

[www.pildat.org](http://www.pildat.org)

PILdAT

Background Paper

# Demand for Saraiki Province

[www.pildat.org](http://www.pildat.org)

PILdAT

Background Paper

# Demand for Saraiki Province

PILdAT  
Pakistan Institute of  
Legislative Development  
And Transparency

PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

PILDAT is a registered non-profit entity under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, Pakistan.

Copyright ©Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency PILDAT

All Rights Reserved

Printed in Pakistan

Published: March 2011

ISBN: 978-969-558- 214-5

Any part of this publication can be used or cited with a clear reference to PILDAT.

Published by



Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency - PILDAT  
Head Office: No. 7, 9th Avenue, F-8/1, Islamabad, Pakistan  
Lahore Office: 45-A, Sector XX, 2nd Floor, Phase III Commercial Area, DHA, Lahore  
Tel: (+92-51) 111-123-345; Fax: (+92-51) 226-3078  
E-mail: [info@pildat.org](mailto:info@pildat.org); Web: [www.pildat.org](http://www.pildat.org)

# CONTENTS

*Foreword*

*Profile of the Author*

Introduction	09
Genesis of conflict and supporting views	09
Bahawalpur vs. Saraiki Province Debate	12
Views opposing Saraiki Movement	13
Political Parties' position	14
Conclusion	16
<b>Figures</b>	
Figure 1: Map of proposed Saraiki Province	11
Figure 2: Population and ADP Allocation as a percentage of Total for Punjab	12



**Demand for Saraiki Province***Background Paper***Foreword**

The Background paper **Demand for Saraiki Province**, authored by **Mr. Muhammad Feyyaz**, attempts to explore salient dynamics generating demand for Saraiki province and viewpoint of its opponents. The peer reviewed Background Paper is a composition aimed at synthesizing all possible dimensions of the issue.

The Background Paper has been prepared to serve as a background for a conflict resolution simulation exercise for the benefit of members of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab.

**Acknowledgments**

PILDAT would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the British High Commission, Islamabad through Conflict Pool Fund for the project of Orientation of Members of National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies on Conflict Resolution. The paper has been prepared under the project.

**Disclaimer**

The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the British High Commission, Islamabad or PILDAT.

Islamabad  
March 2011



**Demand for Saraiki Province***Background Paper***Profile of the Author**

**Mr. Muhammad Feyyaz** holds a Masters degree in War studies from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and M. Phil in Peace & Conflict Studies from the Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad. He is a diploma holder in Conflict Management from the Modern Institute of Informatics and Management, Islamabad Pakistan and a certificate in an identical course from the Pakistan Institute of Management, Lahore. He was also part of a marketing strategy Course at the Lahore University of Management Sciences in 2008. Participates in international conferences and seminars on peacekeeping, terrorism and security issues and frequently writes for Pakistani and foreign research and academic journals.





*Background Paper***Introduction**

Pakistan was founded in 1947. Over time, the country went through various phases of political developments. Power has changed hands between the political and the civil-military establishment. Various governments have failed to provide the people the basic necessities of life especially those belonging to remote and rural areas. Southern Punjab is one such example. The region has been comparatively neglected by successive governments and lacks development and is not given its due share in both economic and political matters<sup>1</sup>. This kind of ostensible discrimination in the allocation of development funds to the most poverty-stricken and backward areas had already led many to fear that the next battle ground after the tribal areas might be these areas as militancy was on the rise there<sup>2</sup>. Also, the lack of development is not just about the concentration of power in Lahore but the peculiar concentration of capital and industrial development in the province. North and central Punjab are better developed because most industries, including defence, are located there. Ayesha Siddiqi posits while this is because the bulk of the military is from the north and centre, the majority of dynamic entrepreneurs are also located here rather than in the south<sup>3</sup>. These are perfect conditions for alienation and driving people towards hopelessness and desperate actions<sup>4</sup>. The outcome has been rise of a steady social mobilization transformed into a conflict situation.

This background paper attempts to explore salient dynamics generating demand for Saraiki province. It has been developed as part of a series of conflict resolution workshops initiated by PILDAT which aim to sensitize elected legislators on important national concerns and in the process build their capacity and develop skills to resolve these intricate issues.

