68 percent of branchless banking accounts, while women hold 32 percent. Although digital financial inclusion is improving, gender gaps persist.
- In 2023, Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited had more than 171,000 male borrowers (95.2 percent) compared to only 8,612 women (4.7 percent), highlighting severe gender disparities in access to agricultural credit.
- Women constituted 45 percent of active borrowers in the Pakistan Microfinance Network, with a GPI of 0.82.
- Despite Punjab being the country's agricultural hub with 8.12 million agricultural households, only 1.05 percent were headed by women. District-wise analysis shows 8 million male household heads compared with just 85,600 female heads.
- Punjab Sports Board data for 2023–24 shows that out of 61 employed coaches, 45 (74 percent) were men and 16 (26 percent) were women. Several major sports had no female coaches at all, indicating a lack of gender diversity in sports leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Economic participation is an important means of empowerment. Evidence from major international organisations, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations, and other prestigious institutions, has consistently shown a connection between women's economic participation and development.[281] Sociological literature commonly defines power as the ability to make choices. Empowerment differs from power primarily because for someone to be empowered, they must have been previously denied this ability or opportunity. Thus, empowerment is the restoration of these denied abilities or opportunities. [282]

The IMF World Economic Outlook report (2023) projects the global growth to be the weakest in decades.[283] Moreover, the latest report of 2025 argues that weakening investor confidence and rising trade-related uncertainties have exacerbated the downside risks of the global economic outlook for several upcoming years.[284]

Women's limited agency has long been attributed to the denial of economic resources. It is important to address existing social, political, and economic barriers for both women and men to attain their highest developmental potential. These barriers constrain economies, especially the developing ones. This represents a significant loss of talent, particularly in contexts where it is scarcest. [285] Extensive research has established a link between economic gender parity and growth, suggesting that bridging gender gaps could potentially double global growth rates over the next decade or so.[286]

Over the last three decades, analysis of cross-country labour force participation datasets has predicted convergence in the gender gap; however, in the long run, the share of countries with consistently large gaps in labour force participation is still significant.[287] Devoted and systematic policy efforts are the need of the hour to mitigate this challenge.

Comprehensive unemployment measures, such as the jobs gap indicator developed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), go beyond the unemployment rate and reveal higher gender disparities, especially in the context of developing economies.[288] The ILO explains that a simple unemployment rate often underestimates the difficulties women face in finding and securing jobs. Furthermore, the developing world faces an additional challenge related to employment.[289] The Human Development Report (2023-2024) points out that nearly half of the global population lacks control over their lives. Additionally, almost two-thirds are pessimistic about their voice being heard in political systems. This report also highlights the growing sense of disempowerment and continuous threat to food security among the global population.[290] Notwithstanding, the majority of such a population comprises marginalised segments of society, especially women.

The Women, Business and the Law (2024) report expands its scope by incorporating indicators on safety and childcare, alongside legal and support frameworks essential to women's empowerment globally.[291] [292] These two indicators, often underestimated, have multifaceted implications for women, especially in the context of Pakistan.[293] The safety supportive framework remains inclusive in terms of child marriage, domestic violence, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. According to Women, Business and Law indicators, Pakistan ranks 174 out of 190 countries. Pakistan's score decreased exponentially from 58.8 to 42.5 after incorporating new indicators into the legal framework. Support framework and expert opinion scores are also relatively low at 31.7 and 20, respectively.[294]

Article 38 of the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the economic opportunities of every citizen regardless of sex, creed or caste. Nonetheless, the stagnant economic outlook of Pakistan over the past few years has hampered the growth of social and development indicators. As a result, women in Pakistan remain among the most economically and socially disadvantaged. The Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) 2025 ranks Pakistan among the lowest.[295] This report highlights that almost a quarter of females (28 percent) in Pakistan are unemployed despite having advanced education. [296] [297]

281 (Vogelstein & et al, Building Inclusive Economies 2017)
282 (Kabeer, Economic pathways to women's empowerment, 2016)
283 (International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, April 2023)
284 (International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook, April 2025)
285 (Kabeer, Economic pathways to women's empowerment, 2016)
286 (World Bank Group, Women, Business and The Law, 2024)
287(Badel, A., & et al. (2023). When will global gender gaps close?)
288 (International Labor Organization, Women are more likely than men to want a job but not have one, 2024)
289 (International Labour Organisation, The jobs gap: Measuring labour underutilisation beyond unemployment, 2024)
290 (Human Development Report 2023-2024)
291 (World Bank Group, Women, Business and The Law, 2024 necessitates mobility, workplace, marriage, pay, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, safety, childcare and pension relating to women's empowerment.)
292 (Women, Business and The Law, 2022)
293 (World Bank Group, Women, Business and The Law, 2024)
294 (World Bank Group, Women, Business and The Law, 2024)
295 (World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Reports, 2025)
296 (World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Reports, 2023)
297 (World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Reports, 2024,)

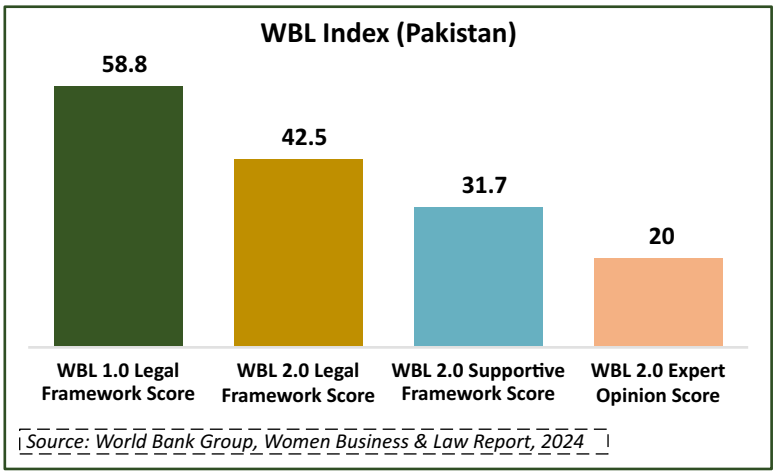


Figure 6.1

Pakistan's Economic Participation Sub-Index			
Year	**Economic Participation & Opportunities Score**	**Labour Force Participation Score**	**Wage Equality for Similar Work Score**
2025	0.347	0.304	0.625
2024	0.360	0.304	0.620
2023	0.362	0.304	0.625
Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Reports			

Table 6.1

The World Bank (2023) highlights that more gender-just laws are the prerequisite for improving women's participation, mitigating wage gaps, and achieving better outcomes in labour force dynamics.[298] However, in the case of Pakistan, where women face gender-based violence and gaps in property ownership, the policymakers need to go beyond conventional means. While legislation relevant to women's empowerment occasionally emerges, the institutions usually show a lacklustre response when implementing those laws.

Mainstream economic policy discussions remain hesitant to address disproportionate property rights, financial freedom, work opportunities and work-life balance for women. Questions like how gender affects time, human development and access to markets and assets are sidelined. Informal economy remains the most obvious choice for women. Women's contributions have largely fallen through the cracks. Higher-wage sectors and full occupational choices remain a distant goal, and wage gaps persist worldwide. [299] These barriers indicate that policymakers must go beyond legal provisions to enhance women's economic participation.[300] Having established the national context, we now focus on Punjab's unique challenges.

Punjab holds a key strategic position as the most populous province and the biggest contributor to the national GDP. Moreover, it is more advanced in terms of agriculture, industrialisation and urbanisation among the other provinces. Women in Punjab constitute around 48 percent of the total population.[301] Despite being Pakistan's most developed region, Punjab is still far from achieving the 45 percent female labour participation rate envisioned in Vision 2025. [302] Instead of envisioning a different rate of female labour force participation, there is a need to take practical steps. Bridging implementation gaps is a critical step for women's economic empowerment. Less developed regions of Punjab are still grappling with poverty, low life expectancy, gender-based violence, sub-optimal development indicators and lower educational attainment for women.

From a young age, women, mostly in rural areas, take the responsibilities of housework and care-giving for children and elderly. This negatively impacts their educational attainment and hinders their prospects of joining the labour force. Childbearing and caring responsibilities that often begin in the early twenties impact all facets of women's lives in Pakistan and have long-term negative repercussions for gender equality.[303] The majority of women have no financial access or freedom in Pakistan. This chapter shows how coordinated action in Punjab can boost women's economic participation and help develop a comprehensive approach to improve economic, social, developmental, and gender indicators for Pakistan.

298 (World Bank Group, Women, Business and The Law, 2023)
299 (Vogelstein & et al, Building Inclusive Economies 2017)
300 (Vogelstein & et al, Women and the Law, 2018)
301 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Population & Housing Census, 2023)
302 (Pakistan 2025, One Nation, One Vision)
303 (Nayab D. and et al., 2023)



6.1 Employment & Earnings

Employment is one of the key indicators for growth, development, productivity and sustainability for countries around the world. Economies thrive on the working-age population being actively engaged in labour market activities.[304] Labour force surveys are conducted regularly by countries to assess the dynamics of the labour markets and to plan accordingly.

Both orthodox and heterodox economic theories suggest a proportionate correlation between economic growth and employment.[305] [306] Critical feminist approaches to this concept paint a different picture, showing that the dividends of growth are realised in a highly gender-differentiated way.[307] Women face the brunt of recessions and face systematic disadvantages. Given the pervasive gender gaps in the workplace, gender-disaggregated labour market analysis becomes particularly vital for analysing women's economic standing and well-being.

Extensive literature has illustrated that gender gaps in terms of employment and earnings are prevalent globally. According to many global, regional and country-specific studies, women are placed at a disadvantaged position.[308] Women are more likely than their male counterparts to engage in part-time work due to household and caregiving responsibilities. Ultimately, it disproportionately affects women's employment and earning potential.[309] In Europe, women on average earn 17 percent less than their male counterparts in research fields.[310] According to the ILO "Decent Work Conventions", access to a variety of employment, equitable educational returns, equal remuneration, favourable working conditions, and growth opportunities are crucial markers to assess the quality of livelihood opportunities.[311]

304 (International Labour Organisation, 2010)
305 (Okun, M, A, 1962)
306 (Tejani, 2016)
307 (Majid, 2021)
308 (Andrew et al, Women and Men at Work, 2024)
309 (Abrar ul Haq, 2019)
310 (EC, 2019)
311 (International Labour Organisation, Decent Work, 2015)

SDG 5 articulates the goal of achieving gender equality and empowering women in society.[312] Against this global backdrop, Pakistan's employment indicators present a concerning picture where patriarchal norms, safety concerns and biases are common, exacerbating the problem of women's participation in the labour market.[313] Women's participation in the labour market is dependent on multiple factors, including on-job support services, education, transportation, economic development, and social and cultural contexts.[314] Inclusiveness requires removing these barriers for long-term sustainable growth.

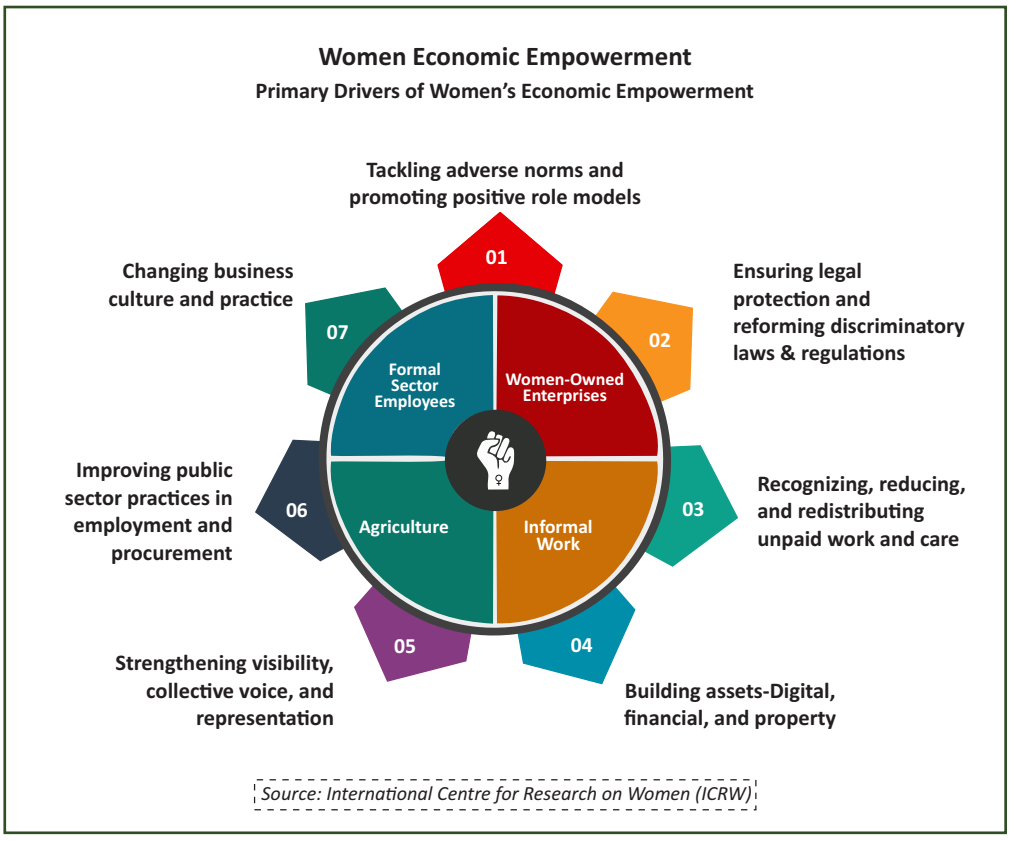


Figure 6.2

6.2 Labour Market Opportunities: Access & Quality

6.2.1 Employment

Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024-25 key statistics for population, labour force, and employment show that there was a working-age population of 179.6 million in Pakistan, with the labour force comprising of 83.1 million people. The number of employed individuals stood at 77.2 million.

In Punjab, the working-age population comprised of 98.3 million people, with 48.2 million people in the labour force. The number of employed individuals stood at 44.7 million. Gender-wise statistics show that while there were proportionate women in the working-age population, their employment statistics are significantly lower than men. Although the GPI of rural areas were higher, employment statistics reveal that most of these female workers were unpaid family helpers in both the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.

311 (International Labour Organisation, Decent Work, 2015)
312 (United Nations Development Programme, SDGs 2015)
313 (Iram Ashraf & et al., 2018)
314 (Sadia, 2018)

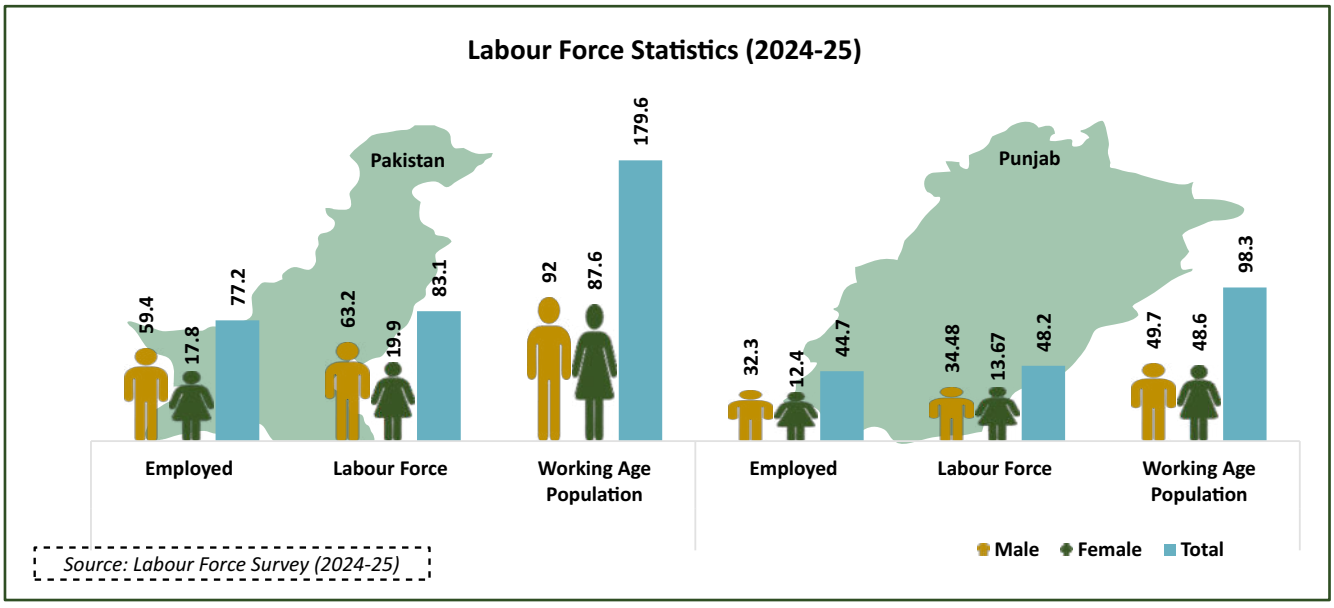


Figure 6.3

Punjab Employment to Population Ratio (EPR) statistics show that the percentage of the employed population has decreased from 45.4 percent to 43 percent over the period. Gender wise analysis show that while male EPR remained almost the same from 2021 to 2025, the female ratio decreased significantly from 25.4 percent to 20.4 percent.

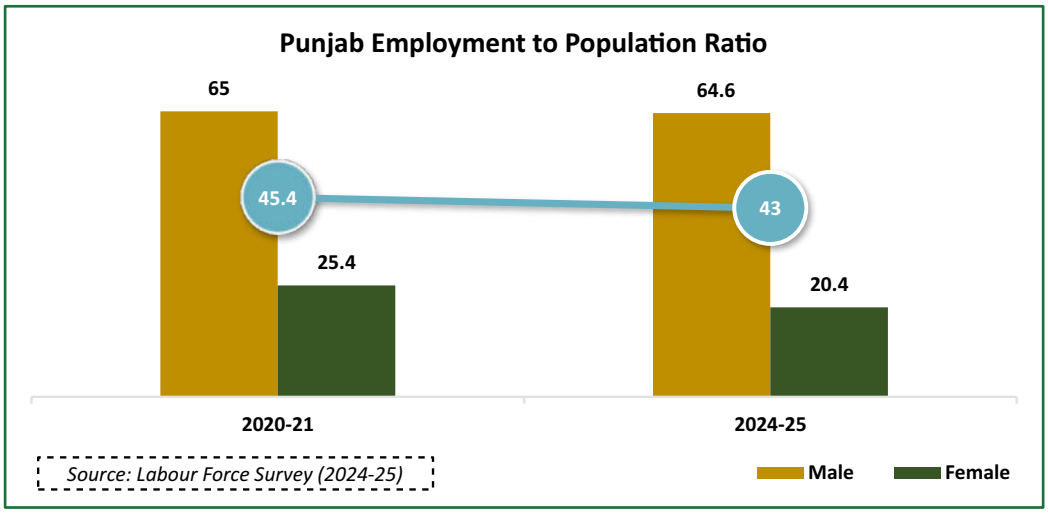


Figure 6.4

6.2.2 Labour Force Participation

Labour market participation is one of the key measures of women's access to labour markets and opportunities. Ensuring women's economic inclusion and improving their status necessitates the removal of systemic barriers. Women with labour market access have greater opportunities of social security, bank accounts, investment possibilities, savings and asset accumulation. Through these factors, women become more financially stable, and they serve as buffers against economic shocks.[315]

Women's earnings are lower compared to their male counterparts within the same industry, which can be attributed to occupational segregation, discriminatory norms, unequal access to leadership roles. Even when equality is achieved for equal positions across industries, women's earning disparities still persist. [316]

315 (Khalil, 2021)
316 (Sadia, 2018)

Four A's crucial for enabling women, labour market opportunities are agency, access, allowance and attainment.[317]

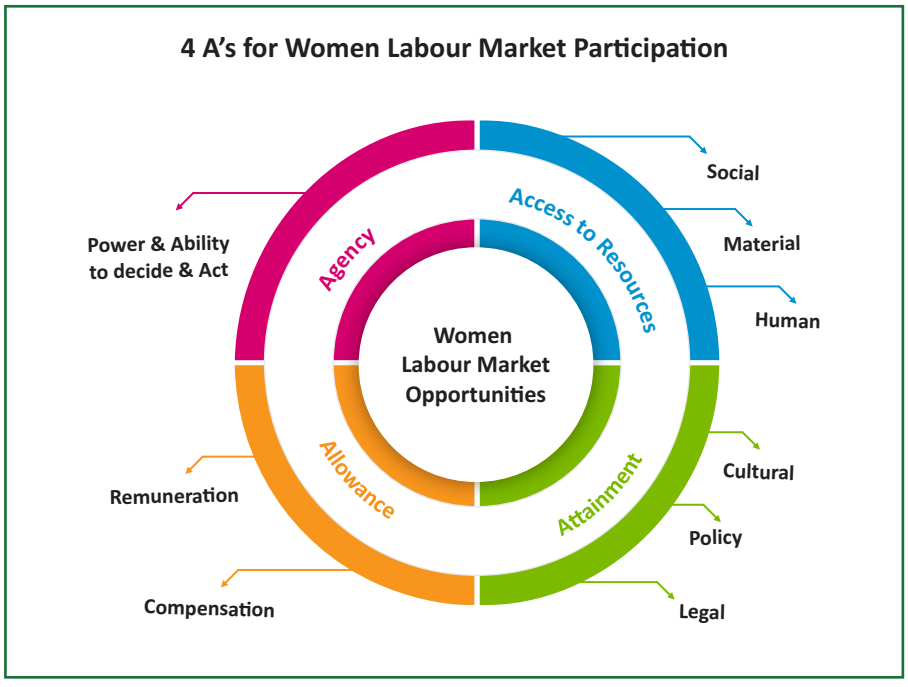


Figure 6.5

LFS 2024-25 statistics show Pakistan's LFPR at 46.3 percent. Gender-wise, LFPR was found to be 68.7 percent for men and 22.7 percent for women. In Punjab, the male LFPR was similar to the national LFPR at 69.4 percent, while the female LFPR was higher at 28.1 percent.

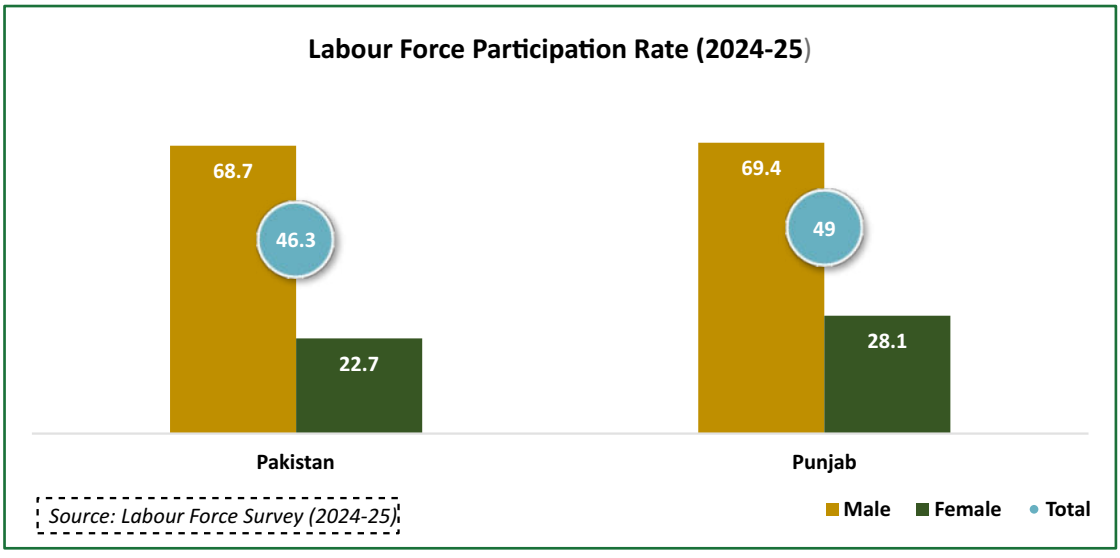


Figure 6.6

In the context of Punjab, the female LFPR has been stagnant for more than a decade.[318] A holistic approach is the need of the hour to uplift female labour force participation rates. It is a panacea for the economic, social, and developmental growth of Punjab and Pakistan.

317 (Kabeer, 2009)
318 (Labour Force Survey, 2018-19, 2020-21 & 2024-25)

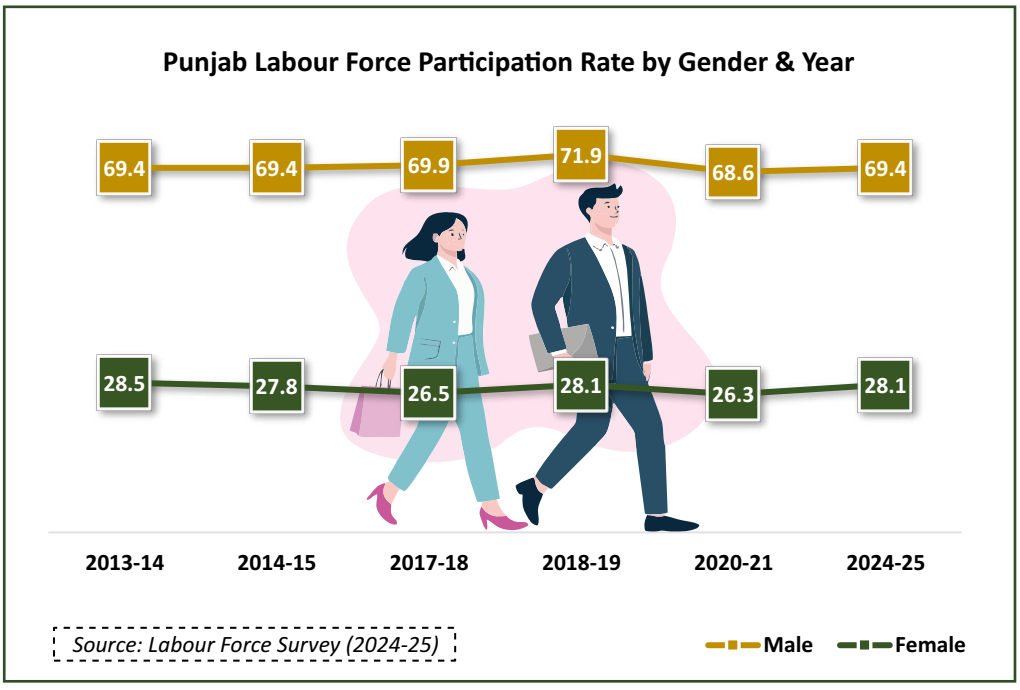


Figure 6.7

LFS statistics show that rural LFPRs were higher for both men and women than urban rates. The following graph shows that the female LFPR for urban areas were significantly lower over the period. Detailed area-wise LFPR statistics are highlighted in the figure 6.8.

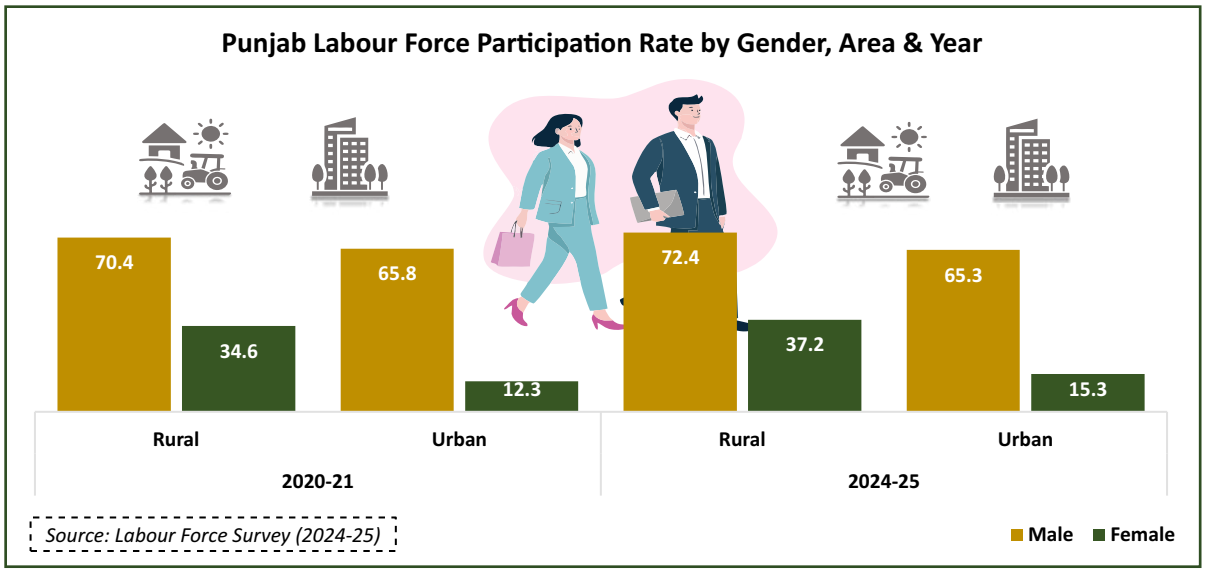


Figure 6.8

6.2.3 Unemployment

Women are grappling with the problem of both unemployment and underemployment around the world. "Unemployment" is when a member of the labour force is seeking work but is unable to find it. "Underemployment" means someone working less than 35 hours a week.[319]

Pakistan's overall unemployment rate was 7.1 percent, but with significant gender disparities. Women's unemployment rate was found to be 10.5 percent, while the unemployment rate of men was 6 percent.[320] This is in line with trends from recent

319 (LFS, 2020-2021)
320 (ILO data set, Unemployment, 2021)

years, as analysis from previous Punjab Gender Parity reports also documents consistently higher unemployment rates among women in Punjab.[321] The backdrop of these issues remains the same, but systemic policy interventions remain inadequate.

LFS 2024-25 statistics compared with the previous report show that unemployment rates in Punjab have worsened. The unemployment rate for men increased from 6.1 percent to 6.3 percent; women's unemployment rate increased by 1.2 percentage points and stood at 9.6 percent in the LFS 2024-25.

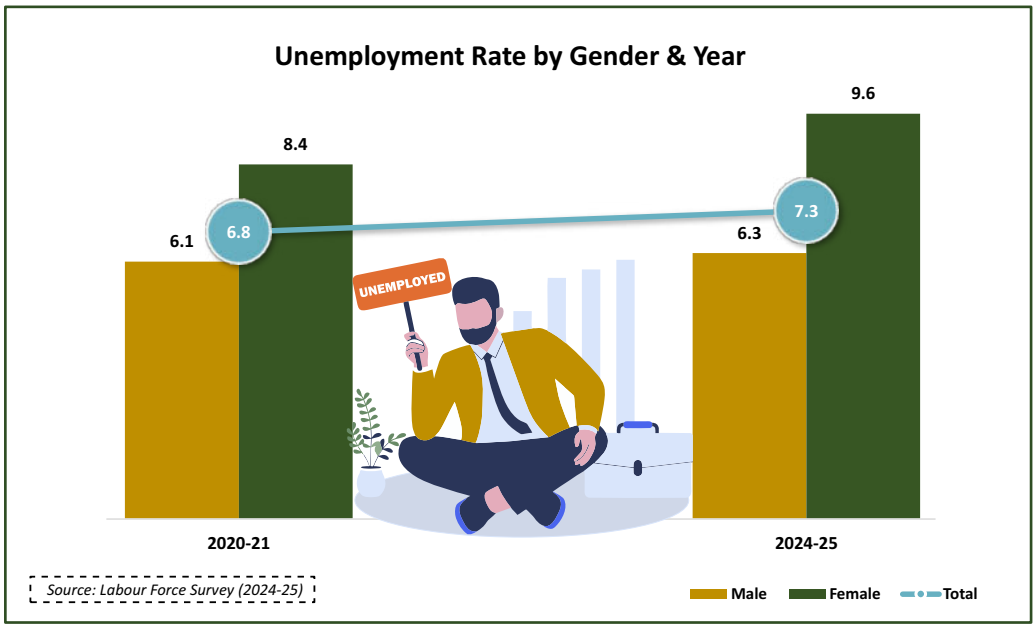


Figure 6.9

The rate of underemployment in Pakistan was 1.6 percent; this was also the male underemployment rate. Women's underemployment rate was higher at 1.9 percent in LFS 2024-25. In Punjab, the underemployment rate for men stood at 1.6 percent and 2.1 percent for women.

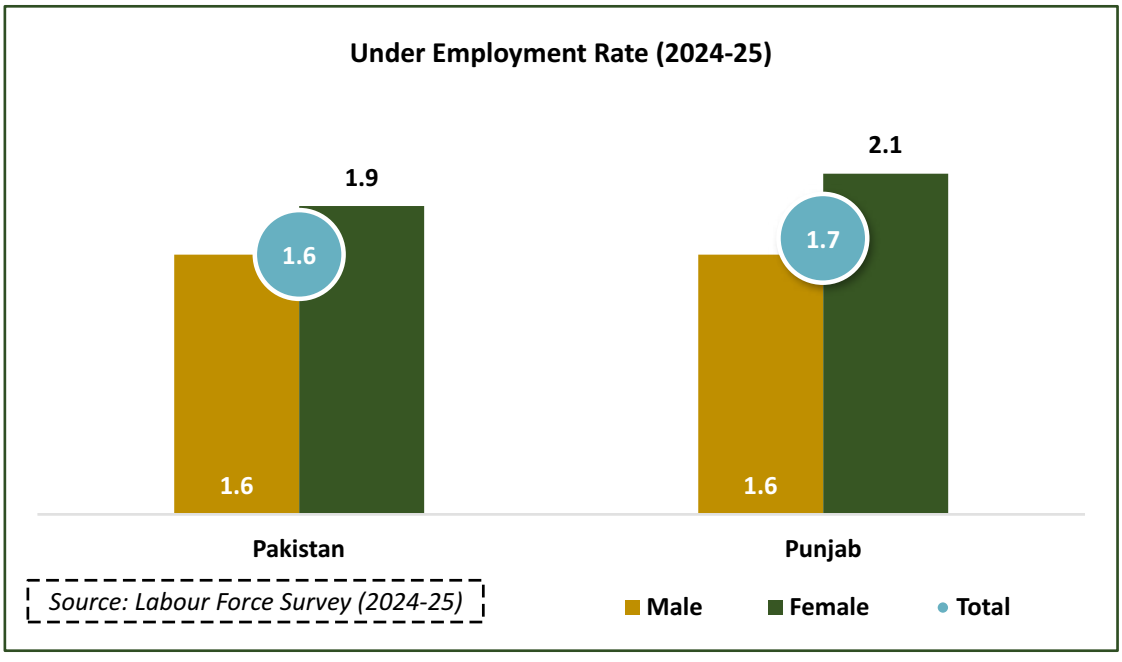


Figure 6.10

321 (Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2022)

6.2.4 Unpaid Family Work & Informal Economy

Rights accorded in the formal economy, like pensions, social protection and rules, are often lacking in the informal enterprise setting. Due to limited opportunities, the informal sector of the economy is usually the only viable income-generation option available to the majority of the population.[322] Predominantly, women are more engaged in the informal economic sector, with low ownership and limited access to finance.[323] Engagement in the informal sector of the economy limits women's productivity, as well as their financial independence.

Furthermore, career returns for women are relatively lower than those for men after graduating in STEM fields. The literature highlights the primary reasons as motherhood responsibilities and fertility decisions. The probability of women engaging in part-time work increases exponentially due to these factors.[324] The bulk of the global agriculture workforce (almost 36 percent) is comprised of women. According to estimates, half of the global food supply is produced by women.[325] Moreover, women are more likely to invest in communities and families; despite these facts, they continue to face limited access to resources and gender discrimination in labour markets. In Pakistan, approximately 68 percent of the agricultural workforce consists of women.[326]

LFS 2024-25 statistics for unpaid domestic and care work revealed that there were almost 117 million unpaid workers in Pakistan, of whom 50.7 million were men and 66.7 million were women. In Punjab, the number of unpaid male domestic workers stood at 26.1 million, while women represented 36.5 million of such workers.

The numbers show that there were almost 10 million more women engaged in domestic and care work across Punjab. The graph given below highlights the stark gender disparities for unpaid domestic work in Pakistan and Punjab.

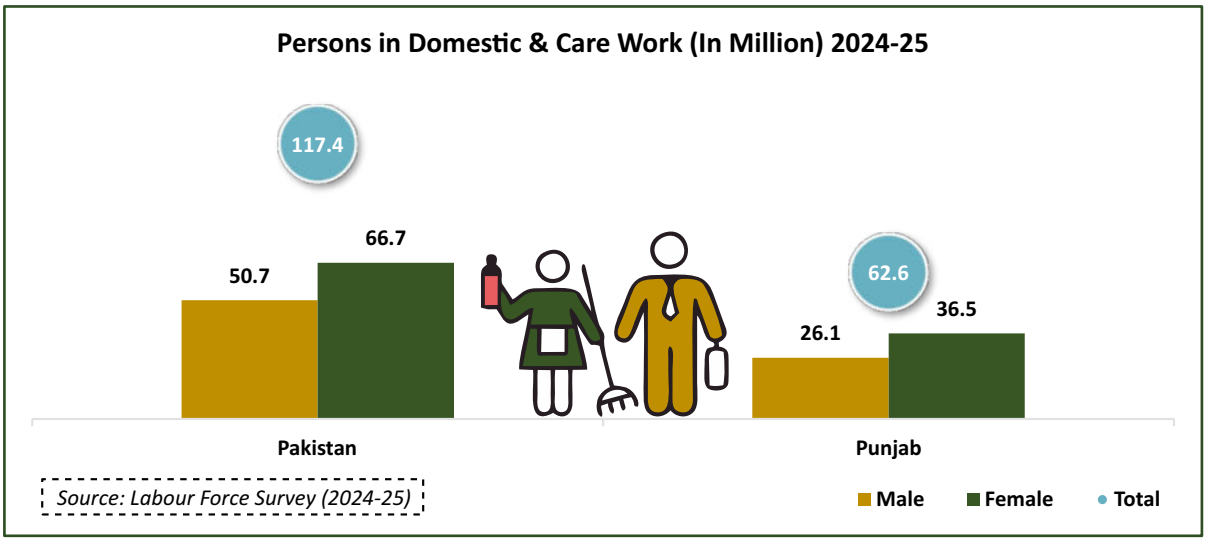


Figure 6.11

6.2.5 Brick Kiln, Industries & Fisheries Participation

In 2023, there were 6,684 registered brick kilns in Punjab, which decreased to 6,467 in the subsequent year. The male workforce also decreased from 26,078 (98.9 percent) in 2023 to 24,470 (98.6 percent) in 2024. While in 2024, there were 342 female workers at registered brick kilns, comprising 1.3 percent workforce.

322 (Women Entrepreneurs, 2022)
323 (Winkler, 2022)
324 (White & Smith, 2022)
325 ((FAO, IFAD, WFP & CGIAR GENDER Impact Platform, 2023).
326 (LFS, 2020-2021)

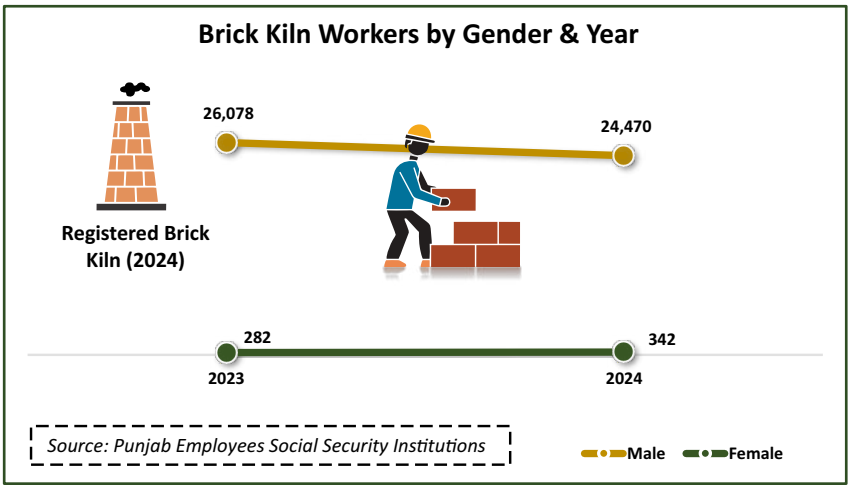


Figure 6.12

The registered factories increased to 67,721 in 2024, from the previous year's number of 64,191. The male workforce increased from 932,938 in 2023 to 969,479 in 2024, consistently making up around 95 percent of the total workforce. In comparison, the female workforce rose slightly from 45,567 in 2023 to 52,350 in 2024, accounting for approximately five percent for both years.

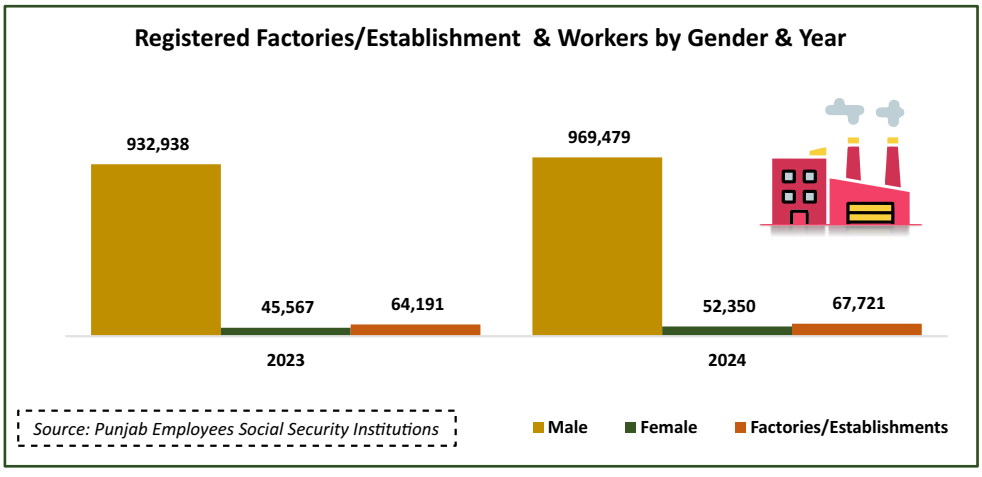


Figure 6.13

In 2023, the fisheries department provided 7,847 training and workshop sessions for progressive fish farmers. Men accounted for 6,890 (87 percent), while women made up 957 (13 percent). In 2024, the number of men slightly increased to 7,277 (88 percent), whereas the number of women decreased to 936 (12 percent). The GPI for both years remained at 0.13 points. Moreover, in the past two years, 39,424 fisheries licences were issued, all to men, and no women were among the recipients.

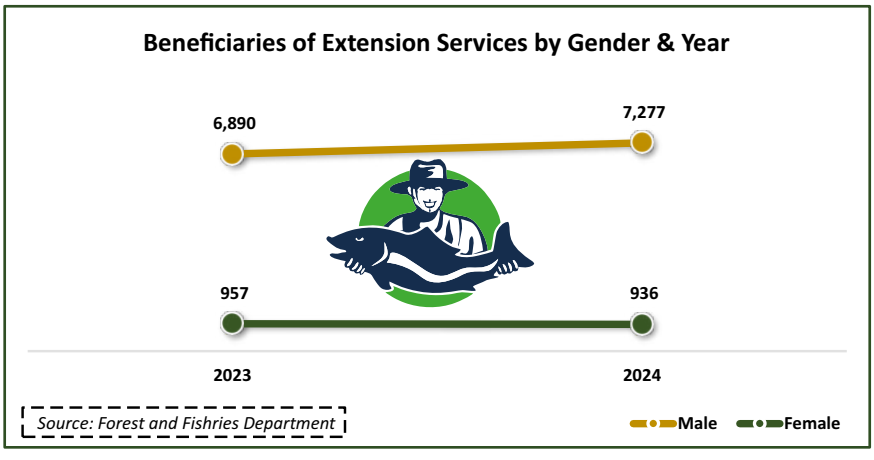


Figure 6.14

6.2.6 Emigration & Overseas Employment

Data received by the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment shows that 487,305 individuals emigrated in 2023, with 475,011 males (97.4 percent), 12,283 females (2.5 percent) and 11 transgender persons. In 2024, the number of emigrants was 403,472, with 392,607 males (97.3 percent), 10,847 females (2.6 percent) and 18 transgender. GPI for both consecutive years remained 0.02 points. A substantial share of emigrants migrated as general workers. However, the highest category of male emigrants was labourers, drivers, masons and electricians, and that of females was nurses, housemaids and doctors.

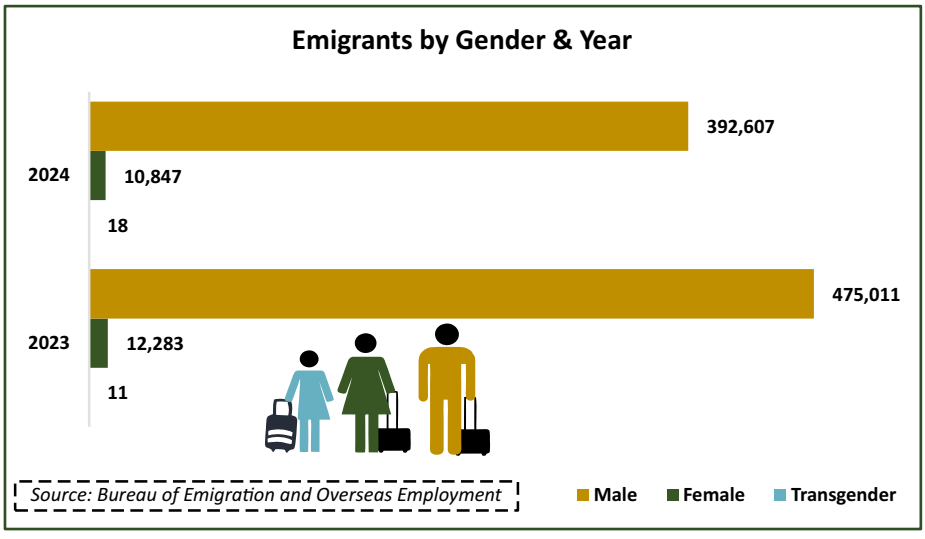


Figure 6.15

Of all the emigrants, highly qualified and highly skilled persons were only six percent and 0.19 percent, respectively. Unskilled workers were the highest with almost 50 percent, which shows that the majority of the emigrants from Pakistan were unskilled workers. A detailed view of the emigrants by the level of their skills is depicted in the figure.

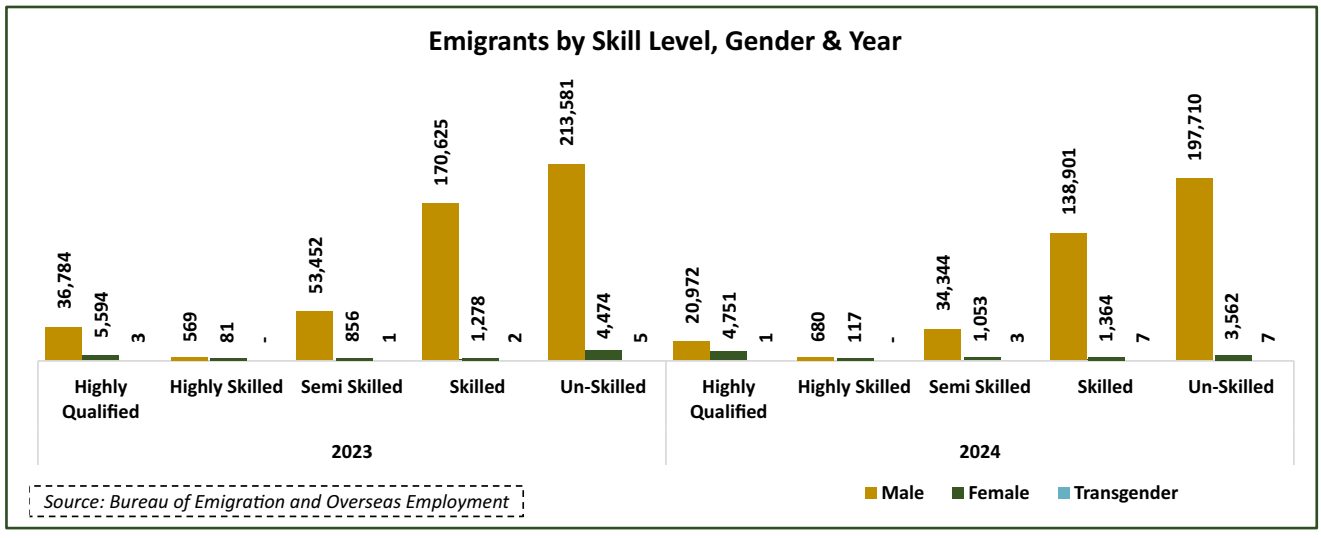


Figure 6.16

25 percent of female emigrants were from the Lahore district. District-wise, Lahore also had the highest GPI (0.10) and percentage share (10 percent) of emigrants. The lowest GPI for emigrants was recorded from the Mianwali district with 0.004 points.

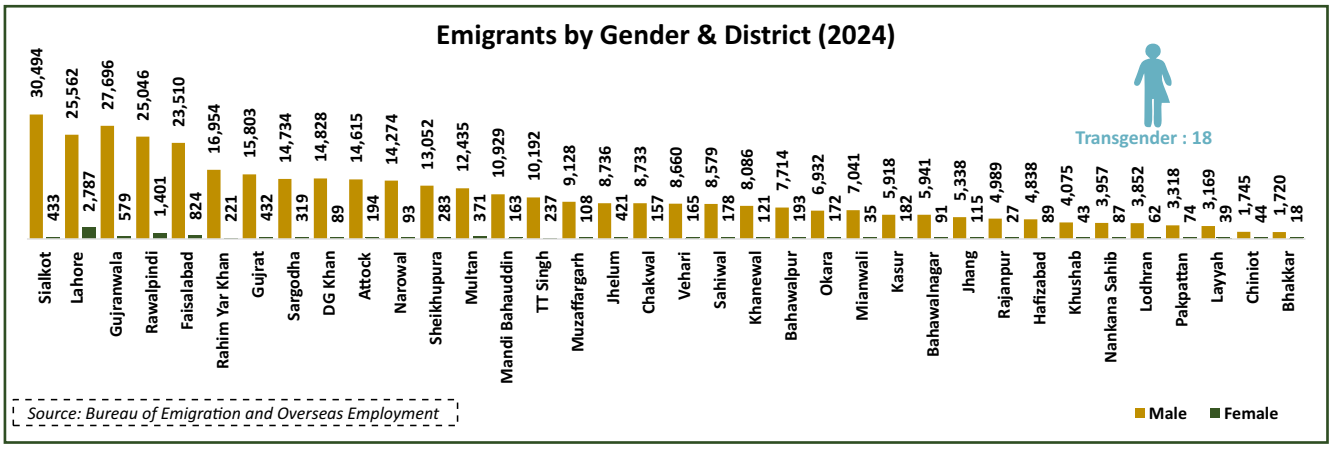


Figure 6.17

6.3 Incidence of Child Labour

Child Labour refers to work performed by children that, by its nature or circumstances, is likely to harm children's health and safety. SDG target 8.7 aims to eradicate all child labour by 2025. Moreover, Pakistan is a signatory to several international instruments addressing this issue, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Convention 138 (Minimum Age Convention), ILO Convention 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights treaty. (What is Child Labour, 2023). In the specific context of Punjab, "Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016" and "Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act, 2016" were explicitly promulgated to address this menace.

The following section is drawn from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Key Findings Report 2024 regarding child labour in Punjab. As per the findings, Punjab's incidence of child labour was 8.5 percent. On average, boys are more affected (10.6 percent) than girls (6.2 percent). Similarly, rural child labour is higher (10.8 percent) than in urban areas (5.2 percent).

The children involved in economic activities below the age-specific threshold were 8.7 percent in Punjab. Of which, nearly 11 percent of boys and 6.3 percent of girls were engaged in economic activities in a week. Whereas, the number of hours spent on household chores per week was higher for girls (43.8 percent) than for boys (40.6 percent).

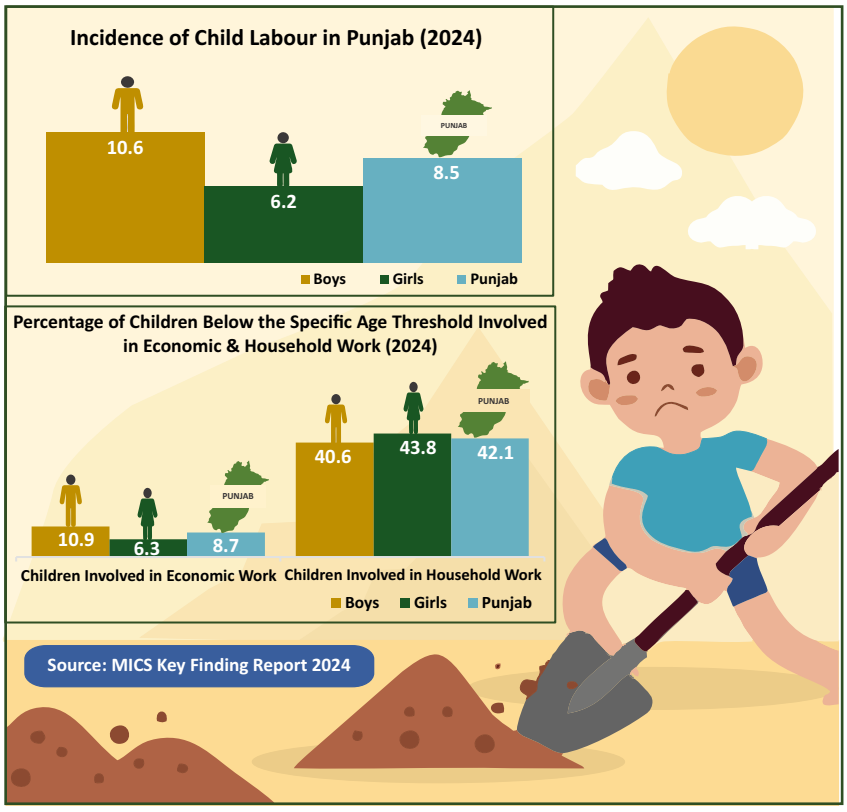


Figure 6.18

6.4 Business & Entrepreneurship

Formal labour market opportunities are scarce, particularly in developing nations. For this reason, entrepreneurship or starting a business becomes imperative as a means of income for many individuals. Analytics from around the world show that men make up the majority of individuals engaged in small and medium-sized enterprise start-ups.[327] Women's entrepreneurship is a vital component of the overall economy. Only a few countries have women's entrepreneurship rates higher than men's. It shows the prevalent barriers to the success of women entrepreneurs.

Mostly, women who struggle to find opportunities in formal business settings turn to entrepreneurship.[328] But these businesses remain small-scale and continue to operate in informal settings. Home-based work often becomes one of the few plausible options available to women.[329] To contextualise, about 94 percent of female workers in India and about 83 percent in Tanzania are employed in the informal sector.[330] This further diminishes women's voice and visibility in the economic sphere.

Pakistan still lags behind in enabling women's participation in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In 2023, the requirement for women to provide their husband's name for business registration was removed.[331] Removal of legal barriers is just the first step on the ladder in women's economic uplift.

In Punjab, only four percent of all employed women own or run their own businesses.[332] A significant proportion of these women are either divorced or widowed. This aspect shows the predominant gender stereotypes and biases against women owning businesses.[333] These social dynamics play a crucial role in determining the profession influenced by gender constructs. To enrich the entrepreneurial ecosystem, coordinated efforts are required from policymakers and entrepreneurs to invest, expand business support programs, and provide relevant training, financial resources, security, and infrastructure development.

The limitations on women's financial autonomy, independence, and entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of start-ups. The implications of lower women's engagement in self-employment transcend beyond the economy and impact the social, cultural, and political milieu.

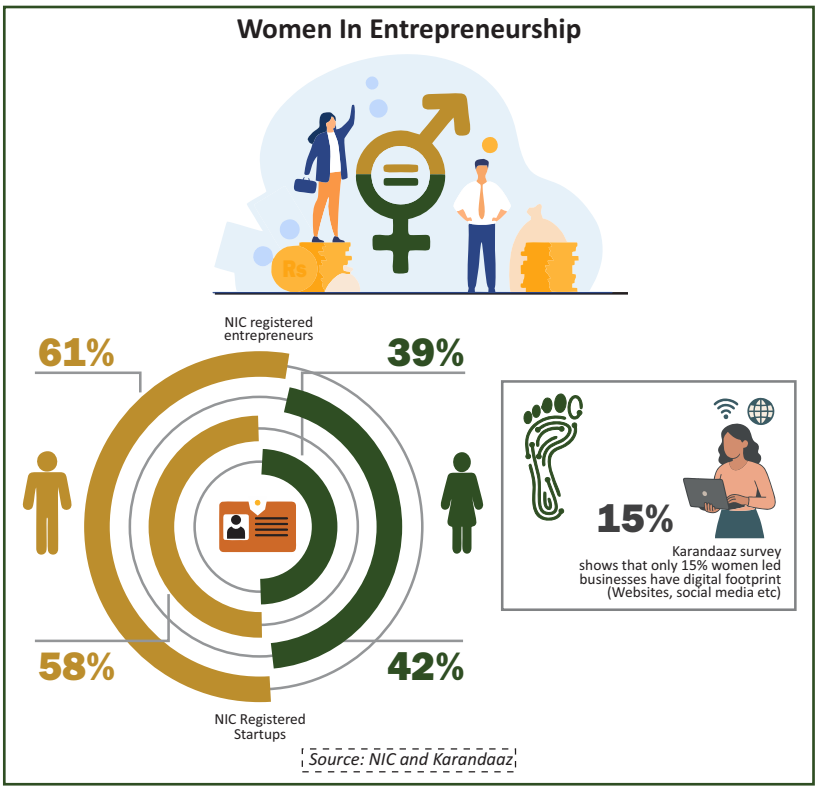


Figure 6.19

327 (Haan, 2016)
328 (ICRW, Women Entrepreneurs Need More Than Capital, 2019)
329 (Yaqoob S, 2020)
330 (We Prosper, 2023)
331 (Women, Business and Law, 2023)
332 (Women Economic & Social Well Being Survey, 2018)
333 (If my wife earns more than me, she will force me to do what she wants": Women's economic empowerment and family caregiving dynamics in Tanzania 2024)

6.4.1 Registered Firms & Shareholding

Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) statistics for registered firms in 2024 reveal that there were 15,573 registered firms in Punjab. On a year-to-year basis, there were 8,034 private companies, which increased to 8,919 in 2024 in Punjab. The number of single-member companies increased to 6,294 in 2024. In 2024, 885 private companies and 237 single-member companies were registered. Additionally, SECP data shows there were 229 limited liability, 36 public companies, 6 foreign companies and 11 trade organisations registered in Punjab. Moreover, companies under section 42 in Punjab were 78 in 2024. District-wise, Lahore and Rawalpindi constituted the highest share of registered firms, while Murree and Rajanpur comprised the lowest share.

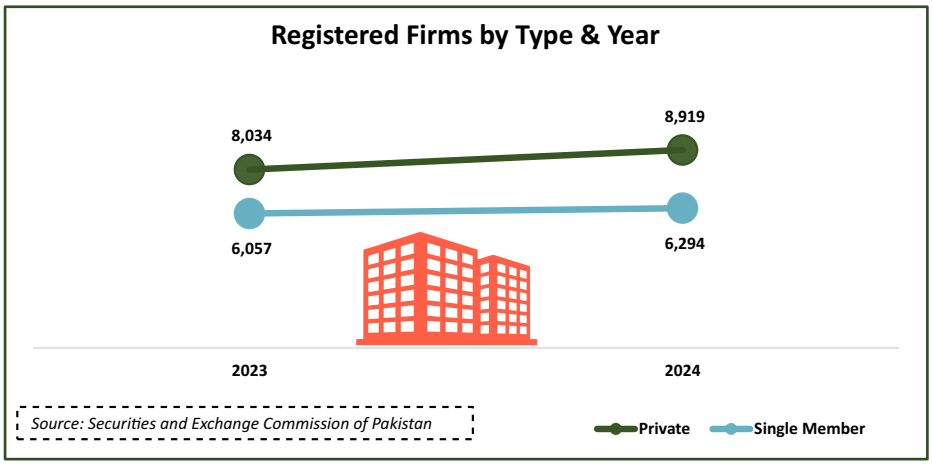


Figure 6.20

In 2024, the number of shareholding companies increased by 1,081 firms on a yearly basis. In 2024, there were 23,709 (87.5 percent) male shareholders, while the number of female shareholders was 3,947 (14.2 percent), with a GPI of 0.16.

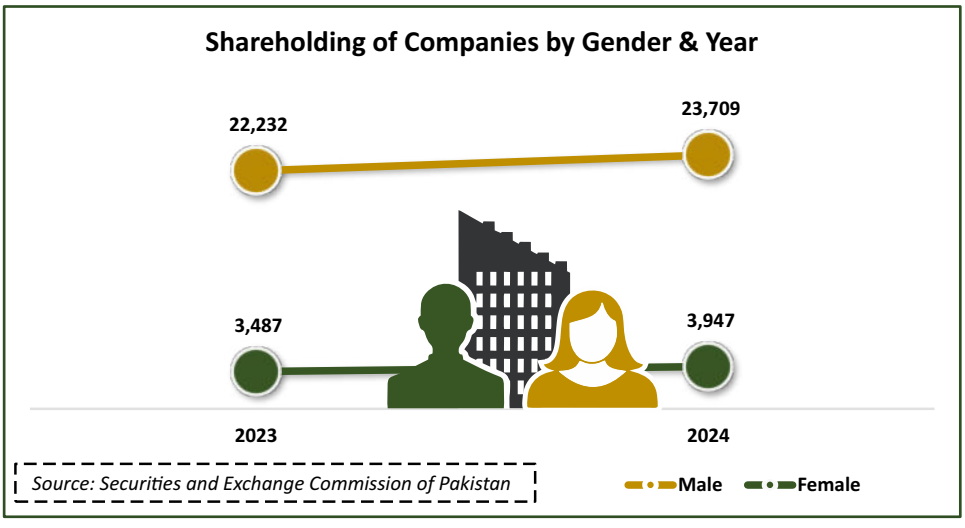


Figure 6.21

District-wise gendered analysis of shareholders showed Lahore had the highest GPI of 0.19, followed by Rawalpindi, Multan and Faisalabad. The lowest GPI was recorded in Rajanpur and Khausab with 0.05 and 0.06 points, respectively.

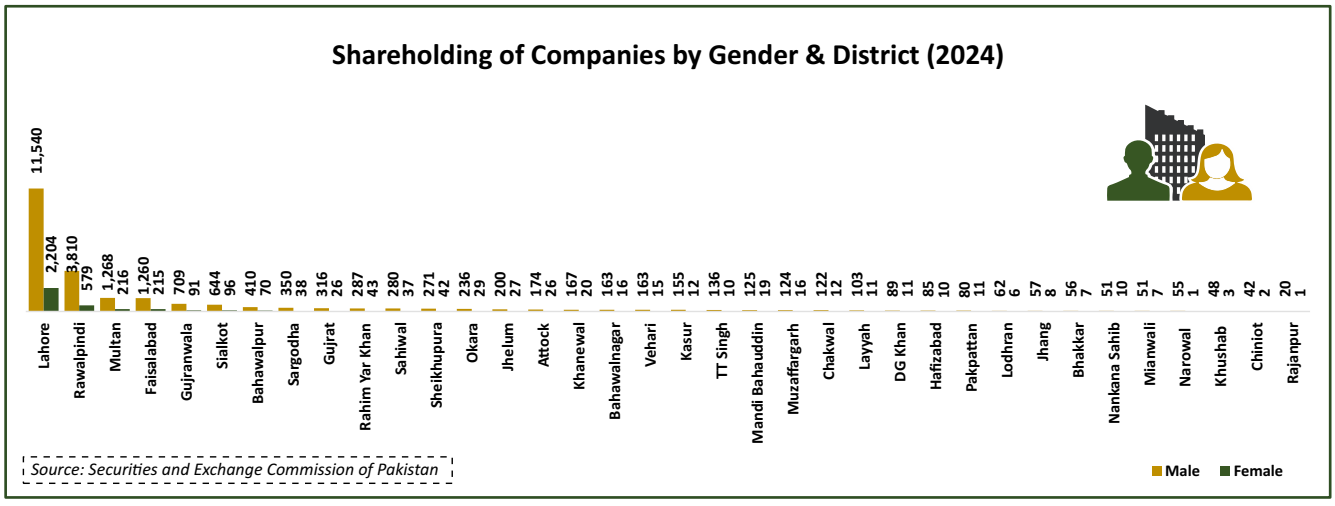


Figure 6.22

Gender-segregated details of board members of registered firms with SECP show that there were 24,907 (86 percent) male board members compared to 4,133 (14 percent) female board members in 2024. On a year-to-year basis, the number of male and female board members increased by 2,140 and 474, respectively. The percentage of female board members slightly increased by 0.5 percentage points on a year-to-year basis.

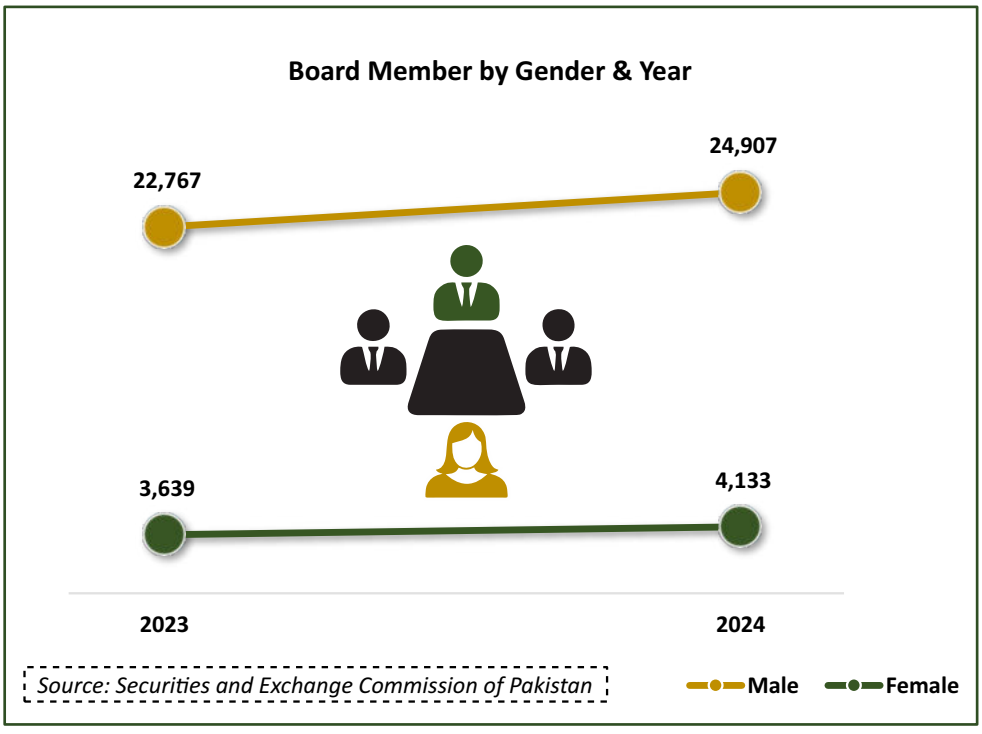


Figure 6.23

The figure below displays the board members ' details by type of company. In 2024, the highest gender parity was observed in section 42 companies with 0.31 points. Trade organisations had the lowest GPI of 0.05 points in 2024, with a decrease of 0.02 points from the previous year.

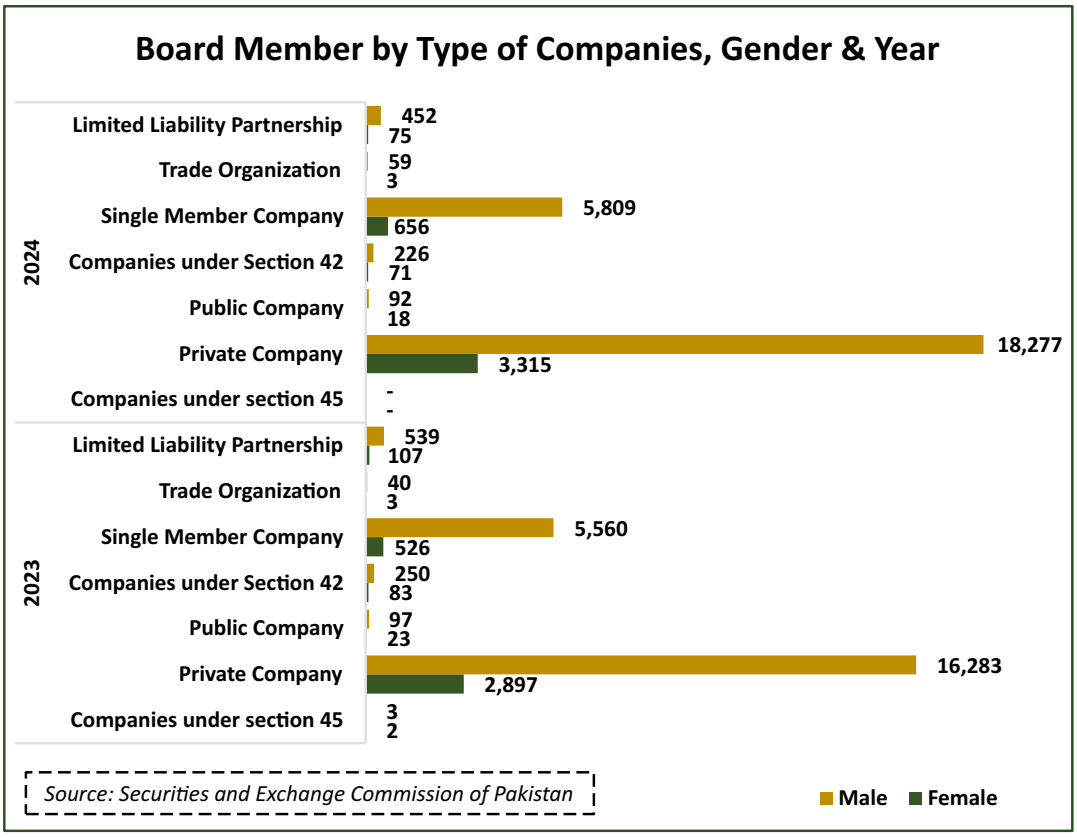


Figure 6.24

District-wise analysis of registered firms' board members is presented in figure 6.25.

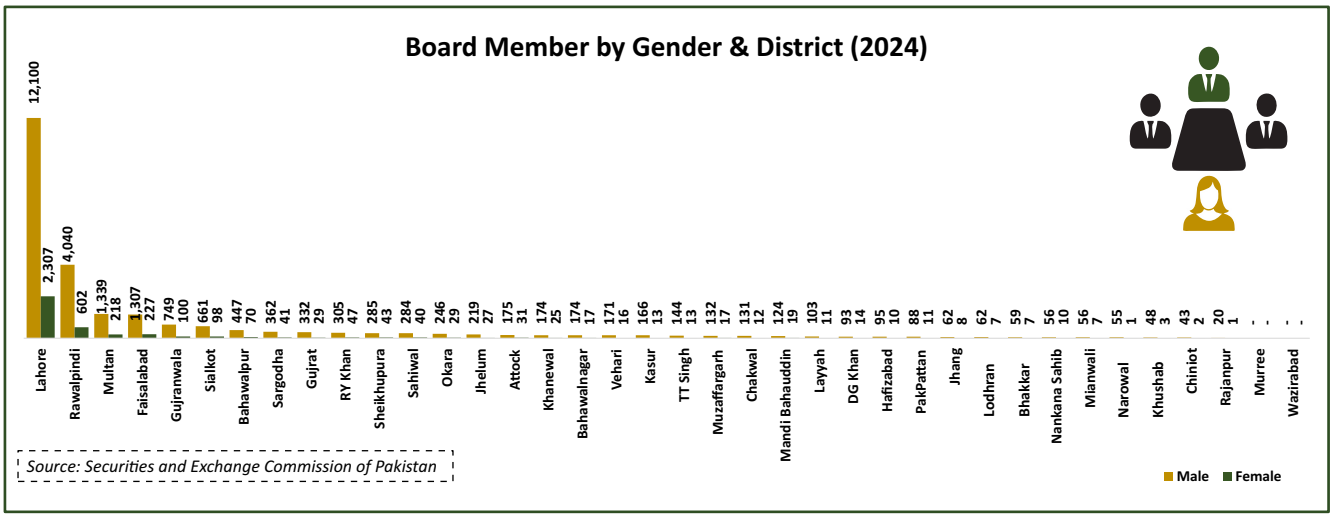


Figure 6.25

The number of companies with at least one female director increased from 3,532 to 4,058 in 2024. It shows 14.8 percent annual growth. The highest number of such companies exists in Lahore, followed by Rawalpindi, while Narowal and Rajanpur had the lowest number of such companies. Meanwhile, the newly constituted districts of Wazirabad and Murree had no available data on registered firms and directors.

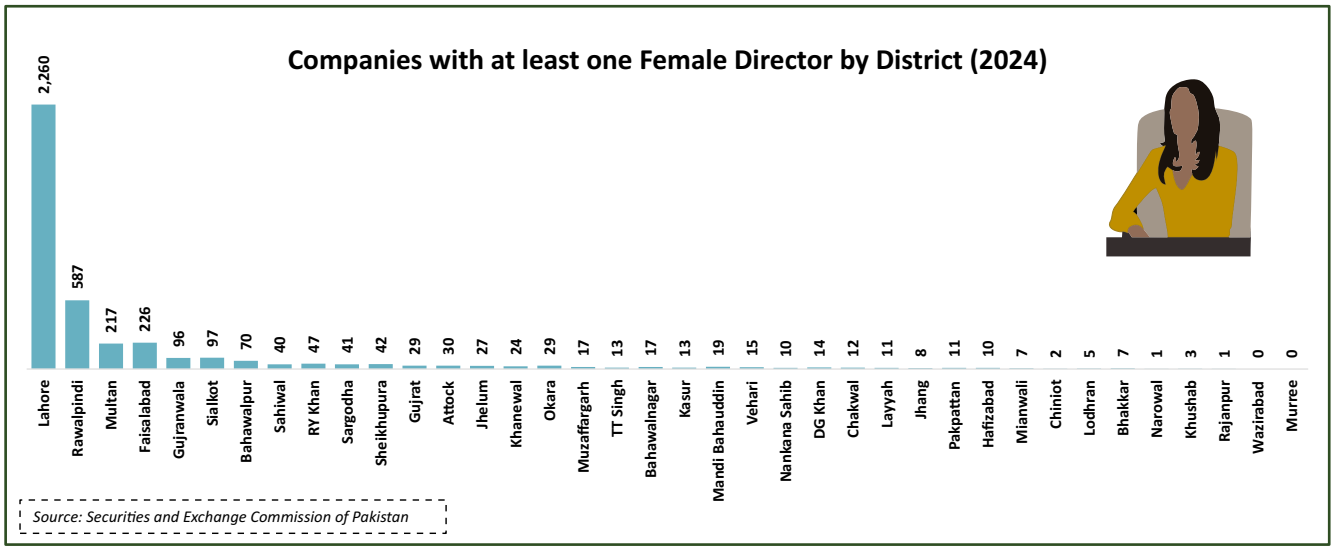


Figure 6.26

Private companies had the largest share with at least one female director for both consecutive years. In contrast, companies registered under Section 45 and trade companies were the lowest to have at least one female director, with only two to three such firms.

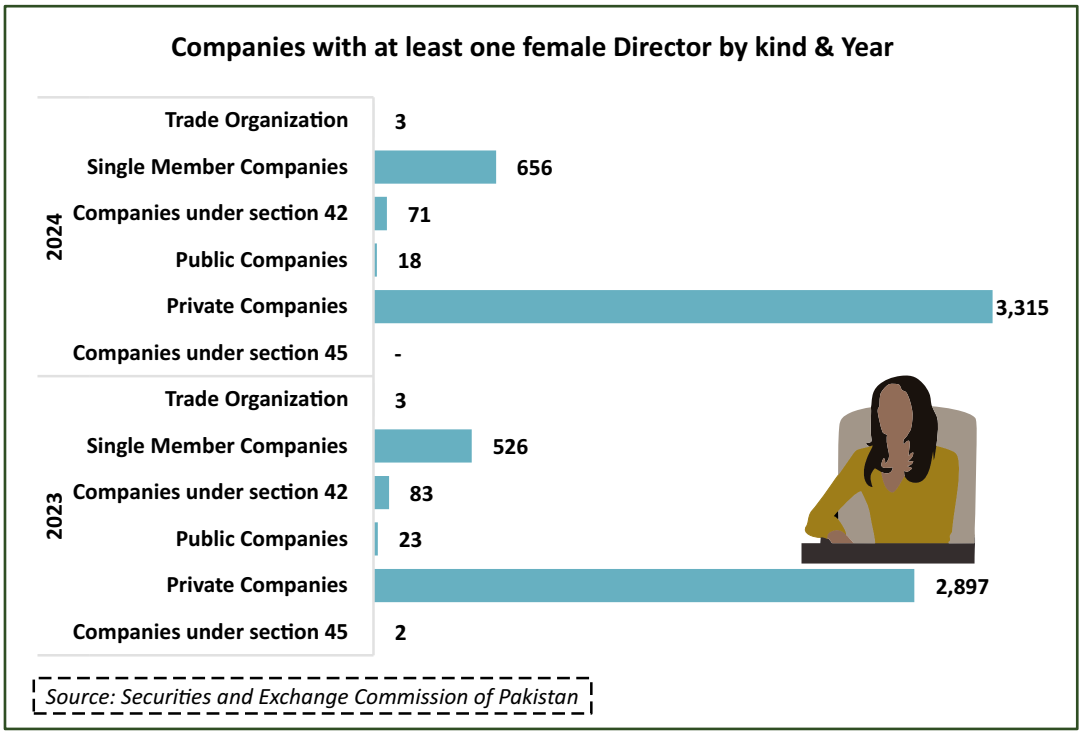


Figure 6.27

6.4.2 Food Business

In 2023, 186,919 licensing applications were registered by the Punjab Food Authority (PFA). In 2024, the number of registered licences increased to 193,623, with the main categories of utility stores, food outlets, meat shops, and dairy businesses.

Regarding label applications, in 2023, a total of 1,861 applications were submitted, with female applications of only 5. In 2024, just 8 females submitted applications to the PFA. Lahore district submitted 863 applications, while Multan and Rajanpur had the fewest, with only 2 in each district.

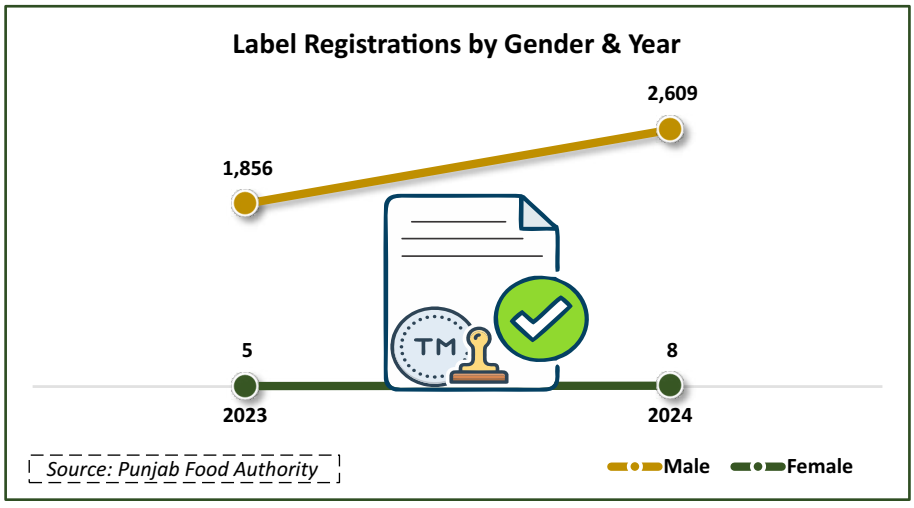


Figure 6.28

District-wise analysis of food handler screenings reveals that the highest number of screenings was carried out in Lahore, with 13,699 males and 4,447 females. Data for more than half of Punjab's districts was unavailable. Based on the available district data, only few female food handler screenings were conducted in Chakwal and Rahim Yar Khan. One of the main reasons for the significant gender disparity in screenings is the lower number of female-owned food businesses.

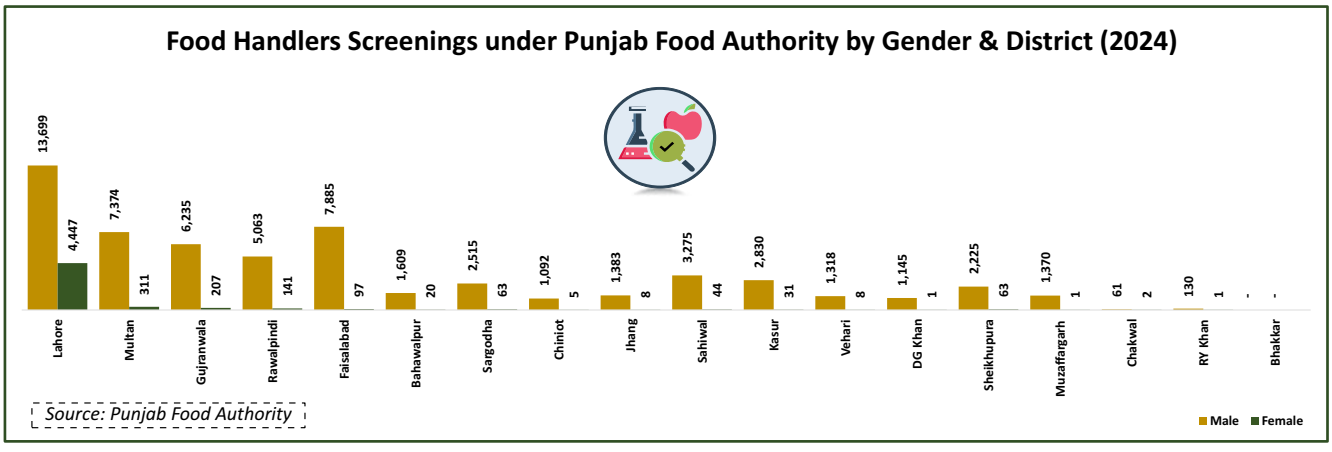


Figure 6.29

Punjab Food Authority (PFA) provides training to food handlers across Punjab. There was a significant increase in Level I courses from 2023 to 2024, while Level II trainings saw a decline. In 2023, 53,264 Level I and 3,058 Level II trainings were conducted. In 2024, Level I trainings surged to 179,122, whereas Level II decreased to 2,434. The majority of trainees were male, accounting for 90 percent, while females constituted 10 percent, with a GPI of 0.1.

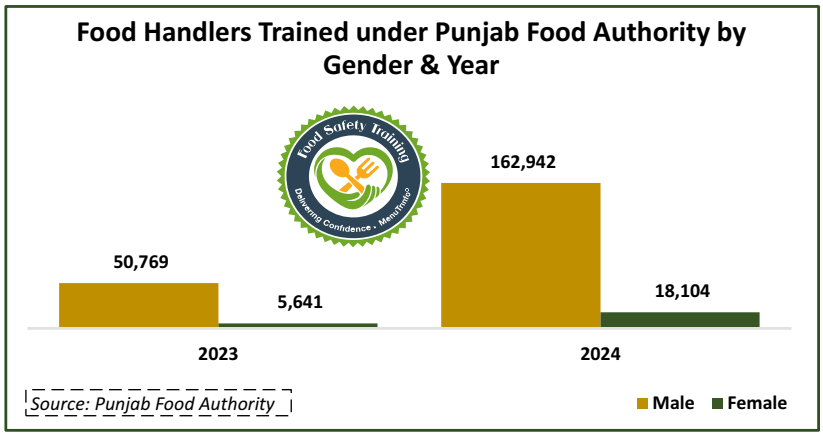


Figure 6.30

6.4.3 Start-ups & Entrepreneurship

The National Incubation Centre (NIC) remains actively involved in training and workshops for youth, focusing on diverse skills pertinent to business and market needs. Training and workshop data revealed that e-commerce training sessions remained the highest, at 24.5 percent. The other highest component of training remained Software as a Service (SAAS) with 22.3 percent, green technology with 9.8 percent, and health technology with 9.6 percent. Education technology and hardware comprised 6.5 percent of total training and workshops. Other miscellaneous trainings accounted for 13 percent of the NIC trainings and workshops for the 2024 year.

