

Implications, Challenges, and Incentives of CPEC for Regional Connectivity and Economic Development

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Article Information	Abstract
Received: December 17, 2023 Revised: December 24, 2023 Accepted: December 30, 2023	CPEC is a multifarious project, connecting two atomic powers of Asia with railways and roadways. Bringing two in-every-way different and diversified nations closer. Much has already been written, scrutinized, and said with minute details about project but no one knows the project in its entirety. The ongoing project has yet to take final shape. The culmination of CPEC will clear the mist surrounding it. Some say CPEC is debt trap by China while others claim that it is purely a business deal between two states. Mainstream media in Pakistan projects almost the shadowy picture. Chinese media says that the project is aimed to tie the everlasting knot of fraternity between two great nations. China has personal interests in this project so does Pakistan. This study aims to unravel the mystery surrounding the project and find out what the project really is, its implications, challenges and prospects for economic development and regional connectivity. Particularly it is explored that how and to what extent will this project impact Pakistan? This is a qualitative study with secondary data resources that aims to depict the CPEC in a broader picture.
Keywords <i>Pakistan-China Relations</i> <i>Debt Trap</i> <i>Gwadar</i> <i>CPEC</i> <i>Belt and Road Initiative</i> <i>Economic Development</i>	

1 Introduction

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is Chinese intention of connecting with the world through roads, railways and maritime silk route with mainland China (Griffiths, 2017). It will connect three continents and more than half of the world population (Jinchen, 2016). Around \$30 trillion market will directly come under the sway of China after the completion of BRI (Lockhart, 2017). CPEC is the pilot project of BRI. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a conglomeration of diverse projects. It contains different projects spanning from energy infrastructure, building railroads, dams and motorways (Bhattacharjee, May 2015). It was signed and agreed upon by the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on April 22, 2015. (Ashfaq, 2016). At its commencement, the venture cost was \$46 billion. It was the largest ever foreign direct investment in Pakistan (Dr. Mansoor Ali, 2016). The total Chinese investment under the umbrella of CPEC raised up to \$72 billion in 2016 (Ashfaq, 2016; Nation, 2016).

BRI has three routes; southern, northern and central (Gilani, 2017). The southern route of BRI is called CPEC and has the strategic importance for both China and Pakistan. Through this route China wants to reach Gwadar by Kashghar, Khunjerab and Gilgit-Baltistan

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(Ahmad, 2016). This is the briefest and most secure route because there sits a nuclear power on its way which has the sixth-largest² population and likewise sixth³ largest active army (Quddus, 2015). Pakistan has proven to be a natural ally and guardian of Chinese interests by default (Nation, 2017).

Ultimately CPEC is aimed to link Kashghar (North-Western China) with Gwadar (Nation, 2016). BRI is aimed to link China and Central Asia with Pakistan to provide the shortest route to the landlocked countries in Central Asia and Western China (Shahbazov, 2017). This route is termed as the modern-day silk-route⁴ by Chinese (Fazal-ur-Rahman, 2011). It will not only give China the shortest access-way to the West, but it will also give boom to the countries situated around the passageway of BRI (Business Recorder, 2016).

CPEC will add to the geostrategic importance of Pakistan and will make it a hub of major economic activity in the region (Ramay, 2018). There are many Chinese companies in Pakistan that are state owned. They are investing almost in every field ranging from mining, oil refineries, gem industry, seafood to the local handicrafts (Jamal, 2017). Chinese have proven to be the modern-day Gog Magog.⁵ This route will cut the costs of transportation. Chinese traffic will move on it with agility and security. Chinese edibles will be available for longer time in the and engulfing markets due to quick transportation (Al-Bawaba, 2015). There is a widespread speculation in the neighboring countries of Pakistan (India, Iran, and Afghanistan) that China wants to partner with Pakistan in its grand economic ventures. Furthermore, it is planning to transfer its textile and other such industries to Pakistan. In doing so, it wants to make developments in the domains of aerospace, nanotechnology, and defense industries, and artificial intelligence with intense national focus (Javaid U. , 2016).

