

## The Dynamics of the Demand for Siraiki Province in Punjab, Pakistan: Horizontal Inequalities Perspective

Misbah Shaheen,<sup>1</sup> Amna Mahmood,<sup>2</sup> & Manzoor Ahmad Naazer<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract:

Though Pakistan faced severe ethno-nationalist conflicts since its inception, still one of its provinces (Punjab) succeeded in avoiding such ethnic violence. However, since 1970s, Punjabi vs. Siraiki friction is being witnessed. The latter complaints to be deprived, and dominated by the former. Existing literature indicates that the political exclusion, economic inequalities, social disparities, and ethno-cultural denial are the primary factors stimulating Saraikis to raise their voice for a separate province. The present study postulates a direct and positive correlation between the demand for Siraiki province and horizontal inequalities (HIs). The hypothesis was tested in two stages. At first stage, the data was analyzed (inferred from various published surveys and reports) to identify HIs (between South Punjab and rest of the province). At second stage, a public opinion survey was conducted in the region to authenticate the official source evidence. Statistical analysis of the field survey confirmed the positive relationship between the demand of a new province in South Punjab and HIs. Accordingly, the study concludes that HIs provided a solid basis to inter-group conflict earlier and for the demand of a new province later. The study suggests that state authorities should pay heed to the dilemma of HIs and the demand for Siraiki province to avoid unpleasant consequences.

**Key Words:** Siraiki Province, Dynamics, Punjab, Pakistan, Horizontal Inequalities

### INTRODUCTION

At the time of its inception, Pakistani federation encompassed four federating units (East Bengal, Punjab, Sindh, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) currently known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) since 2010), chief commissioner's Balochistan province, tribal areas and several princely states including Kalat, Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Amb, Hunza and Nagar (the latter two are part of Gilgit Baltistan). However, after East Bengal's separation, Balochistan became an entire province, and this way, the post-1971 Pakistan once again became a federation comprising of four units (Ahmar, 2016; Sandhu, 2015). All the provinces are diverse in their societal composition, having multiple ethnic groups; such as Sindh is the homeland of two major ethnicities; indigenous Sindhis and immigrants (Mohajir). Sindhi group is concentrated in rural Sindh, while Mohajirs live in urban areas. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), except Pakhtuns; a substantial number of Hindkowan live in Hazara and Kohat divisions. As far as the case of Balochistan is concerned, a significant majority of Pakhtun population is settled in the province in addition to distinct Baloch tribes. In Punjab, many Siraikis occupy Southern part (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019). The communities (Mohajir, Hindkowan, Pakhtun of Balochistan, and Siraiki) complain to be considered

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<sup>1</sup> Lecturer (Political Science), University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan./PhD Scholar (Political Science), International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: misbah.shaheen@uos.edu.pk

<sup>2</sup> Professor, & Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: amna.mahmood@iiu.edu.pk

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor and head, Department of Politics & International Relations, International Islamic University, Islamabad. Email: manzoor.ahmad@iiu.edu.pk

minorities in their provinces, resultantly not getting fair and equal treatment by provincial authorities.

Since decades, voice has been raised by Mohajir, Hazarawal, Siraikis, and Pakthun of Balochistan for the territorial readjustment of the existing provinces to establish their separate provinces either on ethnic and linguistic bases or on administrative grounds (Mushtaq, 2016). However, the demand for Siraiki province has become vocal among them; as it received political recognition at both the provincial and national level in 2012 (Mushtaq & Shaheen, 2017). A resolution about the creation of Siraiki province(s) was passed in Punjab provincial assembly and National Assembly.

The present study is focused solely on understanding the dynamics of the demand for Siraiki province in Punjab. In this regard, an effort has been made to explore the underpinned factors contributing to the demand of a separate province. The correct appraisal of the supporting factors would help devise the appropriate strategies to cope with the problem efficiently. The hypothetical scenario that has been developed to analyze the demand pattern of this movement is based on the theoretical assumptions of horizontal inequalities (HIs) propounded by Frances Stewart. That stresses the role of regional socio-cultural disparities and politico-economic inequalities in manufacturing such sentiments to beget ethno-nationalist movements earlier and to construct the demands of provincial autonomy and separate provinces later. Hence, it is pertinent to analyze HIs with their level of severity to investigate their effects on the demand of a separate province.

