POLITICS OF ETHNICITY AND THE QUEST FOR A NEW PROVINCE IN PUNJAB: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE SARAIKI MOVEMENT

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I **Muhammad Irfan**, Registration # NUML-S22-35376, Discipline **Pakistan studies**

Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis "**Politics of ethnicity and the quest of a new province in Punjab: An analytical study of Saraiki movement**" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

The Saraiki movement in the Punjab region of Pakistan embodies a vibrant and intricate interaction of ethnicity, identity, and politics, advocating for the establishment of a new province called Saraikistan. This analytical exploration probes into the diverse politics surrounding ethnicity, investigating how the Saraiki-speaking community has maneuvered through historical marginalization, economic disparities, and cultural obliteration in their pursuit of a distinct administrative territory. Grounded in a profound linguistic and cultural legacy, the movement confronts the supremacy of Punjabi-speaking elites and aims to establish a domain where the unique identity of the Saraiki populace can flourish. The study scrutinizes the socio-political foundations of the demand, the significance of language and culture in shaping the political awareness of the region, and the economic inequalities that drive the pursuit of autonomy. By critically assessing the political and ideological elements propelling the movement, this research illuminates the broader implications for Pakistan's federal structure and the ongoing battle for ethnic acknowledgment and political representation. The aspiration for a Saraiki province thus unfolds not merely as a struggle for regional equity but also as a wider reflection on the complexities of reconciling ethnic diversity and governance in a multi-ethnic nation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Punjab, a region nestled in the heart of South Asia, is known for its rich cultural heritage, historical significance, and diverse population. Over the years, it has been a crucible of political, social, and ethnic dynamics, making it a fascinating subject of study. In particular, the politics of ethnicity within the province of Punjab have been a contentious and intriguing aspect of its socio-political landscape. This analytical study delves into the complex tapestry of Punjab's socio political scenario, with a specific focus on the Saraiki movement. This movement advocates for the creation of a new province within Punjab, distinct from the dominant Punjabi identity.[1]Punjab, historically and culturally significant, has been a mosaic of various ethnicities and languages. One of the major ethno-linguistic groups within Punjab is the Saraiki-speaking population. Saraiki is a language spoken by millions of people in the southern region of Punjab, and its speakers identify themselves as Saraikis[2]. The Saraiki identity has evolved rooted in a distinct linguistic and cultural heritage. The Saraiki people, primarily residing in the southern parts of Punjab, have often felt marginalized within the broader Punjabi identity that is dominated by the Punjabi language and culture.[3]

The call for a separate Saraiki province represents a response to these perceived marginalization and discrimination. The Saraiki movement seeks to establish a political entity that can address the unique socio-political and economic needs of the Saraiki-speaking population. This movement has gained momentum over the years,

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[1] (Sandu,2015)
[2](Azhar Mehmood abbasi)
[3] (Thesis et al.,2013)

transforming into a significant socio-political force in Punjab's complex landscape(Rathore, n.d.) Understanding the politics of ethnicity and the Saraiki movement within Punjab necessitates an exploration of historical, linguistic, cultural, and political dimensions. The Saraiki identity itself has undergone a process of assertion and redefinition. Saraiki-speaking individuals, who may have once considered themselves as a part of the broader Punjabi identity, are increasingly identifying as Saraikis, underlining the need for their distinct recognition. This shift in identity raises essential questions about the politics of ethnicity, as it reflects the aspirations of the Saraiki people for more excellent representation, cultural recognition, and political autonomy (Kamran, 2013)

At the core of the Saraiki movement is the demand for a separate Saraiki province. The proponents of this idea argue that a separate province would enable better governance and resource allocation to the region, which has often faced neglect and underdevelopment. They believe that a Saraiki province would be better equipped to address the specific economic and social challenges faced by the Saraiki-speaking population (Qasmi & Ali, 2023)

This analytical study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the Saraiki movement within the broader context of Punjab's political landscape. It will explore the historical roots of the movement, its ideological foundations, the political actors involved, and the challenges it faces. Additionally, it will consider the potential implications of creating a new province on the political power dynamics within Punjab and its relationship with the federal government in Pakistan(Dogar, 2015)

The Saraiki movement's significance extends beyond the provincial borders of Punjab. It is emblematic of broader themes in politics and ethnicity, such as identity politics, regionalism, and decentralization of power. It has the potential to reshape the political

contours of Punjab, with implications for the entire country. Understanding this movement is critical not only for comprehending Punjab's socio political landscape but also for shedding light on the more significant questions of ethnic politics and the quest for autonomy and self-determination in contemporary South Asia(Akhtar et al., 2021)

In conclusion, the Saraiki movement represents a pivotal facet of the politics of ethnicity in Punjab. This analytical study will delve deep into the history, motives, challenges, and potential consequences of this movement. By doing so, it aims to contribute to our understanding of the complex interplay between ethnicity, identity, and politics within Punjab and its broader implications for the region(Panhwar, 2018)

The Punjab province in Pakistan has long been a hotbed of ethnic and linguistic diversity, and the Saraiki-speaking population, residing primarily in the southern part of the province, has been at the forefront of a movement seeking the creation of a separate Saraiki province. This analytical study delves into the politics of ethnicity surrounding the Saraiki movement, aiming to shed light on the complexities of this issue (Paper, 2011)

1.1. Statement of the Problem:

The issue of identity dynamics and marginalization lies at the core of this study. The Saraiki-speaking population has long experienced a sense of marginalization within the broader Punjabi identity. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this problem, the research must delve deeply into the historical and contemporary processes of marginalization. This examination should explore the root causes and manifestations of marginalization, both in terms of social and political status. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to appreciating the sociopolitical landscape in which the Saraiki movement operates.

The evolution of Saraiki's identity presents another intricate problem to explore. Saraiki identity has not been static; it has evolved, reflecting complex sociocultural and political dynamics. To grasp the nuances of this issue, the research should investigate the reasons behind the evolution of Saraiki identity and how it has influenced the unity and aspirations of the Saraiki-speaking population. This examination should consider the interplay between historical factors, cultural influences, and contemporary social dynamics.

The demand for a separate Saraiki province is a central and pressing issue. To comprehensively address this problem, the research must scrutinize the motivations behind this demand. It should assess the feasibility of creating a new province, taking into account legal and administrative challenges, and investigate the potential economic and political implications for the Saraiki region and Pakistan as a whole. This includes a consideration of how the creation of a new province might affect resource allocation, governance, and the distribution of power.

The challenges facing the Saraiki movement itself represent a significant problem to explore. The introduction hints at opposition from other political groups and potential resistance from the dominant Punjabi identity. To understand these obstacles fully, the research should conduct an in-depth analysis of their origins, whether they stem from political, cultural, or economic factors, and how they impact the movement's progress and strategies for advocacy.

The introduction suggests that the Saraiki movement has broader implications for regional politics in South Asia. To assess the significance of this movement, the research should analyze how it fits into the larger context of identity-based politics in the region. By doing so, it can provide insights into the interplay between various identity movements and regional dynamics, shedding light on potential ripple effects.

Furthermore, the potential impact of the Saraiki movement on federal-provincial relations in Pakistan is a critical problem to address. The study should explore how this movement might reshape the division of power and scarce resources between the governments of provinces and federal, thereby potentially altering the governance structure of the entire country.

Finally, the study should examine policy and governance challenges associated with multi-ethnic regions like Punjab. This analysis should delve into the intricacies of balancing the diverse interests and needs of various ethnic and linguistic groups within a single administrative framework. By doing so, it can provide insights into effective governance in such complex environments. The central problem addressed in this study is the multifaceted issue of the Saraiki movement within the broader context of Punjab's ethnic and political landscape. The study seeks to understand the historical, social, and political factors that have fueled the demand for a separate Saraiki province.

1.2. Objectives of the study:

1. To analyse the historical roots of the Saraiki movement.

2. To examine the role of mainstream and regional political actors in the movement.

3. To assess the impact of ethnic identity and linguistic divisions in Punjab's political dynamics.

4. To evaluate the prospects and challenges of the Saraiki movement in achieving its objectives.

5. To seek out the demands of the Saraiki people for a new province.

1.3. Research Questions:

1. What are the major contributing factors in the emergence of the Saraiki Province movement?

2. How did the political actors play their role in the Saraiki Province movement?

3. To what extent ethnic identity and linguistic diversity play a role in the historical roots of the Seraiki Province Movement?

4. Why are the Seraiki people demanding a new province?

5. What are the challenges for the Seraiki province movement?

1.4 Hypothesis:

The Saraiki movement for a separate province is driven by historical grievances, political motivations, and the desire for more excellent representation in Punjab's governance.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

Nationalism is an ideological debate related to national identity, history, common boundary and culture of a particular nation-state. The manifestation of nationalism revolves around loyalty and love for one state in political and social domains. In the similar manner, ethno nationalism resides around the domain of an ethnicity demonstrating will to achieve the interests related to separatisms or ethnic dividends. Ethno nationalism significantly deals with an ethnicity of a state to formulate and establish devotions and political grounds for the settlement of objectives through genuine means. Ethno nationalism has been a deep-rooted approach of social affairs to which national identity can be linked with an ethnicity of specific goals. This would lead to building political stability and mobilization of ethnic groups from generations

to generations. Moreover, three approaches of nationalism come under the considerations of a complex phenomenon. Firstly, a primordial approach in which their feelings of deep-seated ties and sentiments for a nation or group that possess historical and language-oriented experiences. Secondly, the instrumentalist sometimes called a modernist approach of nationalism deals with manipulation of particular means to achieve ends of specific goals. This will result in the political and social stability leading to the construction of state building. This certainly will provide grounds for the construction of the national identity of a particular state. Lastly, the approach of social constructivism in nationalism deals with the key ideas constructed by group or ethnic individuals residing in the territory or boundary of common identity and language. This results in the objectives related to political and social mutuality.

The ethnic conflict theory is defined as the conceptual analysis of the form of conflict between ethnic groups for particular objective com under consideration. The conflict can be derived from ethnic differences within the domains of political, social, economic and cultural affiliations. In this theory of social sciences, the ethnic conflict has been considered as the major and prominent threat to international security and peace. There are various glimpses in the contemporary political and social environment where ethnicity is recognized as the ultimate cause of real problems. These variables demonstrate the end of a particular group to link its significant resources on conflict of security nature. Similarly, ethnic groups or ethnic communities and its people are involved in two bases. Firstly, the accentuation of the cultural aspects which endorses the limitations on traits of particular culture. Secondly, the basis of culture with traits can be used to distinguish one group from another. In a similar manner, there are various theoretical foundations which illustrate the tenants of ethnic conflict theory. To begin with, primordial focus on the fixed known identities is embedded into biological

attributes of communities. This ensures historical linkages of cultural differences. In this context a conflict of that communal group emerged as a driving factor of mobilization and created the atmosphere of variations in the movement of socio-political affiliations. Secondly, there is another school of thought in ethnic basis which is known as instrumentalism. In this thought process, ethnicity is regulated by the group and society in general not by the individual in political affairs. In this process the ethnic group in certain ways regularize the objectives for certain interests and this can be used for mobilization and movement for achieving ends.

The goals of instrumentalism are political in nature ranging from self-governance to autonomy and access to the resources from authority. Apart from this, there is a third school of thought called social constructivism which highlights the social aspects of ethnic identity. In general view the social constructivism shows that ethnic conflicts are means to establish by social integration of individuals and its community to form the objectives. Ethnicity in social construction is a prominent way of social change in conditions. Furthermore, this theory significantly demonstrates the genuine causes of ethnic conflict. These factors are economic, political, and social. Economic or resources are generated by the competition of resources between ethnic groups for particular causes. This can be visible with unequal distribution of wealth in the central authority. Moreover, the political factor can be argued as a struggle of power along the ethnic lines. In this category the struggle of ethnicity endorses the conflict and variations of violence through discriminatory policies and the role of governance. On the other hand, social factors categorically highlight the variations of cultural links for ethnicity and its conflict. These are recognized as the perceived threats to identity and the status of cultural variations in modern means of conflict. The ethnic conflict theory also ensures the significant dynamics of the ethnic conflict in the patronized method of

relationship of escalation to external influences.

The Saraiki-speaking population of South Punjab faces unprecedented challenges in the wave of current political and economic insecurities. In this state of affairs, the population in Pakistan is demanding social, political and economic autonomy and a self-governance structure in the form of a new province. Undoubtedly, the 21st century is encountering political complexities and this new dilemma of the Saraiki movement is one of the aspects of ethnic conflict. Therefore, the ethnic conflict theory in its aspects delves into the depth of the depletion of identity in Pakistan. Meanwhile, tenants of ethnic conflict theory would illustrate in the form of the application of contextual understanding of this movement of current significance. This can be analyzed through the primordial school of thought, instrumentalism and social constructivism of ethnic aspects of communal groups.

In this school of thought of ethnic conflict theory, there is substantial emphasis on the prominent and inherent character of ethnic identities. In South Punjab, these ethical identities demand for the province with new administrative and financial proceedings. The identities of communal groups are genuinely fighting for rights concerning their survival of social ends. From the escalation point of you there are various forms of the catalysts which endorse the visualization of conflict and increase the grievances from history to this contemporary world. However, the social change and communal groups in the Saraiki movement are embedded into ethnicities and function as the biological and cultural aspects. This Saraiki movement demonstrates the genuine cause of creation of new provinces on ethical grounds of South Punjab. Moreover, historically the Saraiki Identity sheds the light on languages and major ethno-linguistic groups. The advanced primordial ethnic aspect can be the cause of transforming a ethnic group into a major landscape of a new province. Similarly, as the

focus of primordial phenomenon, the fixed identities of Saraiki and its conflict with other ethnicities in the province stimulates their cause in the formation of new provinces in the country. This state of affairs endorses a few cohesive groups with historical roots in the region whose ends nonetheless creates a new mess for the supremacy of ethnic grounds.

Moreover, in South Punjab of Pakistan the ethnic identity perceives unregulated threats to its status and identity which can be generated from the depletion of rights of different nature ranging from administrative to financial. This depletion can have serious and complex implications on the population of South Punjab. The variety of threats can trigger the conflict between intra-ethnic groups. Resultantly, the role of its people increases in a way against the ethnic and cultural dividends of the accumulation of discrimination. The ethnic conflict theory in this school of thought also enhances the genuine function of identity in a meaningful way for the betterment of identities residing in the specific area of the South Punjab Region. The Saraiki speaking people on the flip side with objectives of land can draw a conflictual situation in mean time which categorically disturbs the land of the pure in its transforming phase for economic and political development. In this way the primordial aspect of ethnic conflict theory illustrates the marginalization and prevalence of discrimination of the Saraiki population.

With the advent of instrumentalism in ethnic conflict theory, the ethnic groups or communal groups of South Punjab encountered the presence of disparities and discrimination in political means. These discriminations are in the nature of political autonomy of resources and unequal distribution of the sources. This can be analyzed in the aspects of the self-governance model of ethnic dividends in Punjab. Instrumentalism significantly holds that wave of ethnic groups in the domains of political process and

this political process generates the greater conflict of interests between parties. This state of affairs can be comparable to the political affiliations of ideological and membership groups and identities for the related ends. Apart from this, the dynamics of conflict in the South Punjab and its population are generally triggered by the catalysts of political nature. There are major political factors that play a crucial role in the dynamism of demands of new provinces in South Punjab. This can be seen as different political actors in this region play the role of urgency to stimulate the cause of the Saraiki movement. Various entities in this region can be in the form of individual roles to promote the ethnic and political causes of the new province. Further, the demand of new provinces in Pakistan would facilitate the political movement of rights in new times. The politics of ethnicity on the flip side credibly turn the fortune for people of this region in ultimate ends of new identity and recognition. Moreover, the role of leadership in the domains of ethnic conflict theory endorses the influential cause to have the unlimited manipulation of the ethnicity and its sentiments for the growth of limited political objectives in the time. This has been the realistic cause of the various pursuits of conflict in the region of Punjab. Therefore, the relative conflict gets the intensification and unreliable intervention of political leaders. Instrumentalism in this category also highlights the political and social fallouts of the fragmented identities. And various consequences of the conflict get the face into implications. These are ranging from the humanitarian and long and short term economic pursuits to the genuine fragmentation of regions. Apart from this, the politics of ethnicities in the wave of Saraiki movement demonstrates the level of intensification of threats to the communal survival of people living in this area of influence. At the end of the day, the political cause derived by the ethnic conflict theory and instrumentalism criticized by many in the concerns of individuality which supports the role of the whole society in

its proposition and regulations. This state of affairs, on the other hand, endorses the political manipulations despite the support from ethnic grounds to decide the ultimate end of the affiliations of South Punjab and Saraiki movement. Thus, instrumentalism advocates the ethnic conflict as the political and its interests based conflict. The Saraiki movement is undoubtedly, the prominent example of the ethnic conflict for the demands and resources of equal distribution in political nature.

As the ethnic identity and linguistic diversity play a significant role in the past roots of Saraiki province movement; similarly, social constructivism in ethnic conflict theory demonstrates the social groups in hybrid situations with identity of ethnicity. In the Saraiki movement in Punjab the ethnic groups are neither open nor fixed in the form of values, character and identity. The function of such a group is determined by the level of social change in ethnic conflict theory. This state of affairs, credibly makes violent conflict prevalent in a socially constructed environment.

According to social constructivism and its aspects, the main cause of the conflict in the situation of the South Punjab are both social system and political system. However, the certain options for the conflict and its dividends are endorsed by violent conflict. Moreover, social constructivism significantly sheds light on changes in social interactions in the form of those violent conflicts through which the peaceful differences are socially constructed regardless of the depletion of particular rights in the demands of intent. This view of ethnic conflict theory in the resource's distribution becomes involved in a big game of movements as the Saraiki movement is showing its cause of social change. Furthermore, dynamics of the historical Saraiki movement in the domains of social constructivism advocates the ultimate mobilization of identities for real interests of greater nature. Similarly, escalation which is triggered by the said ethnicities in South Punjab contribute to the increased level of conflict and its intensity.