This qualitative study based on secondary sources, at first, aims to take an overview of CPEC projects and connectivity routes. Second, this analyses the regional and international implications of this flagship project. Third, this takes into account significant challenges to the success of the economic corridor. Fourth, particular incentives in terms of economic and connectivity benefits which motivate the two countries to push hard for the success of this landmark bilateral agreement are discussed.

2 Overview of Projects

In February 2018, CPEC's total worth was approximately \$72 billion (CPEC-Energy Priority Projects, 2017). Pakistan's GDP was \$283.7 billion so, the CPEC amounted to 25.37 percent of total annual gross domestic product of Pakistan (Bank, 2017). The Economic Corridor has been divided into four main areas namely:

1. Development of Gwadar International Port;
2. Energy projects (it is crucial for China's industrial setup in Pakistan);
3. Roads and Railways network, and;
4. Industrial Cooperation.

² <https://www.census.gov/popclock/print.php?component=counter>

³ <http://www.businessinsider.com/these-are-the-worlds-20-strongest-militaries-ranked-2016-4>

⁴ Silk-Route was an old route on which China exclusively exported the world its Silk which was found only in China from 2nd century BC to 14th Century AD.

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/silk-route.asp>

⁵Giants in the Hebrew, Biblical and Muslim traditions that will appear on earth before apocalypse and will devour everything alive on earth including humans.

The project is further divided into three phases; early harvest projects which are short-term (2015-2020), mid-term projects (2015-2025) and long-term projects (2015 to 2030) (Tribune, 2017). Currently the project is aimed to work on two-terms; short and the mid (Arif, 2016). The development of Gwadar, overcoming energy shortage and development of infrastructure is the focal point of this project (Dawn, 2017). Once these phases are completed, trucks loaded with Chinese goods will be passing through Pakistan on low scale initially (Kayani, 2013).

The early harvest projects under the banner of CPEC would add 10,400 megawatts of electricity to the National Grid of Pakistan (TOI, 2017). Karachi Circular Railway is part of CPEC which will circumnavigate Karachi (Dawn, 2017). Karachi Peshawar Motorway is also part of the CPEC which passes through or by major cities in Punjab like Rahim Yar Khan, Multan, Faisalabad and Lahore. In Sindh it will pass by Sukkur, Ghotki and Hyderabad (CPEC.gov.pk, 2017). There is a web of motorways under this project which will go through all the provinces of Pakistan connecting Quetta, with Peshawar and Karachi with Lahore linking all of them with Kashghar and Gwadar (Nation, 2017).

Gwadar International Airport is also the part of CPEC along with an oil refinery, a technical institute to supply the manpower needed for the project and an oil reservoir to supply uninterrupted fuel to the traffic along the route (Khan, 2014).

3 Significant Routes

This corridor stretches from Gilgit-Baltistan running through the hilly areas passing through plains of Punjab, hills of KPK, Rivers of Sindh, passing betwixt the sand dunes of Balochistan and will ultimately end up at the sea port, connecting all the major cities of Pakistan to Kashghar and Gawaadar (Rana, 2015).

Initially it was planned that the Corridor will be built on the already constructed roads by upgrading them but after the serious agitation and belligerence by the political parties, government devised a plan to construct new roads and divide the route into three lines. Now the Corridor has central route, eastern route and western route. It was necessary to eliminate grievances of the parties. The routes will usher development in the areas they pass through and will solidify much needed fraternity and harmony in provinces (Fazal-ur-Rahman, 2011).

The eastern route extends from Gawaadar to Makran Coastal highway going to Karachi. From Hyderabad it turns to Sukkur passing through Rahim Yar Khan, Multan, Faisalabad, Pindi Bhattian and will merge into M2 (Lahore-Islamabad Motorway) from Islamabad it will turn towards Muzaffarabad (Kashmir) and then it will enter Gilgit and will merge all the way to Chinese Motorway in Xinjiang.

Haripur, Abbottabad, Mansehra and especially the Hazara division are also in the planning phase to be linked with this route. Diامر, Torkham Border, Wagha border are also planned to be linked with the eastern route. Mountainous area of Karakoram will also be linked with CPEC. This is the longest and the most strategic route which will pass through and will be linked with all the provinces and major cities of Pakistan. The motorway in Eastern route is called KLM (Karachi Lahore Motorway). M4 is the part from Pindi Bhattian to Multan which is divided into five sections. Of which, all five have been completed sections have been completed; from Pindi Bhattian to Faisalabad fifty-three-kilometer section; Faisalabad to

Gojra fifty-eight-kilometer; and from Khanewal to Multan a fifty-six-kilometer section finally Multan to Rahim Yar Khan and Rahim Yar Khan to Sukkur.

