

## Decentralization and Democratic Resilience: A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Saraiki Identity Movement in Pakistan

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### Abstract

This article investigates the evolution of the Saraiki National Movement as a significant case study in regional persistence and democratic resilience within a multicultural federation. While conventional state-building often emphasizes centralized administrative control, this research argues that the mobilization of the Saraiki Waseb (Southern Punjab) represents a strategic community response to systemic "internal colonialism" and socio-economic marginalization. Drawing upon Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" and Michael Hechter's "internal colonialism" models, the study utilizes a qualitative and descriptive methodology to analyze historical data, demographic shifts, and economic disparities between 1971 and 2026. The findings highlight a profound "agrarian paradox": while the Saraiki region provides the "white gold" (cotton) that serves as the backbone of Pakistan's economy, it suffers from chronic underdevelopment, with poverty rates (43%) significantly exceeding the provincial average. The research further maps the transition of the movement from a cultural mood to a structured political demand through the role of grassroots institutions like Saraiki Lok Sanjh. These organizations have fostered community resilience by standardizing linguistic identity and creating inclusive social networks among the middle and labor classes. The article concludes that the quest for a separate Saraiki province—accelerated by contemporary catalysts like the 18th Amendment—is not a threat to state integrity but a necessary mechanism for federal stability. By addressing regional grievances through decentralization, the state can transform ethnic friction into a source of democratic strength, ensuring a more equitable and inclusive future for the federation.

**Keywords:** Saraiki Movement, Internal Colonialism, Democratic Resilience, White Gold Paradox, Decentralization, Community Organizing.

Many ethnic groups in the world are demanding the recognition of their separate identity on the base of language and culture along with economic interests. For example, the Turkish community in Bulgaria, the suffering masses of Senegal, Mauritians, the drastic situation in the Soviet Republic of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan etc.(Inayatullah, 1997:1). Even in the Britain which appeared to have achieved national integration to a high degree, the Scottish and Welsh nationalist groups are getting strength and pressingly demanding the greater autonomy in their native regions is an open question. (Eriksen, 1990:2). Besides, there are the Basque nationalists in Spain, the Eritreans in Ethiopia, the Kashmiris, Sikhs, Mezzo and Nagas in democratic and secular India. (Ahmad, 2000:182). Moreover, Sri Lanka faced Sinhalese and Tamil conflict. Besides, there are other movements like, Moros of Philippines and the Tibetan insurrection in the People's Republic of China. (Seavaratnam, 1989:28). The train of such cases is very long and a growing one. Pakistan has also undergone the bitter experience of Civil War in the East Pakistan which resulted in the break-up of the country. The fundamental questions behind the emergence of the struggle of an ethnic group are the acquisition of some basic rights and the

natural pull towards their language and identity. (Axmann, 2009: 7). So far as the ethnic issues in Pakistan are concerned. Pakistan is a gallery of a couple of ethnic identities expressed through the languages they speak e. g: Punjabi, Urdu, Balochi, Pakhtoon/ Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, Hindko, Baltic, Sheena, Brahvi etc. The fact influences the politics of Pakistan. It is worth noting that in this contest, the language plays a robust role for asserting their power and launching an ethnic movement with a view to determining their identity. Pakistan faced a serious threat for the integrity of the state as is seen in the Bengali language issue which, in the long run, gushed up to bifurcate Pakistan. Greetz (1963:109) writes that 'Language is the life blood of a people that welds them into a nation with a strong sense of identity removed from others'. In the contemporary era, these linguistic markers have transitioned from cultural symbols to primary drivers of democratic decentralization and community resilience within the Pakistani federation. This study, therefore, aims to analyze the variables involved in the genesis and growth of Saraiki nationalism between 1971 and 2012. While this study focuses on the formative arc ending in 2012—a year marked by peak legislative interest in South Punjab—the findings remain critical for understanding the current landscape of democratic decentralization in Pakistan. By examining the historical and cultural background of Saraiki language identity alongside the role of the intelligentsia and literary associations, this research concludes with an assessment of the movement's current status and its implications for provincial autonomy and power-sharing in the modern state.

The word nation has been originated from Latin means birth. At the very first it refers to the group having close kinship later on it extended to the phenomenon of beloved kinsmen having close relationship as a nation. With the passage of time the definition of nation extended to mean as a combination of groups without any condition of blood relation. So, nation refers to the people who are the subject to the same historical events. A nation has shared social values including geography, language and religion. The concepts of nation move around the common sharing which is mentioned above. Anderson who belongs to the modernist school of thought laid stress on the novelty of the nation. According to him nation is an "imagined community" which is the result of vast extension and expansion of the communication (Anderson, 1990: 5-7). He extends the idea of nation to as an 'imagined political community' both inherently limited and sovereign. (Anderson, 1990: 15). According to him nation is limited because it is bordered with other nation. Similarly it is sovereign because nation derives the legitimate and divine right from the creator (God). Furthermore, nation is imagined because the most the members of the nation do not even know each other. He is of the view that the decline in the sacred languages has created a wide space for the up rise of nationalism. As the middle class is more conscious of national interests on the basis of vernacular languages instead in the languages like Latin and Greek which are considered as the symbol of aristocratic classes. In this way the modern 'printing press' has played an important role in the formation of modern nation. (Anderson, 1990:94-95). In this way due to this revolution the members of the nation feel themselves as the contemporary of one another. In this way printed languages contributed an important role in the formation of nationalism. Along with the printed languages the other elements including words, maps, censuses and museums are also one of the other elements which are considered essential in the discourse of the imagined nations. While Anderson provides the psychological framework for an 'imagined' Saraiki identity, Michael Hechter's model of internal colonialism provides the material explanation for its political mobilization. Regarding the nationalism Michael Hechter is famous sociologist has contributed a lot in the contribution of nationalism mainly in the context of Great Britain. He has presented an assimilational view of nationalism. Hechter (1966:7) is of the view that 'from the interaction we will come to the commonality and ethnic homogenization'. He is against the diffusion theory of people and projected the notion of internal colonialism. He is of the view that ethnic unity is possible on the account of modernization and increased contact between the ethnic groups. In this way the inequalities between the ethnic groups can be conquered on the basis of nationalism. In

the shell of national identity and nationalism the hostilities can be relegated. Thus Hechter is of the view that although nationalism is a type of internal colonialism by it provides a strong stance of nationalism as a way of addressing the conflicts. Applying Hechter's model of internal colonialism to the contemporary Pakistani landscape reveals that Saraiki nationalism is not merely a cultural 'imagined community,' but a rational response to documented material disparities. The following sections provide the empirical evidence of this systemic marginalization through an analysis of provincial fund allocation and agricultural exploitation.

The constitution of Pakistan, though it is distorted and molested, guarantees the political, economical and cultural rights of the people. It guarantees for the equal distribution of funds opportunities for the better livelihood of the people of the urban and rural areas. It guarantees protection and promotion of the people's languages and cultures. A large number of UN conventions and Pakistan is also signatory of those, urges its member states to protect and promote political, economical and cultural rights of their people. To move from the theoretical model of internal colonialism to the empirical reality of the Saraiki Waseb, one must analyze the structural distribution of resources within the Punjab province.