Data was collected in two stages to measure the impact of HIs on the demand of Siraiki province.. At first stage, the available reports published by official, semi-official and non-official sources were analyzed to find out the existence and the severity level of inequalities between the South and the rest of the Punjab. The factual evidence was collected through primary and secondary sources including, Punjab Development Statistics, District Census Reports, Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement surveys (PSLM), and Household Integrated Economic Surveys (HIES). At second stage, to corroborate and supplement the measurement analysis, a self-administered public opinion survey was conducted in the study area (Multan, Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan Divisions). Sample size was drawn by utilizing two-staged stratified random sampling technique. Four non-overlapping strata including academicians (teachers, and researchers), middle-class professionals (doctors, advocates, poets, writers, farmers and bankers), politicians, and journalists (analysts, newspaper editors, blog and column writers and reporters ) were designed at district level based on their proportion to the total population of the division. Then three sub-strata based on their linguistic identity were developed as per the number finalized at the first stage. The below-listed table portrays the process of sample size determination from the pool of the general population.

### Sample Size Determination Process

District	District Population as per 2017 national census	District Ranking in terms of population & %age in proportion to total population	Sample size based on district proportion to the total population	Division of that proportion into three categories based on respondents' linguistic identity (Punjabi, Siraiki, Others).
Rahim Yar Khan	4,814,006	1 <sup>st</sup> & 13.85%	150	40:93:17
Multan	4,745,109	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 13.65%	149	31:90:28

Muzaffargarh	4,322,009	3 <sup>rd</sup> & 12.43%	128	10:110:08
Bahawalpur	3,668,106	4 <sup>th</sup> & 10.55%	117	32:75:10
Bahawalnagar	2,981,919	5 <sup>th</sup> & 8.58%	96	90:04:02
Khanewal	2,921,986	6 <sup>th</sup> & 8.41 %	85	68:05:12
Vehari	2,897,446	7 <sup>th</sup> & 8.33%	85	70:10:05
Dera Ghazi Khan	2,872,201	8 <sup>th</sup> & 8.26%	85	02:68:15
Rajan Pur	1,995,958	9 <sup>th</sup> & 5.74%	66	03:50:13
Layyah	1,824,230	10 <sup>th</sup> & 5.25%	53	13:32:08
Lodhran	1,700,620	11 <sup>th</sup> & 4.89%	53	06:37:10
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,743,590</b>		<b>1067</b>	

Source: District census reports, 2017

The present study is organized into three sections. The first section explores the historical and political discourse of the demand for Siraiki province in South Punjab since its embryonic stage to present-day development. Generally, the three divisions; Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan, are known as South Punjab, hence this section briefs their journey to become the part of Punjab. The second section investigates the major factors aiding the development of Siraiki nationalist sentiments and to the demand of the formation of Siraiki province in the region. It presents an elaborative and extensive statistical analysis of the four-dimensional theory, “Horizontal Inequalities” being the fundamental factors to boost the demand of Siraiki province more vigorously. The last section concludes the study’s findings and recommends some possible ways to satisfy the demand of the region and to deal with the issue of the Siraiki province’s demand.

### THEORIZATION AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

The majority population has multiple identities, including region-based, profession-based, religion-based, and culture-based. The individuals who share common identities form groups and consider themselves distinct from others (Hamer, et al., 2018). The binding markers may range from cultural homogeneity to common ancestry. On a broader level, these distinct groups form societies; however, in some societies, they live peacefully, and in others, they face riots, violent conflicts, and civil wars between them (Stewart, 2002). Hence, it is pertinent to investigate the drivers of conflict among these ethnically distinct groups. The theoretical propositions of “Horizontal Inequalities” assert that when social, economic, cultural, and political inequalities persistently exist between the identity groups, a sense of deep resentment and marginalization is instigated. If not addressed adequately by the state authorities, it may lead to ethnic struggle, provincial autonomy, the demand of new constituent units and may even allure to violent conflict and civil war resulting into separatist and secessionist tendencies as it happened in Sri Lanka, Spain and Azerbaijan (Stewart, 2008).

HIs model refers to such types of inequalities found among those identity groups that are the inhabitants of a particular region, and different parts of the same region are getting different treatment from state authorities (Cederman, Weidmann, & Gleditsch, 2011). The problem while evaluating HIs in any country; is to fix the criteria for the formation and classification of groups. The most suitable classification contemplates the distinctions of identity that are substantial to people, in terms of their peculiar apparent identity and other’s perception about them. Some of the group categories are likely to be insignificant or temporary, for instance, specific club membership.

However, other group categorizations determine how individuals see themselves and how they are treated and interacted (Stewart, 2005).