A dual train track is also being built on this route which is named ML1 (Main Line one). It stretches from Karachi to Peshawar. From Peshawar it will be linked to Kashghar passing through Gilgit-Baltistan (Javaid U. , 2016). ML2 (main line two) will connect eastern, central and western routes and will facilitate shipments of goods. This route starts from Gwadar and passes through the southern districts of Balochistan. With link roads from Iran, Afghanistan and KPK it will pass by Dera Ismaail Khan a district in KPK (Khyber PakhtoonKhawah). This route will give Iran and Afghanistan an easy access to Gwadar and China. Special economic zones (SEZ) are being built around this route keeping in mind the Iranian and Afghani Market. It ends at Islamabad merging into eastern route (Zeb, May 2012) (Hassan, 2016).

Western route was not planned initially. After the demands made by the governments of KPK and Balochistan it was added into CPEC bucket. Work on it was suspended for almost six months because the government said it did not have enough men and equipment to build the route. FWO (frontier works organization, owned by Pak Army) came forward and took the responsibility to go in the terror-stricken areas. Civil contractors had security risks. The work currently on this area has completed. The central route starts from Islamabad connecting with Eastern route .It passes through Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab and enters Balochistan connecting with motorway eight (M8). It ends at Gwadar.

4 Economic Implications for China and Pakistan

The term global village could never have been perceived more rightly than the present international scenario to meet ever-increasing demands and needs of the rapidly growing population. Inexorable is the need of connecting the world through the web of roads and railroads. Connecting China with rest of the world will not only thoroughly help China but it will interconnect Asia on European pattern (Landesbank, 2017). Europe rightly fears that the Chinese Yuan will have a sway over the Asian, African and European markets instead of Euro and US Dollar (Ferdinand, 2016). Business deals will be made in Chinese currency only, and dependency on US dollar will lose the credibility in all these situations (Ferdinand, 2016).

Indian Ocean has become a focal point for UAE and India alike. They seem to be clandestinely partnering due to their collective inclination westwards (Siyech, 2017). This is a most intriguing scenario; UAE dislikes Iran. Iran is inevitable for India and the prior seems to be the only overland option for the latter to reach Central Asia (Pak-Observer, 2017; Soleri, 2016). Regional politics has taken a new shape right after the commencement of this project. India has made some new allies in the region, and it also partnered with Iran in Chabahar (Times of India, 2018).

CPEC is not only an exemplary strategic cooperation of two nations rather it is a business model, a new formula of diplomacy, interdependency, mutual trust and respect (Murtaza, 2016) with bilateral trade, decades old cooperation, having an aura of fraternity, congeniality and diversity. All of this is apparent through their historic relations (AFP, 2013). China has emerged as a strong ally of Pakistan in almost every field and measure (Rosen, 2016). The largest share of imported goods in Pakistan is from China (Mahmood A. , 2014). Projects under the umbrella of CPEC were being carried out in a full swing for swift completion

because many regional and international powers had grievances over CPEC (Zhang & Shi, 2016). The project is running on its slowest pace now to please USA (News, 2019).

Economy is the backbone of any entity, institution, country or an organization. In case of Pakistan, CPEC is not merely a business deal rather it is a matter of life and death for Pakistan (Pak-Today, 2016). The country has witnessed turmoil, natural disaster, political instability and the region where it is situated has been war ridden for decades (Javaid A. , 2018). If its economy is not strengthened then it might suffer prolonged instability, and prosperity might be a far-flung idea in this case (Qian, 2016). This is the sole reason that it is called economic-corridor and not strategic or any other corridor (Economist, 2015). Once the projects under this venture are completed the corridor will cater as a primary route for Chinese goods (Tribune, 2015). The route will shorten the distance and reduce a proportionate amount of time and cost which will surely encourage the producers to export more goods out of China briskly (Mushtaq, 2017). The ingress and egress of goods through Pakistan will not only make Pakistan more prominent but they will also serve as a role model for landlocked countries in Asia and Africa to conjoin (Menon, 2016). Thousands of Chinese ships entering seaports of Pakistan will save the millions of dollars of fuel (Zaffar, 2016). The investment that China is making in Pakistan for road building will pay off in almost two years (Siddiqui, 2017). More than seven thousand miles or around twelve thousand kilometers of distance will be shortened by this economic corridor (Rafiq, 2017). West fears that the CPEC is the Chinese answer to their hegemony and dollar dominated world (Rana, 2020). While Pakistan seeks an opportunity to for creating a balance and not putting all its eggs in the Western basket (Ferdinand, 2016).