Punjab, the largest Pakistani province has the population of 73.6 millions (population census 1998). With reference to language and geography, the province can be divided into three regions, i.e; the northern Punjab where Pothohari is spoken, the central Punjab is the house of the Punjabi language, whereas the southern Punjab has the Saraiki as the language of its local folks. We see polarization in the northern and the southern parts of the province i.e; the former is developed with an active participation in the state machinery and business, whereas the southern Punjab is awfully backward. Besides, we also see a great majority of the civil-military officers, administrators and business tycoons from the central and the northern Punjab together form the Punjabi ruling group (Shackel, 1977:383). Southern Punjab remains structurally underdeveloped and systematically marginalized. The development of any area depends on the developmental funds allocated by the government in the annual budgets. The funds received by the Saraiki region are also critically low from the allocated funds of central and northern Punjab (popularly the term used for central and northern Punjab jointly as the Upper Punjab). The annual developmental program (ADP) funds are the most important funds and they are divided amongst the districts on the basis of the population and the backwardness. Throughout the establishment of Pakistan, the funds for the Saraiki speaking areas have always been allocated less than the deserved share. Therefore, the Saraiki region has been remained underdeveloped. The following table shows the allocation of ADP funds for the Saraiki region from 2005-2011.

**Table No. 2.3 Annual allocation of funds**

Financial year	Total volume of ADP (million RS .)	Allocation To 11 Districts of South Punjab (million Rs.)	Allocation To 11 Districts of South Punjab %
<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>63.000</b>	11.790	18.714
2006-2007	100.000	17.760	17.760
2007-2008	150.000	22.040	14.693
2008-2009	160.000	25.700	16.063
2009-2010	172.000	41.880	24.349
2010-2011	182.000	52.819	29.021

Source: Report on Southern Punjab, (2010: 6)

Comparing the funds with the population of the Saraiki area shows that the allocation of funds are very low than the population of the Saraiki area. This percentage has increased after 2009 and has reached its maximum of 29.02% in year 2010 – 2011 but still it is low than the population percentage which was 31.57% in the year 2010. (Report On Southern Punjab, 2010: 9). According to the report, the Saraiki region, being less developed is mainly due to the allocation of scanty amount of the development funds. In proportion to the population of the area, the allocation of funds is pathetically low as shown in the table given above.

The Saraiki activist Z. A. Dhareeja (2011: 32) criticizes the annual budget for 2010 – 2011 that 52 billion have been allocated for the Saraiki region from 193 billion of development fund. Maximum budget is allocated in any country or any province for under developed and marginalized districts. In this respect, 141 billion for the marginalized districts of the Saraiki region and 52 billion for the developed Punjabi speaking areas of upper Punjab were to be allocated from the 193 billion of the development fund. But here the tables have been turned.

We can study the previous budgets regarding the allocated budgets for the development of the Saraiki region. Expect the marginalization of the areas Cholistan, Thal and Daman speaks for their deprivation. The federal and the provincial governments of Pakistan kept marginalized of the Saraiki speaking areas. In the era of Z. A. Bhutto, the institution of Cholistan Development Authority (CDA) established. During the past years, the institution made 250 tobbaz (a long stitches), 100 Kund (pool), established 100 primary schools and constructed 70 km road. This is the result of excellent performance of the last century that the majority of those people is ignored of the presence of this institution for whom sake this was established. (Malik, 2004:11). The budget of this institution is decreasing consecutively and non development budget is increasing continuously. The budget is not allocated for many years. The rulers remain so much busy in their personal and family works of development that even they do not think about the deprived class of these under developed areas. That is why when the resources would be under the industrialist, capitalist and feudal classes, than economic disaster cannot be stopped. Then, rich would be richer and the poor would be poorer. That is why deprivations and economic disaster in the Saraiki region can easily be understood. Cunning politicians and dictator mind have pushed the people towards economic and social problems. The rulers made five year plans to make the lot of the poor but they did not apply it ever.

The Saraiki sentiment was started during 2009 upon the perceived injustice 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 million loans 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 (Saraiki region). Out of 18 projects, 8 were started in the central and northern Punjab. Likewise out of the 20 million taken as a loan from the Asian Development Bank, only one 37 km road project was started on the Multan- Muzaffargarh road. (Klasra, 2009: online document). Allocation of mere Rs.5 billion in Punjab Rs. 490 billion 2009-10 budgets for the Saraiki region is also cited to further the grievances. (Awan, 2010: online document).

There was lack of educational facilities in the Saraiki region for a long time, in which the great hindrances were the absence of communication resources. The people of the Saraiki areas were remained deprived from getting the education. In the seventeen districts of the Saraiki region, there are only four medical colleges while thirteen medical colleges are established in the fifteen districts of the upper Punjab. Above 20 universities have established in the Upper Punjab but only two universities Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan and the Islamia University Bahawalpur were established in Z.A Bhutto Era in 1975. The demand of the people of Saraiki region for the

establishment of more technical and professional institutions was very old. But after the long period, Women University Multan established in 2012. The plan of the Women University was the old demand of the natives of the Saraiki region. But the Punjab Govt. has materialized it in a way that they awarded a girls degree college the rank of Women University which was situated in the heart of the city where thousands girls were getting education and they declared the staff there as university staff. They did not consider the difference between college and university staff. At once, they replace the introductory board of girls degree college by Women University and in this way University came into being and they deprived the daughters of thousands laborers of education of college level which was present at their door step. (Daily Khabrain Multan, 18 Oct 2016). At the time, different civil forums consulted the high court. In this way, Punjab govt. issued a press release regarding the issuance of the notification under the pressure of the civil society. But still media person, civil society and University administration did not receive that notification. In 2012, 18.889 million were allocated in the annual development funds but released only 10 million while 88 million and 89 thousand are not spent from the allocated fund for this University. (Baloch & Rizvi, 2015:10).

The Ghazi University established in 2014 in Dera Ghazi Khan Division with the same planning of Women University of Multan. The Punjab govt. occupied the some part of land of post graduate college Dera Ghazi Khan and the land of sub campus Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan for the establishment of Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan. The buildings of the both institutions also defunked in the university area.

Although, the Saraiki region is an agricultural land, but there is no agricultural university in this region. The Nawaz Shareef University of Engineering and Technology Multan also established in 2009 still functioning in the building of Technical college of Multan with the incomplete staff. However, the funds allocated in the annual budgets but the land for the university building has not even purchased because the funds have not released by the government of Punjab. (Baloch & Rizvi, 2015:10).

Compared to the upper Punjab, the health facilities are in the worse condition in the saraiki region out of the total 326 hospitals of the Punjab, only 86 are located in the saraiki region that makes up 26.38 percent of the total hospitals. (Development funds for southern Punjab, 2010:13). This situation points a diagnostic figures at the unjust distribution of the hospital in the province of Punjab where 48.5% area and 31.75% of the population are served by only 26.38% of the hospitals. Even these hospitals are in patheticallly managed. The ratio of a doctor to the number of population is awefully painful. (Report on Southern Punjab, 2011:8).

