



**CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR: A WIN-WIN
APPROACH IN A ZERO-SUM REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

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Abstract

Pakistan, due to its geostrategic existence, became a fulcrum of the massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The project is anticipated to bring socio-political and, precisely, economic stability in the region. The project is supposed to revitalize the historical Silk Rout to knock down the social, political, and economic hindrance among Asia, Africa, and Europe. This revolutionary and hi-tech Win-Win enterprise is professed as “the harbinger of a new epoch of congruence and integration” for Pakistan. CPEC is intended to unlatch many commercial routes across China, South and Central Asia, the Middle east and European region. China is going to have quicker and accessible trade rout with Persian Gulf and other resourceful regions. Pakistan would have enhanced economic stability through Gawadar Port Projects, infrastructural development, economic zones, technological assistance, and other energy generating arrangements. This paper tends to discuss the rudiments of CPEC with the geopolitical and strategic reputation considering the zero-sum politico-economic unipolar world. It throws light over social, political, and economic dimensions of the project with the consideration of political development and policy consistency of the region. The trade deficit and antidots through CPEC between China and Pakistan with the inclusion of other neighbouring States would be addressed. Hurdles and security constrictions regarding the corridor are highlighted and research based conceivable suggestions have proposed which the governments of both the countries ought to consider.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC, Win-Win scenario, Silk Rout, Trade Deficit Gawadar Port Project, Persian Gulf, zero sum game.

Introduction:

The rapid advancement of globalization has boosted the geopolitical and economic dependency among nations. China's 'Good Neighbour Policy' claimed to have win-win regional socio-political and economic connectivity with next-door regions. Following its viable traditions in global trade, "China decided the re-stimulation of ancient 'Silk Rout' with the foundation of multi-trillions plan, "Belt and Road Initiative". China, in April 2015, manifested the diversification of BRI to Pakistan with the inauguration of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)" (McCarteny, 2018) to enhance regional bilateral collaboration with Pakistan.

CPEC is a multi-billions flagship scheme of BRI which aims to connect 'China western region to Arabian sea' in Gawadar area of Baluchistan through prolonged channels of land routes and aerial passageways to advance energy conveyance between two countries. This "scheme is anticipated to have 'Three-Thousand Kilometre' long rout which connect Kashgar city with Gwadar Port" (Ali, 2016). It was initially estimated as "46\$ billion schemes but later, in 2017, Pakistan entitled the extension of whole cost into 62\$ billion" (Sadiqi, 2017). The accomplishment of this megaproject is awaited since 2030, which can be echoed the prime venture asserted by China in 21st century. The project is going to be a morale-builder and ground-breaking alteration in the socio-political and economic development for the entire Eurasian and African region.

The existing globalized trends has further augmented the regional dependency and connectivity among nations. CPEC tends to enhance multilateral connectivity in concerning regions. It aims to launch commercial passages between Pakistan, China, and other adjacent regions of Western and Central-Asia, Gulf and African region. For Pakistan, its not just an energy-booster, but apart from economic sphere, the project is the most reliable medium of bilateral friendly socio-political and moral relation between these two nations. People to people diplomacy is the most productive consequence of this project.

Forecasts of CPEC initiative have had been examined by numerous professionals and scholars all around the globe. It is to be said that this jumbo project is supposed to raise socio-political and economic progress to all the nations along the route. It is projected as a comprehensive building-block of regional and international development as well.

Statement of the Problem:

Pakistan holds the title of first Muslim country who recognized China as a sovereign state. Despite certain incompatibilities, both nations share bilateral social, political, and economic relation from the very beginning. Both nations have relatively likeminded orientation of the regional political and economic atmosphere. China shares effectual substantial support with Pakistan and absorb global connectivity through Pakistan. This article contends that both the countries, despite zero-sum global atmosphere, have win-win responsive and reliable socio-political, moral, and economic bilateral relations throughout all the times. The paper tends

to analyse the existing and foreseeable developments at the accomplishment of CPEC.

Rationale:

This article comprehends a comprehensive analysis of the cost-utilities and liabilities of the giant economic project, CPEC. Inclusive perceptions across the border are logically examined.

Some conceivable challenges and sprints are critically emphasised, and dependable remedies and suggestions are also provided to smoothen the desired consequences of the project in the concerning regions.

