

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its impacts on Pakistan Economy and Society

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ABSTRACT

China and Pakistan advocate long-term friendly relations - regardless of ideological differences, are obvious in their names. It is hoping that CPEC will strengthen the bilateral links between China and Pakistan by connecting Gwadar Port with Xinjiang Province China. Therefore, the development of the energy sector, road and railway infrastructure is ought to explain the progress of Pakistan, but the results will not mature overnight. Still counting on the challenges facing the end of Pakistan, financial ambiguity, inappropriate expectations, provincial competition and confrontation with special economic zones, internal security, cultural concerns, useless debt burden, development priorities, despite excessive domestic supplies, raw materials and Import of labor and the lack of income-generating plans are serious questions and concerns for this project. This article focuses the China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor (CPEC), flagship project under the mega One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative is not only the corridor in which Pakistan wants to change its economy, but also the project may undermine its financial and social structure. The paper also discusses economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, as well as China's investment in Pakistan's infrastructural growth and economic development.

KEYWORDS

CPEC; China-Pakistan; OBOR; Challenges and opportunities; Economic development

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INTRODUCTION

China's "One Belt and One Road" (OBOR) initiative is trying to usher a new era of economic and regional diplomacy along the breadth and length of Asia, Europe and Africa. These ambitious plans, launched by Xi in 2014 to connect China with its neighbors in Asia and beyond, involve more than 60 countries. Chinese president Xi Jinping has made the program a centerpiece of both his foreign policy and domestic economic strategy (Scott and David, 2015)¹. In the beginning of 21st century witnessed the dawn of a complex reconfiguration of the world strategic picture driven by Chinese phenomenal economic development and upswing as a leading global power. China has steadily appeared as Pakistan's largest trading partner equally in terms of exports and imports. Mutual trade and commercial links between the two nations were established since January 1963 when both nations engaged the first bilateral long-term trade agreement (Ministry of Finance, 2014)². The relationships of both countries are not only limit to economic and trade but also in the field of diplomacy and tactical partnership. Two countries have frequently exchanged high-level visits ensuing in a variety of agreements and investments in both nations at government level as well as private bodies (Muhammad and Qi, 2015). Pakistan and China signed a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2006 which came into effect in 2007. The agreement was separated in two parts with Phase I ending in December of 2012 and negotiations for Phase II beginning in July of 2013. The agreement targeted bilateral trade of 20 billion dollars between Pakistan and China at the end of Phase II. Total trade of Pakistan and China under FTA rapidly increased from US\$ 3.5 in 2006 to US\$ 14.3 billion in 2013. China was second major importing partner of Pakistan with share of 16.17% of Pakistan's total imports in 2013 (Muhammad and Qi, 2015)³. In recent years, economic corridors have appeared as a significant tool of regional cooperation and growth in a globalized world. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is expected to further strengthen trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the construction of the CPEC during his May 2013

¹ Scott Kennedy, David A Parker, (2015). Building China's "one Belt One Road", Centre for strategic and international studies (CSIS), and 3rd April 2015. <http://csis.org/publication/building-chinas-one-belt-one-road> (Accessed on November 10, 2015).

² Ministry of Finance, (2014). Pakistan Economic Survey 2013-2014. http://finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_14/08_Trade_and_Payments.pdf

³ Muhammad, S.I. Qi, X. (2015). Rising trend in imports and exports of Pakistan's FTA partners in recent years, Academic Research International, Vol, 6 (4), July 2015.



visit to Pakistan (Tiezzi, 2014)⁴. CPEC purpose to connect Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region with the southwestern Pakistani port of Gwadar (GOP MOFA 2013).⁵

CPEC AND ITS IMPORTANCE

CPEC has a high value for both countries China and Pakistan, due to CPEC the connectivity will open up west China to the south and contribute to "One Belt One Road" initiative policy. The establishment of communication from Kashgar (China) to Gwadar –Baluchistan (Pakistan) has been agreed to be completed by 2030. Chinese Government is trying to utilize the entire necessary supporting role to enabling the environment for the open economic system and logistic system in the regional vision of CPEC. The CPEC not only for the China and Pakistan but will also benefit the surrounding countries. Pakistan will increase its economic growth through this project, and it is the right initiative for both countries China and Pakistan. The CPEC has great importance for the both countries. CPEC is envisioned as a corridor of peace, prosperity, and development. Although the CPEC will face a lot of challenges has significant potentials of promising future. The peoples of Pakistan were adversely affected in the past due to inadequate opportunities and lack of right decision. The CPEC will have a transformational impact on the state and the prosperity of the peoples of Pakistan. The visit of President Xi in April 2015 and Chinese commitment of \$46 billion plus for various projects of CPEC, sketched the world attention to the new development and growth of the economy, and this will be the real prosperity for the both countries and will promise future for the region/the world. The Prime Minister of Pakistan held a meeting of the political leadership; all parties of conference supported the CPEC project as well as they warmly welcome to the Chinese investment.⁶

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will improve Pakistan's current economy as well as the lives of nearly three billion people across the region. It is seemed to be a breakthrough for Pakistan's development and successful completion of the CPEC may generate three to four times more profit than their investment. The corridor will boost up economic development and create new business and job opportunities which will help in the alleviation of poverty. The project will help in Pakistan rebalancing between the geopolitical and geo-economic will improve the infrastructure, the energy requirements, workforce development and economic progress. CPEC is viewed as a game changer for both China-Pakistan and the entire region; economic development and regional integration will be enhanced through connectivity and partnership.⁷ It will have a positive impact on the living standard of the common people in the region by providing the numerous opportunities of cooperation and development. It will address the grievances, sense of deprivation, discrimination and poor management of resources, of a different segment of the society of Pakistan. It will boost the trade and investment, exploration of mineral resources and increase the strategic and economic location of Pakistan.⁸ On the other hand, the project is important for China's perspective as "flagship project", it will provide the shortest route to the Middle East, Africa, and Europe will further boost up the economy. The accomplishment of the CPEC will help China to counter the US dominance and will also get the chance to develop its north-western province Xinjiang, which is an underdeveloped area. In Xinjiang separatist movement has started by Uyghur's Muslims. Thus, China wants to develop the socioeconomic framework of that region. Only in this way, China can curtail aggressive sentiments against its central government.⁹