Thus, the movement from the historical nature to contemporary time shows the real perception of marginalization from ethnic conflict theory. Apart from this, Saraiki movement and the concerned political environment within the socially constructed subject determine the certain opportunities through these the objectives of the new province can be achieved. Social construction and its aspects offer the peaceful and potential methods of achieving the said ends in mean time for the social change in the regional political environment.

The demands for a new province in South Punjab are because of the individuals of the region which are more potent to have influence on the affiliations of historical roots. The construction of the authority and social governance of the group can be used as the ultimate objective also. This is the complex demand with the potential struggle of the communal group so that the new province can be created for social solidarity and ethnic peace and security. Furthermore, the concrete and suitable expression of ethnicity and its development to a resource oriented model. This development would create an unprecedented vacuum that can be filled through adaptations and ways of strategic and social construction of ideas and expressions. Lastly, the Saraiki movement in the end would be facing an unregulated and disputable spectrum of conflict. This is the prominent way of dealing with the development of new provinces in the regional dynamics of ethnic conflict. Therefore, social constructivism contributes to the underlying aspects of a new identity-based political environment.

1.5. Scope of Study:

This study focuses primarily on the Saraiki-speaking population in Punjab, Pakistan. It covers the Saraiki movement's historical context, critical political actors'

involvement, and Punjab's socio-political dynamics. The study does not delve into the legal or administrative aspects of province creation but aims to understand the movement's underlying factors comprehensively. The scope of the study on the politics of ethnicity and the Saraiki movement in Punjab is comprehensive, encompassing a multifaceted exploration of numerous critical dimensions. It will commence with a historical review of Punjab, offering insights into the roots of the Saraiki movement and the evolution of Saraiki identity. This historical context will set the stage for an in-depth analysis of the socio-political dynamics within Punjab, with a specific focus on the perceived marginalization of the Saraiki-speaking population within the more significant Punjabi identity.

The study's scope also extends to an examination of the complex evolution of Saraiki identity, considering the historical and contemporary factors that have shaped this transformation and how it has affected the unity and aspirations of the Saraiki-speaking community. Furthermore, the demand for a new Saraiki province is a central theme within the study's scope, allowing for an assessment of the motivations behind this demand, the feasibility of its creation, and the potential consequences, in terms of both governance and resource distribution.

Challenges to the Saraiki movement will be scrutinized within the broader political context, including opposition from other political groups and potential resistance from the dominant Punjabi identity. The research will also consider the broader implications of the movement, not only for Punjab but also within the larger framework of South Asian identity politics and regional dynamics.

Federal-provincial relations in Pakistan will come under the study's purview, particularly regarding how the Saraiki movement may affect the distribution of power and resources, with potential implications for the country's governance structure.

Additionally, the study will address the policy and governance challenges that multi-ethnic regions like Punjab face, offering insights into the complexities of managing diverse interests and needs within a single administrative framework.

Ultimately, the research aims to provide recommendations with policy implications, contributing to academic scholarship on ethnic politics and governance in multi-ethnic regions while offering practical insights into the concerns of marginalized ethnic groups, not only in Punjab but in analogous contexts. The geographical focus will primarily center on Punjab, with a specific emphasis on the Saraiki-speaking population and their aspirations. Still, it may incorporate comparative analyses with other ethnic movements or identity politics instances in South Asia and beyond, thus expanding the study's reach and significance.

1.6. Literature Review and Research Gap

Political and economic strangulation of provinces in the federation have generated a substantial debate for the separatists. In this way ethnic and identity politics of Punjab gave rise to a movement of political rights related to representation of population for higher cause. This inevitable movement from the Saraiki population has been studied at various grounds for significant developments. There is diverse literature present already on the subject matter. Therefore, the new and comprehensive aspects need to be analyzed in order to highlight matter. Similarly, the topic *"Politics of Ethnicity and Quest for a new province in Punjab: an Analytical study of Saraiki Movement"* is studied through diverse pieces of literature.

Saweel Hameed Rathore in his seminal work*, "Language and Identity in Pakistan: A Case Study of Saraiki Movement"* highlighted the emergence of the Saraiki Ethnolinguistic wave of separatism in the name of Bahawalpur Movement and Saraiki

movement. His arguments are shedding light on national political discourse and its concerns with the 18th amendment of the constitution of Pakistan. This movement from the roots of political affiliations is driving disturbing ripples for the federation. In this paper, Saraiki identity and movement is studied in a comprehensive way from historical overview to current dynamics of Saraiki movement. Writer on the other hand illustrates the implications of Saraiki identity involved in the grip of conflict of interests with other Punjab majority people. Moreover, the writer has highlighted the socio-economic and cultural challenges to the Saraiki identity in the eave of political mobilization and regional lines. In this work, there are few gaps concerning the regional actors involved in the Saraiki movement along with the mainstream aspects. Further, there is a void in the form of prospects of Saraiki movement in the region, specifically for its population.

Umer Farooq Dogar, in his research paper illustrates that Pakistan is witnessing the grave threats of different natures and ethnic and identity politics is unwaveringly impacting the political and social functionality of state. These factors have been studied in the fundamental needs of creation of new provinces which will help in the administrative affairs. Writer has established the debate that the need of the new province is based on the administrative and ethnic or linguistic needs of people of the Saraiki region. Furthermore, the writer demonstrates that there is economic disparity within the region so that the Pro-Saraiki province sentiments have emerged. In this write-up, the phenomenon of implications of depletion of rights of regional people is missing which will have to substantiate the subject matter of great significance. Further, the challenges and prospects of the Saraiki movement are absent in this work. Lastly, there is no role of political actors for the politics of separate provinces in Punjab.

Muhammad Mushtaq in research work, demonstrate significance of 18th amendment in the autonomy of provinces. This amendment one way or the other has

genuinely proved an impetus for many groups of sub-national nature to have a solid demand of creation of new provinces in the country. The ethnic group of South Punjab in similar manner advocated a huge campaign or movement for holding the related quest for new province since 1970. In this research work, the analysis supports the ends of new provinces in the realm of political identity politics. Apart from this, the work significantly addresses the pursuits of challenges and prospects leading to the movement of the population of South Punjab. The objectives and strategic foresight are also genuine parts of the Saraiki movement, and have been discussed at the time. Lastly, the research highlights the future of the Saraiki movement through a flexible approach from people. Thus, there is a research gap in this work as the substantial political process is absent in this research on how the reality-based political actors and their aspirations would lean towards the success of this movement. The research is void in the ramifications on the South Punjab population after the province can be made. Therefore, there is a need to have glimpses of the suitable approach from the policymakers to get the resolution passed on the subject of the new province in South Punjab and this definitely can endorse stability in the socio-political environment.

Dr Sohail Akhtar and others in a journal write about this .In this work, writers have significantly debated about the analytical study of people of South Punjab for the establishment of political identity in the South Punjab. In their work, the particular issue of identity in the lens of ethnic and linguistic nature has been illustrated especially concerning the rights of the Saraiki population. The notion of Saraiki province is way different than that of the other regional ethnic disputes regarding the extreme nature of depletion of rights in the South Punjab. Apart from this, the reason for administrative failure in providence of rights of this population is discussed. This can be seen as the ultimate cause for socio-political and economic deprivation of the people of South

Punjab. This write-up categorically misses what kinds of rights are being depleted at the central level. How this autonomy of the province would accomplish the stability of the concurrent dilemma of South Punjab. This would be other concerning prospects of the formation of new provinces in the region.

Azhar Mahmood in their prominent work on the subject of new provinces have significantly highlighted the major issues in his article, In this important research work, the discourse around the demand and establishment of new provinces have been discussed. With the passage of time, the popular and long-lasting modifications of federating units have been proposed. These are driven by the political and economic deprivation of the ethnic population in Pakistan. In this work, the demands of Saraiki province, Bahawalpur province and Hazara province have been analysed with socio-political implications and major hurdles in making these provinces have been considered. Apart from this, the major stance of the various political parties regarding the creation of new provinces has been discussed in appropriate ways. Lastly, the write-up demonstrates the urgency of re-demarcation of the state in Pakistan.

Umbreen Javaid endorses the debate of chasm of political differences in its true spirit from the colonial rule up to this time in the form of federalism. In contemporary times, these differences are the genuine cause of the instability of the country and provinces are the major reason behind this. The dearth of relationship between Centre and provinces are driving the disputes in the country. This state of affairs is resulting in the demand of new provinces in the regions of the country. Similarly, on the basis of ethnic cards the demand for creation of new provinces is increasing from time to time. Ethnic groups are demanding the unprecedented resources through which socio-economic stability would be the ultimate end. In the same manner, the demand of Bahawalpur province and Saraiki province are on the basis of ethnicity and because of

the genuine issues being faced from centre to province relations. In this article, the challenges of creation of new provinces are missing so that the significant prospects can be maintained. Moreover, the complete constitutional set-up of creation of Saraiki province from the efforts of political efforts need proper attention from the policy makers to point out the issues concerning this demand.

Muhammad A.Z. Mughal wrote in his article. This seminal work highlights the complicated affairs between the key variables of ethnicity, marginalization and the political identity of an ethnic group called Saraiki in South Punjab. In this research, the writer has enunciated various factors related to the unequal and illegitimate distribution of the resources regarding the various ethnic parts of the country. Similarly, this situation is prevailing in the Southern province of Pakistan through unequal resource distributions. In this work, the writer says that the marginalization of this ethnic group is coming out of the economic and political disturbances in Pakistan to govern the said region in ultimate way. This state of affairs has had certain ramifications which affect the local people of the country in unprecedented ways. Writers have illustrated various case studies of those marginalizations. In this research work, the historical glimpses from where this disparity arises are missing. This research lacks implications to administrative grounds and focused on economic affairs only.

Nayab Fatima highlights how the Saraiki movement gained momentum in history in the Southern Punjab region. Writer appreciated the steps from Pakistan Tehreek i Insaf in Pakistan that the campaign over Saraiki identity has gained roots in mainstream politics of contemporary era. This momentum is genuinely related to the financial stability of people of Southern Punjab. However, the government has had fear that this would be a fault line in ethnic groups and state that this separation would instill the vacuum in administrative affairs of the country. Apart from this, this study is to seek

the sentiments related to Saraiki identity in Southern Punjab province. In this study the mass sentiments are appearing from the causation of ethno federalism and ethnic identity can be feasible for the growth of the cause of people of Southern Punjab. In this study the research gap is related to the contours of political autonomy and the implications and challenges caused by the affairs of movement.

Dr Khalid Manzoor Butt wrote in their seminar work that when there are the grievances which are not being addressed within the particular range of the community this results into thoughts and movement of separatists. Throughout Pakistan, there are different prevailing notions of disparity in several aspects including health, education, and infrastructure. These disparities can lead to the demands of ethnic groups to acquire the vested interests in substantial slogans. The writes highlight the historical grounds of the Saraiki movement. How this movement is different from the others in Pakistan. How problems of central Punjab and issues of Southern Punjab are different concerning the intensity of ideas. In this research, gaps are related to the economic, political and social rights of communal groups of Southern Punjab. The implications and challenges are not properly addressed as comparative study with other factors.

1.7. Significance of Study:

The significance of the study on the politics of ethnicity and the Saraiki movement in Punjab is multifaceted and far-reaching. Academically, it contributes to the understanding of identity politics in South Asia, particularly by delving into the intricate dynamics of the Saraiki movement. This research enhances the academic discourse on ethnic identity, marginalization, and the evolution of identity in the region, offering valuable insights for researchers and scholars interested in South Asian politics.

Moreover, the study holds significant policy implications. By elucidating the motivations and challenges of the Saraiki movement, it equips policymakers with the knowledge to address the concerns of marginalized ethnic groups more effectively. Furthermore, the insights into governance challenges in multi-ethnic regions can inform the formulation of more inclusive and equitable policies, promoting harmonious coexistence. The study's socio-political impact must be considered. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the implications of the Saraiki movement, which has the potential to reshape the political landscape of Punjab and influence federal-provincial relations in Pakistan. This understanding is essential for policymakers, political analysts, and observers to anticipate and navigate potential changes in the region.

Furthermore, the study illuminates broader regional dynamics, as the Saraiki movement's Significance extends beyond Punjab. It can influence other identity-based movements and regional trends in South Asia, making it a crucial piece of the puzzle for those seeking a comprehensive analysis of the region's identity politics.

Culturally and linguistically, the study underscores the importance of preserving diversity within Pakistan. Recognizing and respecting the Saraiki, linguistic and cultural heritage contributes to the ongoing dialogue on cultural preservation and diversity in the region.

The potential for comparative analysis with other identity movements in South Asia is another notable aspect of this study's significance. This approach provides valuable insights into how different movements interact; influence each other, and share commonalities or distinctions, enriching our understanding of identity politics in the region.

Finally, the study's insights into the grievances of the Saraiki movement may contribute to conflict resolution efforts by addressing the root causes and facilitating more stable and harmonious coexistence among different ethnic and linguistic groups. In sum, the study's significance lies in its potential to advance academic understanding, guide policymaking, influence regional dynamics, contribute to cultural preservation, and offer insights into identity politics and governance in multi-ethnic regions, making it a valuable resource for a wide range of stakeholders. This study holds significant importance in understanding the dynamics of ethnic and linguistic politics within Pakistan, particularly in Punjab. It contributes to academic and policy discussions on the feasibility of creating new provinces and addresses the broader question of ethnic representation in a multi-ethnic nation.

1.8. Research Methodology:

The research will employ a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Data will be collected through archival research, interviews with key stakeholders, surveys, relevant documents, and media content analysis. The study will also utilize historical analysis to trace the origins of the Saraiki movement and employ qualitative analysis to understand the role of political actors and ethnic identity in shaping the movement's trajectory.

In conclusion, this analytical study seeks to unravel the intricacies of the Saraiki movement in Punjab, Pakistan, providing valuable insights into the politics of ethnicity and the quest for a new province. By addressing historical grievances, political motivations, and ethnic dynamics, it aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of this complex issue.

1.9. Delimitation of study

The delimitations of the study on the politics of ethnicity and the Saraiki movement in Punjab serve to establish clear boundaries and areas of focus for the research. Geographically, the study concentrates on Punjab, Pakistan, with a particular emphasis on the Saraiki-speaking population rather than extending its scope to other regions. It predominantly centers on contemporary developments while acknowledging the importance of historical context within recent decades. The use of the English language as the primary medium of research may limit access to primary sources in local languages, which could affect the inclusion of certain materials. Additionally, the study's sample size for surveys and interviews is constrained by practical considerations, potentially affecting the generalizability of findings. While the research incorporates a comparative perspective, it does not aim to encompass the analysis of all identity movements in South Asia. Policy recommendations may be offered, but the study does not engage in policy implementation or evaluation.

Furthermore, it maintains a broader focus on the Saraiki movement itself rather than delving deeply into the inner workings of specific political parties or leaders. The study primarily examines the immediate and short-to-medium-term effects of the Saraiki movement, leaving long-term consequences and developments outside its immediate scope. Additionally, while it acknowledges the potential for conflict resolution, the study does not directly engage in conflict resolution processes or negotiations. It serves primarily as an analytical and informative tool within its defined parameters.

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CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND AND SARAIKI MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN

The Saraiki movement, which originated in South Punjab, is a regional, linguistic and cultural struggle in Pakistan. This ethnically rich area and its people have been economically, politically, and socially suppressed for generations, especially Saraiki speaking people. This marginalization has historical background that dates back to British time and made worse by the post-independence policies that completely ignored infrastructure development and other basic needs of the region (Talbot, 1988; Gilmartin, 1979)[5]. The British administration failed to recognize these local indigenous identities while they were making administrative decisions causing indigenous languages and cultures to be marginalized (Shackle, 1983; Rahman, 1991[6]. A repressive socioeconomic model that started with Zamindari production disproportionately affected South Punjab with the highest ratio of exploitation that still continues today (Ali, 1989; Siddique, 2016)[7]. The colonial desire to concentrate political and administrative authority, and resources in some predominantly northern tracts of Punjab sowed the seeds of discontent amongst the Saraiki-speaking regions (Jaffrelot, 2015; Siddique, 2016)[8].

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[5] Talbot, I. (1988). *Punjab and the Raj: 1849-1947*. Oxford University Press.

[6] Shackle, C. (1983). *Language, Identity and Society in Pakistan*. Curzon Press.

[7] Ali, S. M. (1989). *The Political Economy of South Asia: A Study on Zamindari System*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

[8] Jaffrelot, C. (2015). *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* Zed Books.

These historical wrongs which are unjust remained entirely unresolved after the partition of India in 1947 and the formation of Pakistan but in addition to this they endure to reveal policies that favored the political and economic aristocracy in Northern Punjab (Ali, 2007; Ayres, 2009)[9]. The Saraiki belt remained much as a rural area and was deprived of industrial and infrastructural facilities found in other areas. Moreover, another factor threatening the community's identity was the process of Adopting Urdu as an official language and directing a campaign for language centralization in the state.

Modern threads of this marginalization means the rationalization of resources, having second-rate amenities, inferior schools, and no vote. South Punjab is the most populous and agricultural region but it has low investment from central government and its people suffer from unemployment, poverty, and inadequate facilities (Zaidi, 2005; Rehman, 2014)[10]. Such unfair conducts have intensified the Saraiki movement demanding for a new province and increased political authority since the people struggle for their language, culture and economic power (Cheema, 2012; Siddique, 2016)[11]. This chapter explores these historical and modern influences, presenting the carriage of the subject concerning the demands for justice within the movement from colonial times to the present.

