

## DEMAND FOR SARAIKI PROVINCE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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***Abstract:** Separatist tendencies grow when grievances of a particular community or people of a particular area are not addressed for a long period of time. In Pakistan, what provokes people is disparity among its regions in terms of education, health, industry, and infrastructure. Though slogans and demands for new provinces are mostly exploited by the politicians for their own vested interests, it is worth analyzing whether these demands find any justification on the basis of lack of abovementioned facilities. Hence, this paper attempts to answer the following questions: What is the historical position of Saraiki region? Has it remained connected or detached in past from the mainstream Punjab? Does descriptive statistics show any large scale differences in basic facilities of life between Central Punjab and Saraiki Punjab? Do socio-economic statistics support demand for a separate province?*

**Keywords:** New province, Saraiki Punjab, northern Punjab, ethnicity, historical detachment, socio-economic indicators

### Introduction

Successive governments in Pakistan, whether military or civilian, have not been able to satisfy basic demands of its citizens. Particularly the peripheral and remote areas of the country, despite being rich in cultivable land and natural resources, have remained underdeveloped, deprived, and destitute. Saraiki region, located in south eastern Pakistan, is one such area. Various movements for the establishment of a separate province have been initiated to bring the region into economic, social, and political mainstream. Some of these

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movements find their roots in cultural and ethnic identity and others in extremely poor socio-economic conditions of the area. Some people consider Saraiki *waderas* responsible for an engineered underdevelopment of the area.<sup>1</sup> This paper, therefore, attempts to explore the socioeconomic realities and the historical detachment of Saraiki region from the central Punjab. Hence, the questions under investigation are: What is the historical position of Saraiki region? Has it remained connected or detached in past from the mainstream Punjab? Does descriptive statistics show any large scale differences in basic facilities of life between Central Punjab and Saraiki Punjab? Do socio-economic statistics support demand for a separate province?

The paper is based on two-pronged methodology. Historical approach has been used to problematize the demand for Saraiki Punjab in a historical context. Descriptive approach has been used to identify and analyze socio-economic variables of Saraiki Punjab and northern Punjab – forming grounds for comparison between the two regions. The research is secondary in nature as descriptive statistics have been taken from various surveys conducted by Bureau of Statistics Punjab, Lahore.

The name of Saraiki province projects ethnic inclinations; however, it may or may not be the case. The advocates of this name are of the view that the districts in which Saraiki language is spoken by majority of the inhabitants should be carved out to form a new province. It includes three southern divisions of Punjab (i.e., Multan, Bahawalpur, and D.G. Khan). It also includes districts of Mianwali and Bhakar (Punjab) and Dera Ismail Khan and Tank (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

However, parallel with the demand of separate Saraiki province, there is another demand in the same regional vicinity for restoration of Bahawalpur province. Its supporters demand that the state of Bahawalpur should be declared a separate province. They are of the view that Bahawalpur State was merged in One Unit System in 1955; and with dissolution of One Unit, Bahawalpur State was

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<sup>1</sup> Akhtar Hussain Sandhu, "Saraiki Suba Movement in the Punjab: Viability in Focus," *Pakistan Perspectives* 20, no.2 (July–December 2015): 140–41.

merged in the Punjab province without consent of the people. Hence, the status of the Bahawalpur State should be restored to pre-One Unit position by giving the region status of a province if not an independent state.

### **Historical Detachment of Saraiki Region from Northern Punjab**

Pakistan is heterogeneous in culture and has diverse identities; but many scholars believe that Pakistani establishment is traditionally uncomfortable with the multiple identity discourse.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the establishment and especially the political elite of Pakistan have ignored these diversities and tried to impose religious identity as the sole identity of the people of Pakistan. This imposed identity has made the people insecure about their indigenous cultures.

Moreover, political dynamics of the country also depict trends conflicting to religious identity.<sup>3</sup> Most of the people are of the opinion that the Punjabi dominated civil and military bureaucracy has always been inclined to formulate Punjab-oriented policies at the cost of other provinces. In pre-1971 era, East Pakistan has always been skeptical about this approach. However, adamant attitude of leadership of West Pakistan further aggravated the concerns of Bengalis that finally led to a secessionist movement resulting in the creation of Bangladesh.

