

Issues of Ethnic Diversity and Just Development in Pakistan with a Special Focus on the Seraiki Ethnic Group

*Aisha Shahzad**

Abstract

Ethnicity implies the sense of belonging together as the cultural group in a given society. It is a complex combination of racial, cultural and historical characteristics by which people differentiate themselves from other groups. This research envisages the genesis and the evolution of ethnicity as a political concept, the problems of ethnicity in a heterogeneous, multicultural state and the phenomenon of ethno-nationalism in its historical and analytical perspective in the federation of Pakistan with special reference to the status of Seraiki ethnic group. In fact ethnic expressions exist in all multicultural states and distinct ethnic groups evaluate themselves through communal prism. The less privileged groups develop abhorrence against the over – privileged groups due to the persistence of socioeconomic injustices. Factors like the gap between core and periphery, asymmetrical modernization and authoritarian trends lead towards ethnic disruption. Same is the case with Pakistan, a multilingual, multiracial and multiethnic state with federating units reflecting various diversities. The analysis of ethno-nationalism in Pakistan highlights factors, like regional cultural identity, relative deprivation among regions, centralized state structure, denial of accepting regional language as national language, and the absence of democratic values as being the root causes of the Bengali separatism. The assimilationist policies of the government do not acknowledge the regional/ethnic aspirations. Denial of pluralistic approach has been thwarting the demand for provincial autonomy. The nature of ethnic consciousness in the Seraiki belt, analyzed in this article, is found to be nurtured by the perceived socio-economic injustice at intra-provincial level—between the regions of South Punjab and Central and Northern Punjab put together.

Introduction

Ethnicity is essentially a socio-political phenomenon. It refers to the behaviors of the particular group of people having common culture, language, traditions, ancestry and mass mobilization for common political objectives. It is a sense of belonging to a specific group which differentiates that group from others. Ethnicity involves certain condition, i.e., economic disparities, and competition for power among

* Dr Aisha Shahzad, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore.

ethnic groups which generate ethnic conflicts. Mostly in culturally plural societies ethnic groups tend to perceive themselves in a competitive framework. The minority groups feel themselves marginalized by the dominant groups. When the state structure fails to provide equitable opportunities to all the ethnic groups then this situation intensifies their feeling of alienation. If these conditions persist in a due course of time, the ethnic groups tend towards violence for the expression of their grievances.

This research characterizes that the socio-economic justice and ethnic diversity are significant regarding ethnic conflicts especially in the multi-ethnic society like Pakistan. The policies of the colonial powers, geographical boundaries of the new states (Pakistan, India after 1947 partition), asymmetrical development and the forces of modernization resulted into the visible changes in the ethnic identities of various groups which caused continuing ethnic conflicts, as well as religious and linguistic cleavages.¹

Pakistan, after the adoption of its first constitution, comprised five federating units Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Bengal along with princely states and tribal areas. Since the time of its inception all these regions had distinct cultural, demographical, linguistic and topographical traits. Bengal was home of nearly 55% of the total population. The centralized approach by the Punjabi-Mohajir dominated political and military elite and the non-inclusive policies by the federal government towards the legitimate demands of Bengalis, created a sense of marginalization among them. It eventually led to a civil unrest and East Pakistan debacle in 1971. Afterwards the Pakistani government endeavored to integrate diverse ethnic groups through the 1973 constitution. Despite this fact the inter-ethnic harmony could not be established throughout the federation.

Then the issue of Pukhtunistan in NWFP posed another challenge to the federation of Pakistan. The demand for autonomy by the Pushtuns, an ethnic group, was not addressed by the center rather they were merged into a unified province of West Pakistan which created antagonism among them. Consequently they ascertained alliance with Baluch and Sindhi nationalists, who were also against the One Unit setting in 1955. Moreover, the ethnic confrontation in Sindh emerged vehemently due to the settlement of Mohajirs from India. They had

¹ This section draws upon the Ph.D. dissertation of the author, Aisha Shahzad, 'The Politics and Ethnicity in Pakistan: The Case Study of MQM', Department of Political Science, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, 2011 (Unpublished).

distinct cultural heritage, customs, language and socio-economic background. Owing to their sense of superiority, they deliberately not made any effort to mingle with the local population. Apart from it they had an upper hand over the natives in terms of education, entrepreneurship, commercial skills and experience. It created a feeling of deprivation among the indigenous Sindhis.

This situation strengthened the ethno-nationalist tendencies like G.M. Syed in Sindh. However during 1970s Bhutto's policies were considered by the Mohajirs as a conscious effort by the elite to discourage and deprive them. New quota system and discriminations against Mohajirs ultimately led to the emergence of Mohajir Quomi Movement. The Mohajir-Sindhi controversy became a permanent feature of Sindhi politics during the successive years.