5 Significance of CPEC

Gwadar is a natural deep-sea port gifted by nature to Pakistan. Once developed, the port will bring unfathomable advantages and economic perks to Pakistan (Munir, 2017). This port is the sole reason that China has vowed to invest such a gigantic amount of money in Pakistan (TOI, 2016). Chinese companies crave for their share in such a port (Monnoo, 2017). The development of Gwadar port will give Pakistan an economic autonomy as well as, a boost to local seafood business (Weihua, 2017). Chinese firms have made various agreements with Gwadar authorities to set-up diving schools and shipyards in the area (Gul, 2017). Although the projects just started off recently in the port area, Herald-Dawn reported that the property prices have soared to three hundred percent and local business is thriving speedily (Ahmed M., 2017). Ferry service is also being considered by Chinese and they showed interest to invest in the business because they see great potential in the area (Tribune, 2017).

Gwadar is located at the eastern side of Strait of Hormuz, a very strategic place and a choke point of Gulf-Of-Persia it opens its gates into the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean (Fazil, 2016). World's seventy percent oil trade that is carried by the sea is passed through this strait (MAREX, 2014). Sooner this channel will be trafficked with Chinese goods. Keeping all this in mind, China intends to build a stronghold for monopoly here (Bender, 2015). Comparing to this, the Strait of Malacca can be choked any time to tame China by India and USA (Ranjan, 2015).

India has major grievances regarding the development of Gwadar Deep-Port (Janjua, 2015). It says that China does not only want to expand its business, it also wants to have an upper hand in the area by harnessing the most advantageous sea-port (Siddique, 2014). All Indian brawls did not pay the toll because its fear is rejected by all those who have stakes in the silk-

route (APP, 2017). On the other hand, a strong and thriving Pakistan is not acceptable to India by any mean and way. India fears that it will facilitate Kashmiri freedom movement (Pant, 2012). It is a strategic significance of CPEC.

India's growing population has increasing needs and those needs can only be met by uninterrupted supply of oil which is imported from Arabian Gulf (Campbell, 2016). India also fears that once the Strait of Hormuz comes under the sway of CPEC maritime traffic, the Arabian countries will lean towards Pakistan and China for huge sales in oil. Central Asia alone can take the big chunk of oil products that pass through this strait (Ranjan, 2015).

India has developed Iranian sea port Chabahar. The traffic which will carry goods to and from this port will be Iranian liability (TOI, 2017). Afghanistan compared to India, Pakistan and Iran is a very small economy with trivial needs has been lured by India to join the Chabahar Port venture as a response to CPEC (IndianExpress, 2017). On the contrary the Gwadar port can serve as a secure and shortest route for Arab countries. Russia, China and Central Asia will also be facilitated. With Iran many Arab countries have sectarian differences. Through Afghanistan and Iraq, it is impossible because those two countries are war ridden. Arabs are having growing tensions with Turkey as well after the Khashoggi's murder. Pakistan is the sole viable solution for Arab, Africa and Middle East (Ahmed W. , 2018).

The economic corridor will, for the first time, connect all the provinces and federally administered tribal areas along with autonomous regions such as Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir with Islamabad through motorways, railways and airways (Nation, 2017). A perspective of CPEC for Pakistan is that it will ease the access to diversified cultural entities and different ethnicities within Pakistan to share their culture with the whole country. An implication here further indicates that jobs will be created and tourism in the northern areas of Pakistan will increase (Shi Zhiqin, 2016). Harmony and peace will be guaranteed through this Corridor in Pakistan. This will reshape the socio-political scenario and remodel the whole social fabric in Pakistan bringing people and surrounding nations closer (Suleri, 2010).