Gender-wise analysis of the National Incubation Centre (NIC) for previous years shows that in 2023, the GPI of registered entrepreneurs remained 0.47, which improved to 0.61 in 2024.

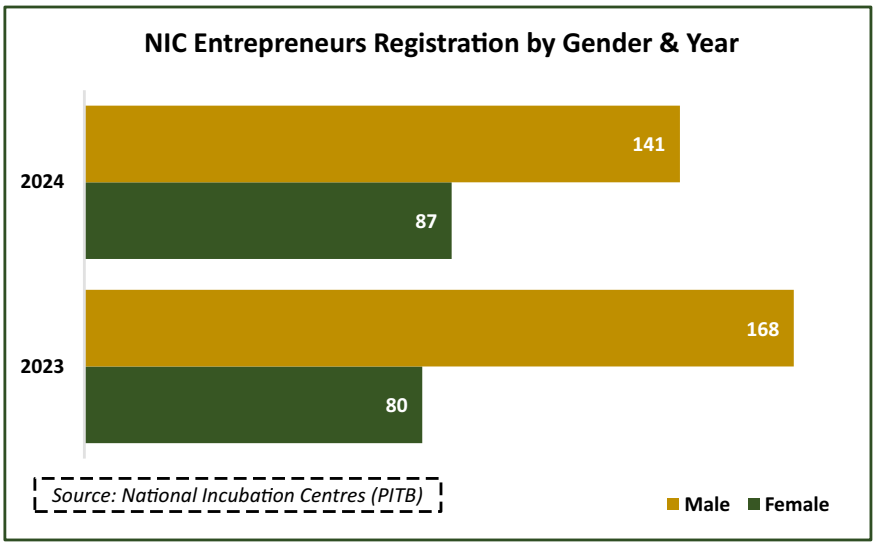


Figure 6.31

District-wise analysis revealed only eleven districts with registered entrepreneurs, while the majority of districts remained unlisted. Lahore and Rawalpindi had the highest number of registered entrepreneurs in Punjab.

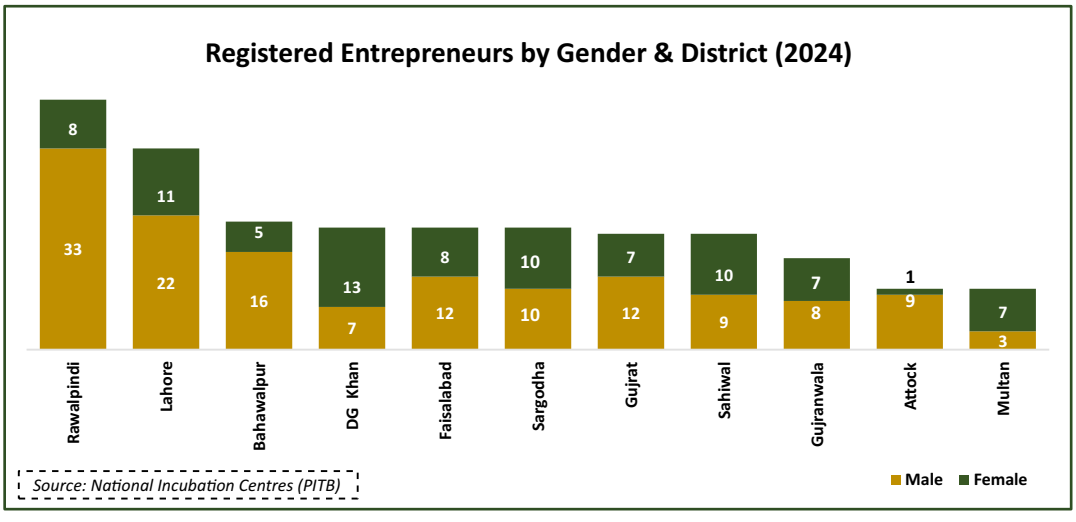


Figure 6.32

Registered start-up members' details from NIC revealed that men constituted 65 percent of start-ups in 2023, while women made up 35 percent. Start-up statistics for women improved in 2024, reaching almost 42 percent of registrations. The year-on-year growth of female start-up members remained at 3.28 percent. GPI of registered startup members of NIC remained 0.54 in 2023, which slightly improved to 0.73 in 2024.

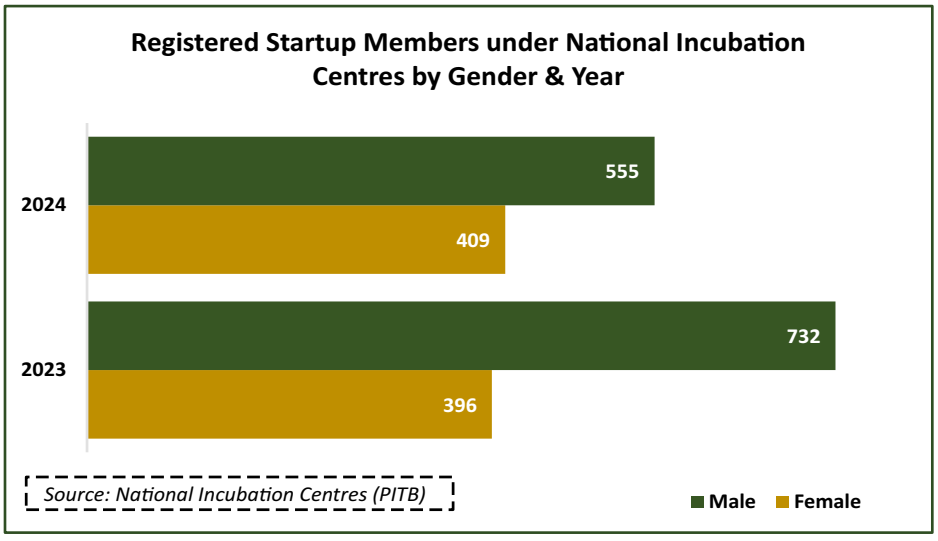


Figure 6.33

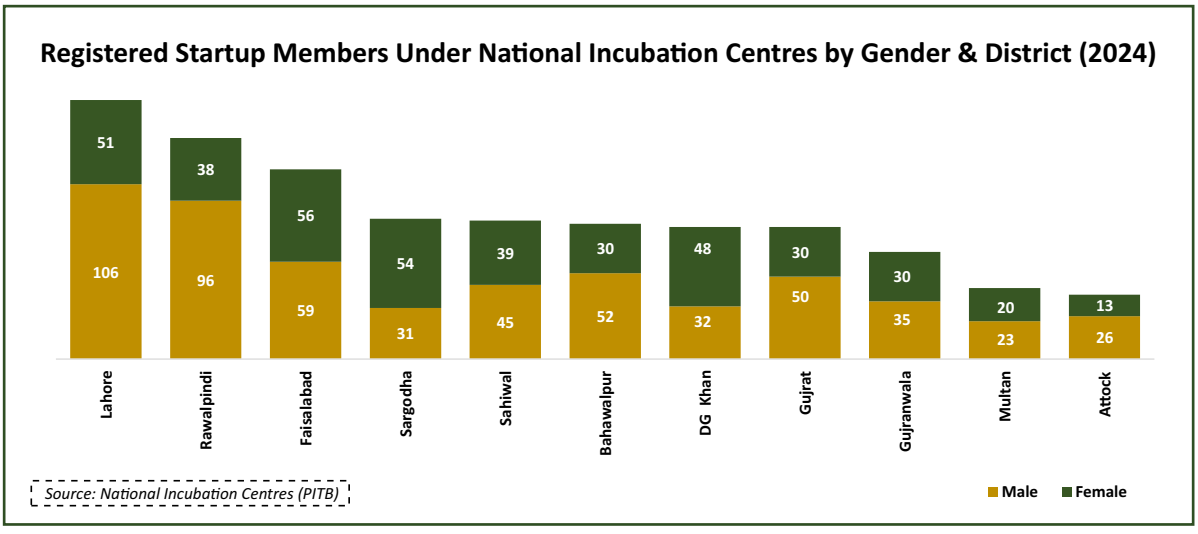


Figure 6.34

6.4.4 Training & Skill Development

Digital skill development has become key for personal learning and professional growth in this modern age of technology. Ignite National Technology Fund undertakes this crucial task of digital learning for the youth of Punjab. Statistics on digital skills training show that overall enrolment decreased by almost 50 percent in 2024 from the previous year. In 2024, the male enrolment percentage was 64 percent, while the female enrolment percentage remained 36 per cent. GPI of enrolment remained almost 0.5 points for both consecutive years.

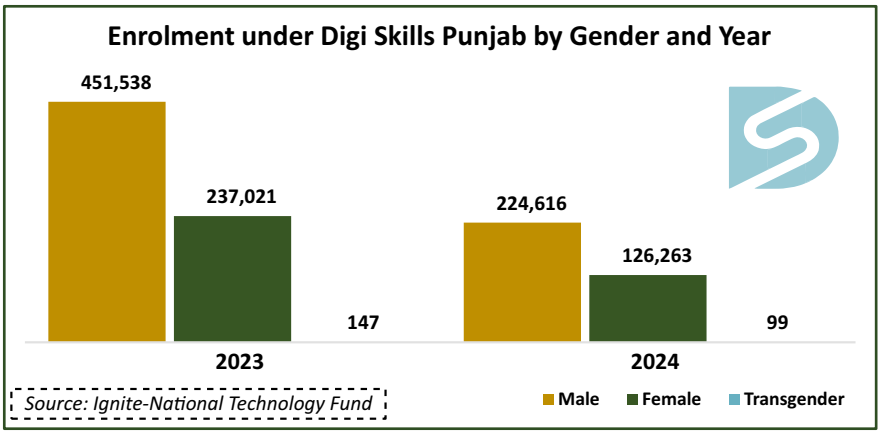


Figure 6.35

A district-wise analysis of Punjab revealed that the largest share of enrolment was from Lahore, followed by Rawalpindi and Faisalabad. The lowest share of enrolment in digital skills training was from Chiniot, Bhakkar, Hafizabad, and Rajanpur. District-wise analysis of Punjab reveals significant gender disparities in enrolment, especially in the south Punjab districts.

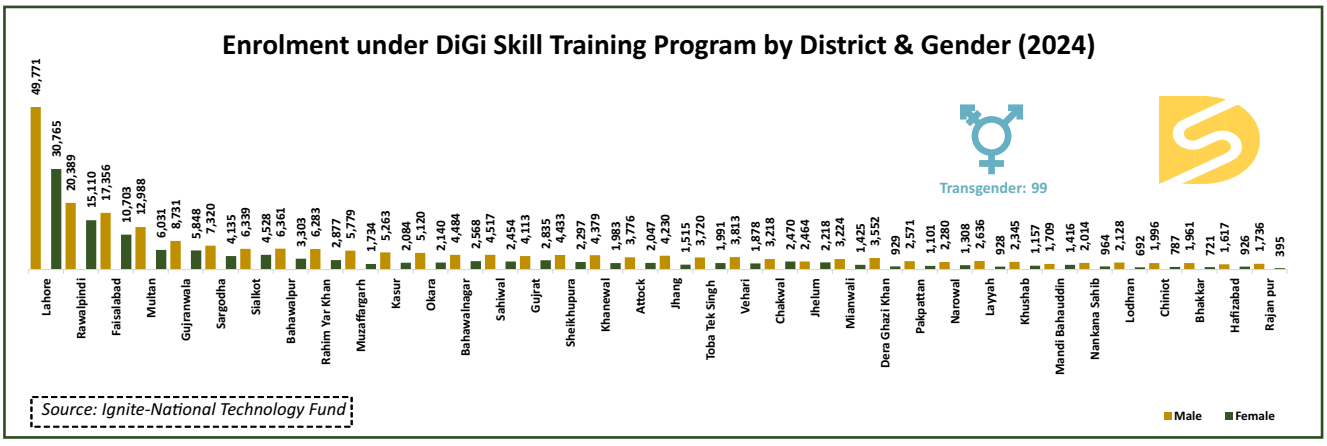


Figure 6.36

6.4.4.1 Skill Development

Enrolled participants' educational level under the Punjab Skill Development Fund (PSDF) revealed that the highest number of participants was at the matriculation and intermediate level, with almost identical gender participation. Comparatively, master's and diploma level trainees were lower than other education levels.

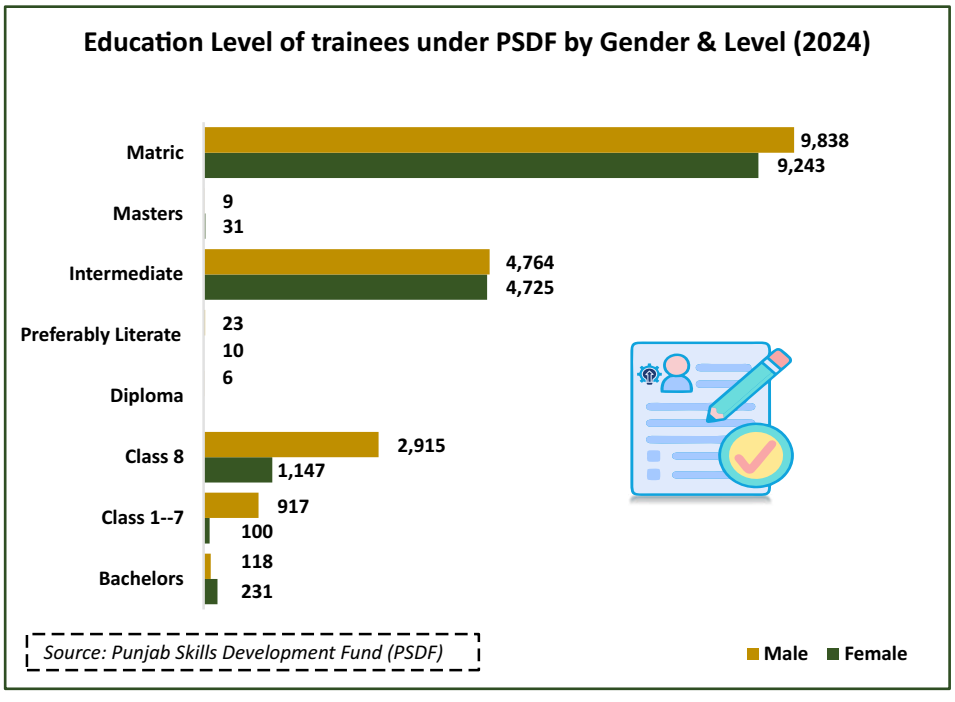


Figure 6.37

Yearly statistics of graduates from PSDF showed that for both consecutive years, male graduates were more than 13.5 thousand. Comparatively, female graduates decreased from 15.1 thousand in 2023 to 12.9 thousand in 2024.

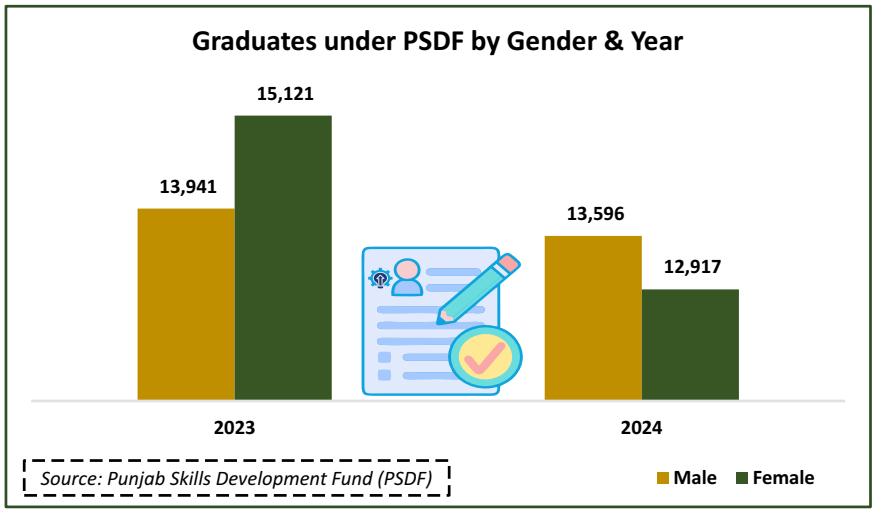


Figure 6.38

District-wise analysis of PSDF graduates showed the highest GPI districts were Sialkot, Gujranwala and Gujrat. The lowest GPI was recorded in Jhelum and Dera Ghazi Khan, with not a single female participant from these districts.

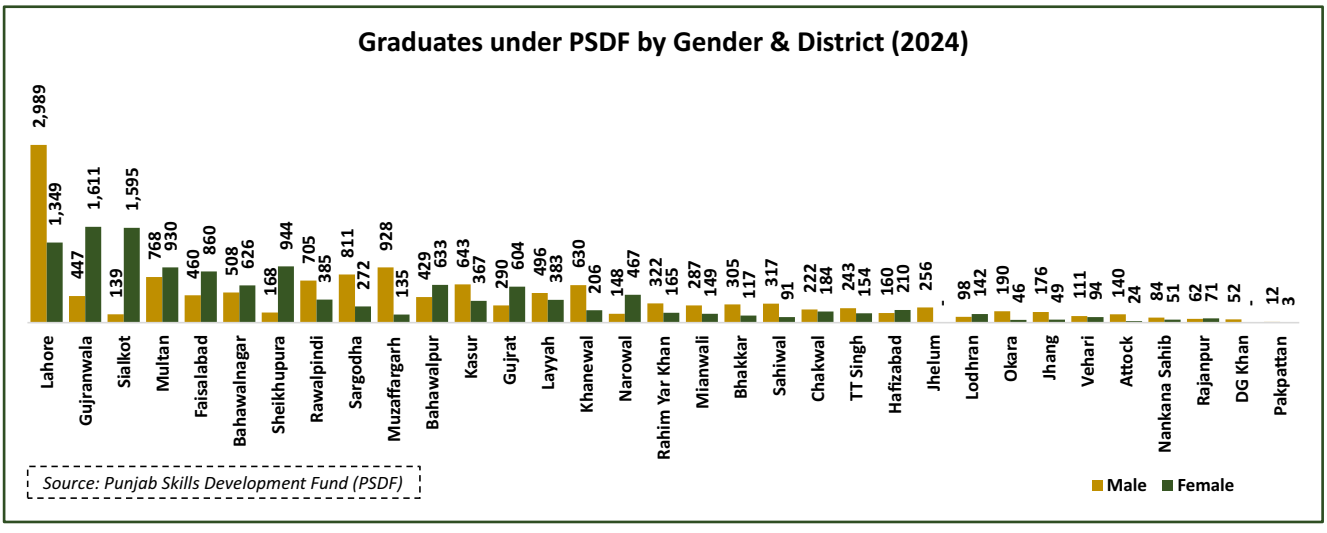


Figure 6.39

PSDF training statistics under different programs show that the Mahir training programme had the highest participation. The Uraan programme had the highest female percentage of 98 percent in 2024. In 2024, the Mahir, Umeed and Aghaaz programmes had the GPI of 0.4 points. Participation under each PSDF programme is shown in figure 6.40.

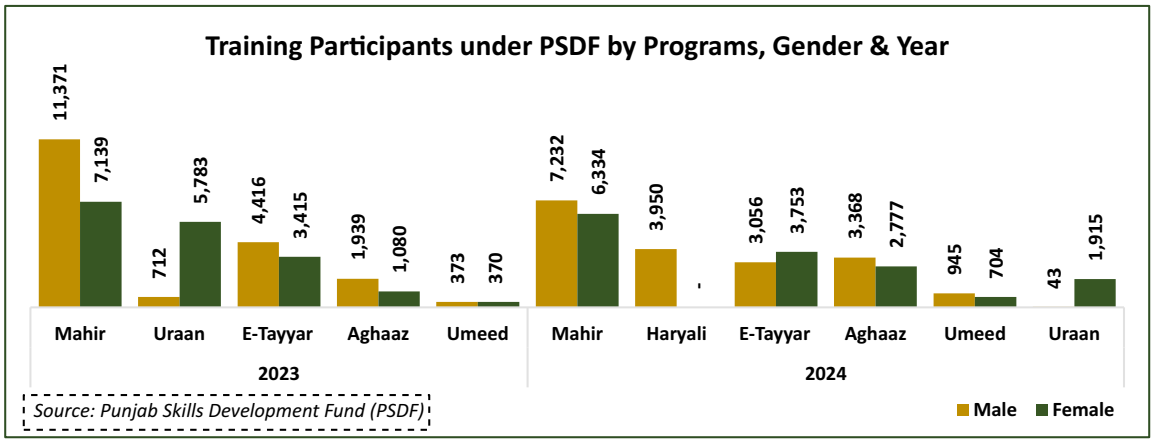


Figure 6.40

District-wise training statistics show that Lahore had the highest number of participants with a GPI of 0.40. Moreover, no female participant was recorded from Jhelum and DG Khan districts.

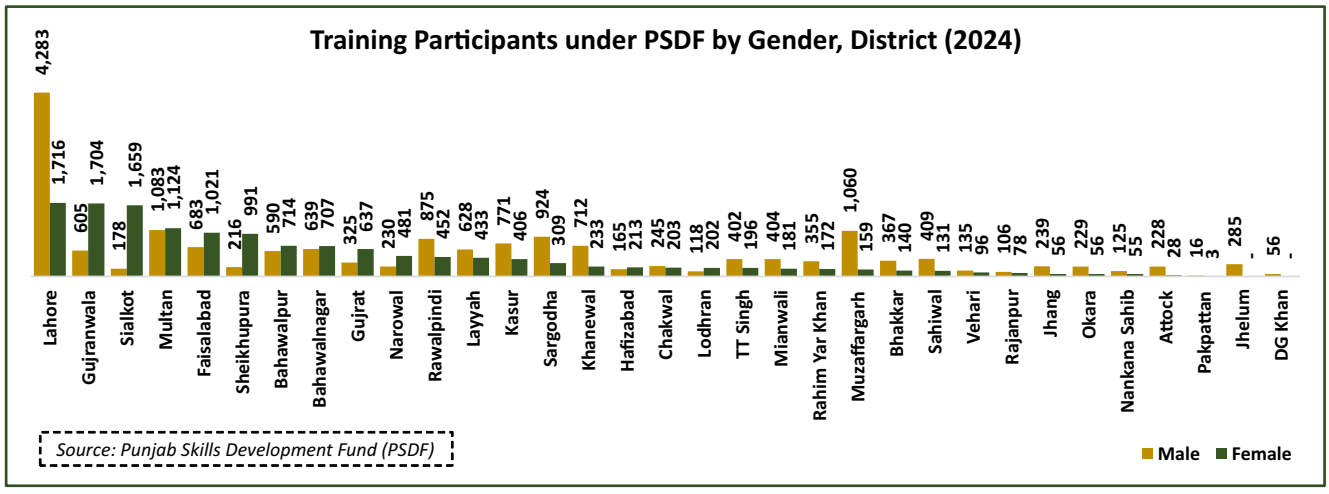


Figure 6.41

PSDF statistics apropos to the participation as per type of training revealed the highest participation in formal trainings with proportionate gender participation. A significant decline was observed in community-based trainings in 2024, as no female participation was observed for that year.

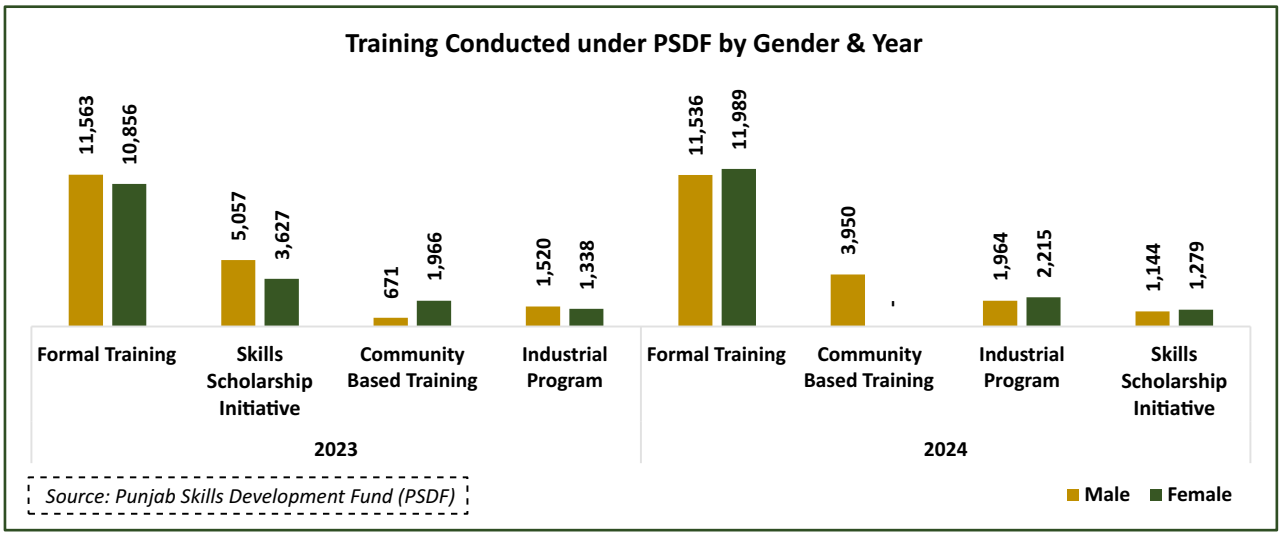


Figure 6.42

Female beneficiaries trained under the Uraan programme showed a significant drop in 2024 (1,742) as compared to the previous year's participation (5,189). Fashion designing, embroidery and industrial stitching remained the popular courses with higher participation than others.

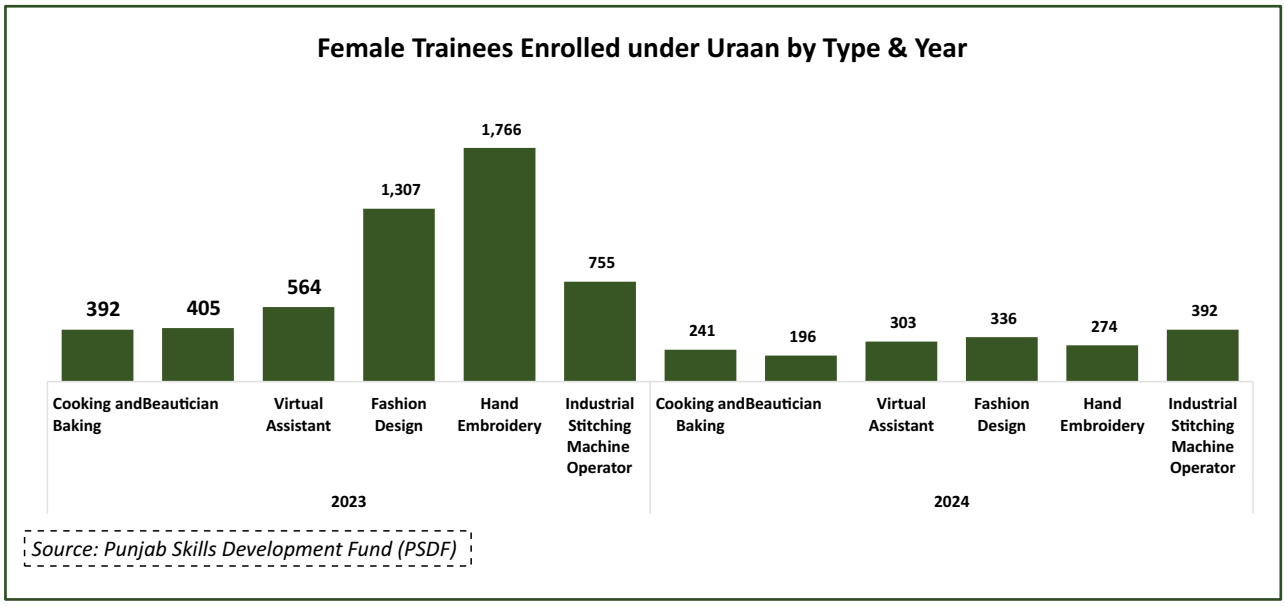


Figure 6.43

PSDF projects of export development and income generation had proportionate gender participation, with female percentages of more than 50.

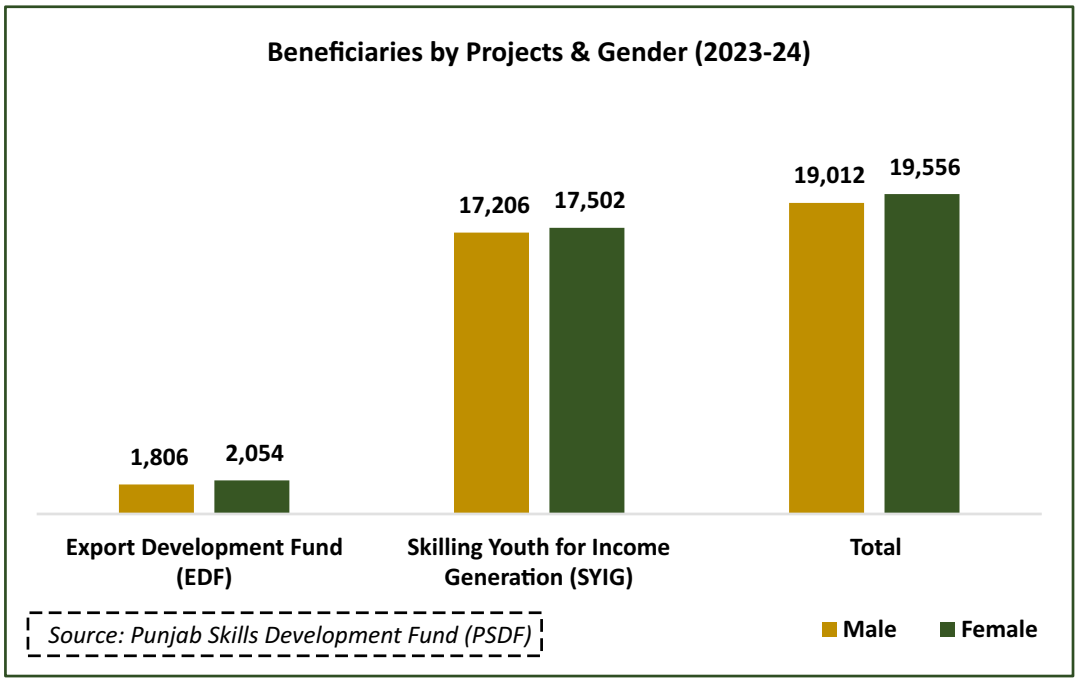


Figure 6.44

Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA) training participation was 60 percent for men and 40 percent for women in 2024. Overall, the GPI of training participants remained 0.60.

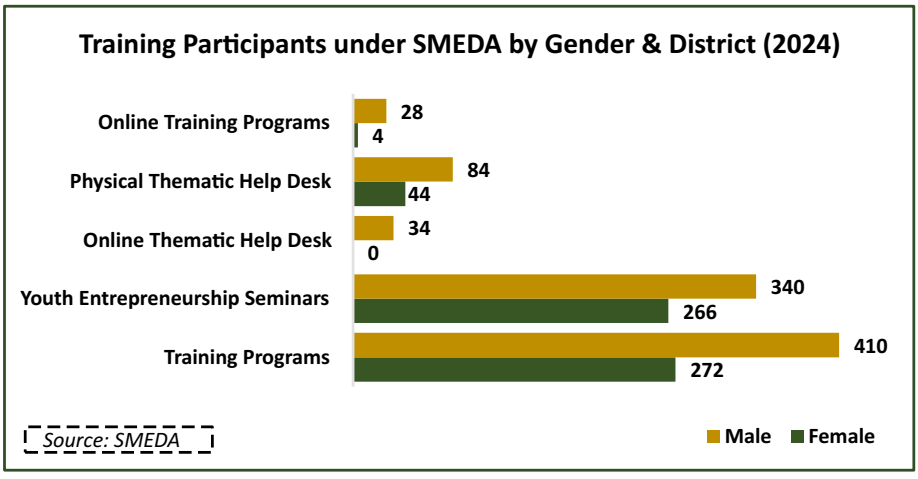


Figure 6.45

SMEDA provides legal and financial services to individuals for small and medium enterprises. Beneficiaries' details of these legal and financial services reveal that fewer than 10 women received these services in the past two years. GPI of legal and financial beneficiaries remained 0.04 in 2023, while slightly increasing to 0.07 in the following year.

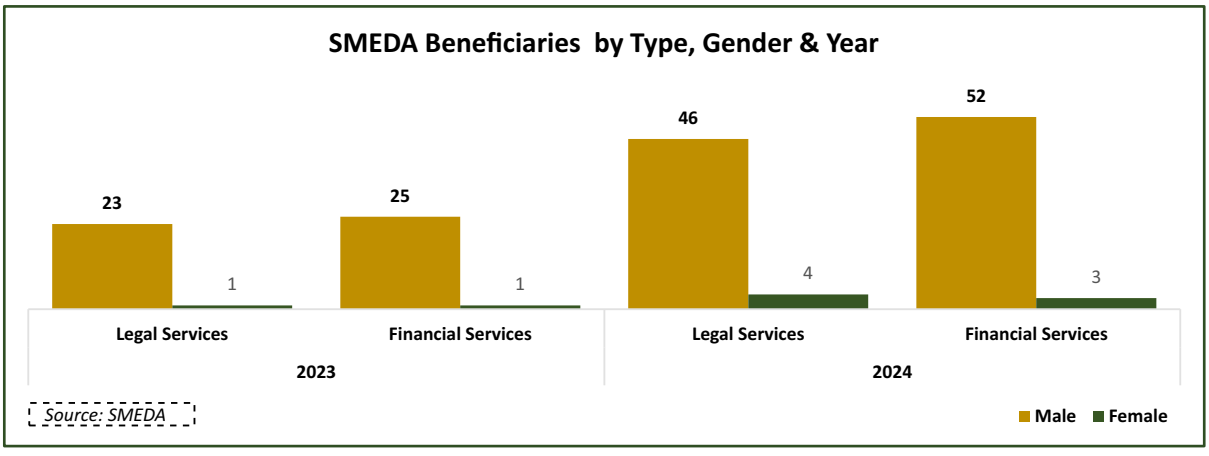


Figure 6.46

6.5 Access, Ownership & Control of Physical Resources

One of key determinant of power or agency is the possession or control over resources, particularly physical ones.[334] Gender inequalities are prevalent globally, and one critical aspect of this is the unequal distribution of physical assets along gendered lines.[335]

Multiple empirical studies highlight disparities in ownership of physical resources arising from social stigmas, restrictions on women's mobility, limited access to skill trainings, and cultural barriers.[336] Women's bargaining power increases exponentially with higher asset ownership. Ownership of physical resources is associated with income generation and a sense of security. Women's right to own, inherit, administer and dispose physical resources is vital for their financial independence and security.[337] Asset ownership enhances women's autonomy, empowerment, and influence over household investment decisions.

The Constitution of Pakistan safeguards women's right to hold and dispose off property in accordance with the law. CEDAW articles argue for equal treatment of women in land, agricultural reforms and resettlements. Moreover, it articulates equal rights for women in ownership, acquisition, management, administration, and disposition of property.[338] Nonetheless, prevalent gender norms, cultural practices and gaps in legal implementation continue to hinder women's ability to secure and

334 Singh J, T & et al, ASSET OWNERSHIP AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT, 2019)
335 (Sarah Khan, 2020)
336 (Rubab, 2019)
337 (Gaddis, I & et al, Women's Legal Rights and Gender Gaps in Property Ownership in Developing Countries, 2022)
338 (CEDAW, 1981)

exercise these rights. To foster inclusive societies and women's economic empowerment, mitigating these disparities is crucial.[339] A multi-pronged approach in terms of legal, political, economic and social aspects is the need of the hour to address this pervasive challenge.

In Punjab, women usually acquire land through inheritance, but inheritance laws are not fully implemented. Rules and practices have major loopholes, which exacerbate the denial of this basic religious and state-enshrined right of women.[340] A significant gender disparity is prevalent in terms of asset ownership, especially in South Punjab districts.[341]

6.5.1 House Ownership

Ownership details of residential houses in Pakistan show a stark difference between men and women, with men owning 95.8 percent of houses in Pakistan, while women own only 4.1 percent. A similar trend is depicted in Punjab, with 96 and 95 percent of houses owned by men, while women own 4 percent and 5 percent of houses in rural and urban areas, respectively. GPI for rural areas was 0.03, and for urban settings, it accounted for 0.05 points in Punjab. These statistics highlight women's lower sense of security, greater dependence, and lack of economic empowerment due to disproportionate ownership across Pakistan and Punjab.

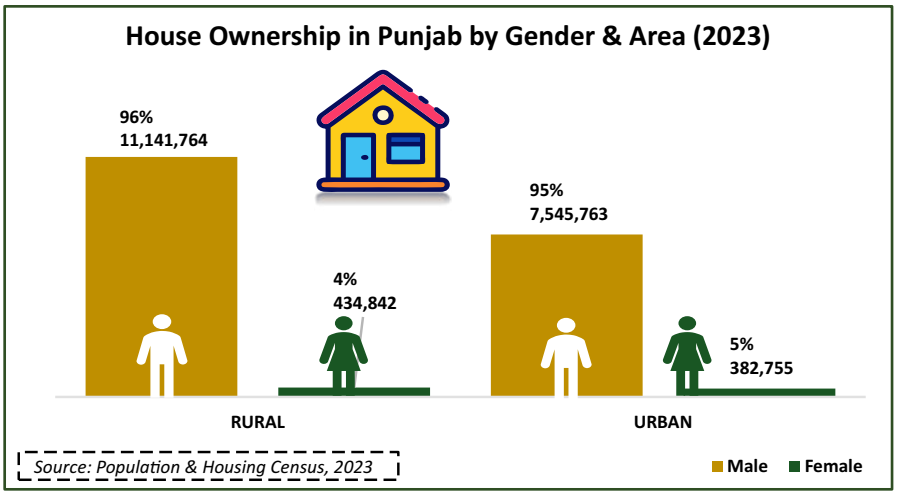


Figure 6.47

Ownership of houses paints a very contrasting picture regionally, with GPI decreasing from upper to central and south Punjab districts, geographically as depicted in the figure 6.48.

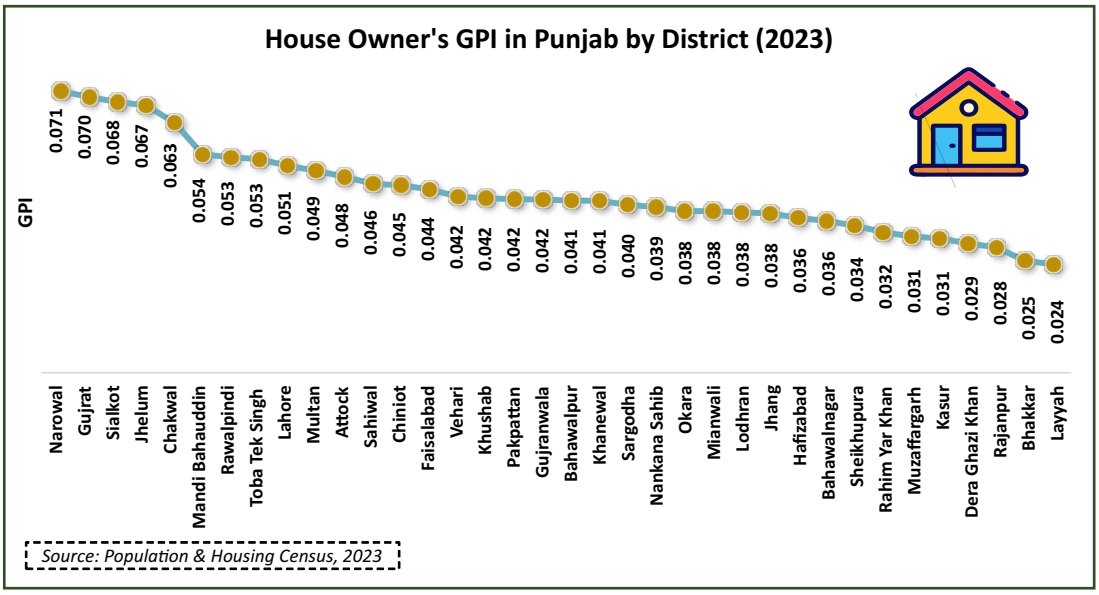


Figure 6.48

339 ((Rodgers & Kassens, 2017)
340 (Sheikh, 2023)
341 Tufail A & et al (2023)

6.5.2 Ownership of Land

Data on land ownership by the Punjab Land Record Authority (PLRA) show that there were approximately 20.7 million male landowners in 2023, which increased to 21.24 million in 2024. Female landowners numbered 9.59 million in 2023 and rose to 9.85 million in 2024. Overall, females made up 31 percent of landowners in 2024.

Regarding area ownership, land owned by males decreased from 26.47 million acres to 26.39 million acres, while female-owned land increased slightly from 4.80 million acres to 4.83 million acres in 2024. Although the number of female landowners is nearly half that of males, the area owned by females was nearly six times less than that owned by males in Punjab province.

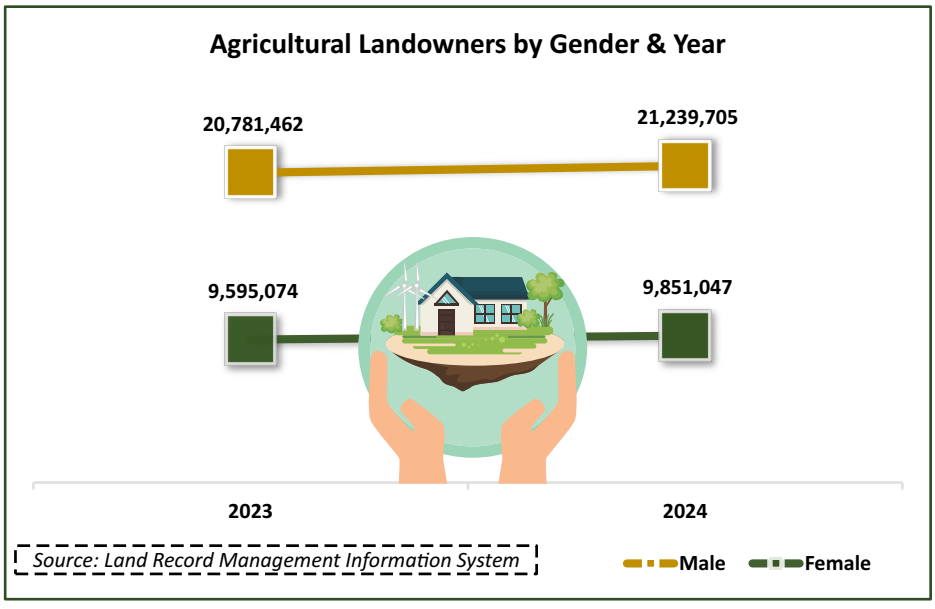


Figure 6.49

District-wise analysis of landowners in Punjab showed that the district Murree had the highest GPI of 0.81. While other districts with higher GPI included Jehlum, Chakwal, Talagang and Rawalpindi with 0.6 points. Bahawalnagar and Jhang were the districts with the lowest GPI of 0.35 points in terms of landowners during 2024. Yearly analysis of landowners' showed that the GPI of Punjab's majority districts remained stagnant. A slight increase of 0.1 point was observed in Faisalabad, Nankana Sahib, Pakpattan, Murree, Lodhran, Khanewal, Gujranwala and Attock districts.

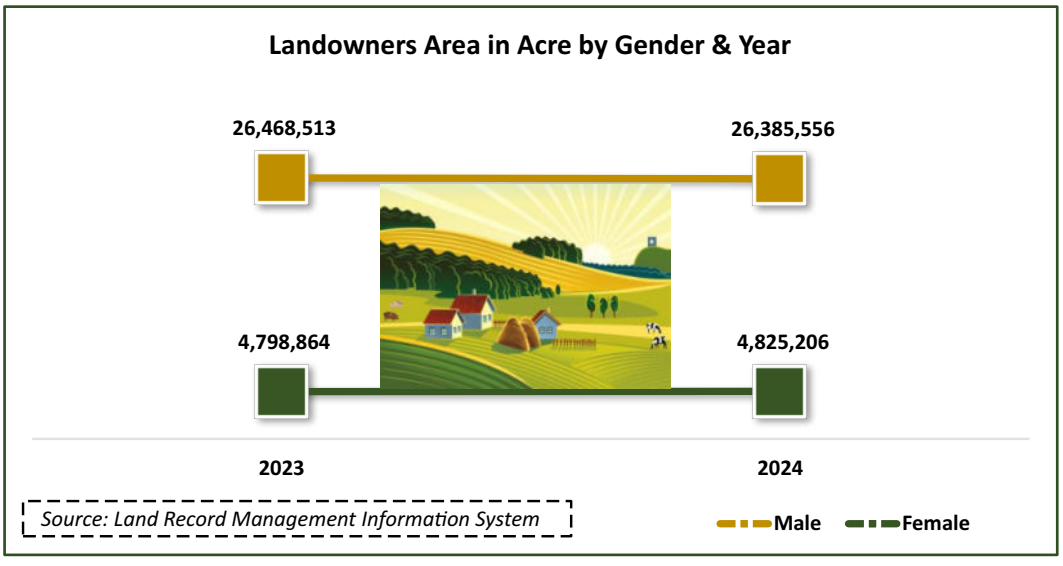


Figure 6.50

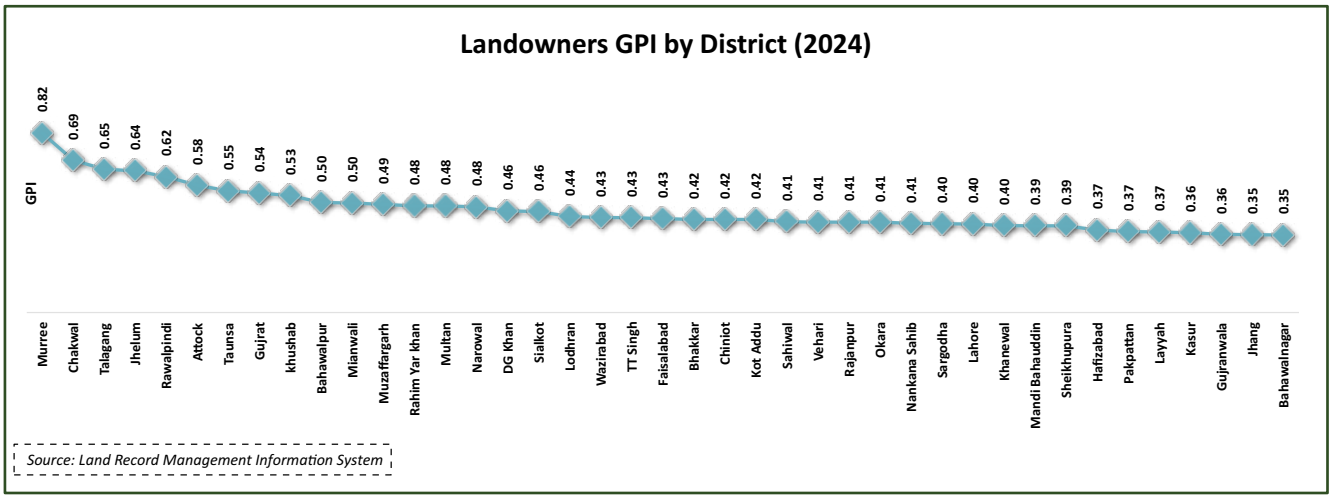


Figure 6.51

Average landholding in Punjab districts was found to be 3,800 square meters (sqm) or 0.93 Acres. The average male landholding was around 5,419 sqm or 1.33 acres. Moreover, the average female landholding was 2,182 sqm, nearly half an acre. District-wise analysis of average landholding show that Khushab, Bhakkar and Talagang were the districts with the highest average landholding for males, each with more than 9,000 sqm of land. The lowest average landholding for males was found in the districts of Murree and Rawalpindi, with less than 2,000 sqm. Taunsa and Bahawalnagar districts had the highest average female landholding, exceeding 1 acre or 4,046 sqm. Gujrat, Rawalpindi, and Sialkot had the lowest female average landholding, at around 1,000 sqm or less.

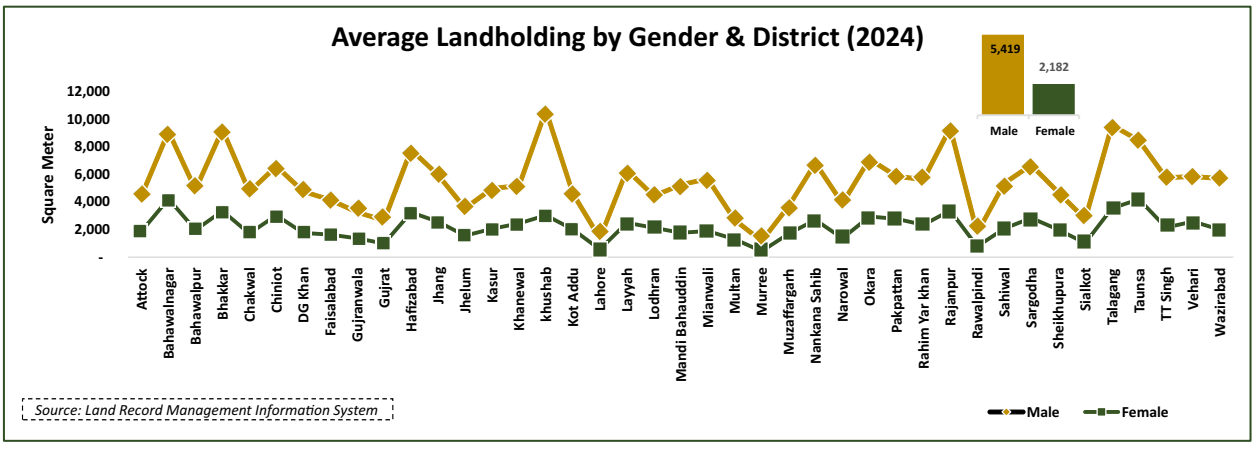


Figure 6.52

PLRA statistics for the number of intiqals show that the number of property transfers decreased slightly in 2024 from the previous year. There were more than 1.2 million non-wirasti-intiqals in 2023 that decreased to 907,232 in 2024. Comparatively, Wirasti intiqals were 163,117 in 2023, which decreased slightly to 151,910 in 2024.

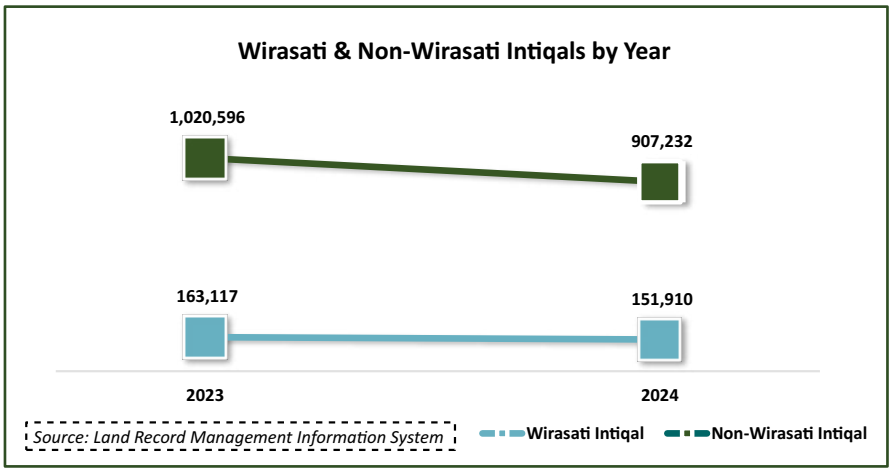


Figure 6.53

6.5.3 Succession/ Wirasti Intiqals

NADRA issues succession certificates for the estates of deceased individuals. Punjab statistics showed a slight yearly increase in certificates issued for the estates of deceased men, while certificates for the estates of deceased women declined marginally in 2024. Overall, about 76 percent of certificates pertained to men's estates and 24 percent to women's, with the GPI at 0.3 for both years.



Figure 6.54

The highest number of succession certificates were issued in Lahore and Rawalpindi, while the lowest number of certificates were from Rajanpur and Bhakkar districts. District-wise statistics of succession certificates are given in figure 6.55.

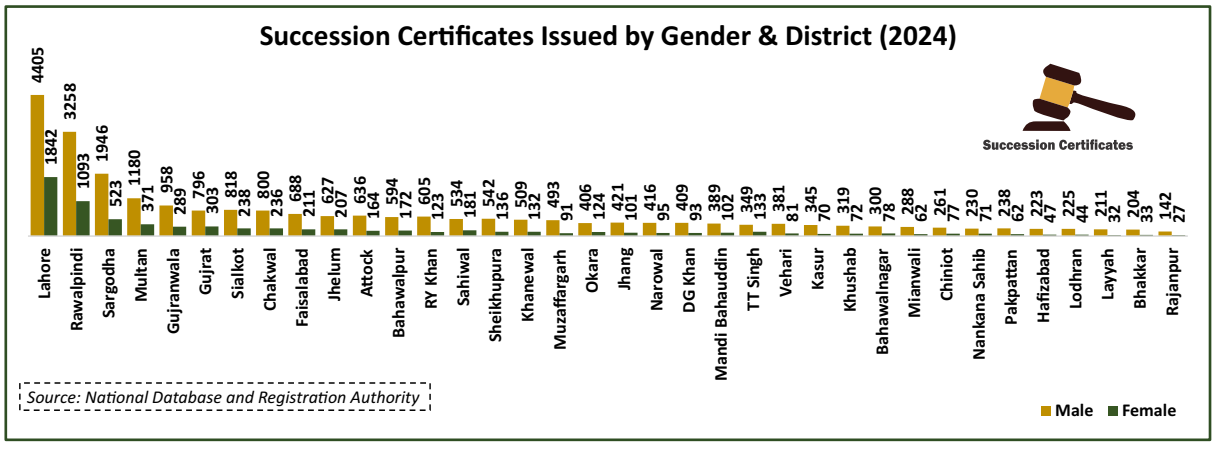


Figure 6.55

Legal successors as per succession certificates were 46 percent men and 54 percent women for the past two years.

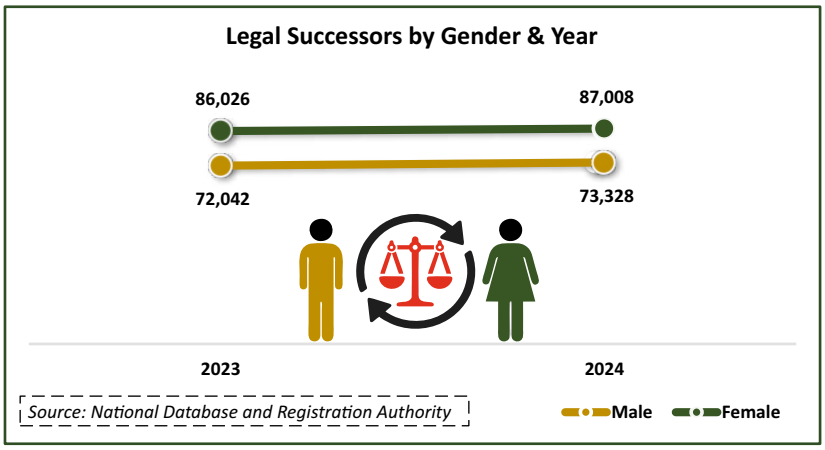


Figure 6.56

The highest number of legal successors were from Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sargodha districts. The lowest number of successors was found in Nankana Sahib and Rajanpur districts. GPI of legal successors remained more than one for all districts of Punjab.

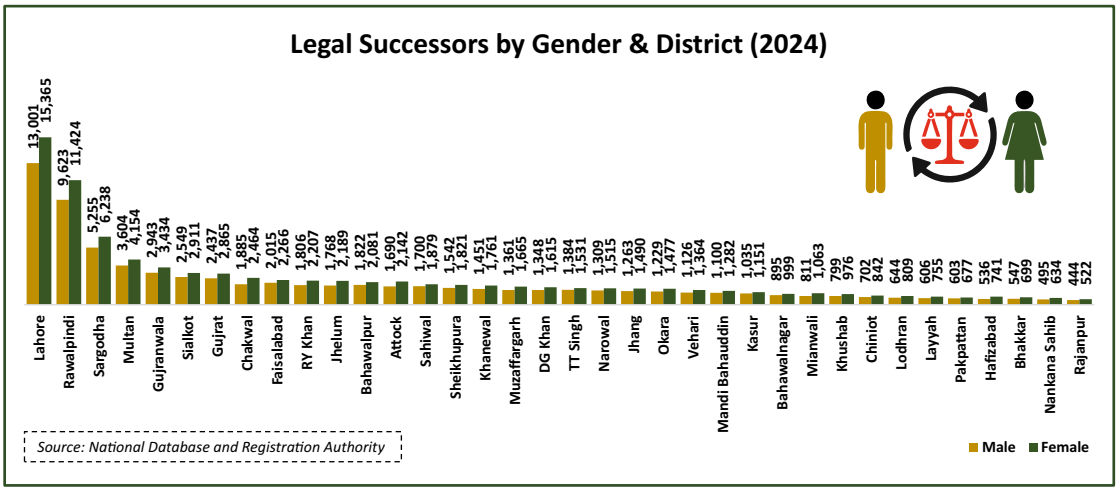


Figure 6.57

PLRA data revealed that the GPI of the heirs remained 0.98 for the past two years. The number of deceased and the details of their heirs, by PLRA, for the last two years are shown in the figure 6.58.

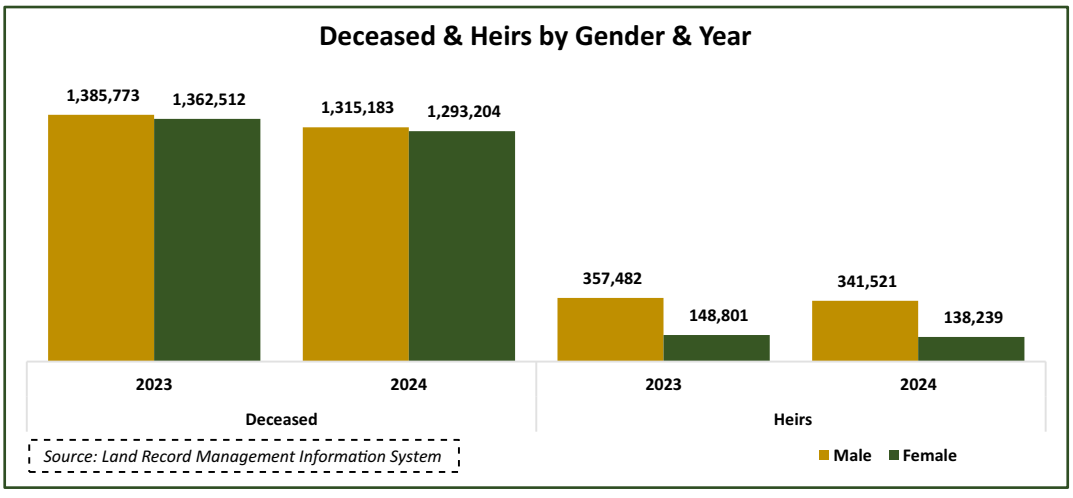


Figure 6.58

Wirasti Intiqal data for the past two years shows that male deceased individuals whose property was transferred accounted for 65 percent, while females made up only 35 percent. The heirs' details indicate that the male share was 85 percent, whereas the female share, as per area, was 15 percent.

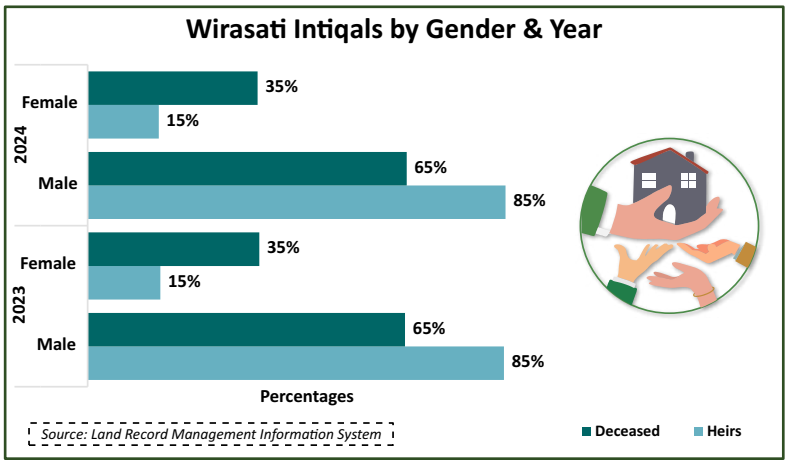


Figure 6.59

District-wise analysis of property transfers showed that there was almost an equal gender ratio for wirasti intiqals beneficiaries, as no district had a GPI of lower than 0.9 points. It changed dramatically for non-wirasti buyers of property, as the majority of districts had the GPI of 0.1 to 0.2 points.

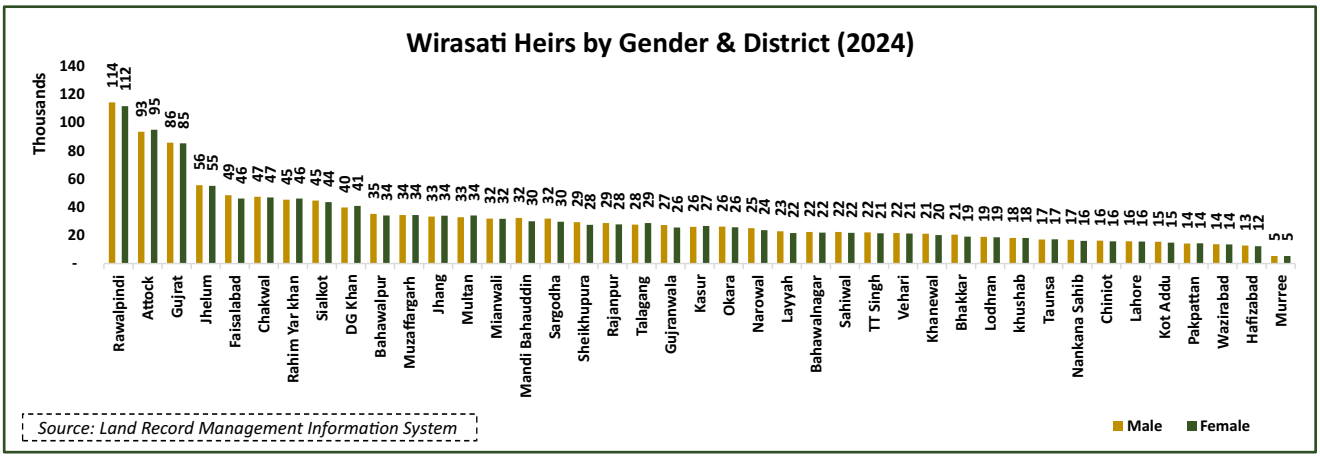


Figure 6.60

6.5.4 Non-Wirasti Intiqal:

Property transfer details showed that male sellers and buyers of property remained almost the same for both 2023 and 2024. Male sellers of property were slightly lower than male buyers for both years. On the other hand, female sellers were almost three times more than female buyers for both years. It shows that women buyers of property were not in equal proportion to women sellers.

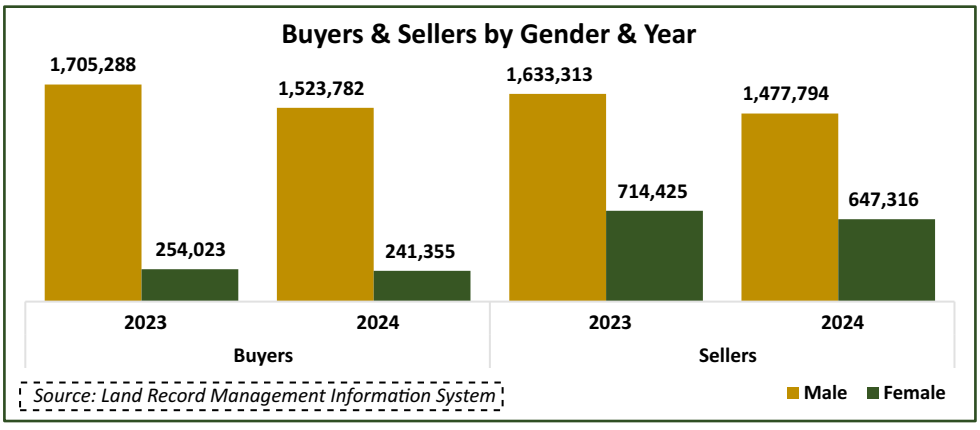


Figure 6.61

The highest buyer's GPI was recorded for Multan and Bahawalpur with 0.26 and 0.24 points, while the lowest was recorded for Rajanpur with 0.07 points.

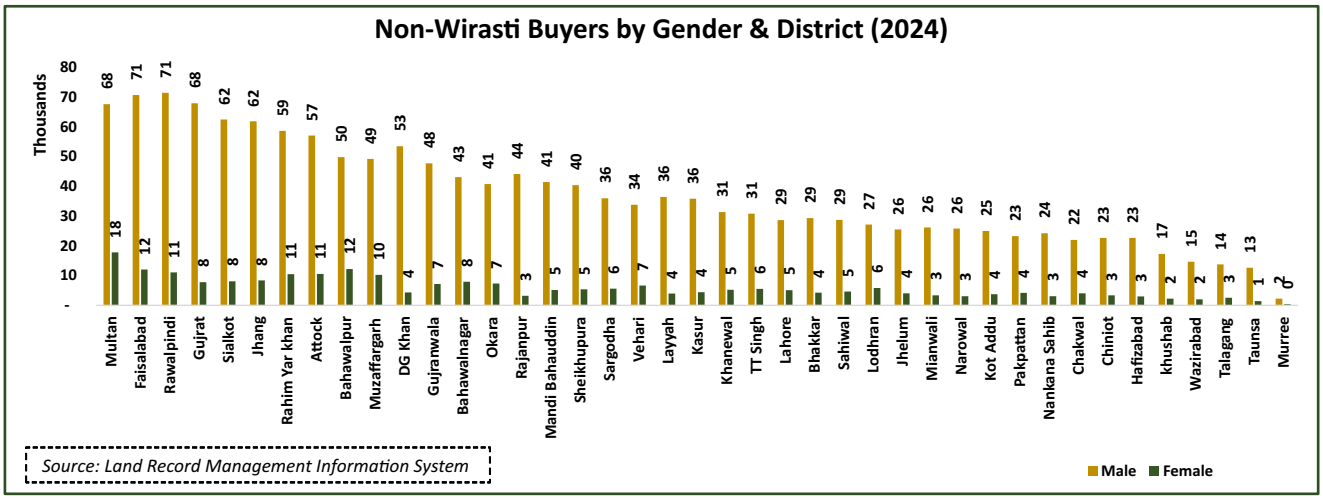


Figure 6.62

6.5.5 Mortgage

As per PLRA statistics, mortgage intiqals were 62,882 in 2023, which decreased by 1,586 to 61,296. Gender wise analysis of mortgagers in Punjab showed that there were 136,888 male mortgagers in 2023, which decreased to 133,349 in 2024. Female mortgagers numbered 9,659 in 2023, which increased to 9,987 in 2024 with a GPI of 0.07 for both years.

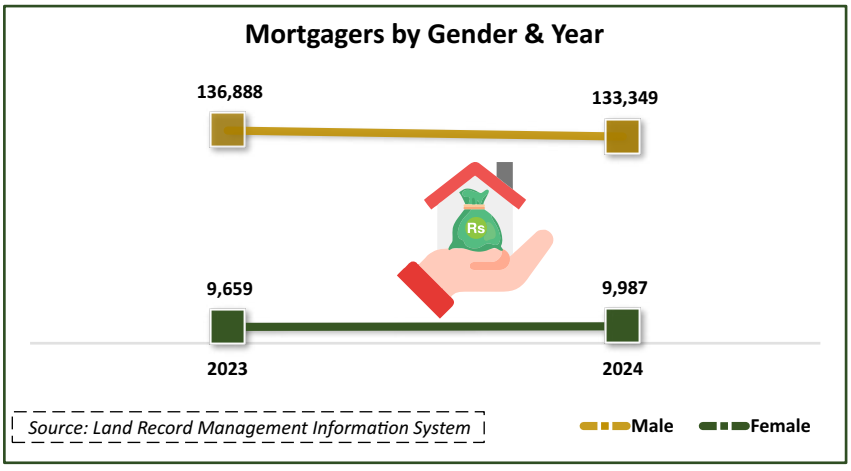


Figure 6.63

The mortgage mutation area also had a higher male-to-female ratio, as depicted in the figure 6.64.

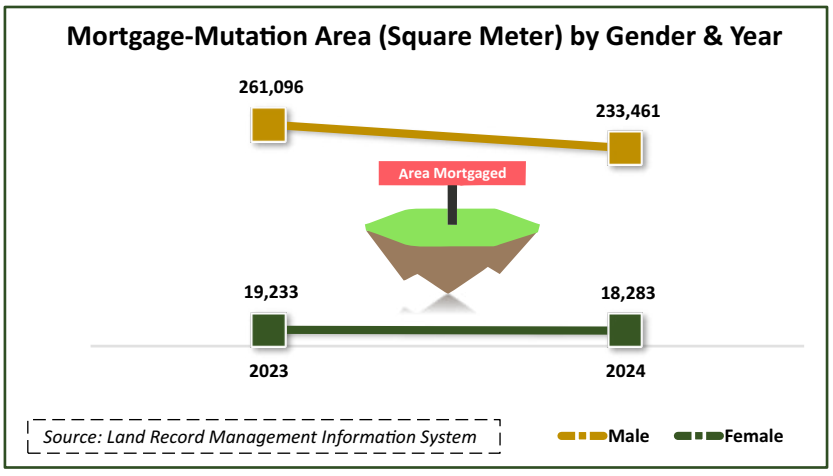


Figure 6.64

The highest number of male mortgagers was from the district of Bahawalnagar, and the highest female mortgagers was from Rahim Yar Khan. The newly constituted district of Murree had the lowest number of mortgagers in Punjab, with only 11 males and no females.

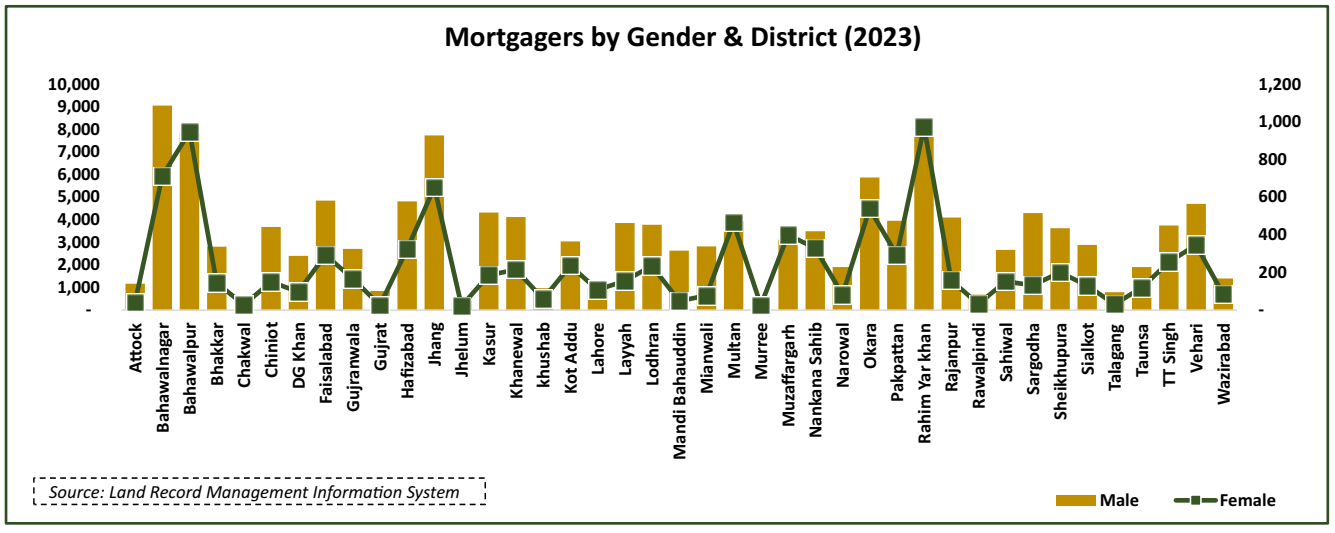


Figure 6.65

The average male mortgaged area for Punjab remained 6,678 square meters or 1.6 acres of land. Comparatively, the female average mortgaged area remained 7,141 square meters or 1.7 acres. It shows that women are more likely to mortgage their property for loans or other needs. District-wise analysis shows that the majority of Punjab's districts had higher female mortgage areas than males.

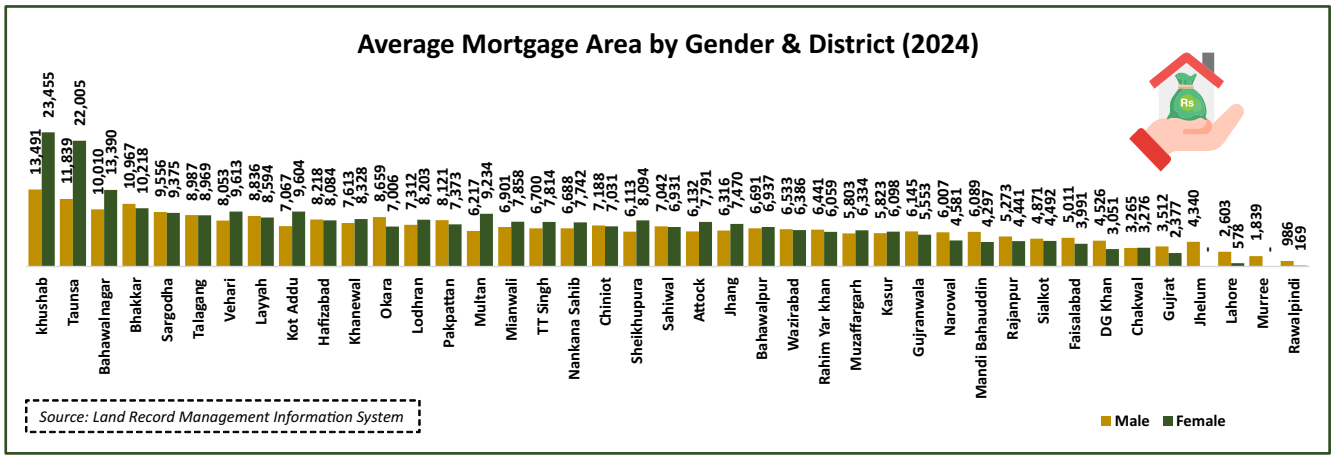


Figure 6.66

6.5.6 Land & Ownership Disputes

The number of individuals whose land was blocked across Punjab due to disputes increased in 2024 compared with previous years. The number of men whose land ownership was blocked increased from 119,718 to 150,187 in 2024. Females with blocked land ownership were around 33 thousand (22 percent) in 2024, with an increase of almost three thousand from the previous year.

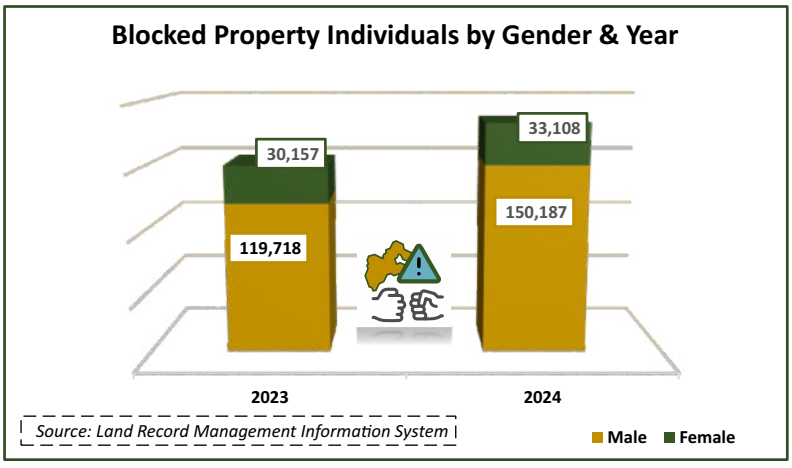


Figure 6.67

Rawalpindi and Bahawalnagar had the highest numbers of persons with property blockage for both males and females. Taunsa and Talagang districts had the lowest numbers of males and females with blocked property.

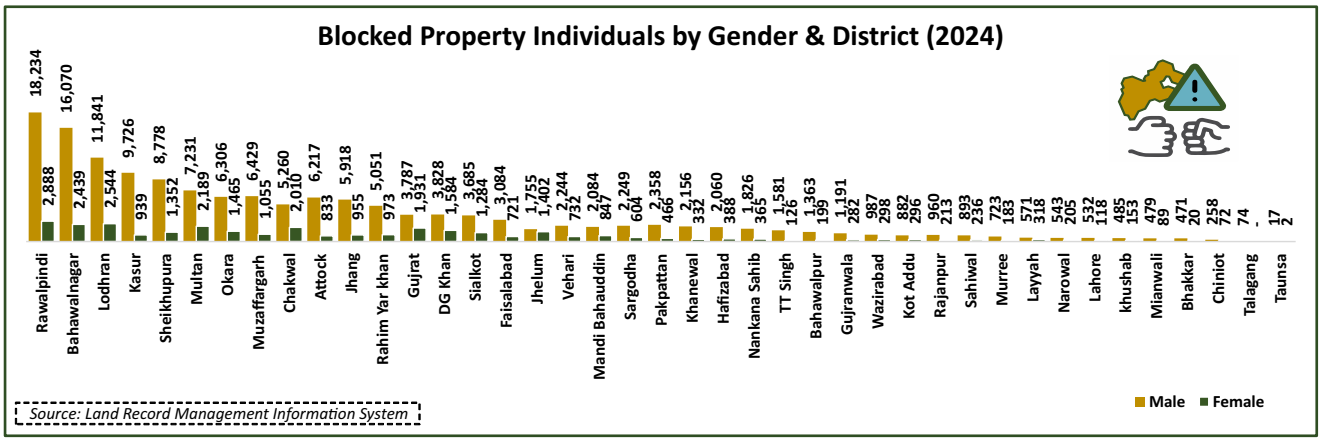


Figure 6.68

Disputed or blocked properties increased in 2024, with females accounting for 35 percent of such cases in both years. The number of disputed or blocked properties associated with men rose by over 17,000 in 2024, while the increase for women was approximately 8,300.

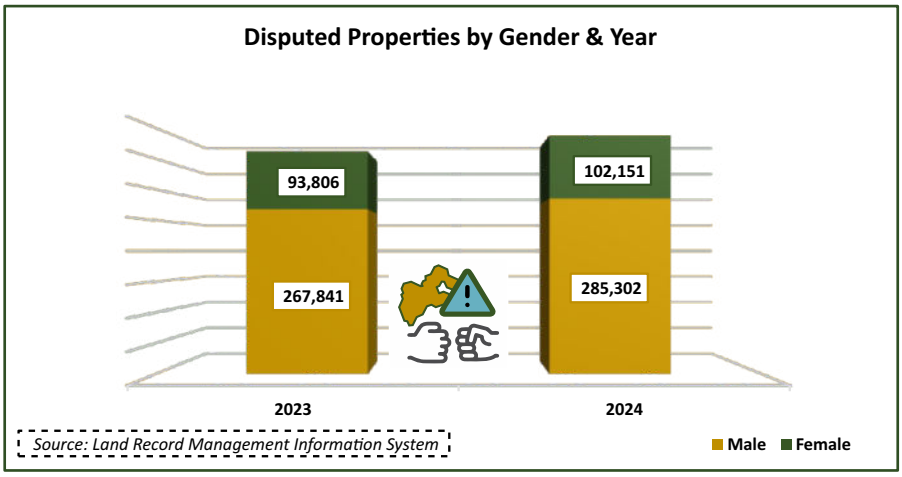


Figure 6.69

Multan and Faisalabad districts had the highest share of disputed properties for both males and females. Moreover, the Taunsa and Murree districts had the lowest share of disputed properties for both genders.

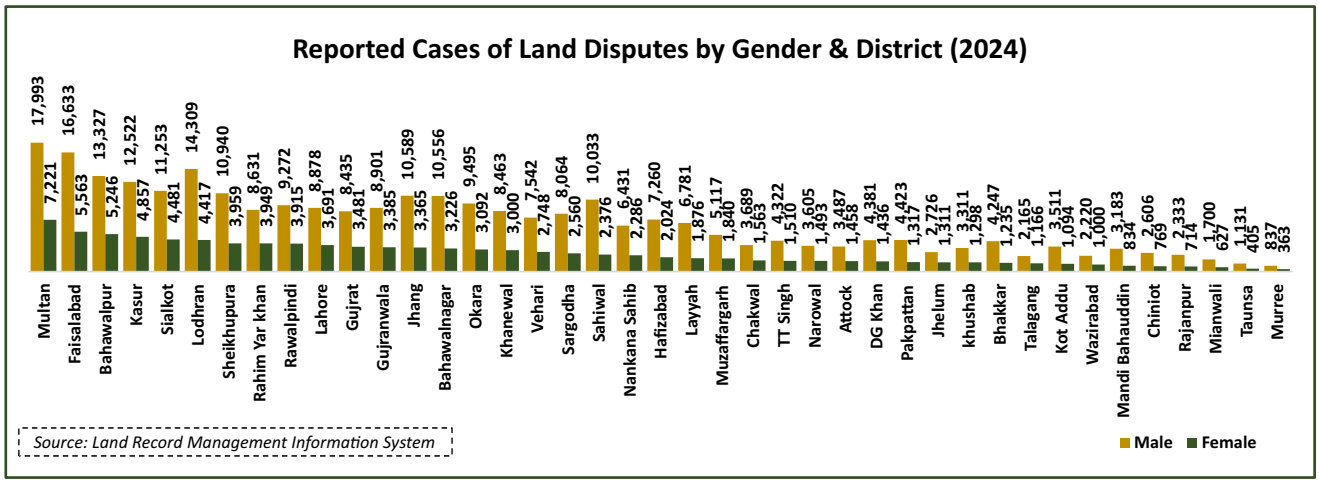


Figure 6.70

6.6 Transportation & Women's Mobility

Vehicle registration data from 13 districts of Punjab shows that male ownership of vehicles was higher than females. GPI of both consecutive years for vehicle registration remained 0.01.

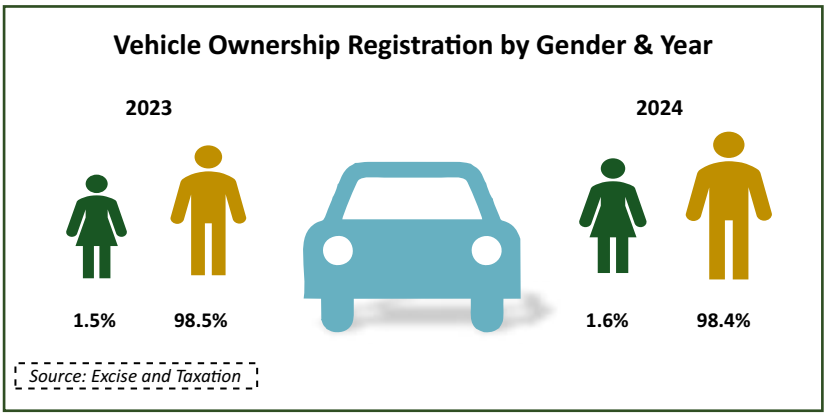


Figure 6.71

6.6.1 Driving Licenses

In 2024, a total of 6.96 million driving licences were issued (36 percent fewer than 2023), compared to 10.96 million licences in the previous year. Of these, 6.7 million licences were issued to males (98 percent), declining from 10.7 million in 2023 (98.3 percent). Female licences also saw a slight decline, with 173,000 issued in 2024 (2 percent), compared to 178,000 in 2023 (1.62 percent).

Licences issued to transgender persons decreased from 573 in 2023 to 237 in 2024, with the majority of licenses in the bike and car categories. A detailed view of category-wise driving licenses issued during the past two years is depicted in the figure 6.72.

