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## Hazara Province Movement in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: An Analysis

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\* **Dr. Gulzar Ahmad,**

Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar Campus, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: [gulzar.ahmad@iub.edu.pk](mailto:gulzar.ahmad@iub.edu.pk) (corresponding author)

\*\* **Dr. Tohid Anwar,**

Ph.D. Pakistan Studies, Department of Pakistan Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: [anwartohid884@gmail.com](mailto:anwartohid884@gmail.com)

\*\*\* **Bushra Rasheed,**

Visiting Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology (AUST). Email: [Bushrayousaf\\_123@yahoo.com](mailto:Bushrayousaf_123@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

*The core objective of this study is to determine the role and struggle of the Hazara Province Movement in making a new province in the Hazara region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). This movement advocates for the disenfranchised class against the privileged class. The movement is fighting against the mindset that supports and encourages such a class system. According to this movement, the silence of the exploited and backward classes has allowed these tyrants to continue to exploit the people unabated under various disguises like feudalism and braveries, linguistic and ethnic demagoguery, and religious and sectarian splits. The results reveal that the movement wants to create a separate province for the Hazara region so that this region could flourish socially, politically, and economically. The mixed method is used in this study consulting secondary data and collecting primary data from the Government institutions of Pakistan. Consequently, instead of ethnicity, language, and identity, new provinces should be formed on an administrative basis only. Whereas the deprivation and backwardness of the Hazara region are concerned, what almost the movement is saying is quite legitimate. The backwardness of these deprived sections can be removed by making a new province. A study of this movement reveals that there are real problems in these areas based on which the people of this deprived region of Pakistan are demanding a separate province.*

**Key Words:** Hazara province movement, Struggle, Deprivation, Exploitation, Politics, Demanding for the new province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

### Introduction

Hazara Division is located in the northeastern part of Pakistan's KPK province. It consists of eight districts.<sup>1</sup> The area of the Hazara Division is 17064 Sq. km while its total population is about 6,188,736.<sup>2</sup> Hazara is the rainiest fragment of Pakistan. The average rainfall in Abbottabad is around 1200 millimeters. Because of the high altitude, the temperature of this region is very low. The Karakoram Highway starts at the town of Hevellian and goes north through the division towards China via the Northern Areas. "Language is Hindko which means mountain of India and 94% speak Hindko while 6% speak others *Barohi*, *Saraiki*, and *Pashto*." The ethnolinguistic arrangement of the area is specified in the next Table 1.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These districts are: Abbottabad, Battagram, Haripur, Mansehra, Upper Kohistan, Lower Kohistan, Kolai Palas and Torghar.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Statistics, *Provisional Summary Result 7th Population and Housing Census-2023, Census of 2023*, (Islamabad: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population/2023/KP.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Mushtaq, "Regional Identities in Quest of Separate Provinces: A New Challenge for the Pakistani Federation." *Journal of Political Studies*, 2016: 289-307.

Table 1  
Ethnolinguistic compositions of the Hazara Region

Linguistic Group Name	Linguistic Group	Mansehra	Abbottabad	Haripur	Batgram
Hindko-speaking	95.98	72.9	94.26	88.5	18
Pashto-speaking	3.86	26.6	2.22	8.9	81.65
Others		0.5	3.52	2.6	0.35

**Source: Population Census Organization, 2001.**

Production of green and lemongrass tea is 70%. the world’s 5th largest and Pakistan’s 1st largest dam produces 33.5% of electricity, which is situated in the Hazara division. The production of tobacco is 100%.

**Hazara Province Movement**

A distinct Hazara province movement was on track in 1957 by an early advocate Mufti Idrees, but this movement could not get energy because Ayub Khan started a one-unit scheme.<sup>4</sup> The first major activity of the Hazara nation came to light in the 1980s when Qazi Azhar<sup>5</sup> with some supporters, started the Hazara Students Federation in Karachi, but other influential groups suppressed their actions.<sup>6</sup> The late Malik Asif Advocate started a movement called "*Hazara Qaumi Mahaz*" (HQM) (Hazara National Front) in 1987 in which he demanded a separate province of Hazara.<sup>7</sup> He died in 2008 but he infused a new spirit into the party. Figure 1 shows the map of the proposed Hazara province in KPK.<sup>8</sup>

