

## **Saraiki *Suba* Movement in the Punjab: Viability in Focus**

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### **Abstract**

The pre-partition politics which revolved around religion was shifted to the language and culture in the post-partition era. After independence many parties emerged and realigned themselves on the basis of language and culture. This research is an effort to analyze the viability of the demand for Saraiki *suba* from different perspectives. It argues that the Saraiki *suba* movement has neither sound reasons nor justifiable political strength. The Saraiki *suba*'s leadership which never won elections throughout the political history of the region, claims areas of Punjab, KPK and Sindh. The demand to create Saraiki *suba* is fraught with 'dangers' including enslavement of the people of south Punjab by feudal lords. The paper recommends some practical steps for the political resolution of this issue.

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### **Historical background**

The majority of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent once emerged as a united political entity on the basis of religion. After 1947, languages perceived as a symbol of unity motivated the separatist tendencies in Pakistan. Absence of Hindu threat loosened the strength of Muslim nationhood and regional nationalism or sub-nationalism appeared as a gigantic problem. The main cause behind this problem was the impotent and incompetent leadership who could not perform well in redressing the grievances of the people. Bengali, Pakhtoon, Baloch, Barohi, Saraiki, Sindhi, Hindko and other voices based on language and culture became an important element behind politics at least at the regional level. In Pakistan persistent economic problems, hardships and violation of basic rights are some of the main factors behind general discontent. Rotten administration, misgovernment and the leadership crisis continues and integrationists, if they exist, are becoming weaker day by day.

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### **The Saraiki *suba* movement**

The Punjab, historically, has been unable to produce a leadership of national caliber throughout its modern history,<sup>1</sup> therefore, it has remained a fragile identity. The areas of the Punjab were separated from time to time and no effective movement stood in the way of its vivisection. After 1947, weak political performance at the national level created a space which encouraged regional leadership to fill the gap, but having the same caliber they could not see beyond their own agenda.

Multan became the host of the first All-Pakistan Saraiki Conference. The PPP Sindh chief minister supported it and several Sindhi scholars, including Rasul Bukhsh Palejo, joined this event but a map of the Saraiki province distributed by the management infuriated the Sindhi participants because the map had various areas of Sindh included in the proposed Saraiki *suba*. This map was countered by the slogan 'Hosho Sheedi' (*Sar daisoon Sindh nah daisoon*). It was the pledge that their life was not more precious than any patch of Sindhi land.<sup>2</sup> The devotion of Sindhi nationalism forced the protagonists of Saraiki *suba* to surrender from claiming the Sindhi areas.

The conspiracy against the unity of the people of Pakistan appeared during General Zia-ul-Haq's military rule. His utmost endeavor was to destroy their unity and the first target of his wrath was the PPP. He created the Mohajar Qaumi Movement (MQM) and caused a non-ending conflict between Urdu and Sindhi speaking groups. This move also tried to divide the Punjab on the basis of dialect. His regime, without consulting linguistic experts, recognized Saraiki as an independent language in the 1980s. Saraiki Qaumi Movement (SQM) emerged on the model of MQM.<sup>3</sup> Karachi, Khanpur, Katora and Ahmadpur Sharqia became centers of SQM.<sup>4</sup>

The formation of SQM in October 1989 damaged the Punjabi cause presented by Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) from within. They demanded a new province consisting of the Saraiki speaking belt of the Punjab. Although Saraiki *suba* movement will have to face serious

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<sup>1</sup> Akhtar Hussain Sandhu, 'Muslim-Sikh Relations in the British Punjab after the Lahore Resolution of 1940', Ph.D. dissertation, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Shafqat Tanvir Mirza, 'The origin and politics of the Saraiki movement,' daily *Dawn*, 24 May 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Saraiki Qaumi Movement (Saraiki National Movement) desire to have Saraiki *suba* consisting of the areas of DG Khan, Bahawalpur, DIK, Jhang, and Multan.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

hurdles in securing its main objective, nevertheless, an intellectual debate ought to continue to assess different angles of the issue. Many authors have written on the construction of Saraiki identity.<sup>5</sup> They agree that the Saraiki *suba* bases their claim on the following issues:

1. Separate language and culture.
2. Poverty and other problems.
3. Administrative issues.
4. Issues of resource allocation.