CPEC MAJOR PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTS

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is Chinese investment of 62 Billion Dollars. Connecting the Chinese markets with Europe, Asia, Africa and CPEC is an essential part of China's OBOR vision. The core idea of CPEC is to strengthen bilateral connectivity between China and Pakistan by connecting Gwadar port to Xinjiang. The distance from Xinjiang to Gwadar is almost 3000 km and if China opt the route of East Coast it is even longer. That is why Gwadar and CPEC are most important part of OBOR due to geo-strategic importance.¹⁰ The major projects of CPEC are related to energy sector, roads and railways infrastructure development. For Pakistan, it is an opportunity to minimize the concentration of electricity crisis. CPEC is multi-dimensional project and its three main dimensions are transit trade, China-Pakistan Bilateral trade, investment and as a flagship for OBOR.¹¹ In monetary terms, total investment on CPEC is distributed like 25% is equity

⁴Tiezzi, Shannon. 2014. "China, Pakistan flesh out new 'economic corridor'." *The Diplomat*, February 20th 2014. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/02/china-pakistan-flesh-out-new-economic-corridor/> (accessed on 18 November 2015).

⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan. 2013. 'Joint Statement – Deepening Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/prdetails.php?prID=1200> (accessed on 22 November 2015).

⁶Shah Z (2015) China-Pakistan economic corridor and its importance. *The monthly diplomatic insight* Preston University, Islamabad 91: 10.

⁷Cheema ZN (2015) Geostrategic importance of China-Pakistan economic corridor: foreign policy news.

⁸Ijaz A (2016) Importance of cpec. *Pakistan observer*.

⁹Ahmad R (2015) Integrating Asia: the history of the one belt one road initiative. *The monthly diplomatic insight* Preston University, Islamabad.

¹⁰Ghulam Ali, *China-Pakistan Relations A Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 205-206.

¹¹ Ibid. 205-206.

and 75% is debt but there are other figures floating and creating confusion. There are contradictory figures on Return on Investment (ROI) and Return on Equity (ROE) from Government side, NEPRA and newspapers.¹²

Table 1: Major Projects of CPEC

No	CPEC Chinese Finance Projects in Different Sectors	Number of Projects
1	Energy Sector	17
2	Infrastructure	8
3	Gwadar	12
4	Cross Border Optical Fiber Cable	1
5	Pilot Project of Digital Terrestrial Multimedia Broadcast	1
6	Rail Based Mass Transit	4
7	Provincial Projects	6
8	Special Economic Zones (Proposed)	9
Total		60

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CPEC AND DEVELOPMENT

There are four main components of CPEC.

GWADAR PORT

Gwadar Port can be considered as the backbone of CPEC because of its geostrategic location in Persian Gulf. Other near seaports are of Dubai and Iran. On East there is a seaport of Oman and in South Saudi Arabia's seaports. Geographically, all these countries are self-sufficient and no other country is utilizing their ports. Whereas, Pakistan assists Western China and it has been assisting landlocked countries of Central Asia for trade. Gwadar port is serving as a transit hub for Middle East oil supply and is also the part of traditional sea route for trade in Europe¹⁴.

Pakistan had joined CPEC considering foreign heavy investment with bonus of development of infrastructure in the region and admitting the fact that foreign investment leads to higher economic stability while CPEC brought all those possibilities of bright and stable future of its economy. US remained consistent in containing China and her sphere of influence in South Asia by supporting India. China had to find another way out for her secure survival and greater stability in all parts of the country.¹⁵

Where many of the analytics rejected the move there many of the scholars compared the development of Gwadar port with that of Hambantota of Sri Lanka. It is perhaps the lack of insight to both the projects as development of Hambantota

¹²Khurram Husain, "CPEC Cost Build-up," Dawn, December 15, 2016.

¹³China Pakistan Economic Corridor, "CPEC Projects," <http://cpec.gov.pk> (accessed October 10, 2016).

¹⁴Ghulam Ali, *China-Pakistan Relations A Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 206. Ibid., 206-207

¹⁵MK Bhadrakumar, "Chinese naval ships at Gwadar port call for a rethink of India's regional policy," Dawn, November 28, 2016.

was a political move and Pakistan entered to CPEC completely considering the economic motives. And in case of Sri Lanka, developments were not that magnificent spreading across the country which would help the state generate resources for payment of loans.¹⁶

Gwadar airport similar to Gwadar port holds a great potential of handling mass transit and it will develop into one of the major commercial-cum-industrial cities of the world. Pakistan would be able to gain much from all the projects once they all are fully operational. Furthermore, projects in Gwadar also address long held grievances of the local population of Baluchistan as it will increase employment and business opportunities.