After the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971, identities were re-adjusted and re-defined. Previously, the rift was between eastern and western wings of Pakistan; but now many other disgruntled ethnic identities started surfacing. For example, slogans such as *Sindhu Desh*, *Muhajir movemnet*, *Greater Balochistan*, and *Pashtoonistan* were raised. All these ethnic issues in one way or the other find their roots in exclusive approach of development with respect to provinces other than Punjab (real or perceived) adopted by Punjabi dominated establishment. The reason is that Punjabis are still

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<sup>2</sup> Ayesha Siddiq, "A Saraiki Province?," *The Friday Times*, February 10, 2012, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/beta2/tft/article.php?issue=20120210&page=19>.

<sup>3</sup> Tariq Rehman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 23.

at the helm of affairs and dominating the civil and military bureaucracy of the country. Hence, the adamant attitude of the Pakistani establishment and political elite is one of the major causes of the ethnic movements in various parts of Pakistan, and Saraiki Province movement is no exception.

As far as history of India is concerned, the whole of subcontinent remained united only in three periods (i.e., Mauryan Empire, Mughal Empire and British Empire). For rest of the time, India remained divided into various autonomous states, which were in a continuous state of confrontation with each other.<sup>4</sup> Multan has always been more inclined towards Sindh than central or northern Punjab. During the Arab conquest in 712 A.D., Muhammad Bin Qasim proceeded up to Multan, and not beyond it. Similarly, Mahmud of Ghazna, who conquered from the north, moved up to Lahore. Hence, it can be deduced that Multan was considered a part of Sindh and not that of Punjab.<sup>5</sup>

Abu Al-Fazl, in his book, *Ain-e-Akbari*, has mentioned the names of languages being spoken in India. In this book, Multani is mentioned as a separate language while Punjabi is not even mentioned. Similarly, in *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* of Sayyid Ghulam Hussein Tabatabai, provinces of Lahore, Multan, and Thatha are mentioned separately and large portion of Sindh is included in Multan.<sup>6</sup> Later on in 1817 A.D., Multan came under Sikh's control while rest of the Saraiki region remained under the control of Bahawalpur state. The Sikh empire was spread over a vast area including Peshawar, Jammu, and Gilgit Baltistan; but it could not expand beyond Multan in the south.<sup>7</sup>

In colonial era, Britain consolidated its rule in India after the War of 1857. With the objective of consolidating their power in the sub-continent, the colonial masters of India manipulated demography in various regions. These policies have deep rooted implications in

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<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Akbar Ansari, *Muqadma suba Saraikistan* (Multan: Jhok Publishers, 2013), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>6</sup> Zahoor Dhareja, *Saraiki qaumi sawal* (Multan: Jhok Publishers, 2013), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Rob, *A History of India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 43.

social and political structure of post-independence Pakistan. The major blow suffered by Saraiki region was in 1901,<sup>8</sup> when Dera Ismail Khan and Tank were included in the newly created North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkwa). This administrative change was resisted at that time and the key demand of the protestors was to include these two districts in the Punjab because of their excessive links with the metropolitan cities of the Punjab. Due to these strikes, twenty five people lost their lives.<sup>9</sup> These protests were led by local leaders like Nawab Ahmad Nawaz (Nawab of Dera Ismail Khan), Nawab Qutb-u-Din Khan (Nawab of Tank), and Sardar Asad Khan Gandapur; Hindu leaders included Jesa Ram, Rai Bahadur Diya Nand, Seth Bgae, and Seth Bhatia.<sup>10</sup> People of this district were compelled to move into two different directions. For governmental issues, they relied on Peshawar; and for economic activities, they had to move toward various districts of the Punjab.

After the emergence of Pakistan, grievances of the people of Saraiki region started with the promulgation of One Unit system that was meant to balance the power equation with East Pakistan. The State of Bahawalpur was merged with West Pakistan on April 30, 1951 under a covenant named as Supplementary Instrument of Accession signed by Ameer Sadiq Mohammad and Governor General of Pakistan Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din.<sup>11</sup> It was elucidated by the regime that the state of Bahawalpur will have a rank of a province, and the Ameer of Bahawalpur will continue to be the constitutional crown of the State.<sup>12</sup> "It is a time-honoured fact that prior to One Unit, Bahawalpur had a provincial rank, and Bahawalpur was fused as a province with West Pakistan at the phase of One Unit."<sup>13</sup> At this juncture, people of Bahawalpur did not have much objection because all the provinces in West Pakistan were merged in the One Unit. "The