Driving Licenses Issued by Gender & Year

2023	5,210,109	40,270	274	**Motor Cycle**
2024	4,321,056	32,617	138	
2023	3,385,965	133,676	230	**Car/Jeep**
2024	1,752,055	138,839	83	
2023	735,737	1,090	31	**Tractor Agriculture**
2024	103,658	352	5	
2023	226,958	316	8	**Tractor Commercial**
2024	42,007	103	3	
2023	1,161,741	2,651	30	**Light Transport Vehicle**
2024	463,760	1,623	7	
2023	4,586	1	0	**Public Service Vehicle**
2024	18,408	25	0	
2023	64,724	69	0	**Heavy Transport Vehicle**
2024	91,368	136	1	



Source: DIG Traffic Police

Male Female Transgender

Figure 6.72

In 2024, 6.2 million Motorcycle, Car and Jeep licenses were issued. 6.07 million licenses (97.2 percent) were issued to males and 171 thousand (2.7 percent) to females. Moreover, 221 transgender persons' licenses were issued. The highest licenses issued (More than 1 million) and the highest GPI (0.06) was recorded in Lahore district. The lowest GPI was recorded in Rajanpur (0.004), Bhakkar (0.009) and Muzaffargarh (0.009) districts.

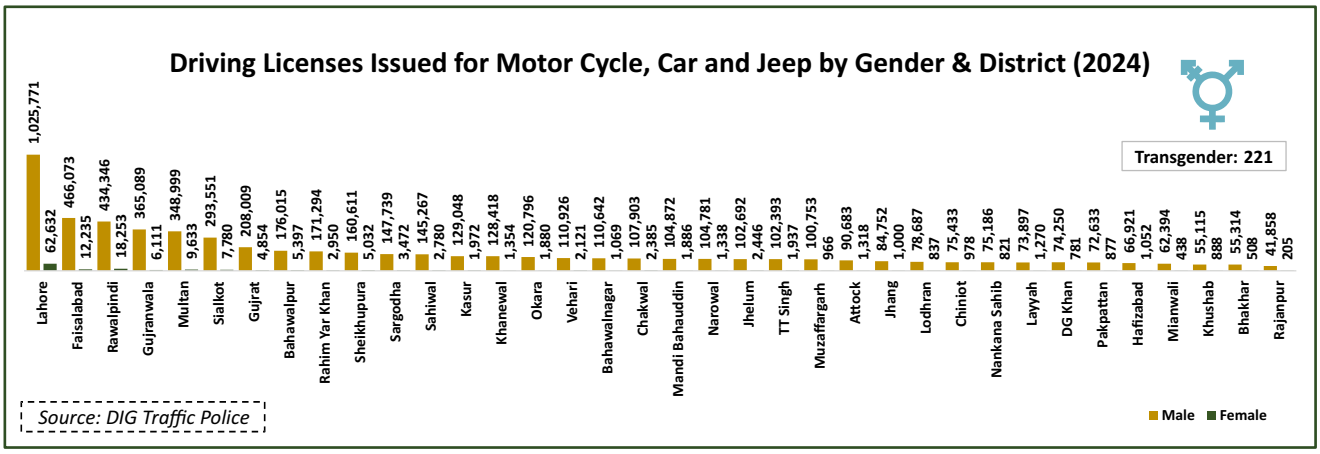


Figure 6.73

In 2024, 99.6 percent of light, heavy and public service vehicles licenses were issued to men, while the female percentage was 0.3 (1784 licenses). The highest GPI was recorded in Lahore (0.06) while the lowest GPI districts were Mianwali (0.0008), Lodhran, Khausab and Jhang (0.0009).

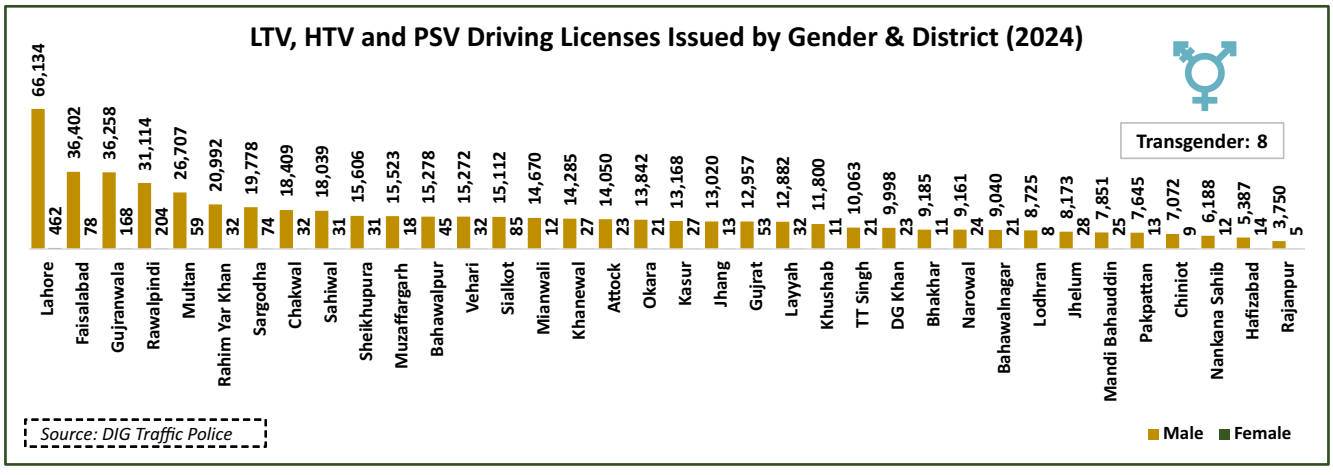


Figure 6.74

6.6.2 Excise & Taxation

Excise & Taxation Department tax exemption details for Urban Immovable Property Tax (UIPT) showed that more than 24 thousand widows and 87 divorced women received tax exemptions in 2023. In 2024, the number of widows increased to 27,592 and the number of divorced women also increased to 227 in Punjab.

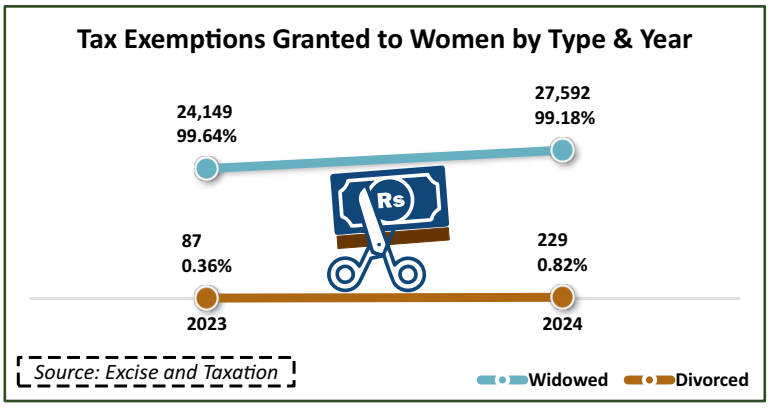


Figure 6.75

Professional tax registration data from 14 districts of Punjab shows that male tax registrations were higher than female registrations. In 2023, the male percentage was 89, and the female percentage was 11 percent. Similarly, in 2024, the male percentage decreased by one and the female percentage increased by one percentage point. GPI for professional tax registrations remained 0.14 in 2024.

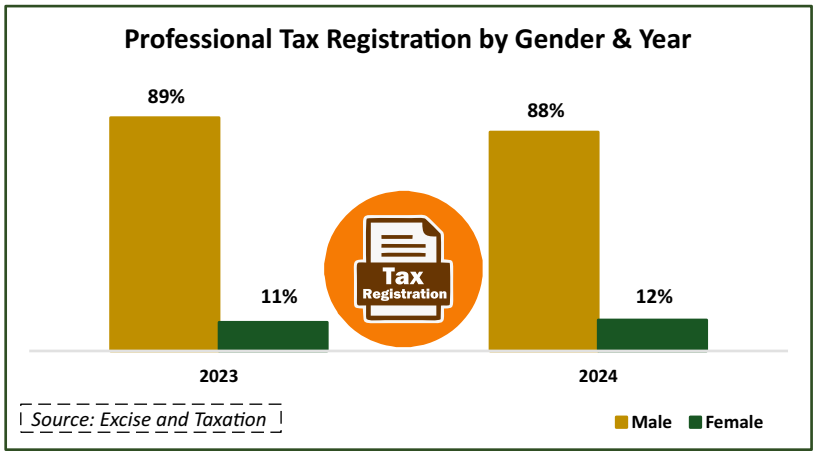


Figure 6.76

In 2024, Excise and Taxation Department statistics for property tax registration showed that the male percentage was 75.4 and the female percentage was 24.5 percent. Female property tax registrations increased by two percentage points yearly. Transgender persons were merely 0.001 percent for both consecutive years. GPI for professional tax registrations in 2023 was 0.28, which increased to 0.32 in the subsequent year.

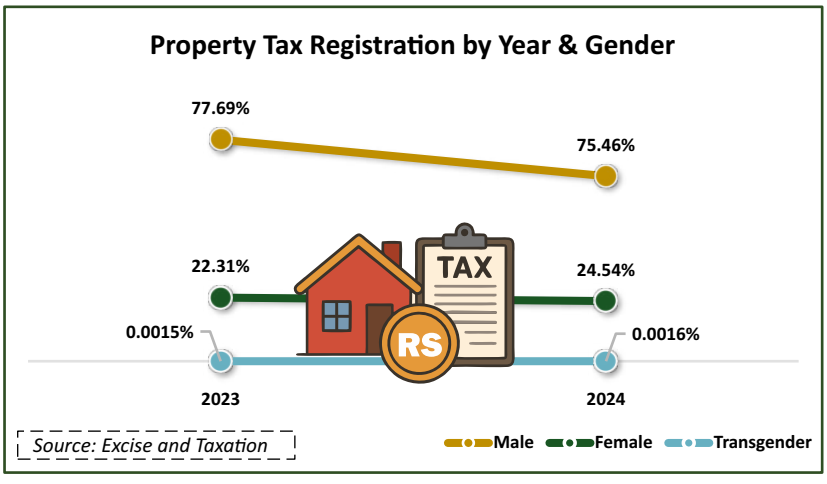


Figure 6.77

Registered owners of factories, commercial establishments and companies' details of 16 districts of Punjab showed that men were significantly higher than women owners. In 2023, the male percentage was 98, and the female percentage was only 2 percent. In 2024, the male percentage decreased by one percentage point, while the female percentage increased by one percentage point. GPI of registered owners was 0.03 in 2024.

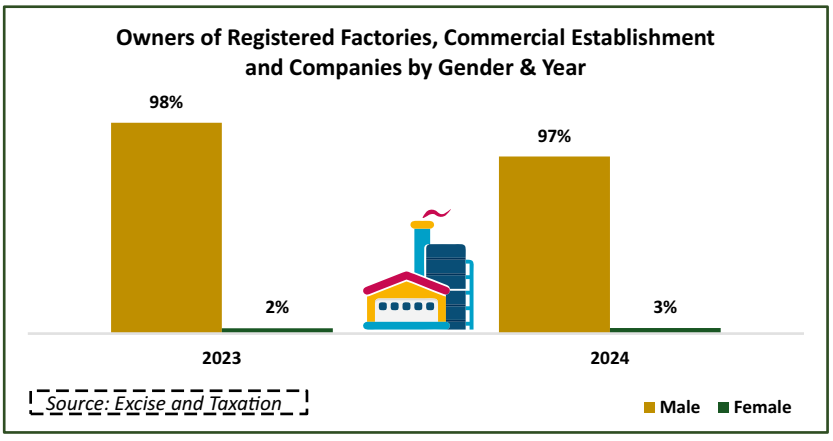


Figure 6.78

Importers and exporters registration details showed that men percentage was more than 97 percent in the last two years. Women comprised 2.6 percent of registrations in 2024, with a slight increase from the previous year. Moreover, the GPI of importers and exporters registration remained 0.02 for both consecutive years.

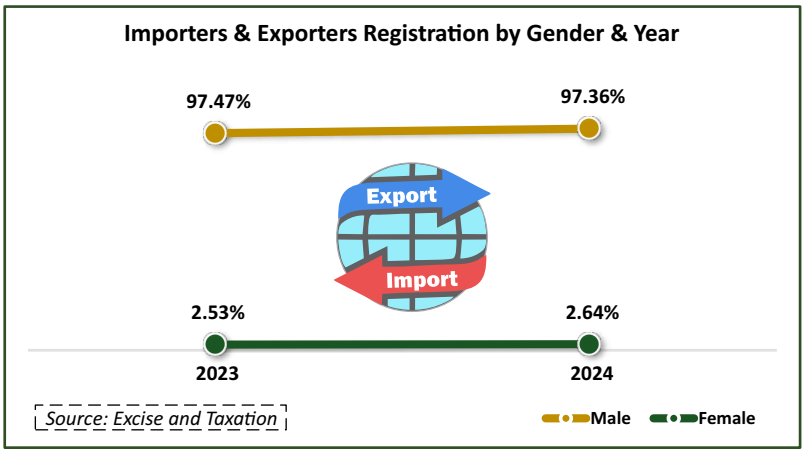


Figure 6.79

6.7 Financial Inclusion

Access to financial resources is crucial for sustainable economic growth and development in any country. Global estimates and empirical studies have shown that significant gender disparities exist in financial inclusion across countries. The majority of people without a bank accounts are women, estimated at around 13 percent against 11 percent of men.[342] Women's exclusion from financial resources results in unequal distribution of finances and, as a result, lower and unequal economic growth. Women's access to finances is vital for reducing poverty, inequality and enhancing women's status.[343] Women continue to face challenges in terms of mobility, restrictive social/cultural norms, financial knowledge, access and gender bias.[344] Men, even with lower financial and business expertise, are more likely to secure credit from financial services than women.[345]

In 2021, the Financial Inclusion Database annual report found that global adult account ownership has reached 76 percent, with a significant increase of 50 percent since 2011.[346] In developing countries, it increased by 8 percent and stood at 71 percent. Moreover, the gender gap in account ownership has fallen to 6 percentage points from 9 percentage points.[347] The primary drivers for this change were financial literacy, mobile money banking, and work.

Around half of the world's unbanked population lives in 7 countries, and unfortunately, Pakistan is one among them. Pakistan had the highest percentage, more than 80 percent of the unbanked population who lack confidence to manage a financial account and shared that they cannot manage an account without help.[348] SBP interventions over the past decade of implementing two national financial inclusion strategies and promoting equality have started to improve the precarious situation. Account ownership has increased to 64 percent in 2023 from 16 percent in 2015.[349] The gender gap has reduced to 34 percent in 2023 from 47 percent in 2018.[350] [351]

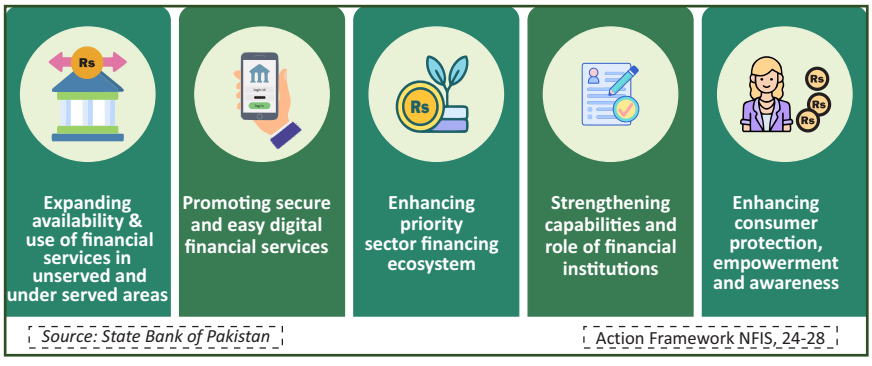
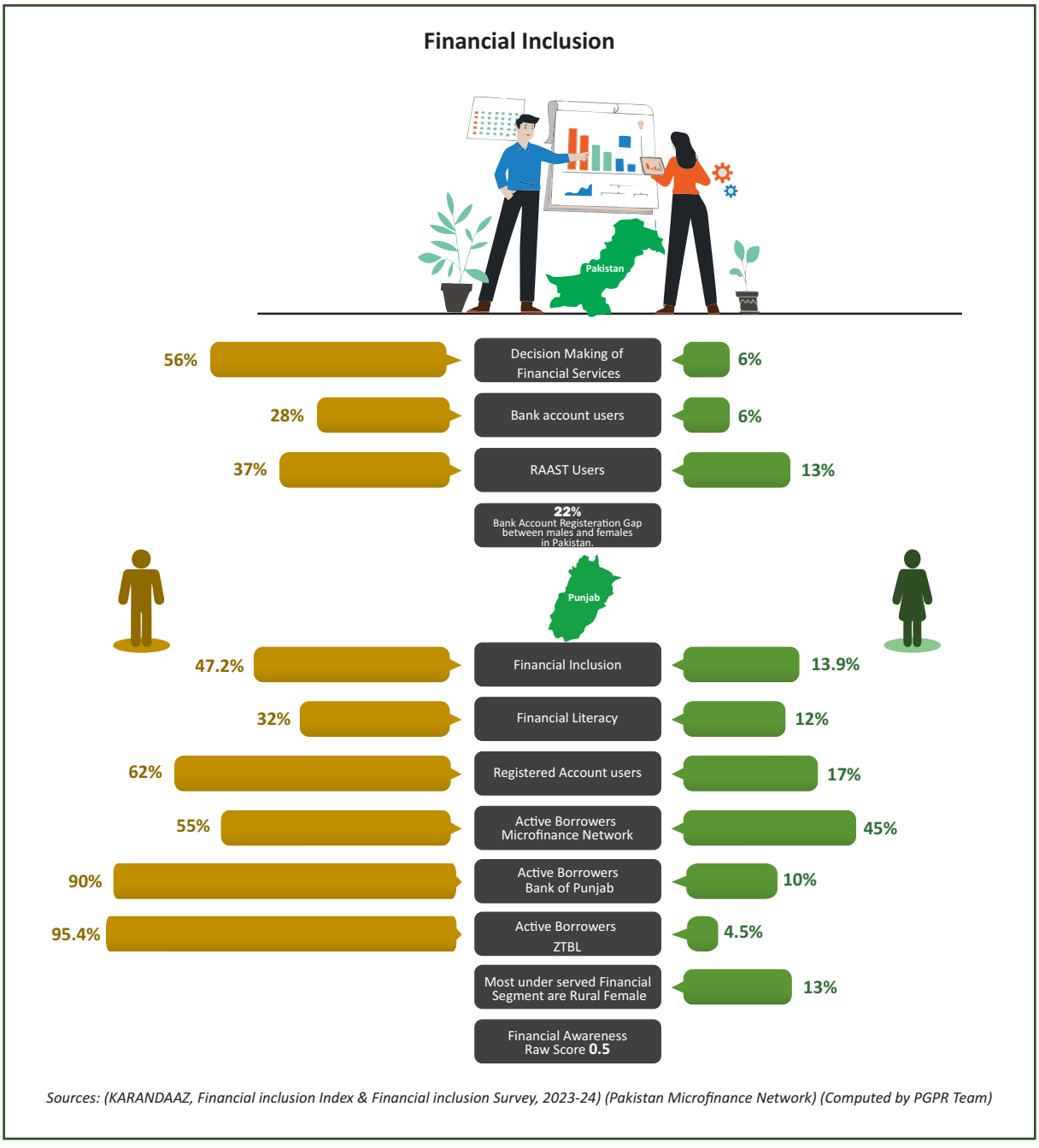


Figure 6.80

342 (Garcia, L & et al, 2019)
343 (Pomeranz and Kast, Saving Accounts to Borrow Less, 2022)
344 (Roy, P & et al, Financial Inclusion of Women and Gender Gap in Access to Finance, 2022)
345 (World Bank Group, State of Financial Inclusion of Women in Pakistan, 2018)
346 (World Bank Group, Global Findex Database 2021)
347 (World Bank Group, Global Findex Database 2017)
348 (World Bank Group, Global Findex Database 2021)
349 (State Bank of Pakistan, National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028)
350 (State Bank of Pakistan, National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028)
351 (State Bank of Pakistan, Banking on Equality, 2023)

A critical view of Punjab, the most populous province of the country, reveals that there are still significant gender disparities in financial inclusion. Women's likelihood of having access to financial services is about 28 percent less than men.[352] Compounded challenges exist in terms of deeply rooted gender biases, financial illiteracy, immobility and social stereotypes, especially in the rural settings of Punjab.[353] Localised culture-specific, financial literacy programs and digital access initiatives are vital to bridge the financial inclusion gap in Punjab.[354]



Sources: (KARANDAAZ, Financial inclusion Index & Financial inclusion Survey, 2023-24) (Pakistan Microfinance Network) (Computed by PGPR Team)

Figure 6.81

349 (State Bank of Pakistan, National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028)
350 (State Bank of Pakistan, National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028)
351 (State Bank of Pakistan, Banking on Equality, 2023)
352 (Mehak, E & et al, Financial Inclusion and Women's Empowerment in Pakistan. 2023)
353 (Ibtasam & et al, Knowledge, Access, and Decision-Making, 2018)
354 (World Bank, Financial Inclusion Insight, 2018)

6.7.1 Account Holders

In 2024, there were almost 50.6 million active account holders in Punjab, an increase of about 1.8 million compared to the previous year. Male account holders rose by 0.8 million to reach a total of 37.9 million accounts, while female account holders grew by 2 million, bringing the total female accounts to 10.8 million. Regarding the GPI of different types of accounts, fixed deposit accounts held the highest parity at 0.5 in 2023 and slightly decreased to 0.45 in 2024. The GPI of savings and current accounts increased by 0.11 and 0.03 points, respectively, in 2024. Call deposits had the lowest GPI at 0.06, followed by other deposits with a GPI of 0.07 in 2024.

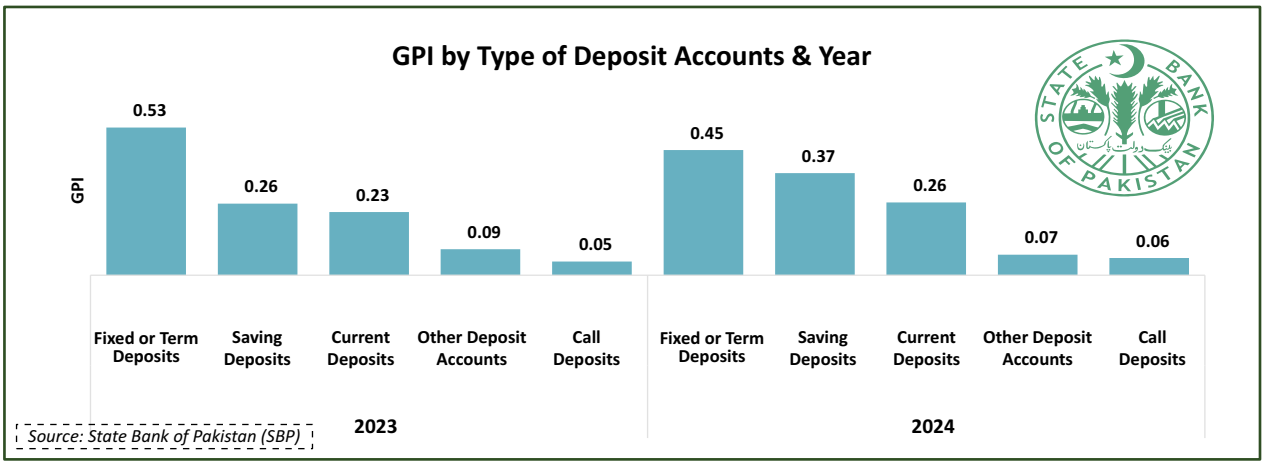


Figure 6.82

Transgender persons' highest percentage by type of account was call deposits for both years. Transgender persons comprised only 0.0006 percent of all current accounts and only 0.0003 percent of savings accounts in 2024.

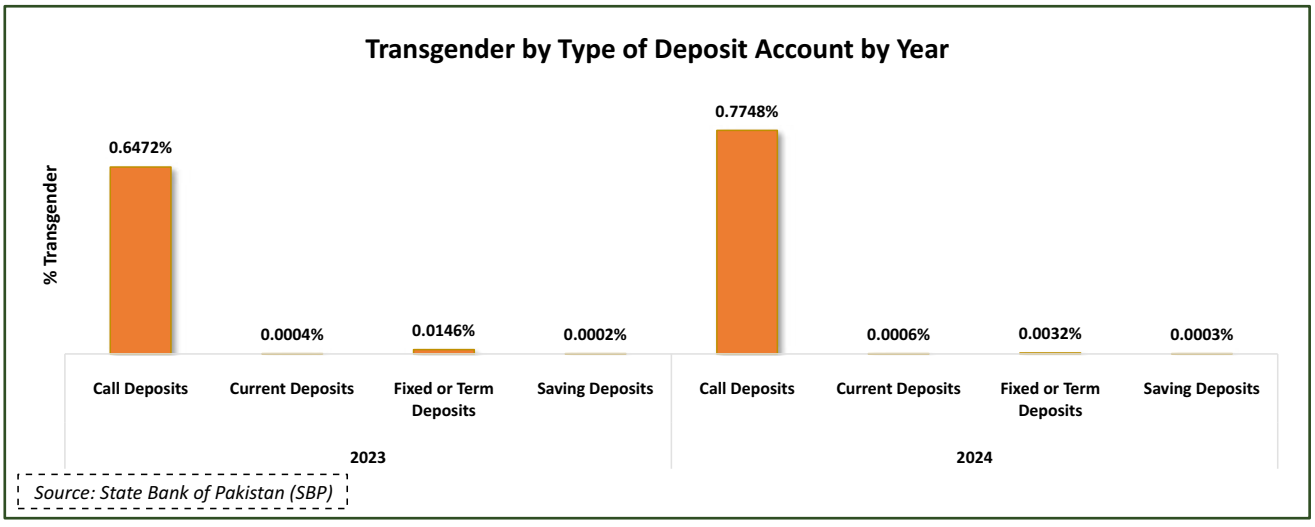


Figure 6.83

District-wise analysis of the bank accounts for the year 2024, pertinent to gender parity, reveals that Jhelum, Gujrat and Chakwal had the highest parity of more than 0.40. Rawalpindi and Muzaffargarh had the lowest gender parity in terms of banking accounts, with only 0.17 and 0.18 points. Most of the Punjab districts showed a higher parity in comparison to the previous year, with the exception of Rawalpindi and Attock. District Rawalpindi's GPI decreased from 0.27 to 0.17 in 2024.

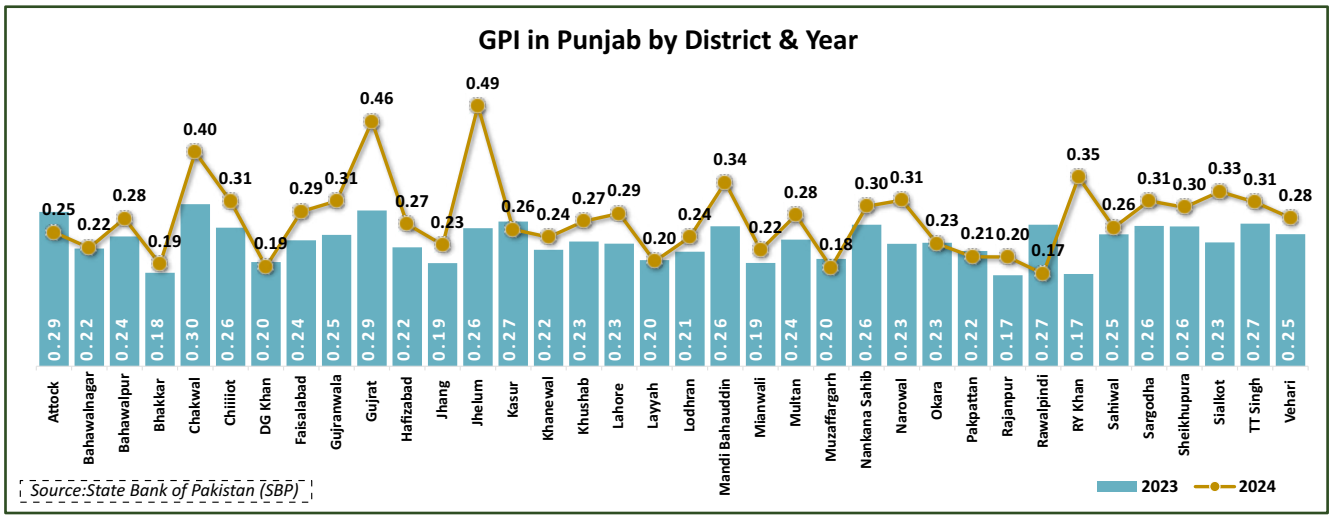


Figure 6.84

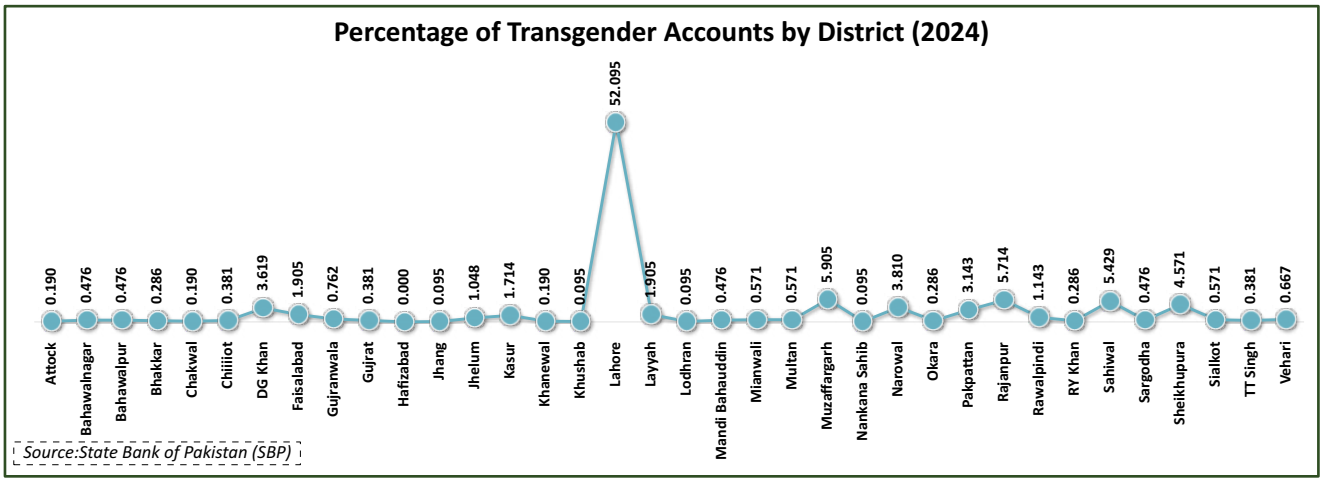


Figure 6.85

The graph given above shows the district-wise percentage of transgender persons' banking accounts. Lahore had more than half of the transgender banking accounts, with a percentage of 52. Districts Hafizabad, Lodhran and Khushab had only one transperson account.

6.7.2 Branchless Banking

State Bank of Pakistan statistics of branchless banking show that in 2023, there were almost 49 million male and 23 million female accounts in Punjab. In 2024, male banking accounts increased by almost 3 million while female accounts increased by 2 million. Within the province male share remained 68 percent while the female share was almost 32 percent. In 2024, Punjab's male share across Pakistan remained 41.4 percent, with a female share of 19.3 percent.

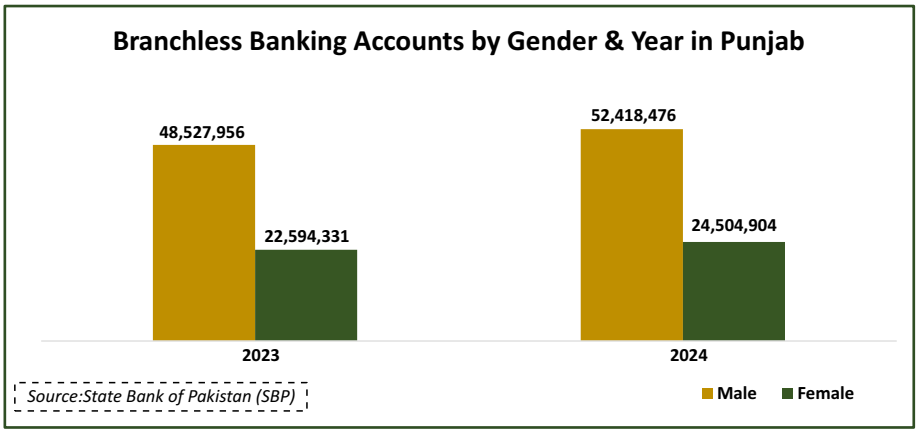


Figure 6.86

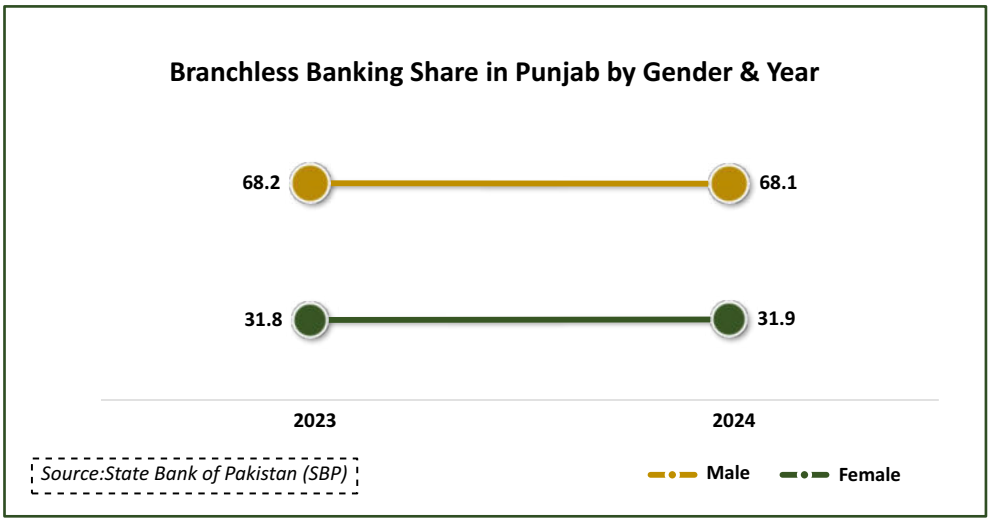


Figure 6.87

6.7.3 Card Holders

Bank of Punjab (BOP) data show that, in 2023, there were 133,636 (75 percent) male debit card holders, while 43,490 (25 percent) female debit card holders. Female debit card holders increased by almost 19 thousand, and the overall percentage also increased by one percent in 2024. GPI in terms of debit card holders was 0.32 in 2023, which increased to 0.36 in the following year.

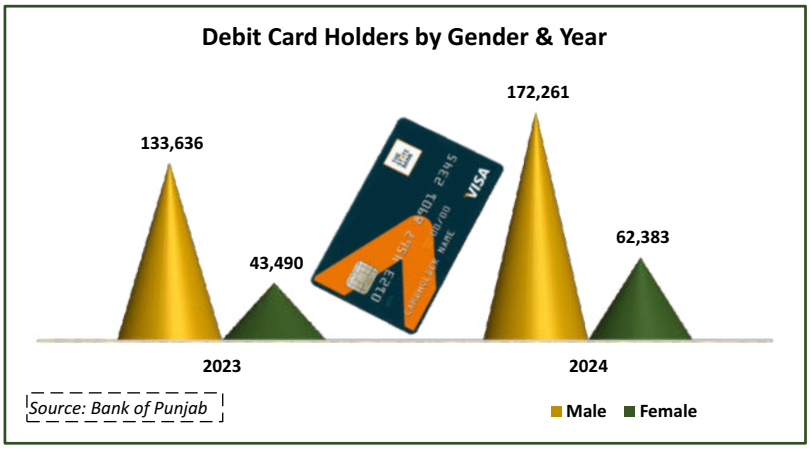


Figure 6.88

District-wise analysis of debit card holders in 2024 reveals that the highest GPI was recorded in Rawalpindi with 0.53 points, while the lowest GPI was in Rajanpur with 0.18 points.

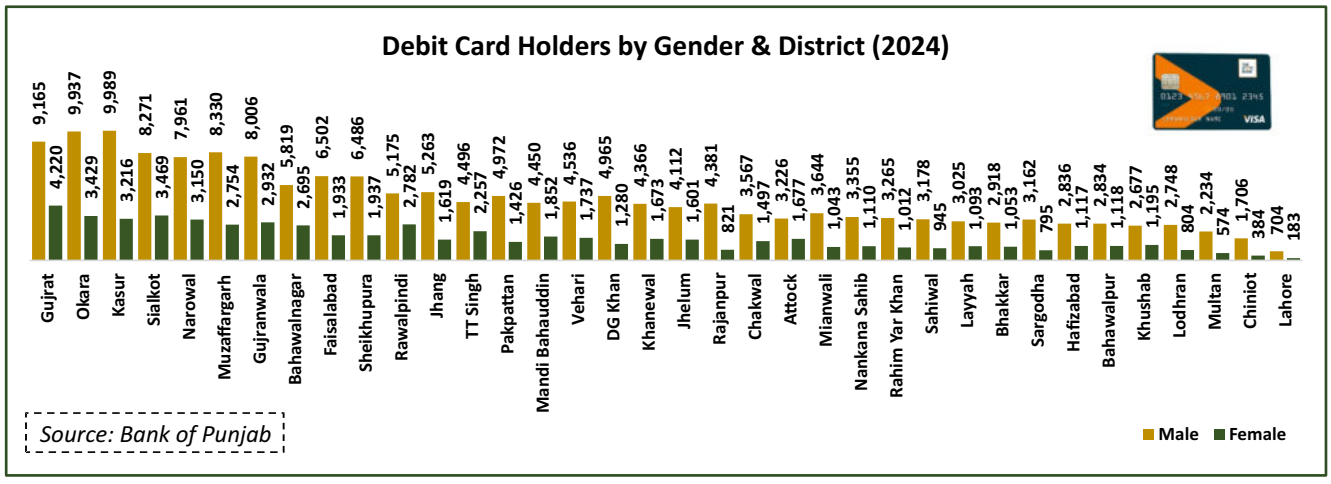


Figure 6.89

6.7.4 Loans/Borrowing

The Bank of Punjab data showed that female-owned loan accounts were quite low. Active loan accounts of women were 12,218 in 2023, which slightly increased to 14,737 in 2024. The male percentage of loan accounts remained 90 percent and the female percentage 10 percent for both consecutive years.

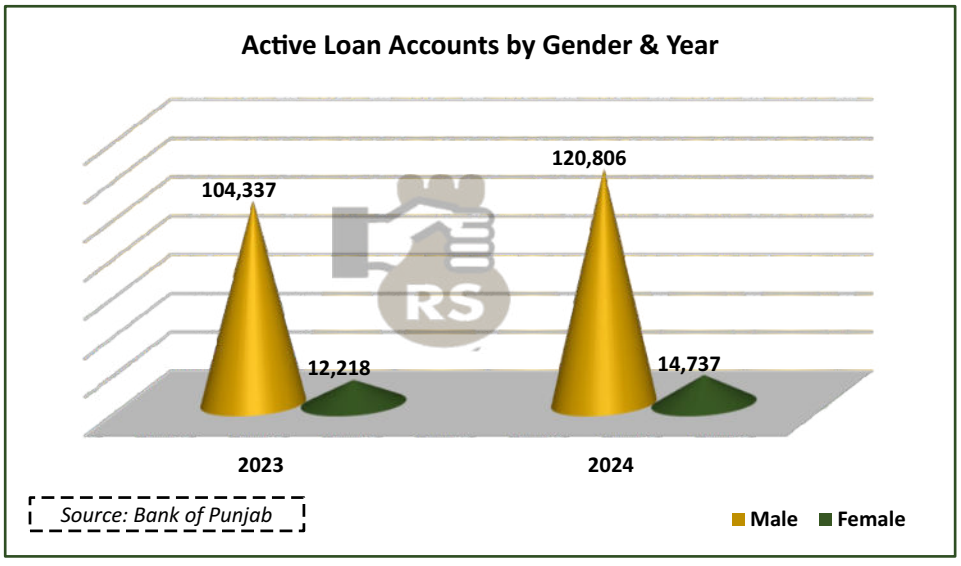


Figure 6.90

In 2023, Zarai Taraqiati bank (ZTBL), men borrowers were more than 171 thousand (95.2 percent), while women borrowers were 8,612 (4.7 percent). In 2024, both men and women borrowers decreased to 149 thousand men (95.4 percent) and 7.12 thousand women (4.5 percent). GPI for the 2023 year was 0.05, which slightly decreased to 0.04 points in 2024.

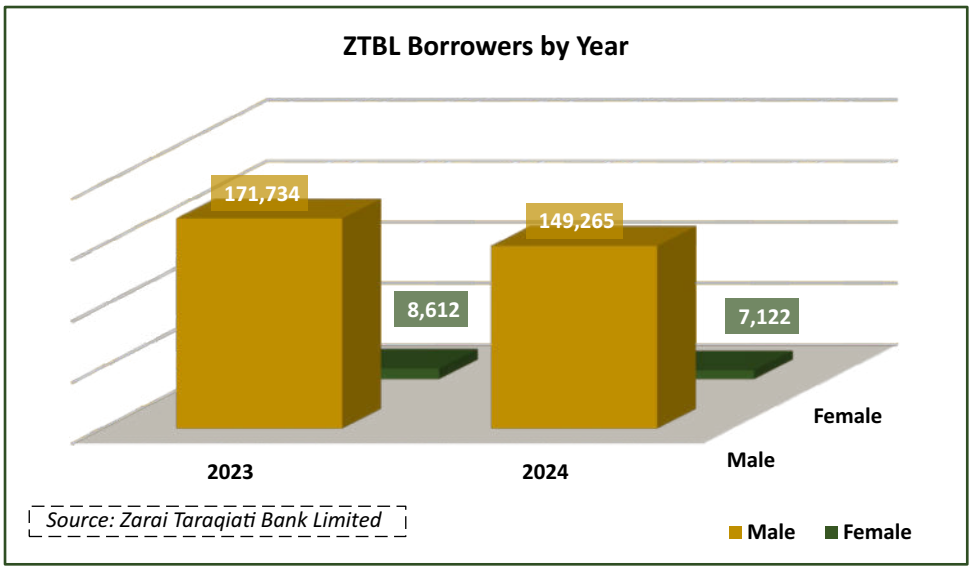


Figure 6.91

In 2023, ZTBL disbursed 71,088 million (94.5 percent) to men borrowers while 4,079 million (5.5 percent) to women borrowers. In 2024, 58,217 million (94.8 percent) were disbursed to men while 3,145 million (5.13 percent) to women borrowers. GPI for both consecutive years with respect to the disbursement amount remained 0.05.

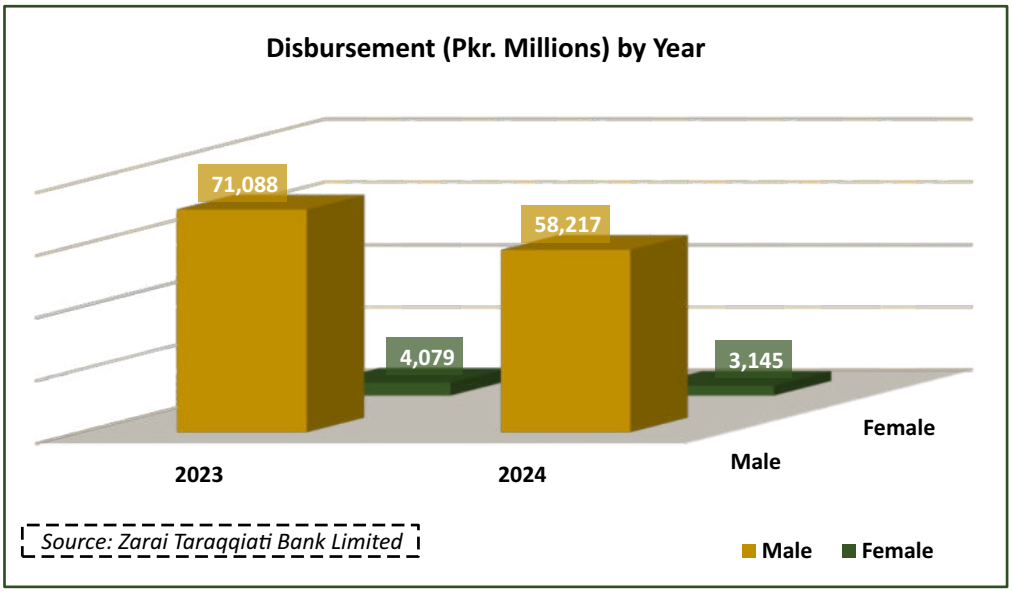


Figure 6.92

6.7.5 Microfinance Credits

Pakistan Microfinance Network statistics show that in 2023, there were 5.06 million male and 4.2 million female borrowers. The number of active borrowers increased in the following year, with 6.79 million males and 5.5 million females. The female percentage of borrowers remained 45 percent for both consecutive years. Active borrowers GPI of Pakistan Microfinance Network remained 0.82 for both years.

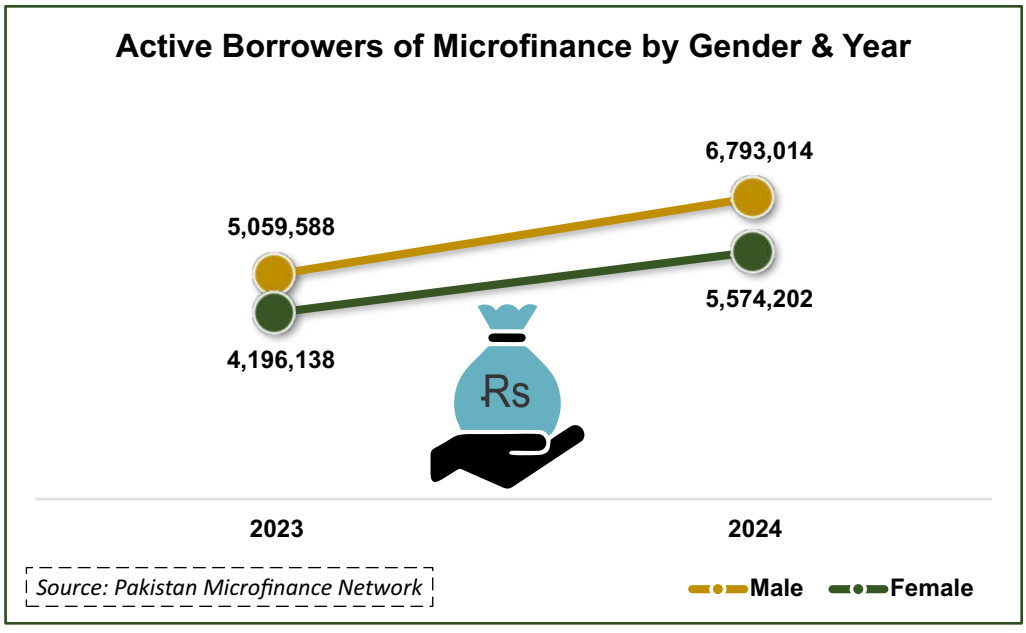


Figure 6.93

A gendered year-on-year analysis of Akhuwat Islamic microfinance reveals that females had a higher proportion of beneficiaries for microfinance credits over the past two years. Men accounted for almost 45 percent and 47 percent of beneficiaries for microfinance, while women comprised 55 percent and 53 percent of beneficiaries for 2023 and 2024, respectively.

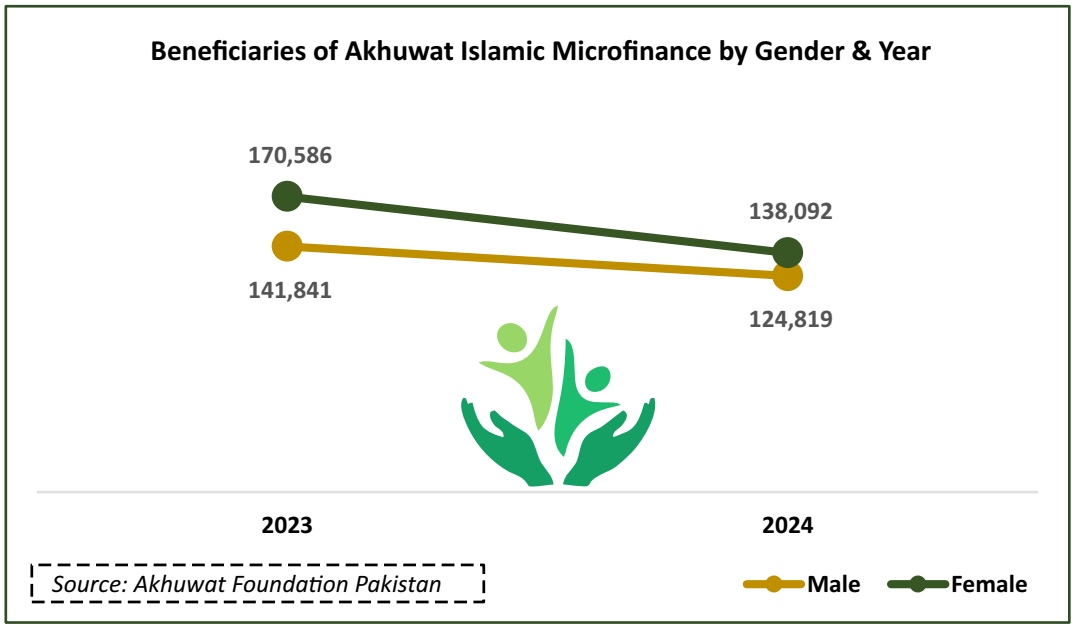


Figure 6.94

A detailed district-wise statistics of Akhuwat microfinance credits is shown in figure 6.95.

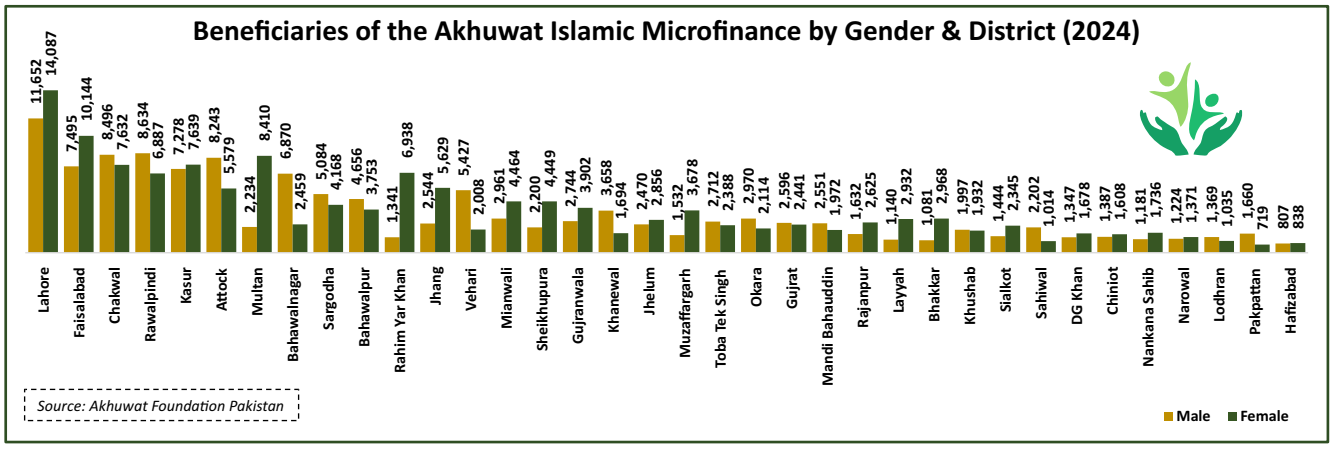


Figure 6.95

In 2023, the Industries and Commerce Department provided interest-free financial assistance to 31 skilled, semi-skilled, and home-based workers. Males comprised 74 percent (23 persons), while females comprised 26 percent (8). In 2024, female numbers significantly increased to 122 (88 percent) while male numbers decreased to 18 (12 percent).

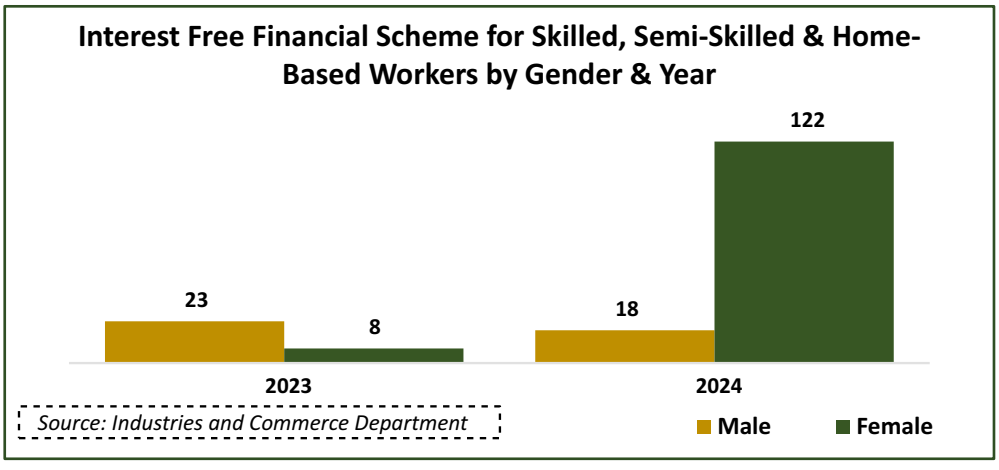


Figure 6.96

6.8 Agriculture Participation

6.8.1 Head of Agriculture Households

Head of household relates to the decision maker of the house in terms of finances and other major decisions. The 7th Agriculture Census provided the statistics of heads of agricultural households. The head of agricultural household data showed that in Pakistan, men were heads of 18.9 million households out of 19.2 million. Pakistan's percentage of female-headed agricultural households was only 1.55 percent. Female heads of households were higher in Sindh (2.3 percent) and Islamabad (1.9 percent). Baluchistan had the lowest percentage of women-headed households at 0.8 percent. Punjab, despite being the country's agricultural hub with the largest 8.12 million agricultural households, had the second-lowest percentage of women as heads, at only 1.05 percent.

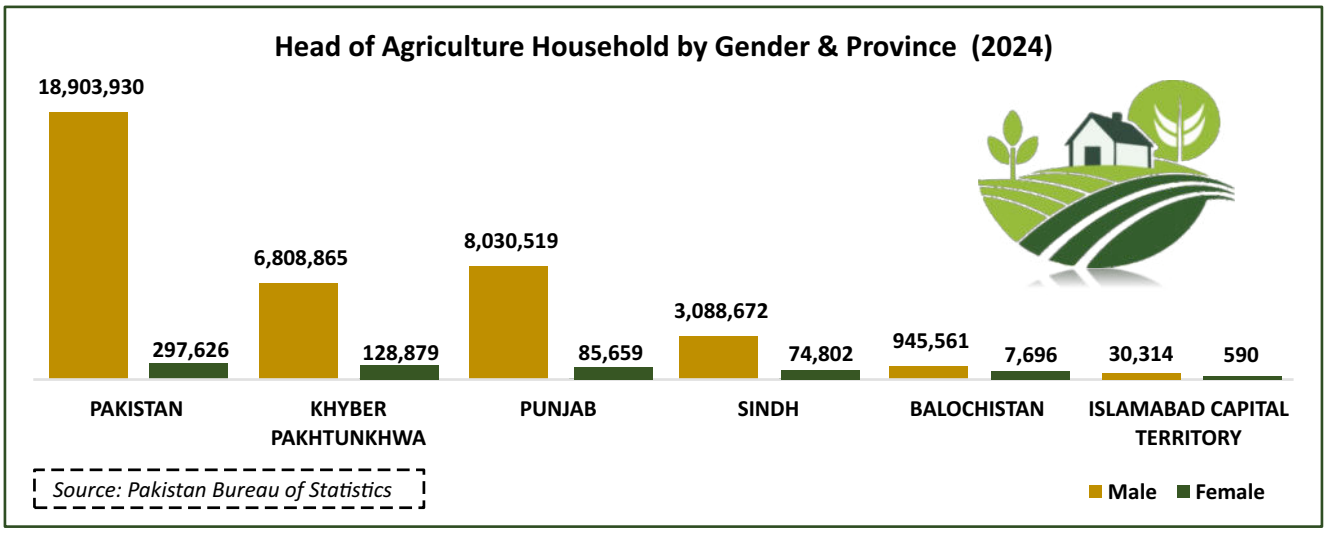


Figure 6.97

District-wise analysis of head of agriculture households revealed that there were 8 million male heads, compared with 85.6 thousand females. Lahore and Narowal had the highest female percentages as heads of agricultural households, at 2.5 percent. Khanewal and Sheikhupura had the lowest percentages of merely 0.2.

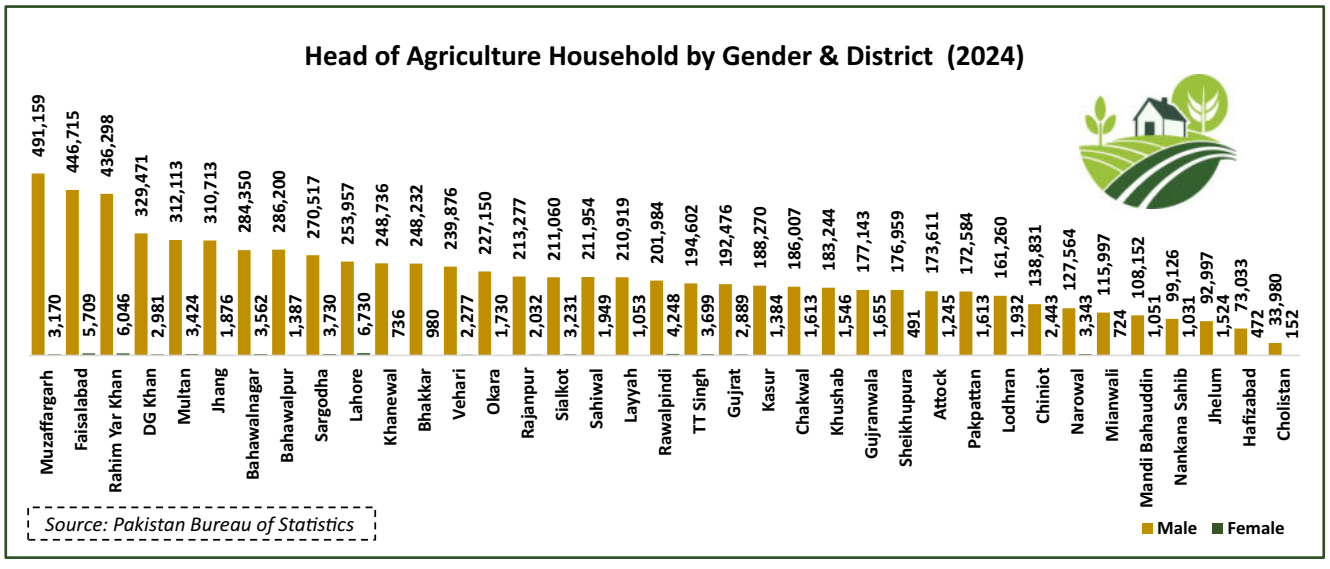


Figure 6.98

6.8.2 Tractor Licenses

In 2024, 146 thousand licenses were issued for agriculture and commercial tractor vehicles. Male tractor licenses were 145.6 thousand (99.6 percent) while female licenses were only 455 (0.3 percent). Only 8 tractor licenses were issued to transgender persons in Punjab. The highest GPI was recorded in Lahore with 0.013 points, and the lowest in Rajanpur.

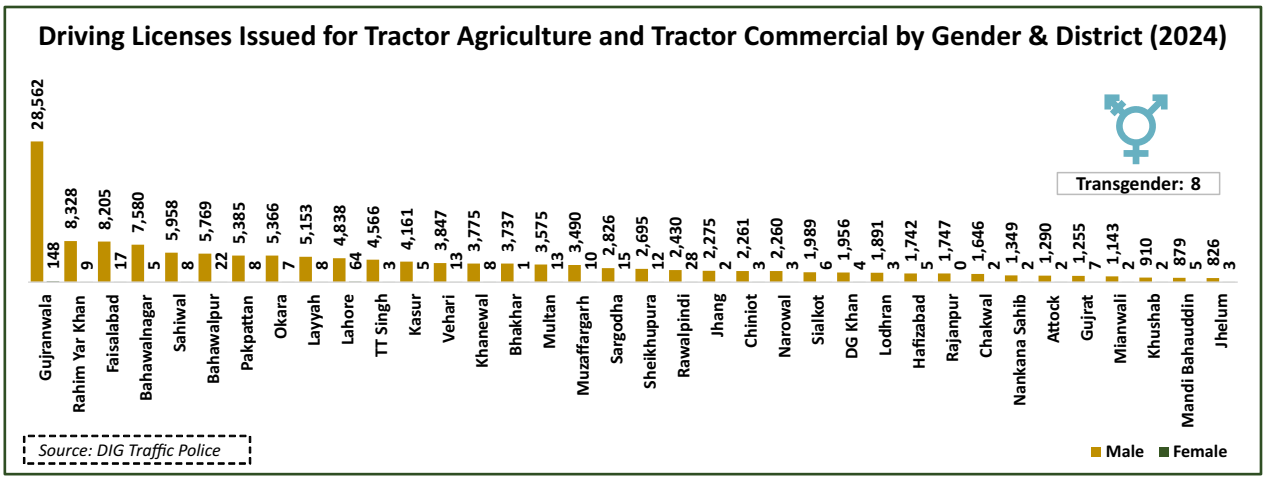


Figure 6.99

6.8.3 Agriculture Department Projects

In 2023, 636 million subsidy amount was disbursed to mechanized agriculture male benificiaries, while 14 million was disbursed to females. Males comprised 98 percent, while females were 2 percent of the beneficiaries and the subsidy amount. In 2024, the male subsidy amount decreased to 153 million, and the female amount halved to 7 million. GPI of mechanised agriculture beneficiaries was 0.02 in 2023, which increased to 0.04 in 2024.

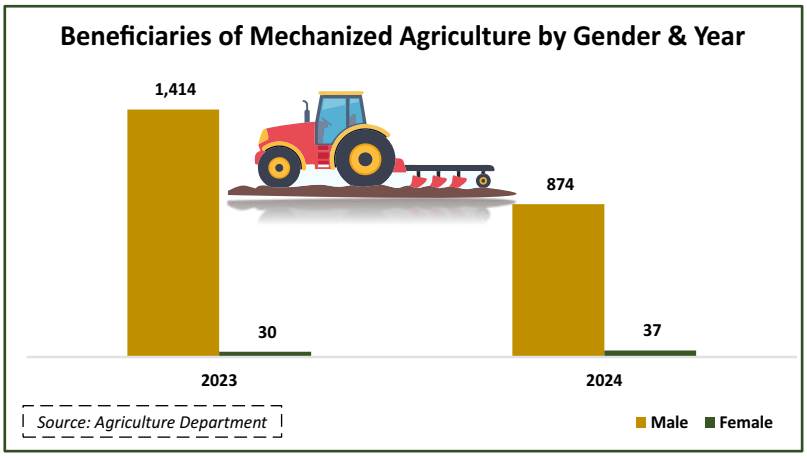


Figure 6.100

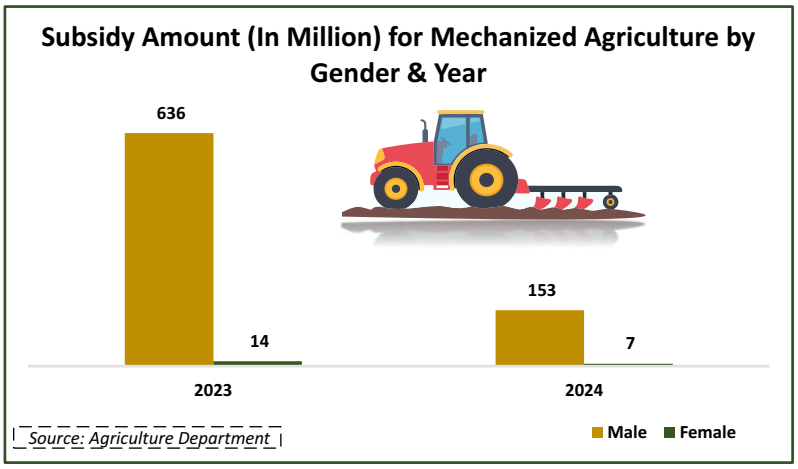


Figure 6.101

Agriculture department statistics show that more than half a million Kissan cards were issued in the last year. Male comprised 96 percent, while females were about 4 percent of Kissan card holders. Green tractor scheme beneficiaries were 9,763, with a male percentage of 97 percent, while females were only 3 percent. Internship scheme for agriculture students' male percentage was 75, and females comprised 25 percent.

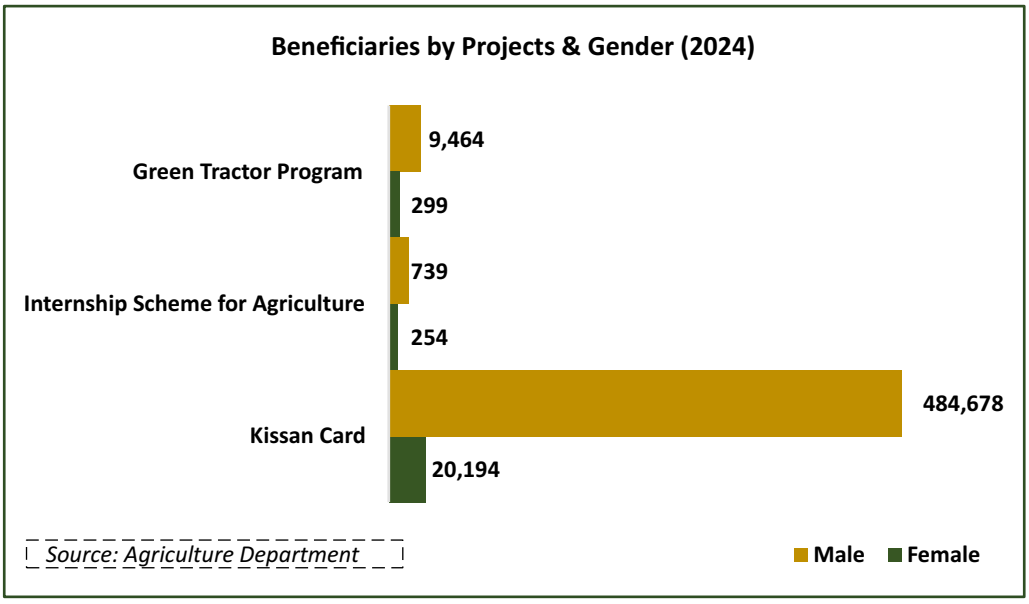


Figure 6.102

Farmers' training conducted by the agriculture department for enhancing crop productivity show that male comprisesed the majority of participants. With almost 2.5 million males, females were fewer than 9 thousand for both consecutive years. GPI of training programs remained 0.003 points for both consecutive years.

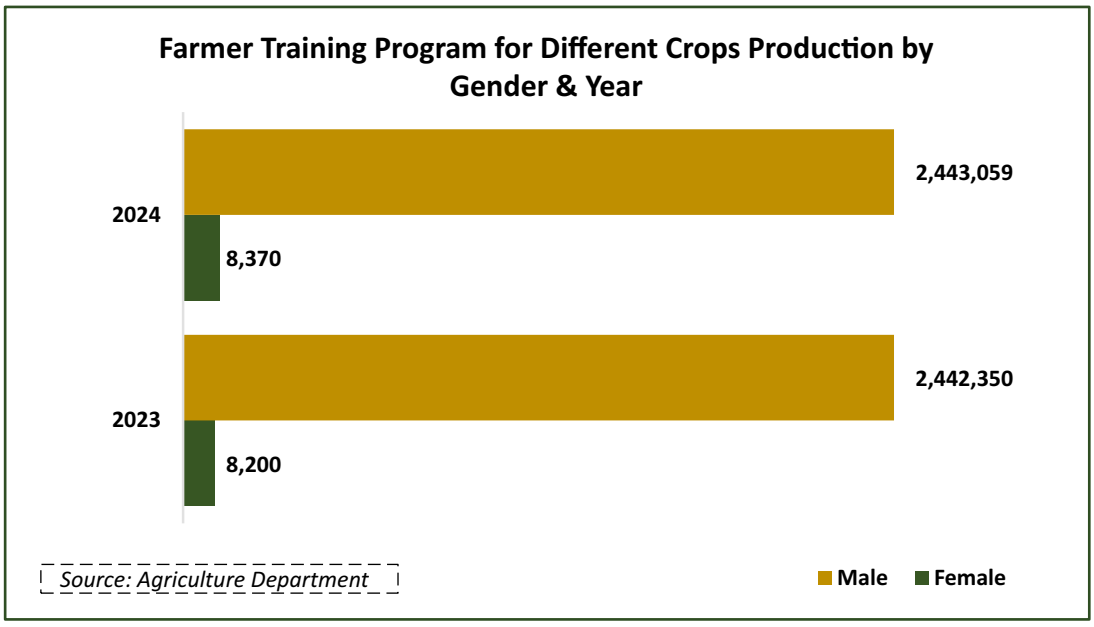


Figure 6.103

6.8.4 Climate Resilience Projects & Training

Farmers' training beneficiaries conducted on climate resilience and climate-smart agriculture were more than 1.5 million, with a male percentage of more than 99 percent and females comprising merely 0.5 percent for both consecutive years.

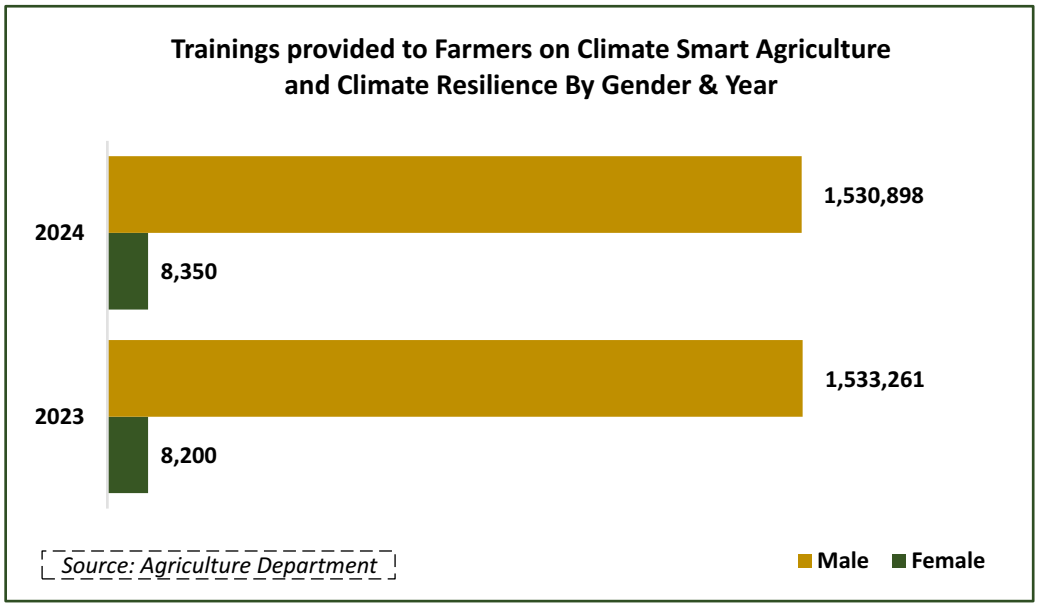


Figure 6.104

Punjab Resilient and Inclusive Transformation project, financed by the World Bank Group, show that males comprised 56 percent of beneficiaries, while females comprised 44 percent of beneficiaries.

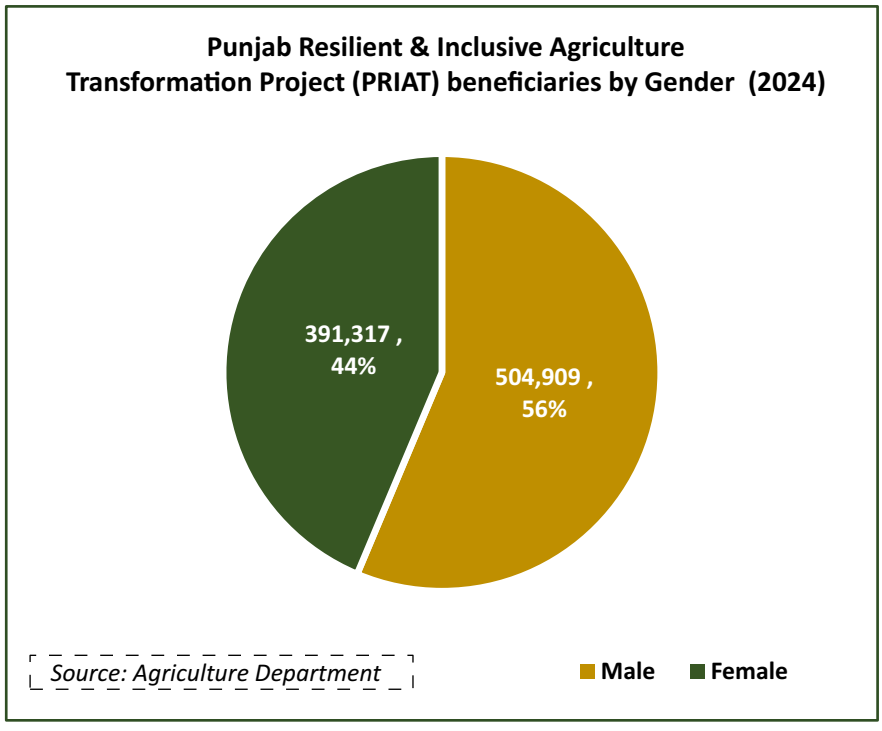


Figure 6.105

Agriculture department climate resilience programs for enhancing command area in Barani areas show there were 1,187 male beneficiaries and only 5 females. GPI in this project remained 0.004. Gram cultivation in Thal areas through the Climate Smart Technologies project GPI remained 0.1.

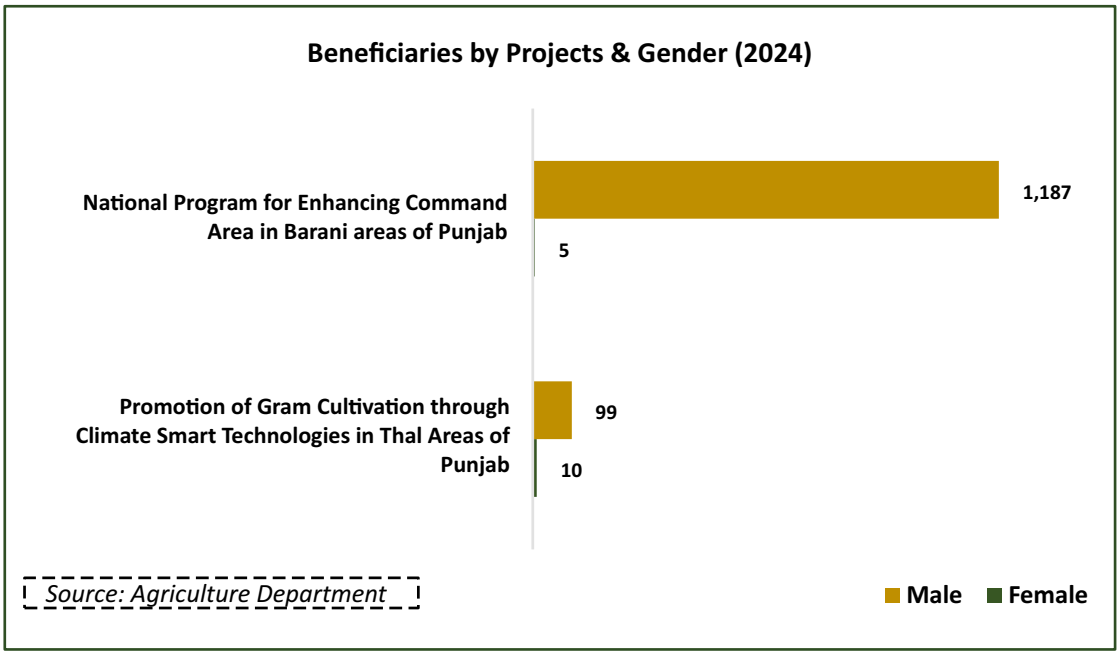


Figure 6.106

6.9 Social Safety Nets

Poverty is the lack of resources for sustenance and a basic standard of living. It is both in absolute and relative terms. Social safety nets are different types of programs designed to protect this marginalised group through the provision of food, clothing, shelter and access to basic services of health, education and social participation.[355]

Pakistan is grappling with fiscal deficit, high inflation, stagnant growth and under development over the past few years. Pakistan's poverty rate stood at 40.5 (as per 3.65 $ IPL) in 2024.[356] Moreover, consumption-based Inequality and labour income inequality stood at 32 percent and 47.6 percent, respectively.[357] The majority of Pakistan's social safety net programs are inclined toward cash transfers (CTP), conditional cash transfer program (CCTP), and food subsidies.[358] Lack of human capabilities and financial literacy render women overly dependent on male family members. Efficiency, effectiveness and transparency are crucial for reaping the ultimate benefits of cash transfer and subsidy programs in Pakistan. The benefits of these programs remain obscure and with limited achievements. Designing and implementing safety net programs need to be realigned as per cultural and contextual specificity.[359] Policy makers need to transcend beyond CTP & CCTP programs for growth and development.[360] Asset provision and skill training programs are key to sustainable income opportunities in Pakistan.[361] There is a need to break the existing state of inertia with a complete overhaul of social safety net programs. The way forward is precipitous and requires dedicated policy efforts.

6.9.1 Poverty Alleviation Programs

The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation undertakes different programs for the uplift of women and other marginalised segments of society. Beneficiaries' statistics of the Nashonuma programme are shown in the figure 6.107.

355 (Robson, 2024)
356 (World Bank, Pakistan Poverty & Equity Report, 2024)
357 Ibid
358 Sadaf Mehmood & et al, An assessment of Social Safety net programs, 2021)
359 Iqbal, T, & et al, Sustainable impacts of Social Safety Nets, 2020)
360 Javed A, et al, Social Safety nets and Poverty alleviation in Pakistan, 2021)
361 (Waqas, S & et al 2023)

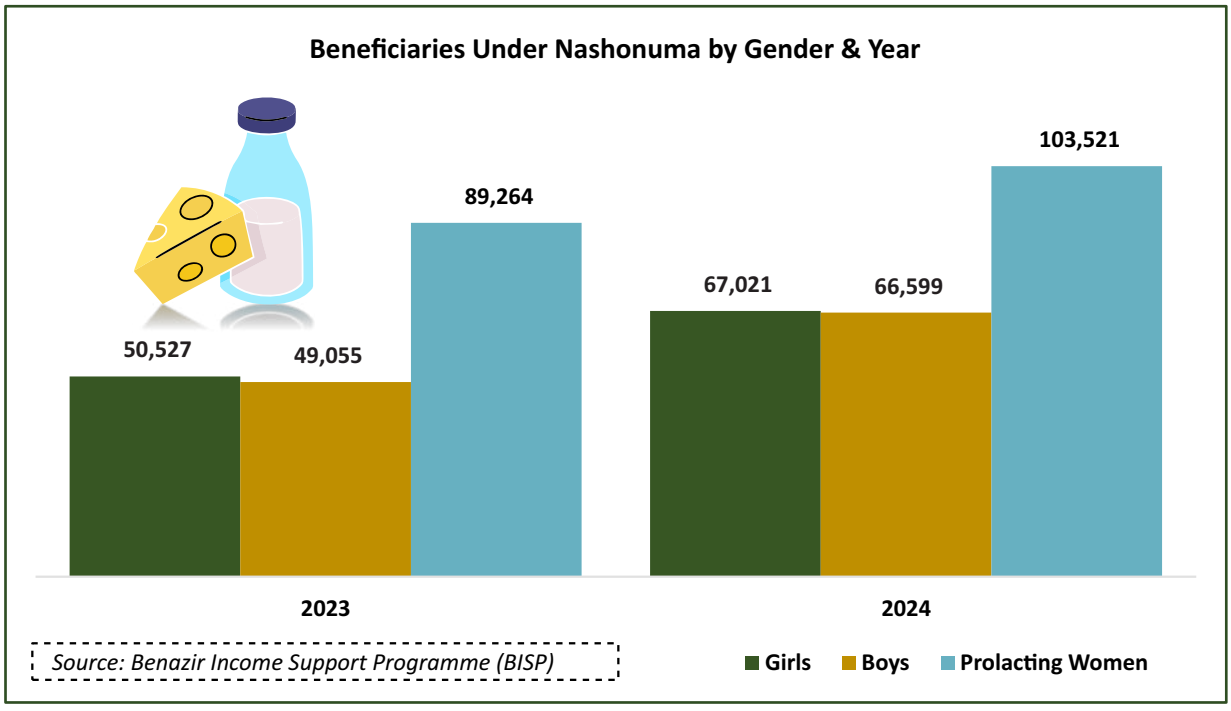


Figure 6.107

District-wise analysis of the Nashonuma programme reveals that the highest number of beneficiaries were from Rajanpur and Multan. This shows that this programme had a keen focus towards South Punjab districts. Talagang and Murree districts remained with the lowest beneficiaries under the Nashonuma programme.

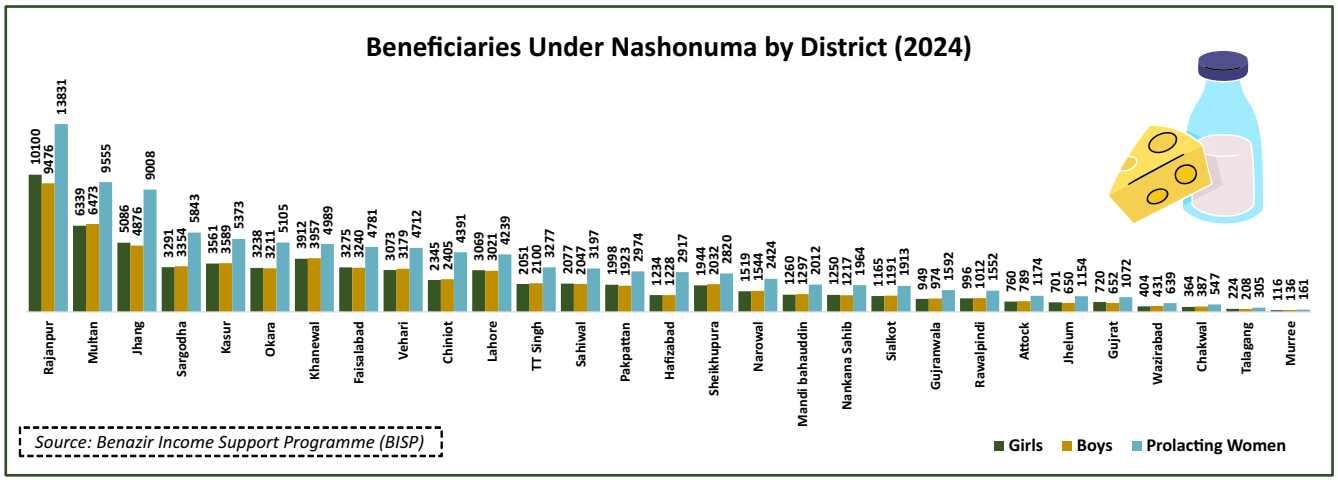


Figure 6.108

Unconditional cash transfers details under the Kafaalat programme show that more than 4.3 million married women benefited from the programme. Divorced beneficiaries remained about 33 thousand for both years. Moreover, widowed beneficiaries increased from 179,170 in 2023 to 187,761 in 2024.