Available research studies explore several reasons and origins of organized dissimilarities amid different religious, ethnic, and regional conflicts. They are associated with various aspects, such as climatological and ecological differences, natural resource endowments distribution, the derivative effect of colonialism, and several economic policies (Brown & Langer, 2008). In the global political discussion, the growing importance of inequalities has heated the debate about how to conceptualize inequalities in the present era. This complicated situation has raised two questions; what exactly is inequality? and inequalities between whom? (McDoom & Gisselquist, 2016). The term “Horizontal inequalities” was first conceptualized, presented, and developed primarily by Frances Stewart (2002). HIs are defined by Stewart & Langer (2006) as “the inequality amid culturally constructed or characterized groups,” and it is contrary to vertical inequality, which is defined as “the inequality amid individuals or households of the same group.” The political, social, and economic inequality amid ethno-linguistic groups within a country is horizontal inequality (Østby, 2008). “Horizontal inequalities” is a multidimensional theory including four facets; political horizontal inequalities (PHIs), Social Horizontal Inequalities (SHIs), Cultural Horizontal Inequalities (CHIs), and Economic Horizontal Inequalities (EHIs). These four aspects cover almost all types of inequalities and stress upon group-based inequalities, which is considered a prerequisite to induce group-based grievances that may become a source of ethnic conflict, political violence, and provincial autonomy movements, the demand of separate constituent units, and even of separatist propensity in some cases. Thereby, such identity-based socioeconomic conflicts are the most suitable variables to analyze the relationship between the demand of new constituent units (new provinces) and HIs in Pakistan. The demanding regions and groups in South Punjab (Siraiki), Hazara division (Hindkowan), Urban areas of Sindh (Mohajir) and Pakhtun of Northern Balochistan complaint to be socio-economically marginalized and culturally deprived by the other regions and groups. Therefore, the HIs theory framework fits best for the present study to investigate the correlation between the demand for Siraiki province and HIs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The politics of new provinces in Pakistan gained significant academic attention since 2010 when the former North West Frontier Province (NWFP was renamed as KP through 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment). The renaming process provided a sound justification to the stance of other ethnic groups demanding the territorial restructuring alongwith ethnic basis. Several studies are available on this scholarship (Zulfqar, 2012; Asghar, 2012; Ahmar, 2013; Soherwordi & Khattak, 2014; Ahmar, 2016; Mushtaq, 2016; Javaid, 2018; Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019). However, only a few studies (Sandhu, 2015; Mushtaq & Shaheen, 2017; Ullah, Khalid, & Hassan, 2017; Alvi, 2017; Asif, Naazer, & Ahmad, 2019; Shahzad, 2019) uniquely focused on understanding the dynamics of the demand for Siraiki province based on direct opinion of the region’s public (South Punjab). Hence, the present study significantly contributes to the existing literature based on the recent literature and the primary sources of data.

## **THE DEMAND OF SIRAIKI PROVINCE: GENESIS, AND DEVELOPMENT**

In 1955, Pakistan witnessed a unique experience of the One-Unit Plan. The three west provinces (Sindh, Punjab, and KP), Balochistan and princely states were merged into one unit that was called West Pakistan to meet the principle of parity with East Pakistan (previously known as East Bengal). The state of Bahawalpur was also integrated into West Pakistan, which till then was enjoying its autonomous status and had its own legislative assembly (Javaid, 2018). However, after the dissolution of One-Unit scheme in July 1970, the other regions were restored to their earlier position. In addition, Balochistan was granted the status of a full province but the status of Bahawalpur was not restored to its earlier position and was annexed with Punjab as its division (Rehman, Shaheen, & Naeem, 2019). In this way the entity, that enjoyed a long period of self-autonomy, lost its privileged position and became a subordinate territory of Lahore. As far as Multan division's status is concerned, it had been enjoying an autonomous entity's position until 1818 when Sikh ruler Mahajraja Ranjeet Singh gave it under the control of Lahore that was the capital of Sikh Empire (Singh, 2015). Like that, Multan lost its unique and independent status and became a part of Punjab province.

In the reaction to the integration of Bahawalpur State, Bahawalpur Suba Mahaz Movement (BSMM) and Bahawalpur Muthida Mahaz (BMM) were formed to build pressure on the state authorities to revert the move (Javaid, 2018). A number of protest rallies were held to show the dissent of the public, and many people gave their lives for the cause. On 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1970, police opened fire on a rally led by Prince Mamoonul Rashid Abbasi. The rally was organised to show the voice of the local population for a separate province. In consequence, two activists; Muhammad Azim Dadpotra and Muhammad Shafi were killed (Gill, 2018). BSMM and BMM held various protests but could not get the goal. In the pursuit of their objective, they decided to participate in the 1970 general elections and fight the political forum. BMM won two, one, and two constituencies from Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Rahim Yar Khan, respectively (Javaid, 2018). However, after the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971, BMM was fizzled out, and the Nawab Saeed ul Rashid Abbasi of Bahawalpur, publically announced that the demand of Bahawalpur province was not a priority now (Manan, 2012). In this way, BMM became inactive and some of its leaders like Riaz Hashmi and Ubaidur Rehman Seth joined hands with Siraiki nationalists of Multan and later joined Pakistan Siraiki Party (PSP).