The paper traces genesis of the conflict in a historical context. It lists opposing views of various stake holders engaged in social processes animating the Saraiki issue. In particular, it highlights key features and different

perspectives advocating for a separate Bahawalpur province vis-à-vis those focusing on a larger Saraiki dispensation.

As such however, this brief expose does not favour or discard a particular viewpoint nor does it itself take a position on the issue. In that sense, the effort is essentially a non-agnostic composition aimed at exposing and synthesizing all possible dimensions of the issue in order to be employed as a resource for conflict analysis and formulations of response options. It is noted that there is no definitive and formal definition or geographic boundary of the South Punjab as it is not a formal entity. However, it is generally accepted and also followed in this paper] that South Punjab consists of three divisions: Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan, which are further sub-divided into eleven (11) districts of the Punjab province<sup>5</sup>.

**Genesis of conflict and supporting views**

The Saraiki sentiment was stirred during 2009 upon purported disclosure of economic discrimination against their rightful share in social development. In June 2009 National Assembly was informed during the question hour that out of the Rs 20 billion loan obtained from the World Bank by the Ministry of Communication to construct mega roads in the country, not a single project was launched in the southern Punjab. Out of 18 projects, eight (8) were started in the central and northern Punjab. Likewise, out of the Rs 20 billion taken as loan from the Asian Development Bank, only one 37-km road project was started on the Multan-Muzaffargarh road<sup>6</sup>. Allocation of mere Rs. 5 billion in Punjab Rs. 490 billion 2009-10 budget for the Saraiki belt is also cited to further the grievance<sup>7</sup>. A new debate was thus started in the country after some Parliamentarians demanded a separate province status for Southern Punjab. The demand echoed both in the National and Punjab assemblies with politicians from Southern Punjab strongly defending the plea for a separate province.

1 Dr. Umbreen Javaid, Movement for Bahawalpur Province, <http://www.pu.edu.pk/polsc/jops/Currentissue-pdf/Movement%20for%20Bahawalpur%20Province.pdf>, accessed 2 March 2011.

2 Rauf Klasra, Saraiki province: a bone of contention for many, June 28, 2009, <http://change.pk.com/2009/06/28/saraiki-province-a-bone-of-contention-for-many/05Jul>, accessed 4 March 2011.

3 Ayesha Siddiqi, More Provinces? July 3, 2009, [http://zaviews.blogspot.com/2009\\_07\\_03\\_archive.htm](http://zaviews.blogspot.com/2009_07_03_archive.htm), accessed 2 March 2011.

4 Rasul Bakhsh Rais, analysis: Southern Punjab's troubles, Daily Times June 16, 2009, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C16%5Cstory\\_16-6-2009\\_pg3\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C06%5C16%5Cstory_16-6-2009_pg3_2), accessed 7 March 2009.

5 Detail of districts are as follows: Bahawalpur Division -Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Rahim Yar Khan; Dera Ghaza Khan Division – Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur; Multan Division – Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran and Vehari. For details see, Development Funds for South Punjab, PILDAT Discussion Paper, Nov 2010, <http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Democracy&LegStr/DevelopmentFundsforSouthPunjabDiscussionPaper241110.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2011.

6 Rauf Klasra, Saraiki province: a bone of contention for many, op.cit.

7 Faisal Awan, Movement for Saraiki Province: The Pros and Cons, <http://waseb.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/movement-for-saraiki-province-the-pros-and-cons/> April 19, 2010, accessed 1 March 2011.

## Demand for Saraiki Province

### Background Paper

Historically, Saraiki as a regional dialect has existed for a long time. In Pakistan it was recognized as a separate language in the 1981 census during the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq<sup>8</sup>. From the 1960s Saraiki has been standardized for the purposes of writing. The language had been written even in the 19th century using symbol of the Urdu script. The choice of the term Siraiki in the 1960s meant that the people of southern Punjab could identify with one identity symbol instead of calling their language by local names such as Multani, Derewali, Riastai, and so on. After the famous conference in Multan in 1975 a number of institutions, like the Siraiki Lok Sanjh, have been promoting the language and it is supported by Siraiki ethnic political parties<sup>9</sup>.

Saraiki is also spoken widely in Sindh and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan as well as by nearly 70,000 emigrants and their descendants in India. According to 1998 Population and Housing census of Pakistan, 13.9 million people speak Saraiki across the country<sup>10</sup>. The major concentration of Saraiki speakers dwell in nearly 17 southern districts of Punjab and southern fringes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In lingual terms it is claimed that Siraiki is a separate language of Indo-Aryan Family, and a separate province namely Siraikistan will help in conservation of the Siraiki identity.