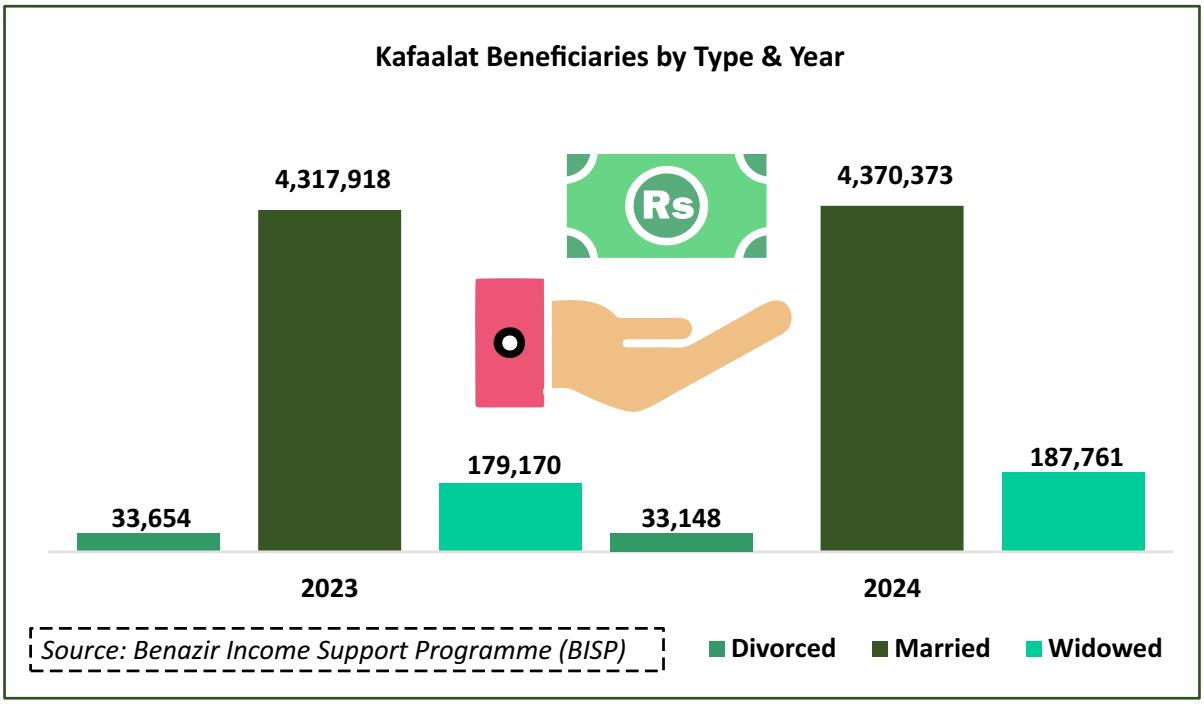


Figure 6.109

District-wise statistics of Kafaalat programme beneficiaries show that the highest number of beneficiaries were from Rahim Yar Khan and Muzaffargarh districts, with almost 300 thousand beneficiaries. Talagang (6,667) and Murree (3,425) districts had the lowest share of beneficiaries.

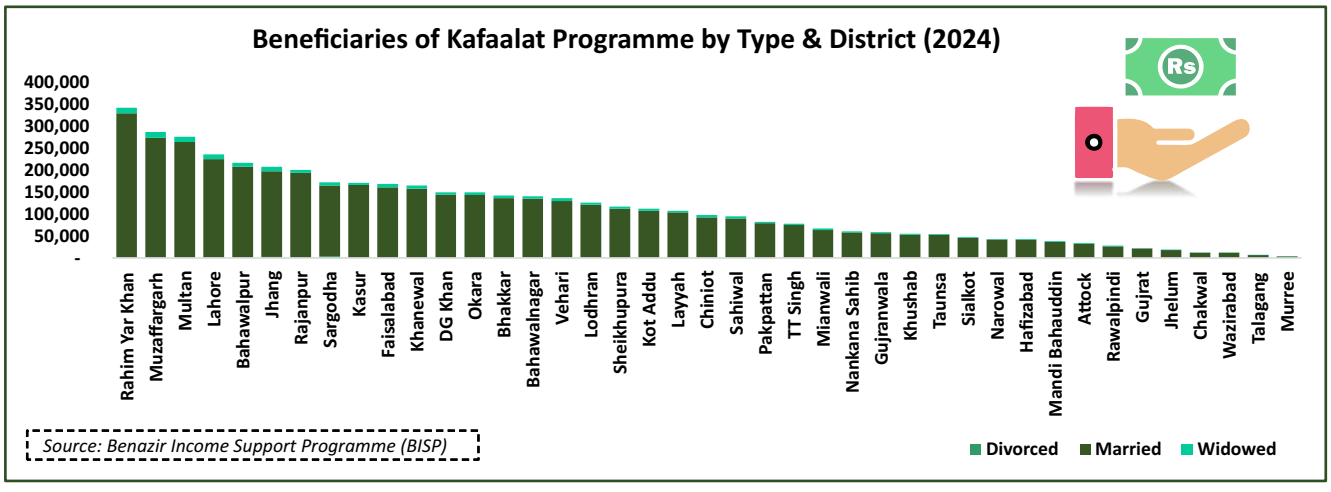


Figure 6.110

Taleemi Wazaif beneficiaries under the BISP programme increased in 2024 in comparison with the previous year. Male beneficiaries increased to 2.47 million during the year from 2.29 million in 2023. Female beneficiaries also increased from 2.09 million to 2.28 million in 2024. Cumulatively, male beneficiaries were found to be 52 percent, while female 48 percent in 2024.

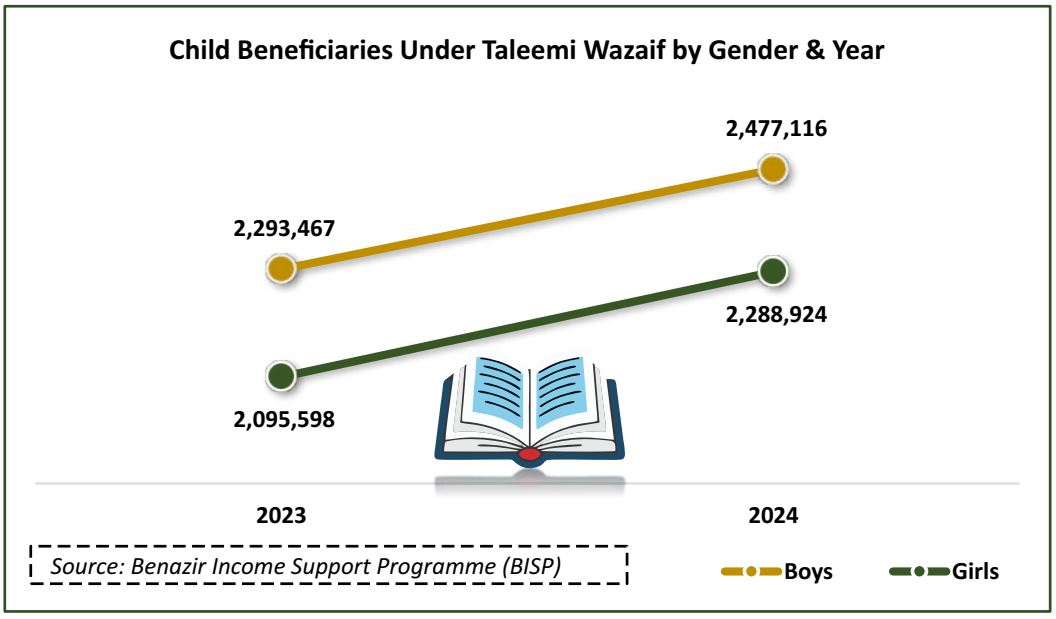


Figure 6.111

District analysis shows that Sialkot remained with the highest GPI of 1.25, while Rajanpur and Layyah had the lowest GPI of 0.7 points for Taleemi Wazaif beneficiaries.

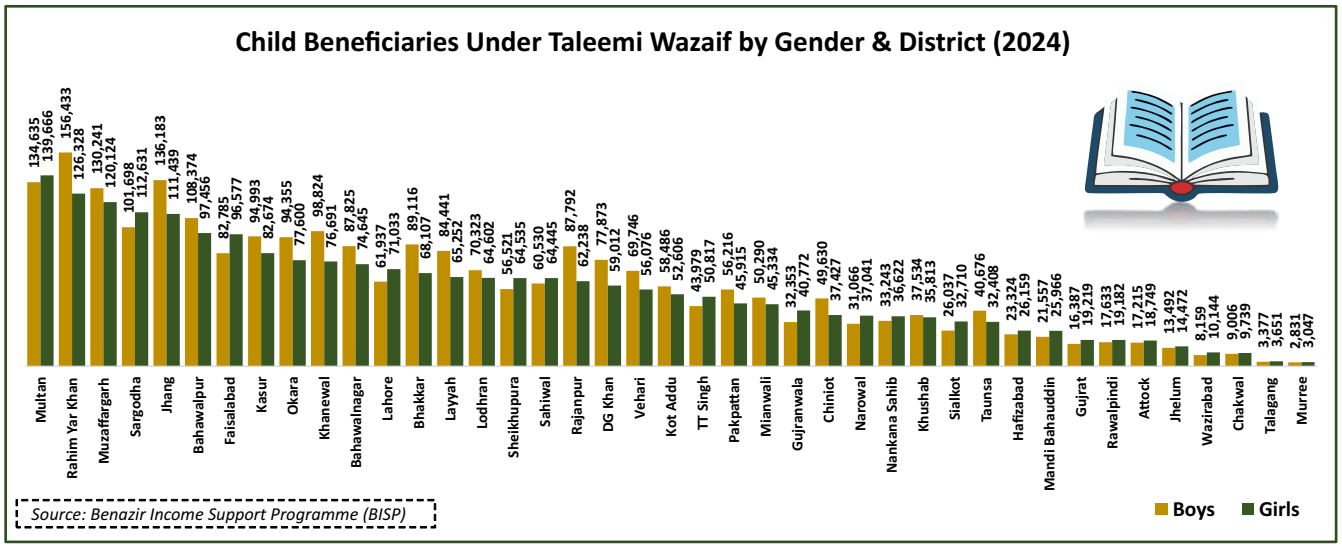


Figure 6.112

National Poverty Graduation Programme (NPGP) remained highly centred toward women during the past two years. In 2023, women comprised more than 96 percent of asset transfers, interest-free loans and trainings. In 2024, the women increased further to 98 percent. Nonetheless, total beneficiaries under the NPGP decreased significantly for asset transfer (78 percent), interest-free loans (75 percent) and training (64 percent).

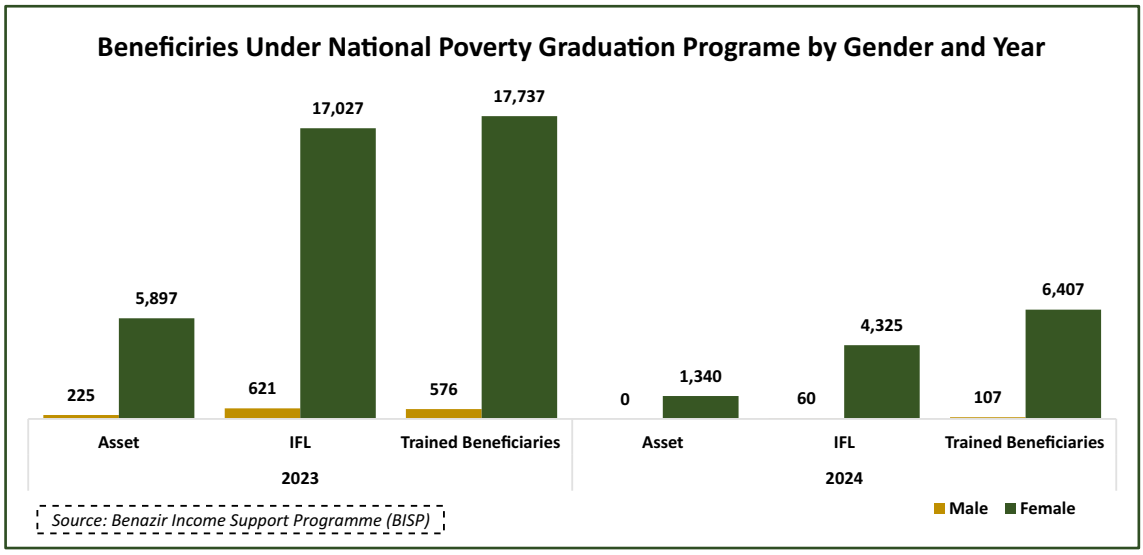


Figure 6.113

6.9.2 Conditional & Unconditional Cash Transfer

Punjab Social Protection Authority

Punjab Social Protection Authority undertakes different conditional and unconditional cash assistance programs, such as;

- Humqadam programme aims to improve the well-being, livelihood, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Punjab. In 2024, male beneficiaries increased to 4233 (with 86.5 million disbursed) from 3983 males in 2023 (with 80.5 million disbursed). Similarly, female beneficiaries also rose from 1,277 (23.500 million) in 2023 to 1,379 (30 million) in 2024. The percentage of male beneficiaries remained at 76 percent, while females constituted 24 percent, maintaining a GPI of 0.32 points over both years.

- Masawat programme focuses on improving and protecting transgender persons. In 2023, 122 transgender individuals were assisted with 3.8 million disbursements. In the subsequent year, 137 transgenders were provided with 4.7 million in assistance.

- Nayee Zindagi programme works for the empowerment of Acid attack victims. 47 acid attack victims were provided assistance under this programme.

- Zewar-e-Taleem Program is a conditional cash transfer for girls in low literacy districts of Punjab. In 2024, 3794 hundred girls were assisted with a total disbursement of 4320 million.

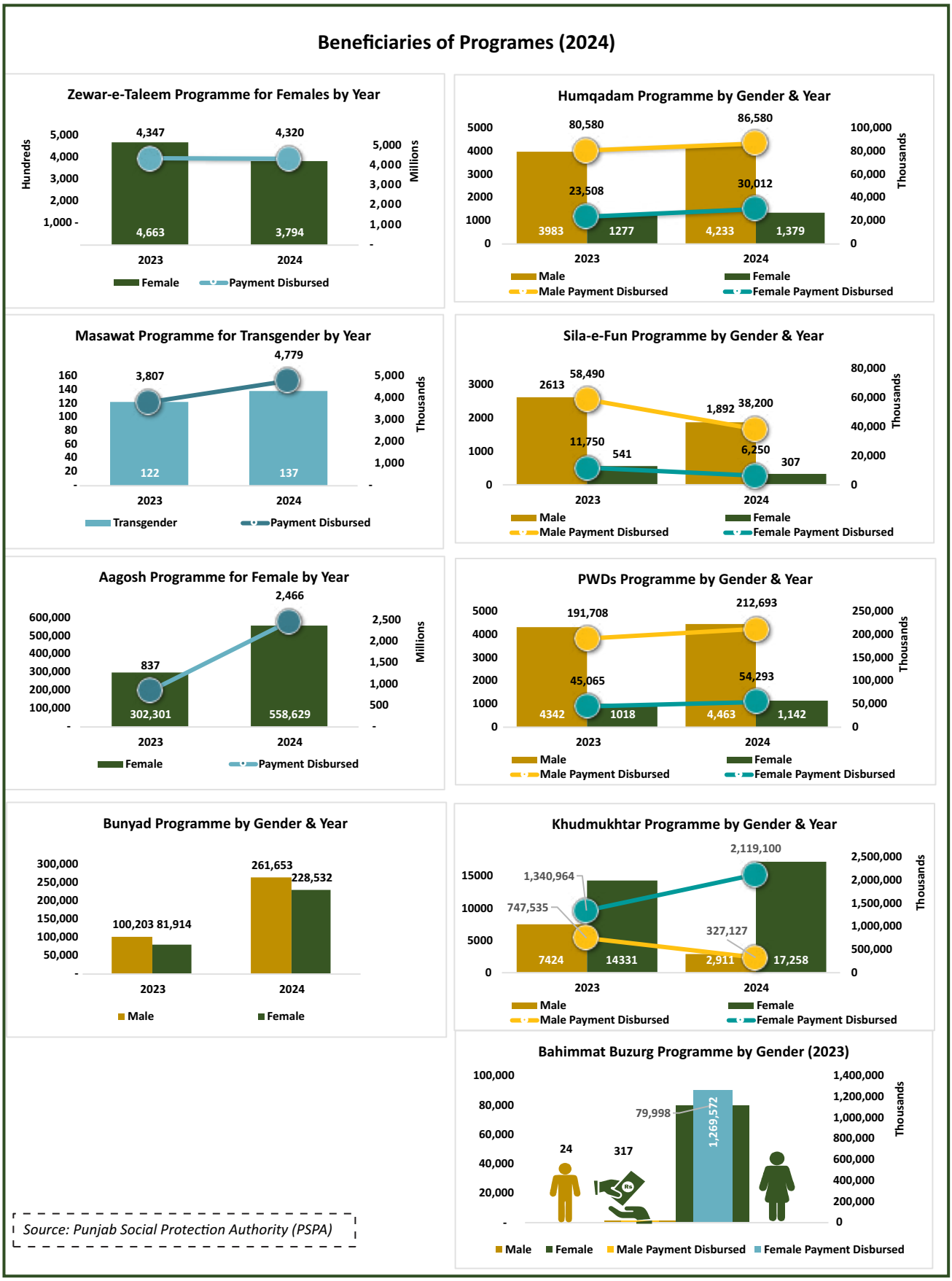
- Sila-e-Fun Program aims to assist elderly artists, writers, poets and media persons. In 2024, 38 million was disbursed to men beneficiaries, while 6.2 million to women beneficiaries. Men were 87 percent beneficiaries while women comprised 13 percent with the GPI of 0.16, for the 2024 year.

- Khudmukhtar programme empowers women through skill development and entrepreneurship training. In 2024, women comprised 85 percent of the beneficiaries for the Khudmukhtar programme with a disbursement of 2119 million rupees.

- The Aagosh programme focuses on providing quality childcare services to working mothers. In 2024, 558 thousand females were assisted with 2466 million disbursements.

- PWD-KCB programme addresses the needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs). In 2024, 4463 men were assisted by this programme and comprised 80 percent of beneficiaries. Female beneficiaries comprised 20 percent with 1142 individuals. GPI of the PWD programme was 0.25 points in 2024.

- Ba Himmat Buzurg initiative supports senior citizens. The majority of beneficiaries under this programme were women (99 percent) in 2023.



Source: Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA)

Figure 6.114

Zakat & Ushr

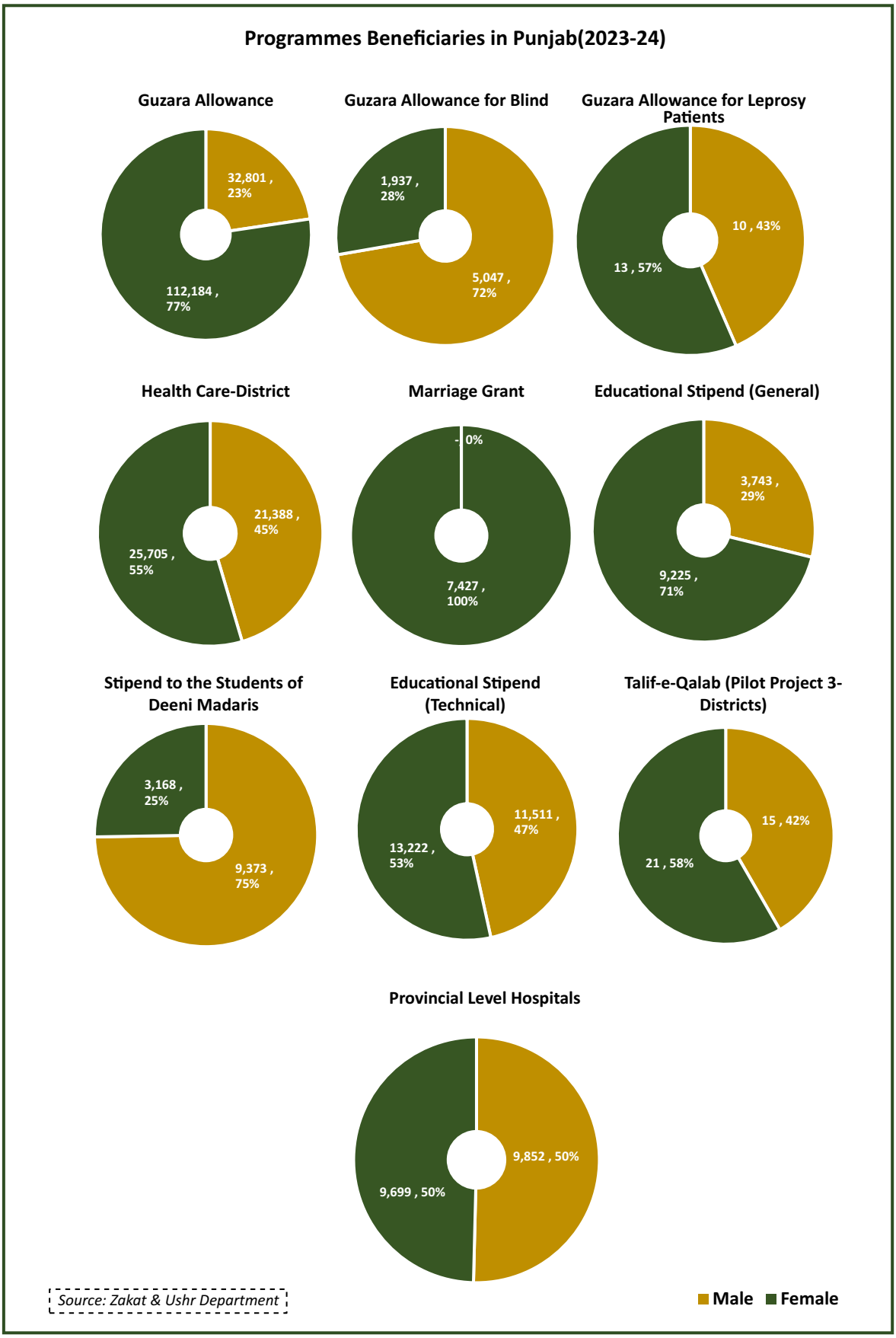


Figure 6.115

6.9.3 Akhuwat

Akhuwat collaborates with the Punjab government to provide assistance to marginalised groups. Beneficiaries of the Akhuwat cloth bank decreased by more than half from 2023 to 2024. In percentage, it accounts for 56 percentage points. Nonetheless, women comprised a higher number of beneficiaries for both consecutive years, with more than two thousand beneficiaries than men. Women accounted for 53 percent and 56 percent in 2023 and 2024 respectively. Moreover, transgender people comprised one percent and 1.7 percent of benificiaries for these years, respectively.

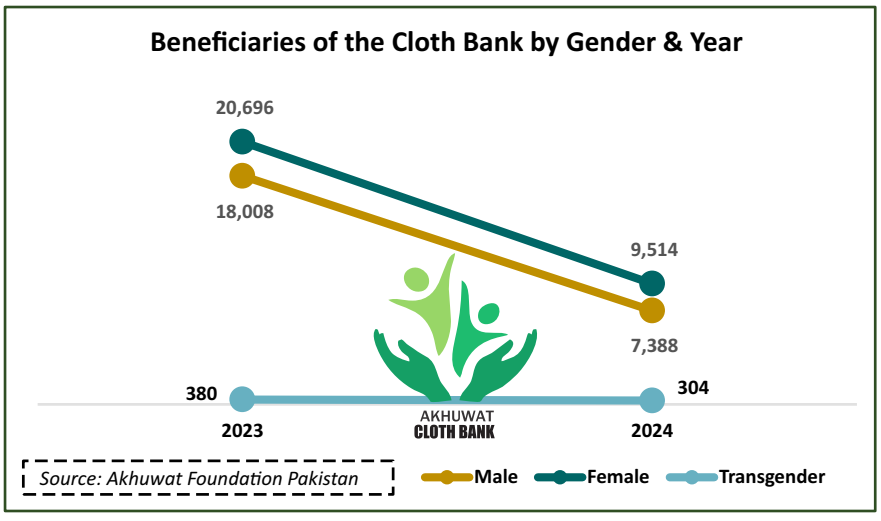


Figure 6.116

Lahore and Rawalpindi accounted for the highest number of beneficiaries for both 2023 and 2024. The majority of the districts had fewer than hundred to 600 beneficiaries with almost identical gender parity for cloth bank beneficiaries.

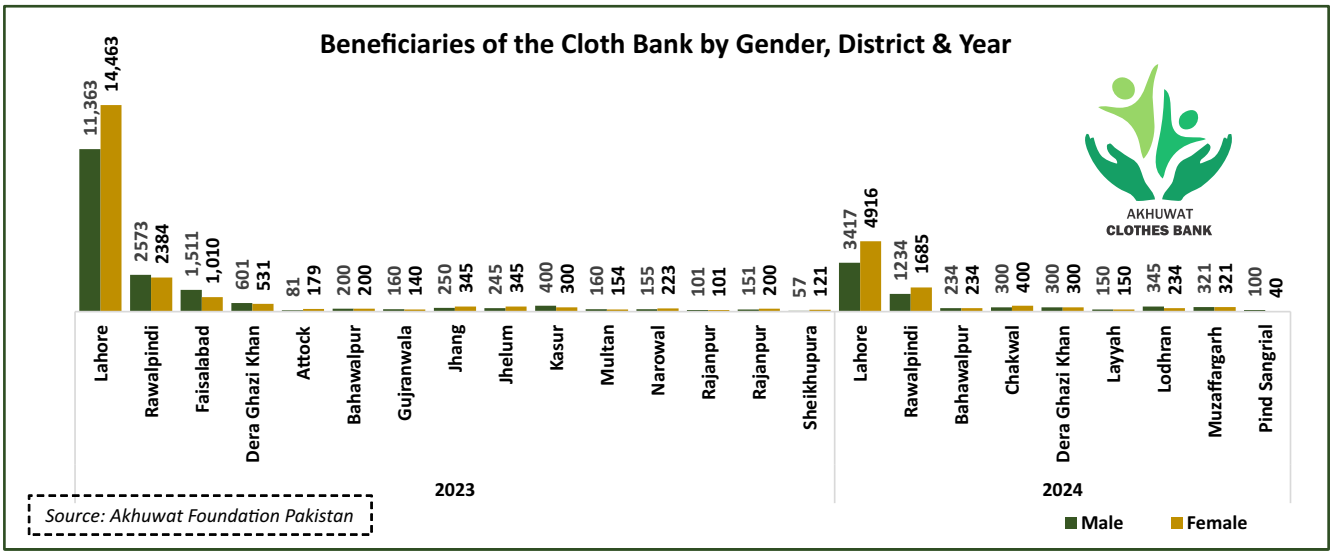


Figure 6.117

Akhuwat education services accounted for 525 beneficiaries in total, with 168 men and 357 women. The percentage share of women in comparison to men increased from 58 percent to almost 80 percent in 2024. Chakwal, Mianwali, and Bhakkar accounted for the highest number of female beneficiaries, while Sheikhupura and Wazirabad had the lowest number of female beneficiaries.

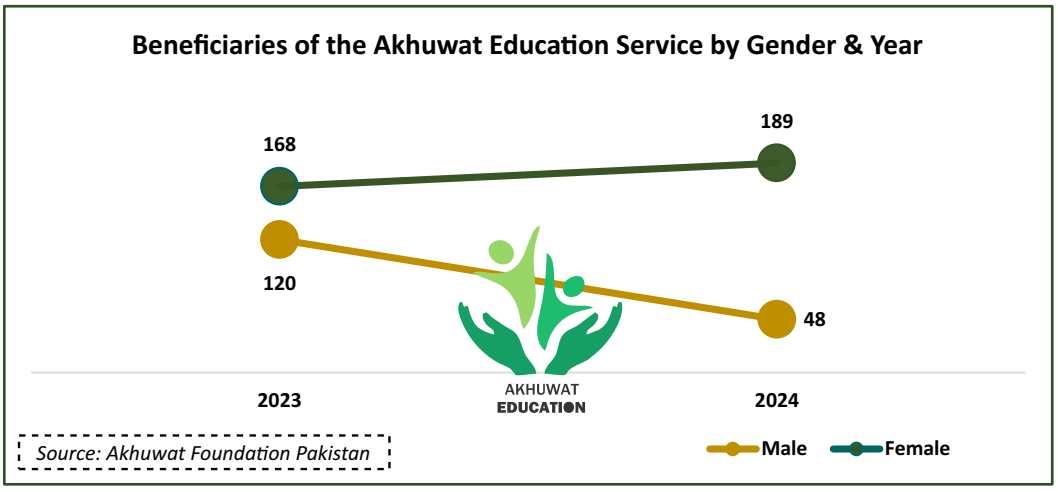


Figure 6.118

District-wise analysis of the Transgender support program shows 521 transgender people who benefited from this program. Faisalabad and Sahiwal had the highest number of beneficiaries, while Sargodha and Sheikhupura had 3 and 4 transgender beneficiaries, respectively.

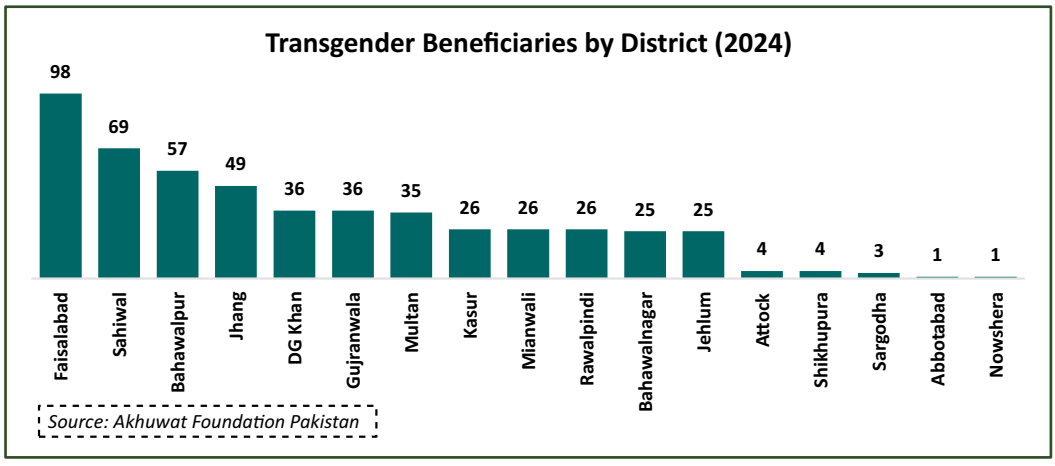


Figure 6.119

6.10 Sports & Tourism

Sports and tourism can go a long way in a country's economic growth. These sectors are vibrant and have the potential for diverse revenue, employment and development streams in an economy. Sports contribute to infrastructure development and are interlinked with hospitality services. Similarly, tourism flourishes through showcasing socio-cultural history and contributes toward transportation, hospitality services and infrastructure development. Both these sectors provide an inclusive and diverse range of facilities.

In Pakistan, the sports and tourism sectors are mostly gender biased due to cultural, religious, political and security reasons. Nonetheless, women of Pakistan have excelled in various sports and tourism sectors. There is a need for coordinated efforts for the development of these two sectors as a whole, and specifically to incorporate women in these sectors. Inclusive sports and tourism sectors can become key for economic growth and development in Pakistan.

6.10.1 Sports

Punjab Sports Board data showed that there were 61 coaches employed in different sports in 2023-24, of which 45 (74 percent) were men, and 16 (26 percent) were women. Many key sports like Volleyball, Squash, gymnastics, baseball and taekwondo did not have a single female coach for both consecutive years. Of the 16 different sports, there were no female coaches in 8 sports. GPI in terms of coaches in the sports industry was 0.35 for both consecutive years.

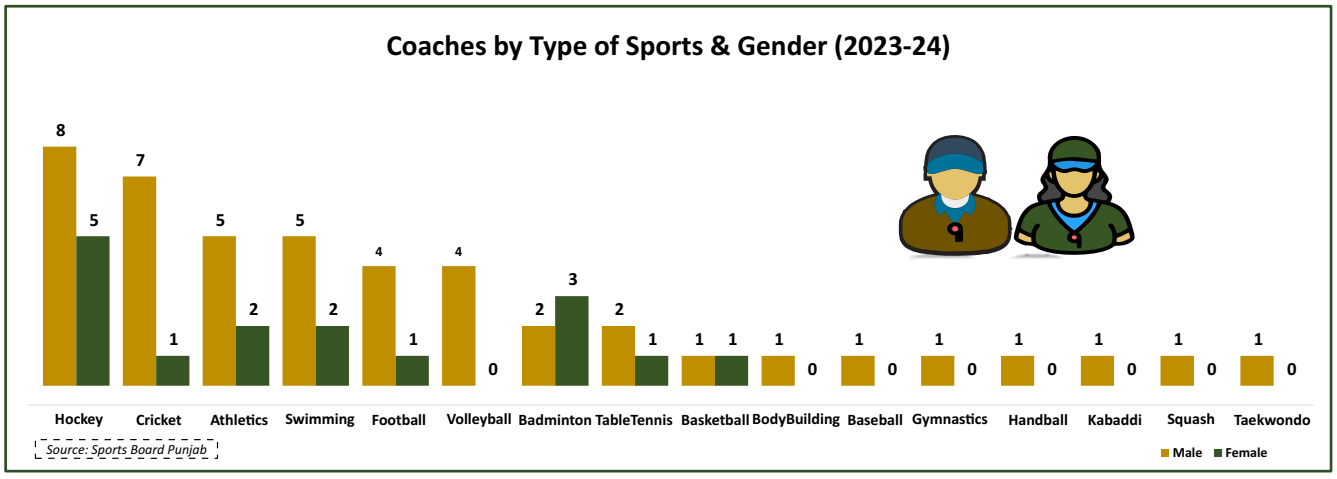


Figure 6.120

Punjab Sports Board conducts training camps for the emerging and dedicated sports individuals sports veterans and coaching staff. Participants' details of training camps conducted by the Punjab Sports Board show that in 2024, there were 494 male (59 percent) and 344 female (41 percent) participants in different sports. GPI of training camps participation remained 0.69 in 2024.

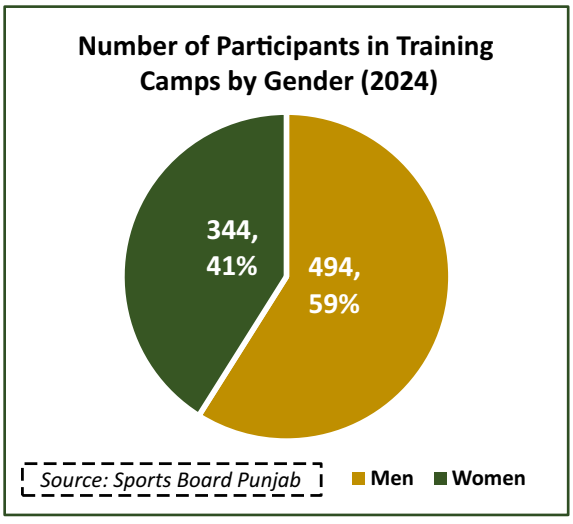


Figure 6.121

6.10.2 Tourism

Globally, the tourism sector is one of the most diverse and gender inclusive sectors, with women comprising almost 54 percent of the workforce. In Pakistan, the tourism sector has remained unable to tap its potential despite diverse geographical and scenic venues. It has remained stagnant and even decreased in terms of female participation. Women are scarce in this industry as managers, employees, tourists, guides and hospitality services providers.

Data from Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) the total staff in 2024 was 420 employees. In comparison with 2023, only one female staff member joined, against 19 male staff members. In terms of tourists, the female percentage is 41 in 2023, which decreased to 37 percent in 2024. It shows that in tourism employment, female participation is quite low.

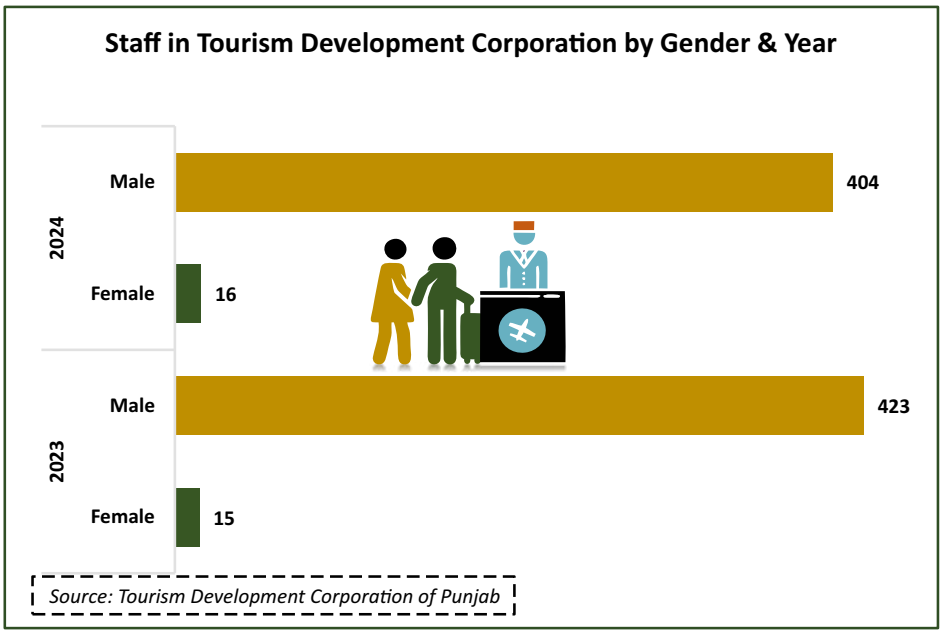


Figure 6.122

A total of 716,458 tourists were facilitated by TDCP in 2024, slightly lower than 734,784 tourists in 2023. The male percentage of tourists was 60 percent in 2023, which rose to 63 percent in the subsequent year. The female percentage of tourists was 40 percent in 2023, which decreased by 3 percent in the following year. GPI of tourists remained 0.69 in 2023 and 0.59 in 2024.

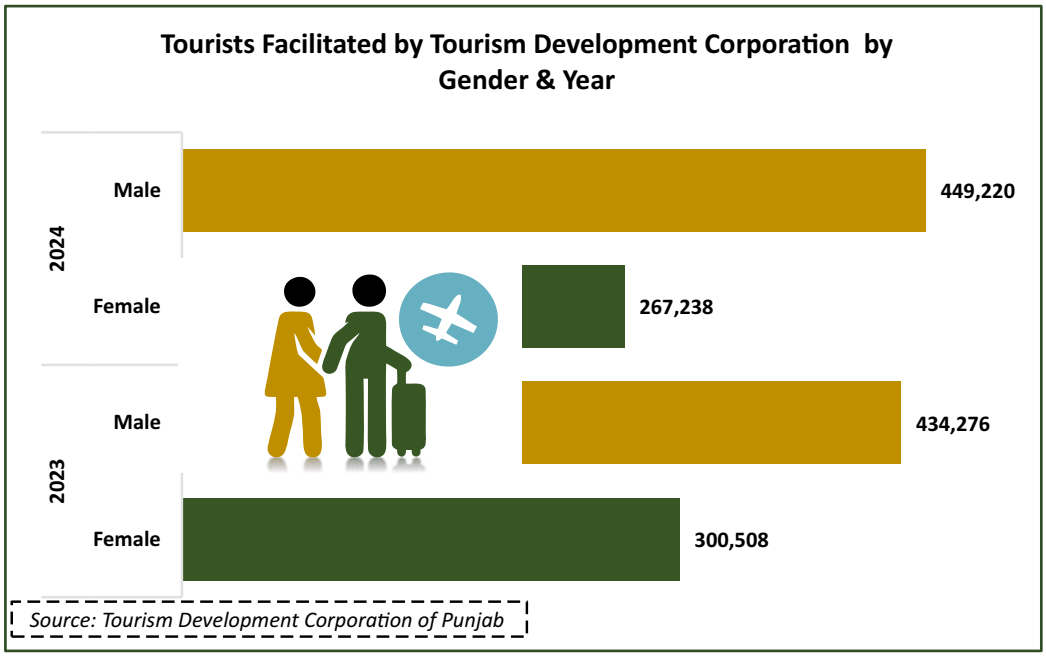


Figure 6.123

Cumulatively, 301 people graduated from TDCP with diplomas and other certifications in different programs in the last two years. The number of graduates in 2024 increased by almost 3.5 times in comparison to 2023. The percentage of female graduates remained 19 and 14 percent in 2023 and 2024,respectively. The online tour guide course comprised the highest number of graduates for both males and females in 2024. Moreover, higher female participation can be observed in culinary arts and professional chef courses.

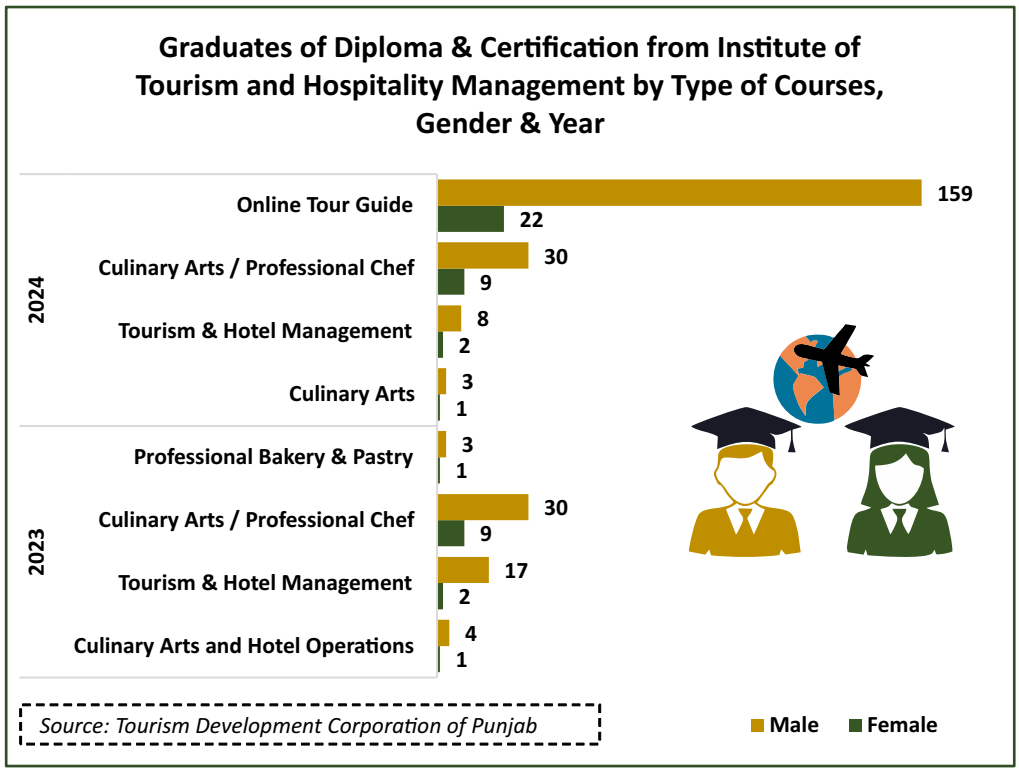


Figure 6.124

6.11 Conclusion

In Punjab, economic participation and opportunities across different sectors, projects and programs have been minutely discussed in this chapter. Particular attention was given to analysing gender gaps in employment, earnings, finances, and control over resources. Significant disparities came forward in terms of employment, institutional support, access to financial resources and ownership.

In this backdrop, there is a need for a comprehensive policy shift to incorporate women in economic activities. A holistic approach to address the challenges faced by women is the need of the hour. Women's participation is imperative for the country's economic growth and development.

The full potential of women needs to be capitalised through formal employment, earning opportunities, access to financial resources and empowerment in terms of decision making. Sustainable economic growth, skill development, breaking social taboos and effective implementation of pro-women laws are key to achieving women's economic and social empowerment.

6.12 Recommendations

Strengthen Women's Labour Force Participation and Employment Opportunities

LFS 2024–25 indicates that women's Labour Force Participation Rate and Employment-to-Population Ratios are critically low. Women also face significantly higher unemployment rates than men, reflecting structural barriers to decent work.

- Local markets in Punjab remain underdeveloped and traditional. The Government of Punjab should revamp local markets for job creation through collaboration with the private sector, with a focus on formal employment opportunities.

- The majority of the graduates remain unemployed and unable to find formal work opportunities in Pakistan. There is a need for collaboration among the Higher Education Department (HED), NAVTTC, and the private sector to introduce graduate placement and internship schemes to facilitate school-to-work transition.

- The agriculture sector of Punjab remains traditional and mostly produces raw material. The Agriculture Department should work for value-added production in agriculture and green transition sectors to generate employment opportunities.

- NAVTTC, School Education and Higher Education Departments should introduce targeted skills training in high-demand sectors such as digital services, agri-tech, and e-commerce to enhance women's employability.

- Punjab Domestic Worker Act, 2019, provides protection for domestic workers in Punjab. The Labour & Human Resource Department should work for the registration and provision of subsidised schemes for these workers.

- Over the past decade, there has been an increased focus on day care centres in Punjab under the Chief Minister's schemes. However, there is a need for a public-private partnership to expand this initiative for enabling women's participation in paid employment.

- Given that most emigrants from Pakistan are unskilled and women constitute only 2.5 percent of emigrants, NAVTTC, PHED, and BE&EO should provide market-oriented skills training, certification, and facilitation for overseas employment, with a specific focus on women.

- Labour & Human Resource department should ensure effective implementation of minimum wage legislation across all sectors through coordinated efforts of relevant provincial departments and strengthened enforcement mechanisms.

Reduce and Redistribute Informal Employment and Unpaid Care Work

The majority of Pakistan's economy is comprised of the informal sector, and women disproportionately bear the burden of unpaid domestic and care work, limiting their participation in formal economic activities.

- As per the latest Labour Force survey informal sector of Pakistan is around 80 percent. The Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI) should develop a comprehensive framework to reduce informality by addressing regulatory barriers, high compliance costs & Procedures, and structural challenges in border and underserved regions.

- The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) should introduce lower tax rates or tax rebates for secondary earners to incentivise women's labour force participation.

- PESSI and the Labour and Human Resource Department should fast-track the registration of brick kiln workers, especially women and introduce targeted social protection and education support for families working in kilns.

Improve Women's Access to Productive Assets (Land, Housing, and Property)

Women's ownership of land, housing, and assets remains significantly lower than men, limiting their economic security and access to finance.

- The Federal Board of Revenue and the Excise and Taxation Department should reduce property transfer fees and offer tax incentives for joint or female-owned land and property registrations.

- The Government of Punjab should conduct large-scale awareness campaigns on existing platforms for women's inheritance rights. Moreover, there is a need to simplify legal procedures and the strict enforcement of the Women's Property Rights Act, 2021.

- The Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) should maintain publicly available digital ownership data for land owners to enhance tenure security.

Promote Female Entrepreneurship and Business Ownership

Women's participation in entrepreneurship, start-ups, and formal business ownership remains limited across Punjab.

- Over the past years, there has been an improvement in NIC-registered startups and entrepreneurs. The National Incubation Centre (NIC) & PITB should further expand women-focused incubation programmes, mentorship networks, and financing initiatives.

- Bank of Punjab (BoP) and Zarai Taraqiati Bank (ZTBL) borrowers' details show that women comprise less than 10 percent of active borrowers. The BoP, ZTBL, and other commercial banks should introduce concessional loan products, credit guarantees, and tailored financial services for women entrepreneurs.

- SECP and the Excise and Taxation Department should provide dedicated business registration support services for women, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas.

- Female shareholders remain less than 15 percent in Punjab. SECP should introduce incentives for companies with higher proportions of women shareholders and board members.

- Over the past two years, fewer than 10 label applications were submitted by women in Punjab. The Punjab Food Authority should develop a dedicated strategy to support women-owned food businesses, including simplified registration processes and branding incentives.

Increase Women's Mobility and Access to Transport

Women's access to private and public transport remains constrained, as reflected in extremely low vehicle ownership and driving licence issuance.

- Punjab Traffic Police should expand women-only driving training programmes and subsidised licensing initiatives.
- The Excise and Taxation Department should offer tax concessions on vehicle registration for women, while banks should introduce women-friendly vehicle financing schemes.
- Transport authorities should implement safer public transport initiatives, monitored routes, and improved lighting and surveillance.

Enhance Financial Inclusion and Access to Credit

Pakistan ranks among the top ten countries with low financial confidence, and gender gaps persist in bank account ownership, branchless banking, micro-finance and access to credit.

- The State Bank of Pakistan should provide gender segregated public data of the banking sector and promote women-centric banking products, mobile wallets, and digital financial literacy programmes.
- The Government of Punjab should strengthen microfinance institutions to offer loans, longer tenures, and business development services for women.
- Provide subsidised smartphones and affordable internet packages for low-income women to promote digital and financial inclusion.
- Launch district-level digital literacy programmes targeting young women, home-based workers, and rural entrepreneurs.

Support Women in Agriculture

Only one percent of agricultural households in Punjab are headed by women, highlighting their limited role in decision-making and access to resources.

- The agriculture department should develop a centralised dashboard with gender-disaggregated farmers and livestock owners' data. Moreover, it should expand extension services, including training, skills development, and knowledge transfer programmes, specifically targeting women.
- The agriculture department should formally register women working in agricultural households and provide targeted subsidies and input support. Moreover, it should develop targeted support schemes for women-headed agricultural households, including access to inputs, markets, and value chains.
- ZTBL should expand agricultural credit products tailored for women farmers and livestock owners.

Strengthen Institutional Systems for Women's Economic Security and Inclusion

- The Home Department and Ombudsperson should strengthen enforcement of workplace harassment laws through regular monitoring.
- The Government of Punjab should mandate women's representation in chambers of commerce, market committees, and agricultural boards.
- Require all relevant departments to collect and report gender-disaggregated data, e.g. labour, property, agriculture, mobility and financial inclusion.
- Strengthen the provincial gender dashboard to monitor progress, identify lagging districts, and inform evidence-based policymaking.
- Expand cash transfer and income support programmes for widows, divorced women, and economically vulnerable women.


Human
Rights

JUSTICE



07 JUSTICE

KEY FINDINGS

- In Punjab, reported cases of gender-based violence increased by 20.82 percent from 28,721 cases reported in 2023 to 34,702 cases in 2024.
- In Punjab, the data showed kidnapping as one of the most reported crimes, increasing from 19,898 cases in 2023 to 24,225 in 2024 (up 21.74 percent).
- Analysis of sexual violence cases showed rape (4,567) as the most reported offence, followed by gang rape (923) and incest (109).
- A total of 150 cases of honour crimes were reported in 2023, and the number increased to 205 in 2024 showing 36.66 percent increase. The highest number of cases of honour crime were reported in Faisalabad.
- The number of reported cases of domestic violence increased by 47.60 percent from 605 cases in 2023 to 893 in 2024.
- Crime emergency cases reported by Rescue 1122 showed an increase in the reported cases from 46,115 in 2023 to 48,251 in 2024, with cases reported higher among men than among women.
- Despite the increase in GBV reporting, the rate of conviction stood at 5.49 percent in 2023, which declined to 4.88 percent in 2024.
- The prison of Punjab remained overcrowded with 70,069 prisoners reported against the authorised accommodation of 38,214 persons.
- In Punjab, there were 1,732 judges, among them 81.47 percent were male, and 18.53 percent were female, with a GPI of 0.23 in 2025.
- Punjab Police Women Safety App, had around 246,263 active users, among them, 158,726 were men, 87,334 were women, and 203 were transgender persons.
- VAW Center in Multan reported 9.9 percent increase in the reported cases of GBV, with domestic violence cases being highly reported.
- Punjab Women Protection Helpline 1737 received 1,300 cases of GBV in 2024. Among them, sexual and physical abuse cases were highly reported.
- Ombudsperson registered an increased from 179 cases of workplace harassment in 2023 to 258 in 2024.
- The enrolment of children in Child Protection Institutes has increased by 18.20 percent from 2,835 students in 2023 to 3,351 in 2024.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals are inherently entitled to fundamental human rights, which are essential to their dignity and well-being. These rights enable individuals to live free from discrimination, violence, and arbitrary interference by political authorities.[362] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) laid the foundation for the global human rights framework. Although not legally binding, it continues to guide national legal systems and the development of the rule of law.[363] Central to the realisation of these rights is access to justice, which ensures fairness, accountability, and protection against abuse.

The idea of justice is linked to equity and fairness, which not only protects the rights of individuals but also prevents crime and punishes offenders. Despite the centrality of justice to human rights, justice systems often fail to serve women and transgender persons equitably. They face significant challenges in accessing justice, including weak implementation of laws, procedural delays, limited institutional capacity, and discriminatory social attitudes. These barriers affect women in multiple roles, whether they are witnesses, survivors, alleged offenders or prisoners[364] and contribute to widespread under-reporting of violence. As a result, many cases remain unaddressed, reinforcing distrust in justice institutions and denying survivors meaningful redress.[365] These systemic challenges are reflected in broader assessments of governance and the rule of law. According to the World Justice Project Report 2024, Pakistan ranked 129 out of 142 countries in the Global Rule of Law Index, with an average score of 0.379, reflecting a one-point decline from the already low 0.39 score.[366]

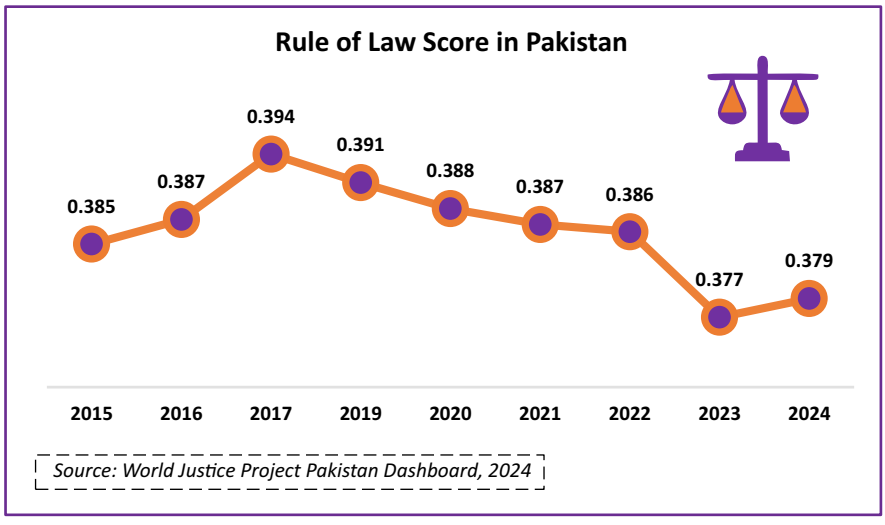


Figure 7.1

The devolution of power and the development of provincial action plans, lacking central coordination, further make it harder for survivors to seek justice.[367] They are often met with dismissive remarks, police may act as mediators rather than filing formal reports or pursuing prosecuting.[368] National statistics show that 56 percent of survivors do not report the case and often turn to informal sources such as family members. While only one percent seek assistance from police or social service organisations.[369] This is partly because society ascribes a higher status to men, while structural gender inequalities have historically limited women's decision-making autonomy, although these dynamics are gradually changing.[370]

Women are highly underrepresented in governance, limiting their influence in decision-making and thereby reinforcing systematic gender bias and weakening institutional responsiveness towards their needs. Ensuring access to justice, especially for women and transgender persons, is critical to achieving gender equality and sustainable development. To accomplish this, governance institutions must be inclusive, transparent, accountable and trusted by all citizens. When these institutions fail to deliver, they fuel social unrest and deepen existing inequalities. [371]

362 (Şener, 2021)
363 (Ministry of Human Rights, 2016)
364 (United Nations, 2018)
365 (UNODC, 2014)
366 (World Justice Project, 2024)
367 (Qaisrani & Liaquat, 2018)
368 (Asghar, 2024)
369 (National Institute of Population Studies , 2019)
370 (Un Women, 2023-2027)
371 (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2024)

To address these challenges, Pakistan has signed international treaties such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and participates in the Universal Periodic Review of its human rights situation. Pakistan enacted laws and policies aimed at protecting women's rights and improving their access to justice. Among them, the most prominent are Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act (2021), Punjab Women Protection Authority Act (2017), Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2020), Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010 and National Gender Policy Framework (2022).[372] The Government of Punjab allocated PKR 1,070 million under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) scheme for FY 2023-24 to the Social Welfare Department for improving Gender Based Violence (GBV) redressal measures for survivors.[373]

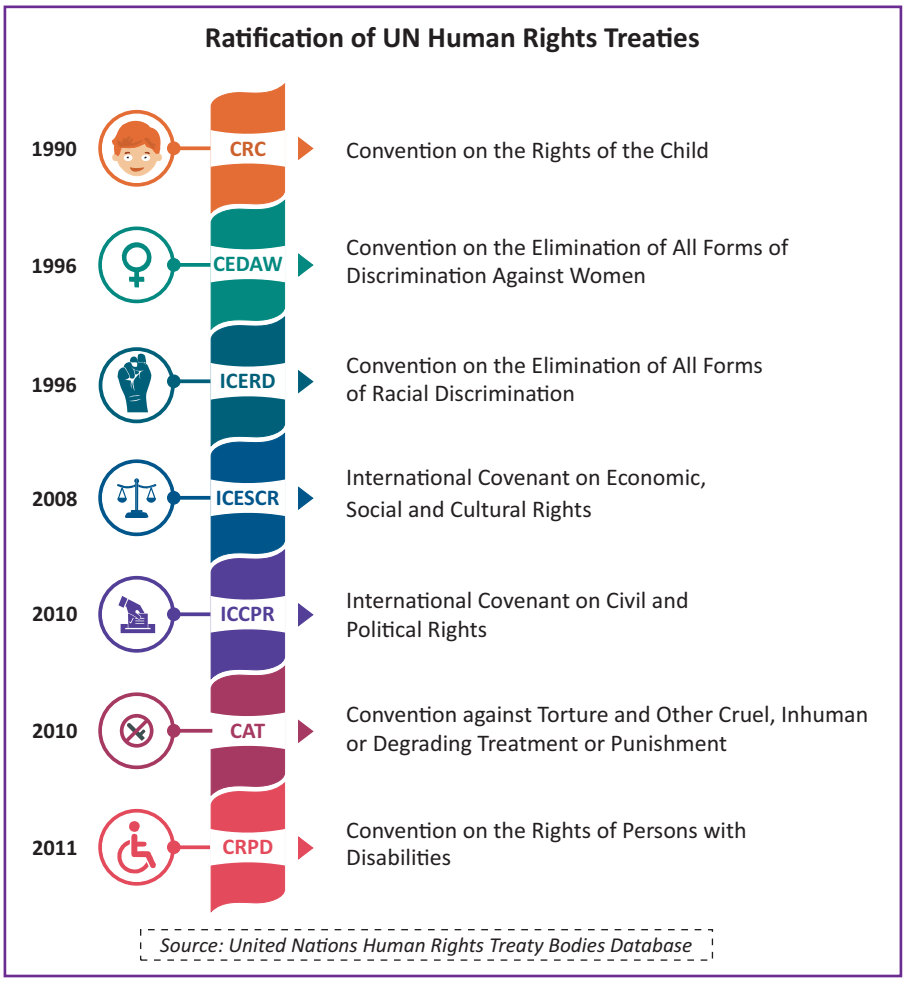


Figure 7.2

While these measures reflect institutional commitment, growing recognition of systematic gender discrimination and violence, significant gaps persist in their effective implementation. Without effective implementation, accountability and gender inclusive decision making in the justice system, these legal and policy reforms remain largely symbolic. Addressing these gaps is essential to turning policy commitments into meaningful, survivor-centred justice outcomes.

This chapter draws on multiple administrative data sources, including the Inspector General (IG) of the Police Department's crime records, 1122 emergency response data, helplines and app-based reporting mechanisms, forensic submissions, and prosecution statistics. These datasets are generated and maintained by separate institutions and are not linked through a unified case-tracking system. As a result, it is not possible to establish whether cases reported to emergency services progressed to police registration, whether forensic cases correspond to police-reported incidents in the same year, or whether prosecution data reflects cases reported within the same reference period. The datasets are therefore presented as complementary indicators of system engagement rather than a single reporting-to-conviction pipeline.

372 (Strategic Note, 2023-2027)
373 (Annual Development Programme 2023-24)

Organization of Analysis

Gender Based Violence

- Reported Cases of GBV
- Reported cases of Crime & Fire Emergencies
- Outcomes of GBV Cases

Criminal Justice System

- Police
- Prison
- Judiciary



Women's Access to Justice

- Women Police Stations
- Gender Based Violence (Redressal) Cells
- Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA)
- Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA)
- Social Welfare & Bait-ul-maal Department (SW&BM)
- Punjab Women Protection Authority (PWPA)
- Punjab Women Helpline
- Ombudsperson
- Punjab Information Commission

Child Protection and Welfare Bureau

7.1 Gender Based Violence

Women experience multiple forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, forced marriage, and so-called 'honour' killings. According to the Pakistan Demographic Health Survey (PDHS) (2017-18), around 23 percent of ever-married women have experienced spousal violence, five percent have experienced sexual violence, and 26 percent have experienced emotional violence. It is more prevalent, according to PDHS, among women living in rural areas, with lower levels of education and limited economic opportunities. In recent years, women have increasingly been exposed to cyber harassment and technology-facilitated abuse. Reported incidents of online harassment highlight emerging risks associated with digital spaces, including technology-facilitated gender based violence (TFGBV), particularly for women with limited access to legal awareness and institutional support. [374]

Violence is a systemic issue driven by multiple, interrelated factors and is often mistakenly perceived as a series of isolated incidents. In many communities, the notion of women as the property of men within marriage reinforces the acceptance of abuse.[375] Exposure to violence during childhood also plays a significant role in perpetuating the cycle of abuse.[376] According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Key Finding Report (MICS KFR) 2024,77.1 percent of children aged 1-14 years experienced psychological aggression, while 41.9 percent were subjected to severe physical punishment.[377] In short, the drivers of violence are complex and operate at multiple levels, from individual and household dynamics to wider societal and national levels.[378]

374 (UN Women, 2023)
375 (Hughed, Marrs, & Sweetman, 2016)
376 (World Bank, 2022)
377 (MICS Key Finding Report, 2024)
378 (World Bank, 2022)

These structural and social drivers of violence disproportionately affect women and girls, taking the form of gender-based violence (GBV). GBV involves harm inflicted physically, sexually or psychologically, whether in the public or private sphere. Although GBV takes many forms, research shows that the most common is intimate partner or domestic violence.[379]

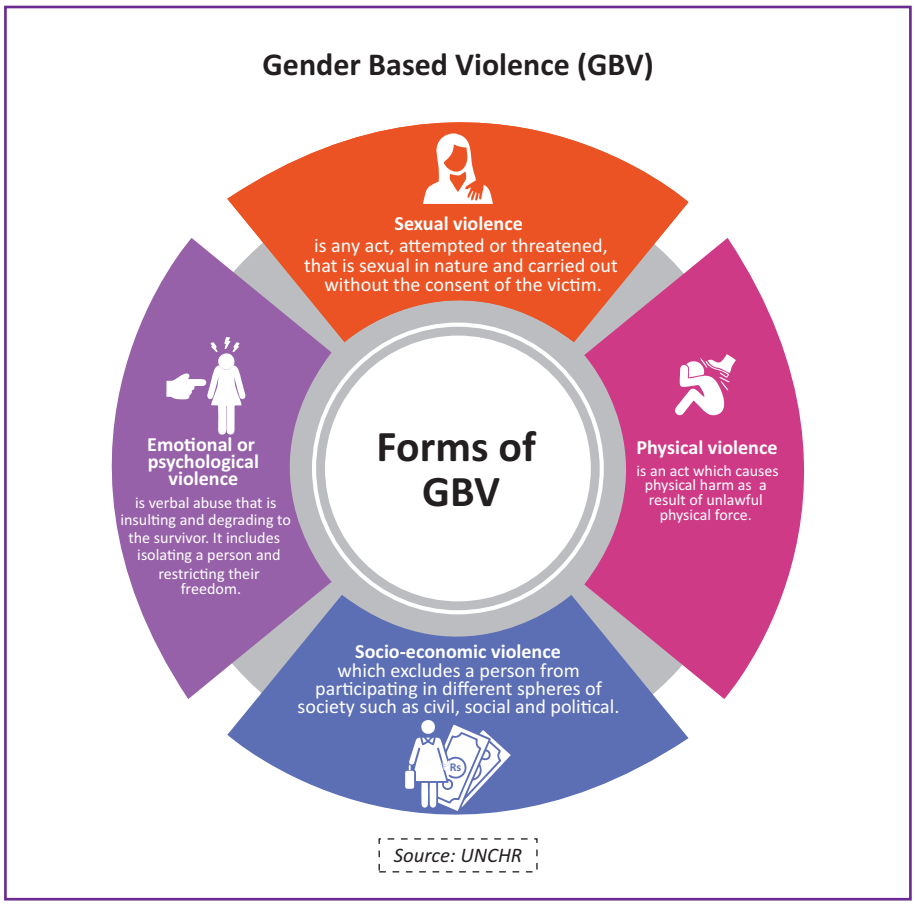


Figure 7.3

GBV is widespread in Pakistan, including Punjab, normalised by patriarchal norms and persistent gender inequality.[380] Perceptions of GBV are highly influenced by socio-cultural norms and practices, leading to the legitimisation of violence . Such factors affect survivors' ability to recognise violence as a violation of their human rights. A cross-provincial study in Pakistan revealed that some women continue to justify being physically abused by their husbands and refrain from reporting the incident to preserve so-called 'family honour'. [381]

GBV also poses a serious public health challenge due to its far-reaching and long-lasting physical and psychological consequences for survivors.[382] Physical outcomes may include chronic pain, injuries, and, in some cases, miscarriages. The emotional toll often manifests as shame, self-blame, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.[383] Recognising the profound impact of violence on women, the international community has placed the elimination of all forms of violence at the centre of the sustainable development agenda. Women and girls comprise half of the world's population, representing half of its potential. Improving their lives benefits the entire community.[384]

The following sub-sections present an overview of GBV cases reported to the police, along with the case outcomes recorded by the Prosecution Department for 2023 and 2024. It is important to note that GBV cases only reflect those incidents that were formally reported. These figures should not be interpreted as the actual incidence of such crimes in Punjab, as they may vary due to underreporting.

379 (García-Moreno, et al., 2013)
380 (Montesanti, 2015)
381 (National Report on the Status of Women in Pakistan, 2023)
382 (World Bank, 2022)
383 (Nyagumbo & Ross, 2025)
384 (Why Gender Equality Matters Across all SDGs, 2018)

7.1.1 Reported Cases of GBV

According to the IG Police data, the number of reported cases of GBV decreased from 34,854 in 2022 to 28,721 in 2023. However, in 2024, the reported cases of GBV increased to 34,702, which included cases of murder, honour crime, acid attack, rape, kidnapping, and child marriage. The rise in reported cases indicates greater public awareness and strengthening of reporting mechanisms.

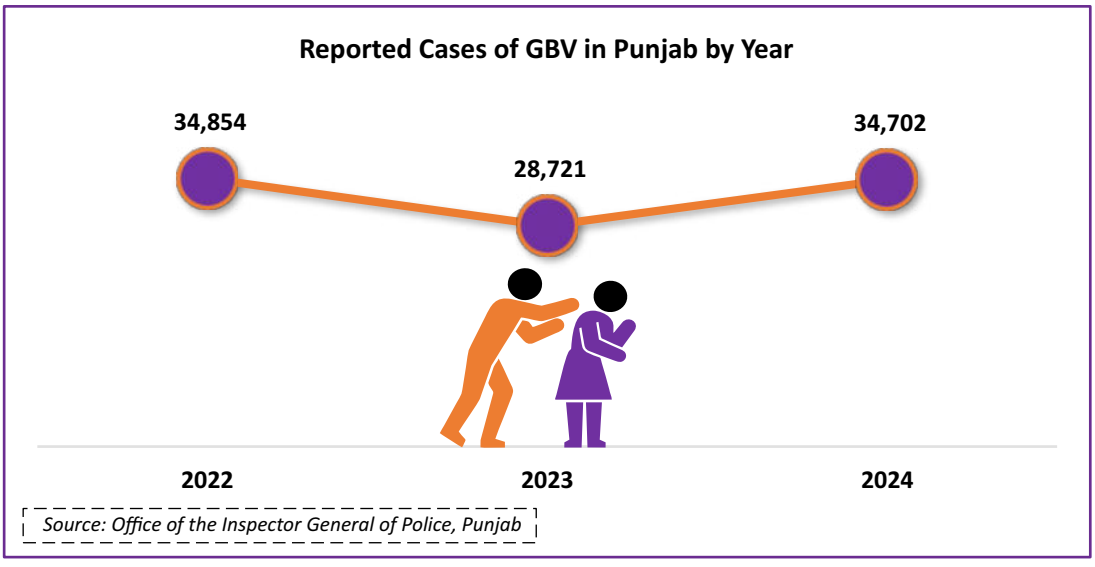


Figure 7.4

The figure below presents the reported cases of GBV in 2023 and 2024.

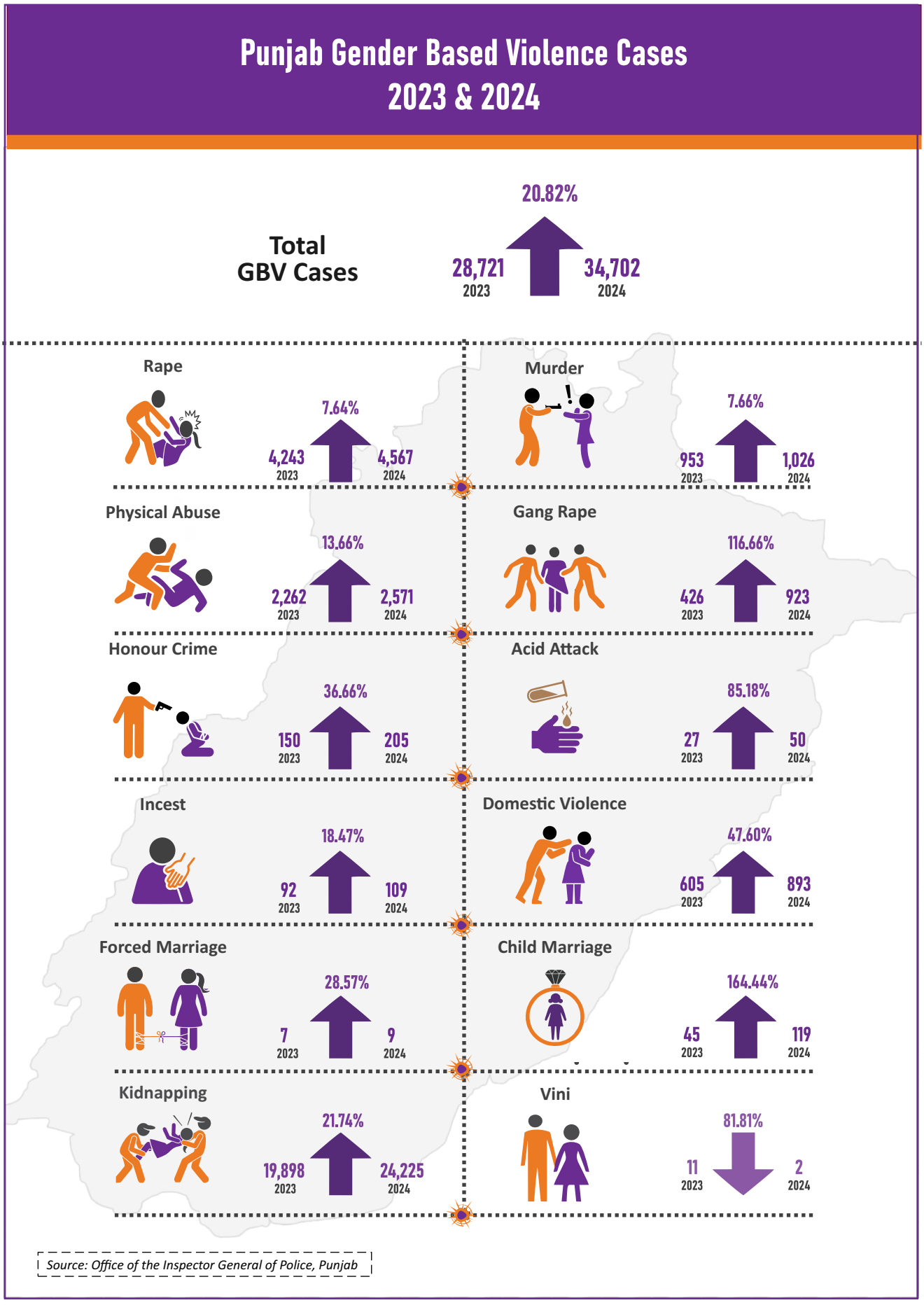


Figure 7.5

7.1.1.1 Murder

In Punjab, there has been a rise in the reporting of murder cases. The data showed that there was a 7.66 percent increase in reported murder cases, from 953 in 2023 to 1,026 in 2024.

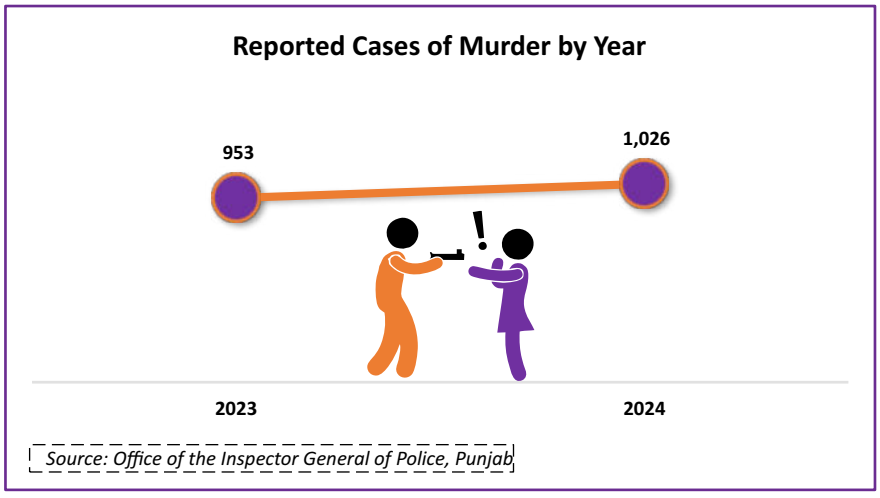


Figure 7.6

District-wise analysis showed that Lahore (106) reported the highest number of murder cases, followed by Gujranwala (59) and Sheikhupura (51). While the lowest cases of murder were reported in Khushab, i.e., two in 2024.

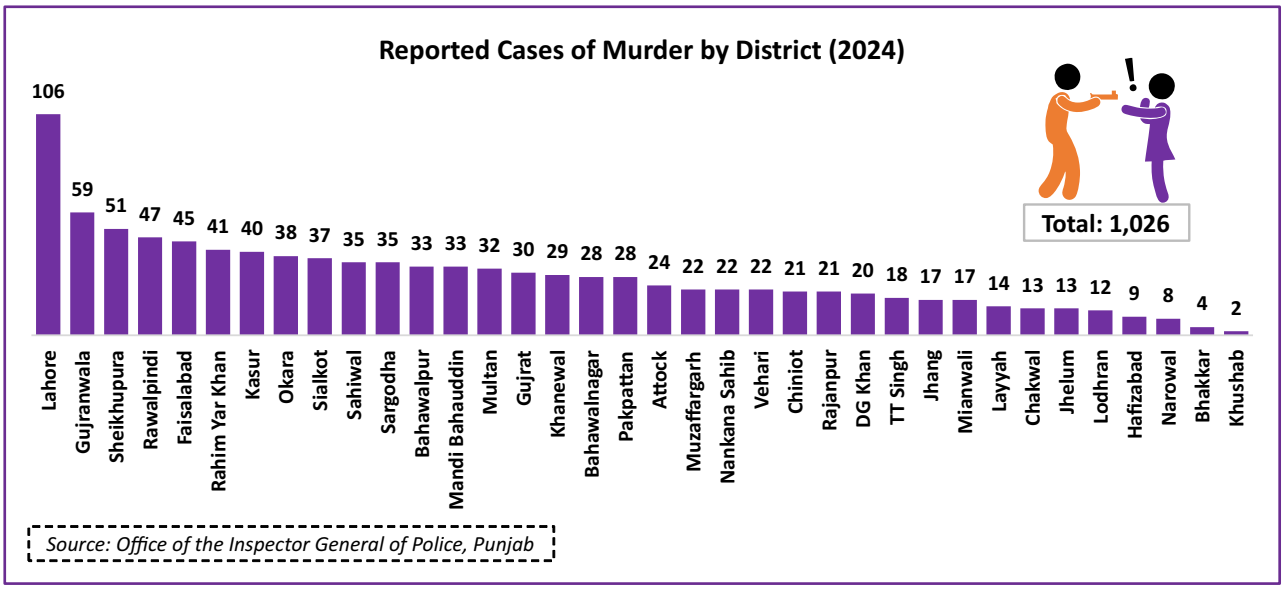


Figure 7.7

7.1.1.2 Honour Crime

Honour crimes are incidents of violence committed with the intent to defend or restore the perceived 'honour' of a social group, especially of a family, class, or caste. It stems from social practices and the traditional honour system, often treating women as a commodity to be controlled and exchanged or even killed if they have brought "so-called dishonour". Although this may affect men, boys, and transgender persons, honour-based violence disproportionately targets women and girls. This affects the emotional and mental well-being of women who might live in constant fear for their safety.[385] Punjab had witnessed a surge of approximately 36.66 percent in the reported cases of honour crimes from 150 in 2023 to 205 in 2024.

"There is no Honour in Killing"
The word "Honour Killing" perpetuates patriarchal views, which tie the perceived honour of a man to the choices of women.
(Charleswell, 2016)

385 (Bhanbhro, 2023)

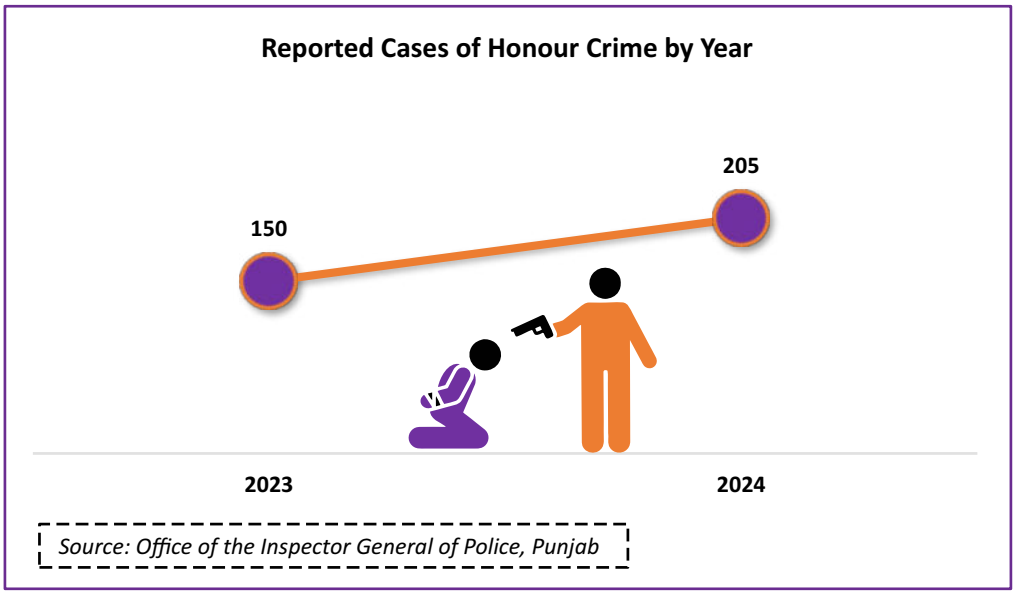


Figure 7.8

Among the districts of Punjab, the highest number of cases of honour crime were reported in Faisalabad. Only one case of honour crime was reported in Narowal in 2024.

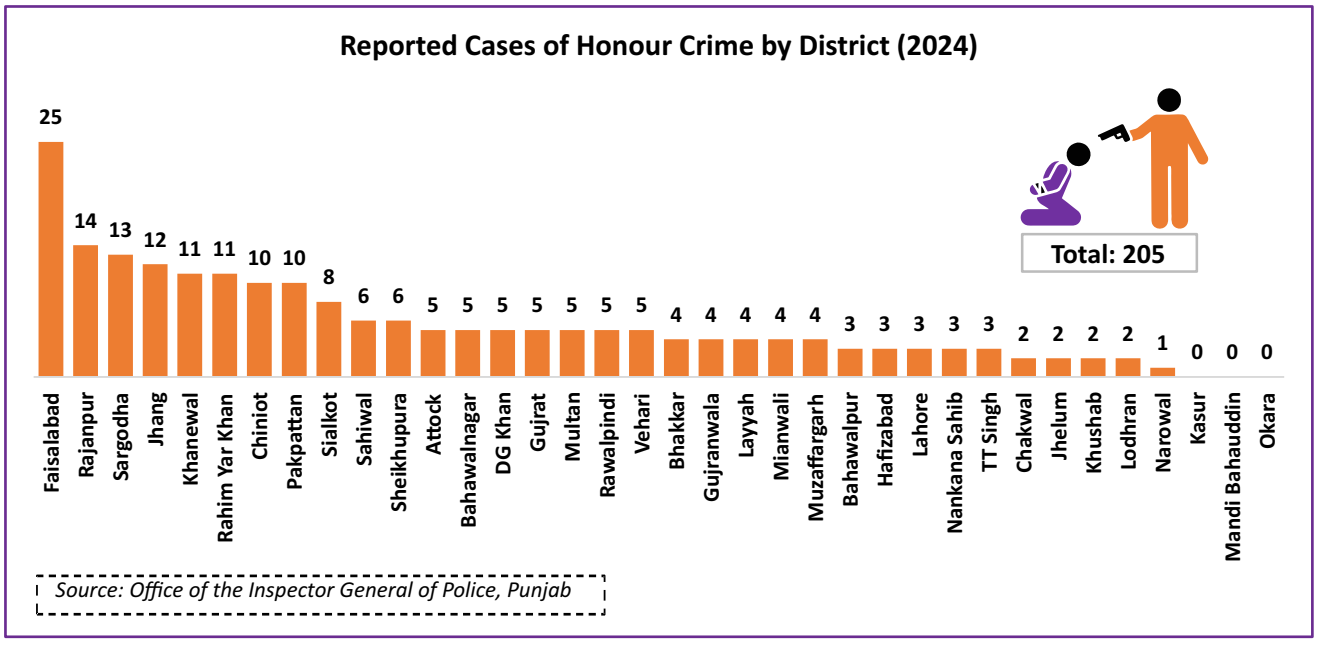


Figure 7.9

7.1.1.3 Acid Attack

Acid attacks is a deliberate use of corrosive substances to harm another person with the intent to inflict lifelong punishment. It is considered one of the most serious forms of GBV as survivors go through devastating physical, psychological, and socio-economic consequences. Even after multiple reconstruction surgeries, survivors often suffer from painful, permanent injuries restricting their ability to pursue education, employment, or engage in other social activities. In Pakistan, many women are subjected to this form of violence, with many succumbing to their injuries due to the severity of burns and lack of timely access to specialised medical care.[386] A total of 27 cases of acid attack were reported in 2023, and the number increased to 50 in 2024.