Balochistan is the largest province in terms of area. It was annexed in 1884 by the British. Since the very beginning Baluchistan had been an underdeveloped province mainly due to its tribal settlement. After 1947 partition, the Baloch tribal sardars and the nationalists wanted to have independent Balochistan but it was forcefully acceded by Pakistan government in 1948. However, during the initial years successive governments in Pakistan could not ameliorate the socioeconomic backwardness in the province due to insurmountable problems, including political instability, fragile economy, constitutional issues, and ethno-nationalist demands. The growing sense of alienation and deprivation provoked ethno-national separatist tendencies in the province which have even causing insurgencies from the past till present.

Punjab has been the most developed and prosperous region in Pakistan in terms of agriculture, industry, health and education. Despite the fact this province has become a victim of intra-provincial ethnic problems due to the widespread economic disparities and controversies between Punjabi and Seraiki communities. The dichotomous inter-group relations generated an ethnic consciousness among the Seraikes which came out in the demand for fair distribution of resources and making southern Punjab a separate province, in order to safeguard their socioeconomic interest. In this backdrop, this study has a special focus on Seraiki region in Punjab.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are:

- i) To describe the parameters of ethnicity
- ii) To empirically examine the relationship between ethnicity and socio-economic dynamics in multicultural settings
- iii) To highlight the disparities within the province of Punjab

- iv) To investigate the flaws in government policies and corroborate alternatives for betterment.

Ethnicity and ethnic diversity – A contextual analysis

The phenomenon of ethnicity is not an innovation; many writers have written about its different aspects. A thinker Kasfir (1979),² envisaging various aspects of ethnicity explains that ethnicity influences the political behavior of the people. The choice of ethnic identity also depends upon the particular political circumstances which keep on varying with the passage of time. Kellas (1998)³ provides an explanation to the Benedict Anderson's Theory about an 'imagined political community' that why some people perceive themselves as a part of a particular nation. This theory reveals the implications of state sponsored nationalism. In multicultural societies the imposition of single culture configuration, in order to make a monolithic state, engenders the sense of dispossession among the suppressed groups. This situation leads towards the phenomenon of imagined political community. Jesse and Williams (2011)⁴ describe two types of democratic institutions to maintain stability in deeply divided societies. First is the exclusivist model, which promotes the interests of the powerful groups. Second is the accommodationist model, designed by Diamond, Linz and Lipset,⁵ aimed at managing ethnic conflicts through power-sharing.

Connor (1972)⁶ criticizes the integrationist's claim that the modernization and integration reduce ethnic discord and cultural dissonance in multi-ethnic societies. According to him, increasing communication among ethnic groups generates ethnic assertion to preserve their identities in deeply divided societies. Such a tendency is contained by pluralist and multicultural approaches. Gurr (1994)⁷ also discusses different factors of the phenomenon of ethnicity. According to him culture is the most significant element regarding ethnic identities.

² N. Kasfir, 'Explaining Ethnic Political Participation', *World Politics, A Quarterly Journal of International Relations*, 31:3 (September 1979), 373.

³ J.G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism And Ethnicity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

⁴ N.G. Jesse, and K.P. Williams, *Ethnic Conflict: A Systematic Approach to Cases of Conflict* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2011).

⁵ L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner (eds.), *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (The John Hopkins University Press, 1994).

⁶ W. Connor, 'Nation Building or Nation Destroying?' *World Politics*, 24:3, June 2011, available at: www.jstor.org.

⁷ T. Gurr, 'Peoples against States: Ethno Political Conflict and the Changing World System', *International Studies Quarterly*, 38:3 (July 2016), 347-77.

But the cultural norms which also determines boundaries of the ethnic groups, keep on varying with the passage of time. Moreover, he epitomizes that cultural differences between majority and minority ethnic groups give rise to ethnic competition. The persistence of this competitive environment and socioeconomic inequalities, eventually produce ethnic conflicts in heterogeneous societies.

Vanhanen (1999)⁸ discusses the ethnic conflicts and explains the concept of ethnic nepotism, meaning that people always support their kins in conflicting situations. It is a universal characteristic which also substantiates the primordial basis of ethnic affiliations. Through his empirical analysis Vanhanen finds that ethnic nepotism cause ethnic conflicts which are unavoidable. But he considers that ethnic conflicts can be mitigated through institutions and accommodating patterns of behaviors.