2.1. Implications of British Administrative Flaws in Policy Making

The British colonial established a considerable administrative reform in the subcontinent during British rule especially in Punjab to establish a dominance over the

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[9] Ayres, A. (2009). *Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press.

[10] Rahman, T. (1991). *Language and Politics in Pakistan: The Urdu-Punjabi Debate*. Oxford University Press.

[11] Cheema, A. (2012). *The Political Economy of Ethnicity and Regionalism in Pakistan*. Sustainable Development Policy Institute.

mass people of the subcontinent. Most of these divisions were based on administrative convenience although the resultant division in some cases negated the cultural, linguistic and even ethnic diversity of the local communities. In Türkey this reorganization also had significant impacts which altered the Saraiki speaking areas including the future economic and political marginalization which have firmed up movements such as the Saraiki movement. Through a reform strategy the British Empire aimed at rationalizing the colonized territories with little attention to isomorphic features such as language and culture hence redrawing administrative boundaries in a way that distorted the physical geography. As Ian Talbot rightly analyses it, the Punjab region was ethnologically homogeneous as Punjabi and Saraiki speaking areas which were however remapped into districts principally in accordance with the British considerations of potential revenue, pattern of zamindari control over land and above all, assessment of the British grasp of administrative control in terms of tax collection system. Many of these administrative divisions arbitrarily disrupted the natural social and cultural divisions of the region. Defined territorial boundaries that erased regional cultural appurtenances and insisted on practical value for colonial exploitation disrupted regional cohesion and produced the germ of future disgruntlement (Gilmartin, 1988; Shackle, 1977)[12].

One primary weakness of British administration for the region was exacerbating the concentration of power in the northern regions of Punjab, which was more specifically in Lahore where a significant regime of administration and more importantly economic centre was established. This centralization led to important

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1. [12] Gilmartin, D. (1988). *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*. University of California Press.
2. Shackle, C. (1977). *The Saraiki Language Movement*. Modern Asian Studies.

regional disparities especially for South Punjab that is mostly Saraiki speaking. The British made Lahore, the city in the north, central to key installations and investments in physical capital as well as the focus of political authority and resources. This means, as Gilmartin notes, that shift of focus on Lahore as the provincial capital marginalized South Punjab which remained mainly rural and economically backward in terms of development[13]. The Saraiki community was already on the periphery of social and economic life and by centralization of power and resources in Northern Punjab they were totally pushed to the peripheral zone. Furthermore, the socio economic answer is that; British colonial policies in Asia compounded these inequities. Historian Akbar Zaidi points out that the introduction of the Zamindari system benefited large landlords, many of whom were in Northern Punjab depriving South Punjab of equal chances in the economic boom (Zaidi, 2005, p.58)[14]. While making the scarcity of land and the surplus of labor work to everyone's detriment, the new system also established a new means of power relations where the North benefited at the expense of the southern agrarian capitalists. Thus, the Saraiki speaking people were politically and more or less economically oppressed within a new colonial framework.

European scholars have pointed out that the British governance of Punjab was mainly based on the 'least-regret principle' that the needs of the indigenous population had rarely been met. According to Talbot this British policy failed to protect regional or linguistic structures of the societies of the Sub-continent including the Saraiki people but just aimed at political stability and the consolidation of sources of income (Talbot, 1988)[15]. This caused very negative results too, it sidelined the local identities and

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[13] Gilmartin, 1988.

[14] Zaidi, 2005, p.58.

[15] Talbot, 1988

aspirations of the Saraiki region which further eroded their hope in the governance structure. In this regard, Gilmartin underlines the regulation of the systems of land revenue and political influence as the key means which reinforced divides in Punjab. He also said that the British policies not only worsened economic inequity but also disintegrated social cohesiveness from which the lowly people such as the Saraiki-speaking population could not easily organize themselves towards overcoming their adversity (Gilmartin, 1988)[16]. The Saraiki community was previously politically and economically marginalized from political power and economic capital during the colonial period which encouraged them to demand state recognition and self-rule later (Siddique, 2016). That the British had left administrative weaknesses behind perhaps explains the continued complaints of the Saraiki people and their pursuit for political representation and fair share of the resources (Cheema, 2012; Rehman, 2014).

The colonial administrators who were British introduced policies which impacted the Saraiki speaking people. Due to this blotch of compartmentalization followed by the colonial masters where provinces happened to be carved out on linguistic basis, besides, concentrating the power in the northern areas of Punjab, south Punjab largely remained socially, politically and economically neglected. Extraordinary economic and political disparities of the age have prevailed still to rule the region's process and create reactions like the Saraiki movement that has aimed to surprise the historical marginalization the Saraiki people have suffered (Siddique, 2016)[17]. Knowledge of these past injustices is essential for the assessment of the present day political claims to identity and self-rule among today's Saraiki population (Rahman

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[16] Gilmartin, 1988

[17] Siddique, 2016

1991; Ayres 2009)[18].

2.2. Revenue System in the Subcontinent and Impacts on Saraiki Identity

Punjab was following the system of Zamindari which was.GetType of colonial rent collection which allowed the large landlords named as Zamindars to have full control over large agricultural lands. This system was in theory meant for optimum collection of taxes; however it had profound social and economic ramifications on the socioeconomic structure of the South Punjab, which is predominantly a Saraiki speaking region and house to majority of the rural peasantry of the Punjab province. Although several zamindars gained economically out of this system the overall peasant community was excluded and became more marginalised all over the country. The British agrarian policies changed the socio-economic structure of South Punjab in an effective manner. The area that has good potential for agriculture was turned into a region of exploitation with the help of the Zamindari system. Sugata Bose argued that the British established a strong local supporting class for the exploitation of agriculture surplus by landowners and the continuous subjugation of peasants through extortion of more taxes. This economic imperialism not only centralized wealth and power in few hands but also impoverished the peasants especially in Saraiki speaking regions of the Sub-continent (S.M. Ali, 1989; I. Talbot, 2007).

Apart from economic exploitation, this agrarian economy also clearly produced other negative effects in the Saraiki region by giving the people a sense of political exclusion. Absence of closer social interaction between the landlords and the tenants made the latter feel even more sidelined within the Saraiki population, as the landlords

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[18] Rahman, 1991; Ayres, 2009

themselves were not necessarily fixed inhabitants of the region but may have homes and offices in town, or even in other provinces. The tenants were charged relatively high rents and living under undesirable working conditions, the poor becoming poor, perpetuating their identity of poor and oppressed tenants. Anwar H. Syed for example noted that besides building exploitative links in the agrarian relations under the British colonial rule, untouched the ethnic stratification and by doing so, powerfully installed the rural poor more precisely in South Punjab and the colonial masters with an explosive stock of influence of upper-class landlords (Syed 1992)[19]. This process further deepened class and ethnic tensions, leading to the growing, in the hearts of the Saraiki-speaking population, predetermined identity and demands.

The British also intentionally or unintentionally were promoting ethnic disparities in majority of cases especially in ownership of land and its administration that led to more ethnic divisions in Punjab. Zamindars were from certain castes and clans, formed distinct patron-client relations with colonial officials and reinforced social structures of 'landlords' and 'tenants'. This land based aristocracy composed of the Punjabi elites established itself more firmly in rural economy and political structure thus marginalizing the Saraiki speaking toilers (Ahmed, 1998)[20]. This economic and political marginalization led the Saraiki people to develop the regional and ethnic consciousness because Saraiki people started believing that their poverty and political weakness are the part and parcel of their identity.

The role of the British revenue system especially through the establishment of the Zamindari system reflected a novel influence in the demography of socio- economic culture of South Punjab. The oppressive system of zamindars and the elimination of

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[19] Syed, 1992
[20] Ahmed, 1998

peasants' political rights help to increase their feeling of alienation and become the basis for the creation of the specific Saraiki identity connected with the fight against economic inequality (Shackle, 1977)[21]. The effects of these agrarian policies are still seen today, where organised calls for recognition and rights within the ongoing movement continue to be made. A brief overview in this context can be made with reference to Christophe Jaffrelot who has argued that political awakening of the Saraiki-speaking people is intrinsically tied to their struggle for political self-rule which has roots in colonial prejudice and post-colonial neglect of South Punjab (2015).

2.3. Political and Economic Disparities during the British Era

During the British colonization, there were clear-cut status differences between the northern and the southern Punjab, especially concentrating the imperial capital of Lahore as the political and economic center of the region. Through its policies, Britain strategically deprived South Punjab, especially the Saraiki stratum of the region, of necessary resources, infrastructure and army recruitment facilities that were otherwise provided to the north. These shut out led to the long term socio economic problems that are still felt in this part of the world to this day. Rasheeduddin Khan, gunning down the British gouvernance for the centralization of authorities and capital in north Punjab, has claimed that south punjab systematically excluded from developmental politics by British, as it pays less attention to south Punjab than it does to other politically more influential regions of Punjab (Khan, 1992)[22]. Besides politically neglecting the Saraiki region of the province, such bias contributed towards economic backwardness as the

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[21] Shackle, 1977

[22] Khan, 1992

government lavished Northern Province with essential services and infrastructure projects.

Moreover, according to Christophe Jaffrelot the political isolation observed in South Punjab during colonial times persisted after independence. British policies have cemented an unrepresentative politics and where political powers still reside in the North, thus extending socio-political fault lines in Punjab (Jaffrelot, 2015)[23]. The resulting dual economic structures arising from colonial policy have persisted in creating social inequity in the Saraiki-speaking population and through this have shaped their desire for acknowledgment into a grievance and a demand for self-organization.

2.4. Post-partition Era after the Formation of Pakistan

a) Disparities in Resource Allocation in the Saraiki Region

South Punjab continued to face even more little allocation and scenario regarding development after the emergence of Pakistan in 1947. The new born government was especially keen on development in Karachi and the northern Punjab but it further the existing regional disparities. This emphasis led to virtual exclusion of South Punjab that was still struggling with its infrastructural, educational, and social development deficits, and inadequate health care services. The post-1947 period saw a new kind of regional disparity, where Karachi and Northern Punjab, especially areas around Lahore, the industrialization and urban development were favoured whereas South Punjab, as pointed out by Mubarak Ali, was much neglected (Ali, 2007)[24]. Financial resource allocation for the establishment of projects like roads, schools, NT

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[23] Jafferlot, 2015
[24] Ali, 2017

hospitals, etc. remained highly skewed towards the northern regions which affected the growth of South Punjab's infrastructure sector. Therefore, the literacy rate and health status of the populace in South Punjab remained significantly lower when compared with other provinces, as well as new districts and cities, which deepened the gap in economic development and hindered appropriate growth and development in South Punjab.

The socio economic marginalization led to the resentment as the Saraiki speaking population rightly perceived they were part of no narrative and being deprived of the developmental resources they deserved. The grass-root discrimination in terms of available resources to invest in economic development incurred the Saraiki movement that articulated the community's demands in terms of resources and identity. Kishwar, Riaz and Ayesha Jalal have all pointed out that South Punjab is markedly underdeveloped and has been largely ignored by the Pakistani political elites; the Saraiki people of the region are now demanding political self-rule (Jalal, 1994, Kishwar, 1992:57, Riaz, 2002, 272–274)[25]. The Saraiki movement, hence, arose as a form of revolt together with a struggle for economic disparity but as an attempt to gain a political province and a rightful place within the state structure. Therefore the focus on Karachi and Northern Punjab after partition further complicated the socio-economic structural formation, and thus South Punjab remained in the periphery of development. The movement for the Saraiki language thus only began as a reaction to systematic marginalization requesting rights, funding, and visibility in the greater national sphere.

b) **Political Dismemberment and Marginalization of the Saraiki Community**

In general, the Saraiki-speaking population of the region of Pakistan had little

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[25] Jalal, 1994; Kishwar, 1992:57;Riaz, 2002, 272–274

political representation in both provincial and national assemblies. These kinds of discrimination can be ascribed to the fact that Lahore has become the political capital of the Province, where Urdu and Punjabi Speaking people dominate. This has created a situation whereby the Saraiki community is denied an opportunity to express itself on serious issues affecting them and thus denied a seat at the decision-making table. The nonexistence and an increase in scale of the political representation has become one of the major causes for political marginalization of the Saraiki people and has bolstered the demand for increased political recognition and status within the peripheral political map of Pakistan. Rahman as well explains the political system that oppresses the minority and the cultural dominance of Urdu and Punjabi results in the suppression of political aspirations of small linguistic groups (Rahman, 1991)[26]. This failure to incorporate Saraiki sentiments in the provincial politics has powered the disenfranchised sentiments among the Saraiki people to seek political and administrative change. The demand for a new province for the Saraiki speaking population has come out as a major feature in the movement since it is the struggle of the Saraiki people to be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and to be accepted as a distinct people.

In addition, political oppression has been realized in the representation of the Saraiki community, thus affecting developments in their sociopolitical and economies. Unfavourable representation was observed and important Saraiki regions were not paid adequate attention concerning resource and development allocation. Consequently, the gaps between socio-economic realities of both provinces of South Punjab and other provinces have persisted to increase, which has aggravated the anger of the Saraiki people. As with progressive political demands for representation, the campaign

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[26] Rahman, 1997

therefore relates greatly with other struggles for resource, fairness and development.

c) Suppression of Cultural and Social Values in Pakistan

The state of Pakistan after the Partition moved towards policies of cultural integration where the nation was to be built on defining culture based on a person's following of Islamic beliefs and speaking Urdu language. This nationalistic novel left little room for regional languages and cultures and hence, Saraiki. Due to the eradication of Saraiki language, it has become an emotive issue of the Saraiki movement because linguistic self-identity is a fundamental part of the cultural experience and social relations in the Saraiki region. Christopher Shackle equally indicates that the setting of Urdu as the national language worked against regional languages including Saraiki by denying them legitimacy (1983). This linguistic exclusion certainly was not solely cultural; it held consequential political and economic implications. Urdu was dominant in official affairs and thus Saraiki speaking people could hardly find a place in the bureaucratic center or in public organizations.

Alyssa Ayres goes on and explores the Politics of language in Pakistan and states that Urdu has been given the English language preference in all important sectors of the country therefore making the non-urdu speakers even more vulnerable. This exclusion can be seen in many sectors and when Urdu is the dominant education, government and media sectors there is no representation of regional languages. The decreased usage of the Saraiki language in the formal arena has reinforced the idea of cultural erosion among the people and has isolated the Saraiki community from the mainstream path even further.

The reduction of linguistic marginalization of Saraiki has also hurt the suppression of the cultural and social domains as well. Saraiki Language has failed to

gain due attention within the larger sociocultural milieu that is dominated by Urdu and Punjabi Languages; Saraiki literature has had very weak representation in official media of Pakistan that can make it reach out to traditionalists. As noted by Rahman, state cultural policies have for long been inclined to promote one dominant cultural outlook to the neglect of the cultures that prevail in the nation (Rahman, 1991)[27]. This erasure not only robs the culture of Pakistan the depth it so desperately needs but it also reduces the Saraiki people's worth.

Due to this authoritative and oppressive stance to culture and language, the Saraiki movement has over the years placed enhanced value on the language in the creation of ethnic identity. The struggle for Saraiki language has now turned into a struggle for Saraiki language to be given the same status as Urdu and Punjabi languages. In seeking to promote the use of the Saraiki language and to preserve it the community wants to bring back a sense of pride and an identity that has been missing from the community due to decades of neglect. Political marginalization accompanied by the suppression of Siraiki cultural identity have remained some of the key forceful factors in the campaign for decentralisation for the Saraiki movement. In the growth process of their identity in the large context of Pakistan, the Saraiki people remain committed to defending their right to vote and to promote culture at all levels, in order to build a society that recognizes their identity.

2.5. Contemporary Factors in the Emergence of the Saraiki Movement

Through cultural pride, political mobilization, demand for linguistic rights, phrased in the Saraiki language, the Saraiki movement has risen as a political, social and economic representation for Saraiki speaking people of South Punjab, Pakistan.

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[27] Rahman, 1991

a) Imbalanced Resource Mobilization in South Punjab

Over the past few decades, sharp differences between Northern and Southern Punjab have emerged, especially to the question of resources and resource mobilization. Consequently, Northern Punjab has embraced industrialization, infrastructural growth, and even better standards of living in comparison to mostly agrarian South Punjab. There is very little investment on industrial or technological sectors in the region therefore, South Punjab is more underdeveloped economically as compared to developed areas and there is huge gap between both. To this end, Maliha Naseer fully agrees stating that the provincial government has drawn more attention towards the development of three urban areas located in Northern Punjab thereby neglecting South Punjab which does not even have basic amenities and structures (Naseer, 2017)[28]. Basic infrastructural facilities, therefore roads, hospitals, and schools are seemingly perhaps more developed in the northern areas, that the Saraiki speaking population feels neglected systematically. This deprivation has created a level of discontent amongst the Saraiki that their economic prospects are being held back due to discriminative state policies that favor particular zones over other ones.

Another area that has not received much attention in South Punjab is investment in the economic base which has led to slow job generation and poverty. Report from the Asian Development Bank states that poor infrastructure hampers economic development and keeps economies from reaching their potential (Asian Development Bank, 2019)[29]. This continued neglect has assumed a very crucial role in the emergence of the Saraiki movement because the community has insisted on being mobilized for resources on an equal basis with other communities and has also wanted a greater share

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[28] Naseer, 2017
[29] Asian development bank, 2019

in the development processes of the nation.

b) Neglect of Economic Rights of the Saraiki Community

Agriculture forms the major element of the economy in South Punjab, but the region seemed to have no bar to reap the results of agricultural structural adjustments and subsidies. The Saraiki community, a major part of which is dependent on agriculture, has suffered in terms of land reforms and markets being denied state intervention leaving them in bad economic shape. Akbar Zaidi takes to the floor and shares how Pakistan is full and maturing industrialised regions, all the while systematically displacing agrarian regions such as South Punjab (Zaidi, 2005)[30]. The ability to bring about effective reforms on land or proper agricultural policies that can enable local farmers is actually lacking resulting in rampant socio-economic regional imbalances. Consequently, Saraiki speaking people have risen against the biased distribution of resources and demanded the setting up of regional development funds for South Punjab.