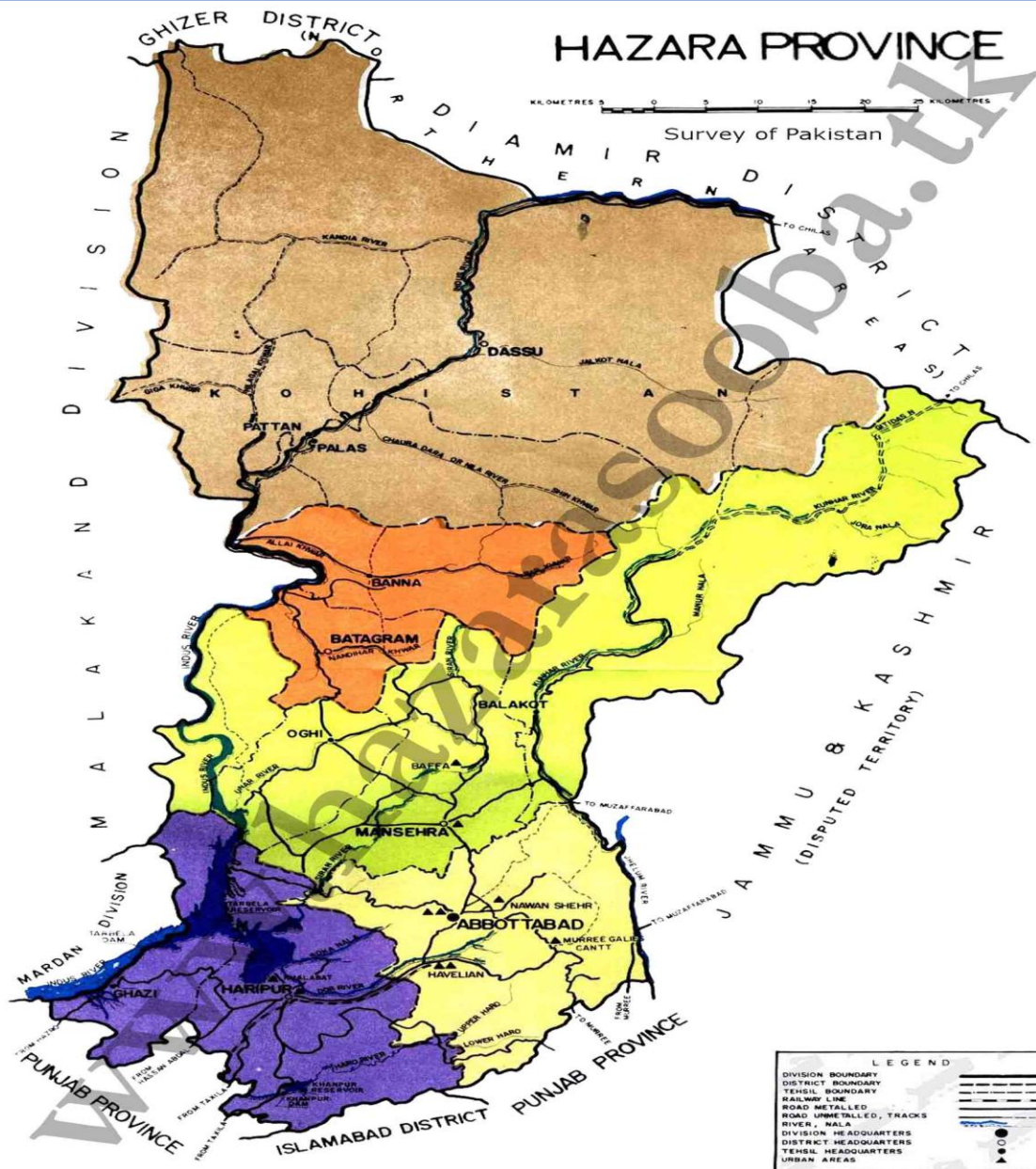
<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Munir, *Realities of a Separate Hazara Province*, May 18, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Qazi Azhar is among the pioneers to raise the voice for a separate identity.

<sup>6</sup> Kalbe Ali, *Hazara movement: divided we fall*, The Dawn, December 2, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Hazara Qaumi Mahaz, *Hazara Qaumi Mahaz*. n.d.

<sup>8</sup> <https://newpakhistorian.wordpress.com/2018/04/17/languages-religion-tribes-and-castes-of-the-hazara-region/>.