Separate Saraiki province in south Punjab is not a newly coined term and in fact has been looming for almost past three decades since the time when one unit was dissolved in 1970 by General Yahya Khan and the state of Bahawalpur was annexed with Punjab province<sup>11</sup>. Some see 'one Unit' as violation of the instrument of accession signed by the princely states which supposedly gave birth to ethnic politics in the country and the Saraiki nationalism<sup>12</sup>. Saraiki Movement started in 1960's, initially not as a political movement but more of a cultural and linguistic movement. The movement gained momentum in early 1970's after the Bahawalpur Province movement had fizzled out in 1971<sup>13</sup>. The 1977 coup by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan, a centralist ruler,

caused the movement to go underground. After his death in 1988 allowed the Saraiki movement to re-emerge openly with the goals to have a Saraiki nationality recognised<sup>14</sup>.

There are six main political parties and groups working for a separate province:

- i. Pakistan Saraiki Party;
- ii. Saraki Qaumi Movement or party
- iii. Saraikistan Qaumi Movement
- iv. Saraiki National Party :
- v. Saraikistan Qaumi Ithad
- vi. Saraiki Sooba Movement. (It is a registered party with Election Commission of Pakistan since August 2002. Also known as Saraiki Sooba Mahaz (front) it has been raising the demand at various levels for many years now.)

There are number of grievances which have been put up by the various Saraiki political parties and organizations<sup>15</sup>. One of the grievances is settlement of people from other areas. This began when in 1886-86 canals were dug by the British and new canal colonies of Southern Punjab Bahawalpur region were opened to settlers from outside. Then again after Sutlej Valley Project new settlers came into Bahawalpur region, which is still continuing much to the disapproval of Saraiki people.

Another grievance is that the Saraiki area generates more income than what is spent on it. It is believed that Bahawalpur being the major producer of cotton, the income earned from it is not being spent on Bahawalpur<sup>16</sup>, hence, feeling of Saraiki area being economically exploited. As per the available estimates on poverty 43% of the population of South Punjab is living below the poverty line<sup>17</sup> compared to 27.7% of population of Punjab which is below poverty line. Consequently, a major demand of Saraiki activists is that the quota of employment for Saraiki's be raised<sup>18</sup>.

8 Amna Latif, Phonemic Inventory of Siraiki Language and Acoustic Analysis of Voiced Implosives, [http://crulp.org/Publication%5CCrulp\\_report%5CCR03\\_16E.pdf](http://crulp.org/Publication%5CCrulp_report%5CCR03_16E.pdf), accessed 2 March 2011.

9 Tariq Rehman, Language Education and Culture, Oxford University Press Karachi 1999, p.230.

10 Akbar Mayo, "Why not Saraikistan?", The Frontier Post, 12 October 2009.

11 Faisal Awan, Movement for Saraiki Province: The Pros and Cons, op.cit.

12 Riaz Missen, Saraiki nationalism in focus – April 19, 2010, <http://waseb.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/saraiki-nationalism-in-focus-by-riaz-missen/>, accessed 3 March 2011.

13 Dr. Umbreen Javaid, Movement for Bahawalpur Province, op.cit.

14 Saraikistan, <http://waseb.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/saraikistan/>, accessed 3 March 2011.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Development Funds for South Punjab, PILDAT Discussion Paper, op.cit.