5.1 India's Take on CPEC

Indian Media portrays CPEC as an ultimate threat to itself. It eyes CPEC as a speed-breaker in its way becoming regional power (Asifa Jahangir, 2016, p. 9). The country is cornered geographically by China and Pakistan (Ms. Ayza Shoukat, 2017). It also feels itself insecure surrounded by enemy states (Khan I. F., 2016, p. 234). It has fought wars with China and Pakistan in the past. Both the latter have to face trouble by the former from time to time (Sachdeva, 2006, p. 274). It is sternly against the idea of the stability of Pakistan and China's growing influence in the region (Khan Z. A., 2015, p. 81). This situation was the ideal for USA as it itself sees China as a threat to its hegemonic international role (Stéphane Callens, 2017, p. 125).

USA latently decided to align with India in regional politics and started pressurizing Pakistan with gestures and frowns (Mohan, 2016, p. 91). This regional integration is persuading new global and regional alignments by far making new upfront allies and foes (Gojree, April 2015, p. 8).

5.2 Afghanistan's Perspective

Afghanistan, a buffer state between global powers, cannot be left out in the whole scenario (Roselle, 2016). USA is already present in the country and asked India to join in (Evans, December 2012). The situation was ideal for both to check Sino-Russian advancement towards warm waters to halt Pakistan's emergence as a peaceful, welfare and stable state. USA and India tempted Afghan NDS (National Directorate of Security, primary intelligence agency of Afghanistan) to believe that Pakistan is not a reliable neighbour. The agency helps anti-Pakistan Afghan elements against it (Union, February 2017, p. 19). This helped them to make a troika and join hands against Pakistan. CPEC has displayed the vulnerable angle of the security situation in Pakistan (Rafique, August 2017, p. 3). In the past there were hostilities only on the Indian side of the border, after the announcement of CPEC, Pakistan has to maintain peace and security on two fronts (Javaid, 2017, p. 9). She has to ensure security and peace to Chinese convoys running through the northern areas of Pakistan and to repel any potential threat of any nature. Pakistan has raised a special security division (SSD) and deployed it along the routes of CPEC (Maini, Winter 2016, p. 12).

5.3 Iran's Stance

Iran's situation does not seem much worrisome for Pakistan (Javed, January 2017, p. 257). India cannot lend and extend a favouring hand to Iran for a longer time. USA has political differences of severe nature with Iran (Vats, November 2016, p. 14). Iran itself cannot trust India in a long run because whatever favour India extends to Iran it is based on the enmity of Pakistan, not their mutual socio-economic interests. Israel, a major and trustworthy ally of USA would not like Iran to be facilitated by USA and India (Amir, 15 December 2016, p. 9). This scenario seems promising and ideal for Sino-Pak cooperation on the one hand but worrisome for the quadrille of Afghanistan, India, Israel and USA on the other hand (Kroenig, Jan/Feb. 2012, p. 81).

6 Challenges to the Success of CPEC

There is a mammoth of challenges to building an economic corridor. There are financial Challenges at home of which most of them have been dealt with due to enough funding by China; starting infrastructure projects simultaneously in all the provinces. There are security challenges as well that are posing constant threat to the ongoing projects. External threats are from the neighboring and enemy countries whether in the vicinity or across the seas. Once this agglomeration is in the phase of completion the end result would be the soaring motion of Pakistan's self-dependency in many fields. Country Pakistan is debt ridden to World Bank, IMF and other international money lending institutions. There is a scarcity of local vocational training which is direly needed to complete the project efficiently and proficiently. Administrative inefficiency is another backlog that is acutely harmful for the ongoing projects (Ashfaq, 2016).

There are factions that according to the major political parties of the country play in the hands of enemy of the state. Some Baloch factions have been witnessed in the past damaging the infrastructure that was even fruit-bearing for them; blowing gas pipelines, looting the tourists, kidnapping and beheading them for ransom and so on. Strategically, CPEC is a game changer not only that it is going to make Balochistan the center of attention globally and more than that, regionally. Most of the maritime economic activity of region will be shifted to Gawadar (Ms. Ayza Shoukat, 2017).