**Figure 1: Proposed Map of Hazara Province in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan)**

Qazi Azhar could not win the backing of their public on ethnic ranks, after the formation of HQM in 1987, and Hazara people voted totally in favor of the Pakistan Muslim League. Qazi Azhar the Chairman of *Hazara Quami Mahaz* (HQM) said “We are not into politics with the hope to win elections – but to raise awareness among the masses for our cause.”<sup>9</sup>

Baba Haider Zaman laid the foundation of *Tehreek Sooba Hazara* (TSH) (Hazara Province Movement) in 2010 after renaming the province from NWFP to KPK under the Eighteenth Amendment in the Constitution of 1973. Baba Haider Zaman not only elevated the Hazara Movement to its peak but also rejuvenated the movement. Although he has not been able

<sup>9</sup> Kalbe Ali, *Hazara movement: divided we fall*, The Dawn, December 2, 2012.

to achieve his goal of a separate province, the campaign for that purpose has been given a new lease of life. He passed away on 24 October 2018 at the age of 84 years. He gained a political advantage over other politicians from the region simply by assisting and leading the Hazara Province Movement, which he carried on till his death. He was an icon of the Hazara province movement.<sup>10</sup>

In April 2010, through the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, it was declared that NWFP would rename Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan, which led to protests by the Hazara region commanded by Baba Haider.<sup>11</sup> After the proclamation of the new name of the province, a separate province was demanded from the Hazara Division. In April 2010, ten people were killed and nearly 200 injured during demonstrations and rallies across the Hazara region against the new name of NWFP and the formation of a new Hazara province. The Silk Road was fastened for all traffic for a week and violent protests damaged property worth billions.<sup>12</sup>

On May 2, 2010, in support of this demand, there was made another wheel jam and shutter-down strike in the Hazara region. In this regard, along with large rallies, the protests of the public movement were regularly organized under the auspices of the HQM and *Tehreek-e-Sooba Hazara* (TSH).<sup>13</sup> But NWFP's name was permanently changed to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, the management of the Hazara movement sworn to continue its fight to achieve its goals through peaceful and constitutional means.

The ruling *Awami* National Party (ANP) celebrated the new name of NWFP. Still, the people of the Hazara Division burnt tires and raised their voices against this move by putting obstacles on the Karakoram Highway. Interestingly, apart from former MPAs and MNAs, lawyers, civil society members, journalists, and shopkeepers also joined hands in this mission and demanded from the Constitutional Reforms Committee headed by Raza Rabbani that Hazara should be declared a province in the interest of the people of this region. Meanwhile, Tahir Faraz Abbasi, Shad Muhammad Khan president of HCBBA, Fazal Haq Abbasi, and Iftikhar Khan Jadoon Advocate passed a unanimous resolution against the change of name of the province. They said, "We are protesting on a large scale in the public interest".<sup>14</sup> Figure 2 shows the protest of the Hazara province movement that is demanding a new province in the region.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Said Alam Khan, *Baba Haider Zaman: An icon of Hazara province movement*. October 26, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Associated Press of Pakistan, *Protest in Hazara continues over renaming of NWFP*. Associated Press of Pakistan, April 5, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Noor-ul-Huda Shaheen, *Haider Zaman Khan's journey from Sardar to Baba*, October 24, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Mohammad Munir, *Realities of a Separate Hazara Province*, May 18, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Associated Press of Pakistan, *Protest in Hazara continues over renaming of NWFP*. Associated Press of Pakistan, April 5, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> *Samaa TV*, April 13, 2011, reported by Atif Qayyum.



**Figure 2: A rally of Tehrik-e-Hazara (Hazara Movement) held in Abbottabad, demanding a separate province. SAMAA TV on April 13, 2011, was reported by Atif Qayyum.**

On January 3, 2012, the *Muttahida Quami* Movement (MQM) succumbed to a constitutional amendment bill to the National Assembly Secretariat for the formation of new provinces in Punjab and KPK. The bill exactly mentioned that Hazara province would consist of six districts of KPK. The bill also suggested that the people of twenty-one districts of South Punjab should choose by plebiscite if they want Seraiki province or more than one province. Several MQM leaders called for new provinces to be formed and warned that if new provinces were not formed in KPK and Punjab, a Baluchistan-like situation could arise here.<sup>16</sup> In August 2012, the PPP set up a parliamentary commission headed by Senator Farhat-Ullah Babar to create new provinces in Punjab. PML-N Leader Senator Pervez Rashid said “New provinces should be created wherever they were required all over Pakistan, but this issue must be resolved permanently”<sup>17</sup> Figure 3 shows the protest of the Hazara province movement under the command of Baba Haider Zaman.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Moonis Ahmar, “Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan: A Case Study of Hazara Province.” *Journal of Political Studies*, Vol.20, Issue - 2, 2013: 01-19.