ENERGY SECTOR

Energy is a vital factor for the implementation of projects, there is a power supply shortage due to high demand and less supply and it is a big hurdle for better economic growth in Pakistan. The growth rate of Pakistan's economy can be increased up to 6 to 8 percent and energy sector has a decisive role in it. Consequently, more than 30 billions of dollars has been allocated for the energy sector. Most of the electricity generation projects are early harvest projects which are to be completed less than two years, and it is estimated that by the end of 2020 there would be sufficient addition of electricity in the national grid to meet the requirement of the country. Pakistan has a significant potential to produce electricity through Hydroelectricity projects¹⁷. Electricity produced by such source is of more significant owing to number of reasons. The government and policy makers need to undertake such environment friendly pursuits.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

It aims to improve the connectivity of Pakistan with China. In the venture, China and Pakistan won't be building new infrastructure rather it will be done through improving existing roads, construction missing links and refining railways infrastructure of Pakistan.¹⁸ From Khunjerab, Karakorum highway is starting and it is connecting to Dera Ismail Khan, Zhob, Qilla Saifullah, Quetta and Sohrab. From Sohrab to Gwadar, there was a missing link of about 650 km and it was the main hurdle in the functioning of Western Route, Frontier Works Organization (FWO) is completing the missing link. In All Parties Conference (APC), another decision was taken to connect Dera Ismail Khan to Burhan to Karakorum Highway (KKH).¹⁹

RAILWAYS

Three major railway routes are planned in which Chinese government would be investing.

ML 1: Karachi to Peshawar via Lahore (More than 70 of cargo and passenger and revenues).

ML 2: is along the Indus River to Peshawar. (Mostly cargo and freight goes through this route). 3rd route: from Jacobabad to Quetta which is not that functional.²⁰

OPTICAL FIBER CABLE

The Pakistan-China Fiber Optic Project is one of the most significant project that is likely to be completed by June 2020 and amounts to US dollars 44 million. 840 km long optic fiber cable is supposed to pass through Karimabad, Gilgit, Babusar, Naran, Mansehra, and Jarkyas and reach Rawalpindi city. Territory of Gilgit, KPK and parts of Punjab province will benefit from it. The very high expectations of Special Communication Organization (SCO) chanting this project to turn the trade corridor into "Digital Corridor".²¹

The joint venture of Huawei - China and SCO-Pakistan aims at providing safe and secure of foreign intervention passage of voice traffic to both the countries. Generation of employment opportunities in the areas of Gilgit Baltistan is also tied to this project.

In the final phase, optic fiber line is likely to connect to Gwadar and finally terminating at Karachi. It will provide a great link from Gwadar to other international sites. It will also serve the purpose of an alternative to consortium built by Indian companies and partners as it involves greater risk for Pakistan's security.²²

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES AND INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

Nine economic zones have been planned, one in each of KPK, Baluchistan, Punjab, FATA, Gilgit Baltistan, Kashmir, Islamabad and two in Sindh. There is a controversy regarding Special Economic Zones as the history of Economic Zones and Industrial Estates in Pakistan has not been good. Starting from 1950s many economic zones and Industrial Zones were established. 1952 in Tando Adam Khan, 1954 in Layyah, 1964 Larkana, 1963 Sukkar, 1960 Quetta, 1974 Mardan and since

¹⁶Irfan Husain, "View from Abroad: White Elephants in Sri Lanka," Dawn, March 31, 2017.

¹⁷Ahsan Iqbal, "Debunking myths on CPEC," The Express Tribune, May 25, 2017.

¹⁸Ibid. 215-218

¹⁹Ahsan Iqbal, "CPEC a Positive Outlook," The Express Tribune, August 28, 2016.

²⁰Ibid. 220-221

²¹ "Fibre Optic Cable Project to Turn CPEC into a Digital Corridor,"

PAK CHINA NEWS

, September 20, 2016, <http://pakchinanews.pk/optic-fibre-cable-project-to-turn-cpec-into-digital-corridor/> (accessed January 7, 2017).

²²Jamal Shahid, "Army seeks fibre optics cables along CPEC," Dawn, January 12, 2017

then almost 70 economic zones and Industrial Zones were established across Pakistan.²³ Considering the history and the already carried out experiments, few questions are borne in mind. Is dividing areas under “economic zones” has proved to be fruitful? What difference does it make? Are they successful and why? What is their contribution in national economic trends? Above all, how economic zones under CPEC are different than those which already existed? Would they be successful? Perhaps, it’s a long way before we can get to know the answers of these questions as the industrial cooperation between both the Pakistan and China is the soul of CPEC.

Table 2: Province Wise Distribution of all Projects of CPEC

No	CPEC Chinese Finance Projects in Different Sectors	Balochistan	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	Kashmir	Gilgit & Baltistan	Common Projects (Between two Provinces)
1	Energy Sector	2	3	7	1	1		3
2	Infrastructure	1			1			6
3	Gwadar	11						
4	Cross Border Optical Fiber Cable							1
5	Rail Based Mass Transit	1	1	1	1			
6	Provincial Projects	2	1	1			1	1
7	Special Economic Zones	1	2	1	1		1	1 (FATA) 1 (Islamabad)
9	Social Sector							2
	Total	17	7	10	2	1	2	13 + 2

CPEC SIGNIFICANCE FOR BOTH CHINA AND PAKISTAN SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHINA

More than half of the world's proven oil reserves are located in the Middle East, the top region-based seller of crude oil to China. Until now tankers dragging over some 10,000 nautical miles to terminals along the east and southeast coast of China. Respectively each journey is beset with one of the world's supreme hazardous chokepoints - the Strait of Malacca (Cheng, 2013)²⁴.

China will discover a relaxed access to the Middle East, Iran and additional to Africa and Europe, as it is dominant region of the world because of oil reserves and huge markets. China is already reliant on the oil from these regions. Moreover this corridor will also open routes for China’s private sectors and businessmen into world’s fastest growing economy of Pakistan and to world via Pakistan. China can make full use of technology advantages and other advantages in intensifying

²³Ahsan Iqbal, “Debunking myths on CPEC,” The Express Tribune, May 25, 2017.