Scope of the Study:

The study provided the foundations of Sino-Pak diplomatic connexion against overwhelming odds. It proclaims the credibility and advantages of CPEC in China Pakistan region. All predictable pros and cons for geostrategic and geopolitical and economic enhancement of the region are disapprovingly examined. Some research-based suggestions for further refinement of the project are also provided.

Objectives:

Some of the main objectives of this dissertation are.

1. To discuss the economic dimensions of CPEC.
2. To reveals about the political and geographic dimensions of CPEC.
3. To describes the potential benefits of CPEC for Pakistan.

4. To throw light over the challenges CPEC could face in the region.

Statement of the Research:

The purpose of this paper is to study the economic, political, and strategic dimensions of CPEC and challenges which both countries facing in making it a successful development.

Literature Review:

Pakistan due to its geographical existence has been a pivot of geostrategic and political goings-on of the South Asia and other connecting regions. It was Pakistan's geographical status which attracts the operation of multi-trillions umbrella mega project of China, BRI. Pakistan holds a critical role in the application of this project to boost-up global connectivity between Asia, Africa, and Europe. CPEC is going to be a fortune-changer for Sino-Pak as well as other neighbouring regions. All connected countries would share a joint comprehensive corridor of CPEC to fulfil their desired aims. Pakistan, through CPEC, provides regional association between Eurasia and Gulf countries. Besides, "Gwadar Seaport will be a fulcrum point where the Land Routes will amalgamate with the Maritime Route" (Choudhary, 2017).

CPEC claim to have fetched enormous global commercial trends from entire Eurasian region. Pakistan is going through enormous difficulties with energy crises, fiscal inflation, infrastructural backwardness, unemployment, industrial and agricultural underdevelopment, and more critically market downgrade. CPEC is going to attract global commercial multi-national corporations and would boosted-up Pakistan's access to

global commercial market to fulfil are the desired necessities. Some major energy crises are expected to be considered.

CPEC is anticipated to meet all disparities and can play a vital role in the enhancement of all spheres of life in connected region. “Diverse CPEC developments would be functioned on BOT (Build Operate Transfer) paradigm which is a kind of Public Private Partnership (PPP)” (Junaid, 2019). Pakistan tried to implement PPP in power and telecom sector in 1990s to enhance governance”, but it did not deliver the required result.

CPEC is strictly expected to have win-win national and international consideration of economic and political development. It needs not only national consensus in China and Pakistan but a global consensus and reliability among concerning countries as well as developed nations should be constructed. Even a single global antagonism from concerned and developed States can drag the project to socio-political and economic incarceration.

Some regional countries like “India does not an optimistic imitation of the project in the region” (Ahmar, 2015). Historical grievances with Pakistan and China have overshadowed its attitude towards this consistent valuable project. This cynical apprehension of the project can cause certain constraints for India as well as the successful application of the scheme. The project should be all in all inclusive in all aspects and it must not be divergent towards any global actor.

Economic Dimensions of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor:

Men, in general, are more likely dependent in almost all aspects of life. As for Nations, “living alone for them is a risk factor” (Chen, 2020). Globalization has further extended this dependency among nations to a critical level. It has established a ‘global village’ of the diverse nations from all around the world. Despite all cons, globalization has developed a global integration and collaboration among nations. Nations are predominantly engaged in multi-lateral diplomatic relations to fulfil their national interests peacefully. This interdependency, on the other side, has mushroomed undeniable vulnerability and hegemonic competition among nations.

As for as CPEC is concerned, it is a solid plan to enhance win-win global connectivity and collaboration between China, Pakistan, and other regional actors. Being an extension of umbrella scheme, BRI, the project tends to deliver cosmic opportunities in socio-political and economic development of the region. It is fundamentally an “inclusive approach to march westwards through landlocked nations and through the waters” (Wang, 2012) to enhance market orientation and opportunities among numerous nations.