There are reports that RAW (research and analysis wing), an Indian spy-agency has allocated five hundred million US dollars to sabotage the project. There is a special office that is supervised by AjitDoval, (former Indian spy who has spied for India in Pakistan) he gives weekly briefing about the progress of CPEC to the Indian prime minister. The frequent attacks of terrorism in after the inauguration of the project in Pakistan were the repercussions of CPEC (Ashfaq, 2016; Bhattacharjee, May 2015).

Being an antagonist neighbor, India does not miss a chance to hurl allegations at Pakistan. The matter of major concern for India is building eight submarines by China at the cost of five \$billion. CHASNUPP (Chashma nuclear power plant) five plants are being erected by China at Chashma in Mianwali District in Punjab (Bhattacharjee, May 2015).

To encounter the foreign propaganda, government of Pakistan has taken steps to assure the nation that CPEC is equally and entirely for the whole Pakistan. All the provinces will have equal share in infrastructure developments and jobs. The routes will pass through every major city and the nearby or faraway cities will be linked through link-roads with the motorways (Ahmar, 2016). There is still some instability in Balochistan that is the reason that bomb blasts took place from time to time in the recent past in this area.

6.1 Security of the Project

Security measures were the primary concern regarding this mega-project, both China and Pakistan were very heedful at the venture of it. The think tanks of both the countries analyzed every possible and potential threat from every dimension and direction. This was the reason that Pakistan Army took the responsibility of safeguarding the personnel and installments under the umbrella of CPEC. The then COAS (chief of army staff) General Rahil Shareef raised a division called SSD (special security division). This division composes of nine thousand military personnel comprising nine battalions; thousand personnel in each battalion. Six thousand additional civil armed forces personnel joining the SSD will aggregate the number to fifteen thousand personnel. This division is under the command of a two-star general (Major General). HQ of the SSD is in Chilas (a small town beside silk route and now the route of CPEC in Gilgit-Baltistaan). The SSD will guard the CPEC from both internal and external threats alike (Bhattacharjee, May 2015).

SSD dexterously keeps the track-records of the following terrorist organizations and keeps checks on their activities to avoid any potential threats by them or their subsidiaries. ETIM (East Turkistan Islamic Movement) a terrorist organization, has many subsidiaries such as TIP (Turkistan Islamic Party) or TIM (Turkistan Islamic Movement). Mainly this organization operates in Xinjiang China but now it has started operations in Afghanistan as well, especially in the areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. Reports say that this radical group of extremists is very close to Daesh (ISIS) Salafi terrorists in its radicalism and fundamentalism (Javaid A. , 2017). This is an anti-China group. China is making a gigantic investment in Pakistan and SSD is well aware of this group's targets. Chinese and their installments are the potential targets. Daesh (Ad-Daulatul Islam fil Iraq wash Shaam) or ISIS, an acronym which means Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is another major threat to CPEC as well. Pakistan cannot afford any negligence. SSD is aware of fact that ETIM and ISIS share radical ideas and can join hands anytime to assist each-other on Pakistani soil. This is the reason that a border management at Durand-line is in full swing and Pak-Army has secured the Afghan border with barbed-wire, fence, ditches and check-posts stopping any incursion from Taliban,

ISIS, ETIM and other indigenous terrorist groups. Although BLA (Baloch Liberation Army) is an anti-state faction but it has been majorly dealt with by Pak-Army(Cohen, Curtis, & Graham, 2008; Esteban, 2016).

6.2 International Opposition

Pakistan and China have ventured on a juncture where countermeasures are imminent by the rival states. The major adversary in this regard with the collaboration of India, Iran and Afghanistan emerged as Chabahar port. Only a hundred nautical miles from Gwadar, India has vowed to counter the threat posed by Gwadar by investing eighty-five million us dollars in this port and connecting Afghanistan to it. It further intends to connect with Central Asia and Russia (there are fissures in Indo-Russian relations due to India's inclinations towards USA (Malik, n.d.)). India intends to impede Pakistani cargo passing through Strait-of-Hormuz. In order to counter any probable such hindrance, China plans to erect a naval base in Gwadar for the maritime protection of its cargo. If China builds a naval base in the region it will be a paradigm shift which will make many countries in the region to think falling in the laps of China from USA (Hassan, 2016).