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<sup>8</sup> Zahoor, *Saraiki qaumi sawal*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Dawn* (Karachi), May 1, 1951.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Sahibzada Mohd and Qamar-uz-Zaman Abbasi, *Quaid-i-Azam aur riasat Bahawalpur* (Bahawalpur: Sahibzada Qamar Abbasi, 1999), 188.

declaration of Pakistan government in March 1970 about the conclusion of One Unit System avowed that Bahawalpur was amalgamated into the Punjab province.”<sup>14</sup> This pronouncement triggered demonstrations and strikes in Bahawalpur. “On April 24, 1970, the police unbolted fire on a march killing two persons and wounding many. Many activists were detained. Five demonstrations were taken out in the Bahawalpur town to press the demand for discrete provincial rank for Bahawalpur. The local management called in the Army and curfew was imposed.”<sup>15</sup> Numerous political leaders were detained including Seth Ubaid Ur Rehman, Maulana Ghulam Mustafa, Altaf Qureshi, Allama Arshad, and Syed Ahmad Nawaz Shah Gardezi. Begum Tahira Masood was expelled from Bahawalpur for a period of one month.<sup>16</sup> “Another grievance is that Bahawalpur’s prosperity mainly depended on the waters of River Sutlej, which was given to India in the Indus Water Treaty. This adversely affected the economy of the region.”<sup>17</sup> This decision of the government of Pakistan showed selfishness, and it did not take stakeholders of Bahawalpur in confidence for this treaty.

Hence, it can be argued that the given historical account depicts that Saraiki region possessed a separate identity in terms of geographical and political construction through various periods.

### **Socio-economic Indicators in Northern and Saraiki Punjab**

Saraiki Punjab is mostly underdeveloped – low literacy rate, high unemployment rate, and scarcity of industries are major problems of the region. This underdeveloped status of the region can be studied by comparing socio-economic conditions of Saraki Punjab with that of northern Punjab.

**Defining ‘regions’ for the comparison:** Before making any comparison between northern Punjab and Saraki Punjab regarding development, it is apt to define a generalized boundary for the Saraiki

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 53.

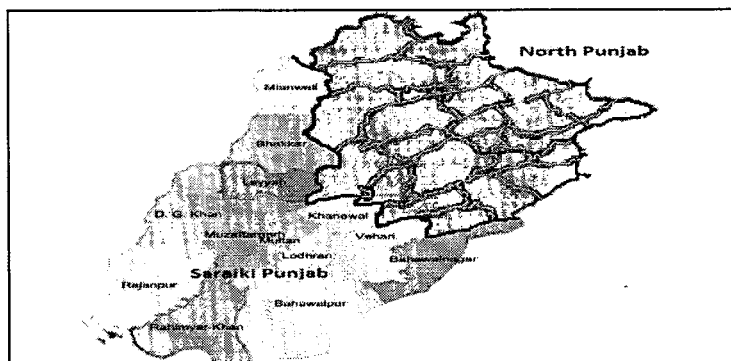
<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 204.

region. Hence, for this purpose a definition closely associated with the historical and cultural interpretations is derived. This definition takes in all Saraiki areas of the Punjab and takes out non-Saraiki areas (mentioned in the National Assembly resolution for creation of Saraiki Province). This generalized definition of region is just for the sake of analysis and comparison of the data from various developmental surveys. northern Punjab may be considered having the following divisions: Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Lahore, Sahiwal, and Sargodha (excluding Mianwali and Bhakar districts). Similarly, Saraiki Punjab may be comprised of the divisions of Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan, and districts of Mianwali and Bhakar.

It is important to mention that while comparing the two regions, it would not be fair to consider data related to Lahore and Faisalabad (northern Punjab region) because of a number of reasons: Lahore is not only an extremely populous city but also the provincial capital, so one cannot compare it with any backward city. Lahore and Faisalabad are highly industrialized as compare to any other city in the Punjab. Furthermore, if these two cities are included in the comparison, the population equation established between these two regions will become highly unequal, which will further decrease the reliability of the comparative analysis. By excluding Lahore and Faisalabad, districts selected for the comparison become easily comparable vis-à-vis their population size. It may help to develop the ratio of the per capita facilities available. The two regions of northern and Saraiki Punjab (defined for this paper) are shown in the following map.

*Figure 1: Saraiki Punjab and Northern Punjab (Defined for this paper)*



**Population Size of Northern and Saraiki Regions:**

Population size of these selected areas is separately presented in the following two tables.