<sup>17</sup> *The News*, Karachi, August 19, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> <https://web.facebook.com/photo?fbid=151310525032303&set=a.105808272915862>



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ABBOTTABAD: Mar12 – Leader of Sooba Hazara Movement Baba Haider Zaman Leading a demonstration for provincial status of Hazara. ONLINE PHOTO by Sultan Dogar

### Figure 3: Baba Haider Zaman leading a rally for a provincial status of Hazara

Addressing a rally in Karachi on May 6, 2012, Baba Haider Zaman said that “the people of Hazara demand rights, if the country is to be saved, new provinces will have to be created”. He said that for the survival of Pakistan, it was important that the demands of the people of the region be met. He added “*Muttahida Qaumi* Movement (MQM) has proved to be a federal party by raising the voice of *Hazarewal’s* rights. MQM and Altaf Hussain have done us a favor by raising their voice in our favor and *Hazarewal* does not forget his benefactors. If not, we can take any route of protest.” Baba Haider Zaman said, “We have registered the *Tehrik-e-Sooba Hazara* (Hazara Province Movement) as a political party in the Elections Commission.” He added more that:

.... government eyes should be opened to see *Hazarewal’s* gathering in Quaid Garden and the government should know what *Hazarewal* wants. Today, the deprived people of Baluchistan, the Hari, and Saraiki of Sindh, the people of Bahawalpur, and the deprived sections of Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab are demanding that their rights be given to them. Don’t talk about Saraiki province because he is not only the prime minister of the Saraiki region but also the Prime Minister of the whole country.<sup>19</sup>

In March 2014, the KPK Assembly voted for a resolution by the ruling PTI to make a separate Hazara province by the majority votes. In this way, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session was chaired by Speaker Assad Qaiser in which Sardar Idrees of PTI presented a resolution that was later approved by the Assembly. The resolution called on the provincial Assembly to request the federal government to pass a bill in the parliament to make new

<sup>19</sup>Tehreek-e-Sooba Hazara, *Tehreek-e-Sooba Hazara (Official)*. May 6, 2012.

provinces, together with Hazara, to facilitate administrative matters. While, opposition parties like PPP, ANP, and “Qaumi Watan Party” (QWP) opposed this resolution.

Sardar Hussain Babak of ANP said, “Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is like a bouquet and his party opposes any attempt to divide it.” Given the difficulties facing the province, it is time to talk about unity instead of fragmentation. Mushtaq Khan, Wajiuz Zaman, and Qalandar Lodhi, the PTI Members of the Provincial Assembly of KPK said that Hazara province demanded to improve the administration affairs instead of linguistic identity as the people of Hazara faced great difficulty in reaching Peshawar.<sup>20</sup>

MPAs of the Hazara region, including Mushtaq Ghani, moved a resolution in March 2014 calling for the formation of the Hazara province. The resolution was passed by a majority but failed to get a two-thirds majority of the total members of the House. Because, in the 2013 elections, the PTI had formed a coalition government with Jamaat-e-Islami in KPK. In this election, PTI could not get a simple majority. Constitutionally, such a resolution requires a two-thirds majority to be implemented by the government. The governing party adored a two-thirds majority in the provincial assembly and could easily pass a resolution in this regard.<sup>21</sup>

However, PTI did not have a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly and Senate, so if PTI passed a resolution regarding Hazara province in the Provincial Assembly with a two-thirds majority but could not pass a resolution in the Lower and Upper House with the same ratio without the help of opposition. Presently, any political party does not sufficient position in any house to pass the resolution with a two-thirds majority. It is impossible to create new provinces in the country unless all the political parties have not a consensus on the formation of new administrative units in Pakistan. Mushtaq Ghani said, “Making new administrative units is essential and the people of Hazara voted for PTI to create Hazara province”.<sup>22</sup>

On 16 November 2014, the Hazara Province Movement (TSH) decided to revive the movement for a separate province by contacting political parties and civil society groups. For this purpose, a five-member team was formed under the chairmanship of TSH convener Mushtaq Khan. Speaking on the occasion, Mushtaq Khan said that the members of the committee would soon start liaising with political parties and civil society organizations to force the government to accept the demand of the people of the Hazara Division for a separate province. He added that a grand gathering of elders and political parties would also be convened to announce the schedule of rallied and procession across the region. He said more “We would also take traders, lawyers, transporters, and other segments of society on board while taking forward the separate province movement.”<sup>23</sup>

In August 2016, a decision was taken under the chairmanship of Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony that Parliamentarians from Hazara District of KPK would meet heads of the country’s national political parties to reach a consensus on forming a new province. Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said that members of the Hazara movement would meet the National Assembly, Senate, and Parliamentary Leaders and give a briefing on the formation of Hazara province. He demanded that Hazara Parliamentarians and people be convinced to make Hazara province. Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Murtaza Javaid Abbasi vowed to use his energies to make Hazara province. He said that more