The first All Pakistan Siraiki Conference was held in 1975 in Multan, attended by notable Sindhi and Siraiki nationalists. The promotion and recognition of Siraiki as a distinct language was the prime objective of the conference. This objective was successfully achieved as Siraiki was enlisted a separate language in the 1981 national census (Langah, 2011). In the same year, the Siraiki-speaking lawyers of Lahore High Court decided to establish a Siraiki forum from where they could raise the issue of Siraiki language and culture more systematically. Resultantly, on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1984, Siraiki Suba Mahaz (SSM) was established in Multan, which was later renamed as Pakistan Siraiki Party (PSP), and a Siraiki lawyer, Taj Muhammad Langah became the first president of the party (Butt & Ahmed, 2016). In 1989, PSP got into alliance with Pakistan Oppressed Nation's Movement (PONM). The major advantage yielded from this alliance, was the formal recognition of Siraiki identity by other ethno-nationalists like Sindhi, Pakhtun, Bloch, and Punjabi (Mushtaq & Shaheen, 2017). Since 1970s to date, various Siraiki political parties and groups were formed. Lack of

cooperation and scanty of charismatic leadership could not unite them into a single Siraiki political party to put forward the demand of separate province with sufficient electoral support (Butt & Ahmed, 2016).

The enactment of the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment facilitated the rationale of nationalists' demands of provincial status on ethnic basis (Mushtaq, 2016). In May 2012, two resolutions were passed in the provincial assembly of Punjab, appertaining to the creation of Siraiki province and for the restoration of the provincial status of Bahawalpur. In the same year, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2012, the National Assembly of Pakistan passed a resolution with two-third majority for the establishment of a commission to look into the matter of the new provinces' demand in Punjab. Accordingly, a commission was appointed headed by Senator Farhat Ullah Babar, that presented its report to the speaker of National Assembly on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 and proposed three models;

1. A new province should be constituted comprising three divisions (Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bahawalpur) of South Punjab.
2. In addition to the three divisions proposed in the Model-1, Mianwali and Bhakkar should also be added in the new province.
3. Bahawalpur division should be given the status of a separate province.

The second proposal was considered the most viable option to constitute a new province in terms of financial and administrative viability. South Punjab contribute 59 percent in the national production of cotton, 36 percent of the total in sugar production, and 41 percent of the wheat production of Punjab (Babar, et al., 2013). However, the development towards the creation of Siraiki province remained limited to the commission report. No further practical advancement was seen from political authorities since 2012. It seems that the commission was developed by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government to secure its vote bank in the general elections 2013. The next government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) took no solid step in its five-year tenure to make South Punjab a separate province. The incumbent government of Pakistan Tehrik-e- Insaf (PTI) also promised to constitute a Saraiki or South Punjab province.

### **Horizontal Inequalities and the Demand of Siraiki Province: An Investigation of the Nexus**

Punjab is the most populous province of Pakistan constituting 52.94 percent and 25.8 percent of the total population and landmass respectively (Government of Pakistan [GOP], 2019). It is divided into nine administrative divisions and thirty-six districts. The province can be split into three geographies; Upper-North Central Punjab, Northern-West Punjab, and Southern West Punjab in to comprehend the lingual, cultural and geographical diversity,. Although these boundaries are not officially recognized yet there are cultural and lingual differences that make them distinct from each other. Upper-North-Central Punjab is a land of Punjabi speakers while Pothohari is spoken in Northern-West Punjab. On the other hand, in South Punjab, there is an overwhelming majority of Siraiki speaking community which resides in three divisions: Bahawalpur, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan. South Punjab nearly constitutes half of the total landmass of the province. According to the 1998 census, the population of the region was 30.67 percent, which increased to 31.58 percent of the total population of Punjab by the 2017 population census (GOP, 2019).