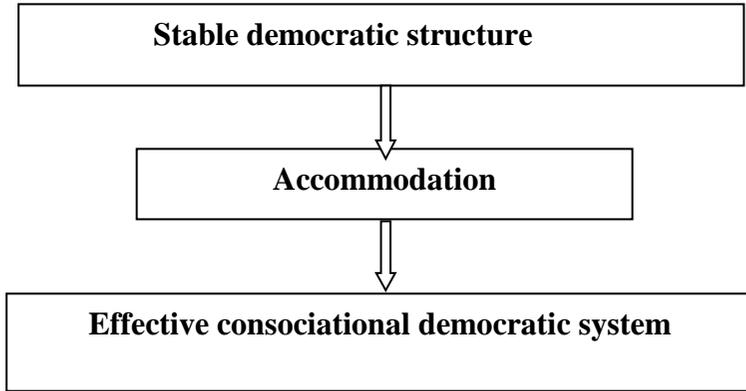
A reputed scholar on ethnicity, Horowitz (1994)⁹ focuses upon the democratization through multiculturalism and pluralism in deeply divided societies. He argues that ethnic differences obstruct the process of democracy in multiethnic societies. Communal identities determine the pattern of exclusion or inclusion of ethnic groups in the state apparatus. The strong ethnic groups enjoy privileges in the power structure of the state. While others are excluded from the mainstream body politic. Various other thinkers have explained the nature of consociationalism to prescribe the solutions to ethnic problems in multiethnic societies. Boynton and Kown (1978)¹⁰ analyze Lijphart's 'politics of accommodation' that consociational democracy can be ensured by the ability of the political elite to counter centrifugal forces to manage ethnic conflicts in divided societies.¹¹ The decision making process also requires an attribute of accommodation which guarantees participation of all the ethnic groups. The analysis made by Boynton and Kown can be viewed in Figure A.

⁸ T. Vanhanen, 'Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis', *Journal of Peace Research*, 36:1, (November 1999), 55-73.

⁹ D.L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (California: University of California Press, 1985).

¹⁰ G.R. Boynton, and W.H. Kwon, 'An Analysis of Consociational Democracy', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 3:1 (February 2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/439677>

¹¹ A. Lijphart, 'Non-Majoritarian Democracy: A Comparison of Federal and Consociational Theories', *Publius*, 15:2 (July 1985), 3-15.

Figure A: Consociational Democracy

Lijphart (1985) considers the segmental autonomy as an important pillar to promote consociationalism within the federation. He stresses the geographical formation of federating units to approximate the homogeneity regarding their composition. Federating units are also entitled to be given regional autonomy to maximize decentralization in the power structure.¹² In this sense his views apply on the federation of Pakistan as well.

Moreover, several writers have encompassed the ontology of ethnicity and issues of marginalization in Pakistan in particular. Wirsing (1988)¹³ reports that uneven distribution of resources and under-representation of smaller ethnic groups, in the state structure of Pakistan, suffocate them and aggravate the ethnic contraventions. Talbot (2003)¹⁴ examines the political history of Pakistan and interprets that the policies of centralization pursued by the successive governments fostered the ethno-nationalistic tendencies in the state structure. These centrifugal forces got reinforcement due to the denial of regional, ethnic and linguistic identities. He explains:

The origin of Seraiki language can be traced back to the ancient Indus valley civilization. Although some intellectuals perceive Seraiki just as an accent of Punjabi language. However, Seraiki writers claimed that Seraiki language had a rich collection of poetry, folk music and literature.

¹² Shahzad, op.cit.

¹³ G.R. Wirsing, 'Ethnicity and Political Reform in Pakistan', *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 15:2 (Summer 1988), 67-83.

¹⁴ Ian Talbot, 'Pakistan in 2002 Democracy, Terrorism and Brinkmanship', *Asian Survey*, XLIII: 1 (2003), 198-207.

Unfortunately, the Seraiki region remained deprived during the colonial era. Various colonial settlement policies created racial discrimination among the people, i.e. Punjabi Jats were considered superior. They were allocated lands for irrigation. The discriminatory policies continued even after the partition of India. The successive governments in Pakistan focused on the area of Northern and Central Punjab. While the South Punjab remained under developed.

Harrison (1987)¹⁵ explains that the domination of Punjabis over the smaller ethnic groups in Pakistan sparked ethnic conflict in the state which could only be avoided through the strategies of pluralism and participatory cultural norms. Jaffrelot (1998)¹⁶ quotes the interpretation of the dynamics of ethnic movements in Pakistan and assert that Indian Muslims culminated their freedom struggle in a form of new Muslim state in 1947 but its centralized nature could not provide a democratic framework for the accommodation of ethnic entities. Furthermore, they delineate that parliamentary set-up on the lines of liberal federal structure to celebrate regional diversities in Pakistan could not flourish, rather it was obstructed.

The above literature review depicts that mostly the proponents provided historical roots of ethnic disruption in the federation of Pakistan. This research study aims at explicating the socioeconomic indicators of Seraiki ethnic consciousness. It examines that how persistent underdevelopment and marginalization hamper the smooth process of national cohesion. It magnifies the phenomenon of multiculturalism that requires positive mobilization of all ethnicities to acknowledge their aspirations. The study focuses on the socio-economic dynamics of South Punjab to develop an argument that retrospectively the fundamental cause of the ethnic uprisings in Pakistan had been the matrix, comprising per capita income, industrial and agricultural inadequacies, and dearth of vocational and formal educational facilities. This research would open new vistas for future research in accordance with the generalization of the conception of multiculturalism in developing heterogeneous settings aligned with the socioeconomic factors.