Important human needs also ignored in every province of Pakistan. Due to the fact most part of the country resources is gone in the hands of the exploited forces. Today, most areas are present in Pakistan where water is polluted in the different ways, due to which different kinds of diseases are created. One segment of the society is present who is deprived of water of puddles and they have to bring water from a considerable distance to quench their thirst. Similarly providing of water is very tough and laborious work on many places in the Saraiki areas. Whether, these are the hilly areas of Dera Ghazi Khan, Taunsa, or the deserts of Thal, Daman and Cholistan, animals and human beings drink water from the same place.

Due to this, disease of "Narwa" (Guinea worm) is produced. Due to which a worm is produced in muscles of leg which makes the disable from walking. (Ahmad, 1988: 157). Besides, many diseases are produced. On many occasions government announces different projects for the availability of purified water but it seems doomed in running these projects practically. The economic well being of any region is directly dependent on the industries in that region, since the industries provide employment to skilled and unskilled labor and cause a boost in regional markets. Unfortunately, Saraiki region is deprived of much industrialization. Before the creation of Pakistan, "between" 1920-30, only five industrial units were registered in the district of Multan,

whereas four were registered in Faisalabad, as compared to eleven in the Lahore district. In the decade of 1930s, not a single unit was registered in Multan as compared to one in Faisalabad and six within the Lahore districts.

Between 1941-50, ten units were established, out of which six were set up before 1947. (i.e. only four units were registered after partition). In the same period, ten new units were registered in Faisalabad, of which nine were set up in 1947. Lahore district however attracted more investment, which can be judged from the registration of 29 industrial units. (Khan, 2004: 71). Not only Multan but the discriminations facing the entire Southern Punjab as compared to the upper Punjab may be discerned in the following table.

**Table No. 2.4 COMPARISION OF INDUSTRIAL UNITS**

Decade/Years	District Multan	District Faisalabad	District Lahore
1920-30	5	4	11
1931-40	0	1	6
1941-50	10	10	29
1951-60	24	74	111
1961-70	48	63	72
1971-80	103	204	232
1981-84	85	73	171

Source: Akram Mirani (1987: 94), Saraiki Des, Lahore

After the creation of Pakistan, in the presence of capitalist economic form industrialization, the industrialist went to those areas which were already developed whereas more and more benefits could be got thorough the investment. The developed areas were in the upper Punjab after Karachi was become more developed and the industry became limited to those areas. The industrial units set up in the Saraiki region were limited to Multan, Muzaffargarh and Rahimyar Khan. Akram Mirani (1987: 98) quoted from the statistics of 1984 that the Saraiki region, excluding Dera Ismael Khan, had only 22.88% of total industry whereas the Census report 1981 reveals its population as being around 20.00 millions. The population of Lahore district was, meanwhile, only 3.55 million, but encompassed 25.59% of the total industry in the Punjab with 53.67% industry set up in three districts Lahore, Gujranwala and Faisalabad. Recently, according to the report on Southern Punjab (2010: 9), out of 6712 industrial units in the Punjab only 1837 are located in the Southern Punjab, which is only almost 26% of the Punjab for a region with population 31.57% of Punjab. This indicator, hence, describes the reason for a low standard of living and ascending poverty in the Southern Punjab.

Many industries can be established in the Saraiki region if the government provided the investors a tax free zone and zero duty areas on lease for a period of at least ten years. These demands have gone unheeded, and private investment in the in the region remains below the target. Most of the investors prefer other areas where they provided the land on cheap rates. (Ahmad, 1988:160). Some local industrialists suggest the setting up of both medium and heavy industry's adjacent to the export processing zone (EPZ). Though approval is made, yet no EPZ exist in Bahawalpur, except such a one near Rahimyar Khan District of Bahawalpur Division. (Gill, 2002: 13). On the suggestion of Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce, the government survey for an industrial estate on 500 acre land at Mauza Jugiat peer adjacent to Lal Sonhara near Bahawalpur Hasilpur Road. To date, no set up has been taken to implement this plan. (Gill, 2002: 13). Hussain Ahmad Khan in his book Re- Thinking Punjab (2004: 74) quoted the views of Mehmood Hayat ( He was the former MPA and advisor of Chief Minister of Punjab) that he blames Punjabi industrialists along

with the Saraiki feudal lords, for dispiriting the establishment and discouraging industrialization in the Saraiki region. He points to several development plans for Saraiki region that were stalled due to the intervention of local landlords.

It is a realistic fact that if the cotton and agricultural industry will get a boost and the Saraiki people will benefit from their own resources rather than the other areas of Punjab. Economy and economic condition can be source of ethnic identity. It is the economic conditions that give rise to privileged and deprived class. Economic conditions determine the class of ethnic group on one side, and itself is one of the main causes of the ethnic behavior. The economy of the Saraiki region is generally based on agriculture, livestock and agro related trades and professions. But the unmindful policies of the state and by denying the rights of representation to the people to decision-making forums, which again comprise of the ruling class, the economy of the Saraiki area has been ruined.

The agriculture once contributed more than 40% to the GDP which has now declined to about 24%. The agricultural growth rate has fallen to 2% and in some years to less than 1% from once 6 to 7 percent. Generally, the farmers are under the burden of debt. The agricultural loans which were Rs 72 crore in 1985, have risen up to more than Rs 15 billion in 2000-2001 that is about 1600% rise in loans. The informal credit to the farmers which had declined to 41% in 1985 again rose to 76% in 1990 and 78% in 1996. The indebted farmers are forced to sell their lands and other assets and migrate to other places. (Kanju, 2004: 2). The families owning huge lands, are now selling or giving their hands on lease which promises a new development and change in the scenario of the land ownership and thereby independence, of the small land holders, of the feudal lords. (Khan, 2004: 74-75). But the prices of agricultural products (particularly cotton and sugarcane) are manipulated by the industrialist belonging to the ruling elites due to the state policies and its agreements, the river are also dry and the profits are drying up for big land holders. The people who were once rich with agricultural resources are now living below the poverty line due to the loss in cultivation.

The main desert of the Punjab Cholistan and Thal are located in the Saraiki region and life in the area is also like living in desert. The above 37 million acres of land has its under cultivation portion of only 17 million across of which only 10 percent is irrigated. Forest is about non-existent. (Monthly Diplomat January, 1994). The Saraiki Number of Urdu weekly "Pachadh" published from Rajanpur reported that the 70% of the revenue in the Punjab province is generated by the Saraiki area but the budgetary allocations are always less than 10% regarding the population at the status of cave age man. It argues that about the ten million acre of the unirrigated land in the region. If turned into an under cultivation area can produce the crop of volum "which would enable Pakistan to export food item.