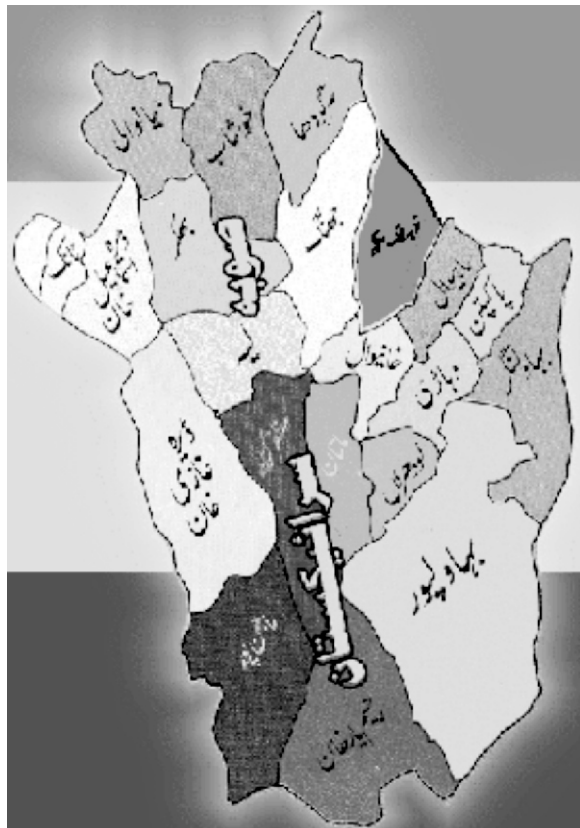
18 Dr. Umbreen Javaid, Movement for Bahawalpur Province, op.cit.

## Demand for Saraiki Province

### Background Paper

Saraiki intellectuals observe that ideally not only Saraiki province but all provinces should be based on lingo-cultural boundaries. They observe that the demand for a larger Saraiki province had been matured and the growing disparity between the central Punjab and the Saraiki region had made the issue unavoidable. The proposed Saraiki province should consist of 22 districts (Figure 1).<sup>19</sup> According to another proposal, the nationalist favour that 'Saraiki province should be carved out of Saraiki-speaking areas annexed by Ranjit Singh and the erstwhile Bahawalpur state and Saraiki-speaking areas merged into the [former] NWFP by the British Raj<sup>20</sup>. The claim is based on the argument that nobody could object to the formation of a province for the Saraikis when the Sindhis are living in Sindh, Punjabis in Punjab and Balochs in Balochistan while the Pashtuns have changed the name of their province.

**Figure 1: Map of proposed Saraiki Province**



The supporters of Saraiki province claim that with a large or developed city serving as its capital will make current Punjab province administratively manageable and subsequently will improve governance. Another argument advanced by the nationalists that creation of more province(s) will result in decentralization of power and it can become much more difficult for a dictator to seize power and rule the country with all the stakeholders of every province happily hanging around his tail<sup>21</sup>.

The major factor contributing to reinvigoration of this call among the suffering common Saraiki inhabitants is related to the extreme economic imbalance created between southern and rest of the Punjab. Each province requires putting in place an infrastructure in its domain specially for the under-developed areas so that they can be at par with the developed areas of the province.

The inception of a separate province will affect a separate budget for itself which should be substantially higher than mere Rs. 5 billion allocated for the Saraiki belt in Rs. 490 billion 2009-10 budget of Punjab<sup>22</sup>.

It is also believed that hike in the budget and laying out of infrastructure will create local employment opportunities. This can prove to be a step in the right direction to alleviate poverty in southern Punjab, which, according to the 2001 report of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on Rural Poverty, is more chronic in the areas of south Punjab<sup>23</sup>. The cotton and agricultural industry will get a boost and the Saraiki people will benefit from their own resources rather than upper Punjab.

It is also worth mentioning that the nationalists [claim] stand for a state with pluralist identity and want it to cast off its ideological burden<sup>24</sup>.

Coupled with psychosocial variables, it will be relevant to survey economic potential of the demanded province. Apart from some coal and limited reserves of uranium in Dera Ghazi Khan, the region is the quintessentially an agrarian economy. Its large agricultural base depends on water reserves from the northern regions of the country. In the event of a new province, its lower riparian status to

19 Shakeel Ahmad, Boundaries of Saraiki Province, DAWN.com, <http://www.wasaib.com/english-article/boundaries-of-saraiki-province.html>, accessed 2 March 2011.

20 Manzoor Chandio, A case for Saraiki Province, Dawn.com, 27 Jun 2009.

21 Faisal Awan, "Movement for Saraiki Province: The Pros and Cons", op.cit.

22 Ibid.

23 Imran Sharif Chaudhry, "Poverty Alleviation in Southern Punjab (Pakistan): An Empirical Evidence from the Project Area of Asian Development Bank", International Research Journal of Finance and Economics, Issue 23, 2009.

24 Shafqat Tanvir Mirza, The origin and politics of the Saraiki movement, <http://waseb.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/the-origin-and-politics-of-the-saraiki-movement-by-shafqat-tanvir-mirza/>, accessed 3 March 2011.