*Separate language:* Authors have utilized different versions of the word to name the language, namely ‘Saraiki,’ however, the true origin (etymology) of the word is unknown and it was used mainly in 1960s. For the purpose of this research, the term Saraiki will be utilized. Saraiki has been classified as an Indo-European language from the Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan family, north western zone, Lahnda.<sup>6</sup> The speakers of Saraiki are located in various areas of the country, although, mainly in south Punjab, Sindh, KPK and Balochistan. But the concentration of the speakers is taken as a geographical counterpoint to forward the creation of a province in the particular area of the Punjab.

It is said that in 2013 the number of the total speakers of Saraiki was approximately of 20,068,000.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, although a large number of the population speaks it, the level of prestige it enjoys is limited since the literacy rate of this particular population is not really elevated.<sup>8</sup> This adds to the fact that the literary traditions of this linguistic system are really limited and although it has a dictionary and a written grammar that is not to say that its written manifestations are abundant.

The Saraiki *suba* bases its claim on the assumption that Saraiki is a separate language. In order to establish Saraiki as a separate language it has been associated with a different script, a Persian derived script called Shahmuki. However, interestingly enough the Shahmuki script, being a variant of the Nastaliq style, is also used to write Punjabi, Potohari,

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<sup>5</sup> See H. A. Khan, *Re-Thinking Punjab: The Construction of Saraiki Identity* (Lahore: Research and Publication Centre, National College of Arts, 2004); see also, S.I. Asif, ‘Saraiki language and ethnic identity,’ *Journal of Research*, 2005, pp.7, 9-17; see also, M.H. Gilani, ‘Historical Background of Saraiki Language,’ *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 33:1 (2013), pp.61-76; R. S. Hashmi, & G. Majeed, ‘Saraiki Ethnic Identity: Genesis of Conflict with State,’ *Journal of Political Studies* 21:1 (2014), p.79.

<sup>6</sup> M. Paul Lewis, *Ethnologue, Languages of the World*, 2009. <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/skr>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/skr>.

<sup>8</sup> In fact almost nil (1% according to Ethnologue).

Saraiki and Urdu languages. In this sense, Saraiki shares the same script as Punjabi language.

The language scientists are divided on whether the linguistic system is a language or a dialect. Shackle<sup>9</sup> states that Saraiki is, in fact, a dialect of Punjabi. Smirnov<sup>10</sup> support this claim stating that Saraiki and Punjabi although presenting some grammar, phonological and phonetic disparities share numerous common traits in morphology, lexical and syntax features as well as being mutually intelligible. Nevertheless, according to the figures mentioned at *Ethnologue*, Saraiki has a similarity level of 80 per cent with Sindhi. This means that Saraiki may be closer to Sindhi language than to Punjabi. A lexical similarity analysis should be conducted in order to figure it out. In any case, a genetic relationship between the languages cannot be denied. Some that propose Saraiki is in fact a language state:

While Siraiki shows the characteristics of both Punjabi and Sindhi, it deserves to be treated as a distinct language due to its disagreement with the Punjabi, in terms of the inflexion and forms of the verb, and for morphological differences with Sindhi.<sup>11</sup>

However, even though the author negates the importance of similarity levels in terms of lexicon (due to the influence of loan words that may have been taken from Persian or Arabic)<sup>12</sup> and bases his analysis on the differences in inflexion of verbs which are different in Punjabi as well as the morphological differences with Sindhi, it is clear that the three languages are related. In this sense, an 80 per cent similarity level between Saraiki and Sindhi indicates that the linguistic systems analyzed are either variants or dialects of another or one of them is a dialect of the other.