This giant scheme is whispered a vital component for the development of economies of both the countries. During the President Xi Jinping visit to Pakistan in April 2015, “both countries came through about fifty-one commercial covenants worth 46\$ billion with more enhancement to about 61\$ billion as professed by Pakistani authorities in 2017” (Malik & Houreld, 2015). CPEC is anticipated to bring economic prosperity in Pakistan in the following paradigms:

Infrastructure Development:

CPEC, during its application has inclusively claimed to bring infrastructural enhancement to desperate condition of infrastructure in Pakistan. The project is going to rehabilitate and invest in railways, roads, ports, airports, and highways etc. This project will enhance Pakistan's infrastructural connection with other regions of Asia, Africa and Europe and it will eliminate all the trade and investment barriers in the region and will develop a business environment. Following are the infrastructure projects which are going to be materialized:

- “Takaut -Hevellian Section. (KKH Phase II)
- Multaan-Sakkar Section. (Peshawer-Karaachi Motorway)
- Khuozdaar - Baseema Road N-30
- Amelioration of D. I. Khan – Zhaob, N-50 Phase-I
- Upgradation of KKH Thaakot-Raikaot N35
- Enlargement and Renovation of Standing Line ML-1
- Haveelian Dry Port” (Mahmood, Sabir, and Ali, 2020).

Energy Enrichment:

If history is reviewed, there have been industrial revolutions in the world. It is very clear that energy have had been the backbone of the economic development. Economic growth is intimately linked to energy. Bright future of the nations is solely dependent on energy. To run all the industries and companies, energy is required. In eighteenth century, there has been industrial revolution in England; there were four main

components behind that revolution, which were Energy, Labour, Technology and Risk Capital (Michael, 2007).

Tourism Industry on Rise:

CPEC claims the political and economic revivalism to Pakistan with stable outlook. It will help a lot in attracting tourists to visit different cities of Pakistan. When tourism will be enhanced, automatically investment in country would also be increased. Tourism is also beneficial for the hotel business. Pakistan is considered one of the beautiful countries of the world having many beautiful valleys. CPEC will be able to connect Pakistan, so it will be easy for the tourists to visit and invest in the country.

Employment Opportunities:

As already been discussed, this mega project has the investment of USD 46 Billion, so its accomplishment requires a vast number of labour force. “Pakistani officials claim that CPEC could help generate even 1.2 million jobs under its currently approved project” (Rashid, Zia & Waqar, 2018). Chinese corporations also outsourced many schemes to homegrown Pakistani corporations. They provide innovative practices and an efficacious knowledge to help Pakistan revolutionise its human resources.

Educational Opportunities:

Chinese educational institutes have launched numerous occupational training centres with indigenous educational institutes in Pakistan i.e., Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar. “CFPD, China Fund for Peace and Development has constructed the ‘Faqeer Primary School’ in Gwadar, which is known as ‘Chinese Pakistan Friendship School’” (Junaidi, 2019).

They also granted thousands of Pakistani students with full funded international scholarships and fellowship programs explore Chinese educational and professional expertise.

CPEC: Political and Geostrategic Dimensions:

CPEC is not precisely an exclusively project confined to economic sphere, but it intended to boost-up the political credibility and reliability in Pakistan. Not only bilateral advancement would occur, but global political stability is also constantly prioritized. Political progress in Pakistan would ensure regional and provincial integration with the eradication of various conflicts caused by socio-political and economic discrepancies. The project also claims political credibility of Pakistan in global political system through collaboration and dependency with numerous regional and far western developed countries.

Pakistan's Political Stability and Policy Consistency:

Through the prism of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, political stability can be brought in the country through social, political, and economic harmony among all provinces.

A positive aspect is that there are consensuses of Political Parties of Pakistan for developing good relations with China, so it can be said that there is no major political obstruction in the way of CPEC construction. When all the political parties of Pakistan will be on the same page regarding her policies related to China (Haider & Parveen, 2014).

Strengthening Democracy in Pakistan:

CPEC intended to have strengthened democracy in Pakistan. Through the prism of CPEC, there would be equalization among provinces. There will be political stability in the country. All the political parties would be on the same page regarding the construction of CPEC. When there will be development of all the areas of Pakistan on equal basis, then the masses of Pakistan will be on the same page to strengthen the democratic values in the country. It also can play a keen role to unite the people of Pakistan.

Pakistan-Afghanistan Peace Talks: China's Role as a Mediator:

So, under the paradigm of ongoing CPEC project, with the help of China, Pakistan has a golden opportunity to maintain peace talks with Afghanistan. In this tense scenario, it might be difficult to successfully construct CPEC for both the countries, so negotiations are the guarantee of success.