²⁴Cheng, S., Ouyang. (2013). The Sino-Pak Trade and Energy Corridor- An Assessment, 8th Pan- European Conference on International Relations, Warsaw Economics University, 21 September 2013.

cooperation of the development of biological resources, mineral resources exploration and other areas to upgrade China's relevant industrial structure, and to promote free-trade zone industrial competitiveness (Saqib and Qi, 2014)²⁵.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR PAKISTAN

Pakistan has signed a currency swap with China in 2014 year, which marks Pakistan the first South Asian nation to sign such type of agreement with China. China is the second largest trade partner of Pakistan and biggest investor in infrastructure, telecommunications, ports, energy sectors. Furthermore, Chinese government and private companies from China have guaranteed to spend US\$20 billion in the energy sector and massive amount of above \$30 billion in other sectors as a foreign direct investment in Pakistan, which will be supportive for promoting mutual trade between the two countries. The recent development in Pak-China Corridor makes Pakistan the first transit hub for the world's second largest economy among the South Asian countries. (Mimouna et al, 2014)¹ Nevertheless of political and military consequences of this major project, it has numerous benefits for the people of the constituency. Pakistan, suffering from continuing energy lacks and narrow trade with its abrupt neighbors, will be better-linked and will all being well become energy- ample. A Pakistan-aligned road network will enable contacts among Pakistan's neighbors on west and east. India and Iran requisite this corridor for closer incorporation with each other's economy. Even though the CPEC simplifies movement of goods and services in the region, China's contribution in the region's economy turns rivals into stakeholders in preserving peace and stability in the South and Central Asian regions.

CPEC COULD DESTROY PAKISTAN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY?

The China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor (CPEC) flagship project under the mega One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative -- is not merely a corridor that Pakistan is hoping will transform its economy but rather a project that may wreck its finances and societal structure. A 15-year master plan of CPEC that has come to light reveals that Pakistan will be fully subjugated by China under the current terms and conditions of the project. The master plan, a copy of which is seen by ET, envisages a deep and broad-based penetration of most sectors of Pakistan's economy as well as its society by Chinese enterprises and culture. The plan spells out in detail what Chinese intentions and priorities are in Pakistan for the next 15 years. It may be recalled that China.

Under the plan, thousands of acres of agricultural land will be leased out to Chinese enterprises in Pakistan to set up "demonstration projects" in areas ranging from seed varieties to irrigation technology. A system of monitoring and surveillance will be built in cities from Peshawar to Karachi with 24-hour video recording on roads and busy marketplaces for law and order. Besides, as the per master plan, a national fiber-optic backbone will be built for Pakistan not only for internet traffic, but also terrestrial distribution of broadcast TV, which will cooperate with Chinese media in the "dissemination of Chinese culture". A similar Sinitication is visible in the Mandalay town of Myanmar which has impacted local architecture and culture. It remains to be seen how a conservative section of the Pakistani society reacts to the influence of Chinese culture. In some areas, the plan is to build on a market presence already established by Chinese enterprises -- for instance, Haier in household appliances, China Mobile and Huawei in telecommunications, and China Metallurgical Group Corporation in mining and minerals.

A key thrust of the plan lies in agriculture. Pakistan will also become a market for agricultural produce from Western China and this will adversely impact local producers, alleged Pakistani civil society activists. From provision of seeds and other inputs, such as fertiliser, credit and pesticides, Chinese enterprises will also operate their own farms, processing facilities for fruits and vegetables and grain. Logistics companies will operate a large storage and transportation system for agrarian produce, as per the CPEC master plan. Chinese enterprises will take the lead in each field. Experts on Chinese economy claim that Beijing's goal through CPEC is to improve the agriculture sector of certain western provinces. The plan proposes to harness the work of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps to bring mechanization as well as scientific technique in livestock breeding, development of hybrid varieties and precision irrigation to Pakistan. It sees its main opportunity as helping the Kashgar Prefecture, a territory within the larger Xinjiang Autonomous Zone, which is poverty ridden (The Economic Times New Delhi, 2012).²⁶

BELT AND ROAD FORUM: IS THE CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR FAILING?

April 2019, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan is participating in the second Belt and Road Forum in Beijing amid reports that the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project is not really moving forward. The Pakistani government, too, has emphasized the need for better economic ties with China to boost its economy, which constantly needs foreign loans to function. In 2015, China announced CPEC, which is part of its intercontinental Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with an aim to expand its influence in Pakistan and across Central and South Asia, as well as

²⁵Muhammad SaqibIshad, Qi Xin. (2014). A New Perspective of the China - ASEAN Free Trade Area and the Storyof Top Ten Products, European Journal of Business and Management, Vol.18, No.18. Pages 1-8. June, 2014.

²⁶The Economic Times New Delhi. (2012) Retrived from http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/58722033.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

countering US influence in the region. CPEC also includes plans to create road, rail and oil pipeline links to improve connectivity between China and the Middle East. As Pakistan is grappling with an acute economic crisis, experts say that CPEC has the potential to stimulate much-needed economic activity in the country.



Figure Source: The ASIA, Shamil Shams. (2019)

But experts say the implementation of CPEC projects have slowed since Khan came to power in August, last year. Abdul Razak Dawood, Pakistan's minister for commerce, industry and investment, suggested in September, 2018, that all CPEC projects could be suspended until a review is completed. Dawood also criticized the previous government headed by Nawaz Sharif, who is now incarcerated on corruption charges, for granting China "too favorable" terms on many projects. "Chinese companies received tax breaks, many breaks and have an undue advantage in Pakistan; this is one of the things we're looking at because it's not fair that Pakistani companies should be disadvantaged," Dawood said. Although, Dawood later clarified to a local TV channel that his remarks about CPEC had been taken out of context, some experts say that in spite of diplomatic exchanges, all is not well on CPEC.