There are many sanctions on Iran that forbid India from making the Chabahar a reality while on the other hand the CPEC is in its full swing and the success is nearing day by day. There are many complexities in the developments of Chabahar. India has made alliances with Israel, USA and Iran (Indo-Iran relations are on a standstill after Iran's remarks on Kashmir lockdown). There is a history of enmity with both (India and Pakistan) of them since the freedom and inception of both. India cannot afford to displease USA and Israel, on the cost of Iranian collaboration and Pakistani enmity. Then there is Afghanistan suffering from instability and terrorism. The country is ridden with foreign invaders and international terrorist organizations. No country will afford to lose cargo trailers on daily basis to terrorists. Besides, there is better opportunity with joining CPEC; connecting with the market of three billion people, why will Iran not join CPEC (Hassan, 2016).

6.3 Bureaucratic Impediments

There is a different pattern of doing official things in Pakistan comparing to China, the whole set of affairs is differently managed. In China, the projects of public interest are dealt with utmost care and priority and there is a thorough check and balance. It is a country with an oldest system and language in the universe that dates back to millenniums. Though they have transitioned from a monarchy into communism in twentieth century but their official language and culture never changed as it did in the united Hindustan. The culture and systems varied here from Arabs, Turks, Persians to Europeans and now indigenous. The amalgamations of all these cultures and systems can be found in Pakistan. Keeping this in mind the government of Pakistan is keenly and diligently working on the whole operation CPEC. CPEC authority, chaired by Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa, is handling operations day and night (Rana, 2020).

China complained initially that the development equipment lies idly in Port Qasim. FBR intentionally does not issue NOCs and clearance certificates. Bribery, corruption and lack of swiftness was rampant that could delay the project. Former Prime Minister of Pakistan (Nawaz Sharif) asked the establishment to cooperate with China. Because this is the only

Chance that could drag Pakistan out from extreme poverty and make it able to compete with the relatively advanced countries.

Russia was watching the global shift as an opportunity and flexing muscles to join anytime soon the Sino-Pak-Russian trio. Presence of Russia at the nook of Central Asia and China in the East might not be a good omen for India. Also, relatively difficult for it to partner with Central Asian countries (Adnan & Fatima, 2016). Whether it will be Russians or Chinese both will be given access to warm waters by Pakistan without any hesitation or difficulty. After the completion and culmination of the CPEC fervor the stigma of “failing-state” and “terror-mongers” will be erased from Pakistan. Poverty, inequality, joblessness, terrorism, illiteracy, health-issues, poor-education, lawlessness and many more social and cultural vices will be wiped out. Because all these sectors demand flourishing economy and brimming treasury of the state with equal distribution and allocation of resources without any discrimination or prejudice (Ijaz Khan, 2016).

The massive influx of Chinese visitors, students, investors and efflux of Pakistani rank and file to China will eventually change the whole socio-cultural fabric of the two countries. The waiver of visa formality does not seem surprising in this scenario and it is highly possible in near future as the situation is developing.

7 Inevitability of CPEC

Regional connectivity is inevitable for consolidation and integration of countries, whether they are contiguous or not (Neil M Coe, 2004, p. 470). It prompts economic growth, strategic cooperation, tourism and social interaction between variety of ethnicities and religio-lingual factions of society (Milner, 1992, p. 472). Regional integration helps to boost the economy and makes life’s outlook liberal and modest (Rosenblum, 1989, p. 23). Countries align with the most favourable and friendly allies that help each other to repel any foreign, direct or indirect threat. Help each other in every possible manner (Zeb, 2006, p. 54). RTAs have helped many countries to forge new ties and cooperation. They (Regional Trade Agreement) are reciprocal and formal agreements between two or more states to facilitate signatories’ trade (Butt, 2015, p. 27). With the development of rail, road, port and communication infrastructures there is need to equally develop the institutional, legal, logistical and financial infrastructure as committed and required. (Mubarak, 2016, p.107).