¹⁵ S.S. Harrison, 'Ethnicity and the Political Stalemate in Pakistan', in A. Banuazizi & M. Weiner (eds.), *The State, Religion, and Ethnic Politics* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1987).

¹⁶ Christophe Jaffrelot, 'Interpreting Ethnic Movements in Pakistan', *The Pakistan Development Review*, 37:4 (Winter 1998), 153-79.

Research questions

- i. How ethnicity interacts with socio-economic dynamics in multiculturalism?
- ii. Why does the phenomenon of ethnicity vary overtime in its intensity in the boundaries it constructs and in the behavior it elicits?
- iii. How did government policies influence economic outcomes in southern Punjab that range from core to periphery and development to deprivation?
- iv. How far the unjust distribution of state resources and non-accommodative approach towards ethnic identities by the ruling elite roved major causes for the ethnic conflict in Punjab?
- v. Can indigenous economic growth and inclusive approach by ruling elite guarantee sustainable development in southern Punjab?

Methodology and sources

This research contains both qualitative and quantitative methods. To elicit the opinion of relevant stakeholders, a non-probability sampling technique was applied to select the respondents. The judgmental sample included volunteers, having good quality of knowledge of the subject, and being willing to respond to the researcher. A total sample of ninety persons from the public sector universities, vocational institutes and chamber of commerce from three districts of South Punjab (Multan, Bahawalpur and Sargodha) was selected to discuss the following four questions:

1. Whether the process of urbanization is creating asymmetrical development in Punjab?
2. Whether the quality of vocational training institutes in South Punjab is satisfactory to attain the goal of human resource development?
3. Whether the number of cold storages for preserving perishable goods is enough?
4. Whether the subsidy given to the textile sector is sufficient for sustainable industrial growth?
5. Whether southern Punjab needs to fortify the backward linkages to contribute to national exports?

Along with the primary sources, secondary sources are also used. Public documentation and government publications have been used. The analysis is made through the relevant press statements, and reports of various departments and census organization. In order to complete the

proposed research, some important libraries in the country were consulted.¹⁷

Case Study: Socio-Economic disparities in the Punjab

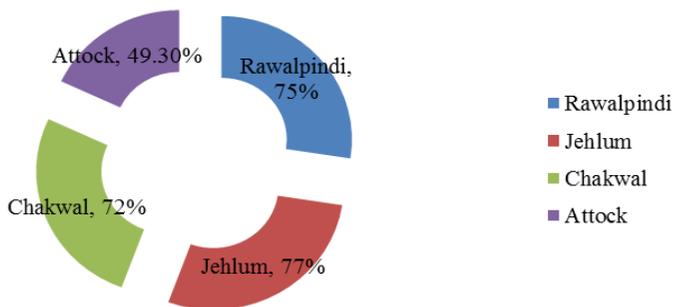
Issues and policy imperatives

The theorist, working on ethnicity, stress on the development of human resource to increase the extractive and distributive capability of the political system. It is the most significant variable to accomplish the target of high economic growth in order to reduce the sense of marginalization among the deprived communities and reduce ethnic polarization. In order to assess the level of indigenous economic growth in southern Punjab, it is necessary to analyze the government's efforts regarding the accumulation of human resource.

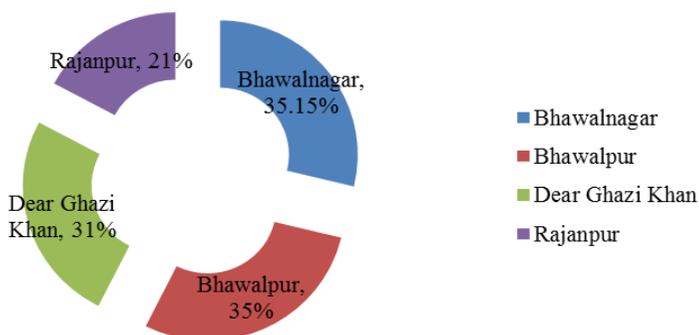
1. Human resource development

The process of urbanization in Pakistan has caused uneven development on a wide scale, which created intra-provincial discrepancies. The gap between the core and the periphery also exists between the South and the Central–North Punjab. South Punjab where the Seriaki ethnic group is in majority, comprises the districts of Bhawalpur, Lodhran, Vehari, Pakpattan, Multan, Khanewal, Shahiwal, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Sargodha, Khushab, Layyah, Bhakkar, Mianwali, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Tank, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, Rahim Yar Khan and Bhawalnagar. The factual analysis shows that little attention was given to Southern region of Punjab in terms of the promotion of educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. Literacy rate is quite low especially dropout ratio at the primary level is about 50 per cent as is shown in Figure B. Compare it with Figure C as well.

¹⁷ Such as: Library of Political Science Department, Lahore College for Women University, Quaid-e-Azam Library, main library of the University of the Punjab and departmental libraries of Political Science Department and South Asian Centre (Punjab University), Pakistan Study Centre (Karachi University), main library of Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, Digital Library of Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Dawn Newspaper's Library Lahore are important to be mentioned.