386 (Yousaf & Purkayastha, 2016)

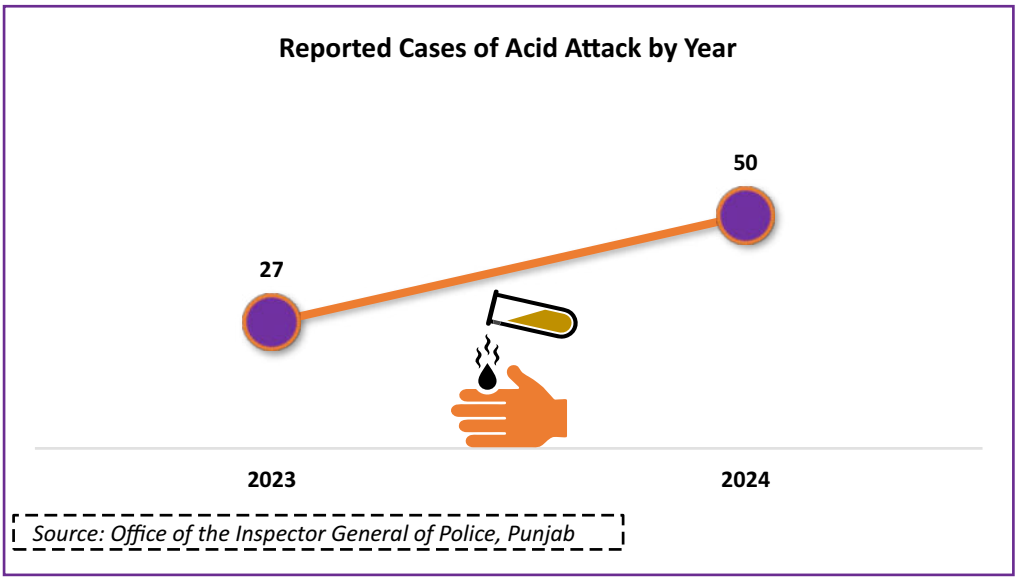


Figure 7.10

District-wise analysis showed that six cases of acid attack were reported in Faisalabad, five cases in Sheikhupura and four cases in Lahore. Whereas, one case each was reported in Chakwal, D.G Khan and Nankana Sahib. Seventeen districts, including Jhang, Sargodha and Gujrat, reported zero cases in 2024.

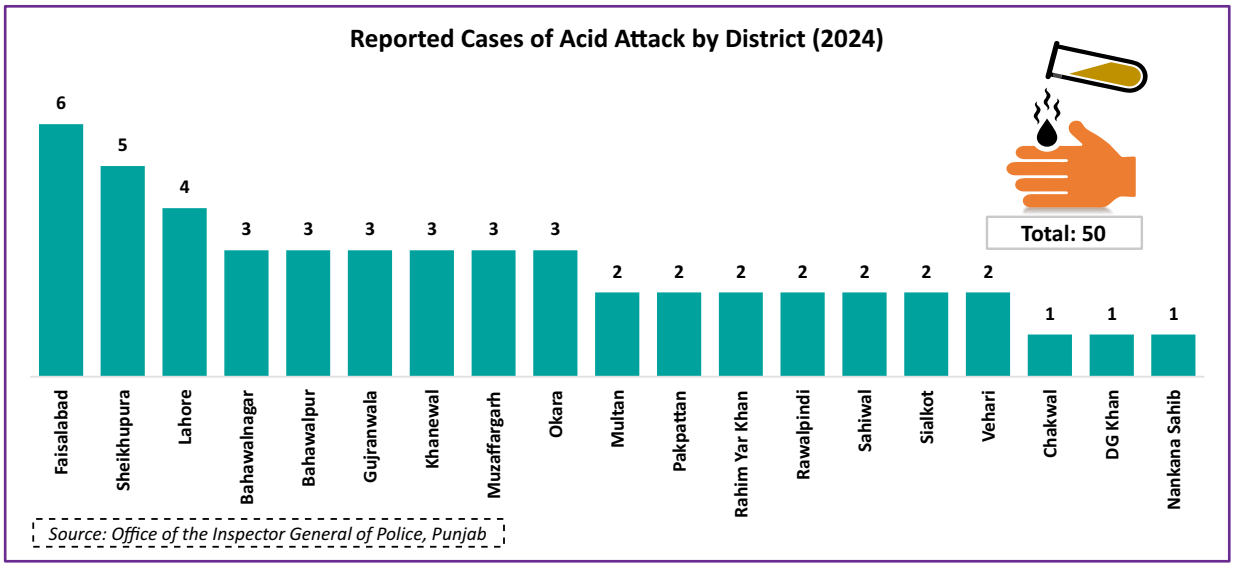


Figure 7.11

7.1.1.4 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is an act or an attempt to gain sexual advantage through coercion and intimidation. Rape and incest are two of many forms of sexual violence. It is to be noted that nearly all forms of sexual violence are considered GBV; however, not all GBV incidents are sexual in nature.[387] Overall, the number of reported cases of sexual violence in Punjab was 4,761 in 2023 and 5,599 in 2024.

387 (Brown, et al., 2019)

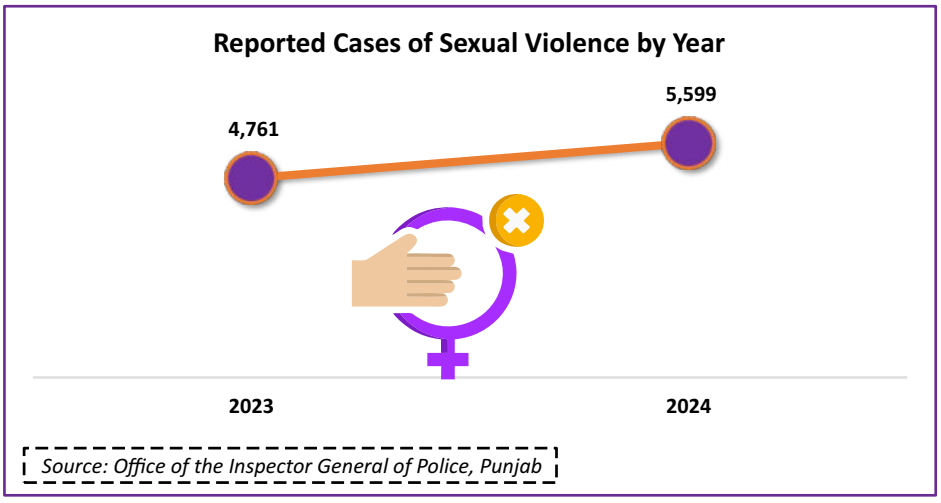


Figure 7.12

The analysis by type of sexual violence cases for the years 2023 and 2024 showed that rape is the most frequently reported incident, followed by gang rape and incest. See figure 7.13 below.

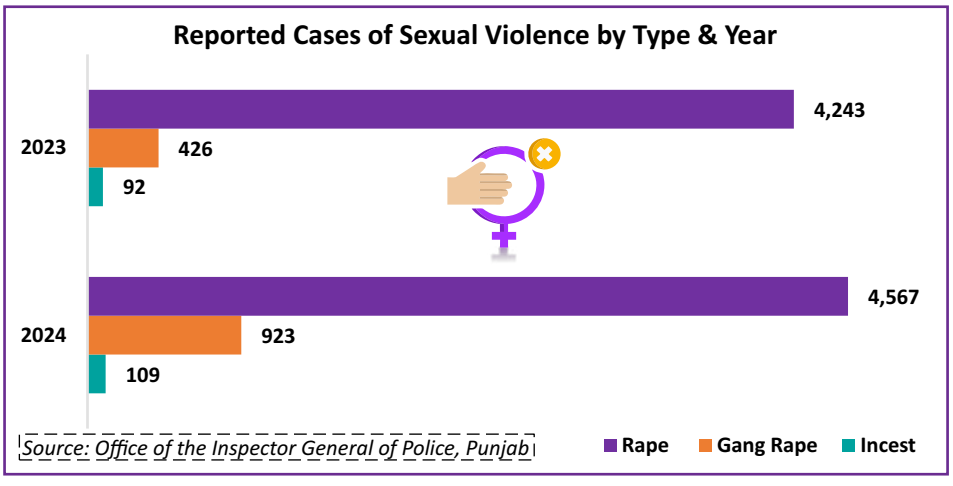


Figure 7.13

The highest cases of sexual violence were reported in Lahore (669), followed by Faisalabad (304), and R.Y Khan (264), while 10 cases were reported in Khushab in 2024.

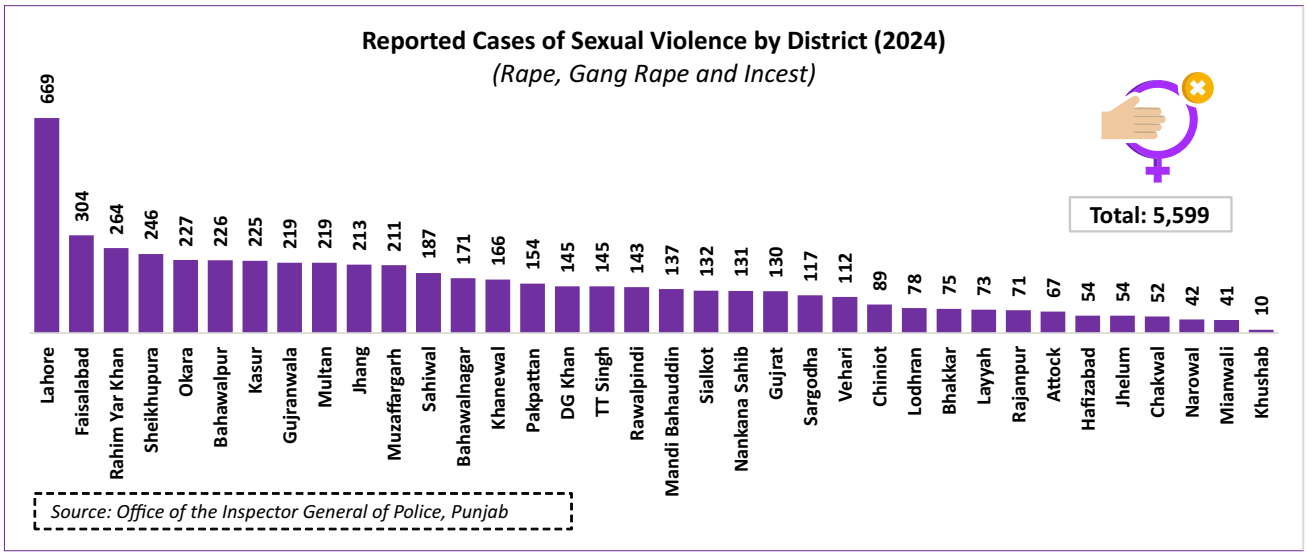


Figure 7.14

7.1.1.5 Kidnapping

Kidnapping is the unlawful detention of an individual through force, threat, or deception, typically for personal or financial gain.[388] One of the motives behind kidnapping is human trafficking. The trauma experienced by survivors often results in both short-term and long-term consequences such as insomnia, hyperarousal, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and cognitive impairment.[389] Another concern in Pakistan is the rise in the cases of abduction of girls from minority groups for forced conversion and marriage.[390] The data received from IG Police showed that kidnapping is one of the highest reported cases in Punjab. There were 19,898 cases of kidnapping reported in 2023, which increased to 24,225 cases in 2024, reflecting a 21.74 percent increase in the reporting of cases.

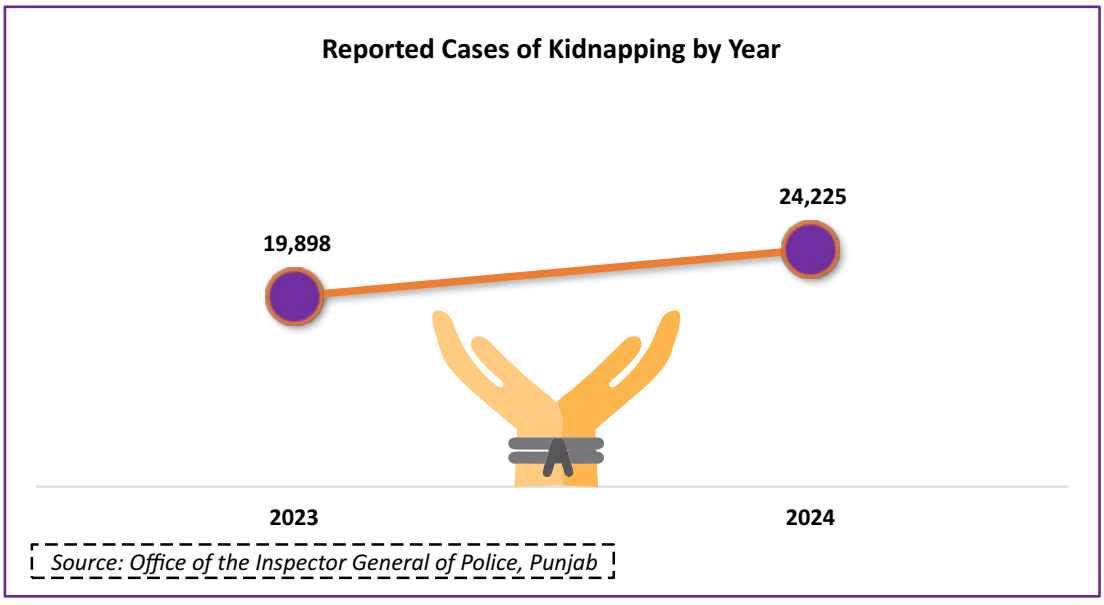


Figure 7.15

Lahore (5,253), Faisalabad (1,841), and Sheikhupura (1,247) reported the highest number of kidnapping cases in 2024. The lowest number of cases was reported in Khushab (37).

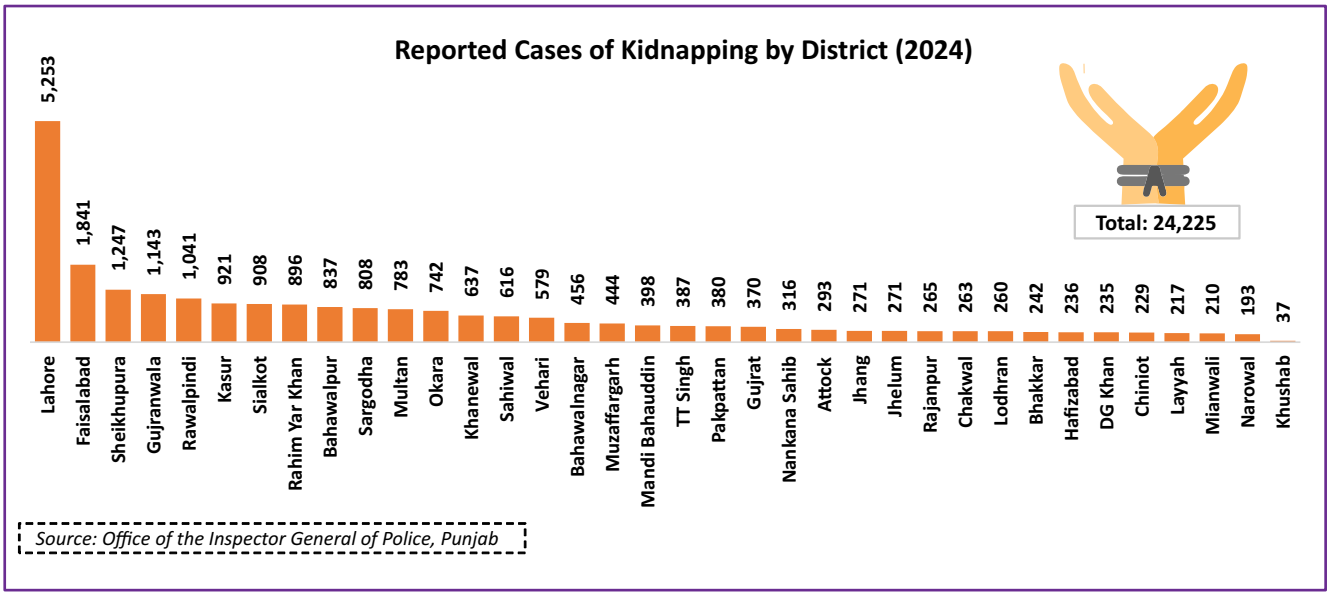


Figure 7.16

388 (Reissman, Akhter, & & Park, 2019)
389 Ibid
390 (Policy Brief on Forced Conversion with Recommendations after Analysis of Arzoo Case, 2019)

7.1.1.6 Child Marriage

One of the harmful traditional practices in our society is child marriage, which is a formal union where one or both individuals have not yet reached the legal age of marriage, which in the case of Punjab is 18 years for males and 16 years for females. The practice of child marriage has been passed down through generations, disproportionately affecting girls by perpetuating a cycle of inequality within society.[391] It is associated with low educational attainment, limited labour force participation, malnutrition, adverse reproductive health outcomes, higher child mortality, and increased vulnerability to GBV for girls.[392(a)]

In Punjab, progress to counter child marriage has been strengthened through institutional reforms, legal and policy measures, and coordinated multi-sectoral efforts undertaken in collaboration with development partners. Capacity-building initiatives for frontline officials, including Nikah Registrars and local government functionaries, have enhanced enforcement and oversight mechanisms.[392(b)] Draft legislative amendments, a National Framework on Ending Child Marriage, and a multi-sectoral Provincial Action Plan have further reinforced the policy environment. Sustained engagement and institutional accountability remain essential for long-term prevention.

According to the MICS KFR 2024, 0.9 percent of boys aged 15-49 years in Punjab were married before the age of 15. Among girls of the same age group, three percent were married before the age of 15. It is commonly reported among children residing in rural areas and those with lower levels of education and socio-economic status.[393] Further reinforcing this pattern, the Population and Housing Census 2023 reported that 249,441 boys and 650,190 girls were married before the age of 20 in Punjab.

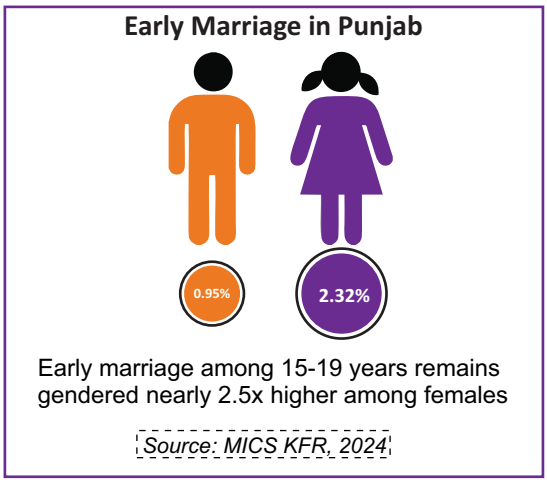


Figure 7.17

Despite the high prevalence of child marriage in Punjab, the number of reported cases remains very low. The number of reported cases was 45 in 2023 and 119 in 2024, indicating underreporting of cases relative to the actual incidence.

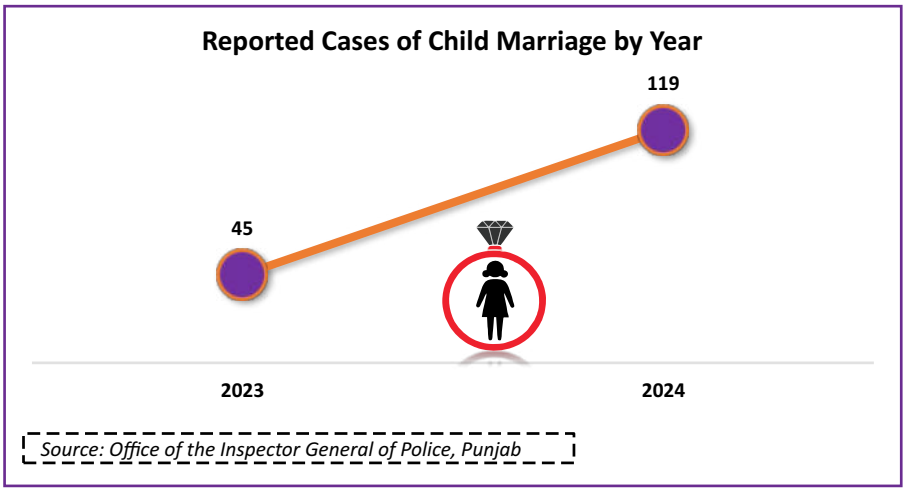


Figure 7.18

391 (Subramanee, et al., 2022)
392(a) (Costing Study on the Child Marriage in Pakistan, 2020)
392(b) (UNFPA supported Study in Rajanpur)
393 (MICS Key Finding Report, 2024)

The highest number of cases was reported in Muzaffargarh (15), Chiniot (15), Multan (12), and Vehari (12), while Bahawalnagar, Sialkot, and Sahiwal reported two cases each. Nineteen districts, including Attock, Faisalabad and Gujranwala, reported zero cases of child marriage in 2024.

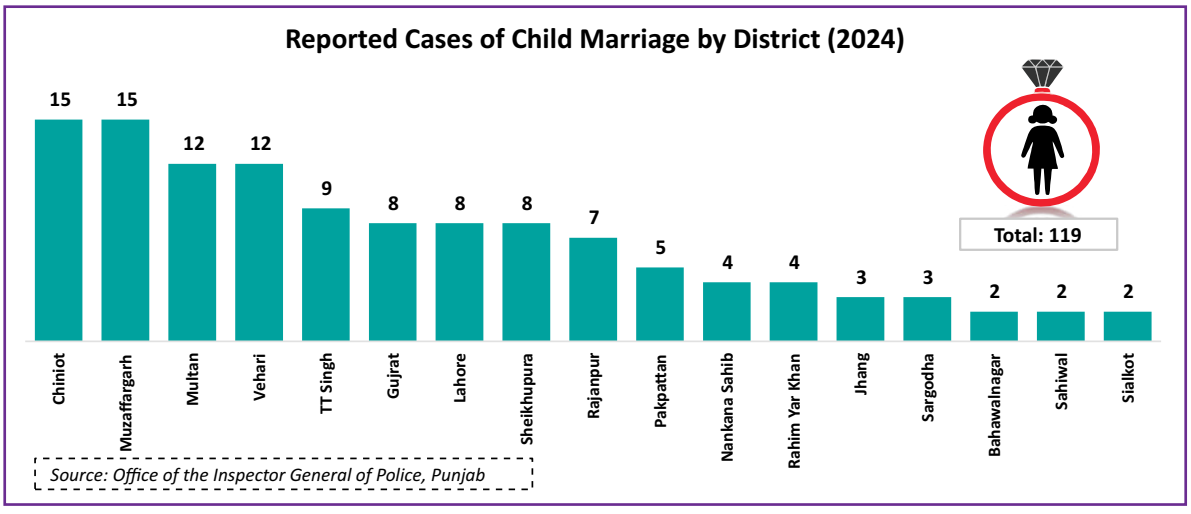


Figure 7.19

7.1.1.7 Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is a complex gendered practice affecting both genders. However, it majorly affects women and girls, with 87 percent of child marriage victims being girls, and more than two-thirds of women being forced into marriage without their consent globally.[394]

These global patterns are also reflected at the provincial level in Pakistan, especially within Punjab, where forced marriage continues to be reported across multiple districts. In Punjab, the reported cases of forced marriage were seven in 2023 and nine in 2024. The cases were reported in Bhakkar, Rajanpur, Sheikhupura, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Nankana Sahib and Lahore in 2024.

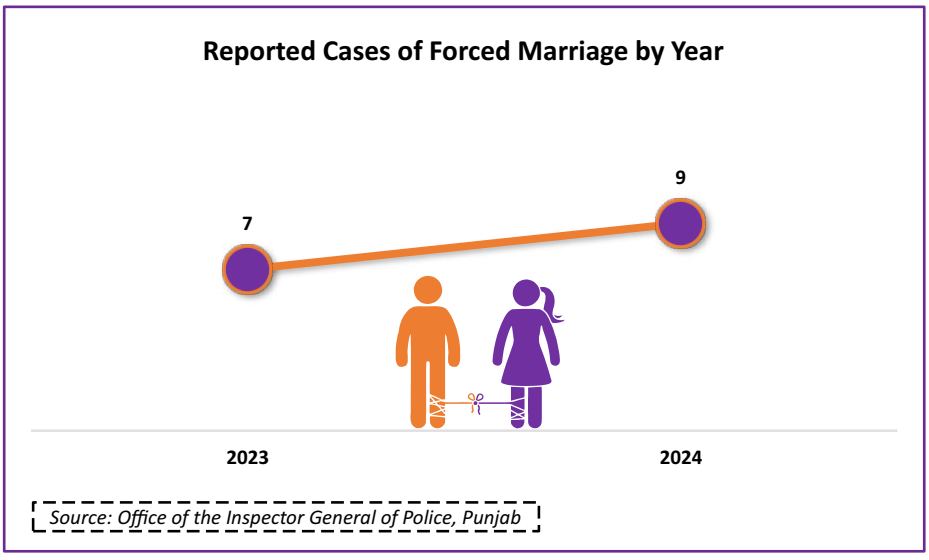


Figure 7.20

Another form of forced marriage is Vani, which is a custom used to resolve disputes by forcibly marrying women. The reported cases of Vani in Punjab declined sharply from 11 cases in 2023 to just two cases in 2024. District-wise analysis indicated that all 11 cases in 2023 were reported from Bahawalpur. Whereas in 2024, one case was reported from Bhakkar and one from Rahim Yar Khan.

394 (Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, 2022)

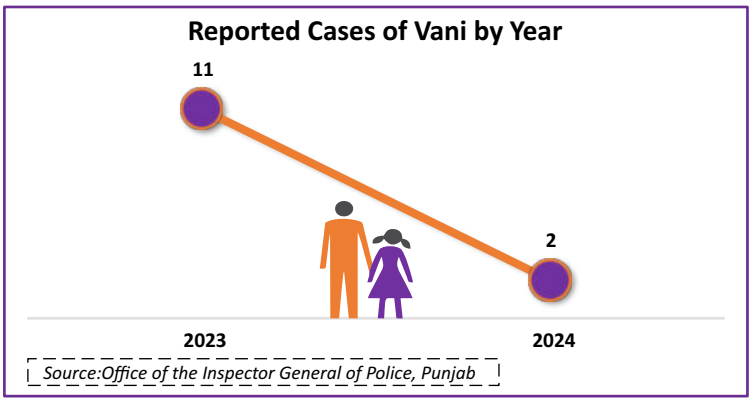


Figure 7.21

7.1.1.8 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse refers to the use of force or aggression to cause harm, including acts such as beating, kicking or slapping. Such violence against women is often underreported as communities either justify or tolerate these behaviours. Entrenched social norms and patriarchal structures continue to reinforce male dominance, further perpetuating the cycle of abuse.[395] Data from IG Police indicated that following kidnapping and sexual Violence, physical abuse was the most frequently reported case of GBV in Punjab with 2,262 cases reported in 2023 and 2,571 in 2024. It is to be noted that these figures solely include cases of beating.

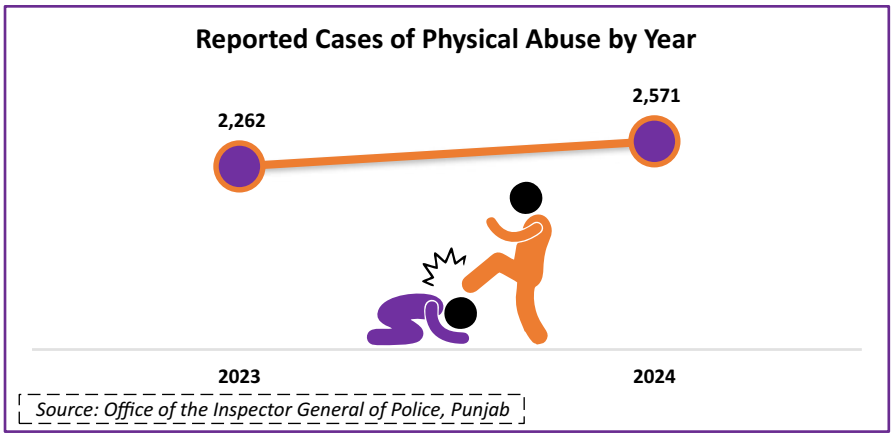


Figure 7.22

The highest number of physical violence cases was reported in Gujranwala (519), while the lowest was reported in Khushab (4). Zero cases were reported in the following districts: Narowal, Sheikhupura, T.T Singh, Chakwal, Bhakkar, Jhang, and Rajanpur.

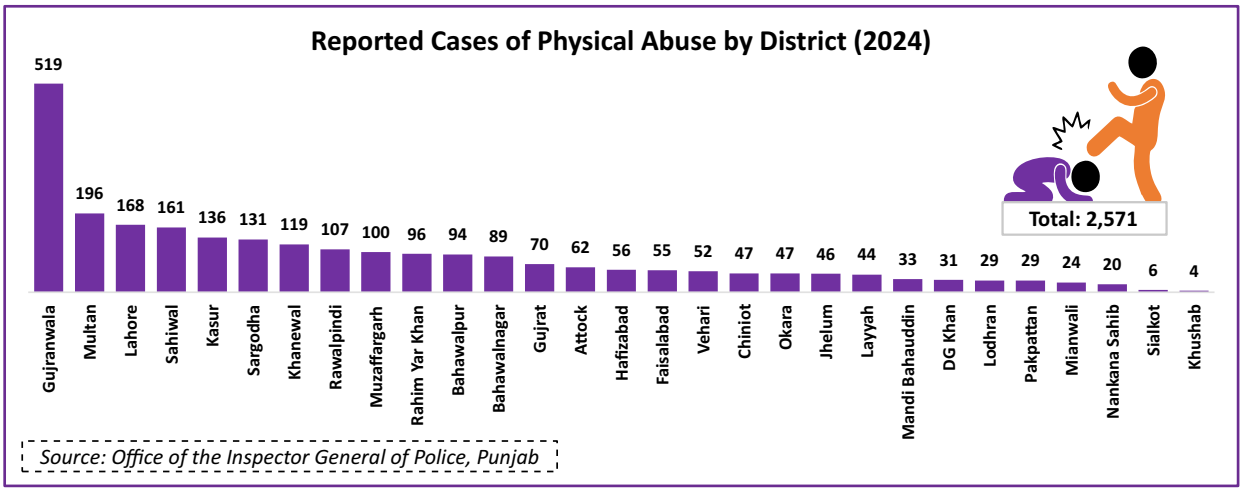


Figure 7.23

395 (Bukuluki, et al., 2021)

7.1.1.9 Domestic Violence

The Human Rights Commission Report 2020 estimated that around 90 percent of women in Pakistan experience domestic violence at some point in their lives. Domestic violence is often perpetuated by community acceptance driven by patriarchal norms, limited personal agency and economic dependence.[396] Regardless of socio-economic status, survivors face significant challenges in leaving abusive partners. Many remain with perpetrators at the cost of their own safety due to fear of homelessness for themselves and their children.[397] The number of reported cases of domestic violence was 605 in 2023 and 893 in 2024.

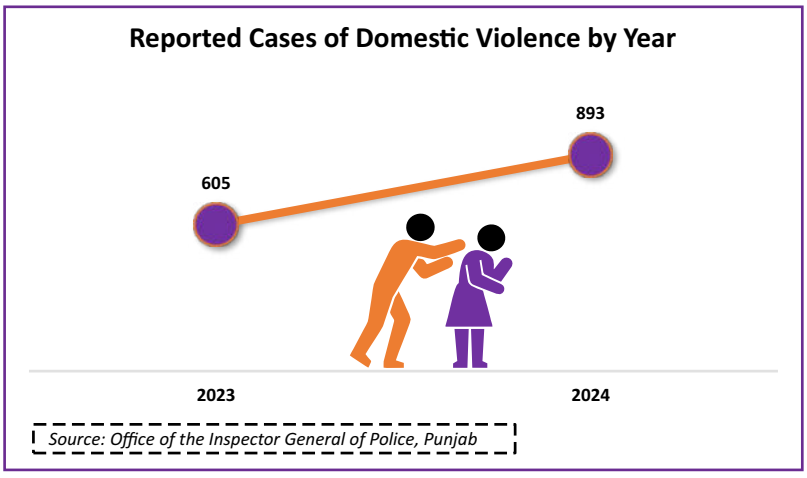


Figure 7.24

Majorly, domestic violence cases were reported in Gujranwala (436), Lahore (88), Sahiwal (68), Rawalpindi (49) and Bahawalpur (35). While Khushab, Pakpattan and Sialkot reported one case each. Around fifteen districts, including Jhang, Kasur, Sheikhupura and Layyah, did not report any incident of domestic violence.

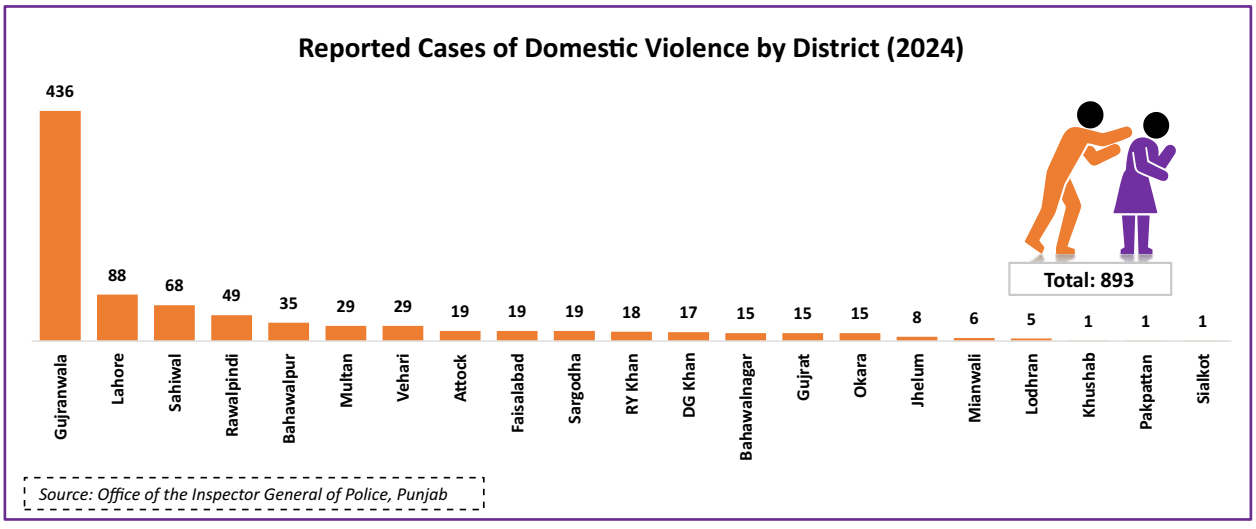


Figure 7.25

7.1.2 Reported Cases of Crime and Fire Emergency

Besides the Police Department, Rescue 1122 is responsible for handling emergency cases, including crime and fire. It has saved millions of survivors in emergencies through its wide network of ambulances and community response teams. There are over 5,000 community emergency response teams deployed in all union councils of Punjab.[398] The following sub-sections present an analysis of emergency cases reported by Rescue 1122 by type and gender.

396 (Domestic Violence Policy Brief, 2023)
397 (Lloyd, 2018)
398 (Emergency Service Department, Government of Punjab)

7.1.2.1 Crime Emergency Cases

The crime emergency cases reported by Rescue 1122 increased from 46,115 in 2023 to 48,251 in 2024. In both years, the number of crime emergency cases was higher among men than women, as shown in figure 7.26 below.

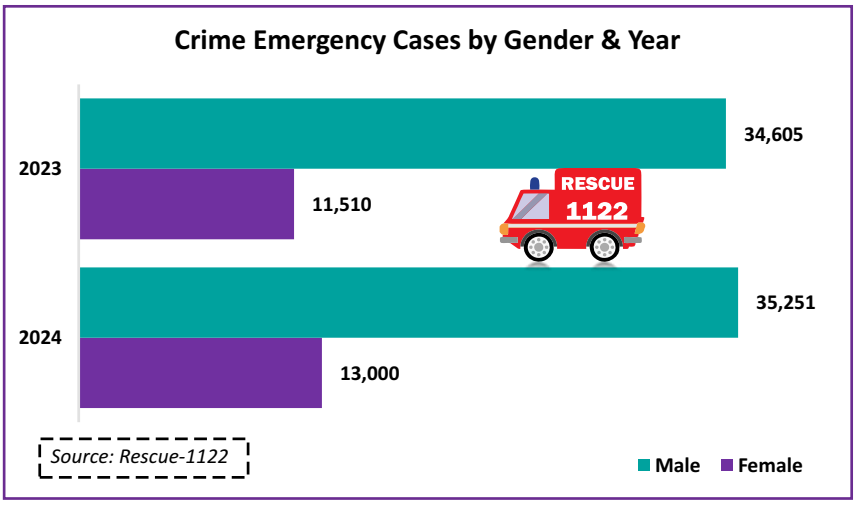


Figure 7.26

The analysis of crime-related emergency cases by type showed that there were 25,675 reported cases of physical assault, 1,037 cases of stabbing, 78 cases of acid attacks, and 57 cases of sexual assault. Additionally, 21,283 cases were categorised as others, which included probable suicide, poisoning, burning, and bullet injuries.

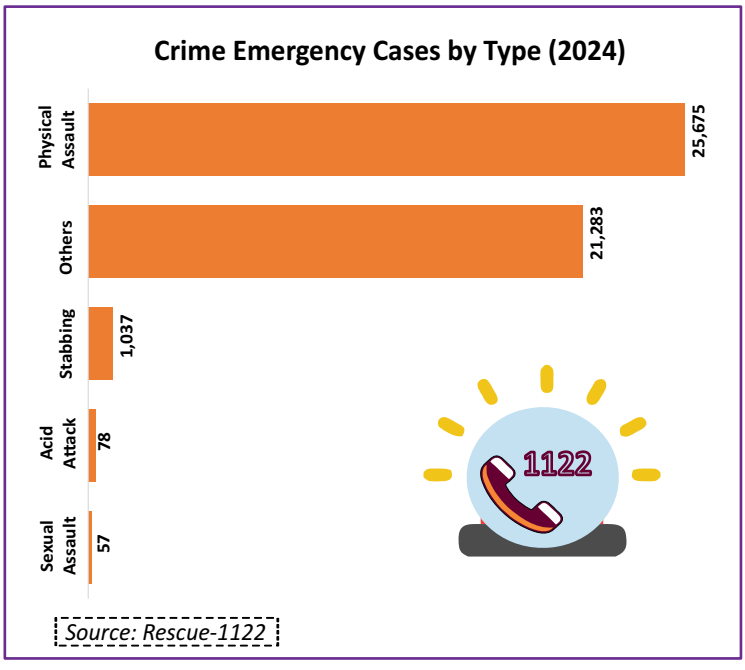


Figure 7.27

The districts with high number of reported crime emergency cases were Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan, while the lowest number of cases was reported in Murree in 2024.

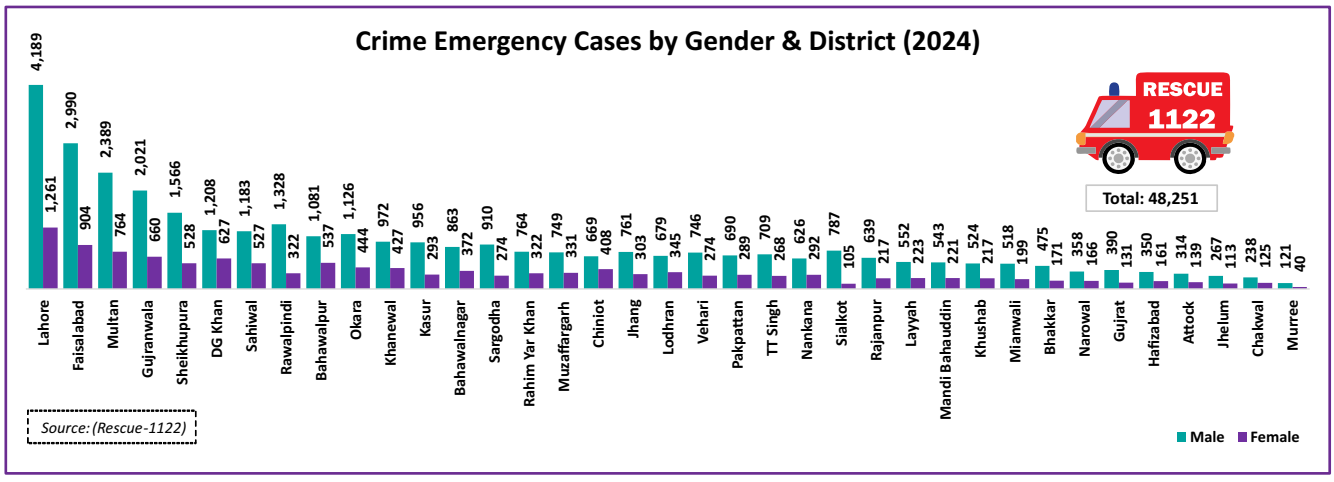


Figure 7.28

7.1.2.2 Fire Emergency Cases

The reported cases of fire emergencies increased by 26 percent from 20,665 in 2023 to 28,018 in 2024.

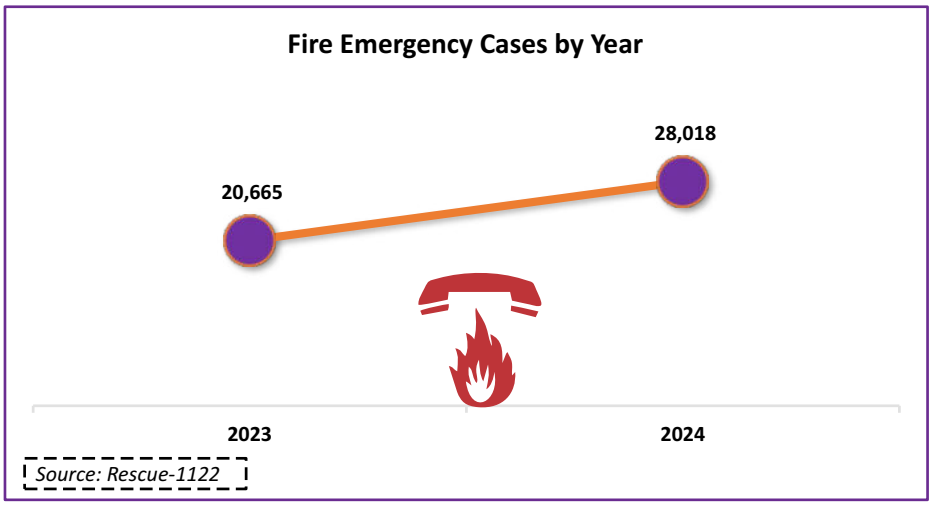


Figure 7.29

District-wise analysis showed Lahore, followed by Faisalabad and Rawalpindi, reported the highest number of fire emergency cases, while Layyah reported the lowest number of cases in 2024.

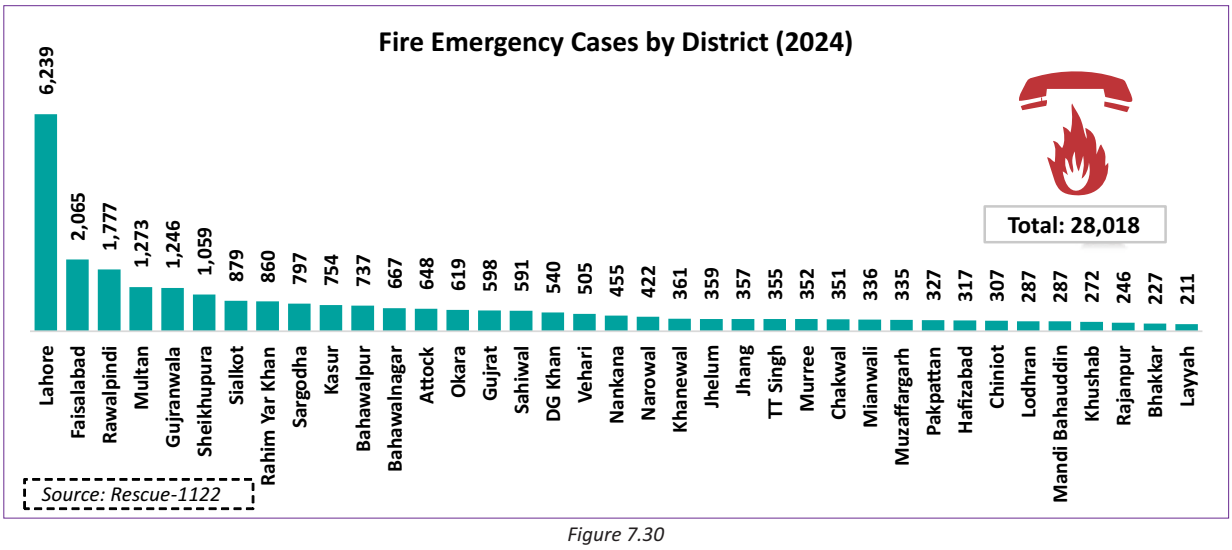


Figure 7.30

7.1.3 Outcomes of Gender Based Violence (GBV) Cases

Analysis of GBV case outcomes indicated that a large proportion of cases resulted in acquittal. In 2023, the conviction rate was 5.49 percent, which declined to 4.88 percent in 2024. In both years, the acquittal rate remained above 90 percent. These figures underscore persistently low conviction rates despite an increase in reported GBV cases in Punjab.

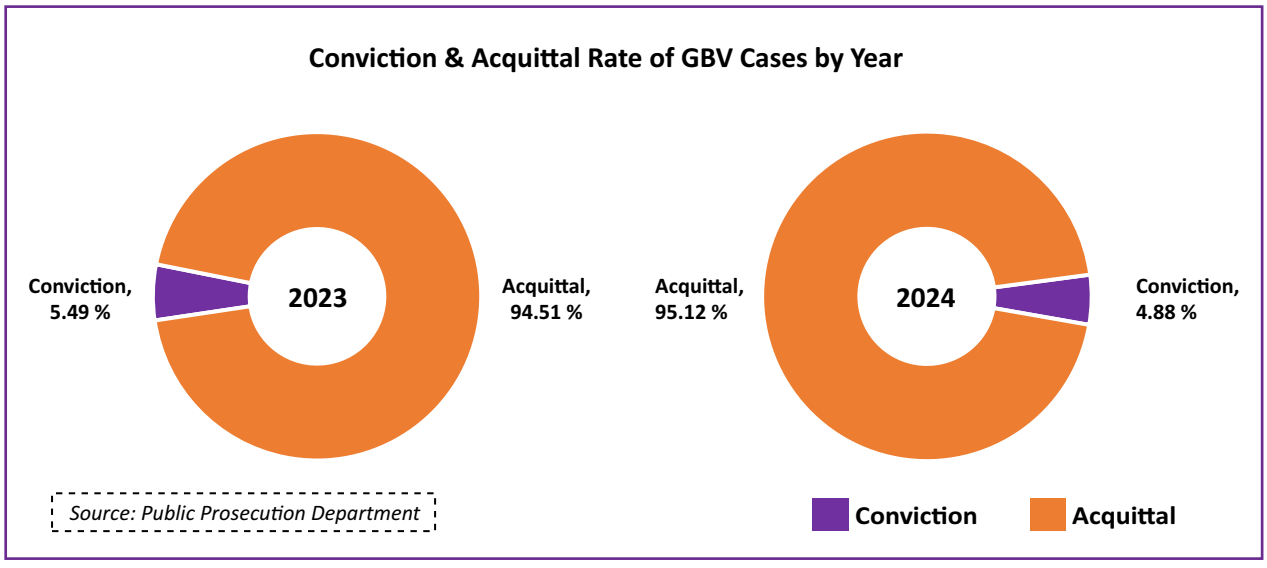


Figure 7.31

7.2 Criminal Justice System (CJS)

The Criminal Justice System is a network of government agencies responsible for law enforcement, adjudicating criminal cases and rehabilitation of criminals.[399] In Pakistan, CJS includes Police, Prosecution, Courts, Prisons and Corrective Services where the criminal law is primarily governed by the Criminal Procedure Code and the Constitution of Pakistan.[400] CJS is an essential component of any society as it provides protection to individuals from criminal harm and maintains order. It upholds the principle that violations of law must be punishable to promote justice and curb social misconduct.[401]

7.2.1 Police

The police serve as the first line of defence against crime and are responsible for initiating the criminal justice process.[402] They play a critical role in shaping survivors' access to justice and trust in the overall justice system. However, the attitude and behaviour of law enforcement agencies become a major impediment to low reporting of cases, especially GBV. The complaints of survivors are often dismissed or labelled false.[403] The limited number of female police personnel intensifies this challenge, as many women are not comfortable sharing sensitive information with male officers. This highlights the importance of gender representation within law enforcement, which is significantly low in Pakistan. Women only constitute 3.2 percent of total police personnel. This raises serious concerns about inclusivity and ensuring the effective handling of cases of violence against women.[404]

7.2.1.1 Police Officers

There were 508 senior-ranked police officers in Punjab, among them 97 percent were male and only three percent were female, with a GPI of 0.03 in 2025.[405] The analysis by rank showed that the highest-ranking police officer, i.e., Inspector General (IG), was male. The two positions of Additional Inspector General (Add. IG) were held by male. They also held all six positions of Deputy Inspector General (DIG). Similarly, among the 38 positions of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), only one position

399 (Rahman, Khan, & Khan, 2020)
400 (Ali, 2023)
401 (Baig, Laghari, Akhtar, & Abbas, 2024)
402 (Ali, 2023)
403 (Hassan, 2015)
404 (Khan, 2024)
405 It is to be noted that the Police HR data was available only for 2025, HR data for 2023 & 2024 were not provided.

was held by a female officer. Women's representation stood at 26.09 percent among Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) and only 0.81 percent for Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), highlighting a significant gender gap.

It is to be noted that this number does not include Special Protection Unit (SPU), Strategic Reforms Unit (SRU), Dolphin Force, Elite Force, Women Police Station Officers, Virtual Women Police Station Officers, Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), Traffic Police and other Staff.

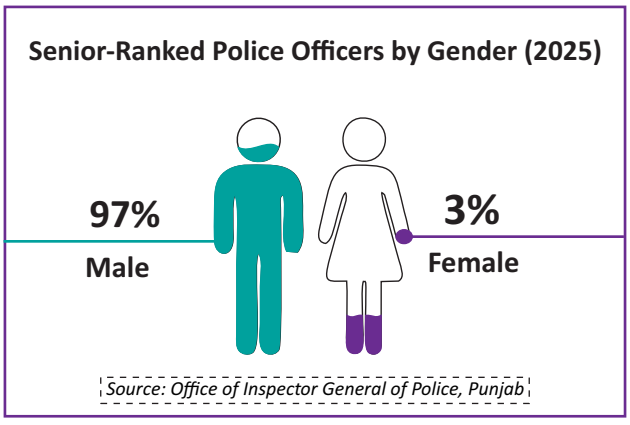


Figure 7.32

A similar trend was observed among junior-ranked police officers, as the data showed that the reported number of male junior-ranked police officers was 110,268 and of female police officers was 9,061, with a GPI of 0.082. This underscores the need for greater inclusivity and improved gender representation. The figure 7.33 below shows the gender distribution of junior-ranked police officers.

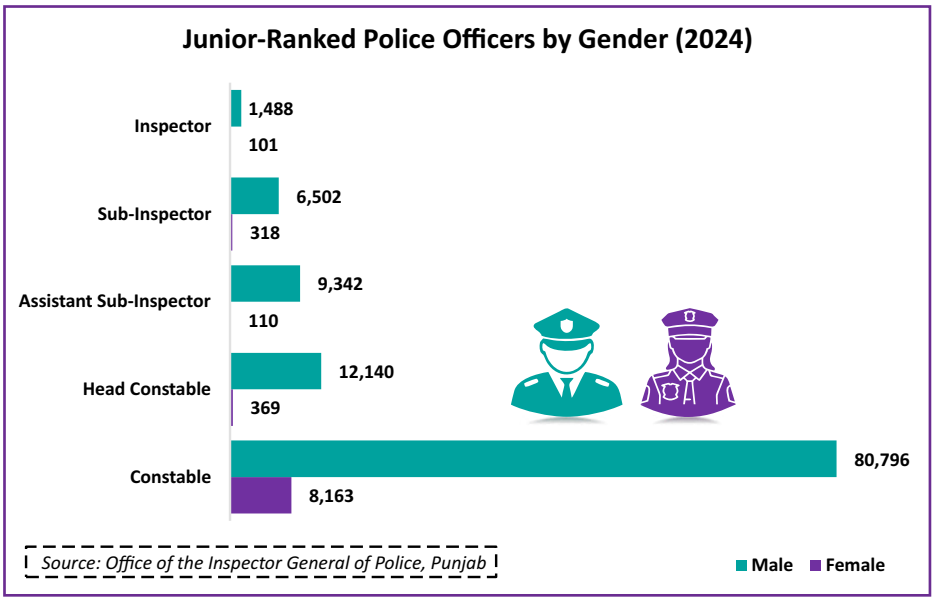


Figure 7.33

7.2.1.2 Women Help Desks in Police Stations

In Punjab, Women Help Desks have been established within police stations to support survivors of GBV. In 2023, 484 out of 737 police stations had functional women help desks, rising to 546 in 2024.

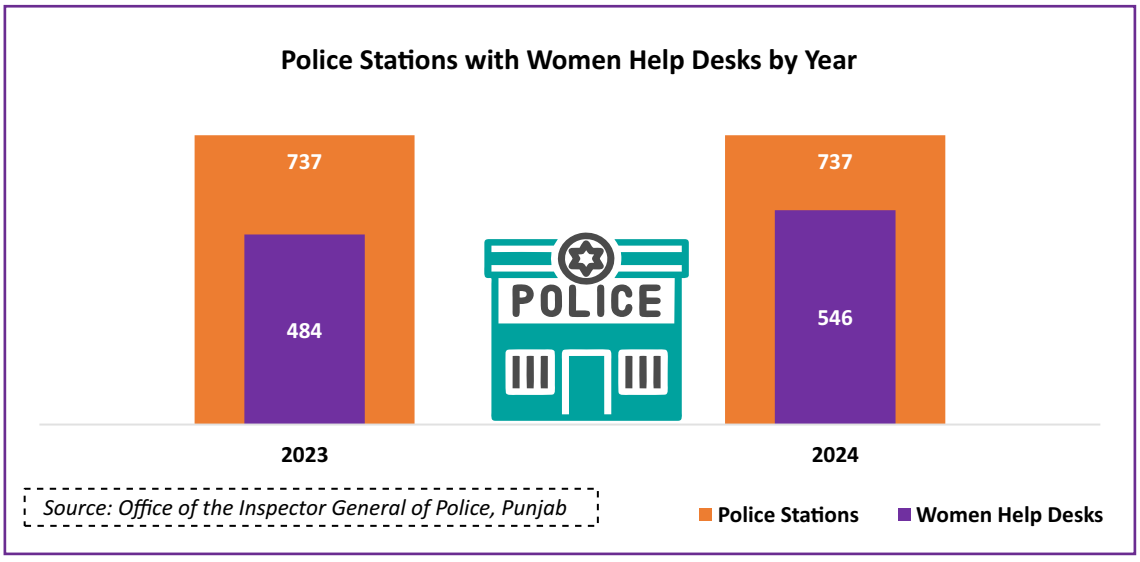


Figure 7.34

The lady constables were engaged at the help desks, who also perform the regular duties when needed.[406] The number of Police officials working under help desks was 540 in 2023 and 610 in 2024.

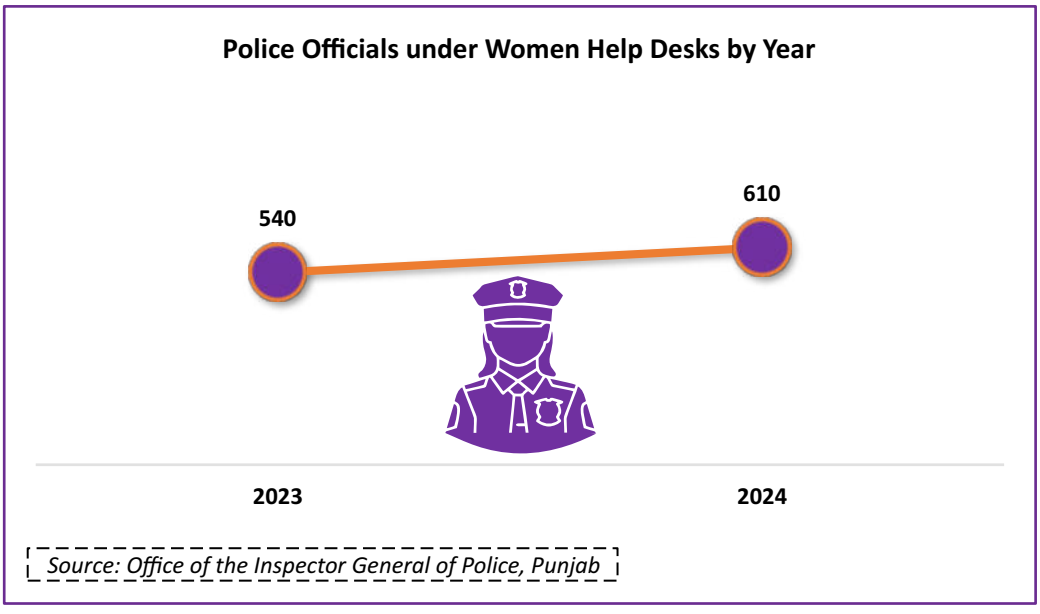


Figure 7.35

7.2.1.3 Traffic Police

Overall, a total of 11,364 traffic police officers reported in 2023, and the number increased slightly to 11,641 police officers in 2024. The gender analysis by rank of traffic police officers indicated that men continue to dominate the traffic police workforce as well. For example, in 2024, there were 1,326 Senior Traffic Wardens (STW) who were male compared with 56 female, resulting in a gender parity of 0.04. Similarly, among Traffic Wardens (TW), 4,113 were male officers, and 171 were female officers with a GPI of 0.04. Among 465 Junior Traffic Wardens, only one officer was a female. A detailed rank-wise gender distribution is presented in figure 7.36.

406 (Women Help Desks)

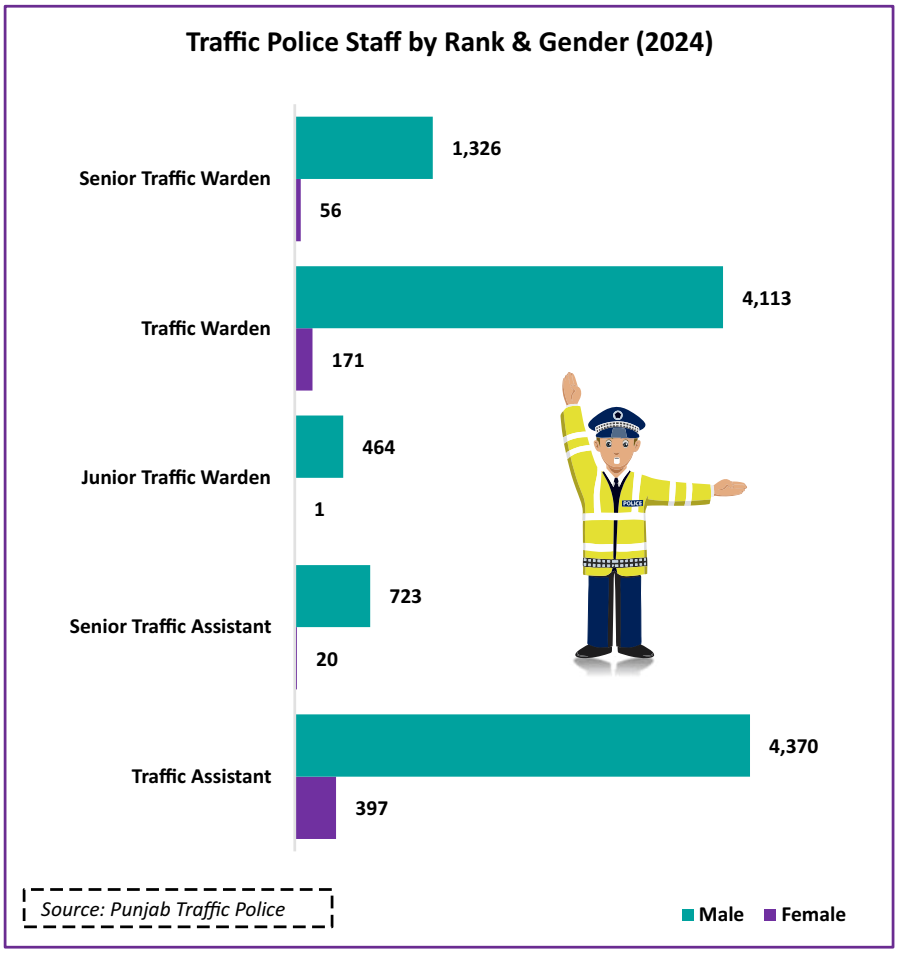


Figure 7.36

The highest number of female traffic officers was reported in Lahore, while Lodhran and Okara had only one female officer each. The data further showed that Attock, Jhang, Mianwali, Pakpattan, Rahim Yar Khan and Rajanpur had no female officers within their respective districts.

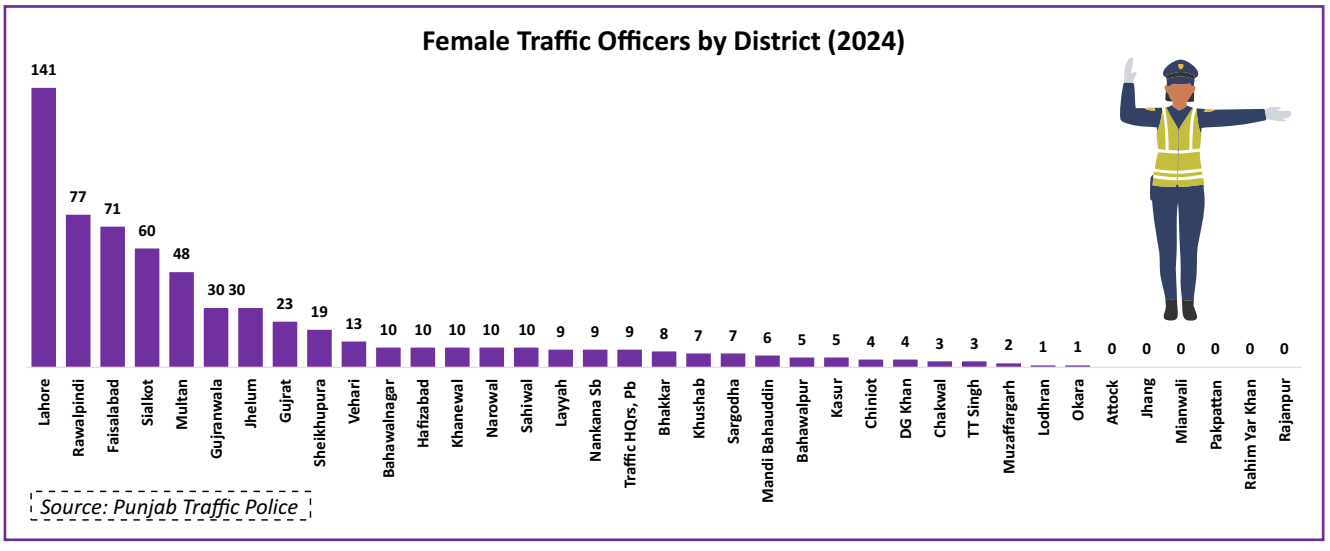


Figure 7.37

7.2.2 Prison

Prison can either function as an environment that perpetuates violence or as a platform for meaningful rehabilitation. The core objective of imprisonment is to protect society while reducing the likelihood of recidivism. UN Human Rights treaties likewise emphasise the role of prison services in preparing individuals for their reintegration into society.[407]

To achieve these objectives, countries are expected to comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which mandate the provision of essential services, including healthcare and vocational programs. However, many prison systems worldwide fall short of these standards, as issues such as overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and poor living conditions remain widespread. These shortcomings are particularly pronounced in resource-constrained countries such as Pakistan. Despite ranking 18th globally in terms of prison population, its prisons remain severely overcrowded and under-resourced.[408] Administrative inefficiencies and financial constraints further weaken the system, contributing to the underutilisation of rehabilitation programmes.[409]

In addition to these systematic challenges, violence within prisons, especially against women, has emerged as a serious concern. The Pakistan Justice Project in 2019 reported numerous cases of physical and sexual assault against women in custody. A key contributing factor to this abuse is the lack of female personnel within the prison system, which limits oversight, protection and access to appropriate support for women detainees.[410]

The subsections below discuss prison population and overcrowding in Punjab in detail.

7.2.2.1 Probation Officers

To facilitate the conditional release of eligible prisoners, the Probation and Parole Services Act was enacted in Punjab in 2019. However, its implementation has been hindered by limited funds and the shortage of staff members. As of 2024, 53 probation officers (40 male and 13 female) were responsible for managing approximately 36,015 probationers. Among the probationers, 190 were women, and 247 were juveniles.[411]

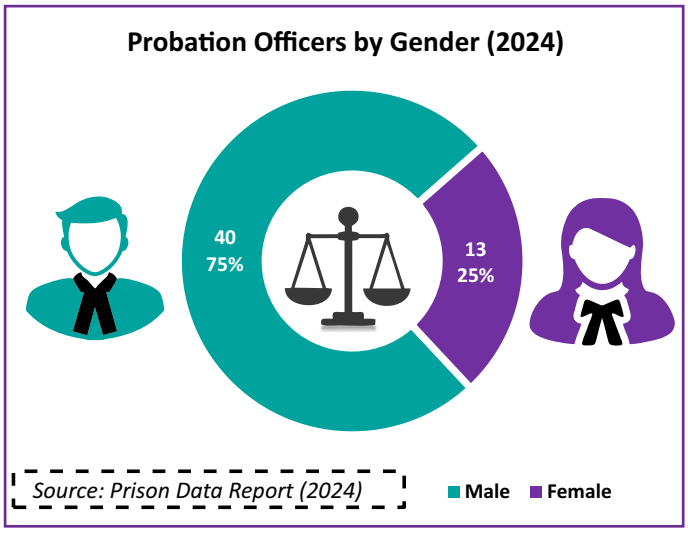


Figure 7.38

Parole services were even more limited, with only 17 parole officers in total, among them, only one was femle. Although Punjab supervised around 45,000 individuals through probation, the number of parolees remained very low, with only seven prisoners released on parole in 2024.[412]

407 (Gul, 2018)
408 (World Prison Brief, 2021)
409 (Bhutta & Siddiqu, 2020)
410 (Pakistan Justice Project, 2019)
411 (National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), 2025)
412 Ibid

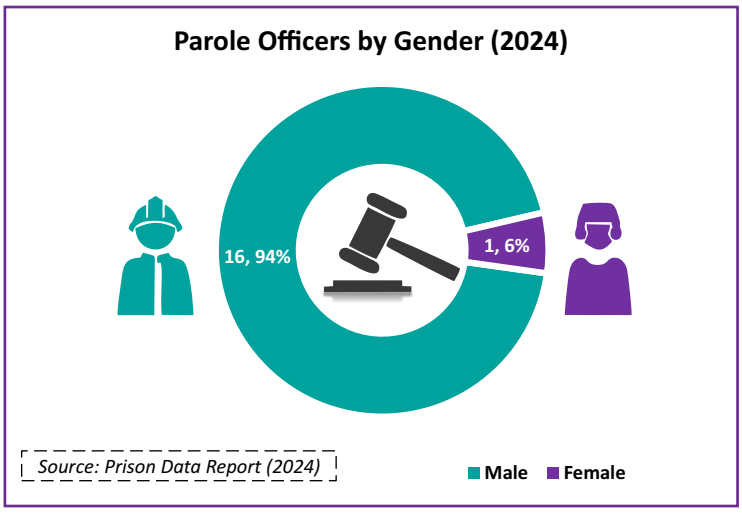


Figure 7.39

7.2.2.2 Number of Prisoners

According to the Prison Report 2024, Punjab had the highest number of prisoners (60.7 percent) in the country, followed by Sindh (22.1 percent), KP (13.1 percent), Baluchistan (2.9 percent), AJK (0.75 percent) and GB (0.37 percent).[413] In 2025, there were 70,069 people in prisons, among them 96.76 percent were men and 1.93 percent were women. Juveniles accounted for only 1.30 percent of the total prison population.

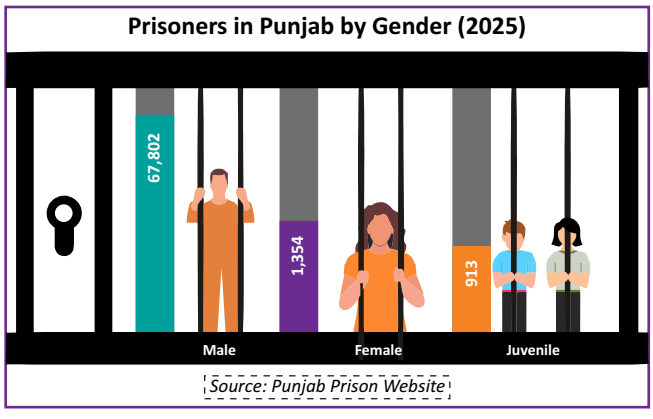


Figure 7.40

As of 2025, among the prisoners in Punjab, approximately 51,428 were undertrial, which accounted for approximately 73.41 percent of the total prison population. 16,303 prisoners were convicted, accounting for 23.3 percent of the prison population.

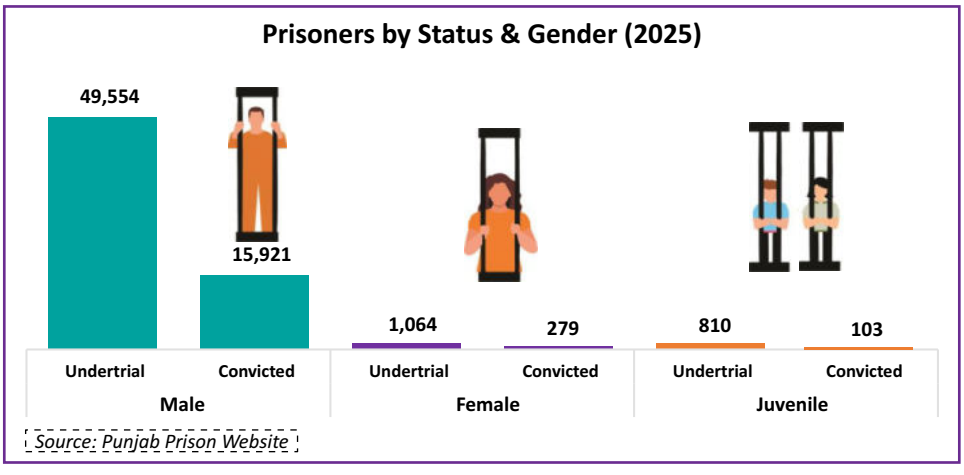


Figure 7.41

413 (National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), 2025)

7.2.2.3 Female Prisoners

Based on the data available on the Punjab Prison website, the highest proportion of female prisoners was reported in Central Jail Rawalpindi (309), followed by Central Jail Lahore (250) and Central Jail Gujranwala (127). The lowest number of prisoners was reported in Central Jail Mianwali (one) in 2025.

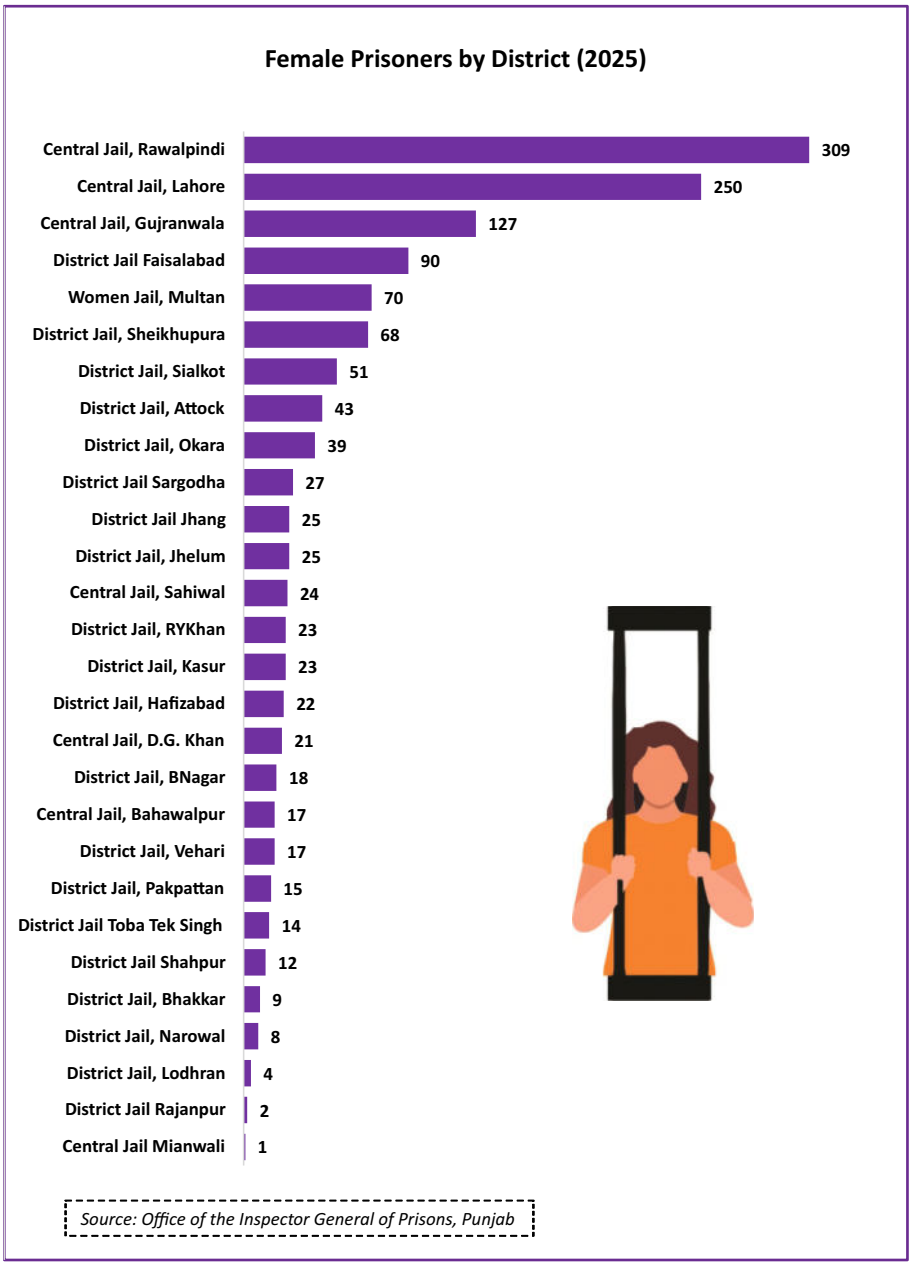


Figure 7.42

There were 140 female prisoners with children in 2023, and the number declined to 133 in 2024. Of the 133 females with children, 75.18 percent were undertrial and 24.81 percent were convicted. The highest number of females with children was reported in Central Jail Rawalpindi, while the lowest was reported in District Jail Narowal.

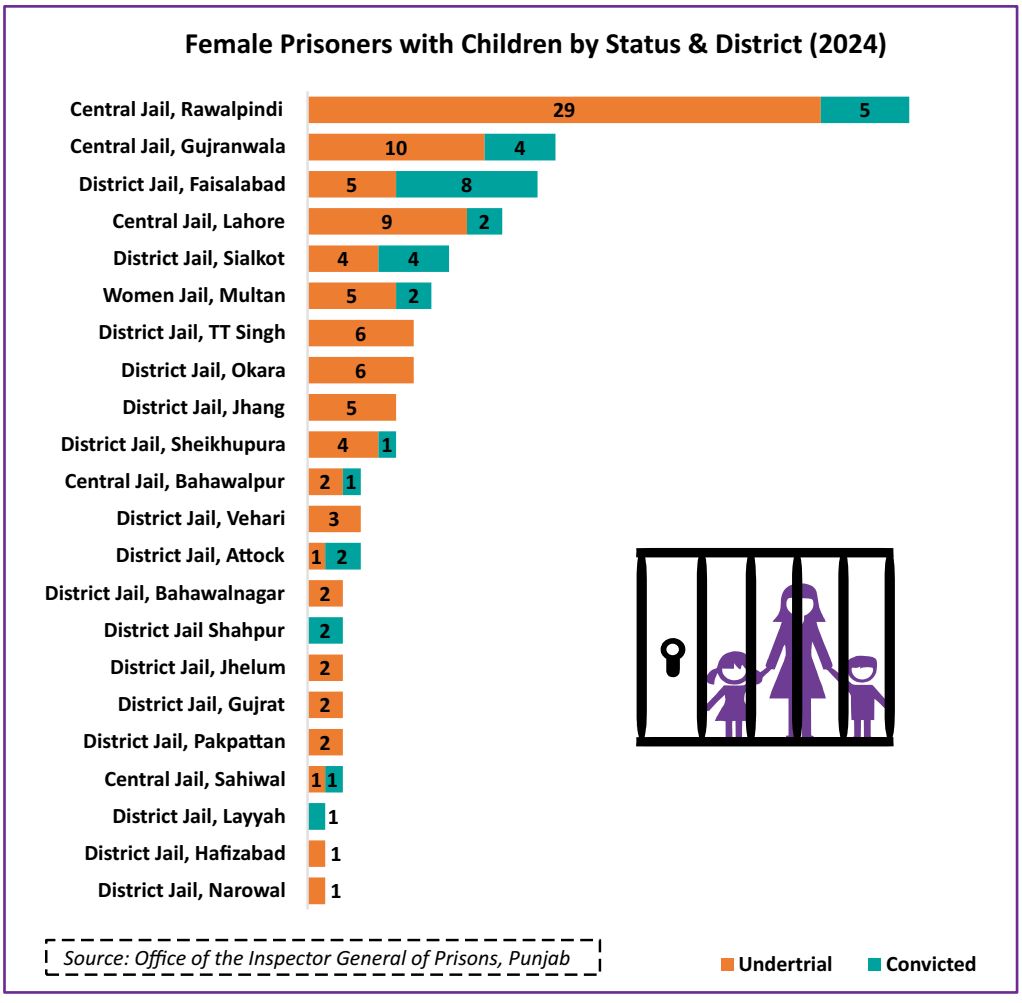


Figure 7.43

7.2.2.4 Overcrowding

Overcrowding remains a critical concern, with most prisons operating well beyond their official capacity. Pakistan's prison population increased by 1.66 percent from 2023 to 2024.[414] While in Punjab, the number of prisoners was far larger than the authorised accommodation, underscoring the strain on an already fragile system. There were 70,069 prisoners against the authorised accommodation of 38,214 persons in 2025.

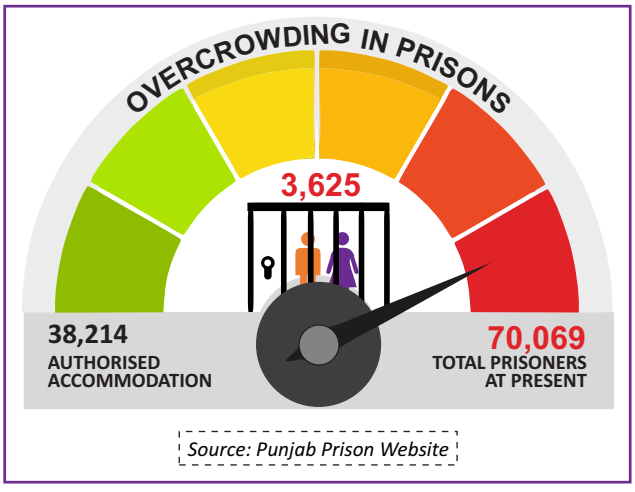


Figure 7.44

414 (National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), 2025)

7.2.3 Judiciary

Justice plays a key role in the lives of individuals; therefore, when it is not delivered on time, the system begins to lose its credibility. It leads to growing frustration among the public.[415] According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) Report (2024), over 57,000 cases were pending in the Supreme Court at the end of the year and about 2.4 million cases across all judicial tiers.[416]

Several factors contribute to these delays, which include a shortage of judges, outdated case management systems, frequent adjournment and weak oversight mechanisms. One study revealed that courts in Pakistan take an average of 25 years to reach a verdict, with an additional 5 years for enforcing it.[417] Another hindrance towards pursuing judicial procedures is systematic gender bias. The legal system often displays scepticism towards women's testimonies, a phenomenon known as credibility discount.[418] This affects their experience from the moment of reporting through to prosecutorial decisions and final judgment.[419]

Therefore, judges need specialised training on gender sensitivity to recognise implicit gender bias. It will also help them better understand the psychological and social dynamics that influence women's decisions to remain in an abusive relationship before filing the report. It can aid women in navigating the legal system, especially in emotionally complex and traumatising cases. Simply, training builds the capacity of an institution to hold an impartial trial to seek the truth, irrespective of the gender of the parties involved.[420]

7.2.3.1 Judges in Punjab

According to data from the Lahore High Court website, the District Judiciary in Punjab consists of 1,732 judges, among them 81.47 percent were male, and 18.53 percent were female, with a GPI of 0.23 in 2025. Across all ranks, the number of male judges was higher than that of females, leading to a low GPI. For example, there were 148 District and Session Judges, among them 141 judges were male and seven were female.

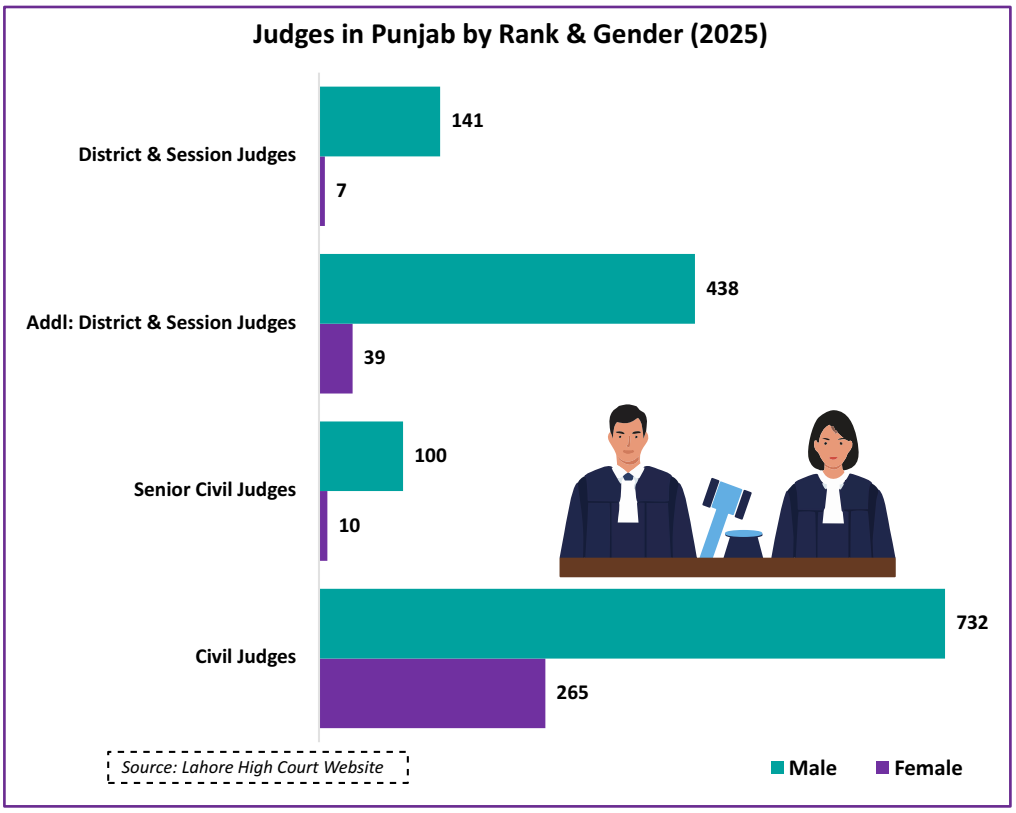


Figure 7.45

415 (Qadeer, Zafarullah, & Riaz, 2025)
416 (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2024)
417 (Qadeer, Zafarullah, & Riaz, 2025)
418 (Fersch, 2023)
419 Ibid
420 (Imran M. , 2022)

District-wise analysis comparing sanctioned and occupied positions within the district judiciary is shown in the figure 7.46 below. Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan had the highest number of judges appointed, and the districts with the most vacant positions were Faisalabad (64 vacant), Muzaffargarh (40 vacant), Rahim Yar Khan (36 vacant), and Jhang (31 vacant).