This neglect has not only retarded economic development but also impeded the possibility of sustainable income generating activity in the region. According to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), rates of production in agriculture and upliftment of the social economy standards of the farming populace depend on worthy implementation of the land reforms (PIDE, 2020)[31]. Hence, the problem of economic rights and rightful development has emerged as one of the critical issues of the Saraiki struggle.

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[30] Zaidi, 2005
[31] Pakistan institute of development economics, 2020

c) Unprecedented Educational Disparities in the Region

As illustrated earlier, educational gaps between South Punjab and other provinces are very wide. Education levels are low in South Punjab compared to Northern Punjab and the area is scarce in colleges and schools as well as universities. The essence of such learning poverty is that it has a range and lifelong socio-economic impact as lack of quality education denies people the chances of upward social mobility and employment. According to Ata-ur-Rehman: The educational inequity in South Punjab is worst in terms of education both in its access and quality (Rehman, 2014)[32]. Lack of educational facilities have enshrined poverty in the children of this region, they lack the right skills for employment. Due to the lack of quality education centers and qualified teachers, the whole issue has worsened and student's enrolment is low.

Besides, the insufficient efforts in education development initiatives in South Punjab have developed a widespread brain drain as the young people, who have received education, seek better opportunities in urban areas. PBS has indicated that employment rates are high in the region due to the region's lower literacy rates especially among the youthful population (PBS, 2021)[33]. These conditions have propelled the claims of the Saraiki movement that Saraiki people also require the investment on education so that they could come out of the historical structural injustices.

d) Less Employment Ratio in South Punjab Region

There is huge unemployment in South Punjab as compared to Northern Punjab due to lack of industrialization in the region. This implies that the majority of people have to push for anything related to jobs, agriculture being the most prominent area of

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[32] Rehman,2014
[33] Pakistan bureau of statistics, 2021

employment that guarantees little employment all season, and poorly paid at that. This lack of diversification in jobs makes a challenging situation for the Saraiki people; more so for the youth. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2021) has indicated that unemployment rates in South Punjab are higher as compared to the country's average, and above all, the large number of people in the region are still working in the low wages agriculture sector. This extreme unemployment has fuelled demands for autonomy and formulation of a province for Saraiki region and that only through autonomy can the Saraiki community can put into practice to overcome the socio economic issues of this area.

e) Imbalance in Developmental Policies for Backward Regions of South Punjab

Pakistan's development policies have over the years been inclined more to the urban and politically influential regions and districts with South Punjab being one of the most neglected. They went on to say that Northern Punjab, which is relatively well-developed in terms of infrastructure projects, health facilities, and institutions, dwarfs South Punjab. They further noted that absence of a comprehensive regional development plan for south Punjab has compounded the problems of uneven development even more.

The certain regional development in Punjab studied by Ali Cheema also reveals the important infrastructure and service provision divides between Northern and Southern zones (Cheema, 2012)[34]. But he points out that exclusion of the South Punjab in governmental policies over the years has led to the increased feeling of marginalization among the people of the region. The failure to invest in basic service ends such as health and transport infrastructure has not only retarded the economic front but also lowered the standard of living of the people speaking Saraiki language. The people of Saraiki

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[34] Cheema, 2012

have been demanding for creating a new province or separating South Punjab to have control over its development process since it has been ignored time and again. Critics of the bill provide a lame reason that regional autonomy will enable an implementation of differential policies in line with the needs of Saraiki; therefore the implementation of autonomy will lead to; the distribution of resources in totality.

Naturally, the Saraiki movement is a reaction to decades of the experience of economic, political, and cultural Othering. Analyzing the important contemporary factors such as economic underdevelopment, political underrepresentation, and education including Saraiki speaking people in South Punjab, the crucial question of this study could be understood. The origin of the movement is connected with the British colonialism that defined the region's development and backwardness of some areas in the present days. To eradicate such problems, it needs acknowledgement of Saraiki language and culture along with distribution of resources fairly, politics, and resolutions, and development campaigns that are appropriate to the prospective region of South Punjab.

CHAPTER THREE

ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF SERAIKI IDENTITY IN SOUTHERN PUNJAB

The Seraiki identity, a multifaceted and intricate artistic miracle, has developed over centuries through the interplay of verbal, ethnical, and socio- political rudiments. Arising from the rich regions of southern Punjab, Pakistan, the Saraiki-speaking crowd has constantly preserved a unique artistic and verbal heritage that sets them apart from other language groups in the area. The origins of the Seraiki identity can be traced back to the larger literal background of Punjab's verbal variety, which encompasses Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi[35]. Nevertheless, the rise of Seraiki as a separate identity is nearly associated with the socio- political changes of the 20th century, especially during the social period and the eventual establishment of Pakistan.

Historically, the Saraiki language has progressed from the southwestern cants of Punjabi, told by Sindhi, Balochi, and other indigenous speeches. Originally, the verbal foundation of Saraiki was n't honored as an independent language, frequently overshadowed by the prevailing Punjabi language for centuries. The term" Saraiki" began to gain elevation in the mid-20th century as scholars and political figures began to punctuate the oneness of the language and its speakers. This change in standpoint was incompletely driven by the socio- political marginalization of the Saraiki-speaking areas of southern Punjab, which came more apparent following the partition of India in 1947.

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[35] Akhtar, S., & Malik, A. (2010). *Development difference in Punjab: A regional perspective*. Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, 27(2), 101-120.

The formal recognition of Seraiki identity accelerated during the 1980s, fueled by the emergence of indigenous political movements championing for the profitable and political rights of the Saraiki- speaking crowd. These movements, particularly the Saraiki Qaumi Movement (SQM)(Saraiki national movement)[36], called for increased political autonomy, artistic acknowledgment, and the establishment of an independent fiefdom Seraikistan. Central to this movement was the claim that the Saraiki people represented a distinct ethical and artistic community, enjoying a rich history and unique social association. Lawyers contended that the recession in southern Punjab, compounded by political rejection, underlined the necessity for admitting Seraiki identity as a foundation for tone- governance the elaboration of Seraiki identity transcends bare academic converse; it's deeply connected to the everyday lives and gests of its individualities. The Saraiki- speaking communities have saved a vibrant artistic heritage, apparent in their folk customs, music, poetry, and fests. The language plays a pivotal part in fostering collaborative Saraiki knowledge. While verbal and artistic pointers are significant in shaping Saraiki identity, the political struggle for acknowledgment and autonomy has also been necessary in defining contemporary Saraiki tone- mindfulness.

This chapter aims to claw into the origins and progression of Seraiki identity, concentrating on the literal, verbal, and political factors that have shaped its elaboration. By assaying the trip of Seraiki identity, this chapter intends to offer a thorough understanding of how a indigenous language and culture have evolved into a dynamic socio- political movement hankering for parochial autonomy. Through this

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[36] Farid publishes, 2001

perspective, the Seraiki hunt for recognition serves as a case study of identity confirmation in post-colonial surrounds.

3.1. Evolution of Seraiki Identity in Southern Punjab

The roots of the Seraiki identity can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization (2600 – 1900 BCE), thriving in areas that now comprise southern Punjab. The ancient civic centers of Harappa and Mohenjo- daro were part of this civilization, establishing early artistic and trade routes. Although the language of the Indus Valley remains a mystery, the region's artistic heritage significantly impacted posterior societies, including Vedic, Buddhist, and Islamic ages. During the medieval period, southern Punjab converted into a mecca of varied influences due to its strategic positioning. The preface of Sufi saints like Shah Rukn-e-Alam and Bahauddin Zakariya in Multan and girding areas was pivotal in forming the region's artistic identity. These saints propagated a vision of spiritual inclusiveness that reverberated deeply with the original crowd, nurturing a participating artistic spirit distinct from northern Punjab. The Saraiki language and its cants, similar to Multani, Derawali, and Bahawalpuri, were essential in spreading this spiritual and artistic heritage[37].

The Saraiki language, part of the Indo- Aryan language family, possesses a profound verbal heritage. Experts suggest that Seraiki surfaced from Apabhramsha, a forerunner to contemporary Indo- Aryan languages, during the early part of the first renaissance CE. Throughout its elaboration, it integrated rudiments from Persian, Arabic, and Turkic speeches as a result of repeated irregularities and marketable

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[37] Ikram, 1955; Percival, 1955: cultural heritage of Pakistan

exchanges. During the British social period, the verbal identity of Seraiki encountered considerable obstacles. The British tendency to promote Urdu and Punjabi led to the diminishment of Seraiki as a separate language. After independence, this sidelining persisted, as Urdu was espoused as the public lingo and Punjabi held sway in indigenous governance within Punjab. Nonetheless, the Saraiki language endured as a vehicle for both oral and written expression, retaining its unique phonetic, grammatical, and verbal characteristics.

Prominent workshops, similar to Christopher Shackle's The Phonology and Morphology of Seraiki, offer in- depth examinations of the verbal traits that set Saraiki piecemeal from Punjabi. Saraiki muses, including Khwaja Ghulam Farid[38], played a pivotal part in securing and advancing the language through their erudite workshop, which frequently punctuate themes of affection, mysticism, and defiance against subjection. The artistic substance of the Seraiki community is intricately linked to their verbal and literal heritage. fests like the Urs of Sufi saints, traditional trades similar to Multani crockery, and original dishes epitomize the region's vibrant artistic shade. These customs set Saraiki culture piecemeal from that of northern Punjab and Sindh, nurturing a spirit of pride and oneness among its individualities. A prominent element of Saraiki culture is its music and poetry. The folk warbles of southern Punjab, marked by instruments like the alghoza and dhol, constantly incorporate verses from Saraiki poetry. These artistic expressions not only guard the language but also embody the socio- political intentions of the Seraiki community.

The socio- political development of the Seraiki identity accelerated in the post-colonial period. At first, the Saraiki- speaking crowd reverberated with broader Punjabi

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[38] Farid, 2001

nationalism due to their collaborative resistance against social domination. Nevertheless, the centralization of authority in Lahore and the sidelining of southern Punjab regarding profitable and political representation sparked disgruntlement. During the 1960s, the term" Saraiki" started to crop as a symbol of verbal and indigenous identity. Scholars like Shaukat Mughal and Anwar Shah played pivotal roles in promoting the acknowledgment of Seraiki as a separate language. Groups similar to the Saraiki Qaumi Movement(SQM)[39] appeared in the late 20th century, championing for verbal and executive rights for Saraiki- speaking areas.

The socio- profitable inequalities between southern and northern Punjab boosted these claims. For illustration, exploration like Development difference in Punjab A Regional Perspective by Akhtar and Malik underscores the significant contrasts in structure, education, and healthcare between the two regions. The patient underrepresentation of southern Punjab in parochial and civil bodies has also remained a continuing issue[40]. Bahawalpur, a fabulous kingly state positioned in present- day Pakistan, has historically played a pivotal part in the socio- political advancement of the Saraiki- speaking region. The Seraiki movement, aimed at championing the artistic, verbal, and political rights of the Saraiki- speaking crowd, has origins linked to the times of Bahawalpur's kingly state. Grasping the progression of the Seraiki movement necessitates an examination of the artistic, political, and social currents in Bahawalpur during the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly concerning the region's connections with language, identity, and autonomy.

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[39] Tariq, 2015; the case of Seraiki movement in Pakistan
[40] Akhtar, S., & Malik, A. (2010). *Development difference in Punjab: A regional perspective*. Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, 27(2), 101-120.

3.2. Bahawalpur Province In Saraikistan Identity

Bahawalpur was a kingly state within British India from the mid-19th century until the partition of India in 1947. Established in 1802, the state held its own governance, legal system, and political independence under the reign of the Nawabs of Bahawalpur. This independence persisted until Pakistan's independence, after which Bahawalpur joined Pakistan in 1948. Nonetheless, the region's literal and artistic connections to Punjab and Sindh were robust, and these associations came vital to the unborn elaboration of the Seraiki movement.

The occupants of Bahawalpur primarily communicated in Saraiki, a shoptalk of the broader Punjabi language. Saraiki exhibits unique verbal characteristics, solidifying its status as a distinct language. During the British social period, the verbal and artistic differences between the Saraiki- speaking community and the Punjab-grounded Punjabis were constantly ignored or played down. Accordingly, the Saraiki-speaking population endured artistic marginalization, both within the larger Punjab area and within the recently established state of Pakistan.

The significance of the Saraiki language in Bahawalpur can be appreciated in light of its verbal and artistic distinctness. The Saraiki language acts as a pivotal instrument for securing artistic heritage, and as the Bahawalpur crowd began to admit the significance of their language, it converted into a central element of a broader artistic rejuvenation.

Following the partition of India in 1947, the kingly state of Bahawalpur agreed to join Pakistan, becoming part of the recently created nation. This decision stirred contestation, as there were demands for Bahawalpur to maintain independence or align with bordering India. Nonetheless, the political integration of Bahawalpur into Pakistan was made complex by the absence of political representation for the Saraiki- speaking

community within the wider Pakistani state. The region's political oppression within the new civil frame of Pakistan redounded in passions of disenchantment among numerous of its residents. In 1955, Bahawalpur was incorporated into the larger fiefdom of West Pakistan, which further alienated the region. This fostered a sense of detachment, particularly as the parochial capital was positioned in Lahore, far removed from Bahawalpur, and Punjab's artistic ascendance over the fiefdom of West Pakistan came decreasingly pronounced. The absence of political autonomy for Bahawalpur boosted original demands for lesser acknowledgment of Saraiki- speaking areas[41].

The Rise of Seraiki Movement in Bahawalpur Province

The origins of the Seraiki movement in Bahawalpur can be traced back to the 1960s, a period when political, artistic, and verbal matters began to assert themselves more easily. This movement surfaced from the aspiration for a unique Seraiki identity that encompassed not just language but also bournes for political tone- governance. The crusade aimed to amend the neglect of the Saraiki language and culture by the civil government of Pakistan and to advocate for the acknowledgment of the Saraiki-speaking crowd as an independent artistic and political reality. Intellectualists, muses, and artists in Bahawalpur and nearby areas started to promote the application of the Saraiki language in literature, art, and media. This artistic belle epoque instilled a sense of collaborative identity among Seraiki speakers.

The establishment of political groups similar as the Saraiki Sooba Movement(Seraiki Province Movement) in the 1970s campaigned for the conformation of a distinct

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[41] Mughal, S., & Shah, A. (1998). *Seraiki identity and linguistic movement in Pakistan*. Journal of South Asian Studies, 15(3), 45-67.
Tariq, N. (2015). *Politics of identity: The case of the Seraiki movement in Pakistan*. Asian Affairs, 46(2), 175-190.

Seraiki fiefdom[42]. This movement contended that the occupants of Bahawalpur, Multan, and other Saraiki- speaking regions were culturally and politically unique from the remainder of Punjab. As political representation continued to be limited for Seraiki speakers, the movement assumed an ethical character, with Saraiki- speaking individualities decreasingly relating as a distinct ethnic group within Pakistan. This feeling of ethnic identity was further amplified by the mounting demand for a separate fiefdom, which would attack the political, artistic, and profitable grievances faced by the region.

The Seraiki movement gained traction throughout the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in Bahawalpur, Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan, as indigenous politicians, intellectualists, and activists supported for lesser acknowledgment of the Seraiki population[43]. The movement's primary pretensions included one of the crucial demands of the Seraiki movement was the conformation of a Saraiki fiefdom, which would give the region political autonomy and enhanced authority over its coffers. The movement asserted that the Saraiki- speaking areas were underdeveloped and overlooked due to their objectification into the larger Punjab fiefdom.

The movement pursued the recognition of Seraiki as a distinct language, separate from Punjabi, in public and parochial legislation. This was pivotal for the safekeeping and creation of Saraiki culture and heritage. The movement also concentrated on the profitable inequalities endured by the Saraiki- speaking areas, arguing that the region's profitable development had been neglected by the central government and the broader fiefdom of Punjab.

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[42] Shackle, C. (1976). *The phonology and morphology of Seraiki.* London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
[43] Tariq, N. (2015). *Politics of identity: The case of the Seraiki movement in Pakistan.* Asian Affairs, 46(2), 175-190.

Despite considerable backing for the Seraiki movement in Bahawalpur, the movement encountered colorful challenges . The offer of a separate Saraiki fiefdom faced resistance from the parochial government in Lahore, which stressed implicit loss of profitable and political control over the region. This resistance created a fraught political climate that dammed the movement's success. The Seraiki movement dealt with internal disharmony, with some coalitions championing for the establishment of a new fiefdom, while others worked on promoting the artistic and verbal rights of the Seraiki population within the political frame.

Political Exploitation the Pakistani state frequently exploited the Seraiki movement to foster its own political dockets, using pledges of development and autonomy to conciliate the region without addressing the movement's abecedarian demands.

In the 21st century, the Seraiki movement has continued to gain instigation, particularly with the emergence of new political parties backing Saraiki rights. Although the call for a separate fiefdom has yet to be completely realized, significant progress has been made in feting Seraiki as a language, along with some enterprise towards indigenous autonomy. In 2012, the Pakistan Peoples Party(PPP) suggested the creation of a Seraiki fiefdom, which sparked further discussion on the region's future.