China as a Mediator in Kashmir Issue:

Issue of Kashmir is not a new phenomenon. It is a deep-rooted historic conflict between the powers of South Asia (India and Pakistan). This issue is disturbing the peace of the whole region. So far, both the countries have fought three wars on the issue of Kashmir. Due to this issue, everyday there is increasing ethnic conflicts, security issues, human rights violation, nuclear proliferation, and cross border terrorism in the region of South Asia. United Nations and international community have failed to bring any suitable solution of this issue.

Finally, it can be said that to successfully accomplishment of CPEC, China also will play a very positive role. Cross border conflicts and

terrorism should be eliminated for the success of CPEC. So, China will do her best for the settlement of Kashmir Issue by playing the role of a mediator.

Peace in Balochistan:

The manifestation of successful developments in Balochistan through CPEC and bringing equalization among provinces, can eradicate violent situation between Centre and desperate Province. Thus, “the Central Government should do the sincere effort to bring Balochistan on equal footing with other provinces of Pakistan” (Antreasian & Aijaz, 2016).

Challenges and Constraints in the Way of CPEC:

South Asia, in general, is commonly known as a region where terrorism, extremism, instability, conflicts, and economic underdevelopment are customary to most of the region. CPEC is showing up to sort out political and economic disparities in the Sino-Pak region. There has always been a counter force to any upward march in the Pak-China region. Probably, there are some projected domestic and foreign challenges to the effective application of CPEC which might have some alarming repercussions. These challenges are bellow.

CPEC: Security Concerns:

Being a pivot of global colonization and due to some global and regional geopolitical fluctuations, South Asia has always been going through some security uncertainties. These political unrests have raised some undeniable challenges to CPEC. After the horrific incident of 9/11 and fall of Taliban

regime Pak-Afghan region has critically outshone by global and domestic terrorism and extremism. This insurgent march has pledged some dire obstructions to the submission of CPEC from its very commencement. Pakistan tried its level best through various heavy handed military operations to exterminate this sophisticated threat to the political stability of the region. An everlasting ebb and flow in Indo-Pak and Pak-Afghan relation also intimidates CPEC since its inception. “Pakistani officials have provided sound evidence of foreign terrorisations from Indian Raw and other concerning foes which bothers CPEC at various notch” (Elahi, 2015). Some other extrinsic and intrinsic threats to CPEC are given bellow.

Domestic Threats:

Domestic insurgencies and violent terrorism have shrunken the socio-political and economic stability of Pakistan. Religious sectarianism and extremism in various regions have initiated a calamitous wave of political unrest and civil combats in the region. The very fulcrum of CPEC project, Balochistan, has perpetually intimidated by various domestic and foreign threats with violent attacks and terrorization of the area. Some direct attacks on Gawadar Port and other concerning zones have troubled the project at its base. China intends to “capitalize the project with gigantic investment in energy and other sectors, but enduring insurrections in Gawadar Region worries its concerned interest” (Economist, 2015).

Gilgit being a disputed territory has always been a nuisance for geostrategic and geopolitical arrangements of Pakistan. This zigzag scenario manipulates the socio-political and economic atmosphere in

Pakistan and other concerned regions. India is in a perpetual struggle to catch the territorial and political hegemony of the region for being the adjacent area of Jammu and Kashmir (Javid, 2019). This two-pronged struggle has dragged the region into domestic and foreign disputes which is explicitly considered a carnage for the successful accomplishment of CPEC.

External Intimidations:

Due to some global indeterminate tendencies in existing global socio-political and economic atmosphere, there are some counter-perceptions concerning revivalism of ancient Silk Route through BRI. These counter forces have intended to propagate the project depressingly against the interest of global and regional political arena.

Indian Attitude Toward CPEC:

Pakistan and China strategically have a shared foe in its bordering conjunction. For this, India is continuously opposing CPEC in guilt of sabotaging its sovereignty in the region. “Indian government as well as public and private have propagated the project as reproachful and devastating move in the region” (Rifaat & Maini, 2016).

Numerous analysts on China Pakistan studies have of the view that Indian antagonism towards CPEC is because of the changing geopolitical and geostrategic balance of South Asia and the enrichment of national strength of Pakistan. For this, India is trying to sabotage the project with terrorist activities in Balochistan, Jammu Kashmir and other concerned regions.