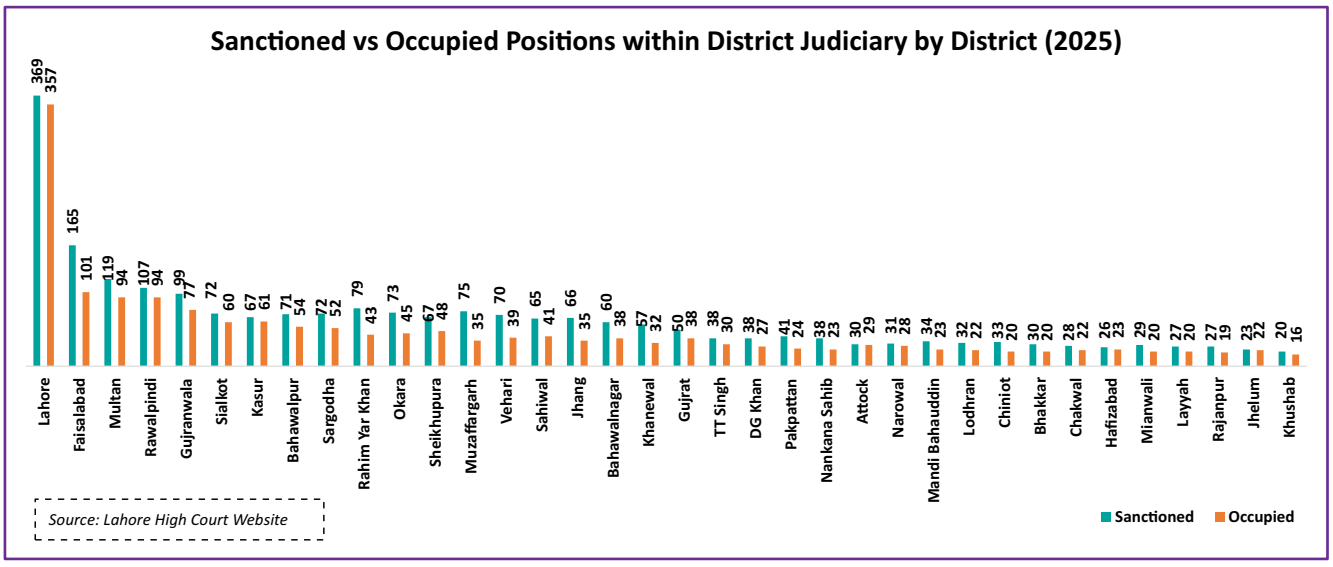


Figure 7.46

7.2.3.2 Gender Sensitive Training of Judges

The Punjab Judicial Academy continued its efforts to strengthen gender sensitive judicial practice by conducting dedicated training sessions for judges. In 2023, a total of 97 Additional District and Session Judges received gender sensitive training, among them 94 were male and three were female. In 2024, the scale of training expanded significantly, reaching 404 judges, among them 371 were male, and 33 were female. This upward trend indicates increased institutional commitment towards gender inclusivity.

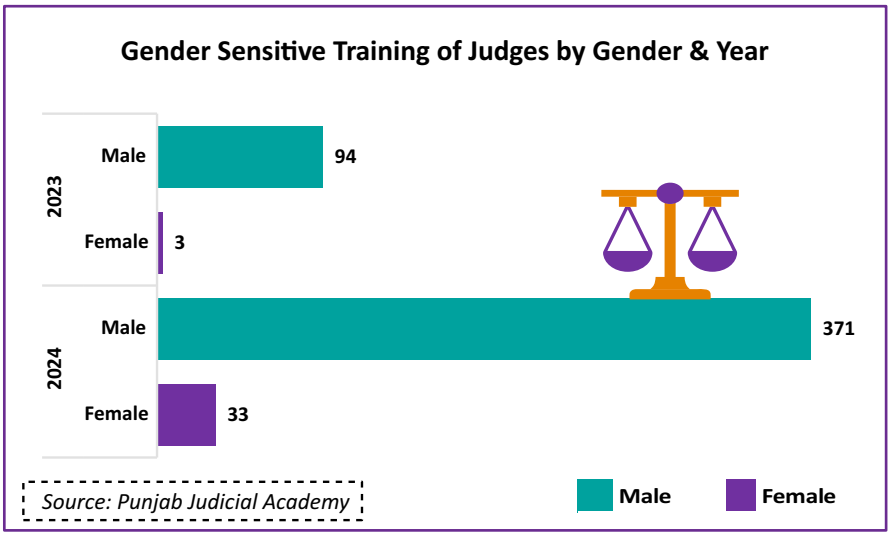


Figure 7.47

7.2.3.3 Prosecutors

According to the data received by the Public Prosecution Department, 1,069 public prosecutors were working in Punjab. Of the total, 84.28 percent were male, and 15.71 percent were female, with a GPI of 0.18. This highlights the gender imbalance, with females highly under-represented within the prosecution department. The gender distribution of prosecutors by rank is presented in the figure 7.48.

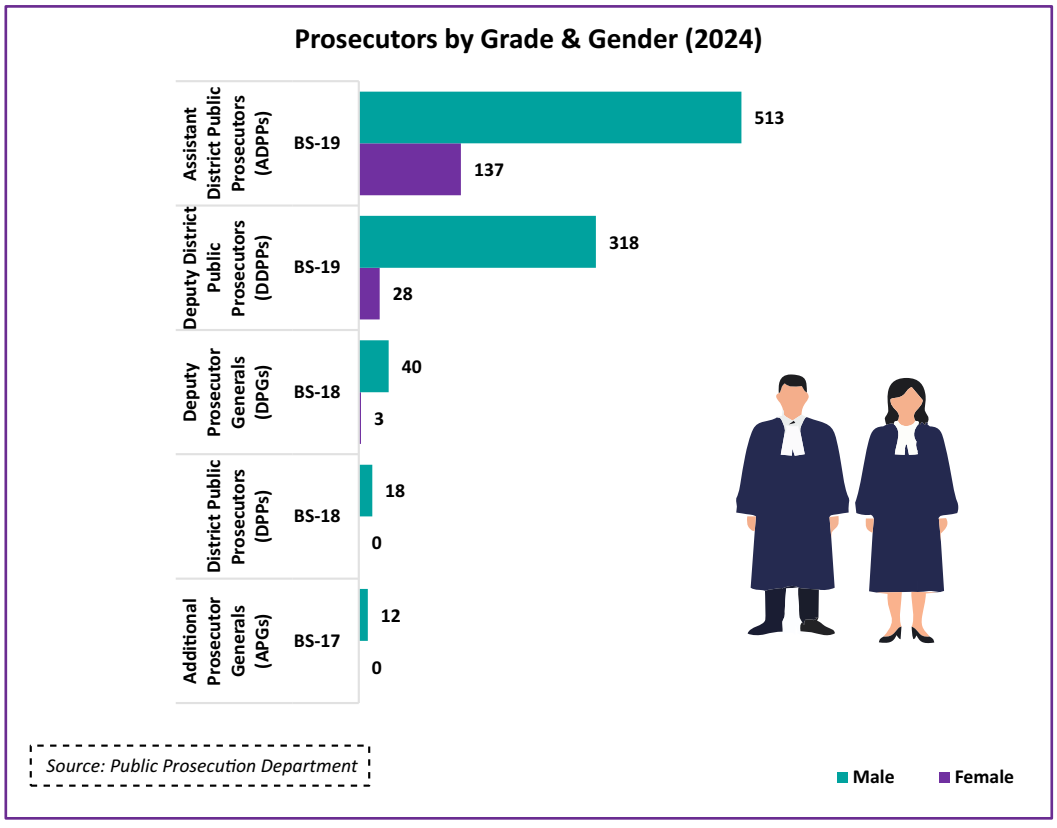


Figure 7.48

7.2.3.4 Gender Sensitive Training Course for Prosecutors

A gender sensitive training course was offered to prosecutors both on campus and online. In 2023, 78 prosecutors completed the training course, comprising 43 men and 35 women. However, the number decreased to 20 in 2024, among them 15 were male, and five were female prosecutors.

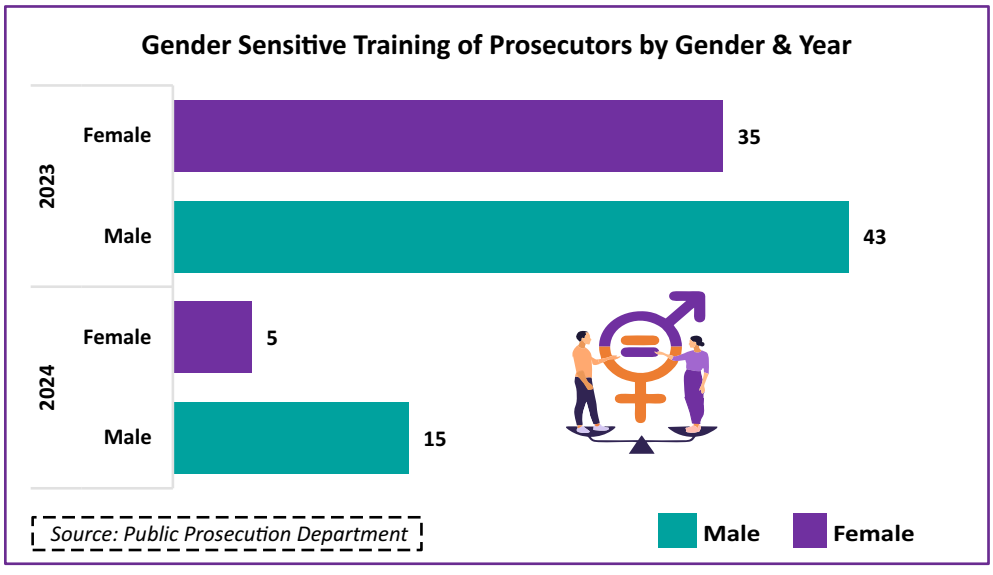


Figure 7.49

There is a session on gender sensitivity offered to Assistant District Public Prosecutors (ADPPs) during their induction courses. In Punjab, 113 ADPPs received training on gender sensitivity, among them 70 were male, and 43 were female, in 2023.

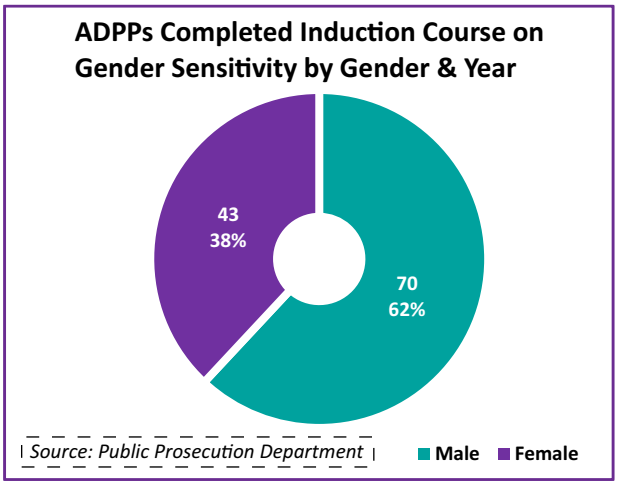


Figure 7.50

7.3 Women's Access to Justice

The Government has introduced a wide range of initiatives to support and encourage women to report cases of violence and facilitate their access to justice. It included the establishment of women protection centres, virtual women police stations (VWPS), mobile apps and helplines see figure 7.51.

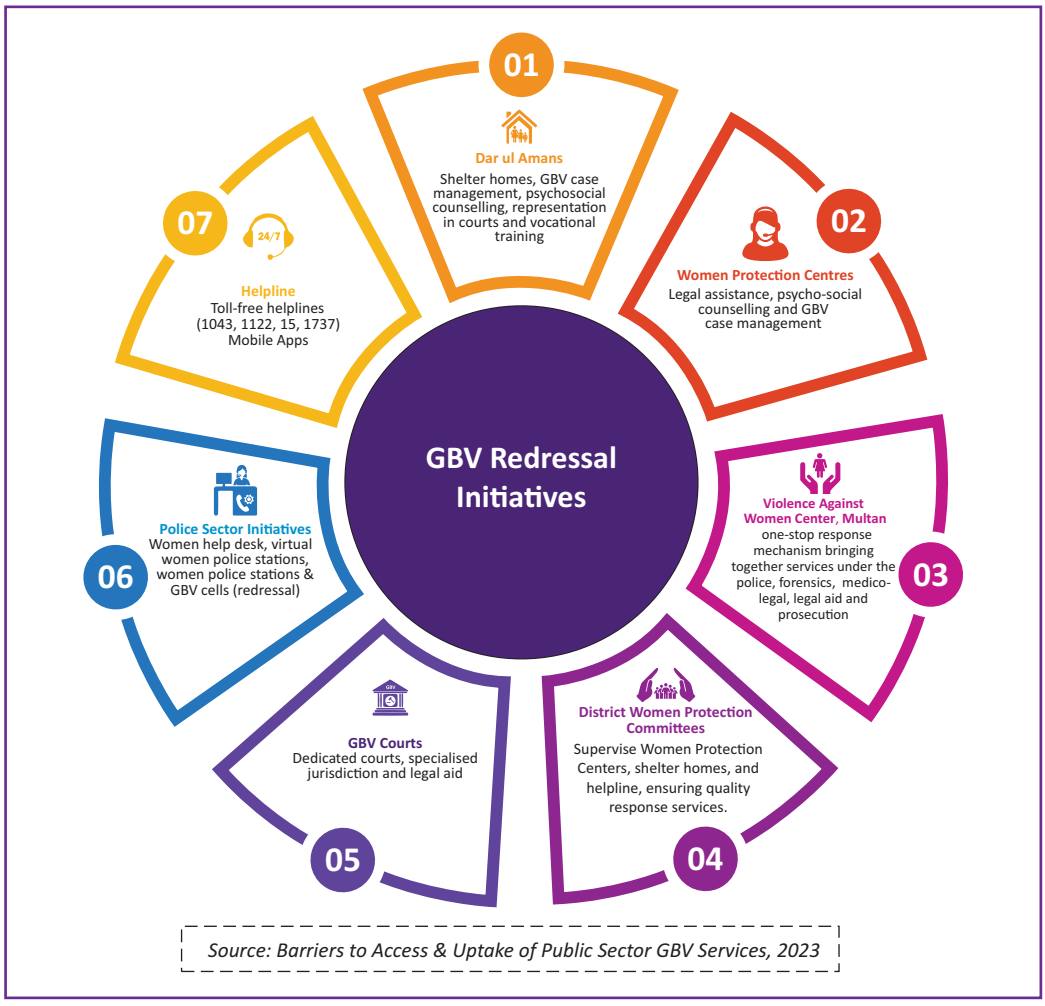


Figure 7.51

7.3.1 Women Police Stations

The Government of Punjab has established women police stations to encourage and support female survivors of GBV in reporting incidents of violence. There were four women police stations established in 2023, and the number increased to nine in 2024. These nine stations were located in Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Jhang, Multan, Lodhran, Sahiwal, Okara and Bahawalnagar in 2024.

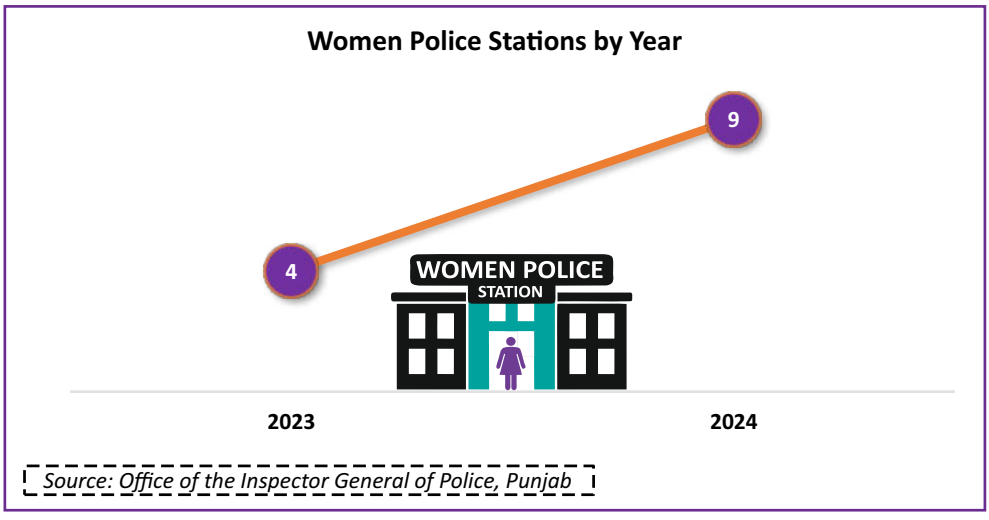


Figure 7.52

7.3.2 Virtual Women Police Stations (VWPS)

VWPS is a digital platform established to support women in reporting crimes in a secure way. They can file a complaint through video call, can live chat through the women safety app and through 15 emergency response.[421] The number of VWPS has significantly increased from five stations in 2023 to 35 in 2024. These 35 virtual centres were located in each district of Punjab except Lahore, Wazirabad, Murree, & Mianwali.

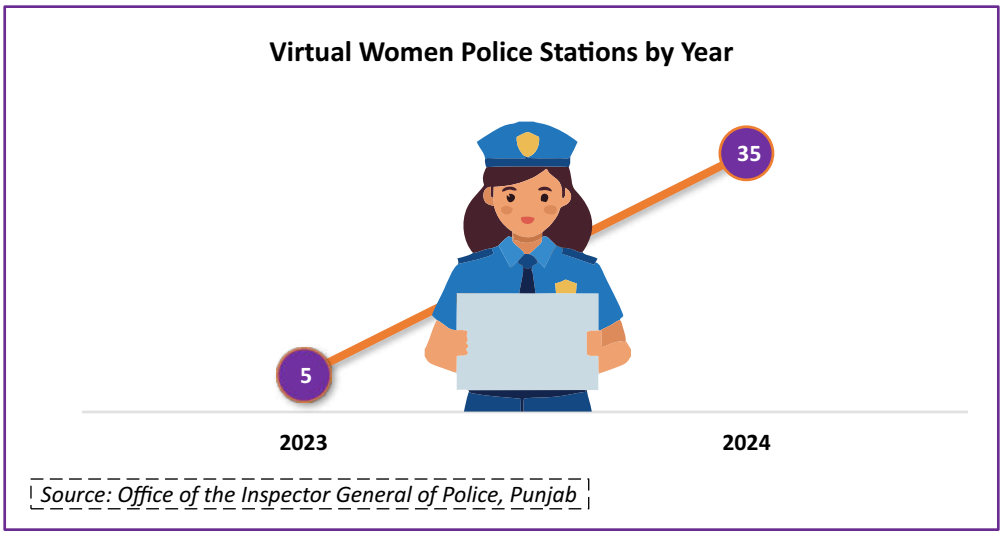


Figure 7.53

In 2024, approximately 172 officers were deployed across VWPS. The increase in the number of officers corresponded with the expansion in the number of stations.

421 (Virtual Women Police Station)

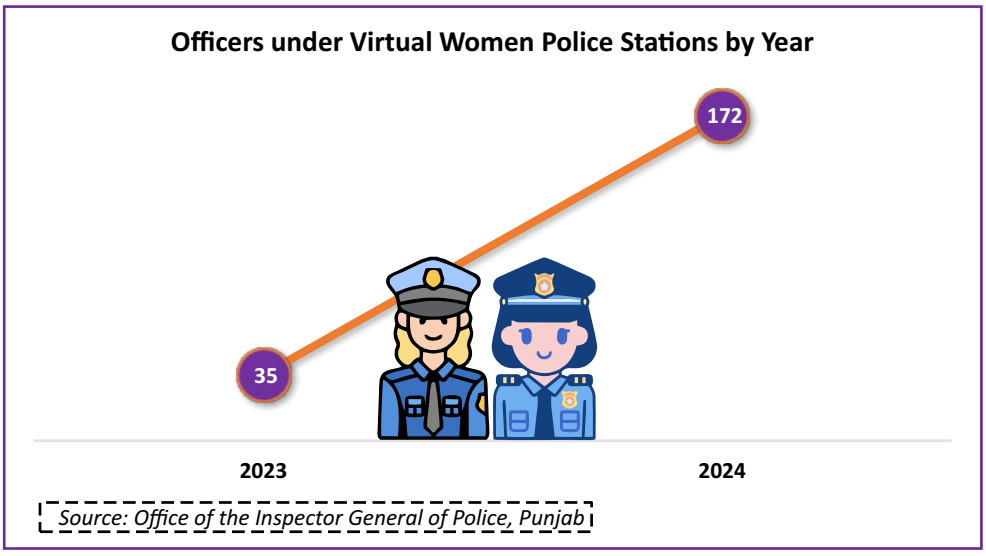


Figure 7.54

7.3.2.1 Cases Reported in Virtual Women Police Stations

According to the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), a total of 235,727 cases of GBV were reported at VWPS, including cases of rape, murder, harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence in 2024. Notably, the highest number of reported GBV cases was of domestic violence (111,186) and a significant proportion of cases reported were categorised as others (92,046), see figure below.

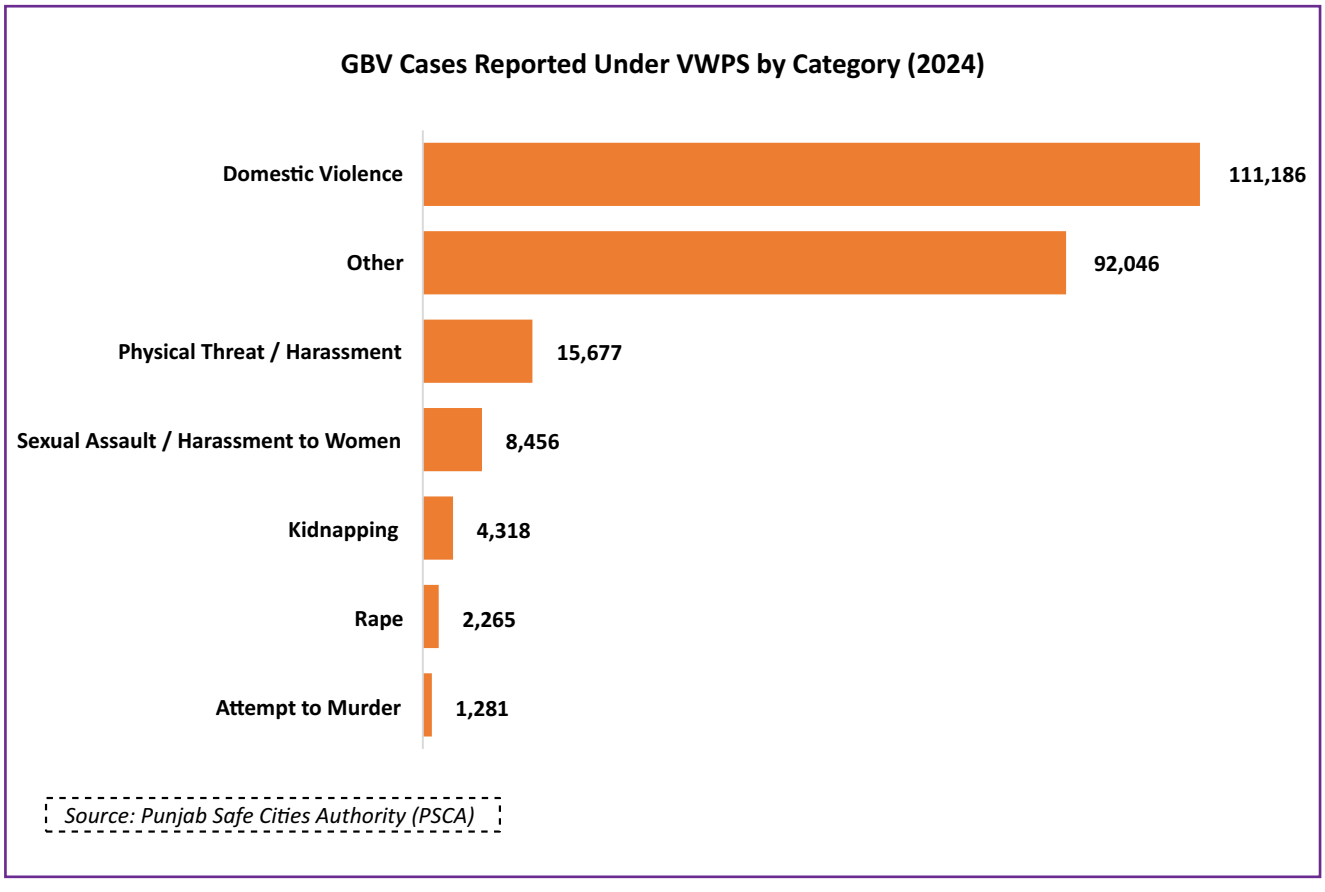


Figure 7.55

Further analysis showed that among the reported cases of GBV, 88.74 percent were resolved, disposed or closed, while 11.26 percent of cases were registered as First Information Report (FIR).

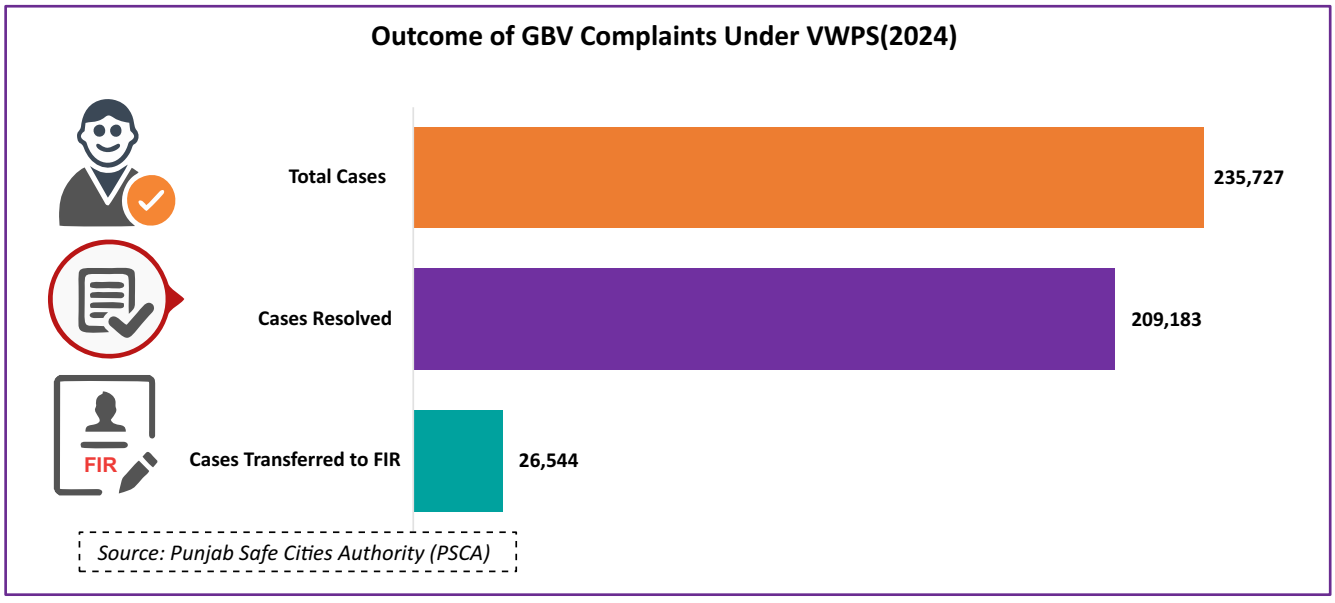


Figure 7.56

7.3.3 Gender Based Violence (Redressal) Cells

GBV (redressal) cells have been established across Punjab to provide accessible reporting, protection, and support services to survivors of GBV. These cells serve as a coordinated mechanism for legal assistance, medical referral, counselling, and rehabilitation. There was a total of 38 GBV (redressal) cells reported in 2023, and the number increased to 47 in 2024.

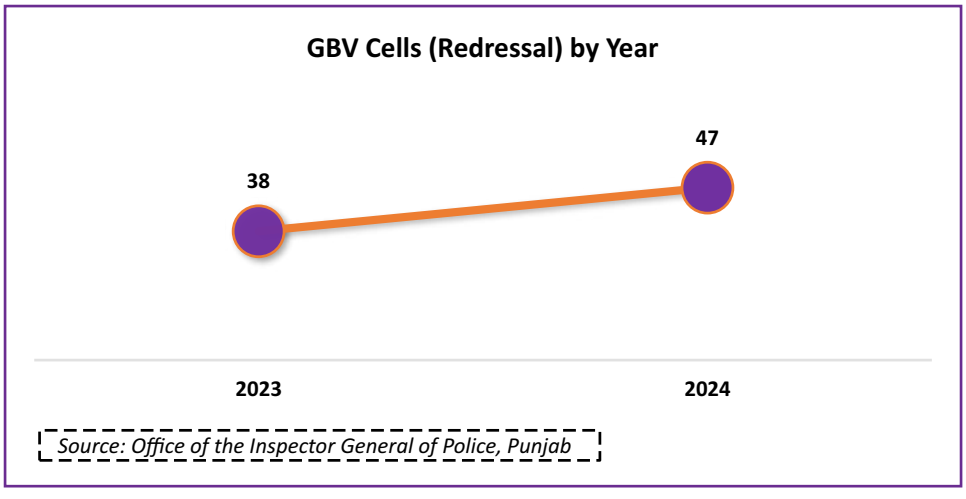


Figure 7.57

7.3.4 Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA)

PSCA was established to enhance public safety, policing and crime prevention by integrating surveillance systems across major cities in Punjab. In collaboration with the Punjab Police, the programme has deployed advanced surveillance technology to support real-time crime monitoring, thereby enhancing emergency response services.[422]

Under this initiative, dedicated women and public safety mobile applications were also introduced, aimed at improving safety for the marginalised population by enabling users to access essential security features directly from their smartphones. These applications included a one-tap "15" emergency response button to notify authorities and request immediate assistance. Additionally, individuals can file complaints through VWPS, the virtual centres for child safety and Meesaq Minorities Centres.[423]

422 (Punjab Safe City Authority, 2025)
423 Ibid

7.3.4.1 Police Officers and Staff under PSCA

Under PSCA, a total of 18 police officers (16 male and two female) were deployed in 2023, and the number was reduced to 16 police officers (15 male and one female) in 2024.

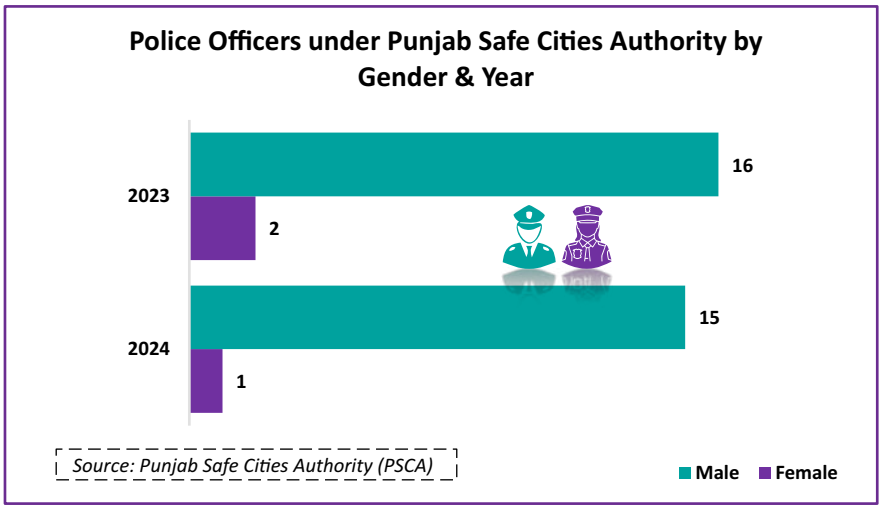


Figure 7.58

The number of staff members at the Punjab Police Integrated Command, Control & Communication Centres (PPIC3) was 582 (477 male and 105 female) in 2023. The number increased to 777 staff members, among them 601 were male, and 176 were female.

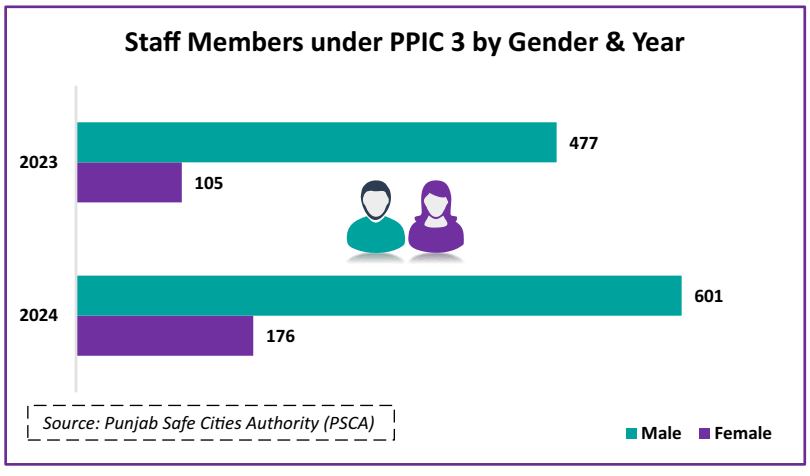


Figure 7.59

7.3.4.2 Punjab Police-Women Safety App

This app enables women to connect with resources to ensure their safety and improve access to justice. In 2023, the number of reported downloads was 111,918 and 89,380 in 2024 across Punjab. In 2024, it was reported that among the active users of the app, 158,726 were men, 87,334 were women, and 203 were transgender persons. There were 21,208 chats initiated to inquire or complain by men, 2,322 by women and 62 by transgender persons in 2024.

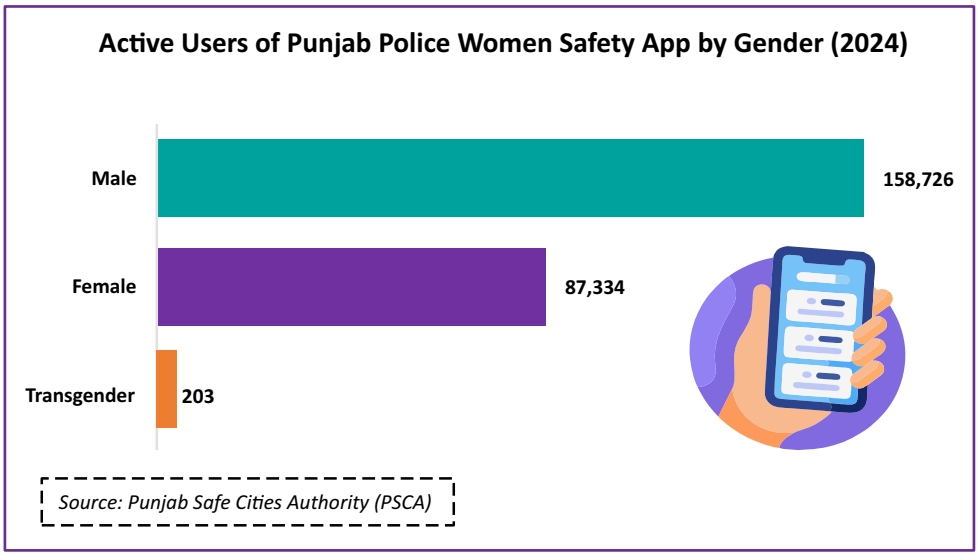


Figure 7.60

7.3.4.3 Punjab Public Safety App

A total of 36,910 individuals reported downloading the Punjab Public Safety App in 2023 and 51,100 in 2024. Furthermore, the number of male active users was 118,665 and the number of female active users was 1,553 in 2024. The total number of chats initiated to inquire or complain during the same period was 1,263; among them, 1,222 were men, and 41 were women. This indicates that male users make up the majority of both active users and service seekers.

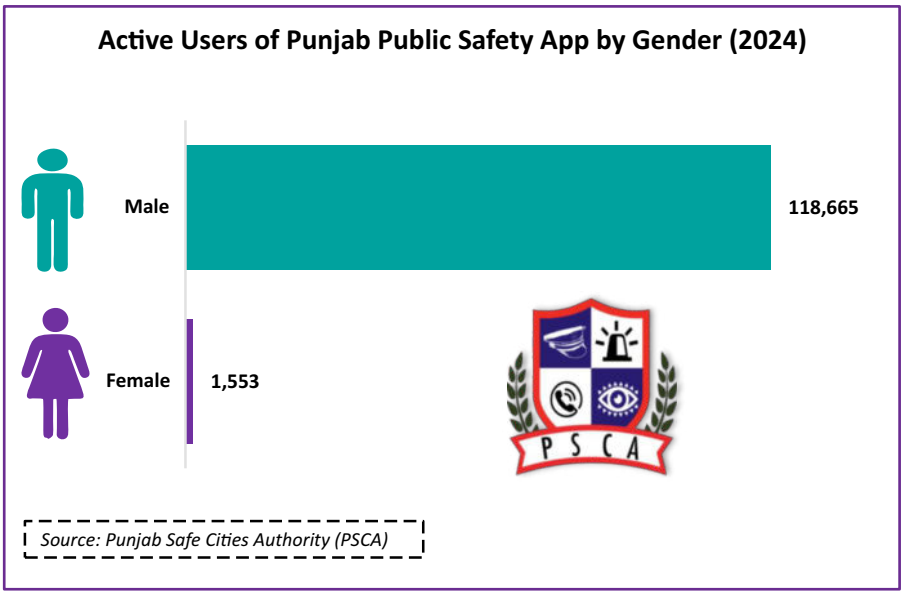


Figure 7.61

7.3.5 Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA)

GBV presents challenges for both investigation and prosecution. This is because the wide range of situations in which these crimes occur requires flexible investigative methods and careful evidence to support prosecution. In this context, the incorporation of advanced forensic science into investigative procedures is highly crucial. High-quality forensic methods, particularly DNA profiling, have transformed the investigation of violent crimes by enabling the identification of offenders.[424] In Punjab, this function is carried out by PFSA and the subsection below presents the detailed analysis of the GBV cases reported under the agency.

424 (L. Smith, D. Flowe, & Kanja, 2019)

7.3.5.1 Number of Technical Staff

PFSA had deployed 388 technical staff members in 2023, and the number reduced to 384 in 2024 across Punjab. For both years, the number of technical staff had more male than female, as shown in figure 3.62 below.

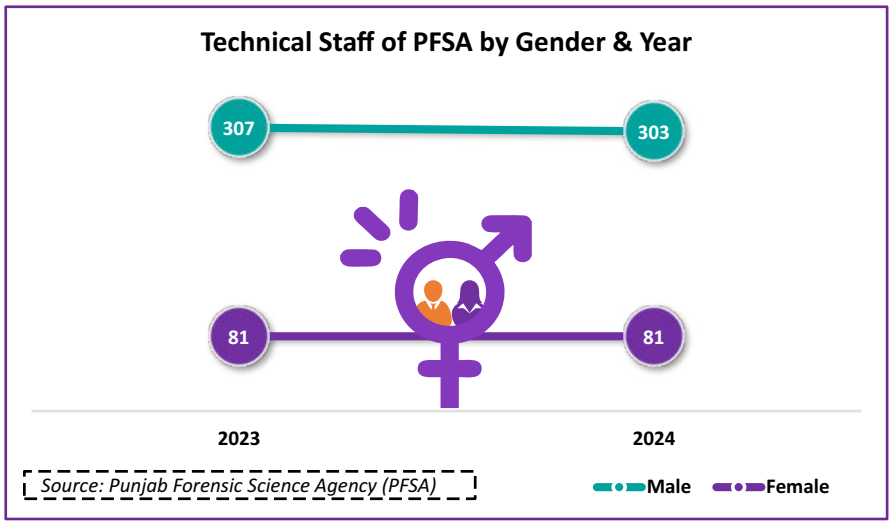


Figure 7.62

7.3.5.2 DNA & Serology

In 2023, a total of 6,208 GBV cases (1,129 men and 5,079 women) were submitted to PFSA for DNA & Serology analysis, which increased to 8,134 cases (2,513 men and 5,621 women) in 2024.

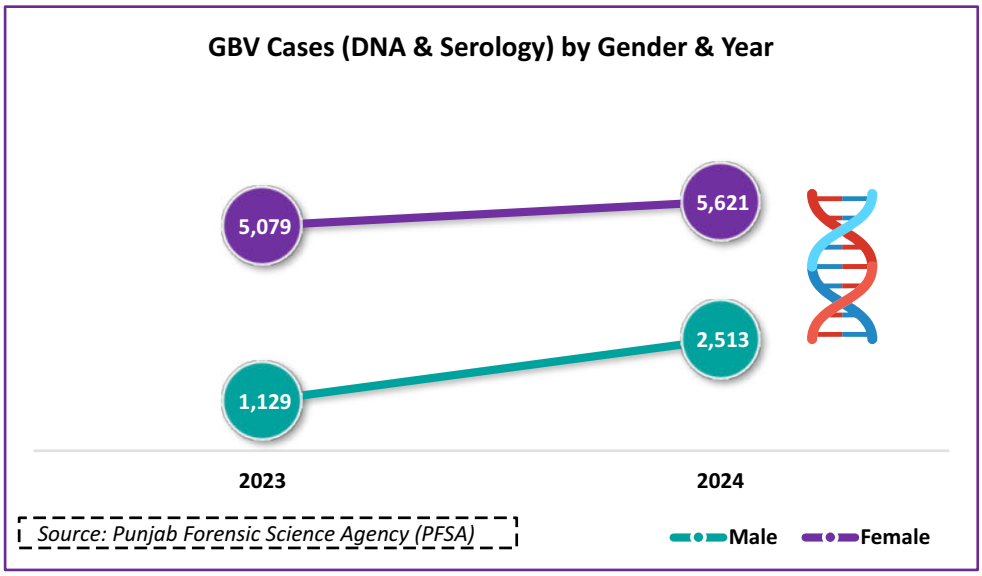


Figure 7.63

Analysis of the cases by crime indicated that rape (4,016) accounted for the highest number of submissions, followed by sodomy (1,756) and kidnapping (1,642) in 2024.

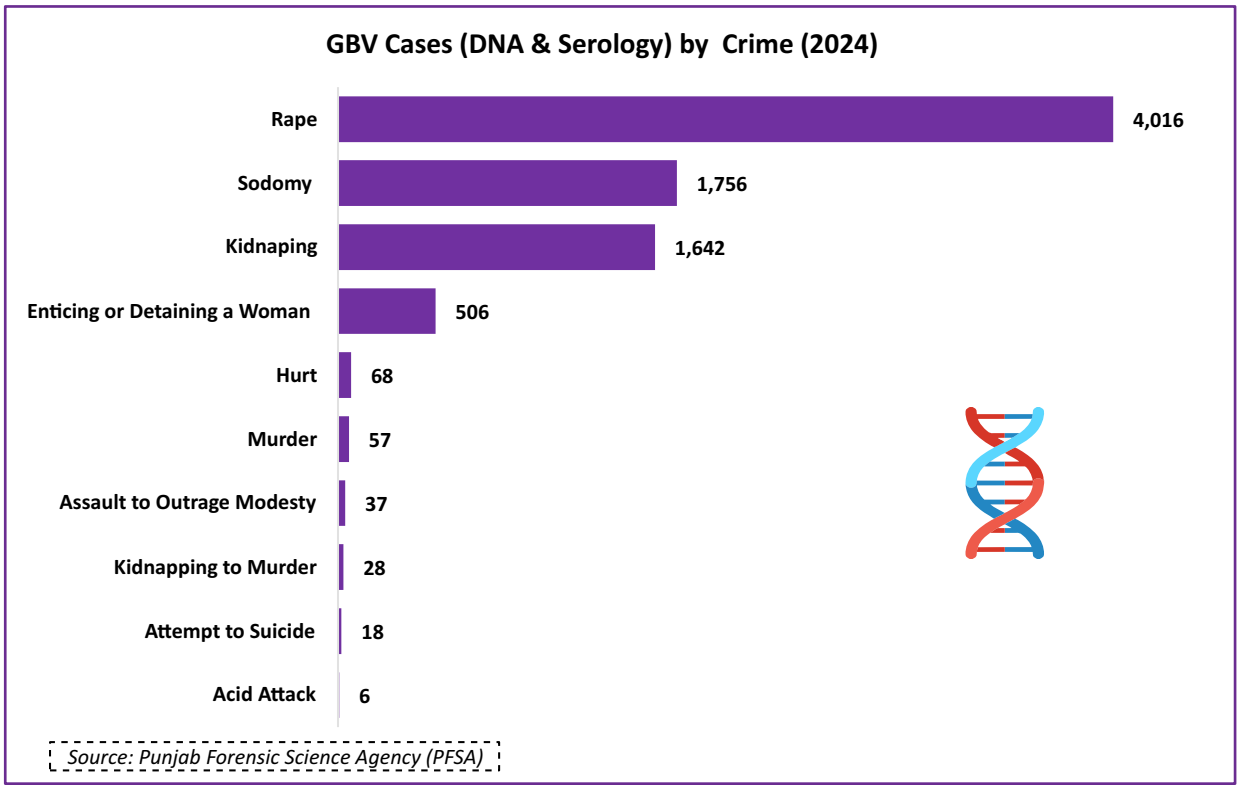


Figure 7.64

District-wise analysis showed that Bahawalpur reported the highest number of GBV cases. While Khushab reported the lowest number of cases in 2024.

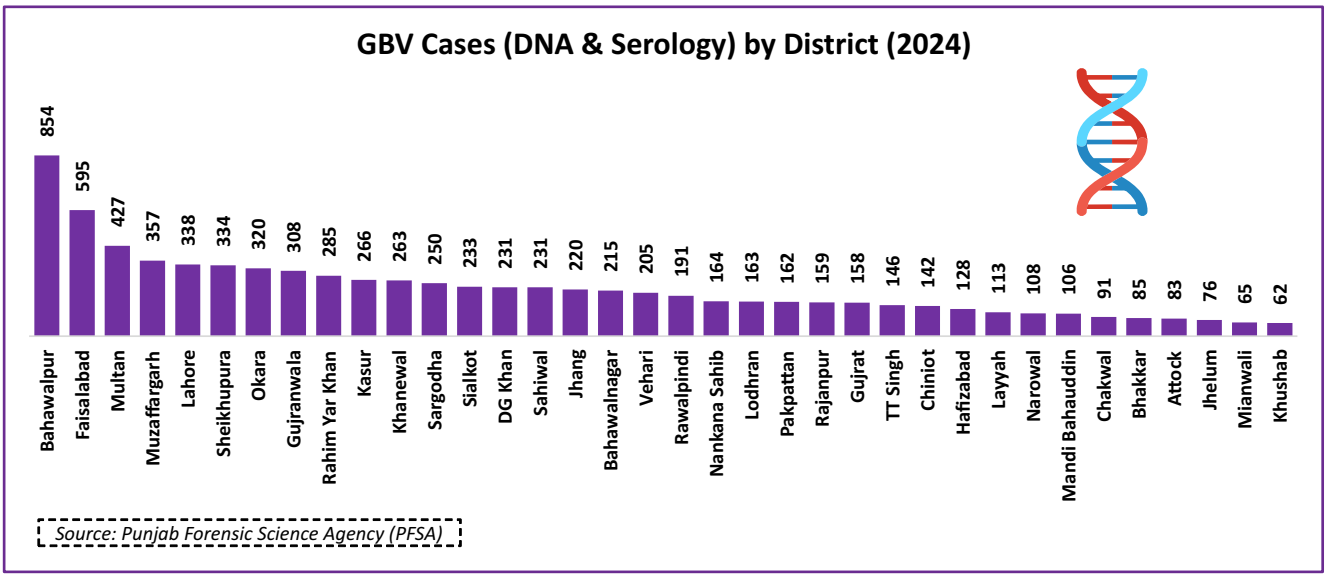


Figure 7.65

7.3.5.3 Toxicology

The agency had processed 1,207 cases of GBV for toxicology analysis in 2023, among them 808 cases were of men and 399 were of women. In 2024, the number of cases increased to 1,415, of which 906 cases involved men and 509 involved women.

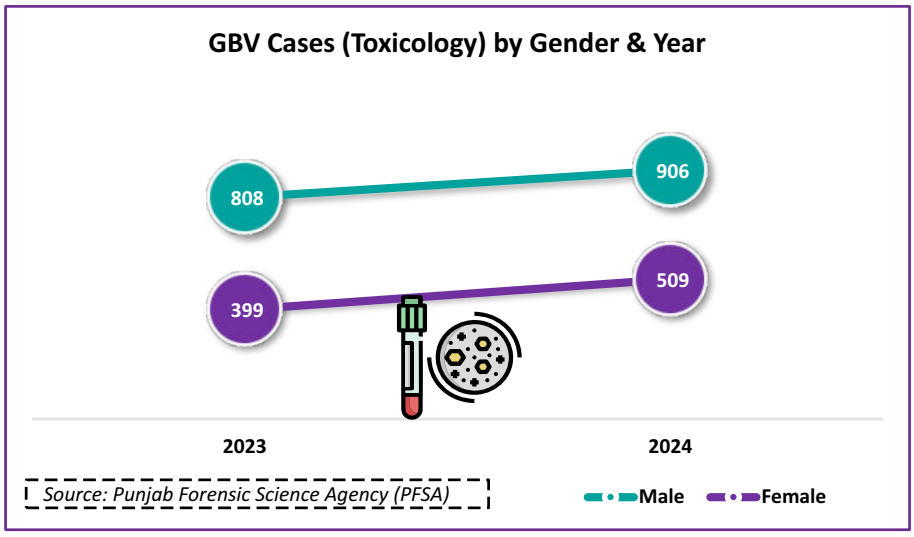


Figure 7.66

The analysis of cases by crime showed that murder constituted the highest proportion among GBV cases, followed by cases of hurt and kidnapping.

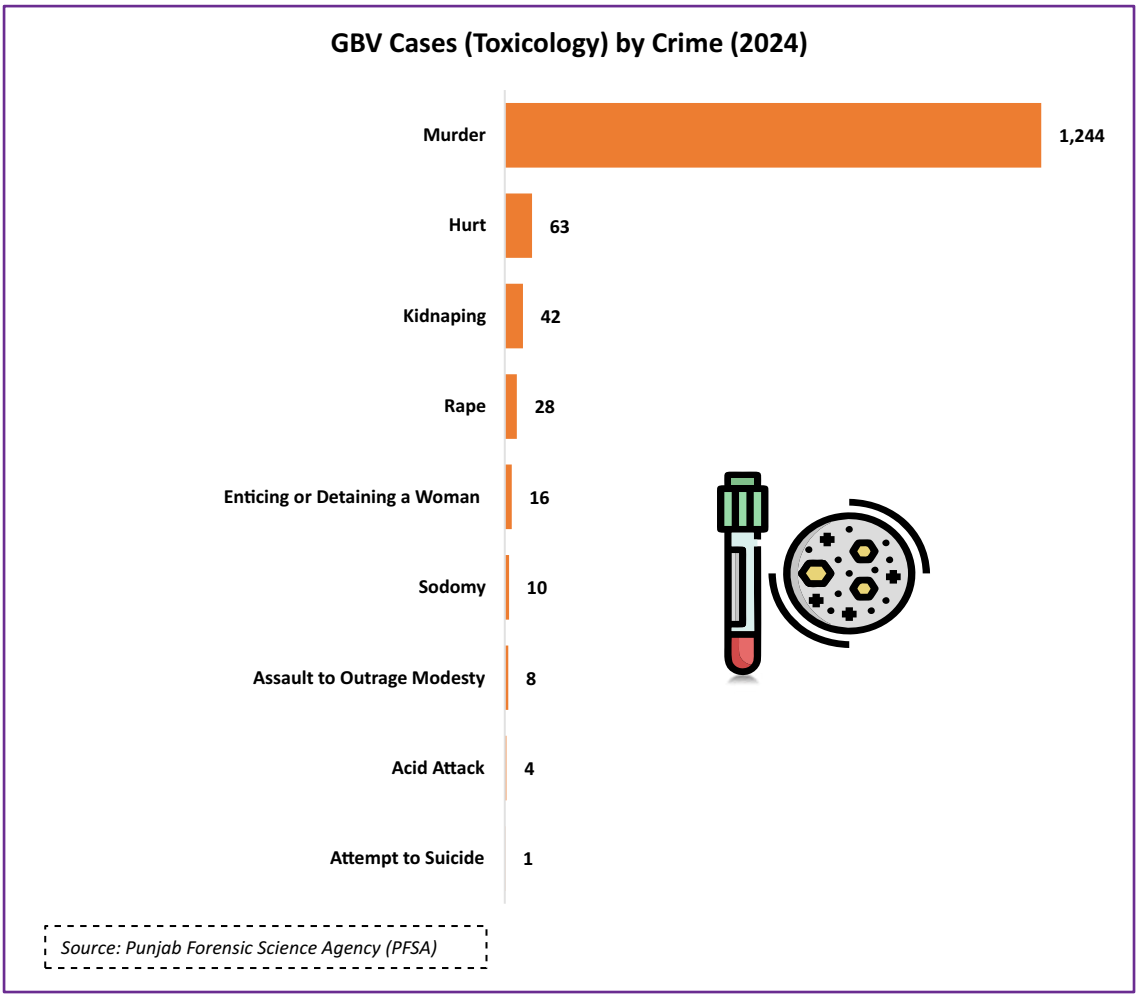


Figure 7.67

District-wise analysis showed that the highest number of cases were reported in Lahore (175), followed by Sheikhupura (84) and Rahim Yar Khan (80). The lowest number of cases was reported in Chakwal (three) and Bhakkar (three) in 2024.

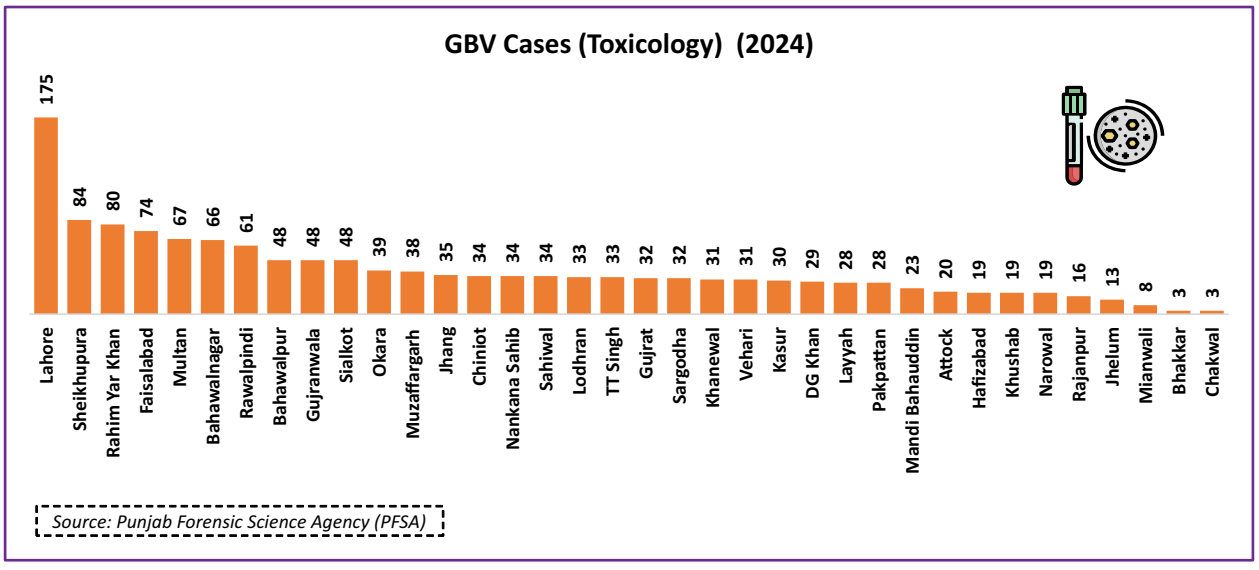


Figure 7.68

7.3.5.4 Trace Chemistry

For the trace of chemicals, the agency had processed 234 cases in 2023, and the number slightly decreased to 223 in 2024. For both years, the number of cases had a high percentage of men as compared to women, as evidenced by figure 7.69 below.

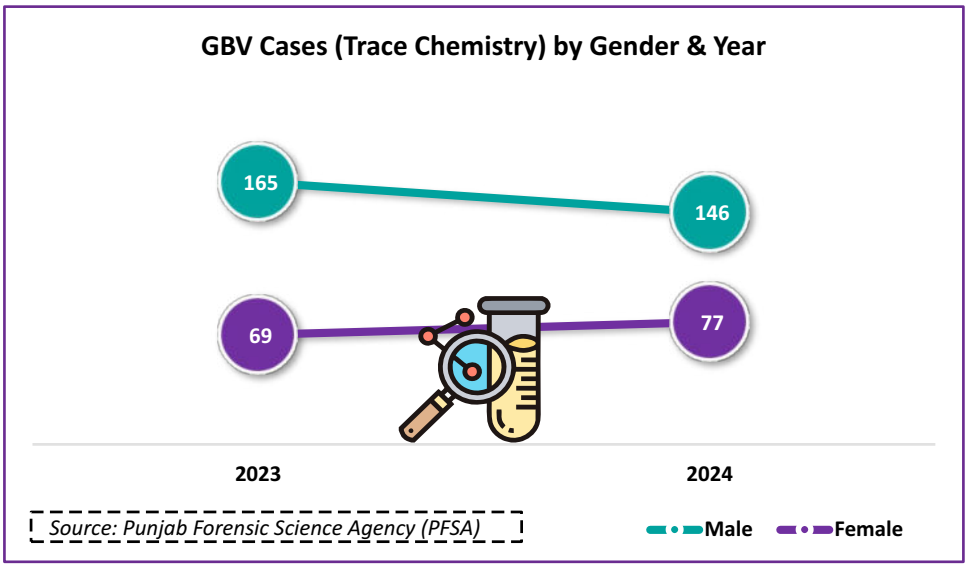


Figure 7.69

The analysis of cases by crime showed that the highest number of cases were of murder and acid attack.

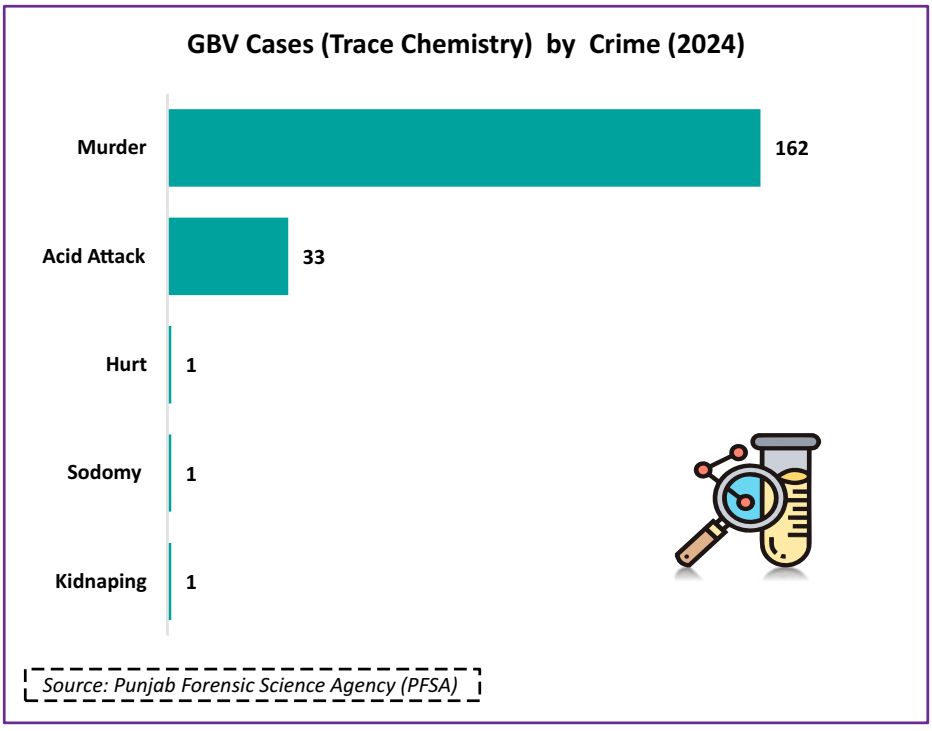


Figure 7.70

Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi reported the highest number of cases, whereas Hafizabad, Narowal and Layyah reported only one case each in 2024.

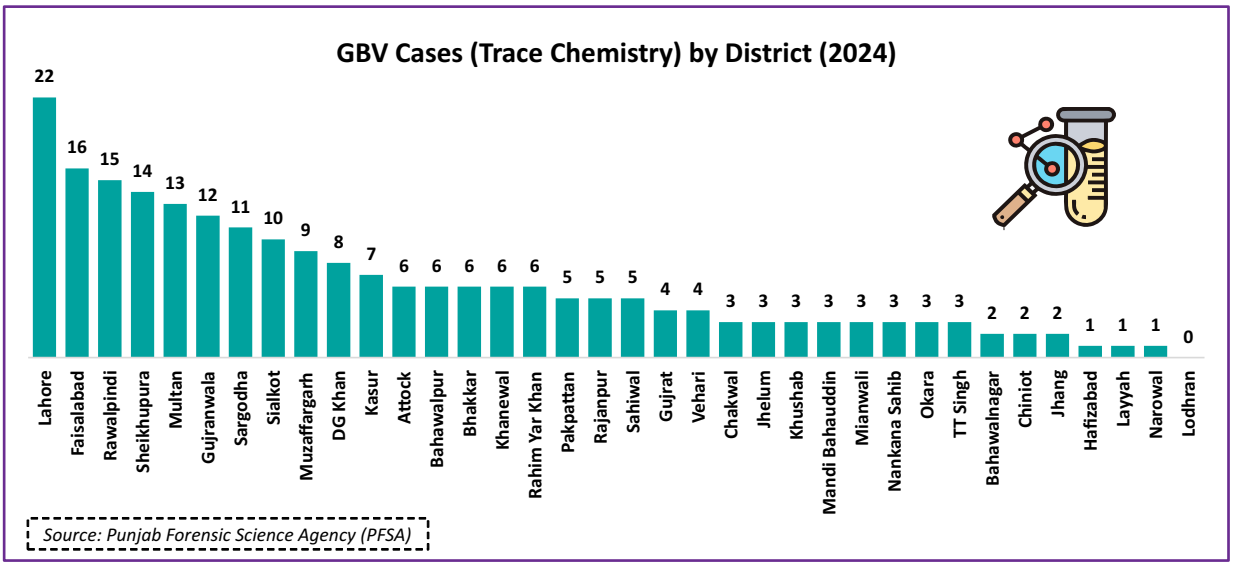


Figure 7.71

7.3.6 Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal (SW&BM) Department

Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal (SW&BM) Department has been established to improve the living standards of marginalised communities by providing opportunities for skill development, training and institutional care services. It operates a range of facilities for women, children and the elderly. An overview of the institutional network managed by the SW&BM is provided in figure 7.72.

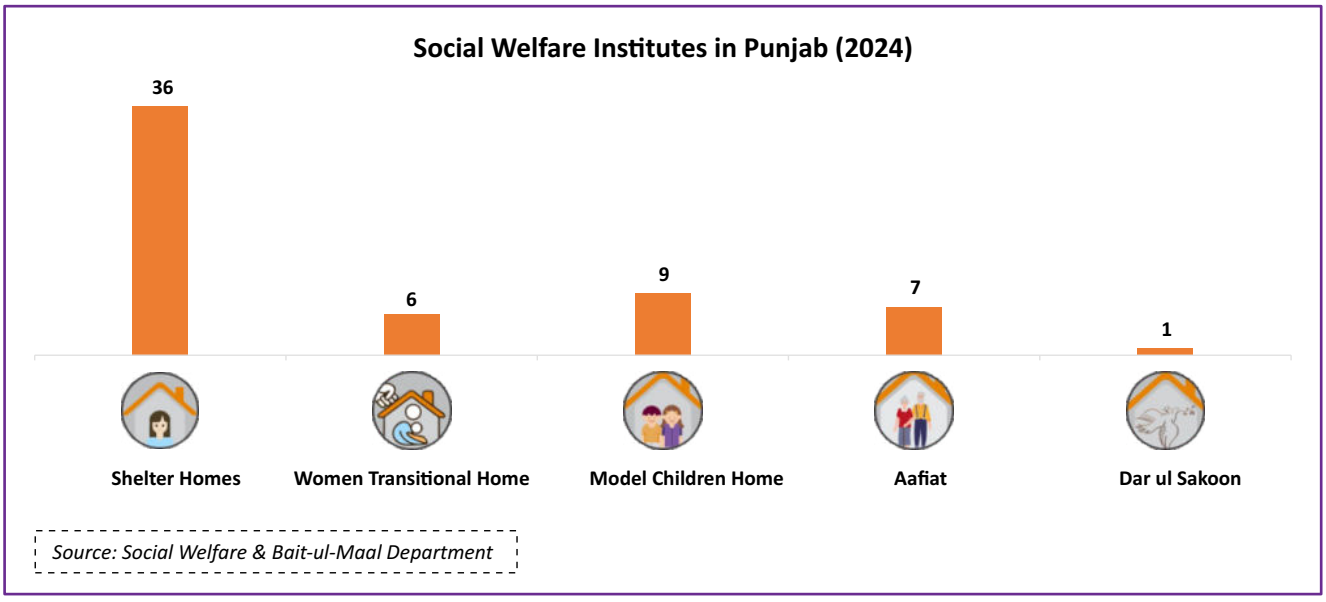


Figure 7.72

7.3.6.1 Shelter Home

The data showed that there were 2,993 children residing in the shelter homes in 2023, and the number increased to 3,262 in 2024. Similarly, there was a 1.55 percent increase in the number of women residing in shelter homes from 10,001 in 2023 to 10,156 in 2024.

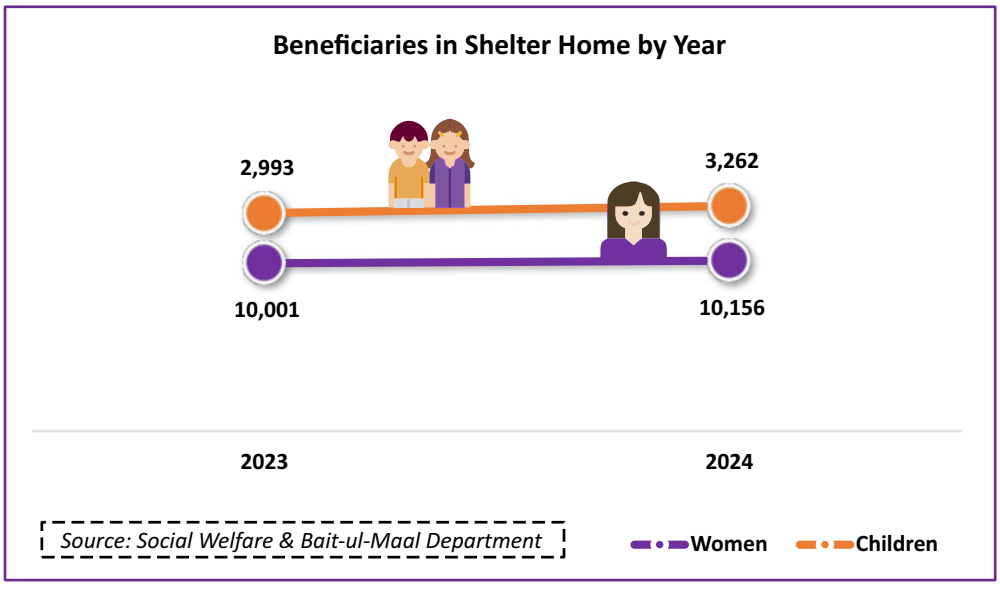


Figure 7.73

7.3.6.2 Women Transitional Home

In Punjab, the Women Transitional Homes were established in Bahawalpur, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Sialkot. In 2023, there were 350 beneficiaries (120 women and 230 children) residing in the institute. However, the number increased to 387 (132 women and 255 children) in 2024.

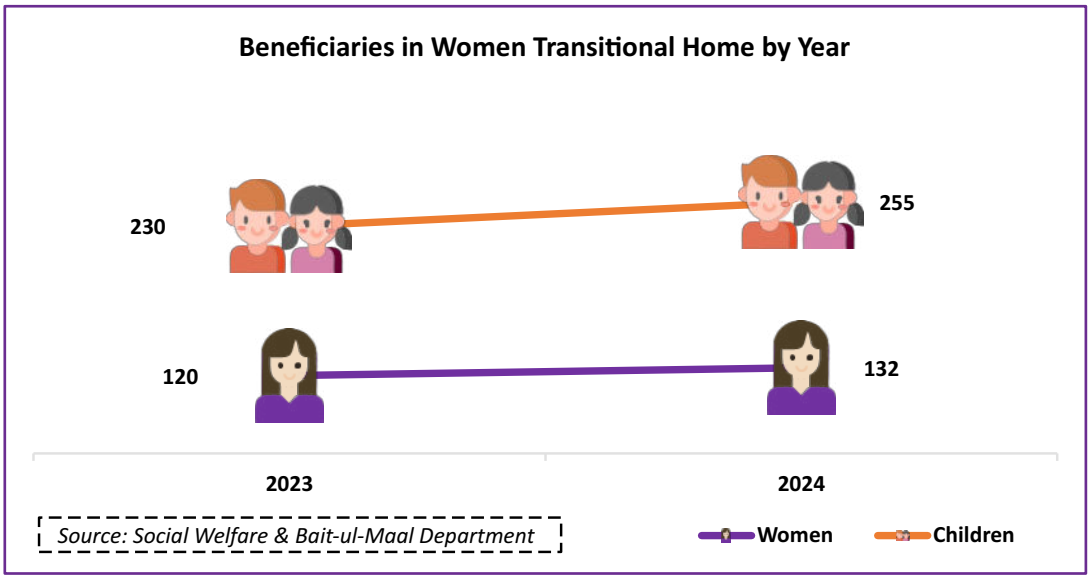


Figure 7.74

7.3.6.3 Model Children Home

Model Children Home was established in Bahawalpur, DG Khan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Lahore, Narowal, Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Sialkot. The number of beneficiaries reported was 699 in 2023 and 802 in 2024.

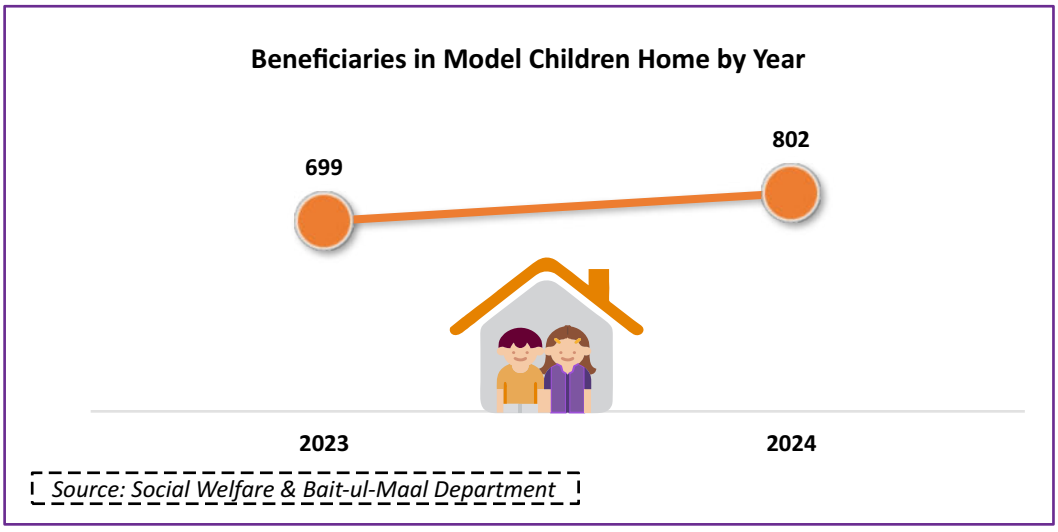


Figure 7.75

7.3.6.4 Aafiat

Aafiat centres were located in Faisalabad, Lahore, Multan, Narowal, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal and T.T. Singh. In 2023, a total of 269 beneficiaries were reported, among them 82.16 percent were men, and 17.84 percent were women. The number of beneficiaries increased by 4.46 percent to 281 in 2024, including 221 men and 60 women.

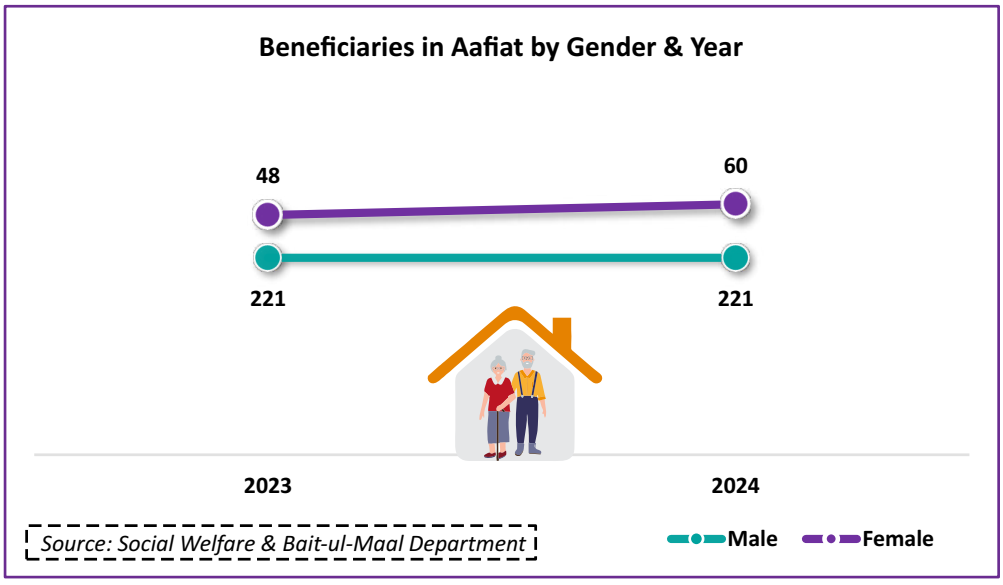


Figure 7.76

7.3.6.5 Dar ul Sakoon

There was only one Dar ul Sakoon located in Lahore. In 2023, a total of 16 beneficiaries were reported (10 men and six women), whereas the number increased to 22 in 2024, comprising 12 men and 10 women.

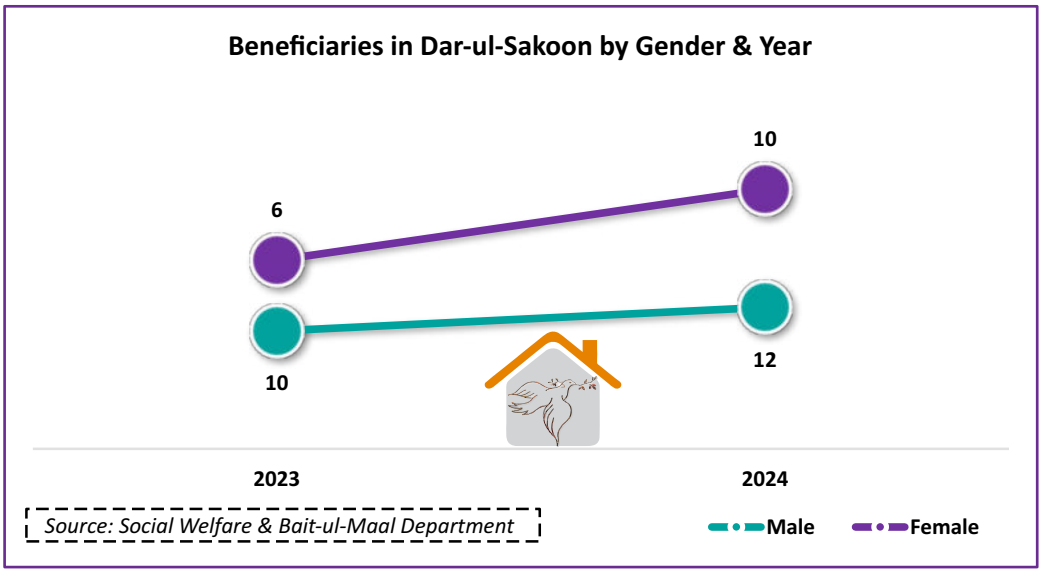


Figure 7.77

7.3.6.6 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

In Punjab, 2,997 NGOs operate under the supervision of SW&BM. An analysis of their leadership shows a significant gender imbalance, with 2,625 organisations led by male and only 372 headed by female in 2025. These findings underscore the need to increase women's representation in leadership roles.

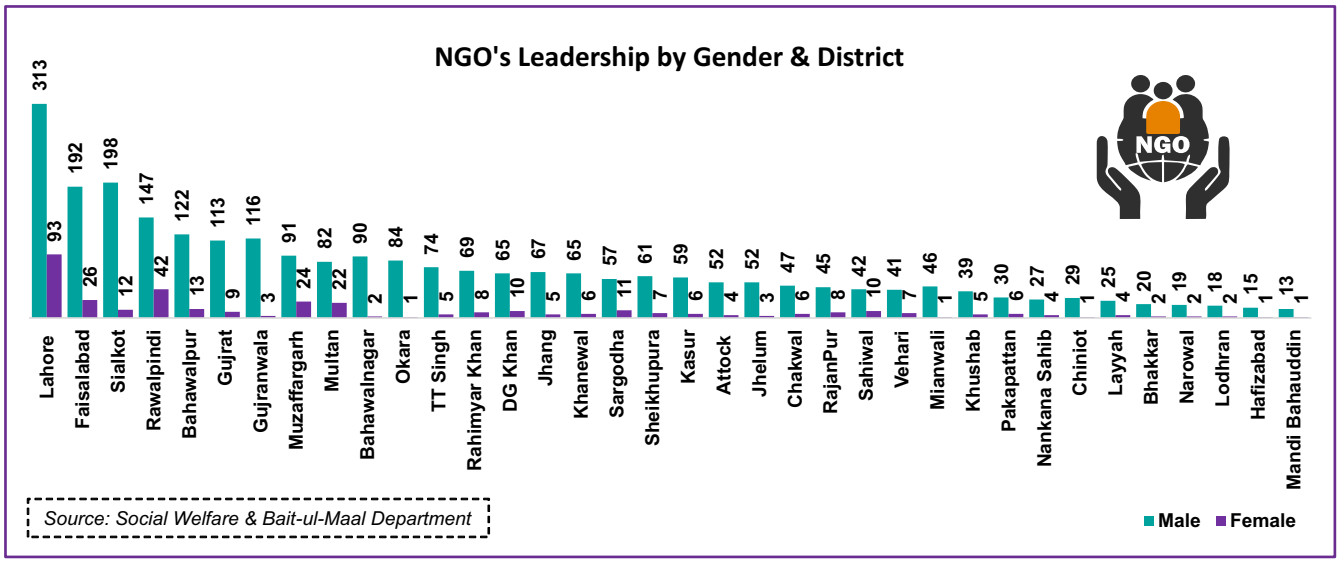


Figure 7.78

7.3.7 Punjab Women Protection Authority (PWPA)

It is established to provide rescue services, shelter and legal assistance to women at risk. It is governed by the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016. They have established women protection centers along with a dedicated helpline for survivors to register complaints. Women protection officers are also engaged to assist survivors in accessing legal remedies and support services.[425] There was a total of 36 women protection officers (WPO) (two male and 34 female) deployed under PWPA in 2024.

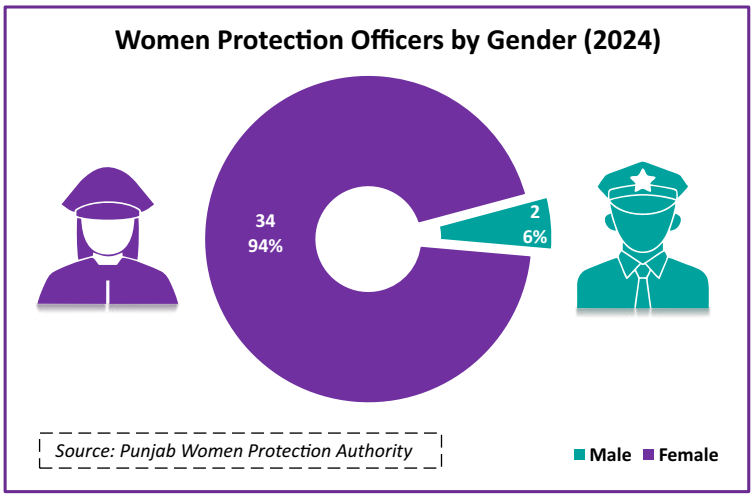


Figure 7.79

7.3.7.1 Women Protection Centers

Under the PWPA, 36 Women Protection Centers were established, which include the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Human Rights Centers for Women, Violence against Women Centre, Multan and Dar-ul-Aman.

7.3.7.2 Reported Cases of GBV at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Human Rights Centers

A total of 3,080 GBV complaints were received in 2023. The number of cases resolved was 3,134 and 2,328 cases were redressed. The number of complaints received during the year 2024 was 3,739. It was further reported that a total of 3,291 cases were resolved, and 2,277 cases were redressed in 2024.

425 (Punjab Women Protection Authority, 2025)

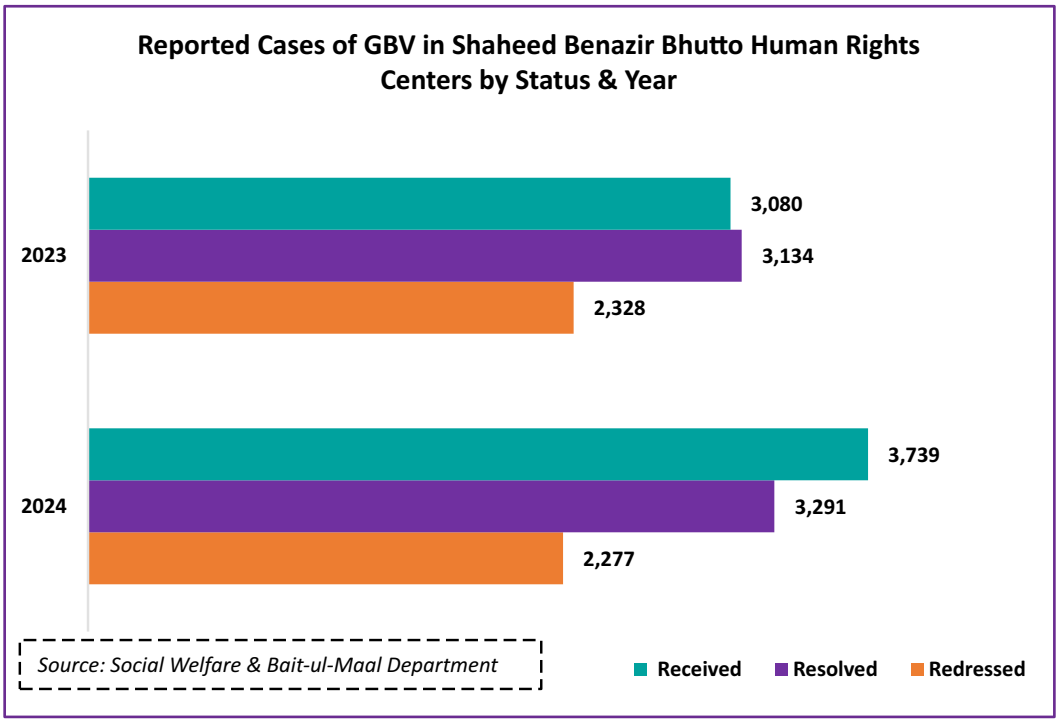


Figure 7.80

District-wise analysis of reported cases of GBV showed that the highest number of cases were reported in Lahore (851), followed by Sialkot (444) and Bahawalpur (368).