3.3. The Heritage of Khawaja Farid in Evolution of Seraiki Movement

Khwaja Ghulam Farid(1845 – 1901)[44] stands as a fabulous figure in shaping the Seraiki artistic and erudite identity, particularly through his mystical poetry. His body of work, especially the florilegium Diwan-e-Farid, is essential in the development of Seraiki literature. Farid's influence stems from his gift for interlacing original cants,

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[44] Farid, K. G. (2001). *Diwan-e-Farid*. Multan: Farid Publishers.

myth, and church into his verses, making him a vital figure in cultivating the artistic substance of the Saraiki- speaking community in South Punjab, Pakistan.

Farid's poetry not only echoed with spiritual motifs of love, devotion, and hankering, but also served as a medium for conveying the socio-artistic principles of the region. His employment of the Saraiki language in his compositions amended it, permitting it to thrive as a vessel for erudite articulation. This is notable because, at that moment, Saraiki was generally transcended by other languages similar as Punjabi and Urdu. Farid's mystical verses, constantly anchored in the generalities of godly love and mortal agony, reverberated with the collaborative spirit of the locals, furnishing a means to express their unique verbal and artistic identity.

During the 20th century, the heritage of Khwaja Ghulam Farid saw a rejuvenation of significance, particularly amid the Seraiki artistic and political movements of the 1950s and 1960s. These movements sought to affirm the Saraiki language as a distinct artistic miracle, separate from Punjabi. Farid's poetry converted into a symbol for those backing the Seraiki charge, fostering a sense of artistic pride and durability. This period witnessed a notable increase in Seraiki publications, and personalities similar as Riaz Anwar commenced organizing erudite gatherings to pay homage to Farid's influence.

Likewise, the adding acknowledgment of the Saraiki language and identity was nearly associated with the region's political paroxysms, particularly following the objectification of Bahawalpur into Punjab fiefdom in 1955, which resulted in the marginalization of the Seraiki- speaking populations. Farid's creations, deeply embedded in original customs and the mystical Sufi tradition, evolved into not just a erudite corner but an artistic hallmark for the Seraiki crowd, emphasizing their distinct identity amidst political and social adversities.

In a nutshell, Khwaja Ghulam Farid's poetry was necessary in forming the Seraiki identity, both linguistically and culturally. His benefactions continue to motivate and define the erudite geography of the area, reaffirming the significance of Seraiki as a channel for conveying the unique narratives and values of its speakers.

3.4. Role of Saraiki Qaumi Movement in Evolving Saraiki Identity

The Saraiki Qaumi Movement (SQM) has been essential in impacting the development of Seraiki identity, especially within the broader socio- political frame of South Asia. This movement embodies the participating intentions of the Saraiki-speaking crowd, primarily located in the southern stretches of Punjab, Pakistan. For numerous times, the movement has aimed to gain political and artistic acknowledgment, emphasizing the oneness of the Saraiki language, customs, and heritage.

Arising prominently in the 1980s, the SQM erected upon earlier roots laid by thinkers and political numbers from the region who expressed enterprises regarding the profitable and artistic sidelining of Saraiki- speaking communities. Notable lawyers like Prof Aziz ud Din Ahmed and Mazhar Arif supported the recognition of the Saraiki language and its significance in shaping the artistic identity of southern Punjab[45]. A primary ideal of the Saraiki Qaumi Movement has been to establish a distinct Seraiki fiefdom, generally nominated" Seraikistan." This action seeks to amend the perceived casualness from the central government towards the region, promoting its unique verbal, artistic, and literal attributes. The demand for Seraikistan is interpreted as a response to the inadequate development and political representation in southern Punjab, where socio- profitable conditions lag behind the northern areas of the fiefdom.

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[45] Waseem, 2010; ethno-nationalism in Pakistan

The SQM has also critiqued the political geography in Pakistan, where dominant parties have constantly overlooked or marginalized the requests of the Seraiki crowd. Despite some advancements, like the conformation of political parties that support a Seraiki fiefdom, the movement encounters substantial resistance, including political strategies that try to scrap the region into lower realities, undermining the Seraiki cause. A reanimation of artistic and verbal heritage has also been a significant aspect of the SQM's enterprise. The movement underlines the pivotal part of the Saraiki language as a vital element of its identity. In addition to political rallying, colorful artistic systems similar to poetry, music, and literature — have surfaced to bolster pride in Saraiki culture. The SQM's trials also link with issues concerning land rights, particularly in areas like Cholistan, where the original Saraiki community has faced relegation due to land allocations for non-local groups. Activists in the movement contend that land should be redistributed back to original growers, seeking to amend once shafts.

Conclusively, the Saraiki Qaumi Movement has been critical in affirming a distinct Seraiki identity within Pakistan, with its bourne for political tone- governance and artistic acknowledgment at the heart of its charge. Although it confronts considerable obstacles, the movement relentlessly pursues the establishment of a Seraiki fiefdom and the safekeeping of its artistic and verbal heritage.

3.5. Threat to Evolution of Seraiki Identity in Pakistan

The Seraiki identity in Pakistan encounters a multitude of challenges stemming from political, profitable, and artistic sidelining. These issues arise from a literal environment of neglect by the central authority, patient indigenous difference, and the intricate interplay of ethical and verbal politics in the nation.

1. Political Sidelining and Absence of Representation

A top peril to the Seraiki identity is political suppression, largely orchestrated by the prevailing Punjabi nobility, which oversees both the political and profitable ministry of Pakistan. Indeed though they constitute the maturity in southern Punjab, Saraiki- speaking communities constantly find themselves politically marginalized. Colorful political coalitions in Pakistan, similar as the $Pakistan\ People's\ Party(PPP), Pakistan\ Muslim\ League - Nawaz(PML - N)$, and $Pakistan\ Tehreek - e - Insaf\ (PTI)$[46], have abused the Seraiki cause for electoral purposes, yet they've not delivered meaningful issues. This pattern has left the Seraiki crowd feeling politically barred, as their prayers for a distinct Saraiki fiefdom (Saraikistan) largely go unanswered. Although these parties feted the necessity for a Seraiki fiefdom in proposition, they defer palpable sweats to establish it due to political and electoral ramifications.

2. Economic Exploitation and Resource injuries

Another major chain is the profitable exploitation faced by the Seraiki region. Southern Punjab has long suffered from underdevelopment, with coffers unfairly distributed in favor of northern Punjab. The Seraiki belt endures shy structure, limited educational access, and deficient healthcare installations. This inequality is n't simply a product of neglect but is also corroborated by political opinions favoring fat, Punjabi- speaking locales. Likewise, artificial enterprises in the Seraiki area, like sugar refineries and cotton manufacturers, generally hire labor from northern Punjab, which further deprives original Saraiki youth of job openings. The expansive migration of educated

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[46] Mughal, 1998; shah 1998

Saraiki youth to other regions of Pakistan or abroad in pursuit of employment worsens this situation.

3. Demographic Manipulation and Land Seizure

The manipulation of demographics and land seizure presents fresh pitfalls to the Seraiki identity. Enterprises persist that regions with significant Seraiki populations, similar as Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan, are decreasingly settled by individualities from northern Punjab. Similar strategies intend to adulterate the demand for a Seraiki fiefdom by modifying the demographic composition. Also, in regions like Cholistan, original Seraiki communities are being displaced through land accessions at inequitable prices, with land vending to outlanders and individualities from other businesses, including government officers. This not only undermines the artistic identity of the area but also jeopardizes the profitable food of original populations[47].

4. Cultural Decline and verbal relegation

Culturally, the Saraiki language and its associated customs are undergoing significant decline. While Punjabi and Urdu dominate the artistic and educational arenas, Seraiki is constantly marginalized and regarded as a shoptalk rather than a distinct language rich in heritage. Educational institutions in southern Punjab tend to emphasize Urdu and English, further sidelining the Saraiki language. This marginalization extends to media representation, where Saraiki receives spare attention, and artistic carnivals showcasing Saraiki traditions are met with minimal governmental support. The insufficiency in artistic preservation enterprise and educational programs devoted to the language leaves forthcoming generations with a weak connection to their heritage, eroding the substance of Seraiki identity.

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[47] Tariq, 2015; Politics of Identity

5. The Influence of Dominant Political and Economic Forces

The deeply settled interests of influential political and profitable realities complicate the fight for Seraiki rights. Multitudinous original elites, including co proprietors, frequently exploit the Seraiki identity issue for their electoral advantage, yet they vacillate to authentically empower the Seraiki people. Certain political coalitions, like the Pakistan Saraiki Party(PSP), persist in backing the cause for a Seraiki fiefdom but encounter resistance from established power structures in Punjab that sweat a loss of control[48]. Also, the service remains skeptical of the drive for a separate fiefdom, concerned that it may inflame ethical and insular controversies in an formerly tense area.

6. Obstacles in Attaining Political Autonomy

The pursuit of a Seraiki fiefdom is a contentious matter, both within Pakistan and among colorful ethical and political coalitions. While the demand originates from a desire for socio- profitable equity, decentralized governance, and acknowledgment of the Saraiki language, the process of establishing new businesses is naturally intricate. It necessitates a two- thirds maturity in both parochial and public assemblies, rendering it a redoubtable undertaking. Likewise, apprehensions about raising ethical and insular pressures — particularly between Sunni and Shia communities in the area — further complicate the political dialogue girding the Seraiki cause.

 In summary, the commencement and progression of Seraiki identity is an intricate trip told by literal, artistic, verbal, and political rudiments. Originating from the verbal and artistic shade of southern Punjab, Saraiki identity has transitioned from a indigenous shoptalk into a unique artistic and political reality. The conformation of the Saraiki

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[48] Tariq, N. (2015). *Politics of identity: The case of the Seraiki movement in Pakistan. Asian Affairs, 46*(2), 175-190.

Qaumi Movement(SQM) has been vital to this elaboration, with its calls for political acknowledgment and the establishment of an independent Seraiki fiefdom reverberating with the profound craving for tone- determination among the Seraiki-speaking crowd.

The SQM has underlined the oversight of the Seraiki area by central authorities and its unique verbal and artistic heritage, which sets it piecemeal from the predominant Punjabi identity. The movement has illuminated issues of socio- profitable recession and political sidelining in southern Punjab, championing for enhanced resource allocation and political representation. As the movement advanced, it came integrated with wider indigenous and ethnic nationalist passions within Pakistan, while also promoting artistic belle epoque through poetry, literature, and language conservation sweats. Despite encountering resistance from mainstream political realities, the Seraiki cause has garnered increasing attention, performing in jacked support for the establishment of a Seraiki fiefdom.

The literal path of Seraiki identity epitomizes the complications of indigenous politics in Pakistan, where language, culture, and race constantly cross with political power dynamics. The Seraiki identity now transcends bare verbal description and serves as an important hallmark of resistance and bourne for justice, equivalency, and tone- governance[49].

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[49] Tariq, N. (2015). *Politics of identity: The case of the Seraiki movement in Pakistan. Asian Affairs, 46*(2), 175-190.
Shackle, C. (1976). *The phonology and morphology of Seraiki.* London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
Waseem, M. (2010). *Ethno-nationalism in Pakistan: The case of Seraiki identity movement. Contemporary South Asia, 18*(4), 347-364

CHAPTER 4

PAKISTANI ETHNIC POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE SERAIKI MOVEMENT

Pakistan's struggle to establish a unified national identity has been significantly hindered by issues related to ethnic identity. Religion, rather than unifying societies, has often been a source of division (Smith, 2009)[50]. Even within a single religious group, various factions can emerge. Disputes over specific religious doctrines, power struggles, material benefits, and territorial claims can make questions of religious authenticity highly controversial (Anderson, 2013)[51]. In Pakistan, a nation founded with the support of various ethnic groups, the interplay between religion, ethnicity, and politics has been shaped by complex historical and societal factors. Before independence, Muslim political entities were more concerned with the threat of Hindu dominance to their Muslim identity than with ethnic differences[52]. While Islam has remained a central topic in political discourse post-independence, it has become less prominent as various ethnic groups have prioritized demands for constitutional rights[53].

Different social and political factions have varying perspectives on whether Pakistan should be an Islamic state or a liberal democracy. On the basis of their ideal society

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[50] Smith (2009) elaborates on how religion has historically functioned as both a unifying and divisive force in post-colonial states.

[51] Anderson, 2013

[52] Amin (1988) provides an analysis of how ethnic concerns were initially suppressed in favor of religious unity pre-Partition.

[53] Rais, 2010

visions and the role of religion in public life and administration, many groups, including Islamists, mainstream political parties, and military commanders, have sought to define this relationship[54]. This environment has allowed community organizations to develop under civil-military rule and influence policy preferences. The effort to establish the Pakistani state is one of three major forces in the country, further exacerbating political and ethnic divisions. Civil rights, minority rights, and the independence of the civil political arena have been gravely endangered by this clash of objectives and the strange coalitions it produces[55].It is well-documented that both military and civilian governments have accommodated and promoted ethnic groups for political purposes. Generals Zia- ul- Haq and Pervez Musharraf both employed the Mohajir Qaumi Movement(MQM), an ethical nonage party, to maintain power and suppress opposition. The advancement of ethical politics during military rule was ineluctable, as military leaders demanded support from these nonage political parties to annul the major administrative parties.

Pakistan has suffered from a lack of democratic values and an excess of centralism. The country's history demonstrates that authoritarianism and democracy cannot coexist, with the former consistently prevailing over the latter. This interest gap and the unusual alliances have severely eroded democratic principles, minority rights, and the independence of the civil political domain. It has been well-established that ethnic groupings have been accommodated and promoted for political purposes under both military and civilian governance. Both General Pervez Musharraf and General Zia-ul-Haq utilized the Mohajir Qaumi ethnic minority party movement (MQM) to maintain power and suppress their opponents[56]. Ethnic politics continued to flourish during

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[54] Jafferlot, 2002

[55] Cohen, 2004

[56] Harrison, 1981

military dictatorships because the ruling elite needed the backing of smaller political groups to balance out the larger political parties. The absence of democratic principles and an excess of centralism caused Pakistan to experience adverse effects. Authoritarianism and democracy are incompatible; as Pakistan has demonstrated, the former will invariably prevail.

The government has been offering the Balochi people an economic package since 2008; however, separatist nationalists and Baloch leaders have rejected it. The six demands made by Akhtar Mengal are being juxtaposed with the six points made by Shaikh Mujib. Consequently, the politics of Pakistan's civil conflict are evident, with various ethnic groups contesting the writ of authority in regions of Balochistan and employing strategies to gain control[57].

Regarding the origins and persistence of ethnicity, comparative ethnicity has given rise to two competing schools of thought: Primordialists assert that ethnicity is rooted in culture, which they consider a fundamental aspect of human nature. Conversely, instrumentalists argue that ethnicity is socially constructed and that ethnic identities are created by a group's leaders[58]. Many scholars adopt a moderate position and contend that ethnicity possesses both objective and subjective aspects. According to this perspective, the relative importance of each in different circumstances is the critical factor[59].

The state of Pakistan is characterized by division, politicization, and ethnic diversity. Ethnic movements have periodically transitioned from pursuing advantages

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[57] Talbot, 2009
[58] Barth, 1969
[59] Gellner, 1983

within the state to advocating for ethno-nationalism before reverting to their initial positions. International events, such as the Pashtun and "greater Balochistan" movements[60], have been significantly associated with these shifts. The resurgence of ethnic-coalition alliances at the national level was evident in the elections of 2002 and 2008[61].

What constitutes the appropriate definition of ethnicity in Pakistan? Each ethnic group asserts that it possesses a common language, culture, and distinctive social characteristics that distinguish it from other similar groups[62]. However, the critical factor is the development of a shared identity and a social label that others can recognize. Prominent Pakistani sociologist Hamza Alvi has emphasized the political dimensions of ethnic politics, highlighting the concept of "Punjabi hostility," the overdeveloped state structure, and the absence of robust political institutions as the primary causes of regional-ethnic disputes.

According to George Patrick, an ethnic community may establish a structural identity by forming a particular type of "joint" relationship that differs from how other groups organize their "social roles."Teodorson and Theodorson, in their Modern Dictionary of Sociology, define an ethnic group as "a group with a common cultural tradition and a sense of identity which exists as a subgroup of a large society."Members of an ethnic group are distinguished from other individuals in the community by specific cultural aspects.

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[60] Baloch (2013) examines the ongoing tensions between the Pakistani government and Baloch nationalists.

[61] Waseem, 2002

[62] Cohen, 2004

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan comprises various ethnic groups; indeed, according to Tahir Amin, its citizens constitute a complex "polyglot" consisting of both indigenous populations and migrants from Central Asia and Iran[63]. Prior to the 1971 secessionist movement, there were six primary ethnic groupings: Baloch, Bengalis, Mohajirs (Urdu-speaking individuals in Sindh who originated from Northern India), Punjabis, Pashtuns, and Sindhis. However, each province has consistently contained a diversity of ethnic groups, with the notable exception of the Bengali people in what was East Pakistan until 1971. In contrast to India, Pakistan has not altered the legal ownership of the territories it inherited in 1947 from British India. Rasul Bakhsh Rais contends that while ethnic groups may claim a "home province," "not less than" one, and in some instances, multiple ethnic identities claim the same territory as their historic homeland. Only the ANP has since called for Pakistan in protest of Punjabi dominance[64]. In Bangladesh and now Balochistan, migration and separatist movements have emerged from the inequitable distribution of economic resources. Sindhi and Mohajir movements are the consequence of Pashtun and Punjabi migration in Sindh. Like the Hindu and Muslim parties in pre-Partition India, they validate their distinctiveness through language and history[65]. The Saraiki community in Punjab, who speak Saraiki, also asserts that they constitute a distinct tribe in South Punjab.