Figure B**Literacy Rate in North Punjab**

Source: Labour and Human Resource Department, *Punjab Employment Trends 2015*, 8 October 2016, Available at: www.punjablabour.gov.pk/download/Final_Second_Report.pdf

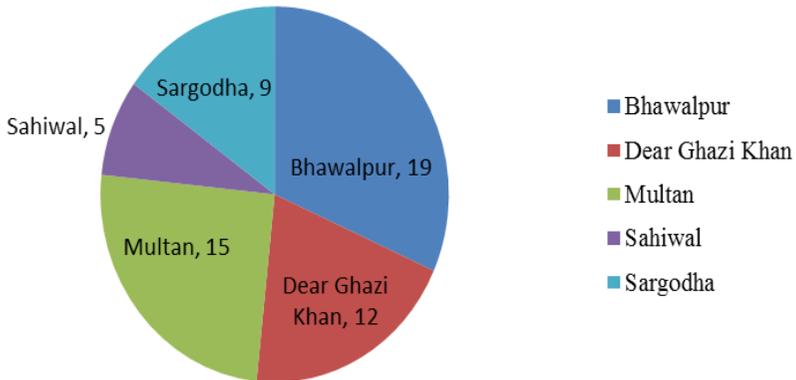
Figure C**Literacy Rate in South Punjab**

Source: Labour and Human Resource Department, *Punjab Employment Trends 2015*, 8 October 2016, available at: www.punjablabour.gov.pk/download/Final_Second_Report.pdf

Though there are about 60 vocational training institutes in 21 districts of South Punjab.

Figure D

Vocational Institutes in South Punjab



Source: Labour and Human Resource Department, 8 October 2016, www.punjablabour.gov.pk/download/Final_Second_Report_.pdf

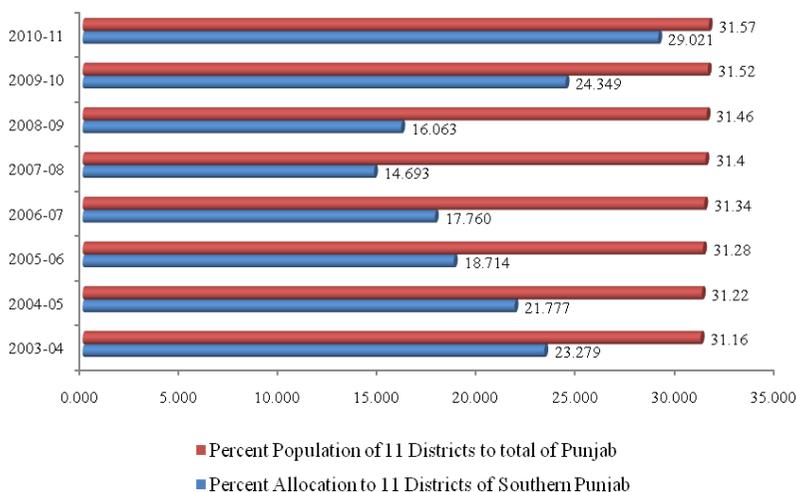
but unfortunately their courses, curricula and examination systems are not standardized. Then the percentage of the attainment of vocational education in remote areas is another critical issue. In fact human development requires investment in education and innovative skills. Economists also believe that education not only imparts knowledge to the individuals but also generates opportunities for economic growth and prosperity. Education alters the orthodox values and transforms the society. Vocational training and education are equally important to increase the capacity of the people and to enhance the economic rationality. Education with technological advancement further accelerates economic efficiency. The pace of economic development is positively related to the endogenous factors, i.e., skilled manpower. But unfortunately there are only three public sector universities and four medical colleges in South Punjab. There is no proper university for engineering sciences and technology.

In addition to it economic growth depends upon the opportunities for entrepreneurship or self employment. Recently, in this perspective, the Punjab government has announced 'Khud Rozgar Scheme' (self-employment), to provide soft loans to the unemployed youth. It was also committed to provide maximum amount to all

backward areas of South Punjab for their economic uplift. Under this scheme 5.5 billion rupees were distributed. But there are certain inadequacies in this scheme i.e. if inexperienced people get loans, they cannot avoid risk factors. There is a need to give proper professional training to the needy people before providing loans so that they could fully utilize the substantial amount. There must be a co-ordination between vocational training commission and finance department. Moreover, there is a need to ensure transparency and accountability regarding the disbursement of loans.