The PTI has maintained that former Prime Minister Sharif and his close aides were colluding with Chinese companies for monetary gain. After coming to power, Khan could not have changed this narrative so easily. Also, the military establishment that helped Khan's rise to power was also not very pleased with CPEC. Actually, they were of the view that if Sharif was allowed to carry forward CPEC, it would make him more powerful as prime minister. They thought that Sharif would gain more popularity and would not be dependent on the military anymore. The opposition to CPEC also comes from Gulf States, which fear that the Gwadar port (part of CPEC) in Pakistan's western Baluchistan province would increase Beijing's influence in the region, where they already have major ports(The ASIA, Shamil Shams. 2019)²⁷

²⁷The ASIA, Shamil Shams. (2019) Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/belt-and-road-forum-is-the-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-failing/a-48473486>

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the last three decades, China has achieved tremendous economic growth and it is the fastest growing economies in the world. On the other hand, Pakistan is with low economic growth and is politically unstable country. The cooperation of China and Pakistan based upon to maintain the economic growth of China and strategic importance of the Pakistan. CPEC was initiated by both countries to attain the mutual interest at the regional level. In a very near time, Pakistan- China has been making concerted efforts to revive the historic Silk Road which is also called the oldest trade route in the world and it will provide a route for trade from Kashgar (China) to Gwadar (Pakistan). CPEC plan will help to become Pakistan one of the most strategically important countries in the region. It will also provide an opportunity to China to build a naval base on Gwadar port that will boost the influence of China in the area and counter US influence in the Asia- Pacific region. China increasing economic engagement with Pakistan should be seen in the context of Beijing's "efforts to counter the US efforts to deepen alliances around the Asia-Pacific region".²⁸

The "One Belt One Road" concept has international strategic importance. The OBOR initiative covers countries and regions with a total population of 4.4 billion and a total economic volume of \$21 trillion, 63% and 29% respectively of the total world.²⁹The corridor plan is involved in improving economic growth, trade change, transportation, mining, and energy sectors and creating political flexibility; this is also a vision with world-changing Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania, and the Middle East are very close together with new infrastructure and free trade zones.³⁰

The "One Belt one Road" project consists of three routes, southern, central, and northern routes:The southern corridor begins from Guangzhou which is the third largest city in south-central China. This route moves to western parts of China and connects KashgarKunjarab Pakistan, from where the Chinese also want to link to Gwadar port in the Arabian Sea. This is the shortest and very feasible choice for China. The second Chinese option is the central corridor that starts from Shanghai and links the country Tashkent, Tehran and onward to Bandar Imam Khomeini Port of Iran on the Persian Gulf, (this is the largest route but have an option.³¹

CHALLENGES AND THREATS FOR PAKISTAN REGARDING CPEC

Pakistan faces a lot of difficulties in the implementation of the CPEC project: The challenges and threats are internal as well as external:

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES STRATEGIES

CPEC pose the greatest threat to at least one neighboring country in the region, i.e. India. The United Arab Emirates is also concerned about Gwadar competing with the established Dubai. Although India and Iran have also initiated the new Iranian port of Chabahar project to counter the Gwadar port, Iran is considerably relaxed and has suggested that both Chabahar and Gwadar will be complementing each other. India invested the Chabahar port heavily, albeit remains still uncertain with only two berths at Chabahar, while Iran has already invited China and Pakistan to participate as well. Chabahar also aims to provide easy access to the landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia for energy imports coming from the Gulf region as well as a passageway to broader region. Pakistan political stability is pivotal to the success of the CPEC. Political unrest is the main obstacle to the completion of the CPEC. Pakistan has always faced political instability due to the various issues like military intervention and tug of war between the different political parties. The previous sit in 2014 for the election rigging has been presented as backlash for the CPEC. The numerous small political nationalist parties always play blame game and malign the sovereignty of the country. The ultimate objective of all these blames game and a negative statement from inside and outside is to leave the CPEC unsuccessful. Anyway, there is a consensus realization among all the political parties to cultivate the friendly relationship with China and pledge to successful of CPEC.³²

SECURITY ISSUES

The most daunting task for the successful completion of the CPEC is the security threat at internal and external level. Both these countries have internal securities, and especially Pakistan is facing the brunt of the extremism and terrorism. From Xinjiang to Gwadar consisting a group of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, (LeJ), Daesh (ISIS), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and the militant wings of some political parties. All these parties are trying to stop the mega project of CPEC. The international forces also in the

²⁸ Iqbal A (2015) Chinese investments dwarf American package: US Media. The dawn, Islamabad.

²⁹Liping X (2015) the development of the one belt and one road and its impact on china-us relations. Chinese people's association for peace and disarmament, Beijing, China.

³⁰Catanza J, Qi RJ, Shan BC (2015) Silk road initiative connects countries on path of prosperity.

³¹Ran S, Mufti F (2015) China-Pakistan economical corridors: lines of development-not lines of divide. The Tribune, Islamabad.