The reviewed studies indicated that South Punjab is a comparatively deprived and underdeveloped region due to imbalanced share in resource allocations, job opportunities, academic outlooks, and

other developmental projects (McDoom & Gisselquist, 2016). Punjab's share in federal bureaucratic jobs is 50 percent according to the quota allocated for all the provinces and federal capital territory (Saleh, 2018). As per its population ratio, it should receive at least 31.58 percent share of Punjab's quota, but it is receiving only 12 to 15 percent, which is entirely unfair and deepens the inequalities (Raja & Hussain, 2015; Babar, et al., 2013). The table given below portrays the percentage of top-level employees belonging to South Punjab.

**Table 1. Share of South Punjab in Privileged Posts (From Grade 18-22)**

Grades & (Total Employees)	Multan	Bahawalpur	D.G. Khan	Total	Percentage
22 (46)	3	1	Nil	4	8.7
21 (127)	6	9	5	20	15.7
20 (437)	26	11	11	48	11
19 (1055)	51	31	24	106	10
18 (1870)	28	90	43	161	8.6

Source: (Alvi, 2017).

Other provinces are further divided into different zones for the fair allocation of opportunities through quota from the federal government. This intra-provincial division provides a safeguard against the over-representation of developed areas (Latif, 2017). However, due to the absence of this safeguard, candidates from Central and Northern Punjab are in a better position to succeed in the Central Superior Services (CSS) and Provincial Management Services (PMS) examinations since they have better educational facilities than the candidates from South Punjab. Only 5.6 percent of the total candidates from South Punjab passed CSS examination over the last six years. This tendency substantially supports the argument that the educational facilities available in the region are poor and insufficient. Educational institutions are considered as nurseries for the nourishment of future builders of the country such as engineers, doctors, academicians, scientists, artists, politicians, journalists, and executives. If such nurseries are not well equipped, then the graduates they are producing would not compete well with those from other regions. Consequently, South Punjab is under-represented in almost all the institutions. This relative deprivation has reinforced the nationalist ideas in the region. During the year 2013, around 1086 Punjab officers were serving in three important Civil Services sectors, i.e. District Management Group (DMG), Office Management Group (OMG) and Police, but only 157 were from the three divisions of South Punjab, and the rest were from northern and central Punjab (Babar, et al., 2013).

In a development ranking of the regions, Multan stood at 4<sup>th</sup>, and Rahim Yar Khan at 6<sup>th</sup> position during the 1970s. However, in 2011, Multan and Rahim Yar Khan both were dropped to 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> positions, respectively (Alvi, 2017). In the industrial sector, the number of industries in Northern Punjab is almost double than the Southern region. In all the provinces, including Punjab, financial resources are allocated based on National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. Punjab gets the largest share in NFC Award as it is the most populated province. Since South Punjab consists of 31.58 percent of the entire provincial population, it should get at least one-third of the allocated amount (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019). However, the actual amount received by this region is far less than its due share. Based on regional financial status, South Punjab comes in "poor, very poor, and extremely poor categories" (Burki, et al., 2012). During the year 2009, eight projects were

initiated in Central and North Punjab from the 20-billion-dollar loan obtained from World Bank, and not a single project was initiated in the Southern region (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019).

**Table 2. Ratio of Annual Development Plan Allocated to South Punjab (2003-4, 2014-15)**

Financial Year	Total ADP (In millions)	Allocation to South Punjab	Allocation to South Punjab in percentage
2003-04	30.500	7.100	23.279
2004-05	43.440	9.460	21.777
2005-06	63.000	11.790	18.714
2006-07	100.000	17.760	17.760
2007-08	150.000	22.040	14.693
2008-09	160.000	25.700	16.063
2009-10	172.000	41.880	24.349
2010-11	182.000	52.819	29.021
2011-12	188.000	60.160	32.00
2012-13	210.000	67.200	32.00
2013-14	240.000	76.800	32.00
2014-15	330.000	118.800	36.00

Source: (Reports (Analysis of Annual Development Programme 2015-16 and Analysis of Annual Development Program 2016-17) published by Punjab Economic Research Institute.

When the respondents were asked to show their opinion about the representation of the region in provincial and national parliament, judiciary, police department, armed forces, they showed their strong resentment against the current distribution ratio of such political opportunities.

**Table 3. Representation of South Punjab in Provincial and National Parliament and Cabinet**

Category of Responses <sup>4</sup>	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SA	172	16.1	16.1	16.1
A	334	31.3	31.3	47.4
D	232	21.7	21.7	69.2
SD	329	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	1067	100.0	100.0	

Over one-half (52.5 percent) of respondents manifested their disagreement which indicates that they are not satisfied with the representation given to the region. They are disappointed about the performance of the representatives elected from the region and they do not consider them as the true representatives of their demands and concerns. by One respondent complained that MNAs and MPAs forget the cause of Siraike province once they assume power.