CPEC has emerged as a driving force to connect Pakistan with Central Asia and China. It has potential to allure all the regional trade-traffic towards port of Gawadar (Mai, 2005, p. 3). Global and regional powers have grievances for China and Pakistan’s connectivity through railways and motorways due to many reasons (Marwat S. A., December 2016, p. 109). West sees emergence of China as a threat to its economic, industrial and scientific domination (Ms. Ayza Shoukat, 2017). If China divides or diverts its trade-traffic towards Pakistan then both will enjoy shared economic interests. If succeeded the project has the potential to revolutionize the industry in Pakistan. Pakistan will have the knowledge and experience and access to all Chinese tech and space industry. Because Chinese would have higher stakes in Pakistan, Pakistan will be in a better position to negotiate better transfer of technology. Both countries have decades old bilateral relations. (Marwat S. A., July – December 2016, p. 108). Economic cooperation is and has always been an inevitable necessity for survival of nations (Ferchen, May 2014, p. 12). Economic cooperation does not mean the exchange of money. It also means exchange of material and usable goods unto which sustenance is based (Ferchen, May 2014, p. 12). Pakistan and China emerged to join hands for their respective economic

good (Javed, January 2017). The economic value of one aspect of this venture has been analysed in the following paragraphs.

BOI (Board of Investment) held a meeting in Islamabad assessing the potential income of CPEC after its completion (Rizvi, 2017). The probable estimate was a staggering sum of money; \$4,908,600,000 dollars per annum (Rizvi, 2017). They analysed the current flow of Chinese cargo by sea to Africa in view of UN reports regarding import and export of China (Rizvi, 2017). Toll fee for a cargo truck in China is one US dollar per 10 kilometres (Correspondent, 2017). In Africa a cargo truck is charged one hundred US dollars for every one thousand-kilometre distance or simply put it, ten cents for one-kilometre distance (Adrees, 2017). This simple math formula suggests that one cargo truck travelling from Chinese border to the port area of Gwadar port of Pakistan covering 2727 kilometre would add around two hundred and seventy-two dollars and seventy cents into Pakistani revenue if the cargo trucks are charged with the same international toll fee (Adrees, 2017). There is not any speculative or empirical data suggesting the number of Chinese trucks that are likely to pass through Pakistan.

8 CONCLUSION

The acronym CPEC implies that Pakistan is a corridor for merely China. Pakistan should open its doors to everyone. The project should be named PAC (Pakistan Asian Corridor). Pakistan should call upon all the South Asian, Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries to join the project and invest in Pakistan. It should convince them that this investment will bring benefits to all. It will be conducive to consolidate Afghanistan and bring peace in the region. Pakistan should ask Gulf states to build oil and gas pipelines in Pakistan to supply these goods to China and rest of the Asian countries. This will satiate the energy demands in Pakistan. Pakistan is the most diversified land having the potential to become a South Asian power hub and she is only inches away from this title. For this, Pakistan will have to open its doors to all the regional and global countries.

Almost all the visible perspectives and imminent implications of CPEC have been covered in this article. The project has been the centre of debate in global media for a considerable time. The success of the project depends on the security of Pakistan. The economy of Pakistan is likely to boost under the project. In order to get maximum economic advantage out of the project Pakistan should invite other neighbouring countries along with central Asian and Gulf states. India is the major exporter in the region and an emerging market. Pakistan should extend a cooperating hand to it and lend it an access to the central Asia. CPEC is vital for the economy of Pakistan. For the security and sustainability of the project, Pakistan should extend solid invitation to India. Economic superiority and survival are the mega-concern of states. This project can provide secure route and safe transportation to its neighbours and other Asian states.

Many Gulf states do not produce major products that they consume. Pakistan should invite them to invest in Pakistan because the latter has both the capacity and expertise. In order to keep the functioning and execution of this CPEC project transparent, a consensus should be developed among national political stakeholders to ensure its uninterrupted smooth running in the best interest of Pakistan's security, prosperity, progress and perception uplift.

Pakistan can be the South Asian and GCC countries industrial production hub after the successful culmination of the CPEC. This in return will boost Pakistan's economy and revolutionize the socio-economic fabric of the country.

In all the data available on the project. The picture of CPEC that appears in this work is the summary of the available data. The project must take culminating and final shape. Many projects are yet to be completed. But the data suggests that the culmination of the project will be promising for all that neighbours and cooperating states.

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