*Table 1: Northern Punjab Population*

Area	Population
Attock	1,275,000
Gujranwala	3,401,000
Gujarat	2,048,000
Hafiz Abad	833,000
Jhelum	937,000
Kasur	2,376,000
Mandi Bahauddin	1,161,000
Okara	2,232,000
Rawalpindi	3,364,000
Sahiwal	1,843,000
Sargodha	2,666,000
Sialkot	2,723,000
<b>Sum Total</b>	<b>24,859,000</b>

*Table 2: Saraiki Punjab Population*

Area	Population
Bahawalnagar	2,061,000
Bahawalpur	2,433,000
Bhakar	1,051,000
D. G. Khan	1,643,000
Khanewal	2,068,000
Layyah	1,121,000
Lodhran	1,172,000
Mianwali	1,057,000
Multan	3,117,000
Muzafargarh	2,636,000
Rahim Yar Khan	3,141,000
Rajanpur	1,104,000
Vehari	2,090,000
<b>Sum Total</b>	<b>24,694,000</b>

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012).

Twelve districts have been selected from northern region and thirteen from Saraiki region. Selection is based on the assumption to bring more reliability in comparison between the two regions by bringing parity in population. According to 1998 census report of Pakistan, the total population of the selected districts (excluding Lahore and Faisalabad) from northern Punjab is about 24.8 million while that of the districts of Saraiki region is 24.6 million.

**Ethnicity and Saraiki Language in Saraiki Punjab as the basis of Demand:** Similarly, it is also pertinent to highlight the ethnic division in districts selected from Saraiki Punjab. The table shows some really important facts about the demography of the region.



Table 3: Largest and 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Ethnic Groups in districts of Punjab

Sr. No.	District Name	D.E.G	% of D.E.G.	2nd D.E.G	% of 2nd D.E.G.
1	Attock	Punjabi	94.61	Pashto	8.31
2	Bahawalpur	Saraiki	72.99	Punjabi	28.39
3	Bahawalnagar	Punjabi	97.69	Urdu	3.74
4	Bhakar	Saraiki	80.25	Punjabi	17.45
5	Chakwal	Punjabi	97.47	Pashto	1.15
6	D.G. Khan	Saraiki	98.04	Balochi	14.33
7	Faisalabad	Punjabi	97.03	Urdu	1.17
8	Gujarat	Punjabi	98.04	Urdu	1.06
9	Gujranwala	Punjabi	97.03	Urdu	1.88
10	Hafiz Abad	Punjabi	98.66	Urdu	0.9
11	Jhelum	Punjabi	96.58	Urdu	1.93
12	Jhang	Punjabi	95.85	Urdu	3.31
13	Kasur	Punjabi	88	Urdu	6.23
14	Khanewal	Punjabi	81.2	Urdu	7.78
15	Khushab	Punjabi	96.8	Urdu	1.48
16	Lahore	Punjabi	86.18	Urdu	10.19
17	Layyah	Saraiki	62.02	Punjabi	32.55
18	Lodhran	Saraiki	69.01	Punjabi	18.06
19	Mandi Bahauddin	Punjabi	96.97	Urdu	2.45
20	Mianwali	Punjabi	74.17	Saraiki	12
21	Multan	Saraiki	60.67	Punjabi	21.63
22	Muzafargarh	Saraiki	86.82	Punjabi	7.47
23	Narowal	Punjabi	98.02	Urdu	1.24
24	Okara	Punjabi	95.71	Urdu	3.51
25	Pakpattan	Punjabi	95.87	Urdu	3.67
26	Rahim Yar Khan	Saraiki	62.62	Punjabi	27.31
27	Rajanpur	Saraiki	75.72	Balochi	17.1
28	Rawalpindi	Punjabi	83.89	Urdu	7.46
29	Sahiwal	Punjabi	98.07	Urdu	1.42
30	Sargodha	Punjabi	93.28	Urdu	5.84
31	Sheikhupura	Punjabi	98.1	Urdu	0.95
32	Sialkot	Punjabi	97.11	Urdu	1.49
33	Tobatek Singh	Punjabi	98.59	Urdu	0.78
34	Vehari	Punjabi	82.85	Saraiki	11.35

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistic* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012).