**Table 4. The Provincial Governmental Policies.**

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SA	81	7.6	7.6	7.6

<sup>4</sup> SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree



A	284	26.6	26.6	34.2
D	377	35.3	35.3	69.5
SD	325	30.5	30.5	100.0
Total	1067	100.0	100.0	

Mostly (65.8 percent) of respondents were not satisfied with the socioeconomic policy measures of the provincial government, and they showed resentment against them. According to the respondents, governmental policies are not pro-South Punjab, and central and northern areas are getting more advantages. The economic dimension of HIs includes; income and access to assets of various kinds, especially access to land and employment opportunities. EHIs are input types of inequalities as they are primarily based on income and income is based on three types of sources; financial, human, and social. In contrast, SHIs are output types of inequalities. If input inequalities would be less, output inequalities would automatically be lesser, and in the case of sharper input inequalities, the output inequalities would be more severe. A sharp difference exists between the occurrence of poverty within the southern and northern districts of Punjab (Chaudhry, 2009). It cannot be a mere chance that radicalization and antagonism are rapidly increasing in the southern Punjab where there exist extensive poverty and high level of illiteracy and unemployment. This situation has caused a comparatively more significant potential of jobless and irritated youth, joining hands with the militant groups (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019).

**Table 5. Comparison of Poverty Level between Southern and Northern Punjab**

Southern Punjab Districts	Incidence of Poverty <sup>5</sup> (%)	Northern Punjab Districts	Incidence of Poverty (%)
Rahimyar Khan	56.8	Rawalpindi	7.5
Layyah	45.6	Lahore	4.3
Bahawalpur	53	Sheikhupura	21.4
Khanewal	39.9	Attock	9.9
Rajanpur	64.4	Gujranwala	14
Vehari	41.9	Chakwal	12.9
Dera Ghazi Khan	63.7	Narowal	26.6
Bahawalnagar	50.1	Sialkot	14
Muzaffargarh	64.8	Sargodha	35.4
Lodhran	46.8	Jhelum	8.5
Multan	55.9	Gujarat	18.4

Source: Report (Punjab Economic Report 2017; Chapter 2: Poverty Profiling In Punjab) Published By Punjab Economic Research Institute, 2015. The unemployment rate is also high in South Punjab as compared to the Central and Northern parts.

<sup>5</sup> Incidence of Poverty means the proportion of those families or individuals with per capita income or expenditure less than the per capita poverty threshold to the total number of families or individuals.

**Table 6. Comparison of Unemployment Rate between Southern and Northern Punjab**

South Punjab	Unemployment Rate	Northern and Central Punjab	Unemployment Rate
Bahawalnagar	7.3	Attock	3.1
Bahawalpur	15.1	Faisalabad	5.9
Layyah	17.4	Gujranwala	6.3
Dera Ghazi Khan	24.8	Gujrat	4.1
Khanewal	19.6	Lahore	4.7
Lodhran	18.9	Mani Bahuddin	5.4
Multan	20.5	Narowal	5.3
Muzaffargarh	20.9	Rawalpindi	3.4
Rahim Yar Khan	18.9	Sargodha	7.2
Rajan Pur	19.3	Sialkot	2.3
Vehari	17.5	Jhelum	2.7

Source: Report (Punjab Economic Report 2017; Chapter 4 Industrial Growth and Competitiveness) Published by Punjab Economic Research Institute, 2015.

Income disparities increase the level of poverty since there is a positive relationship between income and poverty. When income inequality rises, the poverty also increases (Sattar, Yasin, & Afzal, 2012). Poverty restricts not only the access to basic requirements but also “generates inequality of opportunities” (Stewart, 2005) which can further intensify the income gap among individuals from different socioeconomic stratum. Unjust land ownership in Punjab is also one of the critical factors leading to income inequalities in South Punjab. It is reported that approximately 500000 acres of agricultural land were allotted to the military officials belonging to central and northern parts. The share of monthly spending also shows the inequality of utilization between the top and bottom quintile (Mohey-ud-din, 2017). Those belonging to the top quintile use a more substantial portion of their income on education; whereas, those belonging to the bottom quintile cannot spend the required amount on education. This situation shows that the literacy rate is directly connected to household income (Østby, 2008). Not a single district of South Punjab is ranked among the top ten districts in terms of average monthly income. Rather four of its districts (Muzafargarh, Rajan Pur, Khanewal and Dera Ghazi Khan) are included in the category of ten bottom-most districts (Sattar, Yasin, & Afzal, 2012).