*Background Paper*

upper Punjab and KPK for water flows will have to be balanced with rents it can acquire from Sindh, to whom it is the upper riparian. The area is also the recipient of remittances from its population working in the rest of the country and abroad. Its revenue base, however, is expected to remain narrow for the simple reason that lack of natural resource rents and its landlocked status will mean that it will have to buy electricity, gas and other services from the rest of the country in exchange for agricultural products<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, a dedicated budget allocation for the new province has implications for already constrained national financial health.

### **Bahawalpur vs. Saraiki Province Debate**

The Bahawalpur province debate is inextricably linked to the demand for a Saraiki province. Different views have been expressed by proponents of restoration of Bahawalpur province either as a single entity or by integration of all Saraiki districts under its control vis-à-vis the claimants of a larger Saraiki Sooba.

Saraiki Qaumi Party (SQP) contends that the restoration of the Bahawalpur province was not viable economically. The proposed province would consist of three districts while it would have the administrative control of more than dozen districts. The party however, concedes that creation of the Saraiki province was also a constitutional issue<sup>26</sup>.

Others demand the proposed Saraiki province be carved out of all Saraiki districts of Punjab and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) through a presidential ordinance<sup>27</sup> (Constitutional veracity of the proposal notwithstanding). The opposition to the restoration of Bahawalpur province is further informed by Saraikists who assert the Saraiki province should be based on cultural boundaries alleging that people with myopic view of history like Mr Durrani and Ms Maria Malik have always raised the issue of Bahawalpur whenever movement for a Saraiki province gains momentum<sup>28</sup>. Consequently, restoration of Bahawalpur province is considered an injustice with other Saraiki districts, particularly Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and

Tank that are historically and culturally a part of the Saraiki belt but were included in the KPK by the British regime. The proponents of this approach insist the establishment of the Saraiki province did not need a two-thirds majority in Parliament and it could only be established through a presidential ordinance as earlier discussed<sup>29</sup>.

The Bahawalpur camp holds that the restoration of the Bahawalpur province and putting other Saraiki districts under its control was the shortest way towards the Saraiki province. Bahawalpur possesses infrastructure required for a province and the status of Bahawalpur as province could be restored without any constitutional hindrance. Muttahida Tehreek Bahali Sooba Bahawalpur says their movement is not concerned with any cultural or linguistic aspect and they only want the restoration of the Bahawalpur province as it was during one unit rule till 1955. It claims that major political figures of that time such as Mumtaz Daultana, Asghar Khan, Mufti Mehmood, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Maulana Bhashani, Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi, Maulana Maudoodi, Shorish Kashmeri and Maulana Abdullah Darkhawsti had supported the movement for the restoration of the Bahawalpur province when one unit was dissolved in 1970<sup>30</sup>.

Historically it is borne out that at the time of General Election of 1970, when the movement for a separate province of Bahawalpur was at its peak, the candidates who supported the cause received 80% votes. Out of total of 10 Lakh 30 thousand votes, 7 lakh 14 thousand votes went to the supporters of Bahawalpur Province Movement<sup>31</sup>. Another justification projected against demand for Saraiki province is that the Saraiki Sooba Movement does not have many roots in Bahawalpur region. The number of people in Bahawalpur who support Saraiki Sooba Movement comprise only few Saraiki speaking people. Not even once in all the elections has any candidate of the Saraiki Party ever won a single seat in Bahawalpur, rather they always lost very badly in the elections. On the other hand, the Urdu speaking and Punjabi speaking section of people are totally against the creation of a separate Movement for Bahawalpur Province on the basis

25 Dr Asad Sayeed, Viability of new units, <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/apr2010-weekly/nos-25-04-2010/spr.htm#4>, accessed 2 March 2011.

26 Shakeel Ahmad, Boundaries of Saraiki Province, op.cit.

27 Ibid.

28 Manzoor Chandio, A case for Saraiki Province, op.cit.

29 It should be noted that the Constitution of Pakistan clearly demarcates the method for creation of a new province. The Constitution lays down a very hard-to-meet procedure for the creation of a new province. The procedure requires a 2/3rd majority votes not only in the two Houses of the Parliament but also in the Provincial legislature whose boundaries are to be altered. In India, comparatively, a Parliamentary vote with a simple majority is needed to alter the boundaries of a province/state which is why India which had 15 states at the time of its creation in 1947, today it has 28 states with 7 union territories.