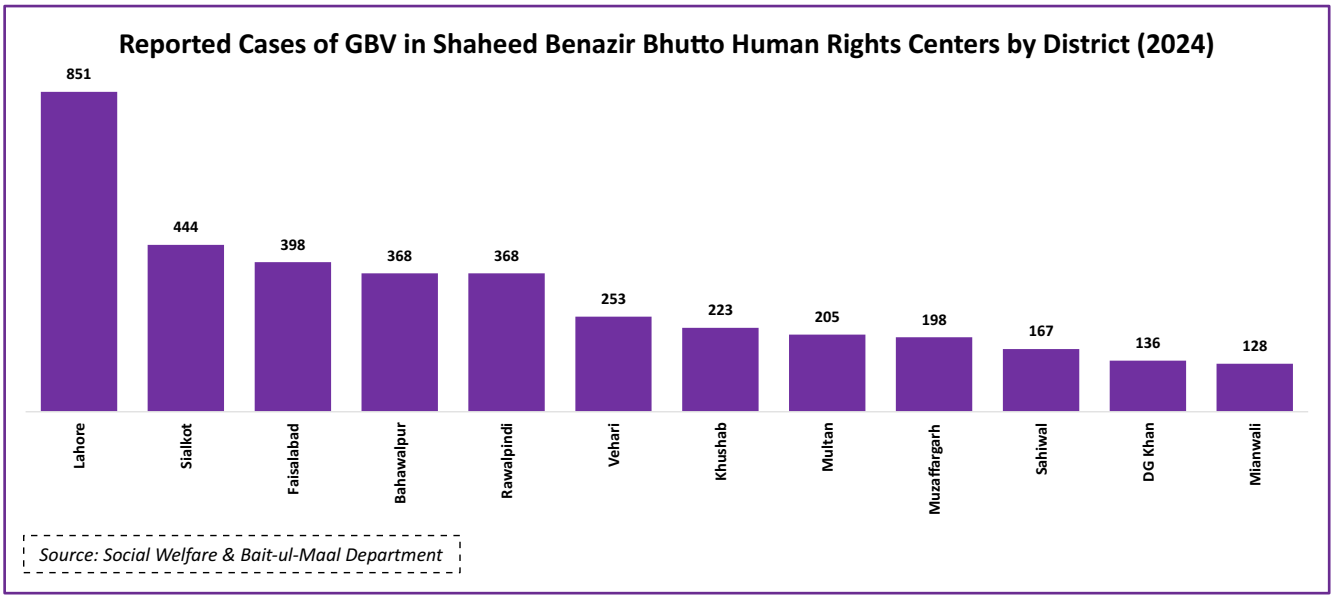


Figure 7.81

7.3.7.3 Reported Cases of GBV at the Violence against Women Center, Multan

The data showed that the number of GBV complaints had increased from 1,873 in 2023 to 2,055 in 2024, reflecting increased awareness among survivors. In 2024, the cases of domestic violence followed by harassment and family suit were highly reported. Among the complaints received, 81.70 percent were resolved, and 18.29 percent were in process.

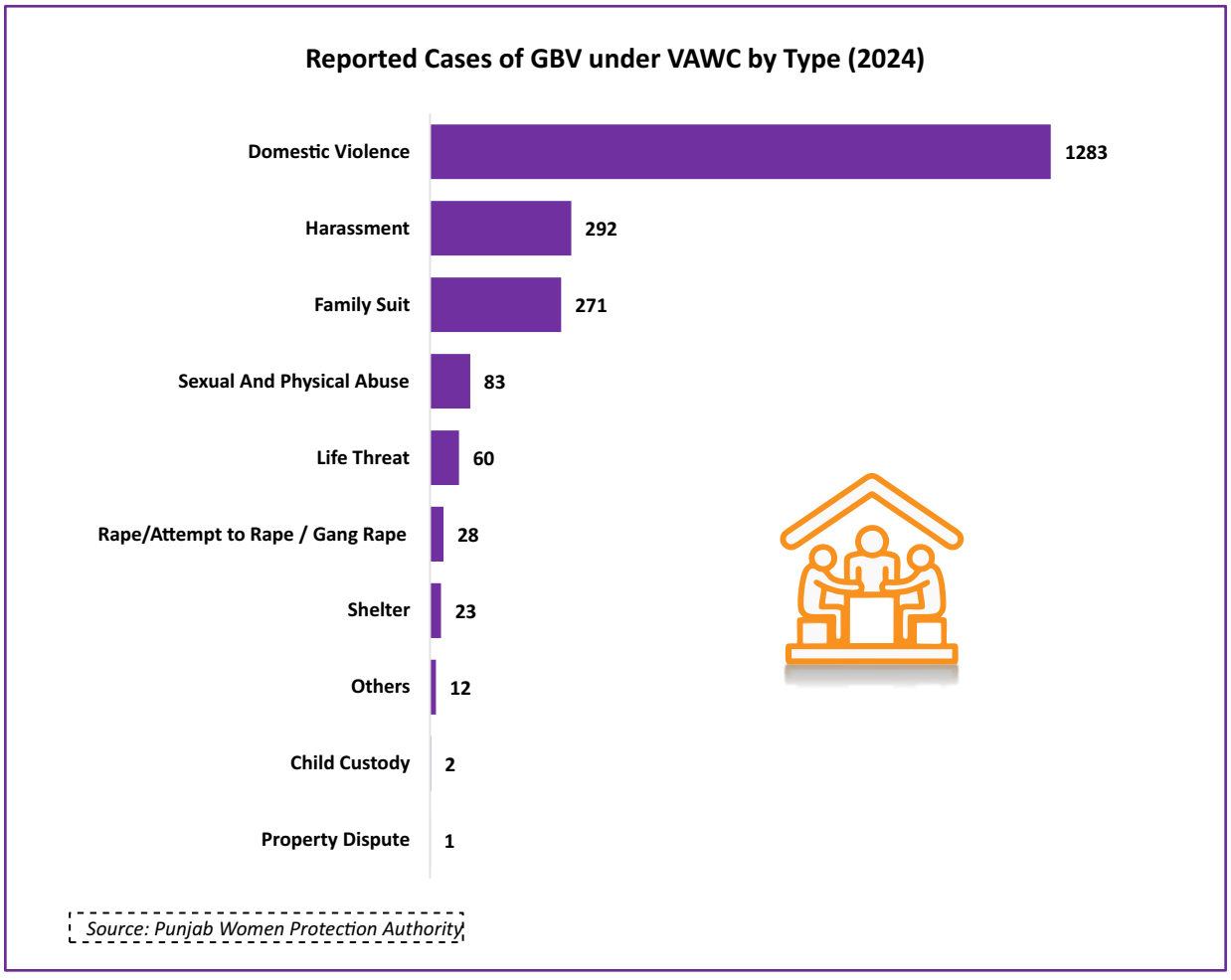


Figure 7.82

The analysis of redressal measures taken for the reported complaints showed that 914 cases were referred to the police, 913 cases were referred for legal support, 852 to psychologist, 384 for mediation, 296 to women protection Officer and 195 for medical assistance.

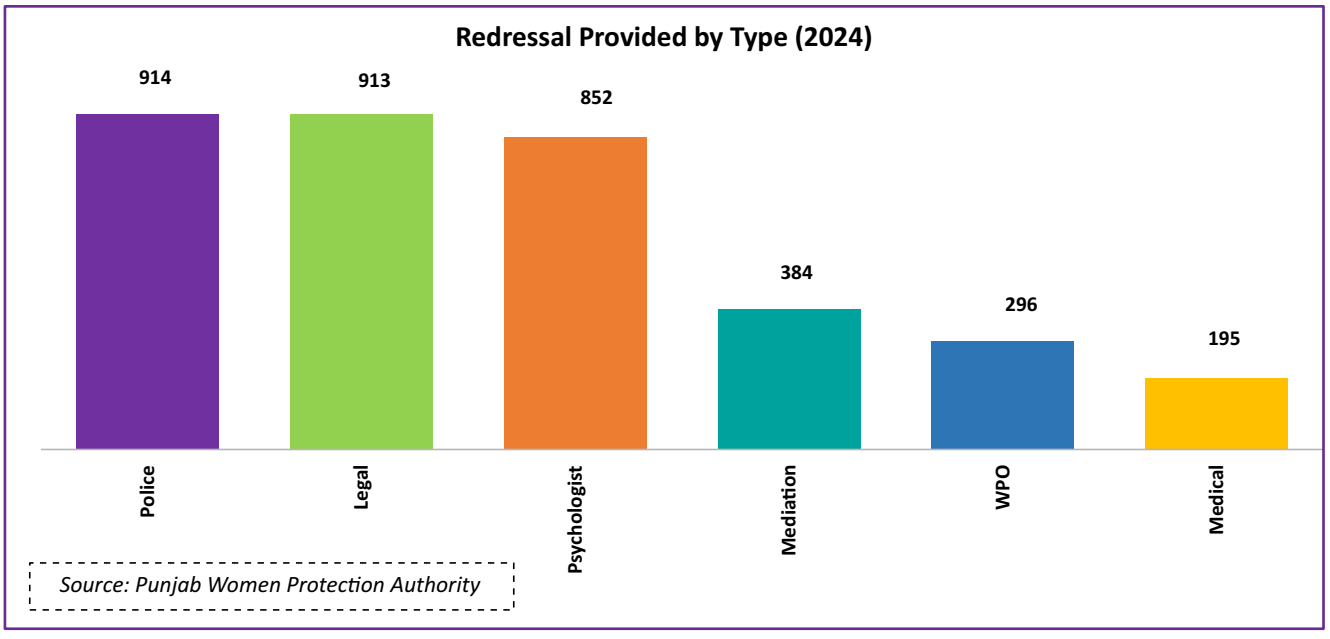


Figure 7.83

7.3.7.4 Helpline 1737

A dedicated Punjab women protection helpline 1737 was established and has been operating since 2024, which is a crucial component and serves as the first point of contact to report cases of violence. There were 1,300 cases of GBV reported in 2024 through the helpline. The highest numbers of GBV cases were of sexual and physical abuse, followed by psychological violence and family suit.

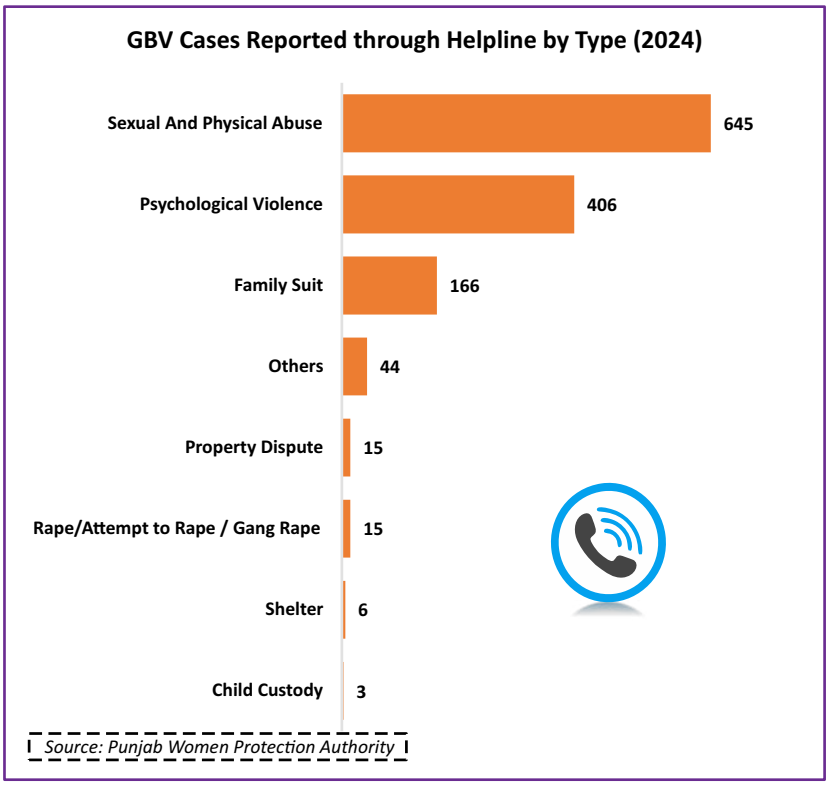


Figure 7.84

The helpline mandate is to also refer survivors to the relevant services and resources in line with their needs. According to the reported data, most cases were referred to District Women Protection Officers (DWPOs), followed by VAW center, legal assistance, psychologist and police (see figure 7.85 below).

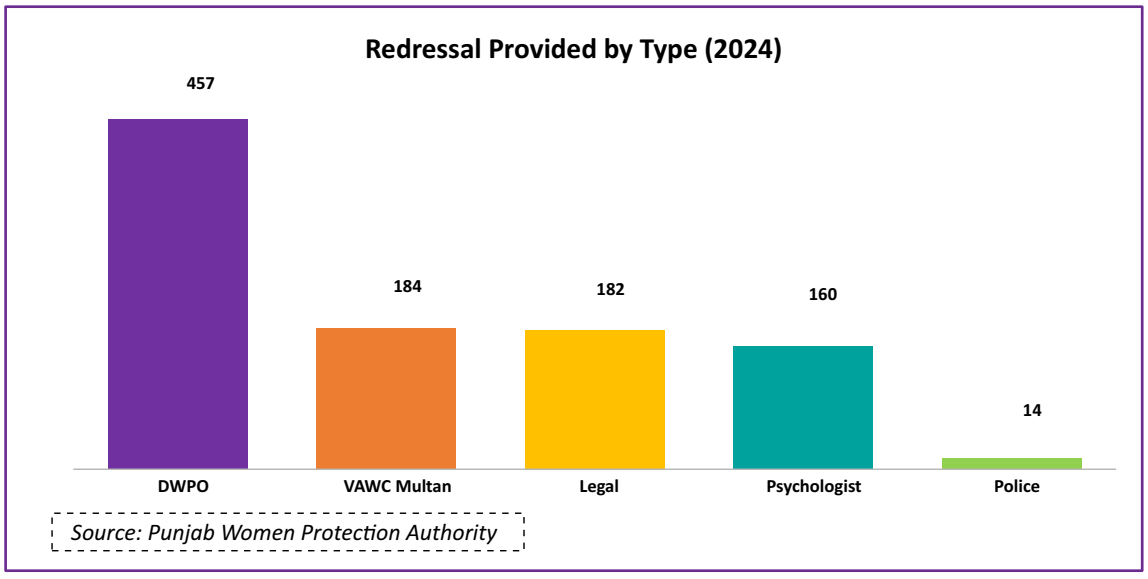


Figure 7.85

7.3.8 Punjab Women Helpline (1043)

The Punjab Women Helpline (1043), launched in 2014 by the Punjab Government, provides round-the-clock support to women in need. It operates as a 24/7 helpdesk offering professional assistance, including psychological and legal support. All services are delivered through specialists housed within the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), who handle complaints and inquiries. There were 18,360 calls received in 2023 and 26,466 in 2024, representing 44.15 percent increase in the number of calls.

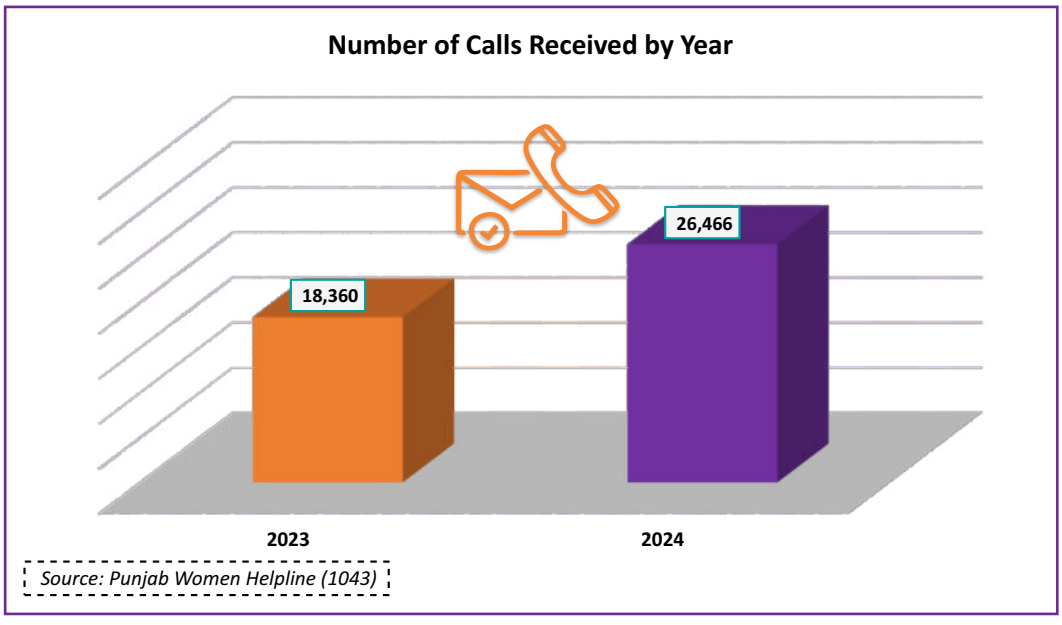


Figure 7.86

7.3.8.1 Number of Complaints

The analysis of complaints received showed that the number of complaints increased from 510 in 2023 to 1,195 in 2024. There were 149 cases of criminal offence, including rape, murder and kidnapping, 541 cases of domestic violence, 374 cases of harassment, 40 cases of family issues, 48 cases of property matters and 43 cases categorised as others, which included employment, health and education in 2024.

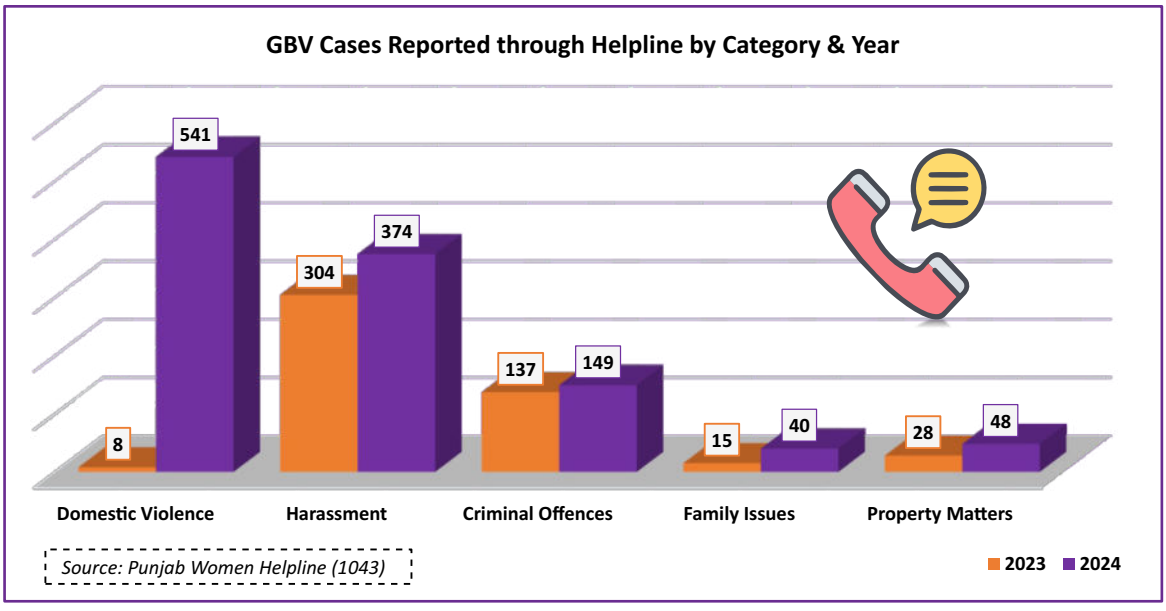


Figure 7.87

District-wise analysis showed that the frequency of complaints was highest in Lahore (371), followed by Faisalabad (81), and Rawalpindi (73) and the lowest in Narowal (four) in 2024.

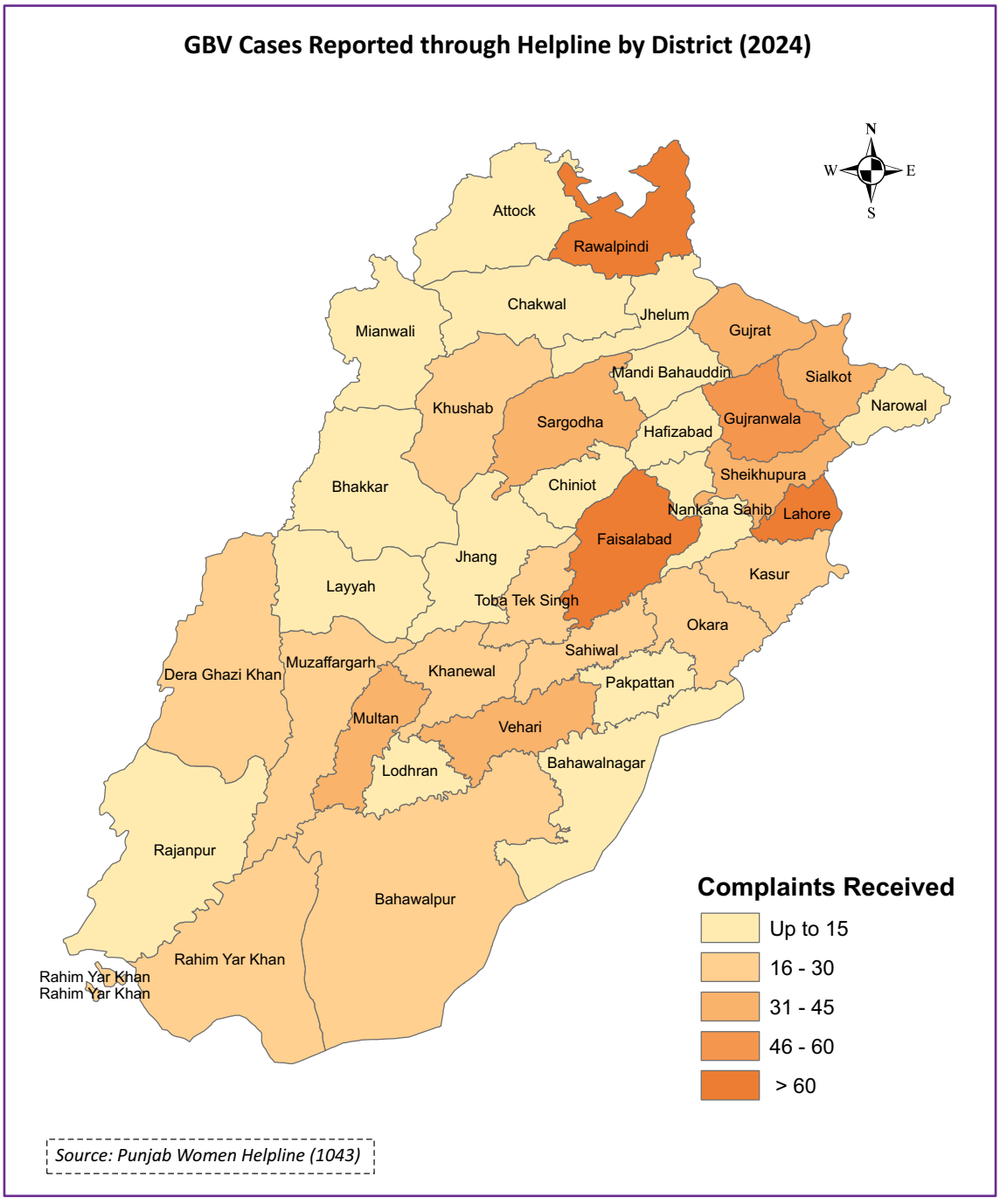


Figure 7.88

7.3.8.2 Number of Inquiries

The analysis of the number of inquiries showed that 10,149 inquiries were reported in 2023, increasing to 15,259 in 2024. In 2024, 8,712 inquiries were related to harassment, 1,764 were about family issues, 1,560 were about property matters, 819 were related to criminal offences, 359 inquiries were about domestic violence and the remaining 2,045 inquiries were classified as others, as presented in figure 7.89.

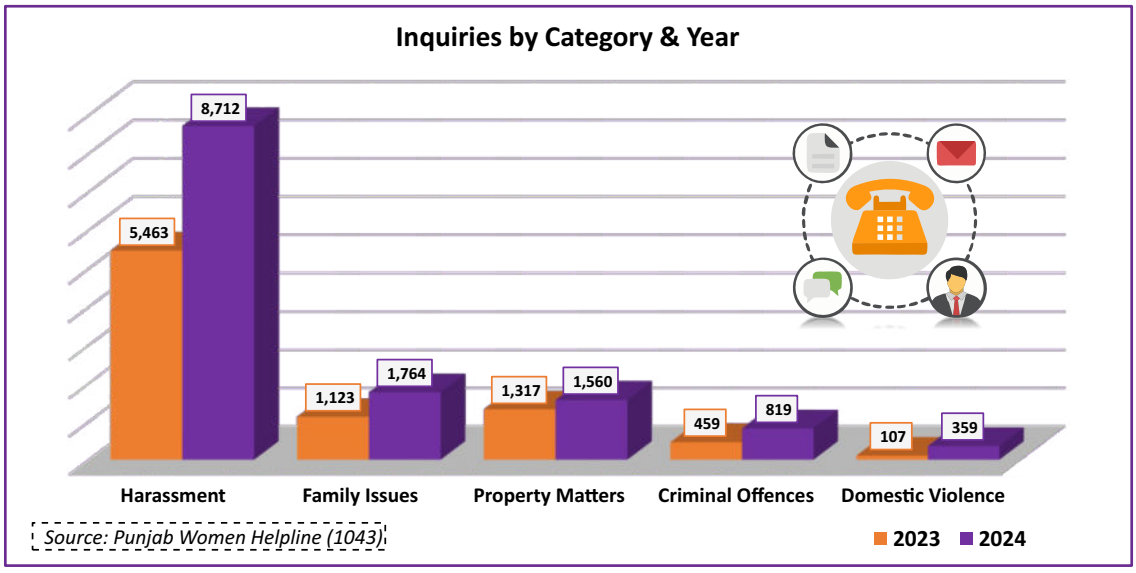


Figure 7.89

The highest number of inquiries was reported from Lahore (5,098), followed by Rawalpindi (1,495) and Faisalabad (1,046). The lowest number of inquiries was reported in Rajanpur (65) in 2024.

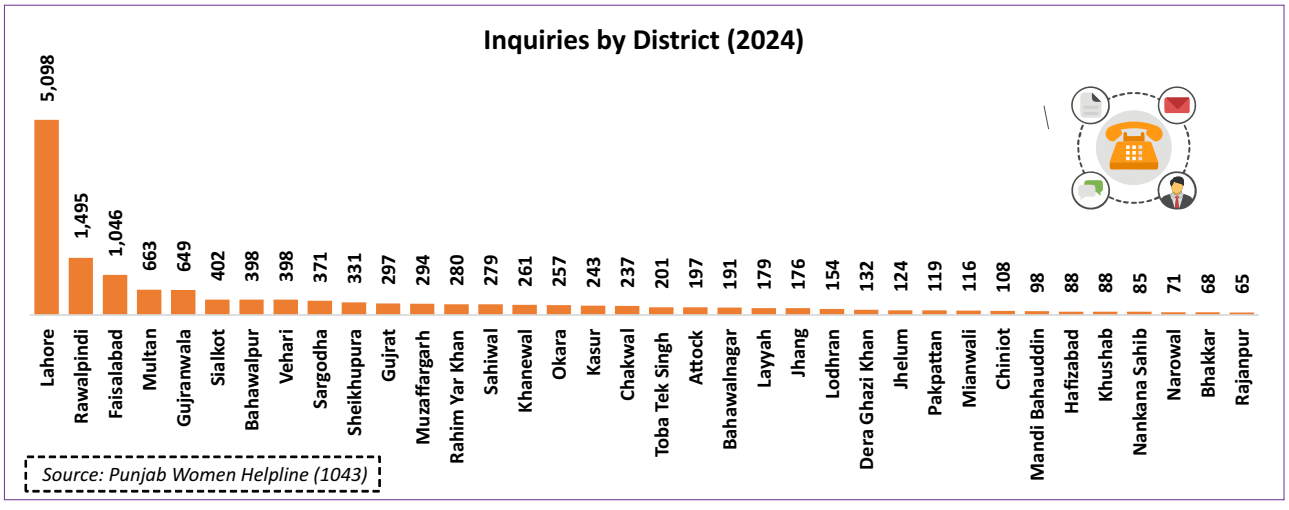


Figure 7.90

7.3.9 Ombudsperson

Ombudsperson is responsible for receiving and adjudicating complaints, conducting inquiries and issuing recommendations or orders to provide relief to aggrieved women. It derives its authority from the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 and the Punjab Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2021, respectively. All the reported cases are thoroughly investigated with appropriate measures taken to ensure effective redressal for affected women.[426]

7.3.9.1 Harassment Cases

The number of registered workplace harassment cases increased by 44.13 percent from 179 cases in 2023 to 258 in 2024. Furthermore, the data of the ombudsperson showed that there were only 3.35 percent of cases pending, 96.65 percent cases were decided/disposed of in 2024.

426 (Ombudsperson, Punjab, 2024)

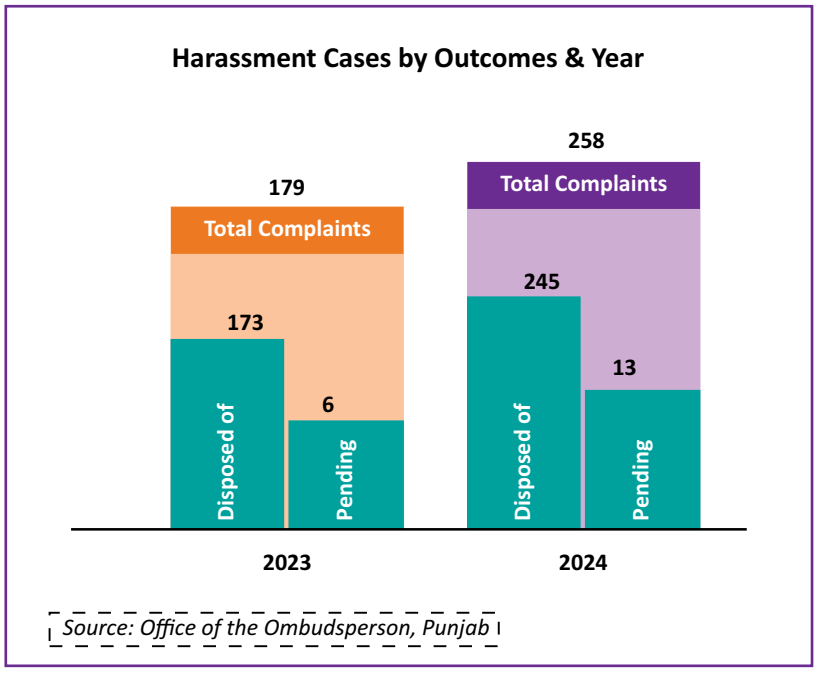


Figure 7.91

In 2023 and 2024, the highest number of cases of workplace harassment were reported in Lahore (203). Whereas, Mandi Bahauddin, Talagang, Gujrat, Khanewal, Narowal, Pakpattan and Layyah each reported one case.

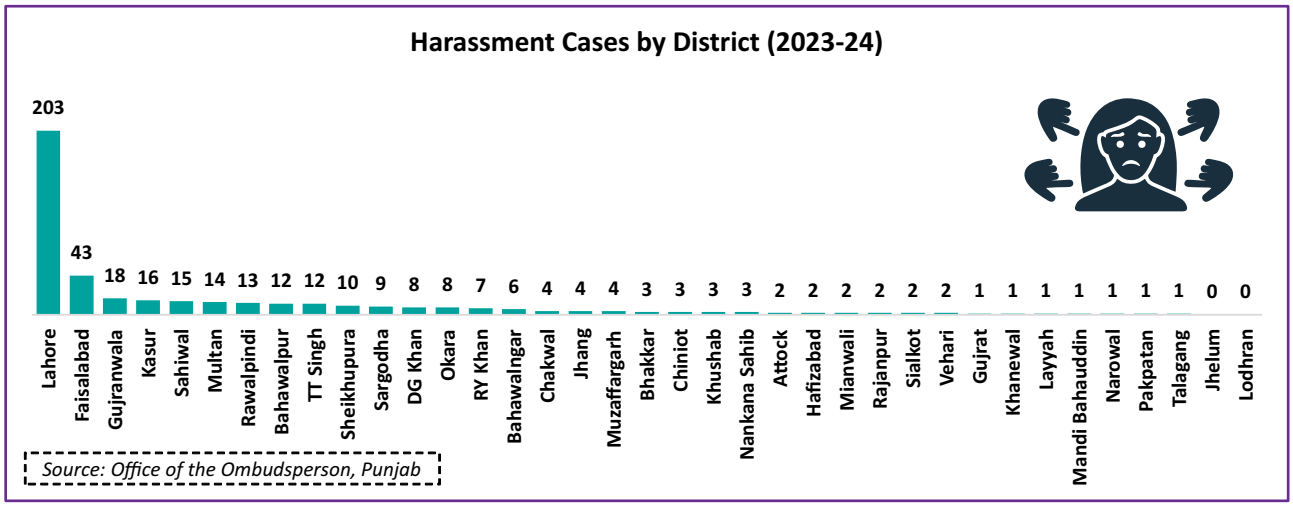


Figure 7.92

7.3.9.2 Property Cases

A total of 828 property cases were reported to the ombudsperson in 2023, and the number increased to 1,429 in 2024. The year-wise analysis by status of property cases showed that 52.41 percent of cases were pending in 2023 and 75.22 percent in 2024. The increase in pending cases indicates that while more women are seeking support from the ombudsperson, the system may require resources to keep pace with the growing caseload. The analysis of pending cases by division showed that the highest number of pending cases was reported in Gujranwala (298), while Gujrat reported the lowest number of pending cases (90).

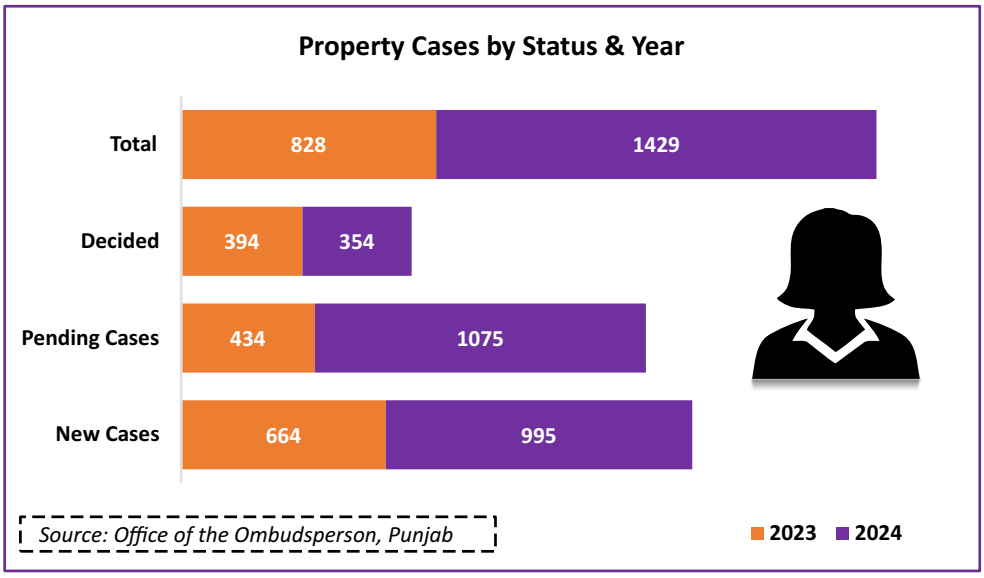


Figure 7.93

Please note that there were 933 cases with no date of institution mentioned; among them, 263 were decided and 670 were pending.

7.3.10 Punjab Information Commission

According to the Punjab Information Commission, a total of 3,197 complaints were filed under Right to Information (RTI) in 2023 and 5,392 in 2024, showing an increase in the number of complaints. Among the number of complainants, 95 percent were men and only five percent were women in 2024.

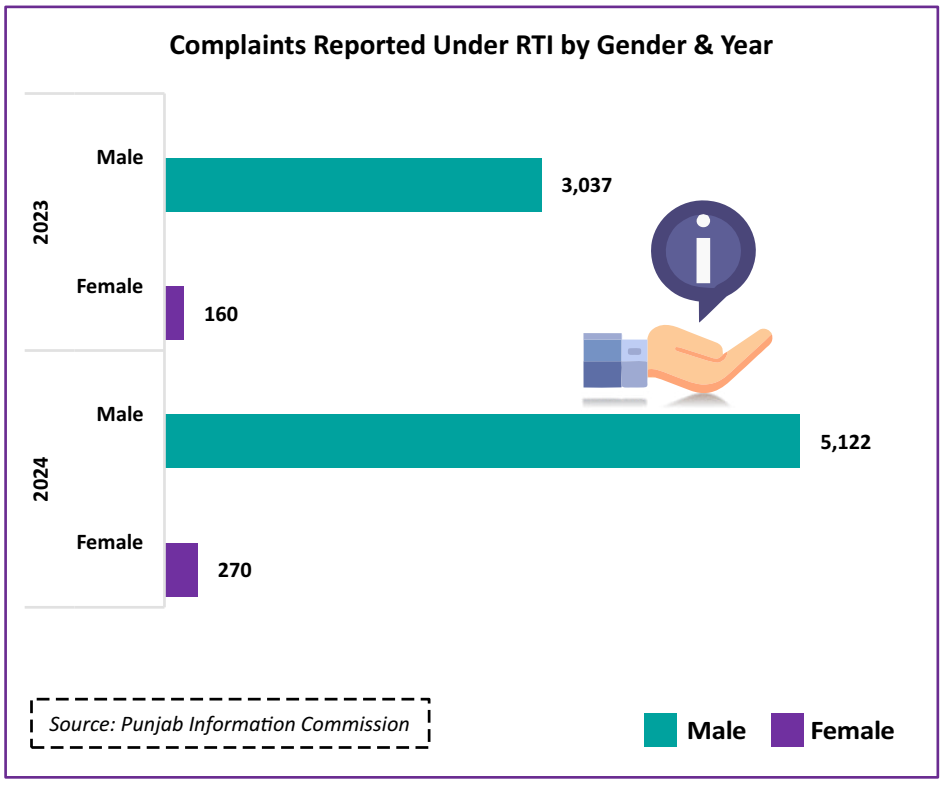


Figure 7.94

The commission had also organised training on the RTI Act 2013 for public information officers, lawyers, journalists and students. A total of 750 participants were trained in 2023 and 400 in 2024, indicating the efforts in raising awareness and sensitising the stakeholders regarding the enforcement of this right.

7.4 Child Protection and Welfare Bureau

The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau was established under the Punjab Destitute & Neglected Children Act 2004 (amended in 2017) to protect and rehabilitate children living in vulnerable circumstances. It aimed to provide a safe environment and access to essential development opportunities, including education and healthcare. The Bureau also operates a child helpline to offer immediate guidance, rescue services and protective custody. Along with that, it runs a dedicated child protection unit and institutes to ensure children's welfare.[427]

7.4.1 Child Protection Units (CPUs)

There were eight child protection units established, each in Kasur, DG Khan, Rajanpur, Hafizabad, Sargodha, Attock, T.T Singh and Muzaffargarh.

7.4.2 Child Protection Institutes (CPIs)

A total of nine child protection institutes were established, each in Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, RY Khan and Sahiwal.

7.4.3 Children's Enrolment at Child Protection Institutes

The enrolment of children in CPIs has increased by 18.20 percent from 2,835 students in 2023 to 3,351 in 2024. In both years, it was observed that the enrolment ratio showed more boys were enrolled as compared to girls.

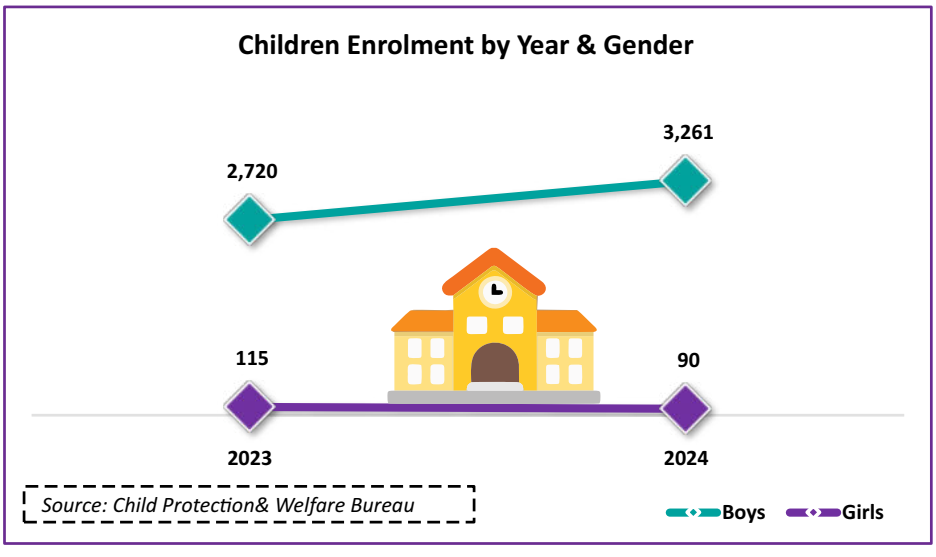


Figure 7.95

7.4.4 Number of Newborn Child Abandoned

Rescue 1122 data showed the reported number of newborns abandoned increased from 104 cases in 2023 to 121 cases in 2024. In 2024, around 64 newborn boys and 57 newborn girls were abandoned. The highest number of cases was reported in Lahore (18) followed by Multan (eight) and Rawalpindi (eight).

427 (Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, 2024)

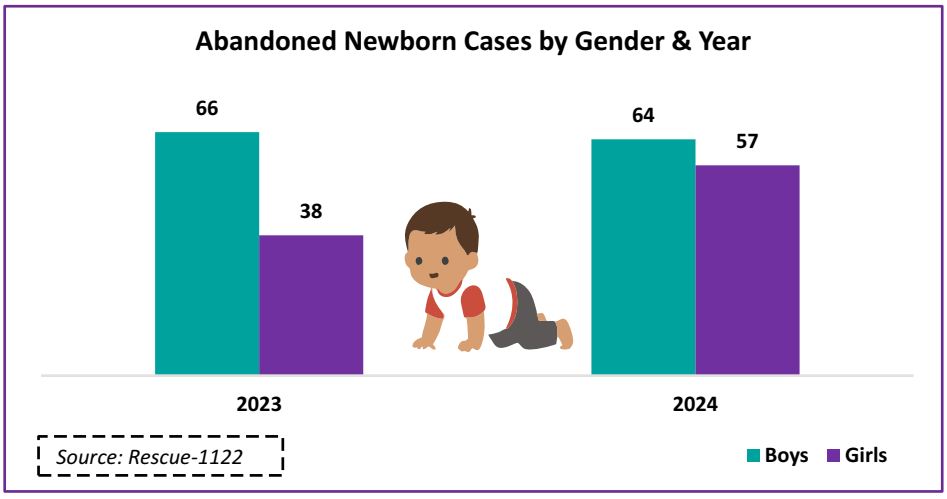


Figure 7.96

7.4.5 Number of Children Rescued

In 2023, there were a total of 6,579 children rescued and protected by the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Department across Punjab, among them 6,006 were boys and 573 were girls. Similarly, around 4,969 boys and 463 girls were rescued and protected in 2024.

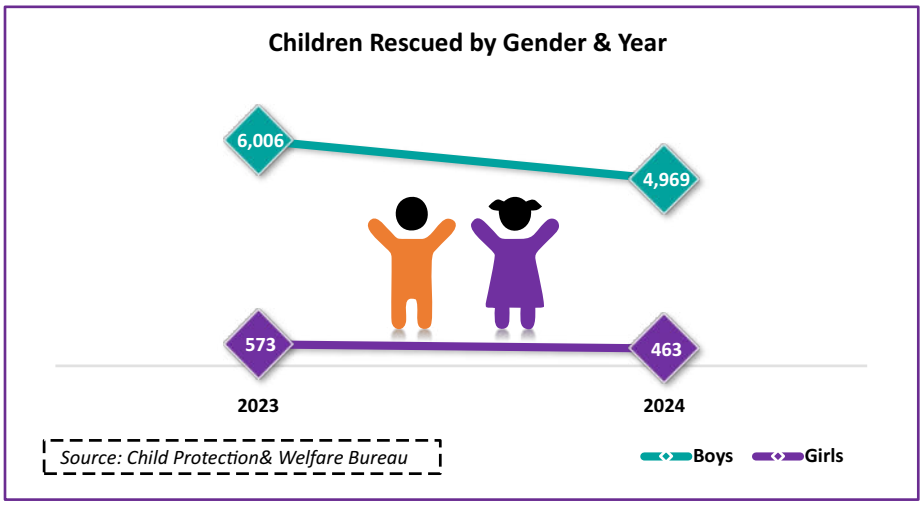


Figure 7.97

District-wise analysis indicated that the highest number of children rescued was reported in Rawalpindi (1,156) in 2024.

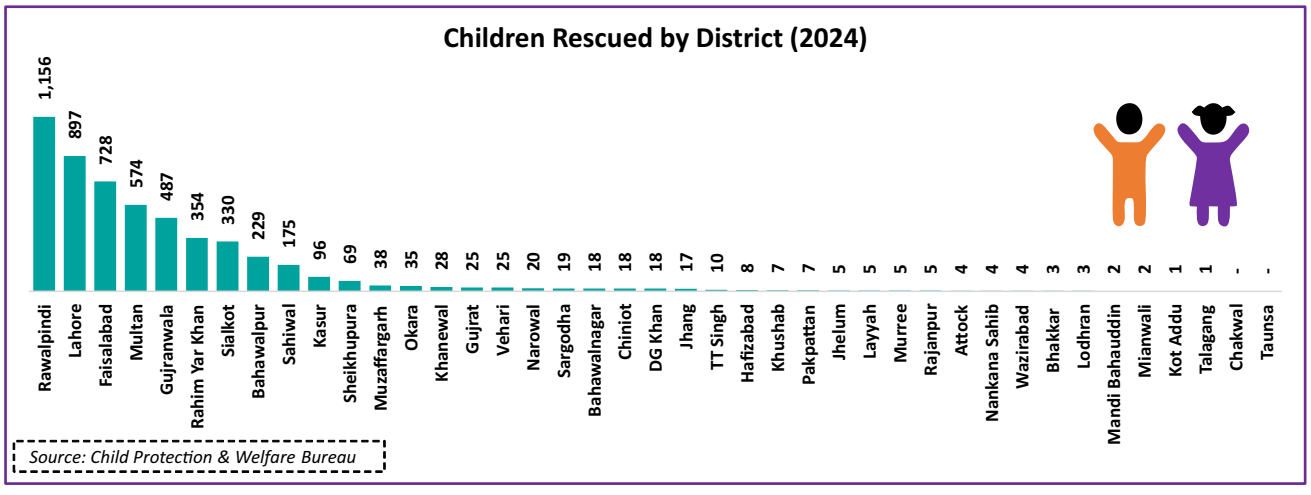


Figure 7.98

7.4.6 Number of Children Reunited with Family

The reported data showed that the number of children reunited with their families was 6,199 in 2023, among them 5,743 were boys and 456 were girls. In 2024, there were 5,010 children reunited with family, among them 4,608 were boys and 402 were girls.

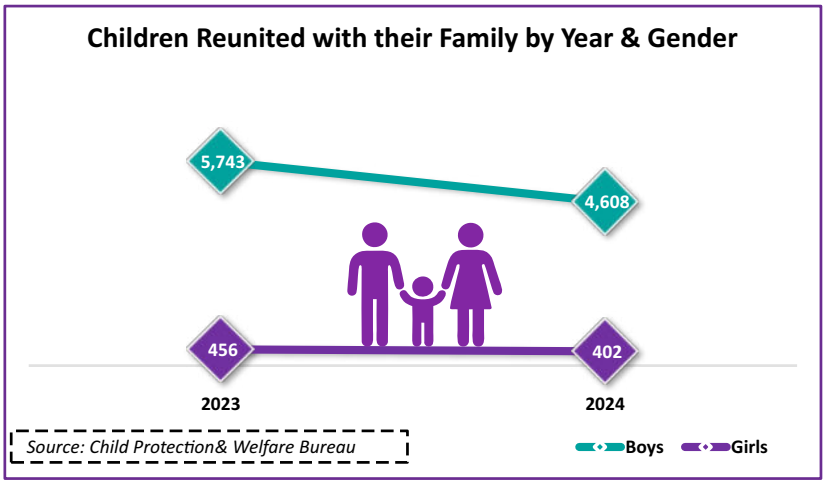


Figure 7.99

The highest number of children reunited with families was reported in Rawalpindi in 2024.

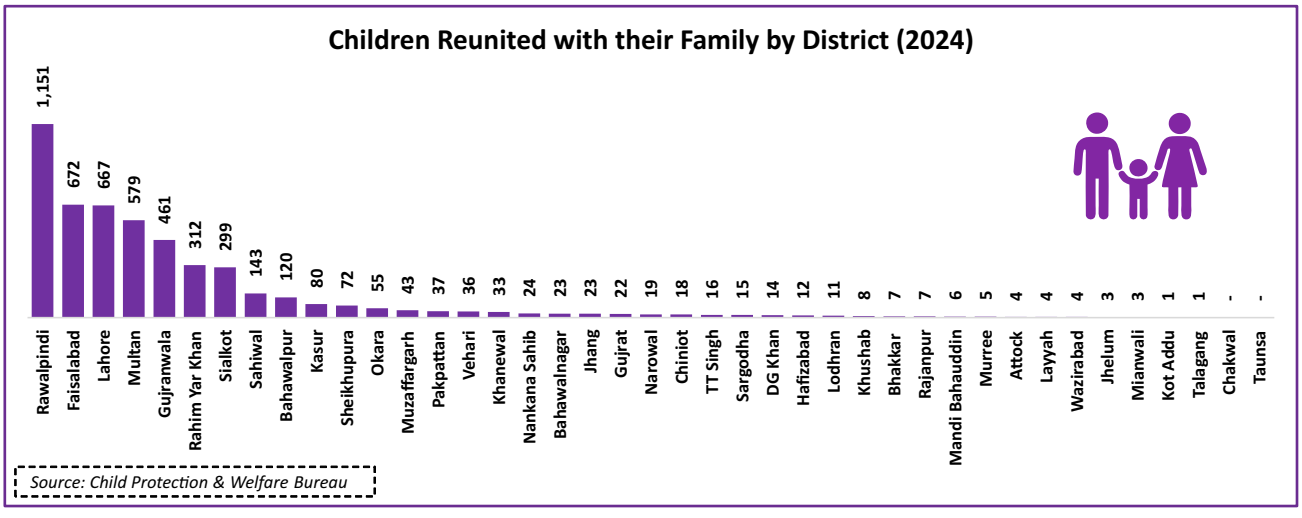


Figure 7.100

7.4.7 Number of Registered FIRs

The data of registered FIRs facilitated by CPIs showed that the number of FIRs increased from 189 in 2023 to 238 in 2024. A total of 101 cases were decided, 24 cases were undertrial, 15 were pending, and 3 resulted in acquittal in 2024.

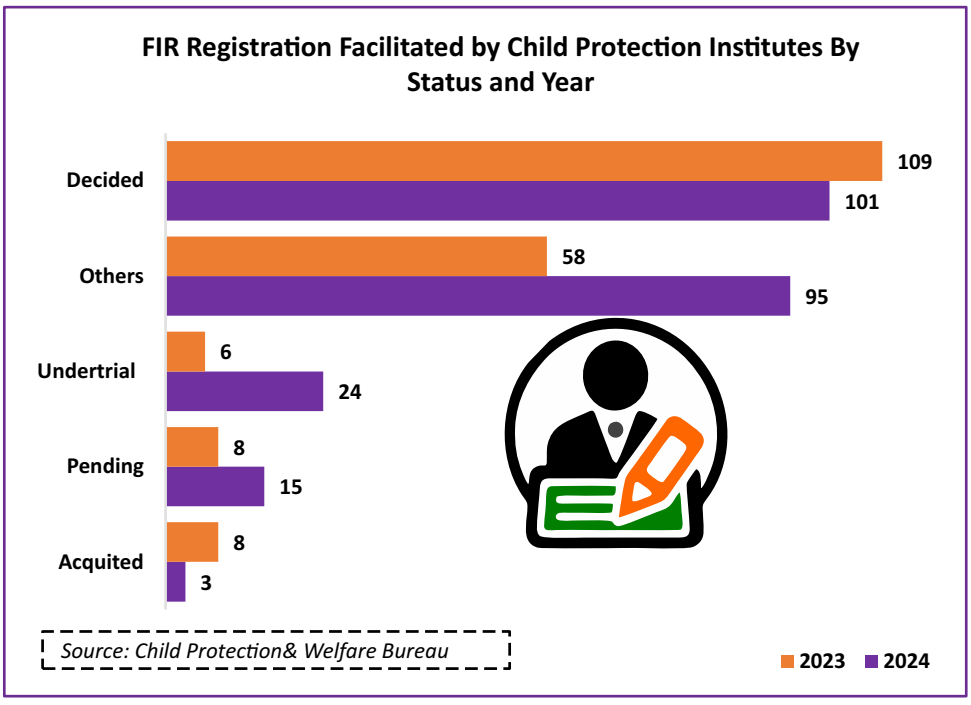


Figure 7.101

7.4.8 Virtual Centre for Child Safety (VCCS)

Responding to the growing concerns for child safety, the Virtual Centre for Child Safety was introduced to deal with the cases of violence against children. There were 27,837 cases reported, including 5,880 incidents of child loss, 3,231 of kidnapping, 2,991 cases of child abuse and 69 cases of child labour. Notably, the highest proportion of cases was categorised as others, which include cases of forced marriage, senior citizens reunification and special person cases etc. The analysis of the case outcomes showed 2,162 cases resulted in FIR and 25,675 were resolved.

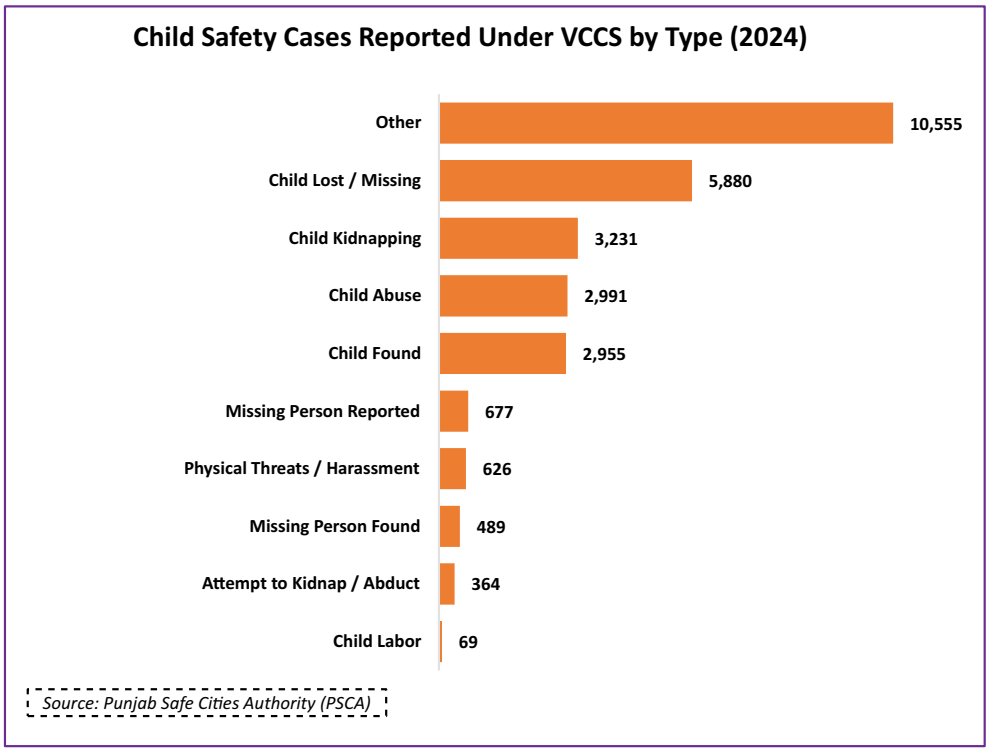


Figure 7.102

7.5 Legislative Framework

7.5.1 Provincial

Punjab Defamation Act 2024

Purpose

It offers legal protection against false, misleading, and defamatory statements on print, electronic, and social media, safeguarding the reputation and privacy of individuals by addressing defamation, slander, and libel within a clear legal framework.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The act explicitly recognises gender-based defamation by including defamatory content targeted at specific genders and minorities within the definition of defamation.
- Women who are the victims of defamation are provided special procedural support, including access to state-provided legal representation through the District Attorney and Advocate General's offices.
- Provision for in-camera proceedings in gender-sensitive defamation cases protects women from further harm, stigma, and public exposure.
- The strict timelines reduce delays that often disproportionately disadvantage women due to social pressure, mobility constraints, and reputational risks.
- Strong remedies, including general, special, and punitive damages, offer meaningful redress for online harassment, character assassination, and reputational harm frequently faced by women.

Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children (Amendment) Act 2025

Purpose

The amendments aim to create a legal framework to protect children in Punjab, strengthening and safeguarding destitute and neglected children through updated procedures, better enforcement, and increased penalties.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The amendments strengthen the protection framework for destitute and neglected children by enhancing penalties and enforcement mechanisms, which will benefit both girls and boys equally under the law.
- By allowing courts to impose imprisonment, fines, or both, the amendments improve accountability for offences that disproportionately affect girls, including neglect, abuse, and exploitation.
- The removal of sub-section (4) of section 6 is expected to simplify procedures, potentially reducing barriers to protection and access to care for vulnerable children of all genders.

Punjab Acid Control Act 2025

Purpose

This act addresses frequent acid attacks in Punjab, mainly harming women and causing lasting damage. It aims to regulate acids' distribution, sale, storage, and transportation, filling the legal gaps in their easy availability.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The act addresses GBV, as acid attacks in Punjab disproportionately affect women and girls, often causing lifelong physical, psychological, and social harm.
- Mandatory licensing, record-keeping, and buyer identification strengthen traceability, which can deter acid attacks targeting women and improve accountability.
- Prohibition on the sale of acid to people under 18 years adds a protective safeguard, particularly for young girls who are vulnerable to exploitation and violence.
- Strong penalties, sealing of premises, and confiscation of acid enhance deterrence against misuse, supporting women's right to safety and bodily integrity.
- Public awareness provisions highlight the human impact of acid attacks, contributing to social awareness of violence against women and prevention.

Punjab Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Act 2025

Purpose

Establish a provincial Centre of Excellence to coordinate evidence-based prevention, rehabilitation and research on violent extremism with a focus on gender-sensitive programming and women's roles in prevention and reintegration. The Centre is intended to mainstream gender into Countering Violent Extremism policy, recognising women both as survivors and as agents of community resilience.

Gender-Related Provisions

- Institutional research and training hub for Countering Violent Extremism with provincial ministry coordination.
- Mandatory gender-sensitive prevention and rehabilitation programming (women-focused outreach, survivor support).
- Data collection and policy advice functions to integrate gendered Countering Violent Extremism risks into provincial responses.

The Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace (Amendment) Bill 2025

Purpose

This bill updates the 2010 Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, making it gender neutral and broadening harassment to include more than sexual misconduct. It adds penalties for workplaces lacking disciplinary rules and mandates regular Parliament reports for oversight.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The Bill amends the Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2010, to make it gender-neutral by removing the words "of Women" from the title, preamble, and relevant provisions.
- It expands the definition of harassment to cover sexual, discriminatory, hostile, physical, verbal, psychological, and digital conduct, applicable to all persons regardless of gender.
- The amendments empower the Ombudsperson to impose financial penalties for non-compliance with mandatory workplace requirements. Bill simplifies enforcement by removing the distinction between minor and major penalties and strengthening oversight through the insertion of a new provision.

The Punjab Women's Inheritance Rights Enforcement Bill 2025

Purpose

This bill seeks to strengthen women's inheritance rights enforcement in Punjab through a clear legal framework. Although Islamic Law and the Constitution guarantee women's inheritance and property rights, enforcement is weak. The legislation aims to simplify succession processes and penalise inheritance denial fraud.

Gender-Related Provisions

- Makes women's inheritance rights explicitly enforceable across Punjab, strengthening legal recognition of women as lawful heirs.
- Prohibits the exclusion or disinheritance of women from inheritance under any custom or authority.
- Mandates compulsory inclusion of female heirs in mutation, partition, and transfer of property records.
- Requires written consent of all female heirs before any inherited property can be transferred.
- Empowers Ombudsperson to address complaints of women deprived of inheritance.
- Creates fast-track tribunals to ensure the timely resolution of women's inheritance disputes.
- Criminalises coercion, concealment, and fraud aimed at depriving women of their inheritance rights.
- Provides free legal aid and access to female lawyers to overcome gender-specific barriers to justice.
- Introduces state-led awareness measures to address cultural practices that discriminate against women in inheritance.

Punjab's Child Protection Policy 2025

- Establishes a province-wide, systems-based child protection framework focused on prevention, response, and rehabilitation for all forms of child abuse, violence, neglect, exploitation, and harmful practices, aligned with UNCRC and constitutional obligations.
- Prioritises the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, confidentiality, and meaningful child participation, emphasising family-based care and discouraging institutionalisation except as a last resort.
- Defines clear roles and accountability across provincial, district, and local levels, with the Child Protection & Welfare Bureau as the lead entity and structured coordination among government departments, police, judiciary, health, education, and civil society.
- Introduces integrated case management, referral mechanisms, and data systems (CP-IMS) to ensure coordinated, child-friendly responses and evidence-based decision-making.
- Emphasises capacity building, resource allocation, monitoring, and public awareness, including mainstreaming child protection into sectoral policies, budgets, curricula, and service delivery across Punjab.
- Punjab Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Rules 2024
- Establishes enforceable rights for persons with disabilities, including equality, non-discrimination, protection from abuse, and full participation in education, healthcare, employment, political life, and cultural activities.
- Mandates accessibility standards across public and private infrastructure, transport, buildings, and services, and provides assistive devices to promote independent mobility and living.
- Strengthens inclusion in education and employment through curriculum adaptation, disability data collection, reserved quotas, vocational training centres, and mandatory workplace record-keeping.

- Ensures social protection through free healthcare, rehabilitation, insurance coverage, social assistance schemes, disaster protection, and access to sports and recreational facilities.
- Creates a structured financial and governance framework for disability services, including dedicated funds, transparent budgeting, audits, and institutional accountability mechanisms.

7.5.2 Federal

ICT Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2024

Purpose

It aims to reduce child marriage in Pakistan, which harms children, especially girls, and violates their rights. The law seeks to protect children in the ICT and aligns with global efforts to end child marriage by 2030.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The act has defined a child who is under 18 years and introduced stricter punishment for male adults marrying a child. According to this act, any child marriage will be treated as child abuse and criminalised coercion and trafficking of children for marriage.
- Parents and guardians found involved in facilitating child marriage will be held accountable, and age verification will be mandatory for Nikah registration.

Acid and Burn Crime Act, 2024

Purpose

It responds to rising acid attacks and burn crimes affecting women and children, often leaving survivors without justice. It aims to establish a clear legal framework to deter offenders, ensure accountability, and provide free medical, psychological, and rehabilitation services for survivors.

Gender-Related Provisions

- This act has outlined a clear and swift mechanism for the investigation and prosecution of acid and burn crimes and mandates free medical and psychological care and legal aid to survivors.
- It has also ensured to provide witness protection and shelter to survivors and free accommodation of up to two years for child survivors.
- One of the prominent provisions is the establishment of a monitoring board with 33 percent women's representation and extending support to dependents of survivors as well.

Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 (PECA 2025)

Purpose

The proposed amendments aim to strengthen cybercrime response by establishing the Digital Rights Protection Authority to safeguard digital rights and regulate online content. They define unlawful online material, including hate speech and misinformation, and introduce measures to coordinate with social media platforms for compliance with the National Law.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The amendments involved expanding the definition of the complainant, regulation and removal of unlawful or offensive online content, followed by the establishment of the Digital Rights Protection and Regulatory Authority to provide an institutional mechanism for addressing online abuse, misinformation, and harassment.

- It has also added rapid complaint handling within 24 hours and clearly stated penal provisions for intentional dissemination of fake information, followed by oversight through tribunals and complaint councils.

Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2025

Purpose

This Act aims to reduce domestic violence in the ICT by establishing a legal framework for victim protection, defining domestic violence, offering preventive measures and legal remedies, and ensuring accountability of perpetrators to eliminate all forms of violence abuse.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The amendments were made to ensure gender inclusivity by including men and transgender persons within the definition of aggrieved persons. It has also strengthened and expanded the definition of domestic violence and recognised gendered harm, such as threats of divorce or second marriage, etc, to address culturally rooted violence against women.
- It has guaranteed right of residence in the shared household, ensuring provision for monetary relief, maintenance, and compensation and clearly stated protection and residence orders.
- It mandates the establishment of Protection Committees and Officers and access to shelter homes, medical care, legal aid, and psychosocial support to survivors.

Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act, 2025

(The bill is awaiting presidential assent to become an Act)

Purpose

Modernise the federal anti-trafficking framework to strengthen protection, prosecution and prevention measures, with expanded safeguards addressing trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced marriage, which disproportionately affect women and girls. The amendment prioritises victim support and rehabilitation pathways.

Gender-Related Provisions

- Broader legal definitions and higher penalties for trafficking offences involving sexual exploitation and forced marriage.
- Strengthened victim protection (rehabilitation, shelter, legal aid) and child-sensitive procedures.
- Enhanced inter-agency coordination and mandatory reporting mechanisms to identify and prevent trafficking routes targeting women and girls.

National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Bill, 2025

(The bill is awaiting assent to become an Act)

Purpose

Strengthen the statutory mandate, composition and accountability mechanisms of the National Commission on the Status of Women to improve federal oversight and enforcement on women's rights and gender equality. The amendment seeks faster reporting and stronger investigatory powers.

Gender-Related Provisions

- Revised composition and quorum requirements to ensure stronger women's representation and regional/provincial inclusion.

- Time-bound reporting obligations and enhanced powers to direct follow-up action to line ministries.
- Expanded investigatory and coordination authority to track implementation of gender-related laws and policies.

Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Section 498AA)

Purpose

This bill addresses gaps in enforcing women's inheritance rights caused by cultural barriers, leading to delays or denials. It establishes legal obligations to enforce court decrees, protecting women's inheritance rights.

Gender-Related Provisions

- Mandates time-bound enforcement of women's inheritance rights by requiring transfer of the decreed inheritance share to the entitled woman within 120 days.
- Introduces criminal liability for non-compliance, strengthening deterrence against deliberate denial or delay of women's inheritance.
- Recognises denial of inheritance as a gender-based rights violation and enhances access to justice for women by linking court decrees with enforceable penalties, reducing prolonged litigation and coercive settlement practices.

Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Amendment Bill, 2025

Purpose

This amendment enhances child protection by tackling procedural delays and re-traumatisation in abuse cases. It establishes specialised child courts with faster, child-sensitive procedures to ensure swift justice, victim protection, and prioritise the child's best interests process.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The Bill strengthens legal protections for child victims by mandating that such cases be heard by Child Courts instead of general special courts.
- The requirement for a medical examination within 24 hours, conducted in a dignified and child-sensitive manner, addresses gender-specific vulnerabilities of child victims, including fear, stigma, and secondary trauma.
- Mandatory preservation of forensic evidence improves conviction prospects in sexual violence cases, which disproportionately affect girls and are often weakened by delayed or improper evidence collection.
- The restriction on the grant of bail, except in exceptional circumstances, prioritises the safety and welfare of the child victim, reducing the risk of intimidation, coercion, or repeat abuse risks that are particularly acute for girl children.

Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Purpose

The proposed addition of section 498D and schedule II criminalises domestic violence by prescribing strict penalties for intentional acts of abuse. It ensures imprisonment ranging from six months to five years, a fine between one hundred thousand and one million rupees or both for effective deterrence and accountability.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The amendment explicitly criminalises domestic violence under the Pakistan Penal Code, recognising it as a serious offence rather than a private or civil matter.
- The definition of domestic violence expressly includes gender-based physical and psychological abuse, acknowledging

that women are the primary victims within domestic settings.

- The introduction of mandatory minimum punishment strengthens deterrence against domestic violence, a crime often underreported due to social and gender norms.
- Clear recognition of domestic relationships ensures protection for women in marital, familial, and household arrangements where abuse is most prevalent.

National Commission on the Rights of the Child (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Purpose

The amendment sets a clear deadline for the commission's annual report and requires full cooperation from federal and provincial authorities, strengthening the commission's ability to perform its functions effectively.

Gender-Related Provisions

- The amendment strengthens gender representation within the National Commission on the Rights of the Child by mandating that at least two members be women, ensuring women's perspectives are reflected in child rights policymaking.
- Guaranteed inclusion of a minority representative and mandatory and time-bound annual reporting to Parliament
- Empowering the Commission to seek assistance from federal and provincial executive authorities strengthens enforcement capacity, benefiting girls who often face systemic barriers in protection and access to remedies.

7.6 Conclusion

The government has undertaken several initiatives to reform the justice system and prevent GBV, reflecting growing institutional recognition of the need to address violence through legal, administrative, and service delivery mechanisms. However, GBV reported cases in Punjab continue to rise, while conviction rates remain critically low. This gap between increased reporting and limited justice outcomes points to persistent structural weaknesses within the criminal justice system that constrain survivors' access to justice.Although reporting mechanisms have expanded, justice delivery has not progressed at the same pace. Survivors continue to face systemic and socio-cultural barriers, even with the establishment of women protection centres, dedicated helplines, GBV cells, and digital reporting mechanisms such as mobile applications. As a result, increased reporting has not consistently translated into timely, fair, and effective legal outcomes.Strengthening justice outcomes requires a more structured and coordinated response that addresses both the incidence of violence and its consequences. The effectiveness of this response depends largely on how government institutions handle GBV cases, including their adherence to principles of integrity, accountability, and due process. Strengthening gender-responsive policing, investing in judicial capacity building, increasing women's representation across justice institutions, and ensuring the effective implementation of protective laws are all critical to breaking the cycle of impunity. Without translating institutional efforts into meaningful justice outcomes, access to justice for survivors remains incomplete.

7.7 Recommendations

The Punjab Government has committed to bringing reforms within the criminal justice system to improve accessibility for survivors seeking help. However, there are certain gaps in the reporting and investigation of incidents, especially gender-based violence, followed by gender imbalance within the police and judiciary, which have made the Criminal Justice System inaccessible for women and transgender persons. Therefore, the justice system needs to be strengthened and centralised for effective management of GBV cases.

Strengthening of GBV Reporting

- Punjab Government to prioritise the GBV agenda by raising awareness through media and within the community to challenge gender norms and educate people on GBV and promote help-seeking behaviours. Such campaigns raise awareness, which gradually shifts behaviour, leading to an increase in reporting of GBV cases.
- GBV, especially physical and sexual assault cases, are time sensitive; hence, there is a need to strengthen the laws mandating immediate registration of FIR upon receipt of complaints and initiation of investigation to ensure legal proceedings occur without any delay to improve conviction rates.
- Expansion of virtual women police stations and women police stations, especially in the areas where the GBV cases are highly reported, allowing the marginalised population to seek help.
- IG Police to record and provide GBV cases data segregated by districts, area and gender with special focus on women and transgender persons. It will allow the relevant stakeholders to effectively plan the interventions.
- IG Police to organise gender sensitive training for the police workforce, including equipping them with skills to effectively manage GBV cases.
- IG Police to ensure gender balance workforce, which is pertinent as women avoid seeking help due unavailability of female police officers at the respective stations. IG Police must arrange community sessions within colleges and universities to attract aspiring students and offer work-life balance to encourage more women within the workforce.
- IG Police to include mandatory training of police officers on medico-legal aspects to ensure proper procedures are followed, preservation of evidence, and collaboration between law enforcement and medical professionals.

Strengthening of the Judicial System

- Government of Punjab to promptly fill any vacant positions within the judiciary with a gender balance approach and strengthen judicial infrastructure by developing more courtrooms.
- Expansion of specialised courts such as GBV courts to ensure effective case management of GBV.
- Punjab Judicial Academy to increase the participation within gender sensitive training for judges, lawyers and prosecutors to equip them with the skills to handle GBV cases effectively.
- Punjab Government to notify a provincial task force to monitor the judicial delays, especially cases of GBV and Child Protection and take potential administrative action, where deemed necessary.
- The low conviction rates for rape, honour crimes, and kidnapping across Punjab highlight gaps in the legal and judicial systems. Specialised GBV courts should be established in high-risk districts to ensure faster trials and better handling of sensitive cases.

Expansion of Punjab Forensic Science Agency

- There are only a few regional forensic offices within Punjab, which causes undue strain due to the large number of cases submitted for analysis. It is recommended to establish field offices in all districts to improve case management.

- Deploy mobile forensic units and standardised rape kits and trained medico-legal officers across underserved districts to improve prosecutorial outcomes.

Strengthening of Prison

- One of the purposes of the prison is to ensure the reintegration of inmates back into society, and for this Prison Department must ensure that the UN Standard Minimum Rules (the Nelson Mandela Rules) are followed. A special focus should be placed on providing food, sanitation, mental health support, and vocational programmes.
- Due to the growing violence and torture within prisons, the prison department must implement measures, including establishing a confidential and effective complaint mechanism to report such incidents.
- According to prison data, over 70 percent of inmates were undertrial, causing overcrowding in the prison. Therefore, the Home Department and Prison Department must bring changes by increasing the number of jails and strengthening the bail system and providing free legal aid to help expedite trials and reduce detention.
- The Probation and Parole Department to ensure that more women are recruited for the position of probation and parole officers to ensure gender gender-balanced workforce.
- The Prison Department to increase the number of women and juvenile jails and expand rehabilitation programs for first-time offenders, including offering education and skill development programs.

Combating Harmful Practices

- Government of Punjab to strengthen the mechanism for the determination of age, and enhance oversight of nikkah khwans and registrars, and village secretaries. Reinforce enforcement mechanisms to enable timely reporting and effective legal action.
- Besides a strengthening policy and its implementation, combating harmful practices required a behaviour change intervention. It is recommended to ensure collaboration with the LHW program to include GBV sensitisation within their agenda and quick doorstep referral.
- Strengthen community-based mechanisms to identify and refer children and families at risk of child marriage, linking them to incentivised socio-economic support and comprehensive child protection services.
- Finalise, adopt, and notify the National Framework to End Child Marriage in Pakistan and operationalise it through a five-year, youth-participatory and contextually relevant national programme that draws on lessons learned, local resources, and national and international good practices.

Centralised GBV System

- It is recommended that existing women protection centres, including VAWC and Women Crisis Centres, must operate under a centralised reporting, follow-up and case management system.
- The Punjab Safe City has launched two apps, i.e. Public Safety App and Women's Safety App. It is recommended that the app should allow users to track the status of their complaints and also integrate the emergency service helpline 1122.
- Government of Punjab to mandate integration of 1043 helpline and ombudsperson e-complaint to streamline workplace harassment complaints and property cases and ensure timely redressal.

SECTION 03

08 SPECIAL INITIATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The status of women in Pakistan has evolved since the country's inception, and considerable progress has been made in advancing women's rights and well-being through federal and provincial legislations. These efforts reflect a growing recognition of the need to protect women's rights and promote their participation across social, economic, and political spheres.

Despite this progress, women in Pakistan, similar to women in other developing countries, continue to lag behind their male counterparts across most major walks of life. The challenges faced by women are both structural and systemic, encompassing legal, political, and cultural barriers. These challenges range from limited career progression and workplace constraints faced by women, to workplace harassment and discrimination. In addition, women's lived experiences and needs are often insufficiently reflected in policy design and implementation, further reinforcing gender-based disparities.

Addressing these gaps requires sustained, targeted initiatives focused on women's welfare. Ensuring that the rights of nearly half of the population are upheld and advanced is not only an ethical imperative but also a prerequisite for inclusive and sustainable development. Achieving this objective necessitates a proactive and coordinated role for the government.

In this regard, various federal ministries and departments of the Government of Punjab work toward the overarching goal of gender equality and parity. These efforts span multiple sectors, including health, education, and governance, as outlined in the Punjab Gender Parity Report (PGPR). Government entities are responsible for identifying women's needs across these domains and addressing them through policies and special initiatives, in line with national and international legal frameworks and in accordance with principles of equity, justice, and fairness.

Given the scope and importance of these initiatives, their detailed analysis is warranted. This chapter outlines key special initiatives, as well as Annual Development Programmes and flagship initiatives of the Chief Minister of Punjab, that target the welfare of women and transgender persons. It also provides an overview of the beneficiaries of these initiatives.

The primary analysis presented in this chapter, however, draws on findings from an administrative survey conducted by the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) as part of PGPR. The survey is designed to assess the extent to which government workplaces are enabling for female employees. Standardised survey forms were circulated to all government departments, district offices, statutory bodies, and autonomous bodies as part of the PGPR data request process. The forms collected information on the availability of women-specific facilities, such as separate washrooms and prayer areas, as well as workplace accommodations that influence women's participation in the workforce, including maternity leave and age-related provisions.

For this year's report, PCSW expanded the scope of its administrative survey of government entities to include a data query on the modes of transport utilised by government employees, including private and public transport. The expanded scope also covers ramp access, washrooms for persons with disabilities, and public and private hostel facilities availed by female employees.



8.1 Accommodations

8.1.1 Maternity Leave

In 2023, maternity leave was availed by 4.7 percent of female employees in provincial departments, reported by 38.6 percent of those departments. At the district level, 4.4 percent of female employees availed maternity leave in 24.4 percent of district offices.

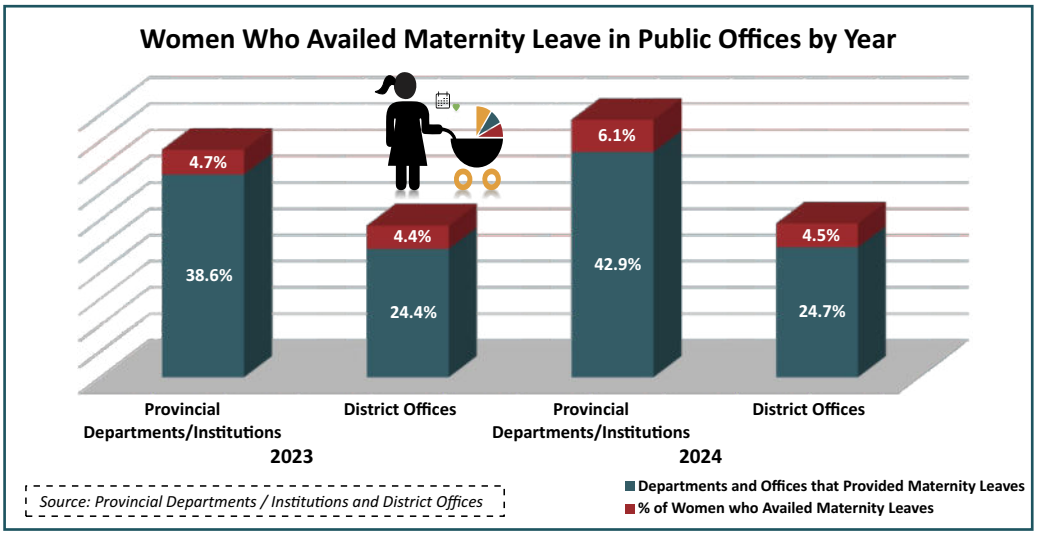


Figure 8.1

In 2024, the proportion of female employees availing maternity leave increased to 6.1 percent in provincial departments, reported by 42.9 percent of all departments. At the district level, 4.5 percent of female employees availed maternity leave in 24.7 percent of district offices.

8.1.2 Paternity Leave

Overall, the proportion of government employees availing paternity leave declined over the observation period.

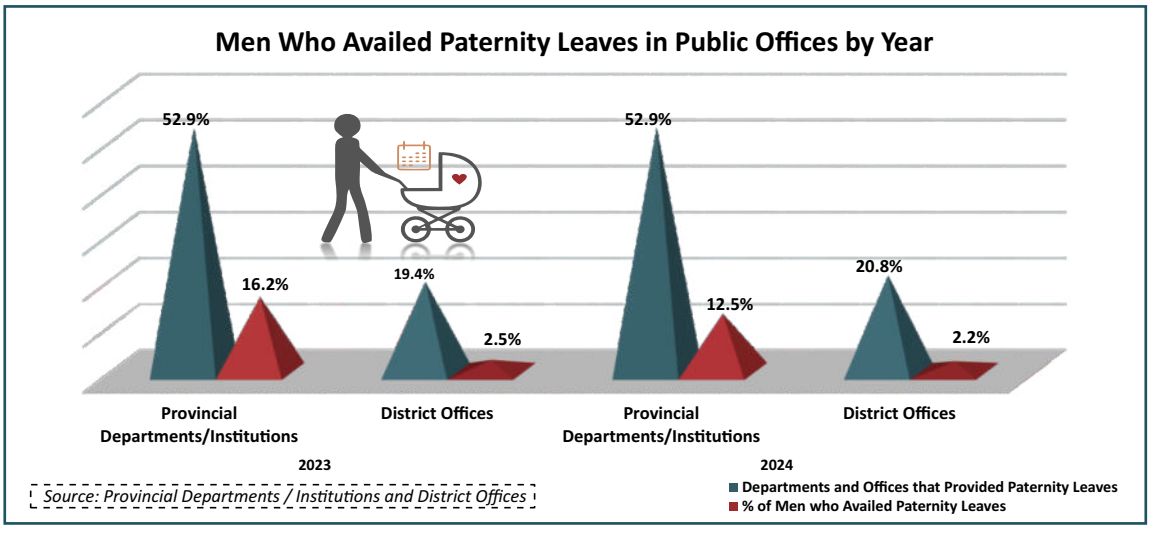


Figure 8.2

In 2024, paternity leave was availed by 12.5 percent of male employees in provincial departments, as reported by 52.9 percent of departments. At the district level, 2.2 percent of male employees availed paternity leave in 20.8 percent of district offices, reflecting a pattern broadly consistent with the previous year.

8.1.3 Mode of Transportation

In provincial departments, a higher proportion of women than men reported using public transport. In 2024, public transport was used by 23.3 percent of female employees, compared to 14.8 percent of male employees, reflecting a continuation of the pattern observed in the previous year.

In district offices, a higher proportion of male employees than female employees used public transport. In 2024, public transport was used by 9.1 percent of male employees and 4.8 percent of female employees, indicating a slight increase from the previous year for both groups.

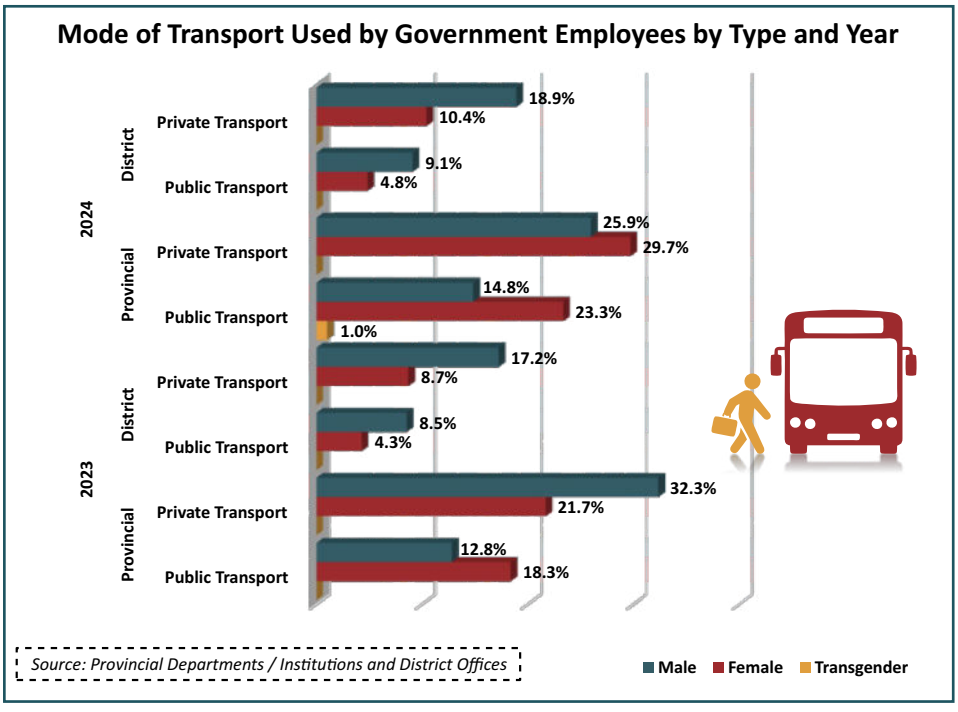


Figure 8.3

In contrast, private transport use among provincial departments showed gender-specific trends. In 2024, 25.9 percent of male employees and 29.7 percent of female employees reported using private transport, indicating a shift from the previous year when private transport use was higher among men.

In district offices, men continued to constitute both the absolute and relative majority of private transport users. In 2024, private transport was used by 18.9 percent of male employees and 10.4 percent of female employees, reflecting an increase for both groups compared to the previous year.