In this sense a genetic as well a linguistic analysis according to the criteria set on identification and differentiation of languages and dialects<sup>13</sup> needs to be performed. The argument cannot be based on preferences of the interested parties, political interests or ethnic grounds.

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<sup>9</sup> C. Shackle, 'Siraiki: A language movement in Pakistan,' *Modern Asian Studies* 11:3 (1977), pp.379-403.

<sup>10</sup> U. A. Smirnov, *The Lahndi Language*. English trs. E.H. Tsipan (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> H.A. Khan, *op.cit.*, p.123.

<sup>12</sup> This claim still has to be proven since etymological dictionaries of Punjabi, Sindhi and Saraiki do not exist.

<sup>13</sup> M.I.Maria Maldonado Garcia & Akhtar Sandhu, 'Language and Dialect: Criteria and Historical Evidence', *Grassroots*, 49 (2015), p.1.

This differentiation needs to be made on the socio-linguistics facts pertaining to this linguistic system. Only in this manner, a positive identification can be achieved. Furthermore, even if Saraiki is recognized as a language and this is proven from a linguistic point of view, this is not to say that a separate province needs to be formed. Maldonado states that the Saraiki *suba*'s movement bases its claims only on political and economic reasons, rather than linguistic facts of Saraiki:

Further, the Siraiki community as recognized mainly on regional affiliation and settled in south Punjab and Sindhi regions bases their claim for a separate province on the fact that they have a separate linguistic system which they have called 'language' and some linguists of the world, predominantly from that area (or influenced by linguists from that area, or simply perhaps who do not wish to contradict) have supported this claim. However, these are not based on the linguistic factors of their systems, rather, on non related political reasons or special interests or in many cases, the feelings of a specific community or group. In other words, they involve social or political factors.<sup>14</sup>

Mouton talks about the fact that languages are not necessarily attached to specific geographic locations:

The nineteenth-century idea of "a language equal to a nation" not always reflects reality, because languages are not usually respectful of boundaries and as cultural events with its own history, sometimes stubbornly reflect previous circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

Maldonado agreeing with Mouton continues:

Shall this rule be applied, a small part of Barcelona would become a colony of Pakistan or a separate country just because there are approximately 70,000 Pakistanis in Barcelona speaking a language not native of Spain (Urdu but also Punjabi, Sindhi, Gujarati and others) and many of them are concentrated in specific neighborhoods. The idea seems absurd.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Pilar García Mouton, *Lenguas y dialectos de Españavol.* 20 (Arco Libros, 1994), p.9.

Translation of 'La idea decimonónica de "una lengua igual a una nación" no siempre se ajusta a la realidad, porque las lenguas no suelen ser respetuosas con las fronteras y, como hechos culturales con una historia propia, a veces reflejan tercamente circunstancias anteriores'.

<sup>16</sup> Maria Maldonado *op.cit.*, p.1.

For these reasons, making a separate province between south Punjab and Sindh on the basis of language makes absolutely no sense. The question would remain unanswered about the situation of the Saraiki speaking hilly areas, those of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and other areas.

They cannot be annexed to a province located miles apart. In this sense, it is absolutely unjustified to base the creation of a new province on language demographics and speakers' concentration in a particular area. In the same context, and through the same reasoning, the claims of a new province on the basis of a separate culture and ethnic background due to population concentration in a particular geographical area may be a weak justification.

In fact, looking at the three factors together, language, culture and ethnic background the reasoning remains the same. Gankovsky states that that the races of southern Punjab parts appeared through the mixing of the ethnicities in Sindh and north Punjab and, therefore, created a new race which has the linguistic and cultural traits of both regions.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the combination of cultures, language contact and racial mixing still do not justify the creation of a new province.