Some of the districts which are claimed by Saraiki nationalists as purely Saraiki speaking areas do not possess Saraiki speaking people in majority. The most important among these districts is Mianwali. According to Table 3, percentage of Saraiki speaking people in Mianwali district is 12 percent. What is more even important about this district is that the largest ethnic group here is Punjabi (i.e., comprises 74.17% of total population of the district). Hence, the claim of Saraiki nationalists about Mianwali to be included in the separate province on the basis of ethnicity does not have any strong grounds. District Vehari is second important example in this regard. Punjabi is the dominant ethnicity in terms of population (i.e., 82.84% of the population) while Saraiki is the second largest ethnic group (i.e., 11.35% of the population). Khanewal is another such district – a Punjabi speaking area. Saraiki is not even at the second position. The second largest ethnic group is Urdu speaking population that comprises 7.78% of the total population.

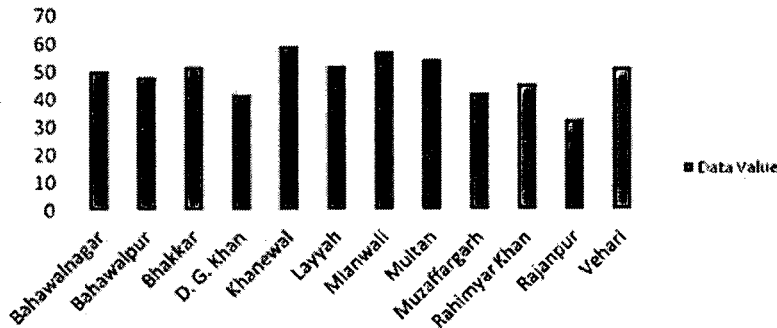
Finally, the table 3 also shows that those districts in which Saraiki ethnic group is in majority also possess considerably large number of Punjabi speaking people. This pattern is especially prevalent in big cities such as Layyah, Multan, Bahawalpur, and Rahim Yar Khan having 32.55, 21.63, 28.39, and 27.31 percent of Punjabi speaking population respectively. Such a large proportion of Punjabi population in these districts of Saraiki region does not support the demand of Saraiki province on the basis of lingual majority.

Similarly, the table 3 also shows that some of the districts like Rajanpur and D.G. Khan of Saraiki region have a good number of Balochi speaking population.

**Literacy Rate:** Analysis of literacy rate of an area is the most important indicator to study in any developmental survey. The following figures show the literacy rate of individuals older than ten years in Saraiki region and in northern Punjab. It can be seen that Khanewal has the highest literacy rate (i.e., 59.2%). Location of Khanewal on the map shows that it is adjacent to district Sahiwal and is along N-5 highway that is the busiest highway of Pakistan. Hence, it can be inferred that it is the location of the district which plays an important role in making it a higher literacy rate district. The lowest literacy rate is of district Rajanpur (i.e. 32.5%). The district Rajanpur

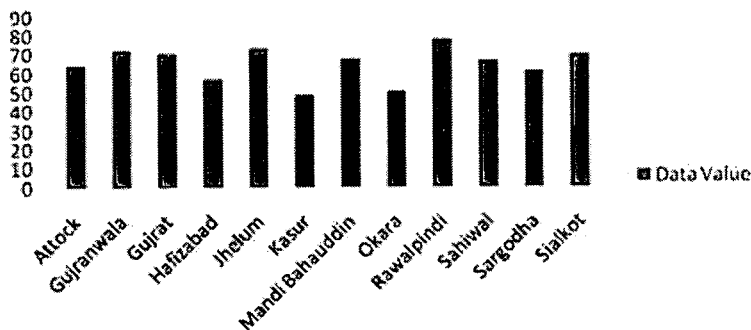
is located in a far flung corner of Punjab bordering KPK and Baluchistan. Hence, the same can be inferred for Ranjanpur that its location makes it the district with lower literacy rate.

Figure 2: Literacy Rate Saraiki Punjab



Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 151.

Figure 3: Literacy Rate Northern Punjab



Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 151.

As compare to Saraiki Punjab, literacy rate in northern Punjab is much higher. The figure 2 shows that the highest literacy rate is 77.9% (district Rawalpindi) and the lowest rate is 49% (district Kasur). The average literacy rate of northern Punjab is 65.07%, while that of districts selected for Saraiki Punjab is 48.81%. Hence, it can be inferred that in terms of literacy rate Sraiki Punjab lags far behind northern Punjab. However, in order to have a more real, precise, and reliable picture of difference in literacy rate between Saraiki and northern Punjab, it is apt to have a comparison of percent change in

literacy rate of the two regions over the years. Table 4 & 5 present the change in the literacy rate of the districts between 1981 and 1998.