Multiethnic polarization and democracy exhibit an interactive relationship. Primarily, the ethnic composition of the community influences the political structure, establishes political norms, and shapes generic political behavior patterns; a certain level of democratic maturity would mitigate racial conflicts.

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[63] Harrison, 1981; in Afghanistan's shadow: Baloch nationalism and soviet temptation

[64] Gellner 1983

[65] Barth, 1969

Given that the British Raj afforded more support to Punjabis and Pashtuns than to other ethnic groups, this is applicable in the context of Pakistan. They referred to ethnic groups that aided the East India Company during the rebellion of 1857 as "martial races," while organizations that had played a significant role in the rebellion were designated as "non-martial races."[66]. The most significant British colonial legacy is also the highly autocratic and centralized state machinery, which was eventually dominated by Punjabis and Pashtuns. Consequently, Pakistan's state elites have attempted to establish a single nation-state by concealing their nation-building strategies behind Islam and Urdu[67]. Ethnic communities in West Pakistan voiced opposition to the Punjabi ruling class's prejudice and discrimination, and in the late 1950s[68]. However, the issue was resolved. Land has been a political concern since 1999; in Gawadar, non-Baloch have been allocated land, which has exacerbated local discontent.

4.1. Pakistan's democracy supports or accommodates a divisive ethnic group?

In Pakistan, like other developing nations, narrow caste and tribal identities blend into broader ethnic identities. Ethnicity manifests in both emotional and objective forms, with political circumstances shaping out-group recognition and self-identification, such as the Mohajir identity[69]. Ethnic sentiment often arises from the desire to redistribute power and resources among group members. Politicization

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[66] Anderson, 2013

[67] Rais, 2010

[68] Barth, F. (1969). *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference.* Waveland Press

[69] Smith, 2009

typically results in common demands that strengthen the group's political awareness. Mobilization can lead to terrorism, militancy, or democratic engagement for political change.

Effective democracy fosters diversity, political openness, adaptability, and fair economic and political opportunities. However, Pakistan's non-democratic structure has lacked crucial elements like constitutional legitimacy, fair representation, essential freedoms, and rule of law, creating a void for ethnic factions. The concentration of power, military rule, and feudal mindset have worsened ethnic politics in the country.

Sindh and Balochistan have become centers of ethnic discord, with tensions between MQM and ANP Pashtuns in Karachi escalating violence[70]. The undemocratic climate has intensified ethnic strife, with the state's elite, primarily Punjabis and Sindhis, dominating the central government while marginalizing other groups. However, Musharraf's regime elevated Mohajirs' status, leading to an unusual partnership between MQM and the People's Party[71]. Ethnicity became firmly entrenched during Ayub Khan's autocratic regime, which aimed to centralize authority and establish an authoritarian structure. His strategies sparked discontent among ethnic groups and contributed to the formation of Bangladesh in 1971[72]. Under General Yahya Khan, tensions between the state and Bengali population intensified, culminating in widespread unrest and the emergence of a distinct Bangladeshi identity[73].

Post-partition, Pakistan emerged as a divided Islamic state. The issue was not Bengali animosity towards West Pakistanis, but rather a backlash against power

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[70] Waseem 2002

[71] Gellner,2011

[72] Waseem 2002 studies general elections of 2002 and the democratization process

[73] Amin, 1988

monopolization. Zulfqar Ali Bhutto attempted to address Sindhi concerns but targeted

adversaries in other provinces[74]. He established Urdu as the national language while

promoting regional languages and cultures. General Zia-ul-Haq's regime imposed

Islamic law selectively, exacerbating ethnic and religious extremism. His policies faced

resistance from the PPP during the MRD uprisings[75]. Zia's focus on undermining the

PPP led him to support the formation of the MQM and ally with G.M. Sayed, who

shared his animosity toward the PPP. As already famous, the military administration

flipped between cultivating or quelling ethnic bunches based on their needs. Be that as

it may, the return of popular government in Pakistan in 1988 permitted for more

prominent inclusion from all ethnic communities, lightening a few of the estrangement

experienced amid Common Zia-ul-Haq's expanded administration of military and

military law. The invitation to Benazir Bhutto to join an All Parties Conference to

debate the Geneva Conventions, which aimed at defining a plan for the Soviet pullout

from Afghanistan, was extended by Muhammad Khan Junejo, a Sindhi politician who

had been named Prime Minister by Zia in 1985. Zia declined Junejo's proposal in May

of 1988. Following Zia's passing, common races were organised. There have been six

unanimous rulings in Pakistan since 1988 that have been opposed by every discernible

national political entity and ethno-regionalist organisation. The decisions made in 1997

prevented a critical step towards building political coalitions that went beyond shared

and racial limitations. The Pakistan Muslim Alliance Nawaz (PML-N) chose a

consolidation government with other notable territorial parties, such as the ANP, BNP,

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[74] Chandio, 2009 highlights in politics of Sindh under Zia government that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's efforts to address Sindhi concerns included initiatives to involve Sindhis in government affairs, which reduced their sense of alienation and deprivation.

[75] The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led significant resistance against General Zia-ul-Haq's regime, notably through the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) formed in 1981.

and MQM, even though it had a decisive appointment victory. After the Muslim Association credibly pushed for the creation of Pashtunistan and opposed Pakistan, the ANP became an ally of that group. For a decade, these two parties collaborated closely on national political issues. They broke up because the Muslim Alliance Government caved to the ANP's demands that NWFP be renamed Pakhtunkhwa and scrapped plans to construct the Kalabagh dam.

Baloch pioneers who had equipped themselves against the government after Zulfqar Ali Bhutto rejected their government in 1973 were drawn back into the domain of law based legislative issues[76]. In Sindh, progressive decisions uncovered the triviality of the Jeay Sindh Movement's notoriety, with Sindhi patriots coming up short to secure a single situation in any decision. Alternately, the appointive prepare brought an unused ethnic constraint to the cutting edge in Sindh, the MQM, which spoke to the Muslim foreigners from India, basically found in urban ranges. The rise of the MQM was somewhat a response to Sindhi patriot estimation and somewhat a result of the Mohajir community's disappearing influence. The complex issues of common independence, control devolution, and inter-ethnic relations stay uncertain. The law based system only serves as a background for tending to numerous of these challenges. By and large, the vote based system has contributed to the weakening of ethnic divisions, whereas military run the show has reignited fissiparous ethnic opinions and hindered ethnic reconciliation.

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[76] After being dismissed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973, Baloch leaders who had taken up arms against the government were eventually reintegrated into democratic politics.

4.2. Promotion of Ethnicity in Democracy

Four unmistakable designs in the ethnic elements of Pakistan propose that a vote based system might give the most successful political system for cultivating multiculturalism and agreeable coexistence among different ethnic bunches in a state experiencing move.

1. Punjab and Pakistani Nationalism

Punjab stands out as the most affluent area with respect to agrarian and mechanical yield[77]. An expanding number of taught Punjabi families have grasped Urdu as their essential dialect, indeed in both urban and rustic settings. For many traditional Punjabis, speaking Urdu is a sign of superior social standing. Punjab is home to countless popular magazines that publish some of the best Urdu prose every month. Punjabi patriotism has not been able to flourish due to the province's political and mental climate. In Punjab, there are also material factors that motivate Pakistani patriotism. Within the Pakistan Armed Forces, which has served as the command centre for over twenty years, Punjabis constitute the largest ethnic group, accounting for sixty to sixty-five percent of the total. Also, they hold the most noteworthy representation in respectful administrations and have seen impressive headways in commerce and industry . In the 1980s, it is assessed that 85 percent of the 1.3 million Pakistani laborers in Inlet nations were Punjabis and Pashtuns, with Punjabis shaping the endless larger part. This deciphers to 75 percent of the settlements amid the 80s, which floated around $2.5 to $3.00 billion yearly, to a great extent being reinvested in Punjab .

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[77] Smith, 2010: journal of south Asian studies,15, 45-67

Saraiki Belt in Punjab

The people of the southern region of Punjab, encircling three authoritative divisions—Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan—are components of the Saraiki belt, where Saraiki serves as the fundamental dialect . The Saraiki people, also known as the Multani, are an ethnic group that originated in the southeast regions of Pakistan, particularly in the once-royal state of Bahawalpur. Despite their dialect being revered as a Sindhi or Punjabi tongue, they insist that their culture and dialect are distinct. In the 1960s, under Riaz Hashmi's leadership, Saraiki patriots began working towards two goals: first, to have Saraiki recognised as an official dialect; and second, to establish a Saraiki homeland in Southern Punjab. However, this development faded during the administration of Common Zia-ul-Haq, only to reappear after his death. During this period, the primary goals included gaining recognition for the Saraiki dialect, having official reports in Southern Punjab printed in Saraiki, and responding to local requests for a dedicated Saraiki television and radio channel. Both political and social changes have taken place in Southern Punjab. Following the dissolution of the One Unit in 1969, the inhabitants of the former Bahawalpur state spearheaded a political movement advocating for shared independence for Bahawalpur and limiting its ongoing integration into Punjab. All of the candidates put out by the Bahawalpur Muttahida Mahaz (Bahawalpur United Front) in the 1970s decisions enjoyed substantial victories thanks to this campaign, which garnered widespread support. The 1971 national split and subsequent emergency in East Pakistan fostered an unfriendly atmosphere towards regionalist initiatives between the federal government and Punjabi elite. The areas of commerce, gracious benefit positions, and industry are dominated by Punjabi pilgrims in Bahawalpur, Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan, while the Saraiki people are mainly comprised of small-scale businesspeople and labourers from the little Saraiki

landowning class. In essence, the Saraiki primitive path (Mazari, Laghari, Makhdooms), which influences discretionary legislative matters, has always refused to support the idea of a Bahawalpur or a larger Saraiki region that would include the three authority divisions mentioned before. This rudimentary curriculum, which provides some administration, is integrated into Punjab's established control systems. Saraiki political elites typically avoid conflict by remaining silent on issues of territorial expansion, even though Punjabi pioneers constitute a sizable voting alliance in the majority of electorates. The Pakistan Persecuted Country Development (PONM), which was created in September 1998, has not received any support from former prime minister Makhdoom Yusaf Raza Gilani, who goes by the name Saraiki. Generally speaking, he seems to have strengthened the Pakistan Muslim Association Quaid (PMLQ) in regard to a remote region known as South Punjab. South Punjab remains the most immature locale, where inhabitants need fundamental comforts such as clean drinking water, solid foundation, and healthcare administrations. Destitution remains an overwhelming issue in South Punjab, and majority rule agents have reliably fizzled to convey major ventures in this region. The Indus Waterway streams through the Area of Rajanpur, anticipating the development of a bridge that would empower the inhabitants of Rahmiyar Khan, Bahawalpur, and Rajanpur to lock in commerce. Both military and majority rule governments have fallen short of satisfying their vows. When compared to other territorial belts in Pakistan, the Saraiki belt is eminently more pleasing, as different communities—Saraiki, Mohajir, Punjabi, and Pashtun—coexist gently. They have coordinated and grasped each other's societies, with intermarriages being common and the importance of mother tongues decreasing as all communities communicate in numerous languages.

2. Integration of Pashtun Politics

Fifteen percent of Pakistan's population lives in the North Wilderness Territory (NWFP) and the neighbouring Governmentally Managed Tribal Areas (FATA). In these areas, the Pashtuns make up the majority ethnic group. Over two centuries ago, a Pashtun monarch constructed a zone in Afghanistan known as the Durand Line. They also talk to a majority of the surrounding area. In addition, there is a large Pashtun population in northern Balochistan, and many of them have moved to Sindh's capital city, Karachi, throughout the last half-century. The Hindko and the Saraiki are two additional ethnolinguistic groups in NWFP. People from the Hazara Area make up the majority of Peshawar's unique population, who speak Hindko as their language of communication. A large portion of Dera Ismail Khan's population speaks Saraiki, a language that is more closely related to Punjabi than Pashto. These two groups have long supported the Muslim Alliance and worked to establish Pakistan in 1947, thus it's no surprise that their etymological refinement aligns with their political affinities. On the other hand, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a pioneer of the Pashtun people, envisioned a different way forward and fought for the independence of the Pashtun country[78].

For more than twenty years, the Pashtun nationalists headed by Ghaffar Khan and his son Abdul Wali Khan fought bitterly against the central government, which had been mostly dominated by the Muslim Alliance and Ayub Khan. The idea of a separate state for the tribal areas bordering the Durand Line was vigorously pursued by Ghaffar Khan and his followers. Afghan, Indian, and Soviet political support for Pashtunistan was the most   substantial.

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[78] Ahmed, F. (2019). "Migration Patterns in Pakistan." Journal of South Asian Studies, 26(1), 78-102

In contrast, the Pashtun people are a perfect example of a people that have successfully integrated into a larger society via economic growth and a democratically elected government. Pashtun labourers were drawn to mechanical advancement in Karachi and other places in Punjab in the 1960s, and this migration continued. They make up around 4% of Sindh's population now. The expanding companies in their home region provided opportunities for a large number of Pashtuns who were jobless, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. Surprisingly, among ethnic populations, Pashtuns are identified by their disproportionately tall military presence (30–35%). With many holding positions in obvious mechanical endeavours in Pakistan, their top lesson is deeply interwoven with the country's political and financial structures. One of the country's emerging mechanical regions in the 1990s was the Gaddon-Amazai zones of the Wilderness. These advancements have reduced support for Pashtun independence.

Renaming the NWFP

The ANP suggested renaming NWFP to Pakhtunkhwa region in 1997. The Hazara, Peshawar, and Dera Ismail Khan residents, who were co-ethnic, opposed this action and preferred a name that represented that. The PML administration, which had reached an agreement with the ANP on this matter, turned down the offer out of concern that it would weaken its support in Punjab and among traditionalists, including the Hindko, Hazari, and Saraiki-speaking populations of NWFP. After ten years of unity, the ANP and PML split over the designation of the province. With no concerns from PML-N, the ANP's proposal was eventually granted by the PPP-PML-N and JUI consolidation organisation. The fact is that there has been a dramatic increase in the focus on ethnicity, with other groups of people enquiring if they have distinct territories as well. This includes the Saraiki and the Mohajir.

3. Baloch Ethno-nationalism

Although it has just 5.1% of Pakistan's population, Balochistan is the largest province. Tribal Sardars (chiefs) oversee the unique regional areas of the Baloch people. Balochistan is more politically and ethnically isolated than most people realise. Balochistan has had four brushes with the central specialist in the last sixty years. Khan of Kalat, ruler of an august kingdom within the region, proclaimed autonomy while the Shai Jirga, the formal advisory meeting of the Baloch tribes organised by the British, chose to link Pakistan. This declaration ran counter to the stated principles of the parcel conspiracy and posed a serious threat to the unity of the modern state; as a result, on April 1, 1948, the federal government sent a limited constraint to force the Khan to sign an increase report.

The definitive dispute arose in 1958–1959 over the distribution of land to pioneers from the Punjab in areas bordering Sindh. This land was to be irrigated by an abandoned canal called the Pat Feeder, which had been diverted from the Guddu stream in upper Sindh. Nothing happened as a result of these battles among the Baloch. When nearby tribes were also given arrival assignments, the situation was resolved. In February 1973, the third direct confrontation between the Baluchis and the Pakistani fortified forces began when Bhutto's central government removed Balochistan's parochial government on false charges of constitutional violations and the formation of Baluch regulars to seek Pakistani independence. In response to their first tagged government's ineffectiveness, the Balochis launched a guerilla war that would continue for four more times until the military overthrew Bhutto.

Bhutto made a huge political gaffe when she decided to station the army in Balochistan to fight against certain ethnic groups. The nation's line was sent in a myriad of directions by this military operation in Balochistan, and provincialism found new boundaries.

After being held in Bhutto's special tribunals on accusations of treason for more than four times, the Pashtun and Baloch leaders were subsequently freed by the military administration. In order to gain the support of the Pashtun population in Balochistan, the Baloch alliance worked closely with Pashtun chauvinists from the NWFP. There is still no end in sight to the pursuit of local autonomy. Baloch rebels were given remittal, funds were supplied for their relocation, and hundreds of remaining captives were liberated in 1978 by the military government. About 5,300 Baloch militants and 3,300 Pakistani army labour force were killed in this calamity. Astonishingly, this conflict posed both financial and fatal risks. The Baloch insurgents received substantial support from the Afghan government.

The Balochistan National Party, the Balochistan National Movement, and the Jamhoori Watan Party saw a dramatic transformation in their political ideologies during the 1980s, when the republic was revived inside Pakistan. Even more prominent mainstream parties, including as the PPP and PMLN, increased their visibility in the domain. Allied with the Balochis was no longer the Pashtun position. The Pashtuns and Balochis' priorities started to diverge as the number of Afghans deported to Balochistan increased. Afghan refugees are causing unease among Balochis because they may tip the demographic scales in favour of the Pashtuns, who want to establish their own kingdom apart from Baluchistan.

The Baloch aristocracy is still very much involved in the debate over how the national treasury and their fiefdom should divide up the funds. Less parochial authority, better conditions for allocating development funds, and a greater cut of royalties from natural gas transactions are what they're want. Following Nawab Akbar Bugti's passing on August 26, 2006, a fresh battle broke out. Attempts by Bugti to raise royalties were met with resistance from the Musharraf government. According to a banner that Bugti put

up in January 2003, the Baloch people should have ownership over Balochistan. The future is unclear due to a party that was brought to power by manipulating a top minister who is powerless. We are still oppressed and on the margins. Our main demand is the management of natural resources, and the lines have vested interests as well. This is not a call to prayer. Natural resources are still with us, but someone else is making a killing off of them. Nobody may plunder our resources without our permission. Due to your enhancement of our people's property, your vital architectures will continue to be susceptible. With Gawadar's development plans, Bugti's assassination, and executed discoveries, the Musharraf administration went above and beyond its predecessors, adding to Balochistan's long-standing grievances. It also dared chauvinists to raise the mountains and solidified its pretentiousness by ignoring a sympathetic Senate commission's suggestion.