There is a strikingly high yield of agriculture in South Punjab in comparison to the northern region. Cotton yield from South Punjab is the key source of raw material for the country’s textile sector. Likewise, wheat production caters to the dietary needs of over 50 percent of the entire Punjab province (Naveed & Khan, 2018). Yet, in southern Punjab, more than 43 percent of people live below the poverty line, whereas, only 27 percent of people are below the poverty line in the whole Punjab province. The poverty approximation from the year 2016-17 indicated that poverty was 51 percent, 58 percent, and 65 percent in Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, and Bahawalnagar, respectively (Shahzad, 2019).

Furthermore, for the same year, the depth of poverty was 16.02 in Bahawalpur, 15.07 in Rahimyar Khan, and 14.09 in Bahawalnagar (Hasan & Malik, 2019). Such high level and depth of poverty in the these areas show severe poverty within South Punjab (Asghar, 2012). When the respondents were asked to show their opinion about the role of economic disparities and regional inequalities in

the development of the demand of separate province, they strongly affirmed that the uneven economic development has forced them to think about a separate province.

**Table 7. Economic Disparity in the Region has created the Demand of Separate Province**

Category of responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SA	291	27.3	27.3	27.3
A	596	55.9	55.9	83.1
D	121	11.3	11.3	94.5
SD	59	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	1067	100.0	100.0	

High majority (83.2 percent) of the respondents affirmed the assumption that the economic disparity in the province has played a vital role in developing a sense of identity consciousness in the region. It can be argued that they became more concerned with their ethno-lingual sentiments due to the regional inequalities in the province and started to demand for a separate province.

**Table 8. Share in Development Plans and Employment Opportunities**

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SA	167	15.7	15.7	15.7
A	341	32.0	32.0	47.6
D	374	35.1	35.1	82.7
SD	185	17.3	17.3	100.0
Total	1067	100.0	100.0	

More than one-half, i.e. 52.4 percent of respondents indicated their dissatisfaction towards the existing power-sharing structure of the province. They complained that the budget and development funds allocated for their region are spent in Lahore. As far as the HIs are concerned, they were measured by the three indicators (availability of education, healthcare services, and housing) (Sattar, Yasin, & Afzal, 2012). It was found that the region is at the bottom of the list regarding the academic performance within the entire Punjab (Shahzad, 2015). South Punjab students have long been the lowest performers compared to the students from northern and central Punjab. These rankings monitor educational and noncurricular activities in all the Punjab province districts by focusing on the teachers' presence during school time, frequency of visits by education officers, level of student retention, and proper sanitary facilities (Raja & Hussain, 2015). Out of thirty-six districts, the bottom four districts are from south Punjab; Muzaffargarh at 33<sup>rd</sup>, Rajanpur at 34<sup>th</sup>, Bahawalnagar at 35<sup>th</sup>, and Dera Ghazi Khan at 36<sup>th</sup> position (Khan, Shaheen, & Ahmad, 2019; Shahzad, 2019). The severe deficiency of basic facilities in the region and insignificant inclination of government to take affirmative steps, are the main reasons of the low literacy rate in South Punjab (Sattar, Yasin, & Afzal, 2012). The average literacy rate of northern Punjab is 67 percent, whereas the South Punjab lags with only a 49 percent literacy rate (Latif, 2017).

The healthcare system in South Punjab needs drastic reforms because there are only ninety-five healthcare institutions, and many lack the necessary facilities. However, in contrast, the northern and central regions of Punjab, have more than two hundred and forty-five healthcare institutions with the best facilities (Ullah, Khalid, & Hassan, 2017). Level of household income inequalities, specifically in South Punjab, is increasing with every passing year. This form of inequality highlights the gap between the people belonging to different income groups. Household income inequalities are also among the leading causes of severe mental conflicts between people (Burki, et al., 2012). Households in a developed region have low-income inequalities because sources of income can be abundantly found in a developed region as compared to a rural area. Since north Punjab is better developed, its dwellers have more employment options which increases their total household income (Raja & Hussain, 2015). On the other hand, because of being underdeveloped, South Punjab's population have restricted job opportunities and fewer earning options, hence income differences are obvious to be produced between Southern part and rest of the province. Income differences lead to SHIs as a person having low income can not afford the heavy educational and health expenditures. (Hasan & Malik, 2019). When the respondents were asked to show their opinion about the role of "Social Horizontal Inequalities" (SHIs) to the development of the demand of separate province, They strongly affirmed the assumption that lack of educational and health facilities has compelled them to talk about a separate province, so that they could equally enjoy such facilities.