*Poverty and other problems:* People of southern Punjab have been experiencing grievous problems that ought to be solved through all possible means and mechanisms. The governments in the past ignored this region and consequently poverty and deprivation dragged many of the people to crime, sectarianism, prostitution, and other illegal and immoral activities. The sane minds of southern Punjab have an eye on the on-goings, therefore, they believe that the 'Seraiki waderas have not allowed the industry, higher education, communications and other facilities in Seraiki areas'.<sup>18</sup> Pakistan has undergone an incessant leadership crisis after the death of Quaid-i-Azam. No alternative or parallel leadership was available who could cope with the gigantic problems. The lack of competent leadership at national level paved the way for regional parties and leadership as an effective voice. Regional leadership with marginal caliber provoked regional issues.

The centre overlooked all such moves taking them for granted which gradually became a challenge for the federation. Punjab being a dominating unit by population influences all the professions in Pakistan while it is a stark reality that this region could never produce any leader of national character. Many Unionist leaders of the British Punjab,

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<sup>17</sup> Yuri V. Gankovsky, *Peoples of Pakistan*, trs. Mirza Ishfaq Beg, *Pakistan ki qumiatain*, Lahore, 2000, pp.118, 136.

<sup>18</sup> Zahoor Ahmad Dhareeja, *Muqaddma Diwan-i-Farid*, 2010, p.52.

referred of having secular character, as a matter of fact tried to paralyze the All-India Muslim League leadership just to save their personal rule. In 1947, all such integrationist forces sided with the separatists under the influence of religious affiliation at local level and political influence of the central leadership. The provincial politics throughout the colonial history remained under the central command because of the competent leadership working at all-India level. This did not let the regional leadership emerge as a threat to the national leadership. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, kept the Punjab politics under his own control. When Dr. Gopi Chand tried to have a compromise between the Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal under the instruction of Sardar Patel, Azad pressurized for no conciliation without his permission.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that top leadership of Pakistan never came from poor or middle class in the history of Punjab has undermined the cause of the masses. Individuals selected for superior services or military bureaucracy of humble background part ways with ancestral dwellings. They marry in rich families and try to become part of the economic tycoons. This posture definitely weakened the middle class and strengthened the elite class. Due to this social mobility and shifting of talents from poor class to the rich, the vacuum or gap has remained unfilled. The leadership depends on wealth and influence in the area. The political groups have been defaming each other for the sake of their own popularity. The poor remain far away from power corridors.

Pakistan lacks such a creative and revolutionary leadership which can hammer the existing negativity and redress the grievances of all the regions. There is a basic difference between regional and national leadership. Regional leadership remain alive on the basis of 'demands' while national leadership do politics on the basis of 'solution'. True leadership working at regional level tries to adopt national character while national leadership endeavours to adopt international character. Unluckily, the Pakistani leaders, failing to work effectively in the federal government, adopt a regional character and, sometimes, leaders in the topmost offices use the provincial card just to secure political identity. Leaders working in national and provincial assemblies sometimes happily accept office in local government. Leaders, having no caliber and effectiveness in any electoral pocket, settled in different regions of Pakistan other than their paternal areas, are active in restoring the old status of some areas; Muhammad Ali Durrani can be quoted as an example. He earned an ill reputation during his period as Information

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<sup>19</sup> Fortnightly Report on the situation in the Punjab for the second half of November 1945, L/PJ/5/248, British Library, London.

Minister but to erase his weak performance he busied himself in regional politics.

**Table 1: Regional Leadership vs National Leadership**

<b>Regional leadership</b>	<b>National leadership</b>
Cry against problems/ demands	Present solution to the regional problems
Grievances	Redress
Expressing Dissatisfaction	Suggesting solution for satisfaction