Since poverty alleviation is considered as an important issue of economic development in the literature, attempts have been made to alleviate poverty by increasing the level of income of households. It has also been the declared goal of every government policy in Pakistan. Nevertheless, most of the efforts have been made to alleviate poverty in Pakistan at macroeconomic level in terms of sustainable economic growth, facilities of job creation by improving the functioning of labor market, provision of high quality health and education services, provision of infrastructural facilities and safety nets in times of natural and financial crisis. However the least emphasis has been placed at micro or regional level poverty alleviation. Pakistan has 67.5% of its population residing in the rural areas. Since poverty in Pakistan is largely a rural phenomenon. Punjab accounts for almost 56% of the country's population. About 36% of its rural population is poor which stands on the second highest in the provinces of the Pakistan. However, Southern Punjab reveals of poverty (40%) not significantly lower than the rural Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa and Balochistan provinces. (Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2002). It is also recognized in the report of international fund for agricultural development (IFAD) 2001 on the

rural poverty that it is more sensitive and chronic in the areas of Southern Punjab Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan.

Southern Punjab (Saraiki region) has a high percentage of 43% living below the poverty line with poor health, education and clean drinking water facilities. ( A Discussion Paper, 2010:13). According to the Bureau of Statistics Development of Punjab ( BSDP), 2010, in Dera Ghazi Khan Division 50.8% , Bahawalpur 39.86% and Multan 38.91% population living below the poverty line. Most of the cotton growing districts in the Saraiki region Lodhran, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan and Muzaffargarh are highly deprived over all and have low employment ranks and also fall in the category of high deprivation. ( Chaudhary, 2009: 6). Comparatively, the peoples of the Saraiki region are living in the worst condition. They have severe problems regarding their average income, human capital asset; access to public services, and of course, the quality of life. The differences have made the Saraiki region backward while the Upper Punjab has become more urbanized. The following table shows clearly the income and expenditure per- capita within Punjab.

**Table No. 2.5 Per Capita Income and Expenditure in the Punjab Region**

<b>Table: Per Capita Income and Expenditure in the Punjab Region North Punjab</b>	<b>Centre Punjab</b>		<b>South Punjab</b>	<b>West Punjab</b>
Mean Household P.C.E*	1264	1181	901	886
Mean Household P.C.E Rural	1080	1002	777	813
Mean Household P.C.I**	1551	1580	1274	1090
Mean Household P.C.I Rural	1204	1329	1121	1003

Source: Hashmi and Majeed, Saraiki Ethnic Identity: Genesis of Conflict with State, (2014: 11).

The differences also exist in the pattern of employment. There is a higher ratio of adult working as labour. Contrary to this, the people of the Northern Punjab have greater access to the government employment and the private industry, and are also very well connected with the international market. (Punjab Development Statistics, 2005). Apart from these differences between the upper region and the lower region (Saraiki region) of Punjab Province, there are certain intra regional differences. Therefore, the poor and miserable people of the Saraiki region feel a dire need of their separate Saraiki ethnic identity in the form of a separate unit which can uplift their poor condition. In fact, through their ethno linguistic identity they want to get their due rights. So, the economic need becomes a driving force for the deprived Saraiki community to fight for ethno linguistic identity.

Punjab is the most populous and relatively developed and prosperous region of the country. Its predominance in ‘armed forces and to a lesser extent in the civil bureaucracy’ has been perceived by smaller units as ‘Punjabization’ (Talboot, 2002: 215). Although Saraikis are being dubbed as Punjabi are not trusted by Punjab itself and are deprived of job opportunities and remained in the under representation in the state institutions that matter.

The president of National Saraiki Party Abdul Majeed Kanjoo in his article “ Call For Saraikistan” (2004:3) writes that you can find only few Saraiki senior bureaucrats in Islamabad and Lahore. There are 38 judges in the Lahore High Court but only 3 are Saraiki. Bureaucrats from Punjab in grade 17 to 22 are now 14000 out of which Saraikis are due to be 8400 according to the percentage on the base of population. But they are not more than 1000.Regarding the Supreme Court, no

permanent Judge has been inducted from Saraikis in 57 years. Saraiki people are almost completely neglected in the government bodies and forums which decide the fate of the people. He further writes that we do not know who plans for us and how. We are not involved in planning of the development scheme, for deciding the prices of our products or for preparing the projects of linguistic and cultural promotion. Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi (ex- chief minister of Punjab province) recently announced the establishment of the institute of Punjabi Language and Culture. However, after realizing that the non- Punjabis in Punjab might show their resentment against the decision, it has been named as the Punjab Institute of Language, Art and Culture. But this all was decided in Lahore.

There is no attempt to redress the balance and improve the representation from other parts of Punjab. Today, Punjab has nine divisions with 96.6 million people, including 32 million people residing in three divisions of Saraiki region. It is 31.26 percent of the total population of Punjab, but their share in the federal services is just nine percent. There are 1086 officers from the Punjab in all the Pakistan unified group, including 338 from Lahore ( 31%), 149 from Gujranwala, 146 from Rawalpindi, 129 from Faisalabad, 105 from Sargodha, 63 from Sahiwal, 73 from Multan ( the third largest populated division of the Punjab), 43 Dera Ghazi Khan and 73 from Bahawalpur. Three division of the Saraiki belt have just 157 officers out of 1086 which makes it 14.5 percent instead of the 31.26 percent is entitled to. In the provincial government services, nine divisions have 127,876 government employees. Six divisions have 109,505 government employees but only 18,131 are from three divisions of the Saraiki region. (Hussaini, 2013: online documents).

The Saraikis have the grievances about the injustice in power sharing. They argue that they are not provided their due share in political, diplomatic and bureaucratic positions. They also resent their under re- presentation in the armed forces. (Mushtaq, 2012:58). The Saraikis are also deprived of jobs not only in the government sector, too but in private sector, even in the Saraiki area, which is obviously controlled by the Punjabi establishment. According to the report of the Development Funds for South Punjab (2010:13) that from 2004 to 2008 there has been 31% industrial growth in Punjab, in 2004, Punjab had 6,521 factories and 594,909 labor force. Out of 6,521 factories, 1,407 were in South Punjab and 106,985 was the number of labor force in Punjab. In 2008, Punjab industrial base grew to 8,549 factories out of which 1,837 were based in South Punjab with a labor force of 128,994.

To date job opportunities and promotions to government posts remain the problem of the Saraiki region. A grade 19 officer of any department working in the Saraiki region, on request of anonymity, clearly blamed the bureaucratic hurdles in the promotions of the officers of the government to higher ranks. The officers cited many examples from this region who were not given their due promotions by the establishment in Lahore. Almost every government department has established its head quarter in Lahore.` consequently, the poor people of the Saraiki region have to go to Lahore to address their petty problems, even for getting the furniture for their office, or for the transfer from one ward of hospital to another ward of the same hospital. (Khan, 2004:69).