³²Rana S (2015) Eastern corridor route: Pakistan, china to sign infrastructure financing deals. The Tribune, Islamabad.

region are active against the CPEC. These forces continuously were assisting the militant groups and sub-nationalist in all provinces to use the terrorist elements in the whole country to threaten the CPEC project. They are involved in the kidnapping and carried out attack on the installation of Chinese companies associated with CPEC and killed many Chinese workers. To ensure the security of the worker, Pakistan army has created a special force for the CPEC security. The newly launched force, like Special Security Division, will consist of nine army battalion and six wings of parliamentary forces, the Rangers, and the Frontiers Force (FC) Corps. The major security threats are also coming from Kunar and Nuristan provinces of Afghanistan, where a lot of terrorist groups including Al Qaeda, the self-styled Islamic State, Tehreek-e-Taliban, the movement of Islamic Uzbekistan and the Turkmenistan Islamic party, etc. are also concentrated.³³

TAX AND POWER TARIFF ISSUES

China is displeased to the concerns over issue of tax, power tariff and electricity price with Pakistan along with the implementation process of CPEC energy project in Pakistan. China has expressed serious reservations over the hurdles and delaying tactics purportedly being employed by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). According to the agreements, under the CPEC, the imported equipment would be exempt from sales tax and withholding tax. However, the approval procedure from FBR is proving time-consuming, which is negatively impacting on construction project timelines in Pakistan. The Chinese authorities also point out that the decrease in tariff for renewable energy will negatively impact of CPEC project, and they feel displeased with the situations. The Pakistani authorities reply that the energy bill will not remain the same in future and will decrease the range of which is related to the project.³⁴

LACK OF QUALITY OF LABOR FORCE

The adequate quality labor force is also challenged to maintain a high degree of excellence and on time completion of the CPEC. The quality of labor force can play a key role, which depends on training, education, physique, and health, labor quality must be a count Pakistan is the 10th largest country labor force wise but lacks the proper development of the labor force. The United States of America, Japan, France, Germany, and many other developed countries are substantially investing in workers training; good education and labor force are given credit for much of the growth in per-capita income and economic productivity. In the end, author focus on the labor force training, education, and other related skills will increase the guaranty quality for the corridor.³⁵

PROVINCIAL CONCERNS

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan according to its area and the smallest in terms of population. When measured against socioeconomic standings of other provinces, Balochistan is the least developed. Its society is still plagued with tribal structures. The province is rich in resources, but the small and unskilled population due to the negligence of authorities is a hindrance in utilizing those resources to the maximum. The failure of provincial governments to enhance the capacities of the population and its institutions has also significantly contributed to under development of the province. PILDAT Working Paper (2012) highlighted that Balochistan's literacy rate stands at 51.5% and requires serious attention. A thin rate of urbanization and a high unemployment index of 20% have also caused a low annual growth rate. Data suggests that Balochistan has had a flimsy growth performance over the past decade and its GDP per capita is also the lowest when compared to other provinces. Other nationalist leaders of Balochistan province are opposing the CPEC, Brahamdagh Bugti, and the leader of the outlawed Balochs Republican Party (BRP), strongly opposed the CPEC and Gawadar port and demanded a referendum decide the future of Balochistan under the auspicious of UN. These miscreants involved in the kidnapping and killings of the Chinese worker's tankers carrying fuel to Chinese company working on the mining project. They are trying to target the management of a Chinese state-owned company.³⁶

Some political leaders of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa (KPK) also opposed to CPEC which is a significant challenge for the mega multibillion dollars project. The main problem of the opposition is changing being made in the original plan of this corridor by the federal government which will divert most of the economic benefit to Punjab only. The original route which is western route would be followed by building a road from Khunjerab to Gwadar via Mianwali, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khuzdar, and Turbat.³⁷ The KPK government and the political government are against changing the original Gawadar-Kashgar route and demanded that government should stop modifying the project, and also said that the changes would divide on the issue³⁸. The SikandarSherpao (QaumiWatan Party Parliamentary Leader) discussed the issue of change in the original plan of the project and says it will be injustice for the peoples of KPK who have already been affected due to the

³³Falak J (2015) CPEC: Internal significance and challenges.

³⁴Jabri P (2015) CPEC projects to benefit all provinces of Pakistan: Chinese envoy. Associated press of Pakistan.

³⁵Magsi H (2015) CPEC and challenges of quality labor force. The monthly diplomatic insight Preston University, Islamabad, Pakistan Preston University Islamabad 91: 26-27.

³⁶Ahmad W (2015) Balochistan, Cpec-another view. The daily time Islamabad.

³⁷Kasi A (2015) PTI protest again china trade route changes. The Dawn.

³⁸Bureau Report (2015) KP assembly opposes changed in economic corridor route. The dawn.

high rate of terrorism He also considers that the original route will connect the underdeveloped areas of KPK, like Fata to the corridor and will generate economic activities in the entire region but with an adaptation of new alignment, these areas would remain ignored. Some sub-nationalist parties in the provinces are also claiming there is a change in the original routes by federal government plan and facilitates the western parts and deprives the east of the mega project of CPEC. Since all these allegations fail to meet the fact and the government of Pakistan as well as Chinese government tried to allay the fears, by interacting with the political parties that are making the allegations.³⁹

INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

India is against with the development project, the government of India trying to fail the project. India is worried about the huge investment of China in Pakistan CPEC as well as Chinese help for Pakistan in producing plutonium at the Chinese-built Kyushu reactor; as well as the eight submarines sold by China to Pakistan worth approximately \$5 billion, which give a significant jump to Pak Navy's sea capability. After the completion of CPEC Pakistan will be the trade hub in the region after Gwadar port starts functioning fully, and dutyfree economic zones are set up. India considers the strategic partnership between the China and Pakistan as a threat and on many occasion convinced China to drop the CPEC idea. However, China has firm believed to stand with Pakistan and complete the CPEC. India had also reservation on the handing over the Gwadar port to China and financed the militant group to create the chaos in Baluchistan which is rich in oil and gas resources. The Gwadar port has been already in function, and there is no need of connection between these two parts. Iran has a stake in the CPEC through a proposal to link Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline with China as for a mutual interest between the three countries.⁴⁰

In the article of Javed on the of August 2016, he mentioned the concern of Bangla leader, Minister of Information Hassan UIHaq Anwar given entirely vote to Indian Government Mr. Modi the interference of RAW in Baluchistan and he further given interview to an Indian newspaper that they condemn the Baluch tribe ignorance in the CPEC and support the Modi that the Bangladesh government will soon announce the Balcoh policy.

BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTAN

Pakistan strategic location gives an immense importance in the region and after completion of the CPEC, the importance will be enhanced manifold in the field of the economic, commercial and geostrategic. It will help in reducing the poverty, unemployment, and grievances of inequities of the under developed province. It is viewed as the game changer and a win-win situation in the whole region by generating massive trade and economic activity and will open new vistas of progress and prosperity for the peoples of both countries.⁴¹

According to Sun Weidong the Ambassador of China in Pakistan, while he is talking about the CPEC, the CPEC getting up of the energy, transport, infrastructure and industrial projects under China-Pakistan and it will be beneficial all the provinces of Pakistan. He further asserted that CPEC is not limited to just a road, but it will connect with numbers of motorways and infrastructure projects included Gwadar port, the 2nd phase of the upgrading project of Karakoram highway, motorway project between Lahore and Karachi, Thakot-Havelian motorway, Gwadar port expressway, it will improve the situation of energy, finance, commerce, banking, industry, and education.⁴²Corridor has certain advantages which will take after the successful completion of CPEC. The project will help in mitigating the chronic energy crisis which has a negative impact on the economy of Pakistan. The energy shortage hampered the industrial production in the country, and business is closing down, shifting to other countries. Pakistan industry needs an uninterrupted energy supply for smooth economic growth. CPEC is the central and ideal project which will help get the free country of the energy crises while WAPDA and KESC have failed to tackle the problems of the system of the state .Chief Minister of Punjab (Pakistan) Mr, Shahbaz Sharif said that China is extending the great economic cooperation to Pakistan for resolving the energy crises, and some projects with Chinese assistance would start producing electricity.⁴³The projects based on the wind, solar, coal and hydro power generation of 16,400 MW, as well as the transmission system and would be located in the, varies provinces of Azad Kashmir, He further said China would be setting up 10 projects of 6,600 MW in the Thar Desert that would transform this remote and underdeveloped region into Pakistan's energy capital and open up economic opportunities and prosperity for the people.⁴⁴

The Gwadar port as well as a storage and transshipment hub for the Middle East and Central Asia oil and gas suppliers through a well-defined corridor passing through Pakistan. The Gawadar post is paramount for the operational control of the port which will enable China's access to the Indian Ocean, which is strategically important for China as it expands its influence across the region. Gawadar port will be connected with China's western province of Xinjiang through

³⁹Staff Report (2015) Chines investment to help eliminate energy crises: Shahbaz. The dawn.

⁴⁰Bhutta Z (2015) India bid to halt Pakistan projects fails. The express tribune.

⁴¹Syed BS (2013) China praises Pak strategy against terror. Dawn, Islamabad.

⁴²Akram M (2015) the cup and the lip. The dawn.

⁴³Kiani K (2015) 3bn people to benefit from cpec: Dar. The dawn.

⁴⁴kiani K (2015) Chines president due today on historic visit. The dawn.

rail and road links; it will reduce the distance to eastern seaboard 3,500 km away from the city of Kashgar in western China while the distance for Kashgar to Gwadar port is only 1500 km.⁴⁵CPEC is the game changer project which eliminates and removes the poverty in the entire region, the project is based on construction of textile garment, industrial part project, dams and installation of nuclear reactors and creating a network of roads, railway line which will automatically generate employment and people's will also take ownership of these projects, the projects will also facilitate the education side, technical side, vocational training institutes, water supply and distribution in undeveloped areas of Pakistan and will improve the quality life of peoples.⁴⁶

CPEC is a mega project of billion dollars covering a multi aspect of the economy and will have a positive impact and bring the stability and prosperity in all region of Pakistan. The Chairman of Gwadar port Dostain Khan Jamaldini said that the CPEC would not only improve the economic situation of Balochistan, but this project is for all provinces of Pakistan, Also Dr. Shahid Hassan said about the CPEC project it would bring more prosperity to the whole country and will reduce the unemployment ratio of Pakistan.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is of great significance. Historically, it is a traditional central trade route from China to South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe, and vice versa. It was formerly known as the "Silk Road" and has become a focus of attention in both developed and developing countries due to its increasing importance. This grand plan stems from Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" concept, which aims to promote the "economic prosperity, national rejuvenation, people's happiness and social harmony" of the Republic of China. The "Belt and Road" (OBOR) is an integral part of the pursuit of the "Chinese Dream". The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a \$54 billion long-term plan to 2030 and is expected to improve Pakistan's socio-economic and foreign policy situation. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor faces many challenges and dissatisfaction in Baluzhi Province and KPK Province. Is the most terrible aspect of the CPEC project, when, how to find the main object of the complaint? Because the project must be completed by 2030 as described in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Pakistan-China relations have experienced a unique continuity in the integration and cooperation of interests. This relationship is indeed rich and often categorized as a strategic multidimensional relationship. However, in the contemporary context, there is an increasing demand to transcend this bilateral relationship beyond stereotypes and, if necessary, to reinterpret its strategic significance in light of local new realities. The importance and advantage of establishing a CPEC is because it can turn a already strong political relationship between the two countries into a stronger strategic economic partnership. As a result, not only China and Pakistan, the world economy will benefit from the integration of the region.