*Administrative issues:* Some argue that because of its vast area Punjab has administrative issues. Authorities they say, could not solve the problems of the people residing in far flung areas. To redress the grievances of the remote areas, especially in the south, Punjab should be divided into two provinces. On the other hand, if we retrospect, Maharaja Ranjit Singh administered successfully the affairs of the Punjab consisting of Kashmir, Afghan areas and proper Punjabi areas up to Sutlej. British ruled over Punjab extended from Pukhtun areas to Delhi. The Punjab underwent several partitions from 1901 to 1950s creating KPK, capital area of Delhi, Indian and Pakistani Punjab, Himachal Pardesh, Haryana and federally administered cities in east and west Punjab. All these units once were a united Punjab being administered properly because of ‘rule of law.’ In Pakistan, the weak and inefficient performance of the governments and institutions forced the local people to prefer the non-government (private) agencies including education, security, health, legal help, sanitation, etc. The dissatisfaction with the government is rampant in all walks of life. People around the country have been facing the same issues.

Infrastructure especially communication and connecting roads and railway tracks within the area caused big problem for the people of southern parts.<sup>20</sup> Analyzing the reasoning presented by the proponents of Saraiki *suba* movement that the southern peoples have to travel to Lahore to solve their problems may seem justified. Multan is 350 km and Rahim Yar Khan is 600 km from Lahore. People highlight that the travel takes more than eight hours. On the contrary, a less advanced country in Europe, Spain, started a fast train service traveling at 365 km/h. One American state is larger than the whole Pakistan, however, they don’t claim separation because they are ensured ‘rule of law’ and ‘good

<sup>20</sup> Anas Malik, *Political Survival in Pakistan: Beyond Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp.10-12.

governance.’ In this sense, enough facilities where issues can be resolved are the need of the day. Infrastructure needs to improve drastically in these areas. Although the need is definitely and without any doubt genuine, this can also be said of all the remote areas of Pakistan that are not demanding separate provinces on the basis of this problem.

*Resource allocation:* Provinces have been recording their complaints against the uneven resource distribution by the federation and similarly various parts within the provinces have been crying about this unjust distribution. The southern parts of Punjab contribute to the revenue of the government but substantial portion of his contribution is being spent in other parts of the province:

**Table II: Uneven Resource Distribution**

Area	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Entire Punjab	86.81 Millions	88.29	89.79	91.36	92.87
South Punjab	27.21	28.25	28.25	28.78	29.32
%age of South Punjab	31.34	31.46	31.46	31.52	31.57

*Source:* Reports on Southern Punjab, Special Committee on Demarcation of Provinces, Youth Parliament Pakistan, PILDAT, [www.pildat.com](http://www.pildat.com), accessed on 2 June 2013.

**Table III: ADP Allocation**

Financial Year	Total ADP	Allocation to 11 Districts of South Punjab	Percentage
2005-06	63,000	11,790	18.714
2006-07	100,000	17,760	17.760
2007-08	150,000	22,040	14.693
2008-09	160,000	25,700	16.063
2009-10	172,000	41,880	24.349
2010-11	18,000	52,819	29.021

*Source:* Reports on Southern Punjab, Special Committee on Demarcation of Provinces, Youth Parliament Pakistan, PILDAT, [www.pildat.com](http://www.pildat.com), accessed on 2 June 2013.

The health sector reflects the same:

**Table IV: Health Sector**

South Punjab	Number	Percentage
	86	26.38
Rest of Punjab	240	73.62
Total	326	100.00

*Source:* Reports on Southern Punjab, Special Committee on Demarcation of Provinces, Youth Parliament Pakistan, PILDAT, [www.pildat.com](http://www.pildat.com), accessed on 2 June 2013.

The tables show poor condition of the areas that constitute south Punjab. While south contributes much to the receipt of the Punjab, major funding is being spent on central Punjab. The uneven distribution of allocation create a sense of deprivation, whereas, a reasonable share can provide basic facilities to the people and play a pivotal role in national integration.

Nevertheless, cry over spending at Lahore needs a review. Capital is always like the face of the body that costs more. As the face of the province, capital is deemed to have monumental buildings, airports, secretariat, arrangements for foreign delegations, and so on. So in the case of Saraiki *suba*, will the same budget be allocated to all districts including Multan as capital? Definitely, the budget of Multan will be more than the other districts. Therefore, reasoning relating to budget allocation is a weak argument because such issues can be settled through peaceful protest. An active media can also highlight it with full force.