Role of Afghanistan:

Afghanistan for being at the rim of Mackinder's heartland and a land-locked country have keen interest to catch the developmental orientation of CPEC. China and Pakistan have a shared agreement to prolong the political and economic uprising of CPEC to Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a long history political and economic disparities. Some major changes in its geopolitics after US incursion created some faceless uncertainties in the region. Afghanistan for its over inclination towards India, as a substitute for Pakistan, has created multi-misperceptions concerning Afghanistan's attitude towards CPEC and socio-political changes in the region. "Authorities have claimed RAW-NDS tie to sabotage the prevailing CPEC shames" (Sajid, 2016). Afghanistan is being accused of cross border terrorist activities and smuggling to Pakistan which troubles the repercussion of CPEC project. There are also internal instabilities in Afghanistan, which is also sabotaging the successful completion of CPEC.

Political Unrest in Pakistan:

Pakistan has multi-party system from its very beginning. As the foundation of all parties are differ, the priorities and perceptions are varied. These political parties have never been on the identical position regarding any political and domestic affair of the State. They all have a diverse political orientation about the political socialization and policy operation of the state. Therefore, political instability and economic unrest became a usual fate of the country. In addition, political disruptions have been occurred due to irregular variations in the existing political system.

Hegemonic capitalism, feudalism, and sectarianism have further deteriorated the political turbulences.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

CPEC is going to drag gigantic opportunities for China, Pakistan and other Eurasian and African nations. It is a fortune-changer and owes massive geopolitical and geostrategic development for both the countries. CPEC is a mutually beneficial project with win-win advantage for both the nations. For China, this corridor will provide an alternate route for energy requirements, and it will help China in finding new markets for goods and services in Eurasian and African region. For Pakistan, the corridor claims a land-breaking opportunities to excavate all social, political, and economic crises. It intends to resolve all energy crises, infrastructural underdevelopment, and economic disparities. Most importantly, this mega scheme is going to strengthen Pakistan's countermove to growing Indian influence in the region.

Regional connectivity, economic development, trade modification, infrastructural advancement, energy enhancement and political versatility are the ultimate aims of the ongoing revolutionary project. Apart from political and economic development, the project aims everlasting social-mobility and enhancing human development index in the concerned regions. With economic development the project will be able to exterminate violent disparities, poverty, and other social tribulations in

Sino-Pak region. It always succeeded in bringing social connectivity, feelings of oneness and people to people cohesion between two states.

This game-changer project with all its beneficial constraints might have some dire challenges to face. The existing global order with confined hegemonic tendencies has an antagonistic overview of the project due to its global reliance in the existing socio-political and economic order. Western hegemons have anticipated the project with massive revolution to the energy sector and global power centeredness. Due to its connectivity with Mackinder's Heartland and Spykman's Rimland, the project can be projected a naval shift to the ongoing global theatre.

Such an ultimate situation is by no means definite. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor can not only alleviate some of the major barriers which are hindering the economic development Pakistan but also upsurge its previously hefty external debt. Greater transparency is of dire need to allow a thorough cost-benefit scrutiny that at present is not conceivable. Many political leaders and journalists are calling CPEC a fortune-changer for Pakistan, China, and entire region. The project is strictly based on win-win advantage for both countries with no other concentration as propagated by various antagonists.

For the successful application of the project some research based conceivable propositions and recommendations are given bellow.

- China-Pakistan Forum apparatus should be introduced to endorse the successful operation of CPEC project.
- People-to-people diplomacy should be considered.

- All inclusive, flexible, and synchronised agenda need to be launched.
- An imperial and systematic association must be recognised.
- A technical board with professionals and virtues statesmen need to be framed.
- The project must be concluded within meant period i.e., 2030.
- CPEC must be prioritised rationally by policy makers and concern officials.
- To resolve existing disparities of Pakistan, scientific progress and research must be appreciated in the regarding sphere.
- Human resources need to be exchange into Human capital.
- Private Partnership Model must be launched for CPEC scheme.
- Mass-produced Organizational and administrative reliance ought to be manufactured.
- All-inclusive relationship between two nations in all aspects must be progressed.
- The project needs to be optimistically recognized a win-win advantageous adventure with a single national consensus.

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