30 Shakeel Ahmad, Boundaries of Saraiki Province, op.cit.

31 Dr. Umbreen Javid, Movement for Bahawalpur Province, op.cit.



*Background Paper*

of difference in the spoken languages as they then will be dominated by the Saraikis<sup>32</sup>.

**Views opposing Saraiki Movement**

Many people contest the status of Saraiki as a separate language. It has overwhelming influence of Punjabi and Sindhi; from that perspective Saraiki can not be called a separate language of Indo-Aryan Family. When compared to its sister languages: Sindhi and Punjabi, Saraiki is far smaller and much behind in literature and in many other ways. The classics of Punjabi include works produced in what is now called Saraiki, and as such this language or Hindco are not distinguished from Punjab<sup>33</sup>.

Historically, Saraiki, before Independence, never created a sense of separate Saraiki identity particularly in Southern Punjab. Customs and traditions practised by the people of Southern Punjab have largely been similar to those of Punjabis and Sindhis<sup>34</sup>. Rasul Bakhsh Rais opines that Southern Punjab, much like other parts of the country, no longer represents any ethnic cohesion. The ethnic-linguistic mix has greatly changed with migration from the other Punjabs since canal colonisation. And the pattern of migration through various land acquisition schemes, particularly after the absorption of the State of Bahawalpur into Punjab, has continued<sup>35</sup>. Explaining troubles of Southern Punjab, he observes that they are primarily because of feudalism, semi-tribal social structure and monopoly of landowning families over political representation. This class has misused its power and continues to do so. There appears to be an unbreakable nexus between the civil bureaucrats heading different government departments at the district level and the elected representatives both of local governments and the members of provincial and federal legislatures<sup>36</sup>. With few exceptions, they have joined hands to misappropriate development funds by spending very little on projects and pocketing most of the money<sup>37</sup>.

That is why adherents of anti-Saraiki approach claim there is no grass-roots demand for a new province. Punjab chief

minister's senior adviser Sardar Zulfiqar Khosa substantiates this assertion that those raising voice for Saraiki province are the 'most unpopular people of their area', implying a separate province is not a popular demand<sup>38</sup>.

One rationale given for Saraiki or Bahawalpur province is that Bahawalpur and the Saraiki belt being far-flung areas from the powerful Lahore fail to make an impact on the policies of Punjab province and have no Saraiki representation whatsoever among the powerful policy making clans, and as a consequence, it is being ignored and deprived of socio-economic development. To counter this claim of scarce political representation from this area, numerous people with national political clout from the Saraiki belt are cited who have represented their area at various fronts and times: Muhammad Ali Durrani (PML), Chaudry Pervaiz Elahi (PML), Jehangir Tareen (PML-F), Mukhdoom Javaid Hashmi (PML-N), Sardar Athar Khan Gorchani (PPPP), Khan Muhammad Hussain Azad (PPPP), Farooq Laghari – President of Pakistan 1993-1997, Balakh Sher Mazari – Prime Minister Pakistan 1993, Yusuf Raza Gilani (PPPP) – Prime Minister Pakistan 2008 – current, Shah Mehmood Qureshi (PPPP), Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Tasneem Nawaz Gardezi, Makhdoom Shahabuddin, Makhdoom Altaf, Makhdoom Khushro Bakhtiar, and Riaz Pirzada, etc. to name a few<sup>39</sup>. It will be recalled that Z.A. Bhutto was committed to radical agrarian reforms and other labour-capital socialistic relationship but somehow was clean bowled during 70s elections in the feudal-dominated districts where the Saraiki speaking people were in a majority: Attock, Mianwali, Khushab, Jhang, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur. After the separation of East Pakistan however, most of the Saraiki MNAs and MPAs including Khosas, Legharis, Qureshis, Mazaris, Wattoos and Nawabs of Bahawalpur joined the PPP and saved their fiefs and the fear of the radical agrarian reforms subsided<sup>40</sup>. With such star-studded Saraiki political representation it is perplexing, the centralists argue, that nothing substantial could be crafted in the last 60 years and they could not influence the policy makers to carve policies for the socio-economic development of south Punjab and have suddenly created a highly questionable and suspicious agitation<sup>41</sup>.