### **Hurdles in the way of a Saraiki province**

The Saraiki *suba* drive will have to deal with several hurdles from different angles to come to the real track of a struggle. Few are discussed below:

*The constitutional point of view:* The constitution of Pakistan does not offer leniency and flexibility to re-demarcate any province due to the fact that it will without any doubt affect the boundaries of other provinces as well:

- (5) A Bill to amend the Constitution which would have the effect of altering the limits of a Province shall not be presented to the President for assent unless it has been passed by the Provincial Assembly of that Province by the votes of not less than two-thirds of its total membership.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> [Pakistan/constitution/part11.html](http://Pakistan/constitution/part11.html).

*Feudal hold:* The demand to create the Saraiki *suba* is fraught with many dangers including enslavement of the people of southern Punjab. A new province can set in a new era of a permanent rule of the feudal and *gaddinashin* families and bring servitude for the poor. The demand to create the Saraiki *suba* suits the feudal to maintain their rule over the districts of the south during the coming centuries. These feudal families have been ruling over this region but they never served the masses. They support the voice for the Saraiki *suba* because they desire to create seats of governor, chief minister, ministers, and bureaucrats, etc. for their own coming generations. To obtain contracts or involvement in new financial market in the form of Saraiki *suba* is the objective of the rich people and political tycoons of south Punjab.

*Lack of political will:* Government have been lacking political will required to take some important and big decisions like the re-demarcation of provinces. At the moment, governments under the security stress seem unable to demonstrate political prowess to go for the idea of new provinces. Pakistan is passing through a very delicate phase and, in the presence of corruption, nepotism, land grabbing mafia, commission in ministries, terrorism, and foreign conspiracies, decisions like new provinces will take the country to a unending tension which will please few and displease major portion of the population residing in different provinces.

*Territorial issue:* Saraiki *suba* movement also claims Seraiki speaking areas of Sindh, KPK and Balochistan. If approved without these specific Saraiki speaking areas,<sup>22</sup> the demand of Saraiki speaking people would be incomplete that means the Saraiki people will continue the movement even after the formation of Saraiki *suba* until the fulfillment of their original demand to merge Saraiki areas from other provinces. History proves that the Punjabis have never been staunch nationalists while Sindhi, Pukhtun and Baloch are identity-worshippers so they will never agree to relinquish any area, leaving the Saraiki *suba* movement as an unaccomplished task. Therefore, a Saraiki *suba* within the boundaries of the Punjab will not fulfill the aspirations of the agenda of the Saraiki idealism.

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<sup>22</sup> Bahawalpur, one of the largest states in British India headed by Abbasi family, joined Pakistan in 1947. Sir Sadiq Muhammad Abbasi V secured pledge of noninterference in the affairs by the government.

*Bahawalpur suba movement:* The PPP Parliamentary government came to power in 2008 and, at the end of their government, it aired Saraiki *suba* just to dent the Muslim League (N) in the southern districts but the elections in 2013 proved otherwise, PPPP had to face a terrible defeat.<sup>23</sup> The slogan raised by the PPPP forced the League to counter this drive by saying that instead of language administrative grounds should be the criteria for re-demarcation. As the demand for Saraiki *suba* gained momentum, it faced severe opposition by the Muslim League (N) as it was aimed at snatching a territory from the League in Punjab which had become a boosting base for its political power. The regional groups endeavoured to attain support from the mainstream political parties. The Punjab Assembly passed resolution to have two provinces of Bahawalpur and South Punjab on the basis of administrative grounds. A commission, appointed by the President of Pakistan to decide about the idea of division of the Punjab, suggested Bahawalpur-Janoobi Punjab Province under 24<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment. Though the Senate of Pakistan passed it yet this move did not succeed because the PPP did not have the required 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority in the National Assembly and Punjab Assembly.<sup>24</sup> Farooq H. Naek, the Law Minister, placed the bill. Although shocking to many, the opposition leader Senator Ishaq Dar did not oppose the bill. Senator Mohsin Leghari, an independent, opposed it, while JUI-F<sup>25</sup> remained absent during the process. Opposition leader in the Senate, Ishaq Dar, speaking about the bill said, ‘that the move aimed at getting political mileage to help the PPP win next election from South Punjab’.<sup>26</sup>