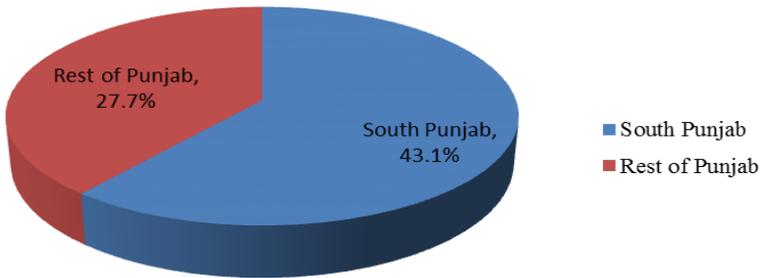
Apart from it there is also a need to increase labour productivity while creating quality jobs. Labour intensive policies, cottage industries, small and medium size finance development can contribute to ensure indigenous economic growth. Although number of institutions are providing training courses but they only rely upon the number of graduates but do not bother about the skilled labour meeting the demands of the market. There is about 50.58% population living below the poverty line in Dera Ghazi Khan, 39.86% in Bhawalpur and 38.91% in Multan. The figures necessitate increasing the job quotas for the local population and mobilization of fiscal resources to redress their grievances. The successive governments have not been able to come up to the normative expectations of the people.

Figure E
Unfair Distribution of Resources within Punjab



Source: 'New Provinces in Punjab: Division and Devolution?', 2 November 2016, <http://apnaorg.com/articles/punjab-division-1/>

Figure F
Population below Poverty Line in Punjab



Source: PILDAT Discussion Paper, *Development Funds for South Punjab*, November 2010, Islamabad.

2. Industrial growth

Economic growth also substantiates industrial output. The analysis shows that there is a wide gulf between the industrial infrastructures within Punjab. Only 21% of the total industries of Punjab exist in South Punjab, while it has great potential for growth. The city of Sargodha has industries of electrical fittings but is constrained due to structural and institutional weaknesses. There is a need to equip these industrial units with modern technology and innovative skilled manpower. Multan is another important city of South Punjab which is famous for handloom industry. It has approximately 423 handloom units. But most of them are fragmented. This situation creates a gap between the local manufacturer and the market which gives undue advantage to the middleman or the professional exporter. There is a need to subsidize the low paid weavers for their economic uplift. Moreover successive governments have established industrial estates in various cities of southern Punjab like Bhawalpur, Sargodha, Sahiwal and Khanewal but their efficiency is hampered due to the non-availability of infrastructure, i.e., testing centers, raw material depot, training centers, banks, warehouses, fire service, security checking, medical aid and sales emporiums. It is necessary to overcome power shortage and procure required

infrastructure to enhance their performance.¹⁸ In this backdrop the present government took certain initiatives. Federal Secretary Production and Industries Abdul Ghaffar Somroo reiterated in Multan Chamber of Commerce that Pakistan needed a long term and comprehensive industrial policy framework to strengthen linkages with backward areas and specially Export Processing Zones in the comparatively less developed areas.

For the sustainable industrial growth in Punjab the Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Shareef announced ‘Punjab Growth Strategy 2018’.¹⁹ The fundamental components of this growth strategy are the macroeconomic management, supportive trade policy, adequate energy and donor assistance. In order to achieve the growth targets, Punjab government also announced ‘Punjab Governance Reforms Roadmap 2018’ to ensure transparency in the system. But there is a need to separately allocate industrial development funds for southern Punjab industrial zones for generating more employment opportunities. In addition to it, the Punjab government initiated to establish a coal-based power plant in Sahiwal to overcome power shortage in the nearby areas. Although coal can be used as an alternative source for power generation but coal plants need large quantity of water to control the temperature. It can affect the underground water table and the fertility of land in these areas. Therefore, safety measures are inevitable for the protection of the land.

Moreover, policy framework needs to be established on rational grounds. Policies like Benazir Income Support Program are supposed to be reviewed. The amount of money disbursed under this scheme can be used to setup industries to provide long term employment opportunity to the needy families to preserve their integrity.

3. Agricultural gains

Along with industry, agriculture is also the mainstay of economy. Major crops in southern Punjab are cotton, wheat and rice. Although the land is fertile but proper measures are not being taken to preserve the fertility. It is necessary to ensure the mechanism for the eradication of soil erosion. Then water reservoirs are required to increase the growth rate. During 1950s, discriminatory policies by the governments deprived the Seraiki

¹⁸ For details see: T. Zafar, *Industrial Estates in Punjab, A Macro Survey* (Lahore: Higher Education Department, Government of Punjab, 2015).

¹⁹ Government of Punjab, ‘Punjab Growth Strategy 2018 First Draft, *Planning and Development Board*, 22 August 2015, <http://www.South Punjab – news.blogspot.com>

people from indigenous land because the Punjabis were granted thousands of acres of land under Thal Irrigation Scheme. Therefore disproportionate resources for the local people in southern Punjab generated ethnic resentment which resulted in a Seraiki movement during 1960s²⁰ which was accentuated, especially after the dissolution of One Unit arrangement. However, the movement could not gain momentum till 1990s. Nevertheless, during the Musharraf era this issue re-emerged. In December 2003, a Seraiki conference was held in Multan and various demands regarding the development of Seraiki people were articulated including the demand for a separate Seraiki province.