Table 4: Literacy Rate in Saraiki Punjab (Change) Percentage

Sr. No.	District	1981 Census	1998 Census	Change
1	Bahawalpur	20.4	35	14.6
2	Bahawalnagar	19.5	35.1	15.6
3	R.Y. Khan	20	33.1	13.1
4	D.G. Khan	16.3	30.6	14.3
5	Layyah	18.9	38.7	19.8
6	Muzafargarh	16.8	28.4	11.6
7	Rajanpur	12.5	20.7	8.2
8	Multan	23.5	43.4	19.9
9	Khanewal	25.6	39.9	14.3
10	Lodhran	14.9	29.9	15
11	Vehari	19.2	36.8	17.6
12	Bhakar	17.7	34.2	16.5
13	Mianwali	21.4	42.8	21.4

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 151.

Table 5: Literacy Rate in Northern Punjab (Change) Percentage

Sr. No.	Districts	1981 Census	1998 Census	Change
1	Attock	21.1	49.3	28.2
2	Gujranwala	29.9	56.6	26.7
3	Gujarat	31.3	62.2	30.9
4	Hafiz Abad	30.3	50.5	20.2
5	Jhelum	38.9	68.9	30
6	Kasur	18.7	36.2	17.5
7	Mandi Bahauddin	23.4	47.4	24
8	Okara	24.8	37.8	13
9	Rawalpindi	46.6	70.4	23.8
10	Sahiwal	21.7	43.9	22.2
11	Sargodha	24.9	46.3	21.4
12	Sialkot	30.8	58.9	28.1

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 151.

Comparison of two tables indicates that not only the average literacy rate is greater in districts of northern Punjab, but also a relatively greater positive change has occurred between 1981 and 1998 in northern Punjab as compared to Saraiki Punjab. Similarly, the highest literacy rate among Saraiki districts is 43.4 % (Multan, 1998 Census), on the other hand, the highest literacy rate among northern Punjab districts is 70.4% (Rawalpindi, 1998 Census). The lowest rate of literacy in the Saraiki districts is 20.7% (Rajapur district) while that in northern Punjab is 36.2% (Kasur district).

Figures in the table show a trivial development in Saraiki Punjab as compare to northern Punjab which has shown a considerable progress. From 1981 to 1998, the average change occurred in literacy rate of Saraiki Punjab is 15.53% while that of northern Punjab is 23.83% for the same period of time.

The above change of literacy rate in Saraiki region highlights low level of commitment of government with respect to the literacy rate in underdeveloped areas. It can be inferred from the data that the government spending is comparatively much more directed towards the northern Punjab.

With the above statistics, it can be also said that it is this lower level of literacy rate to which unemployment and poverty in some way or the other owe their roots.

**Health Facilities:** Another major element to evaluate human development index is availability of health facilities. Generally speaking, these facilities must be in proportion to population of the area.

Health structure in Punjab is sorted out into various levels (i.e., hospitals, dispensaries, rural health centres, basic health centres, T. B. clinics, maternity and child health centres, and sub-health centres). Statistics for Saraiki and northern Punjab are given in the following two tables along with the population size and area of respective districts.

Table 6: Health Facilities Available in Saraiki Punjab

District		Mianwali	Bhakar	Vehari	Lodhran	Khanewal	Multan	Rajanpur	Muzafar garh	Layyah	D.G. Khan	R.Y. Khan	Bahawal Nagar	Bahawal Pur	Sum Total
Population	No.	1,057	1,051	2,090	1,172	2,068	3,117	1,104	2,636	1,121	1,643	3,141	2,061	2,433	24,694
Area	Km <sup>2</sup>	5,840	8,153	4,364	2,778	4,349	3,720	12,318	8,249	6,291	11,922	11,880	8,878	24,830	79,864
Hospitals	No.	6	4	4	4	8	15	5	9	4	24	11	7	13	114
	Beds	392	295	270	132	332	2312	261	496	465	1745	1109	493	1852	10154
Dispensaries	No.	14	41	37	12	16	50	11	33	14	94	64	47	70	503
	Beds	0	52	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	70
R.H.Cs	No.	9	6	11	4	4	10	6	14	3	34	19	10	11	141
	Beds	180	80	202	80	80	146	120	262	60	626	372	200	202	2610
B.H.Cs	No.	41	40	78	50	85	77	32	77	42	205	106	105	80	1018
	Beds	80	80	156	100	170	152	64	142	84	396	212	206	152	1994
T.B.Centres	No.	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	3	3	3	18
	Beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	0	87	36	0	0	159
S.H.Cs	No.	22	13	23	7	3	15	17	24	15	90	0	35	0	264
M.C.H.Cs	No.	6	2	8	1	4	27	2	4	2	13	8	7	10	94
Source: Adopted from <i>Punjab Development Statistics</i> (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 195–99. <i>R.H.Cs: Rural Health Centres</i> <i>B.H.Cs: Basic Health Centres</i> <i>S.H.Cs= Sub Health Centres</i> <i>M.C.H.Cs= Maternity and Child Health Centres</i> <i>Population in Thousands and Area in Square Kilometres</i>															