Although CPEC not only upgrades and restores roads, highways and railway tracks, but also develops infrastructure by building missing roads and rail links between different cities in the country. However, there are many domestic concerns and provincial reservations on the CPEC. In addition to the establishment of special economic zones, the most important issue is to prioritize and focus on the eastern route of the project, because the route has been given more importance and resources, while the western region has been ignored. There is a lot of controversy and confusion about the link project, because people think that the Lahore-Karachi highway is also built under the CPEC, but this is not the case. Yes, the provincial public transport project is a sub-project of the project under consideration. Although the missing railway tracks between Quetta and Peshawar and between Quetta and Daira Ismail Khan have been built, economists and planners still question the feasibility of the economic zone because we used to There are many examples of failures in establishing such a district across the country. Therefore, they claim that CPEC does not need to establish an appropriate mutual framework from planning to income generation, and will be a forward integration of the Chinese economy and its cross-border cooperation policies. The CPEC project can be handed over under the supervision of the Pakistani Army, because if the project is handed over to the Pakistani Army, many international nationalists try to block the corridor and raise the issue of Balochi.s. Pakistan Army is one of the top military forces in the world and they have abilities to tackle the international problems. Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf Party (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Party PML (N) are also opposition parties in the current situation and they must actively consider this best choice for Pakistan. The CPEC project must go through the provincial government because the relevant chief minister knows more about how to control the challenge and highlight the problem.

As a result of the "Belt and Road Initiative", China is expected to revive by rebuilding the Old Silk Road, known as the Silk Road Economic Belt. China's global economic strategy to expand trade through different markets and consumer perspectives across the globe is being viewed and realized. Optimists tend to join, while those who worry about the consequences oppose the realization of the Chinese dream. Whatever the global or regional response, it was created at the

⁴⁵Kiani K (2015) 3bn people to benefit from cpec: Dar. The dawn.

⁴⁶kiani K (2015) Chines president due today on historic visit. The dawn.

⁴⁷Husain M (2015) A Chinese template. The dawn.

beginning to earn greater output by earning a large amount of economic discourse and investment impulses from different countries. Under the “Belt and Road”, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of the six major corridors connecting different countries. In addition to CPEC, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road are other important wits. CPEC has important value and value due to its geostrategic position, which is why it has been declared a flagship project of the “Belt and Road”. CPEC will develop Gwadar Port to ensure effective bilateral trade and will also promote and develop trade through trains. Gwadar’s ability to become a trading hub and its future has attracted much attention from neighboring India and its allies. In view of domestic concerns about CPEC, opponents generally believe that CPEC is more inclined to let Pakistan bear unrepayable debt while further exposing its internal security crack. Once Pakistan has repaid the loans it received from China under the CPEC, this could exacerbate the situation, in this regard, for example, Sir Lanka’s Hambantota initiative. Although Pakistan’s arguments are substantial under greater tax exemptions, Pakistan is unable to develop a comprehensive income-generating plan, but it has proposed this “game-changing” project for the right to transit or toll tax and the import of raw materials. Seriously questioned.

In the financing of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, China not only considers its own short-term economic interests, but more importantly, it cares about the long-term strategic needs of Pakistan's economic development. This economic corridor will help resolve glitch that disrupts the stability of its borders and avoids intra-ethnic conflicts within the two countries. China must unswervingly pursue the political interests of not interfering in the former internal affairs. Based on this, the close relationship between China and Pakistan is prestigious, rather than choosing not to support Pakistan's internal conflicts or to replace its negotiators in Pakistan. Although the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has been observed, China should not tie it to bilateral relations, but it should be considered in a regional and international perspective. China should encourage economic corridor projects through “hard power” in energy and transportation infrastructure, as well as “soft power” in China and Pakistan think tanks, as well as government officials, media and educational exchanges and cooperation, and gradually gain revenue. Experience and make arrangements for the overall implementation of the “Belt and Road” initiative.

An important thing that needs to be properly noted is that CPEC is China's investment in Pakistan, not aid. It has been said that this is an investment, which shows that the Chinese government has potential economic returns, geopolitical and geostrategic goals in the region. The opportunity for Pakistan to redefine its role in the region through trade and economic stability cannot be ignored. One of the dilemmas of the project was the unfortunate politicization of the plan. Politicians played a negative role in the initial stage, which caused dissatisfaction among the masses and remained the center of conflict between the provincial governments. Due to the lack of clarity in the overall project and the opaque implementation of the project, there was room for collusion. Unless these issues are resolved, it will continue to cause problems for the project and will continue to be a tool for political gain. In addition, the success of the project depends on its peaceful operation. It can serve the purpose of attracting more foreign investment from China and other advanced economies in the region. After the implementation of the CPEC, Pakistan should shift its foreign policy from geo-security to geo-economics. Special security forces can be dispatched on behalf of CPEC force; their role will be to protect CPEC and related workers in Pakistan and China. The CPEC project must be funded by contract. The CPEC project is a large-scale project that must be introduced to all ordinary people through social media, local TV stations, and local newspapers to enhance their interests, because the project must provide the latest technology. The implementation of the agreement should be resolved. Pakistan should implement a policy that is in line with the actual situation and should use raw materials and value-added processes in Pakistan. Security issues, the law and order system are the main obstacles to the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Pakistan should develop training centers and Chinese centers for effective communication. According to the official speech of the two heads of state, Pakistan-China relations are of great significance in the world.

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COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

It is declare that all authors don't have any conflict of interest. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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