If analyzed the issue of jobs, the province of Punjab was divided into two zone A and zone B in past. The developed districts of Punjab were included in zone A while in zone B with the under developed districts of Saraiki region (South Punjab) the under developed districts of Upper Punjab were included also and now the policy of separate zones has been ended by the government. Due to this, the youth of the deprived districts face problems in securing good jobs. Moreover, Land problem is another one of the responsible factors contributing to aggravate the Saraiki ethnic issue. The allotment of lands to the non- Saraikis and depriving the natives has enhanced the ethnic awareness. One of the big demands of the Saraiki nationalist parties and writers in that this injustice should stop and the land should be allotted to the natives. On the importance of this topic, the literature of the Saraiki language and political parties can be viewed.

In order to expand their developing Indus Trait structure and meeting other needs, the British started transforming the great continent into colonies. Then, for the rapid achievement of their goals, they introduced the system of inhibition in the inner India. Different inhibited lands were allotted to their favorite feudal lords. Farmers were imported from other areas to cultivate the lands neglecting the natives. Due to these schemes, the natives were kept from the lands and alongwith this, such fertile areas emerged which attracted the faithful of the British. (Mirani, 1994: 30-31). Besides, in order to up lift the morale of their troops and accommodate them, the British Govt. introduced, “The Punjab Alienation Land Act” in 1900 AD. Under this policy the govt. would allot the ten percent of the newly found tillable land to the army. Later, the British govt. brought in the “Colonization of Land Act”, according to which, in Punjab, the faithful civilians and the army personals were allotted lands in this area, which strengthened the feudal system. (Awan, 2009: 149). Under this act, inhibition in the Punjab started in a large scale. In 1886-88, canal colonies took a start. Their detail is given in the table as under.

**Table No. 2.6 Colonies of British Period**

Sr.No	Name of Colony	Period	Doaab	District	Name of Canal	Expenditures
1	Sidhnai	1886-88	Bari	Multan	Sidhnai	1,301,000
2	Sohag Parah	1886-88	Bari	Montigmiry (Sahiwal)	Lower Suhag Parah	1,803,000
3	Choniyan	1896-98	Bari	Lahor	Upper Bari Doaab	--
4	Chenab	(1892-1905)  (1926-30)	Rachna  //	GujaranWala Jhang,Layal Pur,Lahore, ShekhuPura	Lower Chenab  //	53,072,000  //
5	Jhelum	1902-06	Jach	Shah Pur, Jhang	Lower Jhelum	43,613,000
6	Lower Bari Doaab	1914-24	Bari	Montigmiry  Multan	Lower Bari Doab	25,086,000
7	Upper Chenab	1915-19	Rachna	Gujaran Wala Shekhu Pura Sial Kot	Upper Chenab	43,596,000
8	Upper Jhelum	1916-21	Jach	Gujrat	Upper Jhelum	49,770,000
9	Neeli Bar	1926-X	Bari	Montigmiry Multan	Satluj Valley Project	83,787,000

Source: Akram Mirani, (1994:46), Greater Thal, Jhok publishers Multan

Due to these colonies, the govt. earned 33 crores of rupees in a year, that later reached 49 crores a year. In the construction of establishing these colonies was the project of a development of “Thal”. The British govt. introduced “Sind Saagar Do Aab Act” in 1912, to irrigate this vast area of Saraiki region (South Punjab), under which an accord was made with the local population which reads, in the appointed time frame, the govt. would manage to provide water to ‘Thal’ through Thal canal with water of the river Indus, and against this, she will receive  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total

land. However, the govt. failed provides money for this project due to the First World War. And, ultimately the “ Sind Saagar Do Aab Act” was abolished in 1932. ( Mirani, 1994: 32-33).

After the creation of Pakistan, the process of settlement of the migrants took place rapidly. This way, these vast deserts and arid zones of the Saraiki region also suffered which continues to date. Lacs of acres of land were allotted to the settlers depriving the local population. This resulted in the settlers getting stronger and stronger economically, when the indigenous people were given to the economic deprivation. This growing sense of economic deprivation engendered the sense of ethnicity among the Saraikis. (Ahmad, 1988:150). In order to understand the “Land Problem” in the Saraiki region it is necessary to throw light separately on the lands allotted to the non- Saraikis in Thal, Daman and Cholistan areas.

The vast area Thal spans from Mianwali to Muzaffargarh on the eastern side of the river Indus is called ‘Thal’. After the creation of Pakistan, the govt. of the Punjab presented “Thal Development Act” in 1949, on the pattern of the abolished ‘ Sind Saagar Do Aab Act’ in order to allot lands to the settlers in this area. The purpose of this act was the allotment of the migrants and other non-Saraikis in the area that was meant to develop and be provided with irrigation water soon. In order to get this act implemented, an authority was created called “Thal Development Authority” (TDA). (Mirani,1994: 33-34). Per suing this, at different times, the govt. acquired through notifications, 2 lacs, 71 thousands and 269 acres of land from the local people. This land had long been in the utilization of the govt. But, the Thal canal that is given to the districts of the area is still incomplete (the canal would provide with thousands qeusks of water). (Malik, 2010: daily Khabrain). Hence, the Thal canal did not enhance the tillable area of land, when the canal irrigated area has reached to lacs of acres. The allotments and distribution of lands has become more attractive due to the canal system. The system started in Thal in 1952 with the construction of Jinnah Barrage at Mianwali where the Thal canal was drawn. Now the total length of canals in Layyah is 60103 miles when it has two divisions. A great numbers of Gujjars and Arains from Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sahiwal is the settler in Thal area. The TDA distributed more than 6 lacs acres of land to these settlers. This injustice was strongly felt by the local population, who called “TDA” Thal development scandal. (Tabish, 2014:109).

Ghulam Abbas Sial writes in his book “ Dera Mukh Saraikistan” referring to the Punjab Board of Ravenue (2010: 15) during 1981, 1994, 1999 and 2000, one lac and fifty thousands of acres of land were allotted only in one ‘ Rukh’ of the district Bhakar, to vacate this land, the centuries old local inhabitants were out casted. Against this act, a protest was made at Chowk Munda and Chowk Azam in district Layyah which was ignored by the authority. The settlement in the Thal area continues even today. Now the whole Thal has got under the influence of the authoritative Punjabis and the military personals, when the true inheritors of the area have been deprived of their meadows. This has also casted injurious effects on the economic lives of the Thal residents. The settlement in Thal could become possible via bureaucracy and establishment. The high officers from these departments helped their relatives settle here. The influence of the local Saraiki folks is little in the govt. Departments and upon officers. Hence, they were given lesser piece of land from the authority. Then they had to face the courts, for years, in pursuit of obtaining claims of their share. This area spans along the western bank of the Indus River in Koh-i-Suleman from Kafar Kot (Gomal Valley) to Kashmor. Whereas, Dera Ismael Khan in the north to Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur in the south. In this area lie the Dhundi State and the Bruce Abad State. Most of the lands in Daman were occupied by the British govt. During 1902 to 1905 and was administratively divided into different RUKHS, called the northern and southern RUKHS. The northern RAKH comprised Dera Ismael Khan, Bannu, Tank, Kulachi and Tehsil Taunsa. Whereas, the southern RAKH consisted of district Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur. The lands of these RAKHS were owned by the local Saraiki folks. But, initially the British govt. imposed a minor

tax “Tirni” on them and later, due to nonpayment of the tax, usurped the land. Thus, by the partition of India, these lands of the local people came to be known as the govt. Owned lands.