<sup>20</sup> Dawn, Karachi, March 21, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Dawn, Karachi, November 19, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> Dawn, Karachi, November 19, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Dawn, Karachi, November 17, 2014.

provinces needed the hour.<sup>24</sup> Figure 4 shows the Hazara parliamentarians meeting with political leaders for the evolving consensus of Hazara province.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 4: Hazara parliamentarians meet political leadership for the evolving consensus of Hazara province.**

This movement has not had sufficient popularity in the region. Its popularity was limited with the print media and social media but it failed in the elections 2018 to get any seat in the National Assembly. In the election 2018, *Tehreek-e-Suba Hazara Pakistan* got only 545 votes for the National Assembly. The performance of this movement was not healthier in the provincial elections in 2018. It got only 1637 votes for the Provincial Assembly of KPK.<sup>26</sup> It reveals that the Hazara province movement does not have deep roots in the public. *Tehreek-e-Suba Hazara Pakistan* performed poorly in both Assemblies (KPK Provincial Assembly and National Assembly) like the Seraiki Province Movement in south Punjab.

The same results were given to this movement in the 2013 elections. Here some questions arise, why did this movement fail in both elections? How legitimate is the movement for Hazara province? And why did not she get support in the 2013 and 2018 general elections? The most important problem that has not reinforced the Hazara movement is the division among the Hindko-speaking population. Many groups are fighting for a goal that requires unity and harmony. For example, the following prominent groups are following the demands of Hazara province:

<sup>24</sup> Associated Press of Pakistan, *Hazara parliamentarians to meet political leadership for evolving consensus of Hazara province*. August 10, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Associate Press of Pakistan, Islamabad, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Election Commission of Pakistan, *Statistical Reports (Party Wise Vote Bank - National Assembly)*, July 25, 2018.



1. Hazara *Tehrik* (movement) with Baba Haider Zaman as its chief coordinator (now Sardar Gohar Zaman is working as Chairman after the death of Baba Haider Zaman on October 24, 2018)
2. Hazara Province *Tehrik* with Sardar M. Yousuf as Chairman.
3. Tehreek-i-Huquq-e-Hazara led by Ali Asghar Khan.
4. *Hazara Qaumi Mahaz* with Khursheed Ali Hazarvi as its President. It claimed by the party that she was the first to raise the issue of the creation of a separate Hazara province.

The main reason for the failure of the 2013 and 2018 general elections was that they were unable to contest polls under a single platform.<sup>27</sup> Overall this movement is successful because it has conveyed its message of separate Hazara province to the government circles and the public through the electronic, social, and print media and practical meetings, processions, and rallies. For this cause, on April 12, 2010, there were many people killed and injured by the government. This day is celebrated as Martyrs of Hazara. The struggle of all the groups, especially Baba Haider Zaman for the separate province, played a vital role in flourishing this cause. Baba Haider Zaman was the icon of this movement. After the formation of the movement, he not only actively participated in meetings, processions, and rallies, but also dedicated his entire life to it. He worked tirelessly to spread the message of the movement, inspiring and motivating others to join it. Further, he ensured that the movement's message was understood by all. He worked day and night to make the Hazara movement successful in a short period, he made this movement equal to major separate province movements in Pakistan like Saraiki Province Movement and Bahawalpur Province Movement.

### **Conclusion**

The main objective of this movement was to make a separate province for the Hazara region so that this region could flourish socially, politically, and economically. This movement advocates for the disenfranchised class against the privileged class. The movement is fighting against the mindset that supports and encourages such a class system. According to this movement, the silence of the exploited and backward classes has allowed these tyrants to continue to exploit the people unabated under various disguises like feudalism and braveries, linguistic and ethnic demagoguery, and religious and sectarian splits. Consequently, instead of ethnicity, language, and identity, new provinces should be formed on an administrative basis only. Whereas the deprivation and backwardness of the areas are concerned, what almost the movement is saying is quite legitimate. The backwardness of these deprived sections can be removed by making new provinces on the administrative ground. A study of all these movements reveals that there are real problems in these areas based on which the people of these deprived regions of Pakistan are demanding a separate province.

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<sup>27</sup> Moonis Ahmar, "Conflict Prevention and the New Provincial Map of Pakistan: A Case Study of Hazara Province." *Journal of Political Studies*, Vol.20, Issue - 2, 2013: 01-19.