**Table 9. Access to the Fundamental Rights of Education and Health**

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SA	116	10.9	10.9	10.9
A	292	27.4	27.4	38.2
D	382	35.8	35.8	74.0
SD	277	26.0	26.0	100.0
Total	1067	100.0	100.0	

About two-third, i.e. 61.8 percent of respondents showed a negative opinion that the region has sufficient health and educational facilities. It means that the SHIs are significant in the region.

The fourth dimension "Cultural horizontal inequalities" or CHIs includes societal respect from one identity group for the other group's religious practices, norms, customs, language and cultural recognition (public holidays, local newspapers, language recognition in a political and educational institution), and dress code. CHIs include differences in recognition and hierarchy in social standards, and traditions, and practices of different groups. CHIs primarily create the circumstances that later initiate the sense of marginalization and discontent. Therefore, such circumstances ultimately lead to the political mobilization of ordinary people. Thus, CHIs play a significant part in "conflict development and in ethno-nationalist movements." The nonviolent political movements for the demand of a new province may turn violent if governmental bodies are not perceived to be taking it seriously and paying enough attention. Political elimination is one of the triggering factors behind conflict development hence, should be avoided by "political inclusion" (McDoom & Gisselquist, 2016). South Punjab's population is about 32 percent while only one newspaper

“Jhook” in Siraiki language is being published from Multan. Since decades, Saraiki language was considered a dialect of either Punjabi or Sindhi, but, in 1981, it was given full-fledged language status and it appeared as a separate language on the performa used in 1981 population census. Masses of the region seems worried and concerned about their identity recognition and feel uncomfortable with the existing territorial arrangements as they feel themselves disenfranchised and dominated by the Punjabi identity group.

**Table 10. Propagation and Promotion of Siraikis’ Identity and Culture**

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SA	80	7.5	7.5	7.5
A	338	31.7	31.7	39.2
D	349	32.7	32.7	71.9
SD	300	28.1	28.1	100.0
Total	1067	100.0	100.0	

Majority, i.e. 60.8 percent of respondents disagreed that the distinct identity and culture of Siraikis are being propagated and promoted with due attention. They showed a great resentment about the recognition of their identity and culture.

The analysis of the responses shows that a substantial CHIs exist in the province. All the four dimensions of HIs model are significantly applicable in the case study of South Punjab with reference to the demand of Siraiki province. The region is the homeland of about 32 percent of the total population of Punjab, but the share it gets in political and economic resources is very less. The same is the case with health and educational institutions; they lack the basic facilities and qualified workers. Most of the professionals prefer to work in the Northern and Central Punjab as these areas are developed and have all the facilities, one needs. Public opinion survey confirms the supposition that HIs are the actual drivers and the triggering force behind the the demand of a separate Siraiki province.

## CONCLUSION

The prerequisite for sustained development and peace is the due participation of each identity group in the political system, and enough role in the power structure as political ostracism leads to a suitable environment for the political mobilization either against the groups who occupy the power-structure or against the state authorities. Thence, it is necessary to ensure each identity group’s just participation in the state structure. HIs are essential dimension of welfare, and more importantly, having socioeconomic and political outcomes can be highly detrimental to development. Thus, they **need** to be considered as the essential part of development policies in all the societies irrespective of the differentiation that some are suffering from the consequences of such inequalities and some others are immune to them. HIs may cause inauspicious and unpleasant repercussions, and the most dangerous is the outbreak of violent conflict and separatists’ tendencies. Hence, it is imperative to formulate valid policies to mitigate them. Necessary and immediate actions are needed to lessen PHIs, and ensure cultural equality to reduce social and economic disparities. Complete knowledge about the dynamics and context of the type of HIs is pertinent to design appropriate policies.

There are several policy options to combat HIs; however, two major approaches have been proved more effective; direct and indirect. The first involves giving entitlements to people, whether political or economic, because of their group affiliation. While the second involves correcting HIs by more general policies that have the effect of improving HIs but without specifying group affiliation. The combination of both direct and indirect approaches in a systematic way is the most effective tool to mitigate HIs and to get economic growth and enduring peace. The dynamics of HIs change from time to time, and the pattern of the inequalities also appears with new paradigms. Therefore, the policies based on the complete analysis of the context would be proved effective and result-oriented. The findings reveal that uneven development and regional inequalities in the Punjab province are the primary factors in developing the demand of Siraiki province. Therefore, if fiscal decentralization and just distribution of resources is ensured in the province, it can promise a peaceful environment of tolerance and acceptance to combat different ethnic, political, economic, and social issues.

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