The settlement of lands in Daman started in 1965 during the Ayub Khan regime. He revived the British Law “Colonization of Land Act 1912” and allotted thousands of acres of land to bureaucrats and army personals for five to fifty thousand rupees per acre, when from legal point of view, the lands were the property of the indigenous people. This block law of the British period has not yet changed. And, since 1980, the land acquisition has become more systematic. (Sial, 2010: 155-56). With the inception of Chashma Right Bank canal project, the Pakhtoon leader Mufti Mehmood made general Zia abolish the “Land Ordinance” in 1980, paved the way for tribal Pakhtoons to settle in Daman. The abolishing of the land ordinance is considered the greatest corruption in Dera Ismael Khan. During the Zia regime, the allotment of houses and lands to the army personals was managed. Under this scheme a furnished house was also given to the army men on their retirement. (Sial, 2010: 156). From the period of general Zia upto the just before the martial law of General Pervaiz Musharaf 5,1000 acres of land were allotted to the rate of Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 per acre when the market rate was not less than 2.5 lacs per acre even at that time. Suppose the rate was 2 lacs per acre, and then the total sum reaches Rs. 127,750000000. (Awan, 2010: 158).

In 2002, the Pervaiz Musharf’s regime holds historical importance with reference to the allotment of the lands of the Saraikis. In order to accomplish the allotments, MMA (Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal) was crafted. The agencies served for the victory of MMA. Through the results of MMA, five members of Maolana Fazal-ur-Rehman’s family were inducted into the assembly. The seventeenth amendment was easily passed in the assembly with the help of MMA and support to the martial law was improvised. Proving his alliance, the then Chief Minister of MMA, handed over the land to army through a special NOC, when legally the land can only be passed on to the local tillers of Daman. As a reward to this favor, G.H.Q allotted 600 kenals to Fazal-ur-Rehman’s family and 600 kenals to Chief Minister Muhammad Ali Durani. Besides, another 600 kenals were gifted to the ex- Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa Akram Durani. This way many political allies were obliged with thousands of acres of land for Rs. 200, as annual fee, which well nigh accommodated the politicians. (Sial, 2010: 158-60).

Likewise, 7000 acres of land were allotted to the army personals in Ramak ( tehsil Taunsa) during the Pervaiz Musharaf’s regime, whereas, so far, the Punjabis and the ‘Changars’(a caste) are allotted 63890 acres of land in Dhandi and Bruce Abad States. A village is there with the name 2RD, of which the complete lands are allotted to the Punjabi settlers. (Tabish, 2014: 150).a very low share is also given to the local people. Like Thal and Daman, Cholistan also spans over a wide area those measures 10,399 square miles. This desert comprises Bahawalnagar, Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalpur. (Bahawalpur Gazetteer). With the introduction of irrigation system under Satluj Valley project, the land of Cholistan caught sight of the civil and military bureaucracy, army officers and the politicians. The Punjabi settlers and other non- natives were allotted lands under the different schemes, are named as under;

1. Shahi Muzarea (royal peasant) scheme.
2. The affectees of Muzaffargarh canal.
3. The affectees of Okara Cantt.
4. The affectees of Pat Feeder Baluchistan.
5. The affectees of Lal Sohanrah park.
6. Land reforms scheme.

Under the scheme mentioned first, which was launched by the Nawab of Bahawalpur, 863 people were allotted 41800 acres of land. Under the second scheme, 164 people were given 2225 acres

of land, under the third scheme; 4464 acres of land were allotted to 357 people. The fourth scheme came with the allotment of 6012 acres of land to 481 people. Under the fifth scheme, 787 acres of land were allotted to 132 people. And, under the land reforms scheme, 1790 people got 22375 acres of land. (Tabish, 2014: 120). Later, the scheme “Grow More Food” was introduced in 1959-60. Under this scheme, 31041 acres of land were allotted to 2091 Punjabi settlers. After the establishment of “Cholistan Development Authority”, another scheme named “Aarzi Kaasht Lease Scheme” was introduced in 1970-71. Under this scheme, 25475 acres of land were allotted to 2038 settlers. After this, “Aarzi Kaasht Fifteen Year Scheme” was introduced in 1977-78 in which 11377 settlers got 141262 acres of land allotted on their names. Then, in 2005 “Five Years Aarzi Kasht Scheme” was introduced, under which 57075 acres of land were allotted to 4566 settlers. (Tabish, 2014: 121).

The 88 participants of the auction for the allotment of 1983 were allotted collectively 1100 acres of land in 2005. Apart from this, through Army Welfare Scheme, 133 soldiers were given 20390 acres of land. Thus, on the name of “Agri Graduate Scheme” 100 acres were allotted to 15 settler soldiers. The Lal Sonharah Park affectees were given 1013 acres in 2009. (Tabish, 2014: 121). During 1981 to 1989, thousands of acres of land were allotted to settlers and soldiers on 99 years lease for nominal price. Aisha Siddiqa writes in her book “Khaki Company” 2013, according to the govt. Record, the army illegally holds 99865 acres in Cholistan which include 5000 acres of forest department. Other than this stolen land, the govt. has already given 20000 acres to army on contract. And, the forces have further given this vast area of land to different people of elite on lease. To irrigate such huge area, water is also stolen on huge scale. e.g. the water of the Abbasia Canal, that carries water to Rahimyar Khan and Sadiq Abad, is stolen at places.

The allotment of the lands and properties of the Saraikis still continues. The previous govt. Of Mian Nawaz Shaeif has also allotted 7 Lacs of acres to the Arab Barons for corporate farming, besides the thousands of acres of land that he himself occupies. (Tabish, 2014:133-34). This time the solar energy project is going on 20 thousand acres which will produce electricity for the industry in Lahore and Faisalabad, leaving waste and pollution for the Cholistani folks. During the Pervaiz Musharaf regime, Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalpur districts for Rs. 12 per acre. During the year 1999-2000, near 120 army officers acquired lands at Cholistan with the approval of GHQ. In his regime, pieces of 200 and 400 Kanals of land were allotted. Sixty three high army officials are the beneficiaries of the 400 kanals plots with General Musharaf on top of the list, whereas, plots of 200 kanals were allotted to fifty four army officers. (Tabish, 2014: 129-134). Abdul Majeed Khan Kanju (2002: 6) president of Saraiki National Party quoted information disclosed in the Punjab assembly by the then provincial Revenue Minister, Chaudhary Muhammad Iqbal, 6150 military officers men were allotted 4,48,024 acres of agricultural land in Punjab (that is Cholistan and Thal) between 1952 to 1985. During the last twenty years, about 5 lac acres of land in Saraiki region have been allotted to the armed forces personals which according to a recent report include 100 senior officers from the rank of Brigadier to Generals including Gen. Pervaiz Musharaf, Gen. Aziz, Gen. Moin-uddin- Haider and Lt. Gen. Khalid Maqbool. They have allotted land in Cholistan.