Apart from it the Seraiki people demand to build head-works to manage flood water in southern region of Punjab which destroys heavy crops every year. The availability of subsidized fertilizers and pesticides are equally important to facilitate the farmers. Contrarily, there is a monopoly of foreign firms on pesticides which are beyond the reach of the small farmer. Agricultural productivity depends upon research and innovative inputs. There is a need to establish agricultural universities or research centers to maximize the agricultural profitability.

The Chief Minister Punjab ascertained under Punjab Growth Strategy – 2018 to transform the agriculture sector into a science-based vibrant and internationally linked sector which may ensure food security. Therefore, 27.677 billion rupees have been allocated in the budget, but the popular demand is the specification of the amount for southern Punjab. In addition to cash crops and grains, fruits are another major export product in various cities of southern Punjab. Sargodha is known as ‘California of Pakistan’ due to the best production of oranges. It is necessary to promote modern export processing zones and cold storages to boost up the export of citrus. Then Multan has trade potential for mango.

To increase the profitability of mango trade, there is a need to establish well equipped processing plants. Sahiwal has potential of growth in potatoes as well. This area has the best ecological conditions for potato growing but the constraint for the small farmer is expensive high quality seed which can surely produce best results. Government is supposed to encourage small farmer having low purchasing power. Currently the declining commodity price in international market requires intervention by the government to protect the farmers. If the government does not take timely decision then it would adversely affect them. In this connection support price regimes are needed to be established.

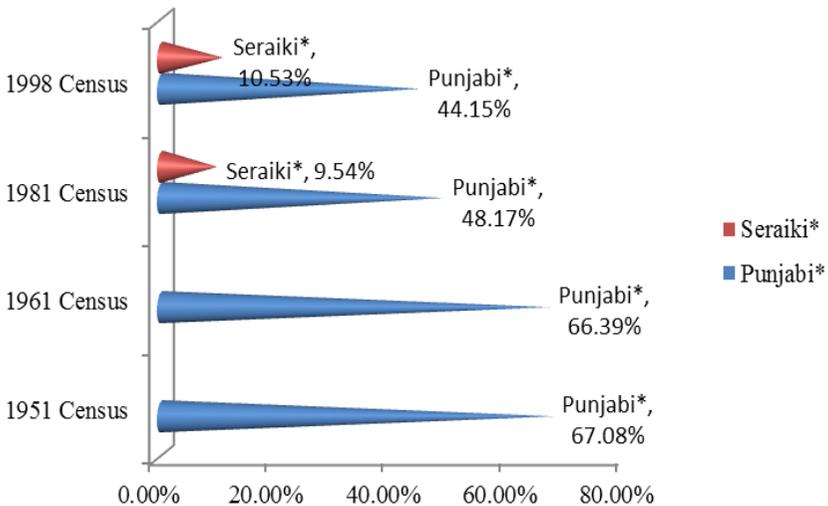
²⁰ Riaz Hashmi is a prominent Seraiki leader.

Economic growth cannot be ensured without developing commerce and telecommunication sector. The telecommunication in Pakistan is mainly administered by foreign firms and monopolized by the private sector. Under Social Action Program, the government involvement in service sector is necessary to upgrade the peripheral areas. There is a need to mobilize the economic agent of capital market in order to accentuate opportunities for trade and finance in South Punjab. As the stock exchange exists in Lahore therefore the capital market concentrates in the central region.

4. Cultural reservations

Seraiki speaking people are also concerned about their language, as language is the most important indicator of cultural identity. They perceive that their language was deliberately merged with Punjabi language by the Punjabi-dominated ruling elite. Historically, the 1947 partition of India brought multifarious demographical changes in this region as the Seraiki population was replaced by the non-Seraikis.

Figure G
Ethnic Composition of Population



* Seraikis were included with Punjabis in the 1951 and 1961 censuses.

During the 1960s, the regional social and political leaders kept trying to promote ethnic consciousness on the basis of Seraiki language among the Seraiki people. Therefore, the nationalist leaders of the

Seraiki region i.e. Taj Muhammad Langha used language as an identity marker to create ethnic consciousness among the Seraiki population. They mobilized the people to aspire for redistribution of resources. The ethnic cognizance kept on increasing due to depleting socioeconomic conditions of this region. The Seraiki nationalists perceived threat to their cultural and linguistic identity. They wanted Seraiki to be recognized as a separate language which could be used for official purposes. The politically conscious intellectuals contributed to promote Seraiki language. They started printing of Seraiki literature and poetry for the promotion of their language. Efforts were also made for the standardization of Seraiki script and diction.

Statistical Analysis

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16.0 (Microsoft, 2007). The issue of indigenous economic growth in southern Punjab and the opinions of various segments of the society were calculated by descriptive statistics. The hypothesis to be tested was denoted by 'H₁' alternative hypothesis and 'H₀' as null hypothesis. 'N' is the sample size (non-random, purposive sample). Here 'df' shows degree of freedom. The significance of political and economic factors was tested by using Chi-Square Analysis at $p < .01$. The cross – tabulation of economic issues and opinions of different segments is given below where columns show the different segments and rows show the issues of indigenous economic growth.