Table 7: Health Facilities Available in Northern Punjab

Districts		Sialkot	Sargodha	Sahiwal	Rawalpindi	Okara	Mandi Bahauddin	Kasur	Jhelum	Hafizabad	Gujrat	Gujranwala	Attock	Sum Total
Population	No.	2,723	2,666	1,843	3,364	2,232	1,161	2,376	937	833	2,048	3,401	1,275	24859
Area	Km <sup>2</sup>	3,016	5,854	3,201	5,285	4,377	2,673	3,995	3,587	2,367	3,192	3,622	6,857	48026
Hospitals	No.	13	16	8	17	4	6	7	10	2	12	14	9	118
	Beds	1129	1257	827	3600	411	161	438	493	185	648	1237	570	10956
Dispensaries	No.	227	52	24	87	28	20	29	28	12	28	49	25	609
	Beds	30	72	4	24	42	9	0	0	4	24	100	0	309
R.H.Cs	No.	47	17	11	13	10	8	17	6	5	9	14	6	163
	Beds	828	340	202	206	200	160	308	102	82	180	208	120	2936
B.H.Cs	No.	254	120	77	103	96	52	83	47	32	89	93	58	1104
	Beds	502	240	150	196	192	100	166	94	64	178	186	116	2184
T.B.Centres	No.	5	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	14
	Beds	40	100	0	0	0	6	0	31	0	0	0	0	177
S.H.Cs	No.	44	31	18	0	0	14	0	6	16	31	35	3	198
M.C.H.Cs	No.	100	19	8	49	12	4	9	5	4	9	9	8	236
Source: Adopted from <i>Punjab Development Statistics</i> (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 195–99. <i>R.H.Cs: Rural Health Centres</i> <i>B.H.Cs: Basic Health Centres</i> <i>S.H.Cs= Sub Health Centres</i> <i>M.C.H.Cs= Maternity and Child Health Centres</i> <i>Population in Thousands and Area in Square Kilometres</i>														

The tables show that number of hospitals and other facilities is greater in northern Punjab than that in Saraiki Punjab. If population variable is taken into account, it can be stated that the facilities available per person in both the regions are almost equal which masks an important variable with respect to Saraiki Punjab (i.e., size of the region). The districts of Saraiki region are larger in size with scattered population. The total area of districts of Saraiki Punjab is almost 30,000 sq. km., which is much larger than the size of districts in northern Punjab. Access to health facilities in Saraiki region should be taken into account as the distant health facilities pose difficulty.

Moreover, from the above mentioned statistics it can be noted that tertiary health facilities are almost negligible in Saraiki region. In the southern Punjab, these facilities are only available in hospitals of Multan and Bahawalpur. In addition, facilities and expertise available in hospitals of these two districts with respect to tertiary health centres do not match with the expertise available in the hospitals of Lahore or Rawalpindi.

**Industries and Employment:** Industrial production plays a prime role in development of a region. The following table gives important statistics about industry in the region.

*Table 8: Total Number of Factories and Employs Saraiki Punjab*

Sr. No.	District	No. of Factories	Estimated Employment
1	Bahawalpur	344	14172
2	Bahawalnagar	206	6924
3	R.Y. Khan	201	12910
4	D.G. Khan	98	8029
5	Layyah	130	7976
6	Muzafargarh	130	23884
7	Rajanpur	72	2223
8	Multan	429	27241
9	Khanewal	164	14314
10	Lodhran	126	2929
11	Vehari	178	10164
12	Bhakar	25	2164
13	Mianwali	68	4167
	Sum Total	2171	137097

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 225.