So far three powers stand jointly responsible in the Cholistan and its backwardness. The Punjabi bureaucracy, army and local feudal lords are keeping the local people from basic commodities and human rights neglecting the services of Nawab Sadiq Abbasi. It is the same Cholistan which was considered to be rich and opulent due to the abundance of water in the River Satluj made the lands of the area barren making the people economically weak. If we calculated the allotted lands of the Saraiki region, it reaches 20, 00000 acres of land which were allotted to the officials and politicians at different periods of time.

In some districts of the area, on average 1,90,000 acres are distributed from 1965 to 2003, for Rs. 50 or 60 per acre. 18500 acres in Dera Ismael Khan, 173000 acres in Muzaffargarh, 153000 acres in Dera Ghazi Khan, 133000 in Rajanpur, 170987 in Vehari, 193676 in Pakpattan, 123793 in Multan, 143783 in Khanewal, 173407 in Sahiwal. (Tabish, 2014: 127). If one makes an accurate assessment the land and multiplies with the current price of the land, the amount reaches hundreds of billions, whereas the settlers and the civil military bureaucracies got these lands only for some carores. Recently, the army displaced the local people after allotment of 10,000 acres of land in RAKH Thal Aali, Maoza Abad, and Sadiq Abad, which prompted the sub organizations of Saraiki Lok Sanjh (peoples conservative society) like, 'Rakh- Bachao- Committee', 'Sindhu- Bachao- Tarla', 'Traimet- Sanjh' and Lok Saraiki Party to record strong protest. During the protest sit in the nationalists distributed pamphlets in which their demands were as follows:

1. The RAKHS of the area should be declared the ownership of the local people according to the land record of 1921-22, and its undue distribution should be stopped.
2. The land should be taken back from the illegal occupiers and handed over to the local people.
3. The lands given to non-native farmers under the land reforms scheme should be retained and water should be issued/ provided immediately to the 57 canals of the area. Besides, the half year running canals should be converted into the full time running ones.
4. The oppressive occupation in Thal, Daman and Cholistan should be stopped.

As a result of the settlement in the area, where the new cities emerged, roads were constructed and production increased, the settlers having different languages and cultures brought changes to the area's social set up and way of thinking. A new economic system sprang up, due to which new cultural, political and religious behaviors got birth which are growing and flourishing day by day. If one tries to understand the effects of this settlement, it can be said that it casted both positive and negative effects on the area. The positive effects include; the arrival of the capital, experienced tillers, workers and better technical experience. Whereas, the negative effects, if viewed carefully, constitute; the deprivation of the local people from their lands, suits in the court, corruption and monopoly etc.

Apart from this, the effects of the settlement in the area did not stop here; rather this settlement process deprived the area's settlements, villages and countryside history. The places were given new names e.g. Maoza Dullo Thatha became Chak no. 1, Lohanch Thal came to be known as TDA/ 150 A, Canal Thal became TDA/ 160, Peer Jagi got a new name TDA/170 and Soomra Thal was given the name of Shareef Arain. Later, some Mawazeates and local names were deprived of their geographical and cultural names and converted into Chaks which were further divided into circles e.g. circle no.1,2,3 etc. This caused a sense of identity loss among Saraikis.

The demand for a separate Saraiki unit "Saraikistan" was started in the decade of 1970 when the Saraiki activist Riaz Hashmi (1972: 22) suggests, 'the time is now set that a province known as SARAIKISTAN be established forthwith by adding the districts of Multan, Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan in the former state of Bahawalpur'. However, at this time, the demand of a separate SARAIKISTAN Province is on a full swing. The Saraiki literary, cultural and political groups are presenting a strong case for the establishment of fifth unit SARAIKISTAN on the Saraiki speaking districts of South Punjab. On the one side, the Saraiki community proposed the name of separate unit "Saraikistan" that will be the representative of the linguistic and cultural identity of the Saraikis and suggest Multan division as a provincial head quarter. On the other Side, the name 'Janubi Punjab' is being suggested to represent the South Punjab region. Some

intellectuals and the politicians suggested different names such as Suba Multan, Thal and Suba Bahawalpur etc. But the Saraiki intellectuals and the nationalists are not compromising with any other name except SARAIKISTAN. Due to this debate, the voice of new Saraikistan province has become the national issue in Pakistan. Hence, the issue of separate Saraiki unit is being raised at the different platforms of the country. Resultantly, a resolution was passed for the creation of Saraiki province in 2012 by the national and provincial assemblies of Pakistan. But it is not implemented by any government still and the Saraiki areas are the part of Punjab.

It goes without saying that destitution itself is a problem. But the tragedy is that with the passage of time, the problems of the Saraiki area got even worse and more complex, because neither the problems of the people were seriously thought upon, nor the representatives fulfilled their task. The resolutions and news, printed in the newspapers, mirror the above signified factors and demands like this:

1. Besides, all the resources of the Saraiki area, a substantial amount from the federal budget should also be allocated to provide basic commodities in the area.
2. The compensation for the wrong in the allotment of the lands of Cholistan should be made in the light of Ex. Managing director Baqir Ali Khan's report that lies in the govt. Record.
3. An inquiry should be conducted against the allotment of lands at Khanpur, Sadiqabad and Lyaqatpur.
4. The public should be made aware of the allotment of 48 lac 40 thousand kanals of land in eight districts of that the fraud of 14 lac and 40 thousand kanals of land at Dhandi State (Rajanpur) should be finished completely, for the chief minister of the Punjab Ghulam Haider Wain himself admitted the forgery of 33971 kanals act Rajanpur and 35920 kanals at layyah district. (In his statement published in the daily JANG dated 11-2-1992).
5. From the avaque properties; shops, houses and 92529 kanals of Khawaja Ghulam Farid, the total income should be spent to establish educational, vocational institutes and a grand scale cultural complex and academy.
6. The sectarianism and bloodshed be stopped in the Saraiki area.
7. The VC's of BZU, Gomal and the Isalmia University Bahawalpur should be chosen from the sons of the soil.
8. Braches of SBP should be established at Bahawalpur and Cholistan.
9. The sum earned from lending Cholistan to the Arab Shiekhs, is not shown in both the provincial and the federal budgets. This sum which amounts to more than one hundred crores should be spent only on Cholistan.
10. A bridge should be constructed between Kot Mithan and Chacran Sharif. Since two more bridges are being constructed on the river Ravi when already two bridges exist near Sukkar and another is under consideration.
11. The youth from the Saraiki area should be recruited in the army on priority basis.

But before the last some years the whole Saraiki area is badly suffering from a grave issue. The major part of the population is engulfed by unrest and serious problems. The demands and the resolutions have taken a new form. Who is there that does not know that cotton is the major crop of the country. It holds the status of the backbone for the country's economy. It is the white gold that the Saraiki area provides. The area where there is grown above 70% cotton of the country, its farmer has to purchase tractor and the agricultural tools at the global rate. The tiller has to suffer for the pesticides, seed and fertilizer. The prices of diesel and hi speed increased in daily basis. The farmer has to suffer at the hands of tehsil daar, qanoon go and patwari. Besides, the baron and the SHO of the area are such a nightmare for the poor peasant. And, when the crop ripens, at the cost of loans, the mill owner jumps to exploit his constraints.