Table 1
Process of Urbanization

H₀ – Process of urbanization is not creating asymmetrical development in Punjab.

H₁ - Process of urbanization is creating asymmetrical development in Punjab.

Opinions	Different Segments of Society		
	Vocational Institutes	Textile Sector	Members of Chamber of Commerce
No	07	10	10
Yes	23	20	20

$p < .01$.

The results of (N=90) focus that the process of modernization or urbanization caused socio-economic inequalities in the province of Punjab. The result is significant with $df(2)$, $p < .01$.

Table 2
Vocational Institutes

H₀ – The quality of vocational training institutes in South Punjab is not satisfactory to attain the goal of human resource development.

H₁ - The quality of vocational training institutes in South Punjab is satisfactory to attain the goal of human resource development.

Opinions	Different Segments of Society		
	Vocational Institutes	Textile Sector	Members of Chamber of Commerce
No	22	25	20
Yes	08	05	10

P>.01.

The results of (N=90) focus that the vocational institutes in southern Punjab lack modern computerized digital facilities. The result is significant with *df* (2), *p*>.01.

Table 3
Cold Storage Facilities

H₀ – The number of cold storages for preserving perishable goods are not enough.

H₁ - The number of cold storages for preserving perishable goods are enough.

Opinions	Different Segments of Society		
	Vocational Institutes	Textile Sector	Members of Chamber of Commerce
No	23	27	20
Yes	07	03	10

p>.01.

The results of (N=90) highlight that the cold storage facilities for the farmers in South Punjab are not up to the mark. The result is significant with *df* (2), *p*>.01.

Table 4
Subsidy to Textile

H_0 – The subsidy given to the textile sector is not sufficient for sustainable industrial growth.

H_1 - The subsidy given to the textile sector is sufficient for sustainable industrial growth.

Opinions	Different Segments of Society		
	Vocational Institutes	Textile Sector	Members of Chamber of Commerce
No	20	26	20
Yes	10	04	10

$p > .01$.

The results of (N=90) show that there is a need to procure more subsidies to the textile sector in terms of alternate energy sources for better output. The result is significant with $df(2)$, $p > .01$.

Table 5
Export Promotion Strategies

H_0 –Southern Punjab does not need to fortify the backward linkages to contribute to national exports.

H_1 - South Punjab needs to fortify the backward linkages to contribute to national exports.

Opinions	Different Segments of Society		
	Vocational Institutes	Textile Sector	Members of Chamber of Commerce
No	10	10	0
Yes	20	20	30

$p < .01$.

The results of (N=90) show that there is a need to establish more opportunities for backward linkages to enhance the export potential. The result is significant with $df(2)$, $p < .01$.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

This research paper reflects immense importance of human resource development for indigenous economic growth in less developed areas like southern Punjab to address the real issues of ethnicity. Indeed, Pakistan has abundant factor of population in terms of factor endowment.

Therefore, it is necessary to build up the capacity of workforce through innovation, entrepreneurship, backward linkages and pragmatic vocational training programs. Moreover indigenous economic growth begets sustainable economic development. In consonance to this fact the peripheral areas of Pakistan like southern Punjab is a matter of great concern.

This study illustrates that it is indispensable to initiate comprehensive policy framework to boost up the deprived segment of the Punjab province in order to satisfy the emerging ethnic sentiments. Consequently equal opportunities of education, technological assistance, and a futuristic developmental approach on the part of the government including novelty and equality are considerably important. In addition to it this research explicates the socioeconomic disparities within the province of Punjab. The analysis of industrialization and agricultural gains highlight the flaws in the policies of all successive governments.

Only the core area of Punjab (Central and North) has been the focus of attention by the ruling elite. Infact there is a political discourse regarding the marginalization of southern region. It is evident that a compact reform package is indispensable to guarantee indigenous economic growth in southern Punjab. Though Pakistan's ethnic issues have been relatively more enigmatic, yet a multidimensional and pragmatic policy framework is necessitated with the political will of the leadership to mitigate the interethnic abhorrence. The current PTI led government developed understanding with the nationalist parties in southern Punjab to accomplish the task to create a separate province but nothing has been done practically so far. In realistic senses, the appointment of the Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar from southern side is not the only solution. There is a need for more cohesive national reforms to replace incapacitated administrative machinery for the uplift of underdeveloped areas. Principally the assurance for concrete steps to redress their grievances is desirable.

The current government is supposed to realize that federal form of government provides the constitutional guarantees to operationalize its principles. It includes both structural and procedural arrangements to achieve unity within diversity and it depends upon the accommodative capabilities of the political system. Infact toleration for multicultural apprehensions is more social in nature and paves a way to national reconciliation.