Table 9: Total Number of Factories and Employes Northern Punjab

Sr. No.	Districts	No. of Factories	Estimated Employment
1	Attock	49	5867
2	Gujranwala	1056	33241
3	Gujarat	545	17596
4	Hafiz Abad	64	6387
5	Jhelum	93	7473
6	Kasur	578	96571
7	Mandi Bahauddin	86	5440
8	Okara	80	6854
9	Rawalpindi	309	19646
10	Sahiwal	219	8181
11	Sargodha	350	12643
12	Sialkot	773	40228
	Sum Total	4202	260127

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 226.

Though the statistics of Lahore and Faisalabad are not included in the given list, still the total number of industries in northern Punjab is almost double compared to that of Saraiki region. Similarly, the employability ratio in Saraiki region is also comparatively low.

Moreover, in northern Punjab, Gujranwala, Gujarat, Sialkot, Lahore, Faisalabad (data not included), and Kasur are big industrial cities. In Saraiki Punjab, Multan is the city with highest number of industries, and the total number of industries in Multan is near to that of Kasur.

**Agricultural Sector:** Saraiki region is mainly agricultural and its production contributes a major portion of the total production of Punjab province. The following tables show production of various crops in Punjab.

Table 10: Annual Production of Major Crops Saraiki Punjab (Thousand tons)

Sr. No.	District	Wheat	Rice	Cotton	Sugarcane
1	Bahawalpur	882	10	969	592
2	Bahawalnagar	1073	140	898	704
3	R.Y. Khan	942	44	1143	5315
4	D.G. Khan	430	98	356	197
5	Layyah	554	17	127	623

6	Muzafargarh	892	47	488	1671
7	Rajanpur	478	26	627	974
8	Multan	521	21	617	112
9	Khanewal	628	44	604	420
10	Lodhran	580	10	743	85
11	Vehari	767	42	874	888
12	Bhakar	444	4	47	602
13	Mianwali	412	5	72	175
	Sum Total	8603	508	7565	12358

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 84–87.

*Table 11: Annual Production of Major Crops Northern Punjab (Thousand tons)*

Sr. No.	Districts	Wheat	Rice	Cotton	Sugarcane
1	Attock	253	0	0	7
2	Gujranwala	733	549	0	75
3	Gujarat	288	76	0	92
4	Hafiz Abad	487	277	0	214
5	Jhelum	92	2	0	8
6	Kasur	578	169	32	1821
7	Mandi Bahauddin	359	161	2	1193
8	Okara	783	280	84	715
9	Rawalpindi	158	0	0	0
10	Sahiwal	453	54	233	321
11	Sargodha	565	81	22	2602
12	Sialkot	579	353	0	36
	Sum Total	5328	2002	373	7084

Source: Adopted from *Punjab Development Statistics* (Lahore: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Punjab, 2012), 84–87.

The above data shows a noticeably high yield of agriculture in Saraiki Punjab as compared to that in northern Punjab. Cotton produced in Saraiki region is main source of raw material for the textile industry of Pakistan. Similarly, wheat production fulfils the food requirements of more than half region of Punjab. Hence, by comparing the high yield of agriculture and less development of industries in Saraiki Punjab, it can be deduced that government shows negligence towards Saraiki region.

Similarly, apart from the abovementioned indicators, there is lack of infrastructure and lack of professional and educational institutions as well.

## **Feasibility of New Province: Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the above analysis of descriptive statistics, a fact can be easily derived that the problems faced by people in Saraiki region are not just the problems of Saraiki speaking people but of the entire population as a whole (whether Punjabi, Balochi, or Urdu speaking).

Hence, in a nutshell, it can be concluded that demand for separate Saraiki province has been emerged due to socio-economic backwardness and discrimination. However, it can also be deduced that the demand can be given up if grievances of the people are addressed and problems are solved. Following are some recommendations which can address most of the problems and grievances of Saraiki Punjab.

- ✓ The government (both federal and provincial) should declare the region (defined as Sariaiki region in the paper) as under-developed region.
- ✓ The government should allocate special development budget for improvement of infrastructure, industry, education, and health sectors in Saraiki region.
- ✓ Steps should be taken by government to install agro-industries in Saraiki region.
- ✓ After a certain period, when the developmental projects in the region have been executed, opinion of the people should be taken through a referendum for creation of new province. The opinion of the inhabitants of the areas must be given priority.
- ✓ Water sources must be made available to increase the agricultural output of the region.

If these measures are taken and executed properly, there is a strong possibility that people of the region might change their opinion regarding demand for a separate province. However, to make or carve out an area as a province, factor of viability cannot be overlooked.