These different variables of injustice and deprivation created the sense of Saraiki national consciousness among the Saraikis and led them to use the Saraiki language as the most powerful symbol to assert their separate linguistic and cultural identity along with the economic rights. They came to re- think about their language history and brought about new themes, trends and traces entered into the Saraiki literature, as the themes of love were replaced with a streak of resistance in the literature which introduced and inspired the writers to voice the issues of the Saraikis, which are also considered the food for Saraiki nationalist movement.

While socio-economic deprivation provided the grievance, institutional resilience was built through grassroots organizations. Saraiki Lok Sanjh (People's Co-operative Society) serves as the primary reference for this organized cultural resistance. Saraiki Lok Sanjh is a valid reference of the Saraiki nationalist movement. It was founded at Bangla Korai Tehsil Jampur district Rajanpur. (Elan-e-Bangla korai-te- Ain, 1985: 2). The meeting held on November, 7, 1985 at Bangla Korai is significant because of two reasons. First is, it was a very great meeting in which, about 10000 people assembled. The second one is, in this meeting, the whole Saraiki area represented. Saraiki is a movement. And, any movement carries a specific approach and ideology to the common people. Whereas, the political parties, take hold of their authority and give that thought and ideology, the administrative and legal form. Saraiki Lok Sanjh is like a movement for the recognition of Saraiki cultural identity. It is not the political party that usurps the authority; rather, it is a medium to propagate the Saraiki ethnicity. In it, there is no one greater and smaller, leaders and the follower, all enjoys the same equal status and equal chain. The task that the Saraiki Lok Sanjh undertook to strengthen the Saraiki ethnic awareness is as follows:

1. The search and publicity of the historical and cultural legacy of the area.
2. For the promotion of the Saraiki language, literature and culture, the awareness of reading and writing in Saraiki language.
3. To promote the heritage for the identity of the area and its freedom from the foreign cultures on such, a movement to launch. (Elan-e-Bangla- Korai-te-Ain, 1985: 5).

In the beginning, there have been two strains of thoughts in the Saraiki Lok Sanjh. One wanted to join it with the political process somehow and keeping it paralleled with the organizations working for the political rights for the Saraiki folks. This school of thought was led by Syed Zaman Jafery, while the other group aimed at keeping it delimited to the cultural bounds. This school of thought was headed by the president of Lok Sanjh Fida Hussain Gadi and the general secretary Mazhar Arif. Because of this ideological difference, the Saraiki Lok Sanjh took part, in the awakening of the ethnic awareness in the area, to a specific limit rather than making any great achievement. (Rasoolpuri, 2006: 35-36). Saraiki Lok Sanjh is a purely literary and cultural organization. It is not the cultural wing of any political party. Its basic teaching is to highlight the ethnic awareness and identity with the soil. The fundamental job of the Saraiki Lok Sanjh has done is to make many non – Saraiki speaking realize that now their identity is fixed with this new piece of land where they and their up-coming generations will live forever. Besides, it also have made them realize whether they be Saraikis or non Saraikis that after getting liberty from the exploiting stratum all the residents of the area will work together for the gradual betterment of the area. Lok Sanjh has played a vital role in spreading this approach.

As an organization, the Sanjh set up its units in the whole Saraiki area, that proper reports in the cities like, Rajanpur, Mehrey Wala, Rahimyar Khan, Bahawalpur, Multan, Shadan Lund, Dera Ismael Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Alipur, Layyah, Kot Adu, Karor Lal Esan, Chaobarh, ( Layyah dist) Lahore and Islamabad. Whereas, it's well wishers are there in Vihari, Mianwali, Bakhar, Muzaffar Garh and Taunsa. Some comrades from Karachi, Queta and Peshawar has a mind for representation. (Charter of Demand, 1989: 7). Even today, in most of the cities of the Saraiki area the units of Sanjh are working for a separate identity and political rights. The anti feudal, leftist

approach of the Sanjh makes other typify it to be the front desk of a socialist party. (Rahman, 2003: 185). An incidental pattern may be observed in Paleejo's Awami Party in Sindh, known for its anti feudal politics, whose political leaders hold that in case the Saraiki province is formed, the local feudal lords would reap the benefits of the new situation. Rahman Tariq (2003: 185) quotes the views of Mzhar Arif the founding general secretary of the Sanjh: "We want to end exploitation but are not the front organization of any political party. We do have contacts with the PNP (Pakistan National Party) and ANP (Awami National Party) since they both accepted ethno-nationalism. There was a meeting with the PNP in 1986 with Ghaus Baksh Bazenjo, and our own president Fida Hussain Gadi. The PNP agreed with our stand that Saraiki formed a separate nationality. They made a unit called the PNP Saraiki for Southern Punjab. The ANP also made their Saraiki unit in 1987 and Paleejo was part of it. All this makes us close to these two left leaning parties but we are in no sense their front organization". The Sanjh has a lot of members from the middle class and the lower class. Fida Hussain Gadi, a retired school master remained its head till 1988. He died in 1993. The Saraiki Lok Sanjh has associations with other leftist's parties, and participated in the progressive writers' conference (1986), which recognized Saraiki as one of the ethnic language of Pakistan. (Rahman, 2003: 185). The Sanjh has a strong role in beginning the people together through communication. The Sanjh has used the fairs held in the area for this union.

### **Conclusion**

The evolution of the Saraiki National Movement from 1971 to the contemporary era provides a profound testament to the endurance of linguistic identity as a shield against systemic socio-economic marginalization. As this research has demonstrated, the movement is not a peripheral ethnic agitation but a sophisticated response to "internal colonialism" and the "White Gold" paradox. By reclaiming their language from the category of a "dialect" and standardizing it through grassroots institutions like Saraiki Lok Sanjh, the people of the Waseb have constructed a resilient communal identity that transcends mere economic grievance.

The transition of Saraiki activism from cultural expression to a structured political demand—accelerated by catalysts like the 18th Amendment—highlights a mature model of ethnic persistence. The movement's consistent adherence to non-violent, constitutional pathways proves that the quest for a fifth federating unit is a mechanism for state stabilization rather than disintegration. Recognizing the administrative and linguistic rights of the Saraiki people is a prerequisite for dismantling the lopsided power structures that currently hinder national integration.

Ultimately, the Saraiki experience suggests that true democratic resilience is found at the intersection of cultural recognition and distributive justice. In a globalized world where localized identities are often suppressed by centralizing forces, the Saraiki movement offers a vital roadmap for how marginalized groups can utilize their heritage to negotiate for a more equitable, inclusive, and stable federal future. By addressing these regional disparities, the Pakistani state can transform long-standing ethnic friction into a foundation for lasting democratic strength.

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