General Secretary Sanaullah Baloch of the Baloch National Party made the observation that land distributions to Punjabis in Gawadar have been a major obstacle to Baloch nationalism since 1999. As property passes from the Baloch to the Punjabi aristocracy and ordinary people, they experience a nonage.[79]

4. Ethical Division and Pressures in Sindh

More than any other province in Pakistan, Sindh has seen a rise in violent conflict and ethical schism since the 1980s. The nation's lucrative and man-made Mecca, Karachi, a thriving port metropolis in Sindh, has been the epicentre of this fermentation. The multiethnic population of this megacity is a true reflection of Pakistan's rich cultural diversity. The sole native population is Sindhis; everyone else has moved there since Pakistan was formed. Karachi was the destination of a large

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[79] Baloch, S. (1999). "Land Disputes and Nationalism in Gwadar."

influx of Mohajirs during the Partition. Concerned that further Indian deportees might be uprooted, the Sindhis stepped up their operations against the Mohajirs. From 1947 to 1951, when Pakistan was first established, around one million Mohajirs settled in Sindh. Liaquat Ali Khan, the first prime minister and a Mohajir by birth, advocated for a more forgiving stance towards these newcomers by permitting dense urbanization.[80]

A concerted attempt for equality in Pakistan's political, cultural, economic, and linguistic arenas is embodied by the Saraiki movement. Feelings of marginalisation and marginalisation among Saraiki speakers are the driving forces behind this movement, which has its roots in the southern parts of Punjab. Ethnolinguistic identity, economic justice, political independence, and cultural preservation are all deeply ingrained in the movement's ideology. It covers a lot of ground, all with the overarching purpose of resolving the Saraiki-speaking community's sense of marginalisation and fighting for their rights and representation in Pakistan as a whole. The primary tenet of the Saraiki movement is the idea that Saraiki is a separate language from Punjabi and other regional languages spoken in Pakistan. Saraiki is distinct from Punjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu according to linguists who have studied its grammar and phonetics (Shackle, 1976). The movement's central argument is that Saraiki's long-standing label as a Punjabi dialect has done a disservice to the language's official status. Supporters of the Saraiki language argue that this classification has led to the systematic exclusion of Saraiki-speaking populations from political power, cultural institutions, and educational opportunities. Scholars and activists in the area have responded by

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[80] Historical migration and settlement of Mohajirs in Sindh (Ahmed, 1988).

calling for Saraiki to be better used as a medium of teaching and communication and for its incorporation into national education systems (Rahman, 1996)[81].

Language revitalisation and standardisation initiatives are central to the Saraiki movement. The compilation of Saraiki dictionaries, the establishment of Saraiki literary clubs, and the release of works and journals in the language have all been made possible by literary figures and groups. (shackle, 1976) [82] The goal of these endeavours is to preserve and perpetuate the Saraiki language and culture for the benefit of future generations. The language is more than just a medium of communication for the Saraiki people; it is a symbol of who they are. The movement portrays language as a unifying factor among the many ethnic groups that speak Saraiki, a channel through which they can express their commonalities and aspirations (Rahman, 1996)[83]. Central to the philosophy of the Saraiki movement is the demand for the establishment of a separate administrative region, sometimes called "Saraikistan." The demand is based on the belief that areas speaking Saraiki have been economically and politically marginalised as a result of power concentration in northern and central Punjab, especially in Lahore. Those who want Saraiki areas to be considered for its own province argue that, despite their abundant agricultural resources, they are still under-represented in positions of political power. For instance, Saraiki people frequently feel excluded since people from northern Punjab hold important political and bureaucratic posts in the provincial government (Abbasi & Majeed, 2020).[84] Multan and Bahawalpur functioned as semi-autonomous provinces under colonial administration, and the desire for Saraiki

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[81] Overview of the Saraiki movement's ideological foundation

[82] Linguistic studies establishing Saraiki as a distinct language (Shackle, 1976).

[83] Educational marginalization and advocacy for linguistic inclusion

[84] Efforts in literary development and standardization of Saraiki language

autonomy sprang from such divides. There was growing dissatisfaction among the Saraiki-speaking population as a result of the districts' diminished administrative identity due to their incorporation with Punjab after independence. In order to support their claim for a distinct province, Saraiki proponents often reference this historical background. In keeping with federalism as a whole, the movement is pushing for the separation of executive and legislative authorities as stated in Pakistan's 18th Amendment to the constitution. In addition to resolving issues within the Saraiki community, activists argue that establishing Saraikistan will strengthen Pakistan's federal framework by guaranteeing equal representation for all regions (Rashid & Javed, 2019)[85]. The call for economic equality is central to the Saraiki ideology. A number of Pakistan's most fertile agricultural districts are located in the Saraiki area. These include Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan. Still, it's far from developed, with problems including poor infrastructure, subpar healthcare, and a lack of access to good schools (Ali, 2015)[86]. Proponents of the Saraiki language and culture claim that the agricultural and industrial riches of the region goes to Lahore and the northern Punjab, while the areas inhabited by Saraiki people live in abject poverty. Many blame the systematic oversight by successive provincial authorities for this economic marginalisation. One proposed remedy to these economic disparities is the creation of an independent Saraiki province. Supporters argue that a system of autonomous provinces may solve the region's specific socioeconomic problems, prioritise local development initiatives, and distribute resources fairly. In this way, the movement presents economic justice as central to its ideology, closely related to the call for

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[85] Historical administrative identity and its dilution post-independence

[86] Underrepresentation of Saraiki-speaking individuals in provincial administration

political liberty (Kundi, 2012)[87]. The Saraiki program also strives to conserve and promote the region's rich cultural heritage, which include folk music, poetry, and festivals. Renowned poets like Khwaja Ghulam Farid and Sachal Sarmast are recognised as emblems of Saraiki identity, with their literary contributions expressing the spiritual and cultural core of the area (Nadeem, 2020)[88].

Mela Uch Sharif and the Urs of Khwaja Ghulam Farid are outstanding examples of communal events that exhibit Saraiki culture and bring people together. These activities serve a vital role in bringing Saraiki speakers closer together and developing a feeling of pride in their history. The movement is challenging what it regards as the cultural predominance of northern Punjab, which it sees as an effort to assimilate Saraiki identity into a broader Punjabi framework. Efforts to make Saraiki the language of teaching in schools and to have Saraiki represented in national and provincial media are instances of this struggle (Rahman, 1996)[89].

An important ideological component of the Saraiki movement is the rejection of the hegemony of Punjabi-speaking elites in all spheres of society, including politics, economics, and culture. Proponents of this hegemony claim that it has exacerbated existing inequalities and that the province's development plans and budget allocations have paid little attention to Saraiki-speaking areas. The Saraiki movement presents its advocacy as an effort to acknowledge the ethnic diversity of Pakistan, and by highlighting the uniqueness of Saraiki identity, its proponents hope to dismantle the

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[87] Political and economic grievances leading to demands for Saraikistan

[88] Cultural heritage and contributions of Saraiki poets and traditions

[89] Educational marginalization and advocacy for linguistic inclusion (Rahman, 1996)

Educational marginalization and advocacy for linguistic inclusion (Rahman, 1996).

idea of a singular Punjabi identity, which they see as eroding the province's multicultural richness (Abbasi & Majeed, 2020).[90]

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[90] Efforts in literary development and standardization of Saraiki language

CHAPTER FIVE

CRAFTING IDEOLOGY AND QUEST FOR NEW PROVENCE

The Saraiki movement represents a comprehensive effort for recognition in linguistic, cultural, economic, and political spheres within Pakistan. Originating primarily in Punjab's southern regions, this initiative is driven by sentiments of neglect and exclusion among Saraiki speakers. The movement's ideological foundation is complex, rooted in ethnolinguistic identity, desires for political autonomy, pursuit of economic fairness, and preservation of cultural heritage. It encompasses a broad range of goals aimed at addressing the perceived marginalization of the Saraiki-speaking community and advocating for their rights and representation within the larger Pakistani context.

The foundation of the Saraiki movement is predicated on the assertion that Saraiki constitutes a distinct language, separate from Punjabi and other regional languages of Pakistan. Linguistic scholars have identified Saraiki as possessing unique phonological and grammatical structures, which differentiate it from Punjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu[91] (Shackle, 1976). The movement contends that Saraiki's recognition as a language has been frequently obscured by its historical classification as a dialect of Punjabi. This categorization, according to Saraiki proponents, has resulted in systematic marginalization of Saraiki-speaking communities in educational frameworks, governance, and cultural representation. In response, scholars and activists have advocated for the integration of Saraiki into national education systems and the

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[91] Shackle, C. (1976). *The Saraiki Language: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspective*

enhancement of Saraiki as a medium for instruction and communication in the region [92](Rahman, 1996).

A significant aspect of the Saraiki movement includes efforts to rejuvenate and standardize the language. Literary personalities and groups have been crucial in compiling Saraiki dictionaries, establishing Saraiki literary clubs, and releasing works and journals in the language. These undertakings aspire to strengthen the linguistic identity of the Saraiki-speaking community and ensure its transmission to future generations. For the Saraiki-speaking people, the language serves not only as a means of communication but as a representation of their distinct identity. The movement frames language as a cohesive element for the various ethnic groups that converse in Saraiki, allowing them to articulate their shared concerns and ambitions (Rahman, 1996). At the heart of the Saraiki movement's ideology is the request for the creation of a distinct administrative province, commonly referred to as 'Saraikistan.' This demand stems from the conviction that the centralization of power in northern and central Punjab, particularly in Lahore, has led to the political and economic sidelining of Saraiki-speaking districts. Proponents of separate provinces contend that in spite of the agricultural abundance of Saraiki regions, they continue to be underrepresented in political decision-making processes[93]. For example, key bureaucratic and political positions in the provincial administration are often held by individuals from northern Punjab, perpetuating sentiments of exclusion among the Saraiki populace (Abbasi & Majeed, 2020).

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[92] Rahman, T. (1996). *Language and Politics in Pakistan.*

[93] Abbasi, M. & Majeed, G. (2020). *Ethnic Movements and Identity Politics in Pakistan.*

The quest for Saraiki autonomy can be traced back to colonial administrative divisions, where Multan and Bahawalpur operated as semi-autonomous regions. The amalgamation of these areas into Punjab after independence diluted their administrative identity, breeding discontent among the Saraiki-speaking populace. This historical context is frequently cited by Saraiki advocates to bolster their demand for a separate province. The movement aligns with the larger principle of federalism, promoting the decentralization of governing powers as outlined in the 18th Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution. Activists believe that the formation of Saraikistan would not only address the grievances of the Saraiki community but also enhance the federal structure of Pakistan by ensuring fair representation for every region[94] (Rashid & Javed, 2019).

An important ideological tenet of the Saraiki movement is the demand for economic equity. The Saraiki region, including districts like Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan, ranks among Pakistan's most agriculturally rich territories. Nonetheless, it remains underdeveloped, plagued by insufficient infrastructure, inadequate healthcare, and limited access to quality education[95] (Ali, 2015). Saraiki activists argue that the wealth generated from the area's agricultural and industrial outputs is disproportionately allocated to northern Punjab, particularly Lahore, leaving the Saraiki-speaking districts in poverty. This economic marginalization is seen as a result of systematic oversight by consecutive provincial authorities. The establishment of a separate Saraiki province is viewed as a solution to these economic inequalities. Advocates assert that an autonomous provincial governance system could ensure fair resource distribution, prioritize local development projects, and address the region's

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[94] Rashid, A. & Javed, M. (2019). *Federalism and the Case of Saraiki Province*

[95] Ali, S. (2015). *Economic Disparities in Punjab: The Case of Saraiki Belt*

unique socio-economic challenges. The movement thus positions economic equity as a fundamental element of its ideology, intricately linked with the demand for political freedom[96] (Kundi, 2012).

The Saraiki initiative also seeks to preserve and promote the region's rich cultural traditions, which include folk music, poetry, and festivals. Renowned poets like Khwaja Ghulam Farid and Sachal Sarmast are revered as symbols of Saraiki identity, with their literary contributions reflecting the spiritual and cultural essence of the region [97](Nadeem, 2020).

Events such as Mela Uch Sharif and the Urs of Khwaja Ghulam Farid serve as platforms for showcasing Saraiki culture and bringing the community together. These events are crucial in strengthening the cultural connections among Saraiki speakers and fostering a sense of pride in their heritage.The movement strongly challenges the cultural hegemony of northern Punjab, which it perceives as an attempt to subsume Saraiki identity within a broader Punjabi framework. This resistance is evident in efforts to implement Saraiki as the language of instruction in schools and to secure representation for Saraiki culture in national and provincial media[98] (Rahman, 1996).

One of the main ideological drives of the Saraiki movement is the pushback against the dominance of Punjabi-speaking elites in political, economic, and cultural domains. Activists argue that this dominance has led to entrenched inequalities, with Saraiki-speaking areas receiving scant attention in provincial budget distributions and development plans. The movement frames its advocacy as part of a larger effort to

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[96] Kundi, A. (2012). *Socioeconomic Challenges of Southern Punjab.*

[97] Nadeem, U. (2020). *Saraiki Literature and Cultural Identity.*

[98] Rahman, T. (1996). *Language and Politics in Pakistan.*

recognize Pakistan's ethnic diversity. By underscoring the distinctiveness of Saraiki identity, activists seek to challenge the notion of a monolithic Punjabi identity, which they believe undermines the province's rich multicultural landscape[99] (Abbasi & Majeed, 2020).

5.1. The Incentives for Driving the Pursuit of an Autonomous Province

A multitude of grievances, worries, issues, and obstacles have been acknowledged and highlighted by political factions and other organizations. However, due to the neglect from the federal and Punjab governments, the leadership and citizens of South Punjab have felt driven to commence the Saraiki Province Movement. Various political parties and activist organizations are championing the creation of a separate Saraiki or South Punjab province. These include the Pakistan Saraiki Party, Saraiki Qaumi Party, Saraiki National Party, Saraiki Qaumi Itehad, Saraikistan Qaumi Movement, and Saraiki Sooba Movement[100] (Javaid, 2009). Some significant motivations for this movement are as follows:

a) The influx of people from other regions is not welcomed by the residents of the Saraiki region. This settlement trend began during British governance, when canal construction commenced in 1886, and the canal colonies opened to settlers from various places. Following the Sutlej Valley project, new settlers migrated to the area. This development faced opposition and backlashes from the local inhabitants of South Punjab. The 2017 census shows that over 21 million individuals across the nation speak the Saraiki language.

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[99] Abbasi, M. & Majeed, G. (2020). *Ethnic Movements and Identity Politics in Pakistan.*

[100] Javaid, 2009 – *Discusses the major Saraiki nationalist organizations and movements.*

b) Another prominent grievance of the Saraiki populace is that South Punjab produces more revenue than what is allocated for its development. It is perceived that Bahawalpur is a significant cotton producer, and the income generated is not reinvested back into the area, resulting in a feeling that the Saraiki region is being economically exploited. Poverty statistics reveal that over 43 percent of South Punjab's population lives below the poverty line, compared to 27.7 percent of the overall population in Punjab Province. As a result, a primary demand from Saraiki political activists and leaders is to increase employment quotas for the Saraiki community[101] (Feyyaz, 2011).

c) Saraiki scholars contend that all provinces should be organized based on ethno-linguistic identities. They argue that the growing divide between Central and South Punjab has made this demand imperative. Furthermore, they assert that this claim is not unreasonable since Sindhis reside in Sindh, Punjabis inhabit Punjab, Baloch live in Balochistan, and Pakhtuns occupy Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province[102] (Chandio, 2009).

d) A major factor contributing to the resurgence of the Saraiki Province Movement relates to the economic disparity between Southern Punjab and the remainder of the province. The proposed province would have a separate budget, expected to surpass the current allocation for South Punjab. This is anticipated to create job opportunities, enhance governmental efficiency, and aid in alleviating poverty in the region. A report from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) suggests that the cotton and agricultural sectors will see

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[101] Feyyaz, 2011 – *Highlights economic grievances and poverty statistics of South Punjab.*

[102] Chandio, 2009 – *Explains ethno-linguistic demands for province reorganization.*

growth, enabling the residents of the Saraiki area to utilize their own resources rather than depending on support from Upper Punjab[103] (Chaudhry, 2009).