32 Dr. Umbreen Javaid, Movement for Bahawalpur Province, op.cit.

33 Tariq Rehman, Language, Ideology and Power, Oxford University Press, 2002, p.452.

34 Saraikistan, <http://waseb.wordpress.com/2010/04/19/saraikistan/>, accessed 3 March 2011.

35 Rasul Bakhsh Rais, analysis: Southern Punjab's troubles, op.cit.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Saraiki province not a popular demand : Khosa, Dawn 16 Apr, 2010, <http://66.219.30.210/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/local/lahore/saraiki-province-not-a-popular-demand-khosa-640>. accessed 2 March 2011.

39 Faisal Awan, Movement for Saraiki Province: The Pros and Cons, op.cit.

40 Shafiqat Tanvir Mirza, The origin and politics of the Saraiki movement, op.cit.

41 Ibid.

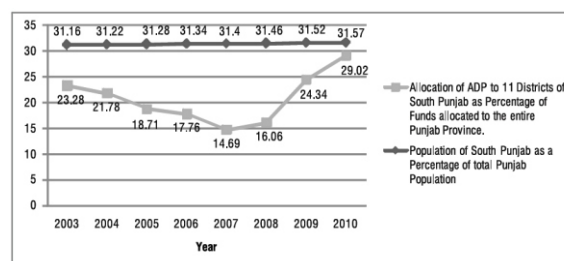
## Background Paper

There are others who concede that discussions about new provinces or the administrative units take place all over the world and there was no harm in discussing them. They contest, however, if this was on the lingual basis, many other nationalities with different languages living in the province would also seek separate provinces<sup>42</sup>.

One reason on the comparative lack of industrialisation is because the large landowners and politicians of southern Punjab have stuck to the more traditional industries and methods of capital formation. This varied pattern is not surprising since the relatively poorer agriculture of north Punjab led to other forms of money-making. A perception also exists that the Seraiki-speaking elite attached itself to the larger Punjabi elite including the military to get their share of resources<sup>43</sup>.

On allocation of funds, PML-N government claims that in addition to Rs. 5 billion for south Punjab development projects, schemes worth Rs. 135 billion were being completed in the region and projects were being executed there in collaboration with the federal government. In the budget speech, Punjab CM emphasized that the development programme for the FY-2010-11 is geared towards achieving the goals of balanced and equitable growth with particular focus on Southern Punjab, backwards district like Jhang, Khushab and Mianwali and the Barani areas of the Province, hence a total allocation of Rs 52 billion was proposed in Punjab annual budget 2010-2011 for 11 district of the Southern Punjab. The provincial government thus dismisses propaganda of uneven distribution of resources to southern Punjab<sup>44</sup>. Besides, in establishing installations of alternative energy sources, as elsewhere one solar energy plant was planned during 2009-2010 in Southern Punjab by the federal government<sup>45</sup>. The latest reports suggest, a Letter of Intent (LOI) has been issued by the government in accordance with the recommendations of the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) and AmPak Energy will set up a 50 MW Solar Thermal Power Plant in Southern Punjab<sup>46</sup>. Figure 2 provides an empirical view of population growth and ADP allocation as a percentage of total for Punjab. It

**Figure 2: Population and ADP Allocation as a percentage of total for Punjab**



Source: PILDAT Discussion Papers Nov 2010

reveals a constant budgetary regression between the period 2003 and 2007, and thereafter, a gradual to sharp increase from 2008. PML-N's assertion of enhanced attention to South Punjab can be measured from the allocation trend captured in the graph.

Punjabi-centric critics view the division of Punjab as an imperialist agenda supported by vested interests, feudals, non-Punjabis of South and by anti Punjab print and electronic media<sup>47</sup>. It is emphasized that Punjab is a natural, single linguistic and administrative unit since times immemorial. The debate in support of the Seraiki province and division of Punjab in Pakistani print and electronic media is thus regarded by them as an organized crime against the integrity and solidarity of Punjab<sup>48</sup>. Above all, due to spectrum of challenges facing the country, the timings of demand are being questioned.