8.1.4 Age Relaxation

As part of the Punjab Women Empowerment Package 2012[428], age relaxation is provided for women in public sector recruitment, the upper age limit had increased from 35 to 38 years.

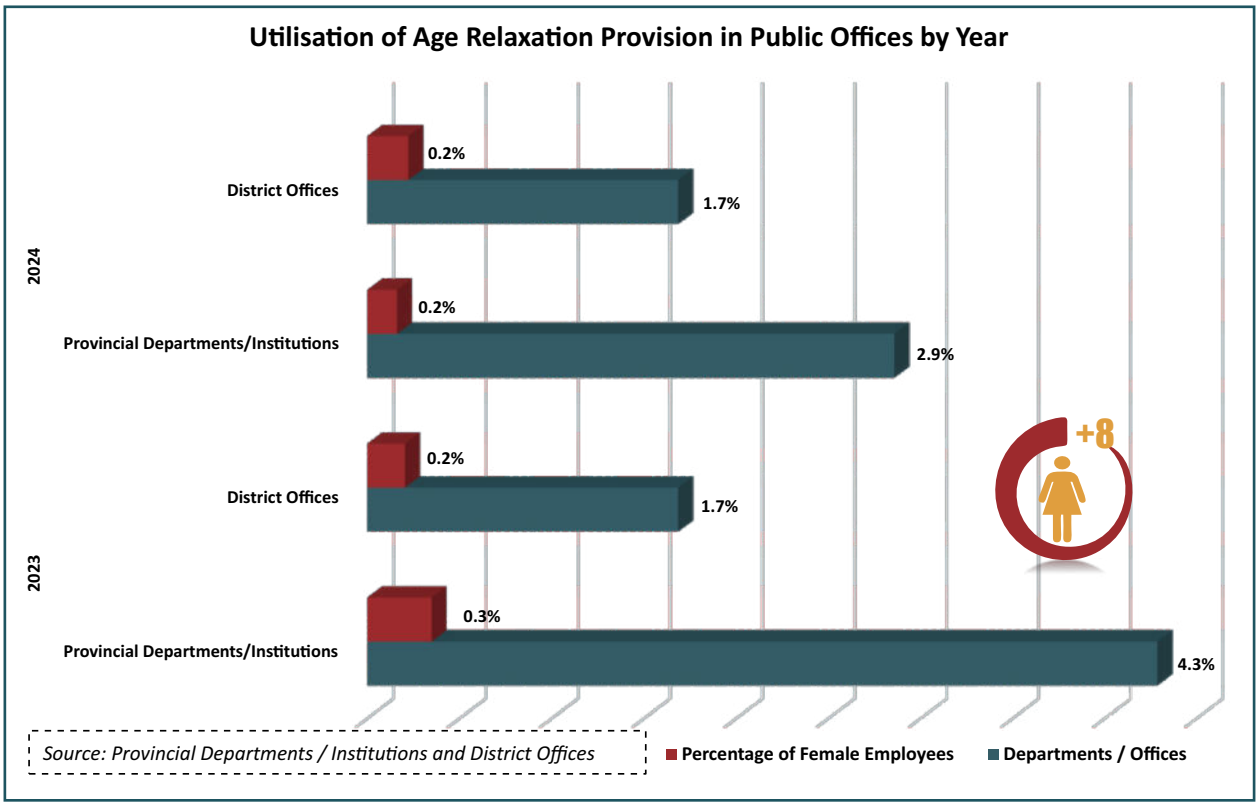


Figure 8.4

In 2024, age relaxation was availed by 0.2 percent of female employees in provincial departments, as reported by 2.9 percent of departments. At the district level, 0.2 percent of female employees availed this provision across 1.7 percent of district offices, indicating no substantive change from the previous year.

8.1.5 Availability of Wheelchair-Accessible Ramps

Accessibility of public spaces is an important part of enabling persons with disabilities (PWDs) navigate their surroundings with ease and independence. As such, facilities like accessible ramps and dedicated toilets are vital for the inclusion, social integration and empowerment of PWDs.

428 (Punjab Women Development Department, n.d.)

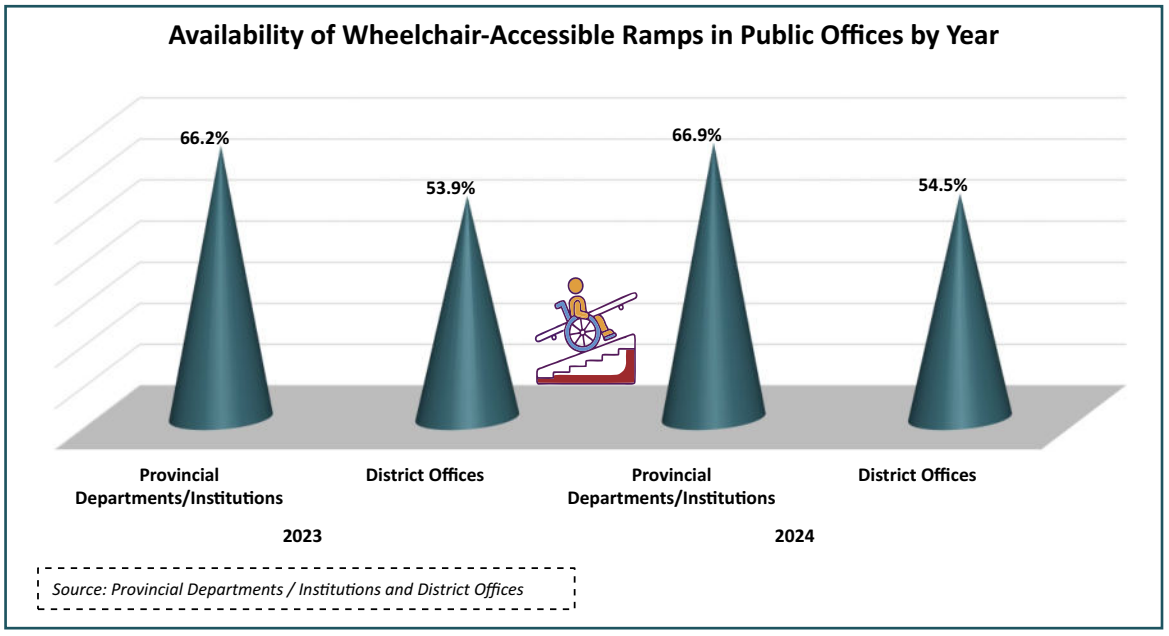


Figure 8.5

In 2023, 66.2 percent of provincial departments and 53.9 percent of district offices reported having ramp access available for PWDs. In 2024, this increased to 66.9 percent of provincial departments and 54.5 percent of district offices.

8.1.6 Washrooms Accessible to Persons with Disabilities

In 2024, washrooms for PWDs were available in 38.6 percent of provincial departments, a level unchanged from the previous year. At the district level, such facilities were reported by 31.7 percent of offices in 2024, showing only a marginal increase compared to 2023.

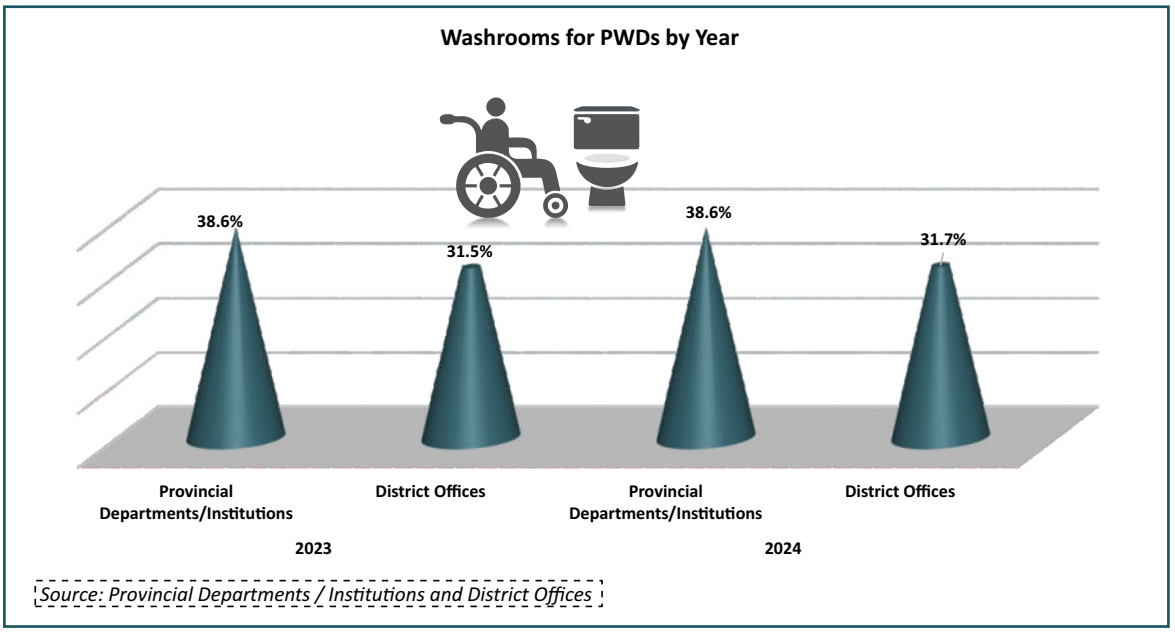


Figure 8.6

8.2 Amenities for Women

This section outlines the availability of women-specific amenities in provincial departments and district offices, including washrooms, prayer areas, and daycare facilities, based on administrative reporting for the most recent year.

8.2.1 Washrooms for Women

In 2024, washrooms for women were available in 84.3 percent of provincial departments and 62.6 percent of district offices. Compared to 2023, this reflects a decline in availability at both the provincial and district levels.

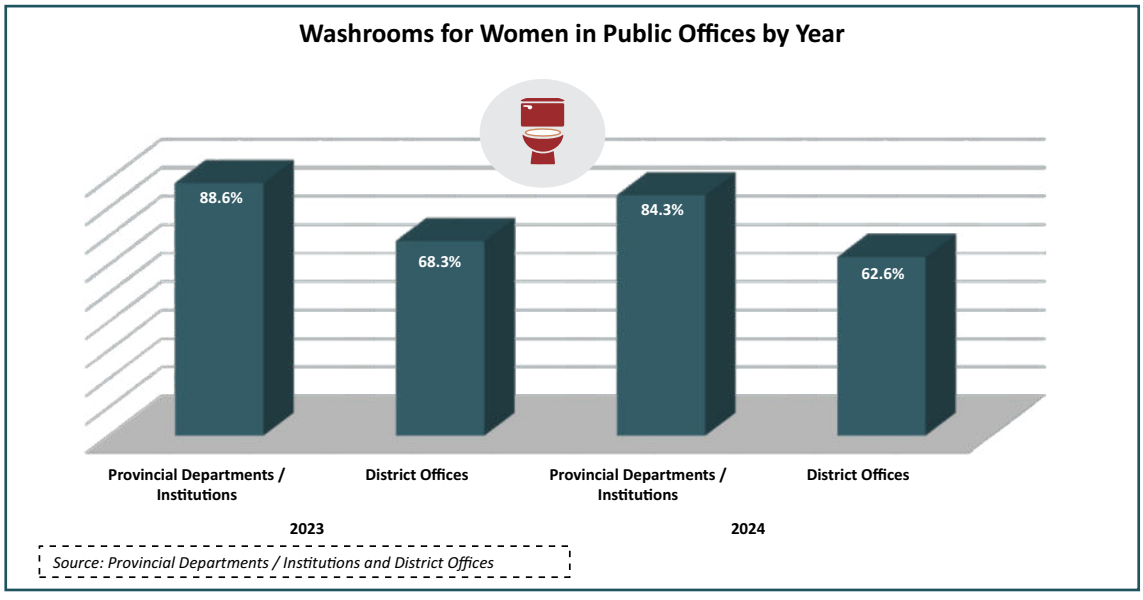


Figure 8.7

8.2.2 Prayer Areas for Women

In 2024, prayer areas for women were reported by 38.6 percent of provincial departments and 27.2 percent of district offices. This represents a decrease from 2023, when a higher proportion of offices reported the presence of such facilities.

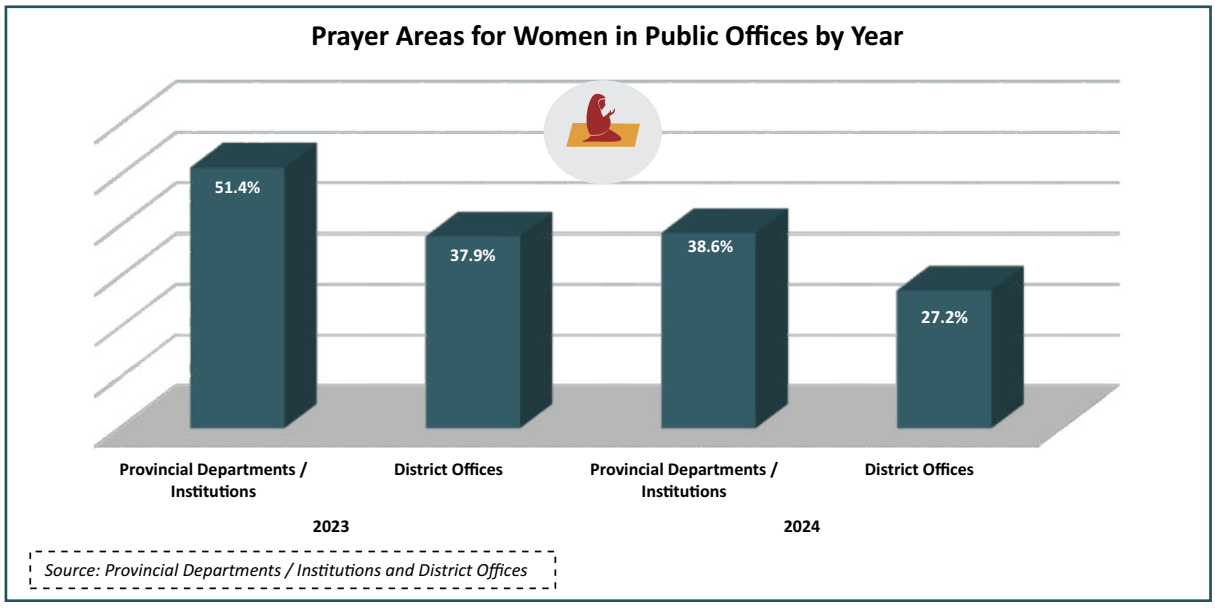


Figure 8.8

8.2.3 Daycare Centres

In 2024, daycare centres were reported to be used by employees in 20 percent of provincial departments, whereas usage in district offices declined to 11.2 percent.

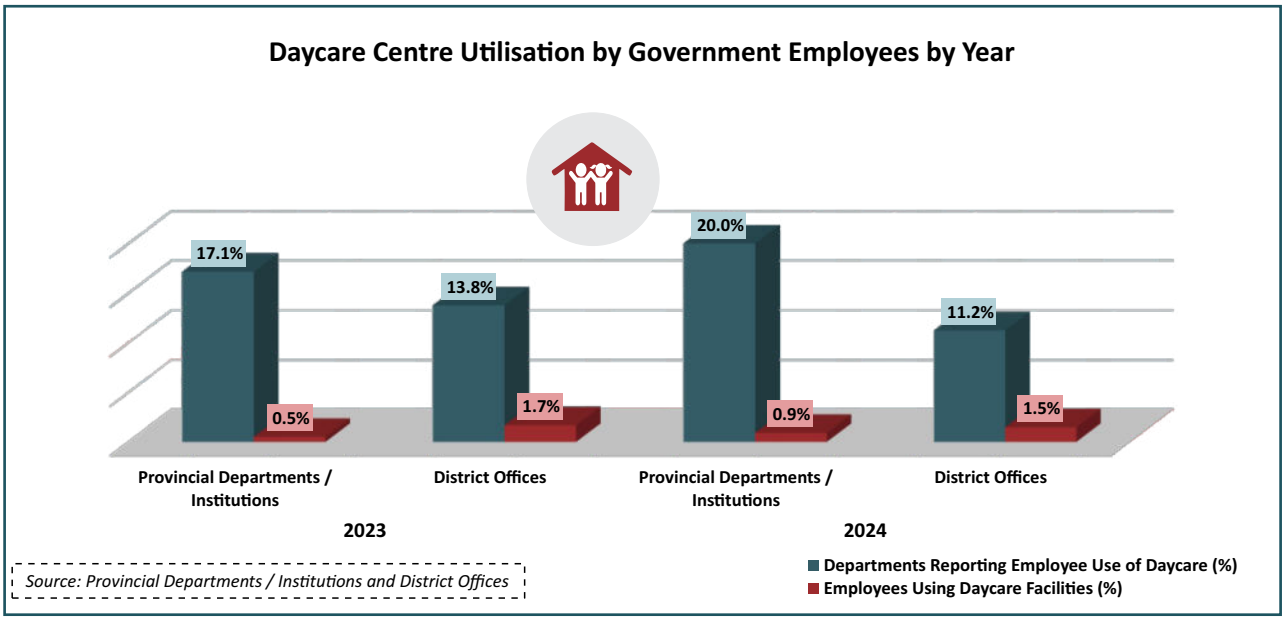


Figure 8.9

In provincial departments, 0.5 percent of all female employees were using these facilities, with a total of 119 children being cared for in the daycare centres in 2023. In the same year, 1.7 percent of female employees were using these facilities in district offices, with 884 children being cared for in the daycare centres.

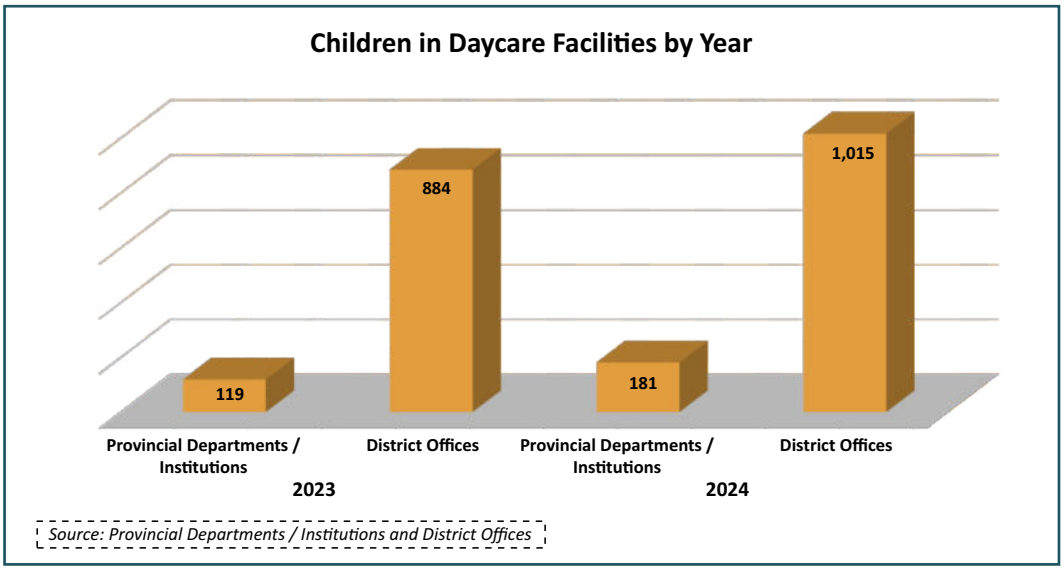


Figure 8.10

In provincial departments, 0.9 percent of female employees used daycare facilities in 2024, with 182 children being cared for in these centres. In district offices, daycare facilities were used by 1.5 percent of female employees, with 1,015 children being cared for.

Daycare Centres Established under Women Development Department

In addition to daycare facilities reported by departments and district offices, the Women Development Department (WDD) maintains a network of daycare centres across the province.

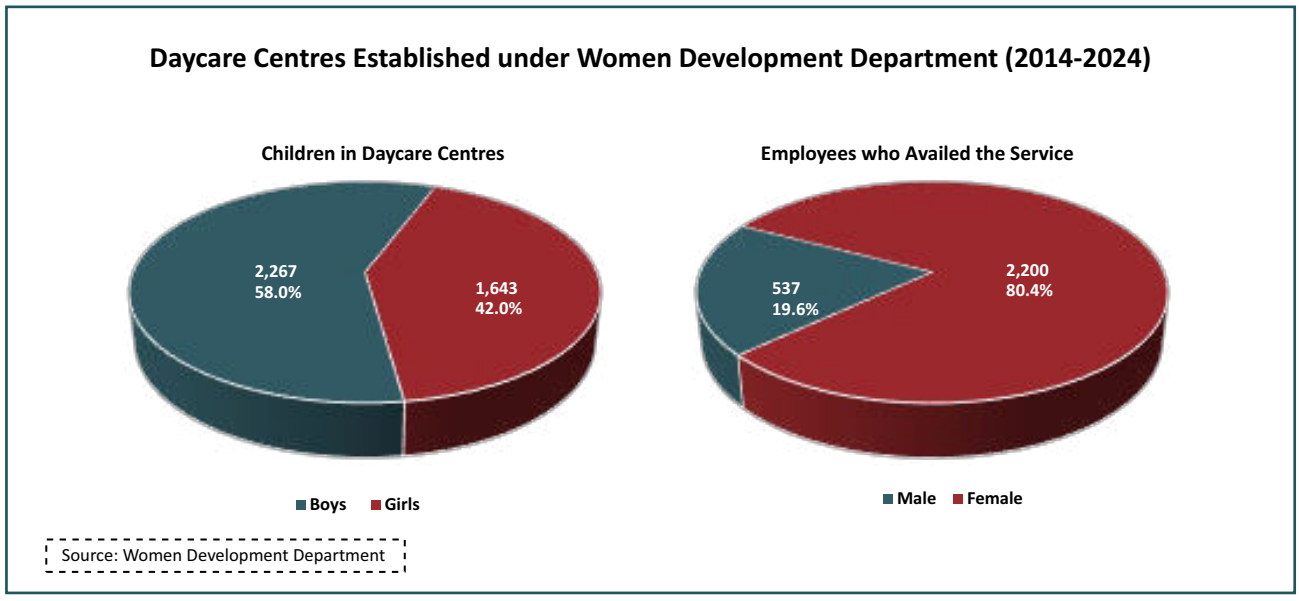


Figure 8.11

From 2014 to 2024, these centres served 3,910 children of 2,737 government employees through 410 daycare centres established across all 36 districts of Punjab. Of the children, 2,268 were boys and 1,643 were girls. Among employees, 19.6 percent were men, while 80.4 percent were women.

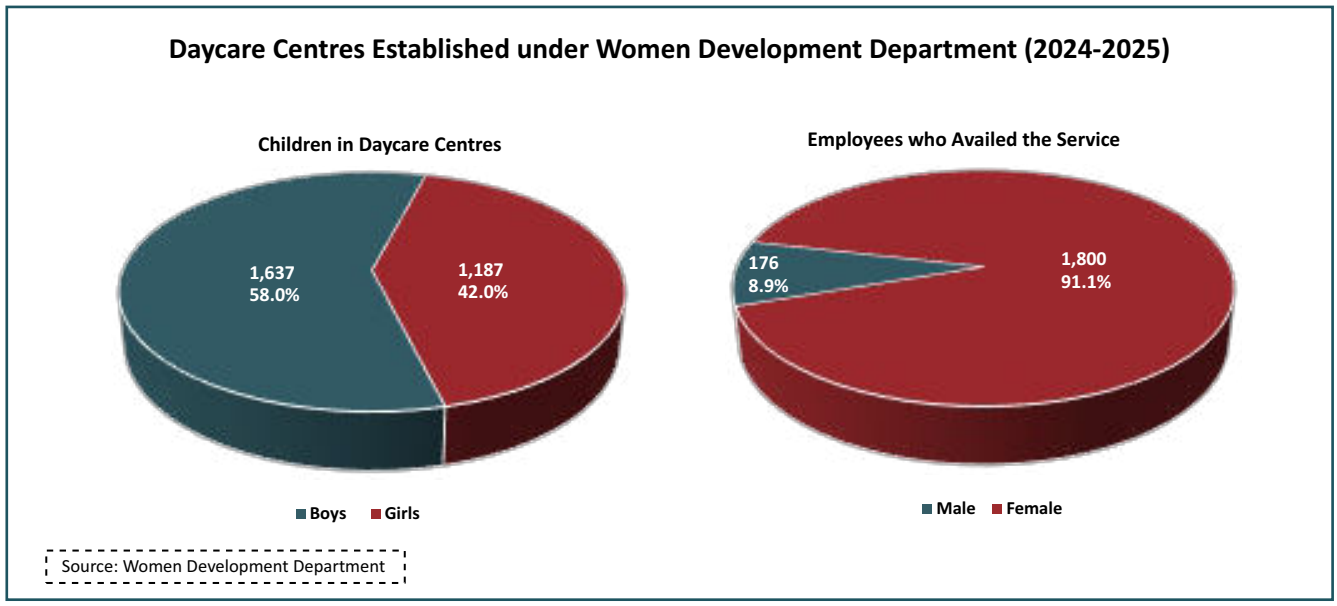


Figure 8.12

In the financial year 2024-25, the WDD established an additional 199 daycare centres across Punjab, catering to 2,824 children of 1,976 government employees. Of these children, 1,637 were boys, and 1,187 were girls, while 8.9 percent of employees were men and 91.1 percent were women.

8.3 Hostel Facilities

8.3.1 Public and Private Hostels

Residence in public hostels among women working in government institutions remained largely the same in both years of observation. In 2024, most women employees were residing in public hostels at both administrative levels. In provincial departments, 79.9 percent of women employees were residing in public hostels, while in district offices this proportion was 93.3 percent.

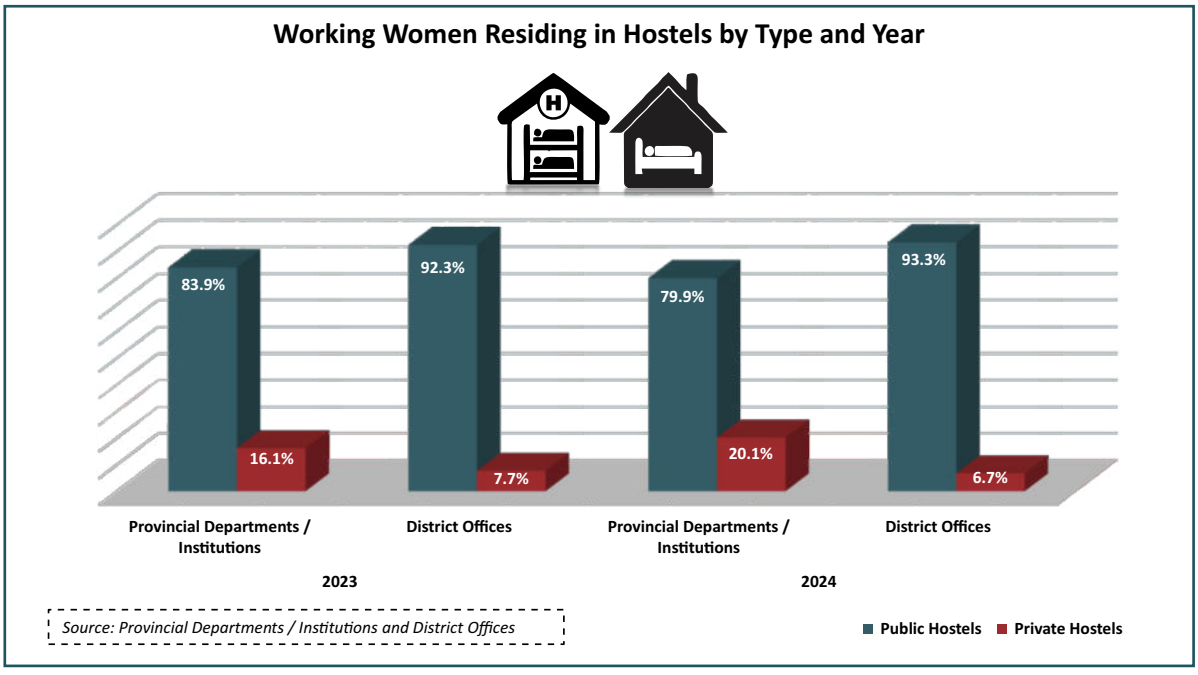


Figure 8.13

In 2024, private hostel residence among female government employees was higher in provincial departments and lower in district offices compared to the previous year. Female employees residing in private hostels accounted for 20.1 percent in provincial departments and 6.7 percent in district offices.

8.3.2 Working Women Hostels by the Women Development Department, Punjab

WDD manages 17 Working Women Hostels across 13 districts of Punjab. As of December 2025, these hostels had a cumulative capacity of 644 residents, against which 480 women were residing in Working Women Hostels, making an occupancy rate of 74.5 percent.

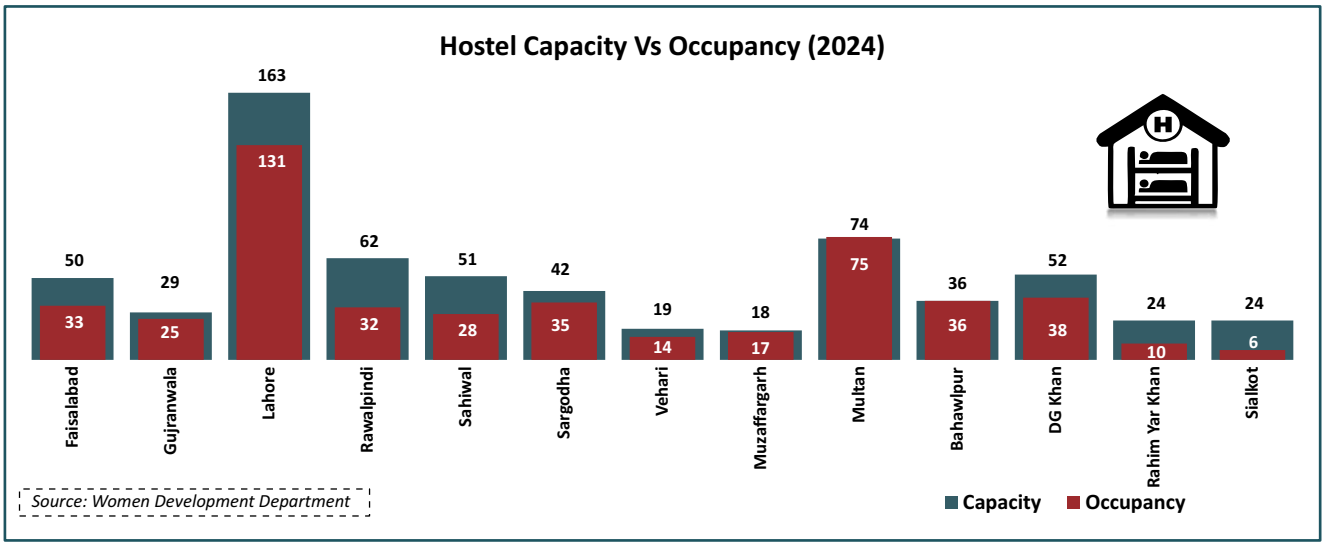


Figure 8.14

Among all districts, Lahore had the highest concentration of Working Women Hostels, with four hostels accommodating 131 residents.

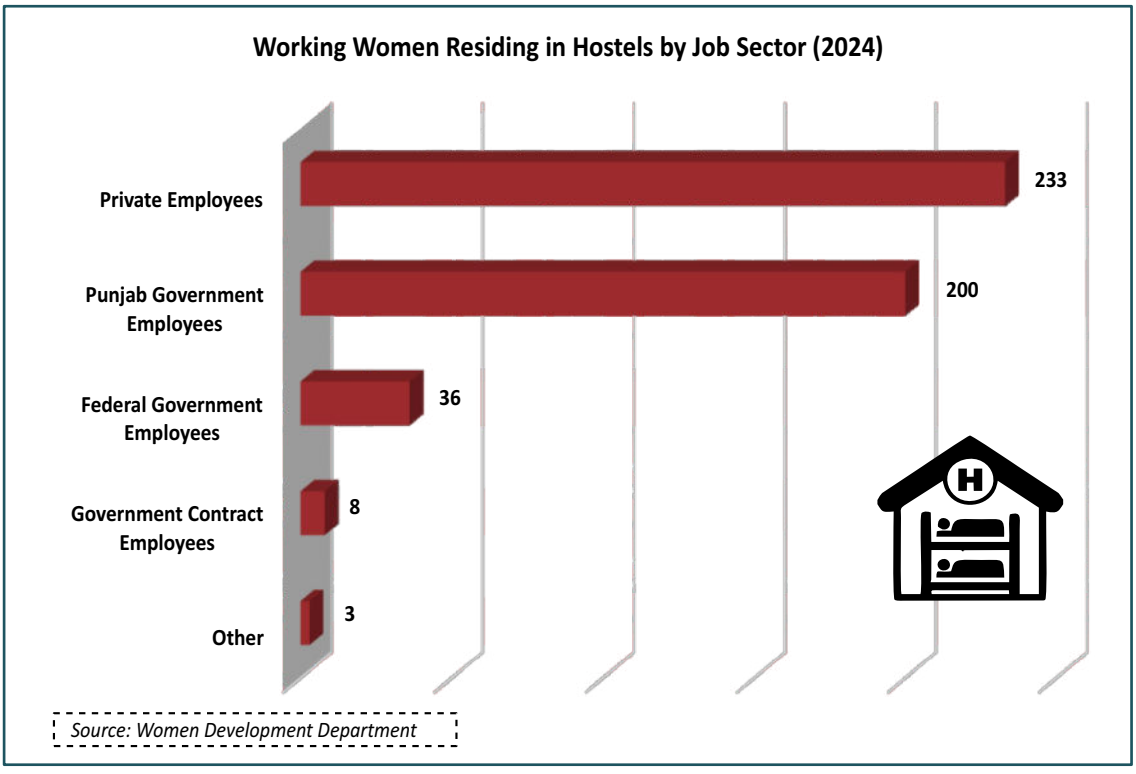


Figure 8.15

Most residents of these hostels were either government employees or private-sector employees. The majority of residents were aged 26 to 35.

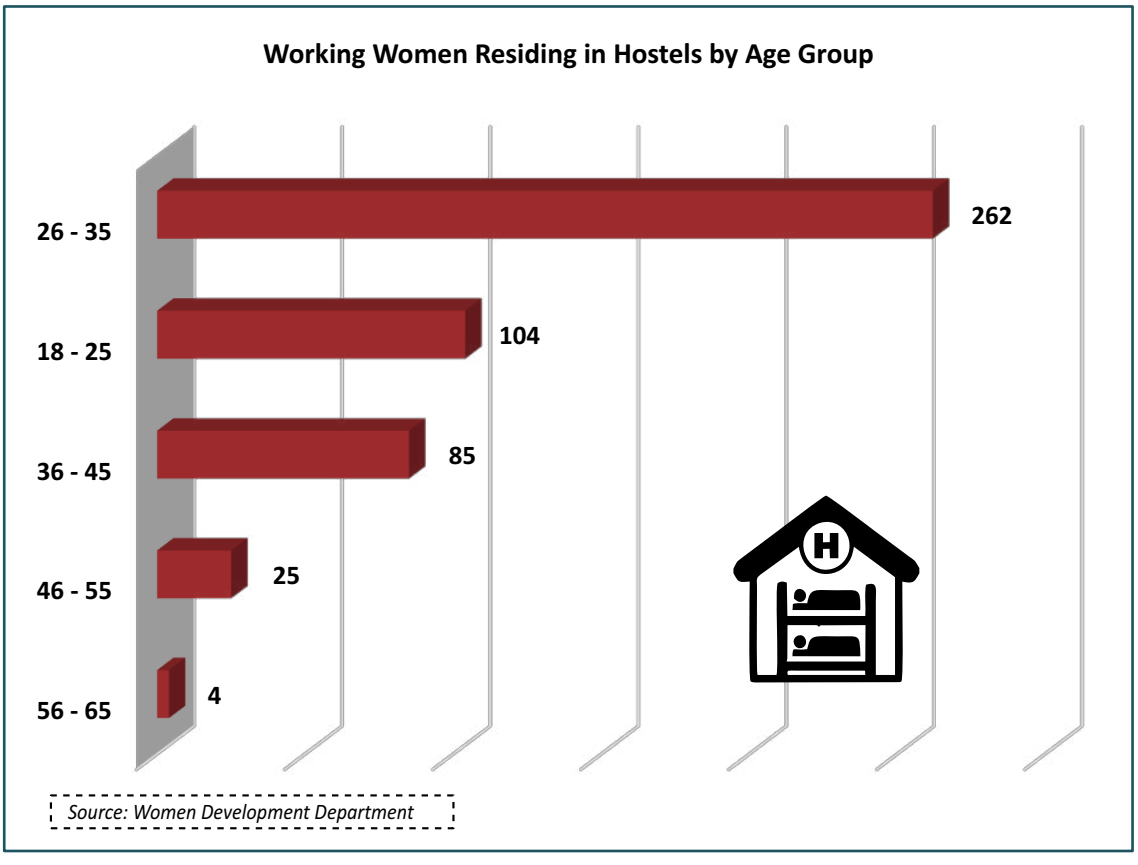


Figure 8.16

8.4 Women Development Centers

The WDD has established Women Development Centers (WDCs) within 18 government universities across Punjab. These centers provide institutional support to young women through career guidance as well as skills and knowledge enhancement.

From their establishment in June 2021 up to April 2025, the Women Development Centers conducted 550 events and activities, with a cumulative participation of approximately 5,000 individuals.

8.5 Special Provisions

8.5.1 Beneficiaries under the Wedlock Policy

Under the Government of Punjab's wedlock policy, married government servants may request a transfer to the same city or region as their spouse. In 2024, wedlock transfers in provincial departments were availed by 0.05 percent of male employees and 0.41 percent of female employees. At the district level, 0.02 percent of male employees and 0.08 percent of female employees benefitted from the wedlock policy. Compared to the previous year, the proportion of employees availing the wedlock policy declined for both men and women at the provincial and district levels.

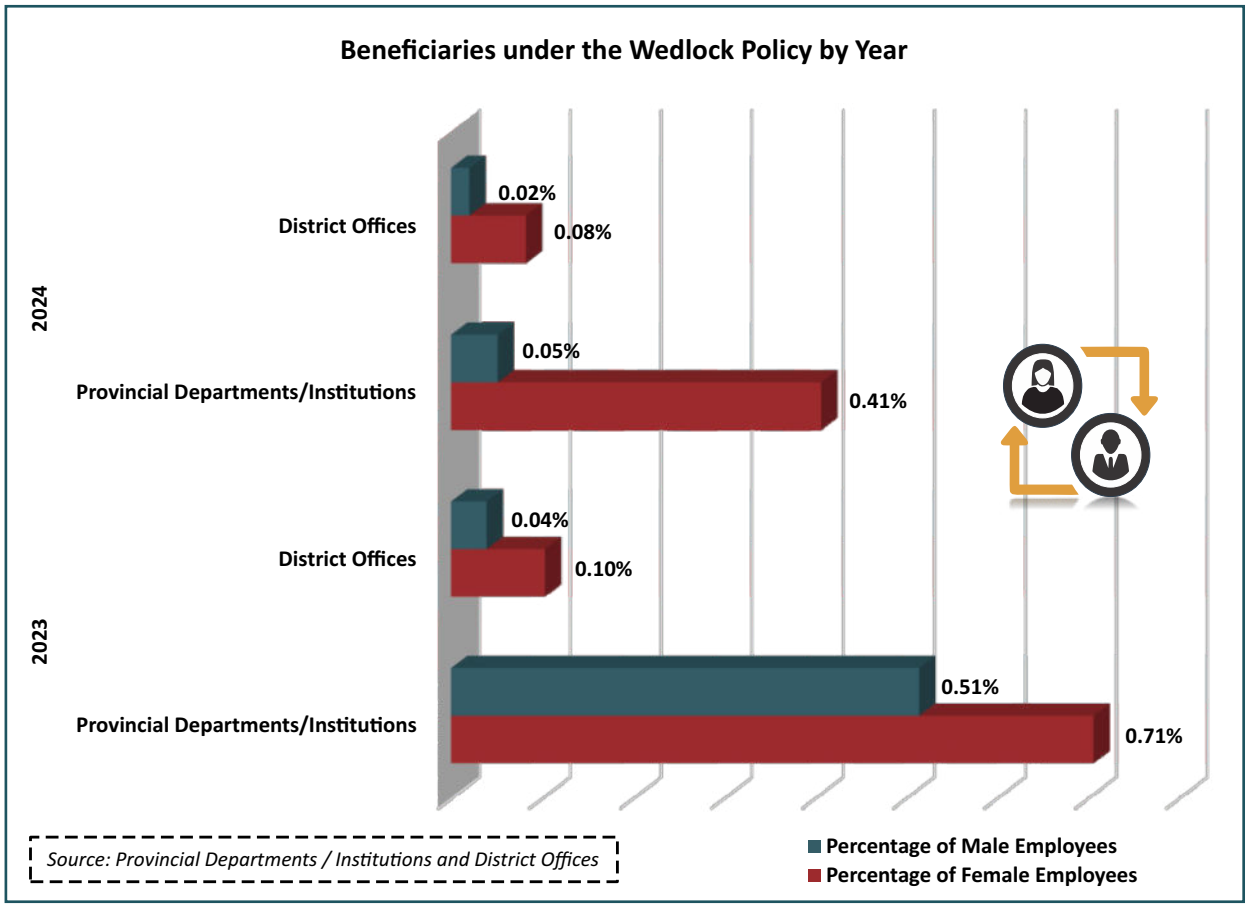


Figure 8.17

8.5.2 Gender Mainstreaming Committee

In 2024, gender mainstreaming committees were reported by 17 provincial departments, representing 24.3 percent of departments that provided data on this indicator. Membership of these committees remained male-dominated, with 57.6 percent male members and 42.4 percent female members. No transgender members were reported.

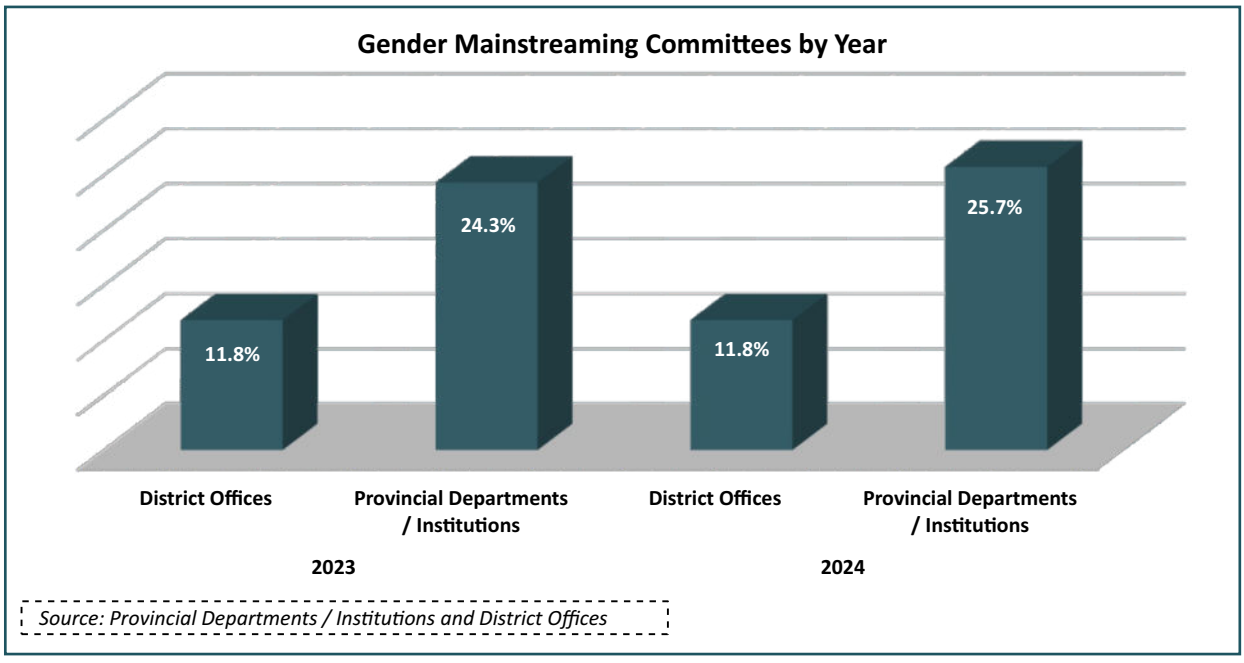


Figure 8.18

At the district level, 11.8 percent of offices reported the presence of gender mainstreaming committees in 2024. Committee composition showed 61.7 percent male members and 38.3 percent female members, with no transgender representation. These proportions remained broadly consistent with the previous year.

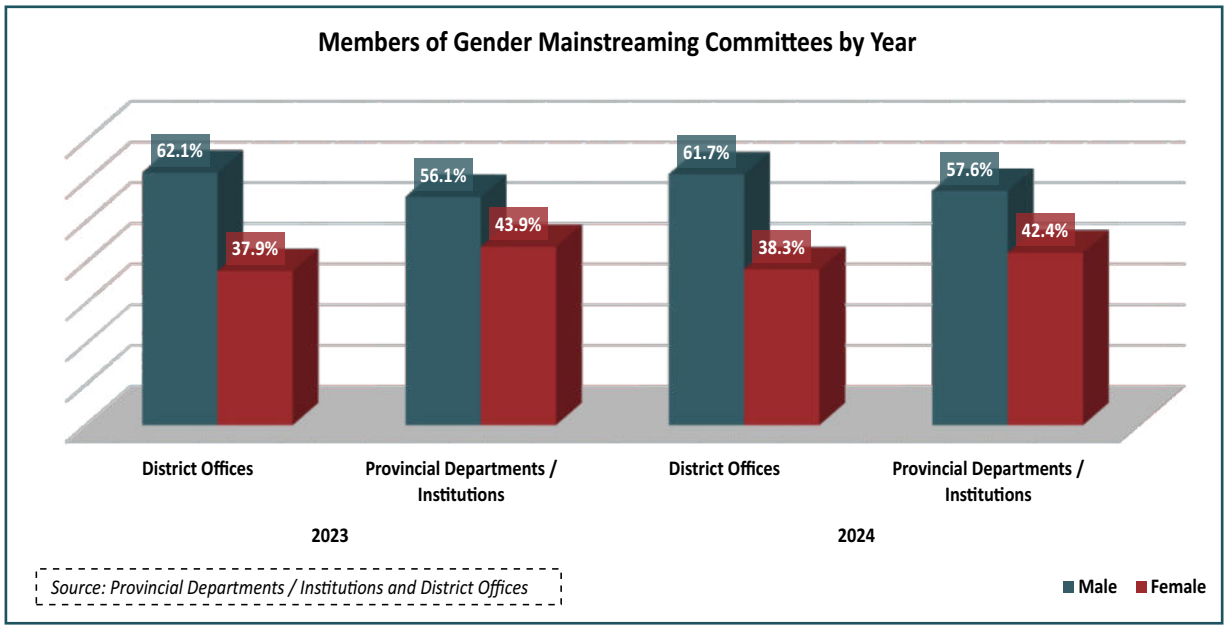


Figure 8.19

8.5.3 Workplace Harassment Committee

In 2024, workplace harassment committees were present in 74.3 percent of provincial departments. Committee composition remained unchanged from the previous year, with 61.8 percent male members and 38.2 percent female members, and no transgender members.

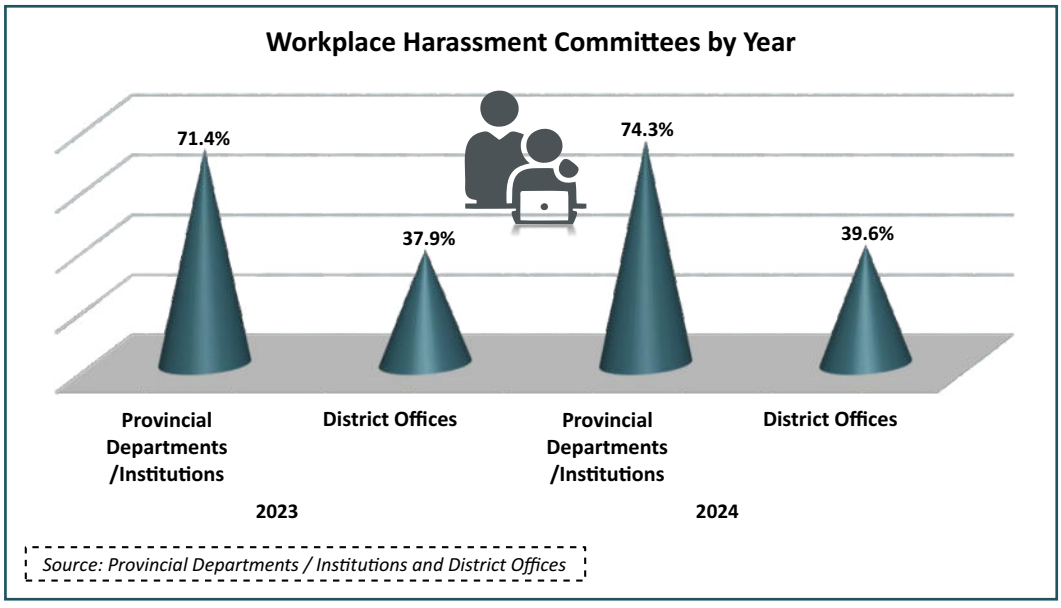


Figure 8.20

At the district level, 39.6 percent of offices reported having workplace harassment committees in 2024. Committee membership comprised 58.0 percent male members and 42.0 percent female members, and no transgender representation.

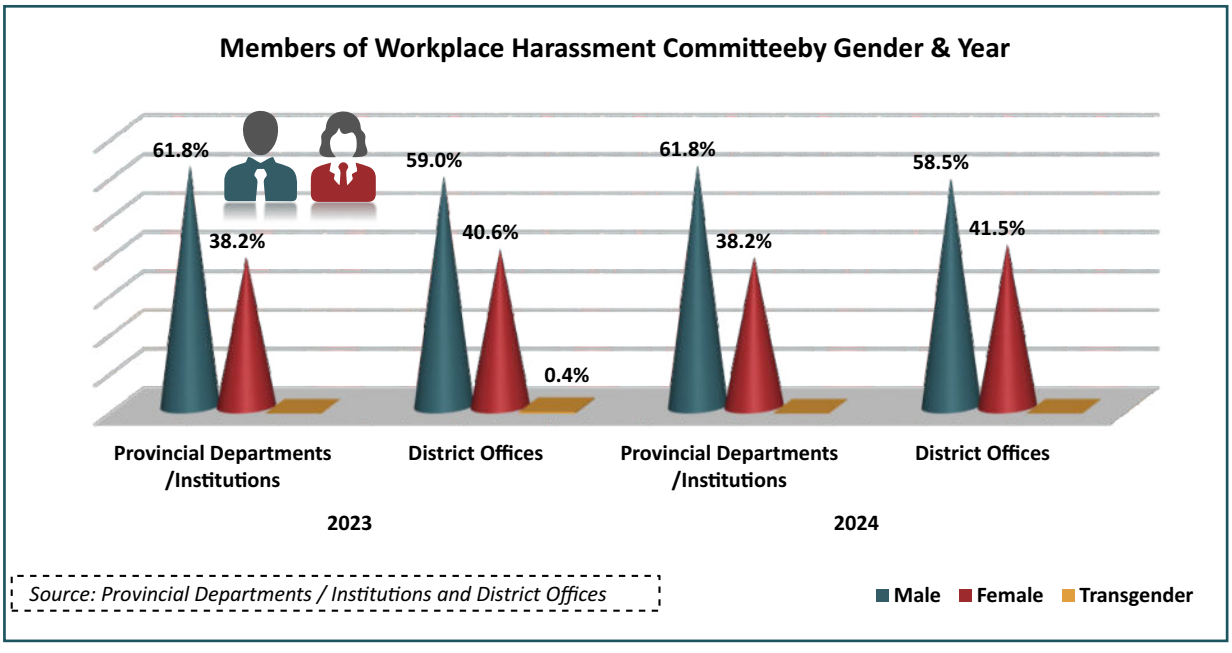


Figure 8.21

8.5.3.1 Complaints

The number of government offices reporting workplace harassment complaints remained limited during the observation period.

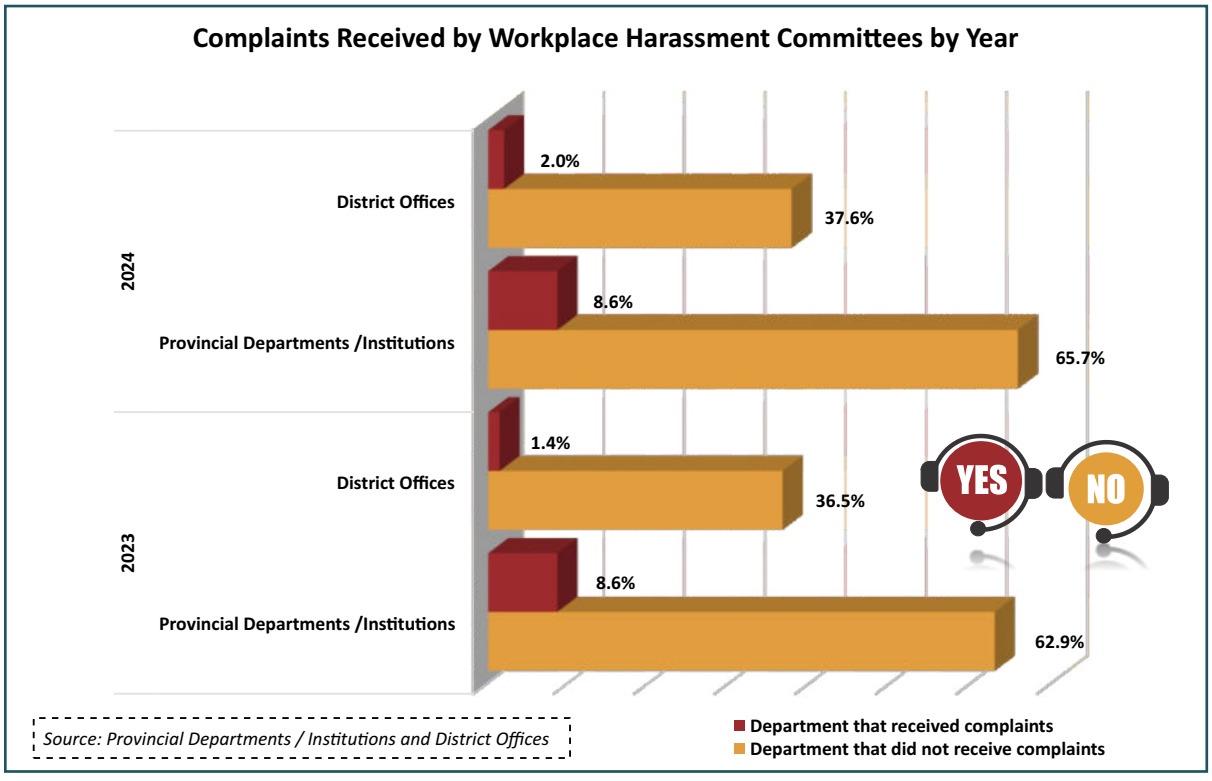


Figure 8.22

In 2024, workplace harassment committees in provincial departments received 272 complaints, with action taken in 97.1 percent of cases. At the district level, 22 complaints were received in 2024, of which action was taken in 95.5 percent of cases. Complaint redressal rates remained high compared to the previous year.

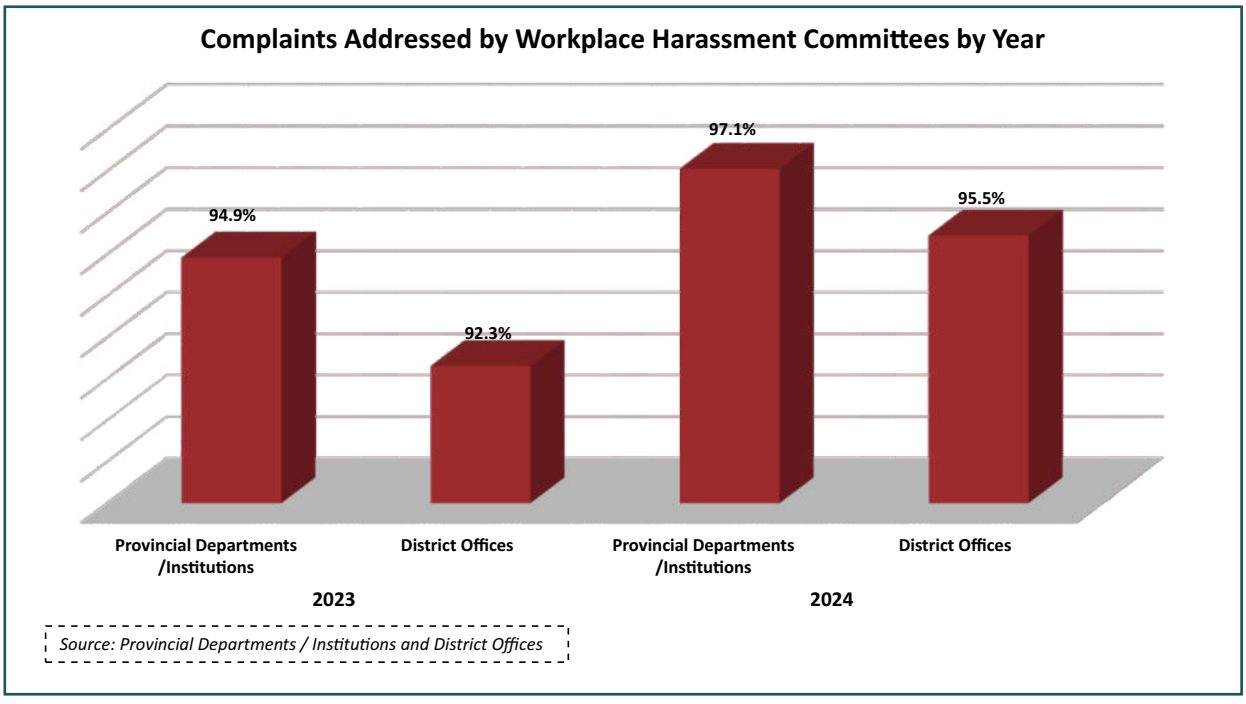


Figure 8.23

8.5.4 Code of Conduct under Punjab Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2012)

In 2024, the code of conduct under the Punjab Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act was displayed in 50 percent of provincial departments, with no inquiries reported during the year.

At the district level, the code of conduct was displayed in 22.2 percent of offices in 2024. As in the previous year, two inquiries were reported.

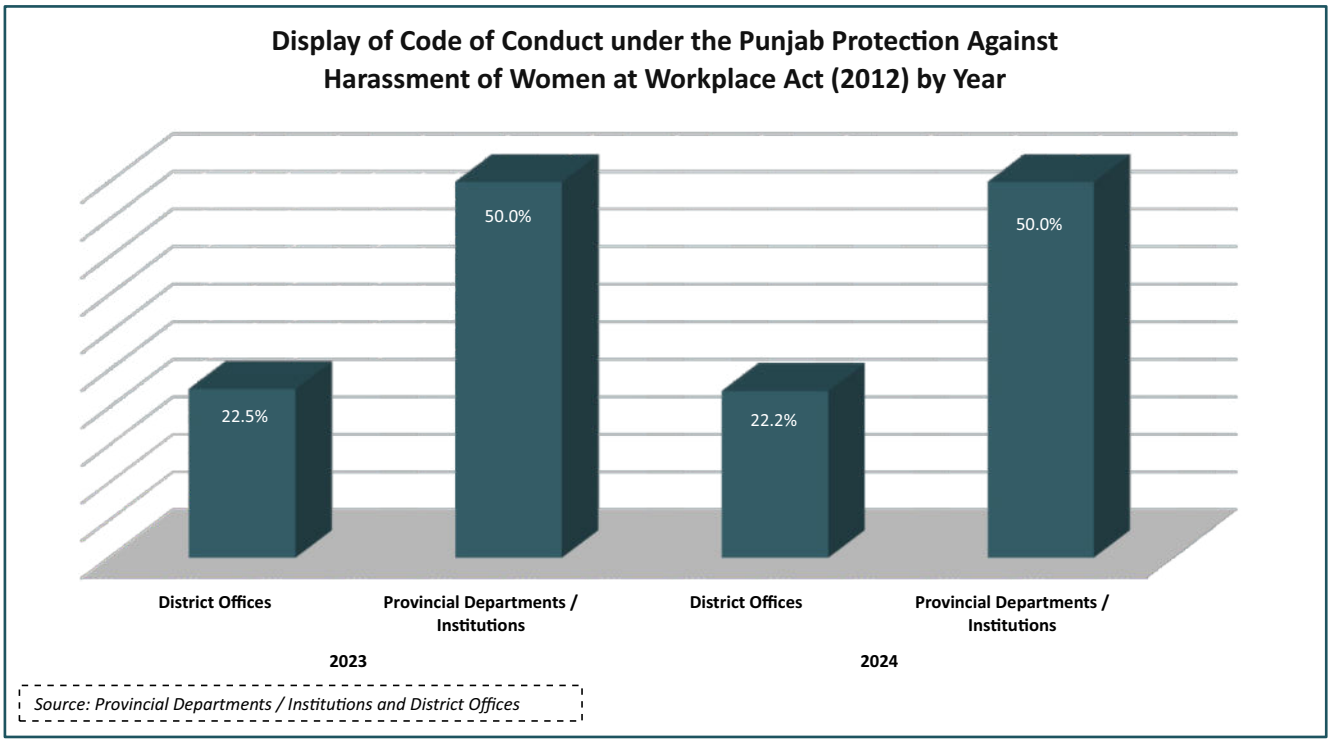
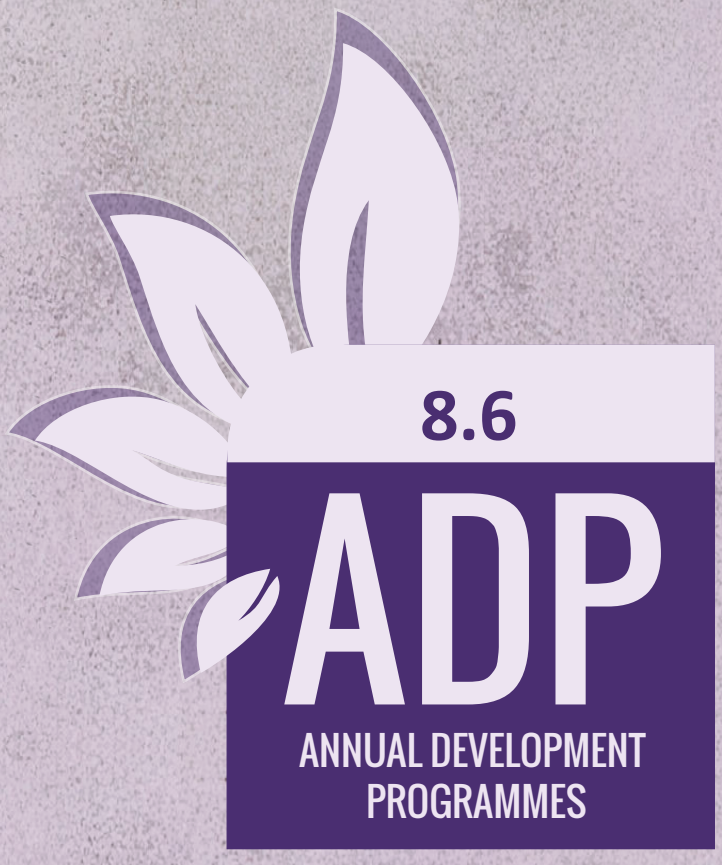


Figure 8.24


8.6
ADP
ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMES

Annual Development Programmes

Punjab Resilient & Inclusive Agriculture Transformation Project (PRIAT)

An initiative to reduce the incidence of poverty in rural households associated with agriculture by improving agricultural growth through enhancement of on-farm water productivity and farmers' income in project areas.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
101,001	99,070	17,823.0 Allocated	16,289.6 Utilized

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
121,003	111,765	14,182.4 Allocated	13,650.6 Utilized

Humqadam Program

An unconditional cash transfer programme for persons with disabilities (PWDs) who have a Special CNIC from NADRA with a PMT Score upto 30. An amount of Rs. 2,000/month is disbursed to the beneficiaries paid quarterly.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiarie		Budget (In Millions)	
4,263	1,360	3,973.1 Allocated	89.3 Utilized

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
3,766	1,325	3,972.1 Allocated	106.4 Utilized

Chief Minister Skill Development Initiative

This initiative aims to introduce industry-relevant/ internationally certified IT certifications and training programs to equip students with in-demand skills and enhance their employability and also to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among students through training. The goal of this program is to train 4,000 youth in different high-demand IT courses, so as to help reduce poverty.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
471	418	50.0 Allocated	50.0 Utilized

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
1,755	1,330	150.0 Allocated	150.0 Utilized

Population Welfare Programme

Provision of Family Planning and maternal and child health services. Target is to increase contraceptive use , reduce maternal and child mortality in order to achieve population stability. Awareness on social issues including child marriage, girls' education, violence on women, reproductive health issues, and family norms etc.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries	
31,080	138,246

Punjab Human Capital Investment Project (PHCIP)

PHCIP is a World Bank funded program that is executing in collaboration with Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA), Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) and School Education Department (SED), Government of the Punjab. The lead agency for implementing Pi-CIP is PSPA. Gestation period of the project is from 2021 till 2026. Three Components of this program are Aaghosh, Khud Mukhtar and Bunyad.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
7,037	465,050	13,957.0 Allocated	7,774.6 Utilized

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
1,452	534,708	9,954.4 Allocated	7,826.5 Utilized

Punjab Socio-Economic Registry

This project seeks to create a centralised, comprehensive information repository for Punjab's government departments and agencies. It will systematically collect, store, manage, and retrieve diverse data, including demographics, land records, healthcare, education, and economic indicators, to serve as a foundational resource for governance and public services.

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries			Budget (In Millions)	
16,018,373	15,485,671	8,662	1,136.0 Allocated	235.6 Utilized

Zevar-E-Taleem

A conditional cash transfer to secondary school girls aged 16 years in low female literacy districts of Punjab (Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Bhakkar, Chinniot, DG Khan, Jhang, Kasur, Khanewal, Layyah, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Okara, Pakpattan, Rajanpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Vehari). On completion of 80 percent attendance, each beneficiary receives Rs. 1000/- per month on quarterly basis.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)
392,385	2,711.5 Utilized

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)
504,642	5,593.5 Utilized

Masawaat

PSPA has launched the Masawaat Program under "Transgender Person's Welfare Policy". The Masawaat program consists of unconditional cash transfers of Rs. 3,000 per month for elderly and Rs. 2,000 per month for differently-abled Transgender Persons (TGPs), job opportunities and micro credit for promoting entrepreneurship among TGPs.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)
124	3.5 Utilized

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)
136	4.7 Utilized

Source: Provincial Departments / Institutions and District Offices

Annual Development Programmes

Nayee Zindagi Program

The Nayee Zindagi Program aims at medical rehabilitation of acid Attack Victims through reconstructive surgeries and psychological counseling. PSPA is implementing this program in close collaboration with the Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)		
5	4	200 Allocated	100 Released	RS

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries	
1	8

Graduation and Income Generation Scheme for People with Disabilities

PSPA, in collaboration with Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC), is running this scheme to provide interest free loans to PWDs in Punjab to establish their small business for generating sustainable income. The size of the interest free loan is Rs. 25,000-100,000. It is a revolving fund and Akhuwat is hired as service provider for disbursement and recovery.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)		
4,218	990	270.0 Allocated	2,406.7 Utilized	RS

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)	
4,114	1,109	253.9 Utilized	RS

Livestock Asset Transfer Scheme in South Punjab

Provision of free livestock assets (cows and buffaloes) widowed and divorced rural women in South Punjab.

FY 2023-24		FY 2024-25	
80.7 Allocated	80.7 Utilized	403	
RS Budget (In Millions)		Beneficiaries	

Establishment of Govt. Associate College for Girls, Bakhshan Khan, Bahawalnagar G.S. No. 171 in 2023-24 & No 68 in 2024-25

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)		
100,000	56.7 Allocated	56.8 Utilized	RS

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)		
100,000	33.8 Allocated	33.8 Utilized	RS

Sila-e- Fun Program

The Sila-e-Fun Program is an unconditional cash transfer offering PKR 5,000 per month to artists over 50 years of age having over 25 years of experience in their field (e.g., film, TV, literature, journalism), and a monthly income below the PKR 35,000.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)		
1,917	318	60.0 Utilized		RS

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries		Budget (In Millions)		
2,293	375	57.7 Utilized		RS

Fatima Jinnah Women University Business Incubation Center

Fatima Jinnah Women University established a "Business Incubation Centre" (BIC) in April 2022 with the primary objective of fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among students, researchers, faculty members, and alumni, encouraging them to create new enterprises and an innovation ecosystem.

FY 2023-24

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)		
22	13.5 Allocated	8.1 Utilized	RS

In 2024 the BIC team successfully organized over 35 events, including pitch competitions, bootcamps, and pop-up markets, providing platforms for students and women entrepreneurs. Capacity-building initiatives such as training on copyrights, patents, and company registration empowered faculty, researchers, and startups with essential business knowledge. Strong industry-academia linkages were established through collaborations with organisations like Shell Pakistan and RCCI, along with mentoring sessions from business professionals.

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)		
42	10.5 Allocated	8.1 Utilized	RS

Asset Transfer to Rural Women in South Punjab

Distribution of female heifers of buffalo and cow through balloting to women in South Punjab.

FY 2024-25

Beneficiaries	Budget (In Millions)		
405	80.8 Allocated	80.8 Utilized	RS

Establishment of Government College District Faisalabad

Establishment of an Associate College for Women in Chak 67/B .

FY 2024-25

Beneficiarie	Budget (In Millions)			
01	250 Allocated	30 Released	10 Utilized	RS

Source: Provincial Departments / Institutions and District Offices

Annual Development Programmes

Awareness workshops and Trainings

This initiative by the Center for Excellence in Training & Women Empowerment in Agriculture aims to strengthen the technical skills and entrepreneurial capacity of rural women through hands-on training. The 2024–2025 phase focuses on scaling women-led agribusiness initiatives and building market linkages to support sustainable income generation.

FY 2023-24

32 ♀ 250 ♂ Beneficiaries

FY 2024-25

55 ♀ 400 ♂ Beneficiaries

Command Area Development of Jalalpur Irrigation Project (CAD-JIP)

Awareness creation, training, capacity development, provision of private agricultural support services and extension services via the Command Area Development component of Jalalpur Irrigation Project (CAD-JIP).

FY 2023-24

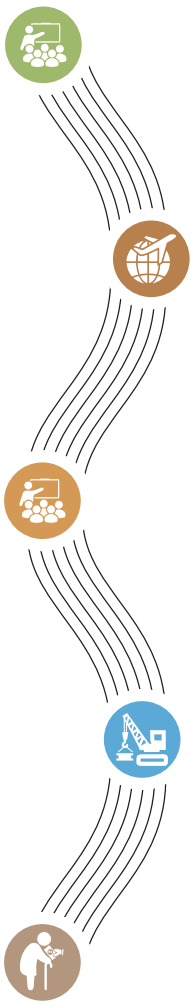
410 ♀ 39 ♂ Beneficiaries

FY 2024-25

550 ♀ 68 ♂ Beneficiaries

Bahimmat Buzurg Programme

This programme provided low-income elderly females of age 65 years and above with Rs. 2,000 per month. Only families excluded from Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) are eligible (having PMT score 16.18 -3).



Department of Tourist Services

Establishment of Punjab Tourism Squad as well as regional offices in Multan and Rawalpindi, to facilitate tourists in Murree.

FY 2023-24

79 ♀ 12 ♂ Beneficiaries

37.9 Allocated 29.9 Utilized Budget (In Millions) RS

FY 2024-25

79 ♀ 12 ♂ Beneficiaries

69.6 Allocated 35.9 Utilized Budget (In Millions) RS

Construction of Building at Women University Multan

To facilitate women and girls, the budget was allocated for upgradation of day care centre, extension of library block, establishment of water filtration plants, renovation of U-Shape building and Dar-ul-Quran, establishment of walkways with parking areas, and entrance gate with fiber sheets.

FY 2023-24

71.0 Allocated 71.0 Released Budget (In Millions) RS

Source: Provincial Departments / Institutions and District Offices

8.6.1 Inclusion of Women in Environment Protection Agenda of Punjab

8.6.1.1 Punjab Green Development Program (PGDP)



The PGDP is an initiative that aims to strengthen environmental governance and promote green investments in Punjab.[429] During all of 2023, and up to December 2024, the PGDP was led by a female Project Director at the Strategic Planning & Implementation Unit (SPIU). Additionally, at the time of the compilation of PGPR 2023 & 2024, a female Director (Environment Policy & Planning) is assisting in implementing and steering the program, while another three women are part of the core team of 12 people working on PGDP.[430]

Under the PGDP, a capacity-building scheme titled "Implementation of Environmental and Social Safeguard Requirements and Pollution Impact Studies" was approved in 2024 with a cost of PKR 6.150 million. In 2025, 11 training sessions were planned to target public and private sector entities and academia, ensuring at least 33 percent female participation.

During 2023-24, a total of 12 structured awareness campaigns were conducted as part of PGDP across Punjab, addressing environmental resilience and preparedness. Additionally, intern-led outreach activities engaged approximately 10,000 students across the province. A significant number of women and girls participated in both public and school campaigns, reflecting the program's strong commitment to gender inclusion in environmental awareness and preparedness initiatives.

As part of the project, a Green Building is being constructed on Jail Road, Lahore for the Environmental Monitoring Center (EMC), Environment Protection Department (EPD), and allied entities established under PGDP (DLI-2). The project is being executed with an estimated cost of approximately PKR 5,800 million.

In addition to all of the above, the SPIU has Initiated ADP schemes across all divisions of Punjab. These schemes have a total budget of around Rs. 15,570 million and include the construction of 9 Environmental Divisional Complexes (one in each division), as well as the Construction of Green Buildings, an Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring System, an Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring System, and Environmental Monitoring Centres across Punjab.

Source: Environment Protection Authority / Punjab Green Development Program

429 (Punjab Green Development Program, n.d.)
430 Ibid



Schemes & Initiatives

Related to Gender Development and Women's Empowerment

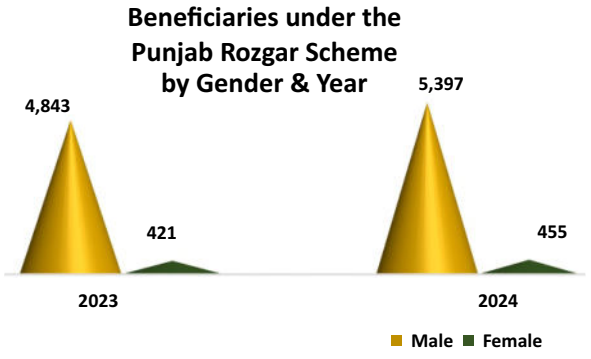
Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Economic Participation

PUNJAB ROZGAR

The Punjab Rozgar Scheme is a collaborative initiative between the Bank of Punjab and the Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) and provides subsidized small business loans.



BUSINESS LOANS
Rs. 100,000
Up to
Rs. 10.0 Million[3]



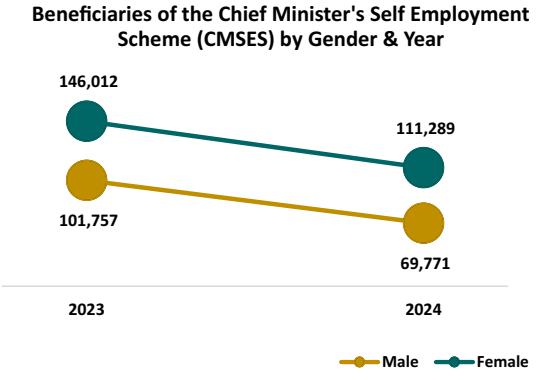
Source: Bank of Punjab

CHIEF MINISTER SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The Chief Minister Self-Employment Scheme (CMSES) is an initiative that grants interest-free loans to eligible people to start small businesses and become economically independent.

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS





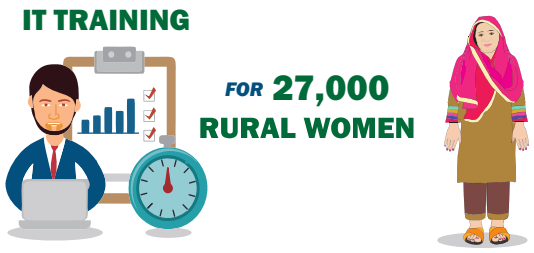
Source: Akhuwat Foundation Pakistan

According to data shared with the PGPR team, loans worth Rs. 54.7 million were disbursed to 371 people as part of CMSES; women made up 59 percent of beneficiaries in 2023 and 61 percent in 2024.

3. (Bank of Punjab, n.d.)

EMPOWERING WOMEN by Way of IT TRAINING Across Punjab

Under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, a comprehensive digital and IT training program has been launched for 27,000 rural women in Punjab. This initiative, led by the Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF), offers six months of online training in various digital skills. Participants can apply from home through the official website.



Source: Flagship Projects, Punjab Portal (online)

SKILL DEVELOPMENT For Transgender People

This program offers a range of valuable benefits to support participants throughout their learning journey. It includes free on-the-job training, allowing individuals to gain hands-on experience in real work environments, which helps prepare them for employment and long-term career success. A monthly stipend of up to PKR 5,000 will be provided during the training period to offer financial support.



Source: Flagship Projects, Punjab Portal (online)

Improving Social Welfare

Punjab DHEE RANI Program

This program enables parents to fulfil their socio-religious obligation in a dignified manner by providing brides with a Rs. 200,000 salami through an ATM card.

2024-25

Collective Marriages of **3,000 poor girls** organised across Punjab.



2025-26

Collective Marriages of **5,000 poor girls** will be organised across Punjab.

Source: Flagship Projects, Punjab Portal (online)

Punjab
SOCIAL PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION Program

The Punjab Social Protection and Economic Revitalization (PSER) Program provides financial and social support to low-income and vulnerable individuals and families. The initiative's focus is on social welfare and economic empowerment by providing special programs for youth, women, and marginalised groups; micro loans and grants for businesses/entrepreneurs and agricultural subsidies and access to farming technology.







Source: Flagship Projects, Punjab Portal (online)

CHILD PROTECTION

The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) is tasked with safeguarding vulnerable children from abuse, trafficking, and exploitation and has now added under its auspices the Virtual Center for Child Safety (VCCS), launched in 2024, to enhance child protection with real-time reporting via helplines, mobile apps, and digital platforms. In its early phase, the VCCS received 1,700+ complaints, leading to 415 FIRs.





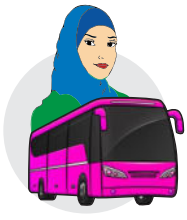


Source: Flagship Projects, Punjab Portal (online)

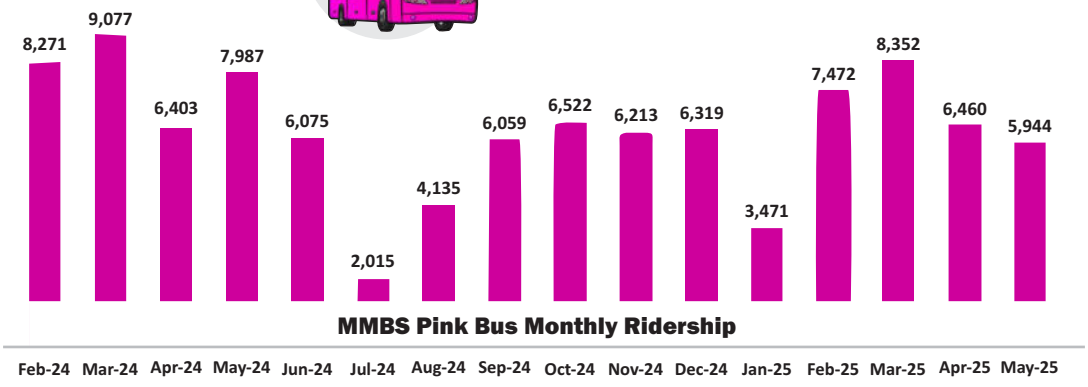
Improving Mobility and Safety

Multan
PINK METRO BUS

In 2023, the Pink Metro Bus was launched in Multan to facilitate the independent commuting of young women and female students. Since then, total ridership of the service has reached 101,637 women, peaking in March of 2024 when the Pink Bus was utilised by 9,077 riders.



TOTAL
101,637
FEMALE PASSENGER MOVED



Source: Punjab Transport Department

Work by the Punjab
SAFE CITIES AUTHORITY
& Punjab Police

The following initiatives have cumulatively ensured safety for 279,000 women across Punjab:



SAFETY FOR
279,000
WOMEN ACROSS PUNJAB

Source: Punjab Safe Cities Authority

''Meri Awaz Maryam Nawaz''
VIRTUAL WOMEN POLICE STATION

"Meri Awaz Maryam Nawaz" is a flagship project of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), which is meant to be a holistic mechanism for the protection of women, by guiding women from reporting a crime to registering an FIR, through to the investigation phase and trail. The aim of creating a virtual police station catering to women is so that women have a designated way of interfacing with law enforcement as per their needs and do not have to go to a police station in person to report crimes.



PANIC BUTTONS

The PSCA has taken the lead in installing "15"(one-five) panic buttons in 173 universities across Punjab. These buttons, which are directly linked the PSCA's control room, are meant to provide support to women in moments of duress where the use of mobile phones may not be possible. Upon pressing a panic button, an alert is transmitted to the Virtual Women Police Station, prompting a police response.





PANIC BUTTONS
IN 173 UNIVERSITIES

PROTECTION CENTRES
(Tahafuz Markaz)

Protection Centres (Tahafuz Markaz) are a social protection initiative by the Punjab Police. First established in Rawalpindi in 2020 and then in Lahore in 2023, these centres are meant to provide support and assistance to vulnerable people facing violence, harassment, trafficking and other heinous circumstances.





Source: Punjab Safe Cities Authority

SECTION 04

Appendix A

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ABOUT THE TEAM

DIRECTOR PROGRAM PCSW



Mr. Muhammad Waheed Iqbal
DIRECTOR PROGRAM PCSW

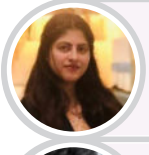
Mr Iqbal has expertise in Project/Program Management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and coordination particularly in Gender and development, Child Rights and related strategic and operational matters.

RESEARCH TEAM GMIS



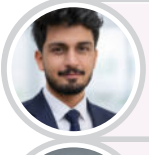
Ms. Fizza Behzad Sethi
SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST

Ms Behzad is a public policy analyst with expertise in policy processes, inclusive and sustainable development, and social protection. She has extensive experience leading analytical and policy research, developing data frameworks, and supporting evidence-based policymaking across gender, development and economic sectors, with an MS in Economics.



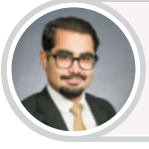
Ms. Mahpara Asad
RESEARCH ANALYST

Mahpara Asad is a research analyst and community development practitioner with more than five years of experience in report writing, data analysis and project management. She is passionate about gender equality and holds a master's degree in Gender Studies.



Mr. Khubaib Azam
RESEARCH ANALYST

Khubaib is an economist, research and development sector professional holding an MS degree in Public Policy. His interest lies in policy dynamics, electoral participation and gender & development with professional experience in Monitoring & Evaluation (MEAL).



Mr. Abdul Mueed
RESEARCH ANALYST

Mr. Mueed is a development economist with nearly a decade of experience in research, advocacy and program management within the Pakistani development sector. His interests lie in good governance advocacy, and data-informed policymaking. Mr. Mueed holds an M.A in International and Development Economics.

STATISTICIAN / GRAPHIC DESIGNER GMIS



Mr. Syed Khalid Shah
DATA ANALYST & VISUALIZATION EXPERT

Khalid is a Statistician with advanced abilities in graphic design. He has a profound understanding of datasets and quantitative analysis skills. He holds a master's degree in Statistics and Visual Graphics.

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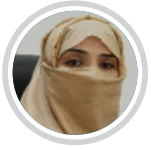

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