Bahawalpur state was merged into West Pakistan (One Unit), on 14 October 1955, but could not be restored after General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan abolished it in 1970.<sup>27</sup> Shehzada Mansoor-ur-Rashid Abbassi, Makhdoon Noor Muhammad Hashmi and Chaudhry Farzand Ali campaigned for independence on the breach of the promise but they failed to achieve it.<sup>28</sup> Bahawalpur, being a princely state once with good governance, has a right to raise a voice for a separate province

<sup>23</sup> Election Results 2013, <http://www.electionpakistan.com/ge2013/index.html>, accessed on 16 February 2016.

<sup>24</sup> ‘*Commission recommends new 'Bahawalpur Janoobi Punjab' province*’, <http://www.dawn.com/news/782895/report-on-new-provinces-tabled-in-na>, accessed on 16 February 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (F) is a religio-political party in Pakistan headed by Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman.

<sup>26</sup> Daily *Business Recorder*, Islamabad, 7 March 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Hamid Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.213.

<sup>28</sup> Anas Malik, *op.cit.*, pp.146-47.

because it enjoys popular support. Annexation of Bahawalpur enraged the masses who opposed the PPP and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto experienced a devastating defeat from these constituencies.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, Bahawalpur *suba* movement has more sound grounds than the Saraiki *suba* demand. Ostensibly, Bahawalpur *suba* movement is a stunning blow to the Saraiki *suba* movement. This also disunites the Saraiki speaking people and has made the Saraiki claims of a united movement apparently very weak.

*Representation in the Senate:* Another hurdle in the way of Saraiki *suba* is strength of the Senate of Pakistan. Small provinces have already reservations on the Punjabi domination in decision-making, lawmaking and government services. With the creation of Saraiki *suba*, Punjab will have double number of seats in the Senate. All the provinces have equal representation (14 each)<sup>30</sup> but Saraiki *suba* will increase the seats up to 28. For southern circles, Saraiki *suba* would be a non-Punjabi unit but for other provinces it would be the second Punjab that will cause more problems in other federating units.

*Issue of migration:* Landlords from central Punjab have vast land in south Punjab making the task of Saraiki *suba* again next to impossible. Will they migrate from that area? Partition and migration are very poignant experiences the Muslims underwent in 1947. A new province will require mass migration from south to central Punjab and from central and north to new province. If Punjabi population remains divided, the issue will not end because hatred will put the non-Saraiki in agony and may be vice versa. Rehabilitation and feelings of revenge for being ousted can cause immense future tension. It will squeeze job opportunities for the people of the south. Those who decide not to migrate will have to live as an unwanted minority because Saraiki *suba* movement is based apparently on complaints against central and upper Punjab which can go to the extent of hatred. It may be mentioned here that in India many Sikhs from the East Punjab do not support Khalistan movement because it will oust them from business, job opportunities, financial and other benefits based in the larger cities of the country.

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<sup>29</sup> Shafqat Tanvir Mirza writes the agrarian reforms of Bhutto were resented by the feudals. When they later on joined the PPP reforms were side-tracked. Shafqat Tanvir Mirza, 'The origin and politics of the Seraiki movement', daily *Dawn*, 24 May 2009.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.senate.gov.pk/en/content.php?id=1008>, accessed on 10 July 2015.