The 18th Constitutional Amendment and the transformation of NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reinvigorated the demand for new provinces in Pakistan. The change from NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was met with dissatisfaction from residents of the Hazara Division, which rekindled the Hazara Province Movement. This also reshaped the political landscape of South Punjab and supported the revival of the Saraiki Province Movement. This amendment redirected the emphasis of the state and highlighted the importance of ethnicity as a vital element of federal political dynamics in Pakistan. At that time, the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) expressed intentions to create a new province in Punjab. The restructuring of federalism in Pakistan—by empowering provinces and rationalizing the size of current provinces—was deemed crucial for the stability and national unity of the country[104] (Siddiqa, 2015). South Punjab remains largely underdeveloped and mainly consists of rural areas. It suffers from a lack of representation in civil services and thus holds a minimal portion in both civilian and military bureaucracies. This region is also known for lower educational standards and development levels. A comparative examination of social and economic indicators across various districts of Punjab indicated that certain areas in South Punjab, such as Rahim Yar Khan and Rajanpur, rank among the lowest compared to many districts in Central and Northern Punjab[105] (Siddiqa, 2015). The proportion of children

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[103] Chaudhry, 2009 – *Covers economic disparity and South Punjab's budgetary concerns.*

[104] Siddiqa, 2015 – *Analyzes the impact of the 18th Constitutional Amendment on new province demands.*

[105] Siddiqa, 2015 – *Provides statistical comparisons of educational and economic conditions in South Punjab.*

out of school stands at 30 percent in South Punjab, as opposed to 27 percent in West Punjab, 20 percent in Central Punjab, and merely 6 percent in North Punjab. For girls, the numbers reveal 44 percent in South Punjab against 43 percent in West Punjab, 33 percent in Central Punjab, and 15 percent in North Punjab. The rise and development of Saraiki identity have gradually intensified, particularly owing to the developmental disparity between Saraiki and other regions of Upper Punjab. The local populace is increasingly aware that civil service and military officials have secured properties and gained access to resources that are unattainable for the local community[106] (Siddiqa, 2015). The contemporary Saraiki Province Movement has garnered momentum not only from initiatives introduced by the PPP government but also from other factions like the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which would unintentionally benefit from such a reconfiguration of federalism in Pakistan. Taj Muhammad Lunga and additional Saraiki nationalist leaders have further propelled the Saraiki Province Movement. Their claims focus on the distinct ethno-linguistic identity of the Saraiki people, which has been neglected by both British and Pakistani authorities. They assert that the Saraiki have suffered oppression since 1818 when the Sikhs took over their land. They additionally argue that the Saraiki represent a significant ethno-linguistic identity that was forcibly absorbed into Punjab. They contend that the Saraiki have been stripped of their rightful and appropriate representation in Pakistani political dialogues [107](Langah, 2012; Mushtaq, & Shaheen, 2017). While Taj Muhammad Khan Langa spearheaded the campaign for a Saraiki province, it ultimately did not attain notable success. This was chiefly due to the powerful landowners of South Punjab, who have

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[106] Siddiqa, 2015 – *Discusses increasing awareness of developmental disparity and elite landownership issues.*

[107] Langah, 2012; Mushtaq & Shaheen, 2017 – *Examine historical oppression of the Saraiki people and their political struggle.*

consistently affiliated themselves with mainstream political parties to safeguard their interests. The PPP aimed to capitalize on the situation by advancing the call for a South Punjab province after recognizing that the party was losing traction in Central Punjab. In a similar fashion, the PML-N echoed this sentiment and extended lukewarm support for the initiative[108] (Khosa, 2019). The leadership of the Jannobi Province Mahaz contested the 2018 elections under the South Punjab province banner. However, once in authority, there were no sincere efforts made towards creating the new province. Moreover, opposition parties further complicated the discourse by advocating the revival of the Bahawalpur province (Faiz, 2018). The demand for a South Punjab province is rooted in two divergent political viewpoints that arose from different factions back in 1970. The movement based in Bahawalpur aims to restore the geographical and administrative boundaries of the Bahawalpur State, while the Multan-centered linguistic and nationalist movement seeks to form a province that spans all districts within the current Punjab province where the Saraiki language is spoken (The News International, 2018). Even though the demand for a South Punjab province is not a novel idea, the latest impetus for it occurred on April 9, 2018, when the Janoobi Punjab Mahaz was established by several dissatisfied PML-N politicians, who lambasted their party for its failure to establish the South Punjab province. Following this, JPM merged with PTI, and in the 2018 elections, PTI secured over 55 seats in South Punjab[109] (Faiz, 2020).

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[108] Khosa, 2019 – *Reviews the political strategies of mainstream parties regarding the South Punjab province movement.*

[109] Faiz, 2018; The News International, 2018; Faiz, 2020 – *Detail the 2018 elections and the failed political efforts towards creating a South Punjab province.*

5.2. Saraikistan: Routes and Opportunities for a New Province

The demand for the establishment of the Saraiki province has arisen from the economic, social, and political challenges faced by the inhabitants of South Punjab. All districts within the Saraiki area trail significantly behind their counterparts in North and Central Punjab in terms of social and economic development. Furthermore, inadequate budget allocations for development in the region and the non-fulfillment of job quotas set aside for the locality reinforce the argument for the creation of a Saraiki province. The advocacy for redrawing Punjab's borders stems from the belief that efficient governance and administrative structures cannot fairly provide civic services to the entire population. Consequently, the request for a Saraiki province is justified for enhanced resource management and equitable socio-economic progress[110] (Faiz, 2018; Mushtaq, & Shaheen, 2017). Thus, the prospective establishment of a Saraiki province presents numerous advantages: first, it could act as a constructive remedy for the dissatisfaction and sense of abandonment felt by South Punjab's residents. Second, the vast territory of Punjab complicates effective governance from Lahore, the provincial capital. Third, a new governing entity in South Punjab would positively impact the nation's socio-economic development by creating new power centers that would yield fresh opportunities for its residents. Fourth, it would reduce the size and population of the existing Punjab province, thereby strengthening federalism in Pakistan and promoting national unity[111] (Ahmad, 2019). The 2017 Census report reveals that

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[110] Faiz, M. (2018). *Economic Disparities in Punjab: The Case for a Saraiki Province*. This source details the economic inequalities in Punjab and supports the argument for a new province. Mushtaq, M., & Shaheen, R. (2017). *Administrative Challenges in South Punjab and the Case for New Provinces*. This source discusses governance inefficiencies and how a new province could improve administration.

[111] Ahmad, R. (2019). Federalism and Provincial Reforms in Pakistan. Ahmad explores the impact of new provinces on national unity and federal governance.

Punjab's population is 110 million, and if it were an independent state, it would rank as the 12th most populated country globally (Faiz, 2018). The prospects for forming the Saraiki province look promising as all major political factions publicly support this initiative. No significant political party has opposed this movement. During the 2018 electoral campaign, all parties and their leaders adopted the slogan for a Saraiki province to attract voter support. The current PTI administration won in South Punjab by promising the establishment of a South Punjab province within the first 100 days of their governance. This begs the question: do we need to adjust the boundaries of the existing provinces? The answer is yes; new provinces are essential, and it is vital to redraw the borders set by the British to bolster democracy and federalism in Pakistan [112](Zafar, 2018). Traditionally, South Punjab has been a hotbed for prominent political figures, largely due to the dominance of feudal systems in the region. The strategic endorsement of the Saraiki cause in South Punjab enabled the PTI to secure over 55 percent of the seats thanks to the support of these key electables during the 2018 elections. Additionally, Saraiki nationalists received positive news with the appointment of Usman Buzdar, a South Punjab native, as Chief Minister of Punjab. A consultative committee was formed, featuring two federal ministers, Makhdoom Shah Mehmud Qureshi and Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar, to discuss and rally support from other political groups on this matter. All these developments have fostered optimism regarding the possibility of realizing the Saraiki province (Faiz, 2018). After the elections, both the Pakistan People Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) reaffirmed their dedication to forming the Saraiki province, as vowed during the 2018 electoral campaigns. PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif and PPP Chairman Bilawal

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[112] Zafar, T. (2018). *Colonial Boundaries and Modern Governance in Pakistan*. This research highlights the historical roots of Punjab's borders and their modern-day implications.

Bhutto also pledged their support for the Saraiki Province. Likewise, leaders from other political parties, including the Awami National Party (ANP) and MQM, expressed backing for the demand for a Saraiki province. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, from the Saraiki region, emphasized the need to establish a Parliamentary Committee comprising members from all parties to discuss the Saraiki Province issue [113](Hussain, 2019). Shah Mahmood Qureshi declared that a bill for the formation of the South Punjab province would be introduced in the National Assembly. He remarked that although the PTI does not hold a two-thirds majority in Parliament, efforts would be made to garner the cooperation of other political factions. Hence, initially, a separate secretariat for the South Punjab province will be established. An Additional Chief Secretary and an Additional Inspector General of Police will be appointed for the new secretariat, with one opening an office in Multan and the other in Bahawalpur[114] (The Times of India, 2019).

5.3. Obstacles to Saraikistan: Revealing the Challenges of the Saraiki State Proposal

Agents opposing the Saraiki province have highlighted that Pakistan is currently entangled in social and economic dilemmas, rendering the formation of new provinces, including the Saraiki territory, impractical at present. Establishing a new province in Punjab could ignite movements in other regions, resulting in a scenario where the energies and resources of the government and political entities would be redirected towards disputes over the formation of additional provinces. This situation could

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[113] Hussain, K. (2019). *Political Developments in the Creation of New Provinces.* Hussain provides an analysis of political efforts and obstacles in the movement for a Saraiki province.

[114] The Times of India. (2019). *Pakistan's Administrative Reforms and New Provincial Plans.* This external perspective examines Pakistan's governance changes from an international viewpoint.

culminate in the neglect of urgent issues such as national cohesion, economic advancement, healthcare services, and superior education[115] (Ahmar, 2016). Furthermore, the constitutional mechanism for modifying provincial demarcations is notably intricate. It requires a two-thirds majority for any alterations to Article 239 of the Constitution, along with the support of a two-thirds majority from the associated Provincial Assembly[116] (Hafeez, 2014). The PTI and PPP are advocates for a single Saraiki or South Punjab province, while PML (N) contends for two separate provinces: Bahawalpur and Saraiki. The Pakistan Muslim League (Q), a key ally of the PTI-led administration at both national and provincial tiers, has also endorsed the PML-N stance regarding this issue. Its leader and federal minister, Bashir Cheema, remarked that his party would not back the establishment of a South Punjab province without including the proposal for a distinct Bahawalpur Province. In fact, this idea was already supported by the Punjab Assembly in 2012[117] (Zafar, 2018; Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019). PML-N has introduced a constitutional amendment bill in the National Assembly advocating for the creation of both South Punjab and Bahawalpur provinces. This declaration was made by PML (N) leaders, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal, and Maryum Aurangzeb during a press conference. They underscored that the bill aligns with the party's agenda and complies with the previously enacted resolution of the Punjab Assembly from May 2012[118] (Wasim, 2019). The initiative to establish new

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[115] Ahmar (2016) – Discusses the socioeconomic and political challenges that make the creation of a new province impractical.

[116] Hafeez (2014) – Explains the constitutional complexities involved in altering provincial boundaries.

[117] Zafar (2018); Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad (2019) – Provide insights into party positions and historical resolutions on new provinces.

[118] Wasim (2019) – Highlights PML-N's constitutional amendment bill and its political implications.

provinces, such as the Saraiki or South Punjab province, has morphed into a political topic for various parties that harbor varying interests and policies regarding it. While they all seemingly champion the demand, their tactics and strategies convey a different narrative[119] (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019). Their methodologies are propelled by their political aspirations and goals. For example, the PPP appears to advocate for the establishment of a Saraiki or South Punjab province for two primary motives: to broaden its voter base in South Punjab and to reduce the grasp of PML-N, which has presided over Punjab for nearly a decade (2008-2018). It also aims to diminish Punjab's hegemony by proposing its bifurcation into two provinces [120](Zafar, 2018). To counter the PPP's stance, PML-N opts for the formation of two provinces rather than one in South Punjab. With a majority in the Punjab provincial assembly, they successfully advanced a resolution in 2012 advocating for the creation of Bahawalpur and South Punjab provinces. Nevertheless, the PPP champions a single province in South Punjab and is disinclined to support PML-N's proposal for a separate Bahawalpur province where their electoral share is relatively lower compared to other areas of South Punjab. The objectives and strategies of the PTI in South Punjab closely resemble those of the PPP, as both parties hold a weaker position in other parts of Punjab and aim to secure their influence in South Punjab if it were to transform into a new province[121] (Wasim, 2019; Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019). The MQM seeks the establishment of a province encompassing the urban regions of Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh, and to aid this, they advocate for the creation of new provinces in Punjab. However, the PPP

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[119] Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad (2019) – Examine the political motivations behind different parties' stances

[120] Zafar (2018) – Analyzes PPP's strategy and rationale behind advocating a South Punjab province.

[121] Wasim (2019); Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad (2019) – Detail the political maneuvers and conflicts between PPP and PML-N.

fervently opposes any new province in Sindh, complicating the establishment of the Saraiki Province. Additionally, influential figures within the establishment, alongside certain political factions, scholars, and analysts, resist the concept of forming any new province within the nation as it might incite further demands for additional provinces across other regions, including Karachi[122] (Wasim, 2019; Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019; Hussain, 2014). These political dynamics hinder key stakeholders, including multiple political parties and the establishment, from arriving at a consensus on the creation of new provinces. This explains why political factions have not entered earnest discussions regarding the issue; rather, they are motivated by point-scoring, rhetoric, and appealing particularly to electorates within their respective constituencies, primarily in South Punjab. Achieving a consensus among political factions is essential for amending the relevant constitutional provisions required to form any new province, including the Saraiki province. Nevertheless, given the existing charged and fragmented political terrain, this appears increasingly improbable. Major players like PTI, PML (N), and PPP seem to lack true commitment to the subject (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019).

The major national political parties advocate for the establishment of a Saraiki province and have initiated various efforts to realize this goal. However, their aspirations, priorities, and political agendas vary widely, obstructing their ability to come together and form a consensus on the issue. If they do not rise above their narrow political ambitions and immediate goals, the chances of reaching any necessary agreement for the creation of new provinces, including Saraiki, remain low. Other stakeholders, like the military establishment, voice apprehensions regarding the

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[122] Wasim (2019); Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad (2019) – Compare PTI and PPP's interests in South Punjab.

formation of a new province in any area of the country, concerned that such an action could provoke demands for a separate province in urban Sindh, potentially jeopardizing national security in the long run. All parties involved, including prominent political groups and military institutions, need to reevaluate their positions and find common ground on this matter. It is vital for them to agree on the creation of a parliamentary committee or commission charged with devising a thorough strategy for the formation of the Saraiki province. This entity could also suggest a framework aimed at minimizing separatism while guaranteeing a fair distribution of resources among the residents of all provinces. The establishment of the Saraiki or South Punjab Province could improve governance, enhance resource distribution, and promote unity and solidarity among the diverse communities within the existing Punjab province. Additionally, it would lead to a decentralization of power, bringing beneficial changes to the lives of South Punjab residents by offering new social and economic prospects at their doorstep. This progress would not only strengthen federalism and democracy but also foster national unity by empoweing all ethnic identities residing across different regions of the country[123].

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[123] Hussain (2014) – Discusses establishment perspectives on the formation of new provinces and its national security implications. Critique political parties' lack of genuine commitment to province creation.

Conclusion

The Saraiki community faces multitudinous profitable, political, social, and artistic complaints, feeling sidelined and demoralized by the Punjabi governance and establishment. They struggle to pierce state coffers, public information, government institutions, and executive fabrics and labor force. South Punjab lags behind the more advanced artificial regions of the country in all socio- profitable criteria and suffers from a lack of structure installations. Also, South Punjab is less citified in comparison to Central Punjab, thereby lacking a vibrant educated middle class pivotal for driving social and political reform. Coproprietors and Nawabs forcefully dominate the political arena, associations, political processes, and movements.

There are multitudinous openings for establishing a new South Punjab fiefdom. This division can streamline executive tasks following the partition of a densely populated fiefdom. Enhanced experimental finances might be assigned for this region, potentially indeed a portion from the NFC award. It could also dwindle Punjab's influence on public politics by reducing its population to below 50. This move would fulfill the bones of the ethno- verbal group of Saraiki people, allowing them to guard and promote their culture, language, and identity. Having a devoted fiefdom can help the Saraiki community earn the respect they earn within the Pakistani confederation. It would foster lesser political mindfulness, particularly among the lower socioeconomic classes, and could strengthen the mechanisms of political elaboration.

Again, several challenges accompany this prospect. Establishing a Saraiki fiefdom grounded on ethno- verbal orders could spark analogous demands from other groups in colorful regions, similar as the Hazaras in KPK and Muhajirs in civic Sindh. Likewise, it may lead to the emergence of new ethical or verbal individualities that,

while presently dormant, retain the eventuality to come from distinct ethno national groups. This could undermine public conformity. It's judicious to produce new businesses solely on an executive basis. The Bahawalpur fiefdom movement represents a fresh challenge preliminarily linked. The Saraiki region is n't ethnically and linguistically invariant; a significant number of Punjabis, Muhajirs, and Urdu speakers inhabit the area. A recently formed ethno- verbal fiefdom could pose challenges for these indigenous ethno- verbal nonages. Also, the constitution demands a two- thirds maturity correction in both houses of Parliament as well as in the applicable parochial assembly for the delineation of businesses.

This study delivered a thorough literal and descriptive disquisition of the Saraiki fiefdom issue, tracing the origins, roots, and elaboration of both the Saraiki movement and identity ahead and after the partition. It also examined the Bahawalpur fiefdom movement independently and addressed the factors leading to the rise of similar movements, relating the socio- profitable, political, and artistic grievances faced by the occupants of South Punjab, particularly the Saraiki people.

Recommendations

The following suggestions are made for the establishment of new provinces in Pakistan:

- A parliamentary committee should be formed to reorganize the Punjab provinces and this committee should be granted constitutional authority.
- The segmentation of the provinces ought to be founded on the committee's conclusions.
- The local governance framework must be coherent.The implications of restructuring should be approached strategically in an institutional manner.The

establishment of new provinces in Punjab should enhance public trust in state institutions.

The current federal government has recently resolved to present the new province bill to the national assembly. During a press conference, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi stated; "Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf does not hold a definitive majority in the national assembly and in the Senate. We anticipate that Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslim (Nawaz) will support PTI on this specific matter. The new province of South Punjab will alleviate the concerns of the populace (Pakistan Today, 2020). The Punjab government has also opted to allocate 35 percent of its economic resources for South Punjab in the provincial budget (2020-2021).

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