### Political Parties' position

Muttahida Quumi Movement (MQM) supports more provinces. The party is of the view that increasing the number of provinces will strengthen the country<sup>49</sup>. ANP is ostensibly opposed to creation of more provinces. PML (N) and PPP have not yet taken a position on the issue at the party levels. Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has, however, maintained that PPP being a symbol of the Federation is totally against any fragmentation of provinces. However, On 8th February 2011, National Assembly's Deputy Speaker Faisal Karim Kundi called for creation of a Seraiki province, saying "The prime minister has no

42 Rauf Klasra, Saraiki province: a bone of contention for many, op.cit.

43 Ayesha Siddiqi, More Provinces? Op.cit.

44 Budget, A Part Of Punjab's Long Term Vision, JUN 15, 2010, <http://www.pakistannews.com.pk/national/pakistan-budget-2010-2011/punjab-budget-2010-2011/budgeta-part-of-punjab%e2%80%99s-long-term-vision.htm>, ACCESSED 7 MARCH 2011.

45 RAFAY AHMAD DAR and Umair Ahmad, ECONOMICS OF PAKISTAN, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35300245/Budget-2009-2010>, accessed 7 March 2011.

46 AmPak to set up first 50 MW Solar Thermal Power Plant in S.Punjab, Feb 24, 2011, <http://news.reportlinker.com/n06726652/AmPak-to-set-up-first-50-MW-Solar-Thermal-Power-Plant-in-S-Punjab.html>, accessed 7 March 2011.

47 Nazeer Kahut, Seraiki Province Debate - An Organised Crime Against the Integrity of Punjab, [http://www.punjabics.com/Seraikilisation\\_Of\\_Punjabi/Seraiki\\_Province\\_Debate\\_Organised\\_Crime.html](http://www.punjabics.com/Seraikilisation_Of_Punjabi/Seraiki_Province_Debate_Organised_Crime.html), accessed 25 Feb 2011.

48 Ibid.

49 More provinces to strengthen country: Altaf, The News January 30, 2011, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=10333>, accessed 2 March 2011.

**Demand for Saraiki Province***Background Paper*

objection to the creation of new provinces if this is done through a democratic process<sup>50</sup>." Prime Minister, present at the occasion, neither supported nor opposed the idea.

Electoral results show that PPP support is concentrated in rural Punjab which is basically south Punjab versus PML-N's following in the urban centres<sup>51</sup>. Sources therefore, suggest that the PPP government would support this formula so that the power of the Sharif brothers can be diluted. The top PML-N leadership reportedly fears that such a move, which is said to have strong backing of the top PPP leadership, would lead to erosion of its political authority in case a new province was created in the Punjab.

Presently, the debate has been tempered somewhat by the attempts of the top leadership of the PPP and PML-N to quash talk of dividing Punjab, but it is continuing ferociously in the media and in sections of the political elite<sup>52</sup>. In a national context, the Pakistan Muslim League-N, which alienated most people in its traditional stronghold in the Hazara region, may rally in support of the demand for a Hazara province in the face of rising public pressure. The PPP may use it as a justification to press for the creation of a Seraiki province in southern Punjab. Begum Abida Hussain has instead floated the idea of separating the military-industrial districts from the agrarian regions of Punjab<sup>54</sup>.

50 Kundi calls for Seraiki province, The Dawn, February 9, 2011, <http://www.dawn.com/2011/02/09/kundi-calls-for-seraiki-province.html>, accessed 2 March 2011.

51 Ayesha Siddiqi, More Provinces? Op.cit.

52 "Seraiki province", Dawn Editorial 05 Jul, 2009.

53 Asim Awan, PPP may use Hazara demand to press for Seraiki province, The Express Tribune, April 19, 2010.

54 Riaz Missen, Seraiki nationalism in focus, op.cit.



**Conclusion**

Regardless of the merits of case for a separate South Punjab province, i.e., Bahawalpur or Bahawalpur as the centre for Saraiki province or a larger Saraiki province including Bahawalpur, ground realities project that perceptions of relative deprivation exist in the southern Punjab and need to be addressed. The re-course to solution should be found through platform of civil society and debates at the Parliament and Provincial Assembly of the Punjab and the KPK.



Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency - PILDAT  
Head Office: No. 7, 9th Avenue, F-8/1, Islamabad, Pakistan  
Lahore Office: 45-A, Sector XX, 2nd Floor, Phase III Commercial Area, DHA, Lahore  
Tel: (+92-51) 111-123-345; Fax: (+92-51) 226-3078  
E-mail: [info@pildat.org](mailto:info@pildat.org); Web: [www.pildat.org](http://www.pildat.org)