## Conclusion

The Saraiki movement has been successful in sensitizing the Saraiki language and culture instead a movement for separate province. The desire to have a separate province is a hard task because of the prevailing constitutional, social and political hindrances. Saraiki language is yet to be recognized as a separate language by the linguists under the accepted methodology and even if this happens, having a separate language, ethnicity or culture does not justify the ownership of an independent geographical area as demonstrated before. The Saraiki *suba* leadership does not enjoy popular support as demonstrated by the fact and they were unable to win any seat in the electoral history of the Punjab. To win Saraiki *suba*, more conducive environment is required.

Administrative systems of Pakistan present the best solution to the problems faced by the citizens. Village, union council, thana, tehsil, district, division, province and center show a chain of political and administrative hierarchy that provides power, finance, justice, solution and mechanism for betterment of the common people but corruption, nepotism, enslavement, lack of quality education, non-political attitude of the political people, passive behavior of the masses and misgovernment have paralyzed these administrative arrangements and infrastructure. The malpractices and corruption have converted national, provincial and local governments from an effective apparatus into an ineffective mechanism to address mass problems including poverty. The elite class has established its influence at the cost of the masses.

Re-demarcation is a dangerous issue that pleases none. Khizar Hayat Tiwana expressed these views with the Cabinet Delegation in April 1946 and reiterated that the Punjab should not be divided into pieces and Pakistan having regional nationalities like Pathan, Sindhi, Baloch, etc. would not be a practicable solution. To him, the Sikhs would face severe difficulties in Pakistan. He claimed that he 'believed in Pakistan' but the issue of re-demarcation would please and satisfy none of the concerned parties.<sup>31</sup> Every boundary has same language speaking people on the both sides and several languages exist in different areas of Pakistan that should not start unending movements for new provinces on the basis of language.

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<sup>31</sup> Meeting between the Cabinet Delegation, H.E. the Viceroy and Hon'ble Lt. Col. Malik Sir Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, KCSI, OBE, Premier of the Punjab, 5 April 1946, *ibid*; see also Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication, 1999), pp.180-81.

## Recommendations

To deal with the political gimmick of few families, the people of different federating units ought to unite to strengthen democracy by fighting against injustice, misgovernment, corruption, etc. Saraiki *suba* movement can also be seen as a conspiracy launched by the feudal and *gadinashin* families to enslave the common people of south Punjab. They will enjoy the powers of governor, chief minister, minister, bureaucrat, parliamentary secretary, advisor and so on in case of the Saraiki *suba* victory? Is the feudal class of south Punjab ready to surrender the political and administrative positions in favour of the middle and poor classes? The system cannot ensure the empowerment of the poor and middle class, therefore, I fear that Saraiki *suba* would inflict severer servitude and irreversible injustice on the people of south Punjab. A new province free of corruption cannot be guaranteed; similarly, good governance, development and prosperity cannot be ensured. In the same manner, if prosperity is postulated to the 'rule of law' then the population of these areas can achieve prosperity without a new province. The authorities can cope with odds with justice and fair-play with the southern parts of the Punjab.

For eliminating the prevailing deprivation Saraiki areas within Punjab can be made an administrative unit with maximum administrative and financial powers. The study recommends that restoration of the local government system of 2001, with better monitoring mechanisms, can decentralize maximum powers to the district, tehsil, town or union council levels. Regional development is imperative to end the sense of deprivation, but special step such as affirmative action for a specific faction is not healthy, instead merit imparts a sense of respect and confidence in the minds of posterity. Budget allocation for the cities should be standardized according to population density and concentration. All the stakeholders should be taken into confidence before any step is taken in this respect and any decision relating to specific area. Promotion of local languages and literature,<sup>32</sup> good governance, independence of judiciary, the focus on best infrastructure, just sharing of resources, rule of law, implementation of government will in the decision-making and merit can bring a positive change.

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<sup>32</sup> It is said that referendum is the best mechanism to decide the re-demarcation but it is doubtful if it is politicized by the power-seekers who can invest money and false promises to impress upon the voters. How a tenant, disciple slave, servant and so on can vote freely?