

CPEC: CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS UPON HAZARA DIVISION

JALIL FARAZ

MPhil Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies Abbottabad University
of Science and Technology.

Email: jalilfaraz786@gmail.com

GHULAM ALI

MPhil Scholar, Department of Pakistan Studies Abbottabad
University of Science and Technology.

Email: Ali_isonly@yahoo.com

HUMERA SABIR

Lecturer Government college of Technology mandian Abbottabad.

Email: humeraasabir@gmail.com

Abstract

The friendship between China and Pakistan is known as greater than mountains and deeper than oceans. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a good example of bilateral relations. CPEC is as flagship project among the One Belt One Road. The CPEC including linkage of Gwadar (Balochistan) and the western region of China Kashghar (Xinjiang) through 2700kg roads, gas and oil pipelines, railway and establishment of Special Economic Zones and it provides access of China to Central Asian States and Europe through Arabian sea via a short and safe route. The primary objective of present study is to find out the challenges of CPEC and impacts of CPEC upon Hazara Division. Qualitative method is adopted and data have been gathered through different books, research articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, different reports and seminars. CPEC is a game changer that is playing important role in all fields like employment opportunities, industrial zones, exchange of cultures, tourism etc. The current research is raised upon the challenges of CPEC as security challenges, challenges in Balochistan, role of India and to discuss the impacts of CPEC upon Hazara Division.

Keywords: CPEC, Pakistan, China, Gwadar ,Hazara Division.

Introduction

Pakistan is surrounded by the three main countries China, India and Afghanistan. Pakistan and China exist cordial and exemplary relations with each other. The friendship between China and Pakistan is greater than mountains and deeper than ocean. Pakistan was the first Muslim state that accepted China as People's Republic and Pakistan International Airline (PIA) served as the national airline of China. The Pak-China relationship had grown since 1960s and now both countries exist deep friendship. The development of Karakorum highway in 1972 further developed this bond. "Pakistan Ex-President Musharraf said that Islamabad considers Beijing is a time tested and reliable friend."¹ China is the largest country of world by population "playing a core role not only in the Asian region but in the entire world."² The Chinese President, Hu Jintao adopted his country's Good Neighbor Policy in 2003 that was based on the design of peaceful development with its neighboring states and the world. To follow this strategy China turned its nearest region.

Pakistan always given preference China formulating its foreign policy. It helps Pakistan in maintaining balance of power in the region.³ The relations between China and Pakistan is based upon interests as economic cooperation, shared internal security and geostrategic interest. For economic cooperation and interest both China and Pakistan decided to start an Economic Corridor popularly known as China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Under this CPEC umbrella, 59 billion US dollars are being invested.⁴ This corridor was originated by China President Hu Jintao on Monday 20 April 2015. Its objective is to connect Gwadar (Balochistan) to the western region of China Kashghar (Xinjiang) through 2700-kilometer roads, railway, gas, oil pipelines and optical fiber linkage. The construction of mega projects like Roads, energy projects (hydro, coal and solar), up gradation Gwadar Sea port, Gwadar International Airport and establishment of several economic zones along with motorway are included under CPEC. The successful completion would result in huge economic benefits for China as well as Pakistan.⁵ CPEC is part of "One Belt One Road" consist upon four stages. According to this scheme China is investing 46 billion dollars in different projects in Pakistan consisted on following fourth Stages;

1 This project was from 2015 to 2019, is related to energy projects and to be completed in 2019. This project included 7000-megawatt electricity to National grid.⁶

2 The second project have to developed till 2022 based on roads, fiber optic, hydro and power projects and development of Gwadar.

3 Related to Railway and Industrial zones to be construct till 2025.

4 The fourth is long term project up to 2030, the construction of industrial zones, tourism and agricultural included in this scheme.

Geography of Corridor route in Pakistan

This Economic Corridor passes through the fourth Provinces of Pakistan,

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Muzaffarabad the Capital of Azad Kashmir and the areas of Gilgit Baltistan. Pakistan decided to build up three corridors after the consultation with China, these are the central alignment, eastern and western alignments.

The eastern alignment of CPEC starts from Gwadar towards Karachi through the Makran Coastal Highway and after passing the interior Sindh, Central, Southern and Northern region of Punjab, it runs Islamabad. From Islamabad it entered Haripur districts, Abbottabad and Mansehra. This corridor will enter in Muzaffarabad the capital of Azad Kashmir and spread Khunjerab after going to the Pamir Plateau and Karakoram. A link of corridor from Taxila to Peshawar and Torkham is also included the eastern alignment to Jalalabad in Afghanistan. The eastern alignment also connected with Wagah Border Lahore.

Western alignment is the original alignment starts from Gwadar and connects through some eastern and southern districts of Balochistan (Dara Bugti and Khuzdar) and some districts of South Punjab reach to Dera Ismail. Khan (KP), it extends to Islamabad and then Haripur and other districts of Hazara Division.

CPEC is a game changer that provides China an alternative way of access oil and energy supplies. The current route of China's trade by the Strait of Malacca (12500kilometer) through the South China Sea. This is contested region and claimed by China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. United States of America fleets enjoy a constant presence in this region. In any case of contest, the United States of America and his allies can block the Strait of Malacca and hence completely paralyzing the Chinese economy.⁷ With the construction of CPEC, China get easy and save access to Central Asia and Europe through the warm water of Arabian Sea and become China "Asian Tiger." However, there are some major challenges for the smooth completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Literature review

Numerous researches have been done about CPEC on different perspective (Abid and Ayesha 2015). This is most prominent article on the challenges and opportunities of CPEC. They discussed the historical perspective of China Pakistan relations and geographical location of CPEC. They also raised the opportunities of CPEC for Pakistan. They said China Pakistan Economic Corridor is considered to bring prosperity and peace in South Asian and Pakistan. With the construction of CPEC, Pakistan had gained importance not only in Asia but in the whole world. This is game changer for Pakistan. Under this project number of infrastructure and motorway are constructed. These motorways connect different areas of Pakistan with each other. Pakistan would solve energy crisis, poverty, poor infrastructure problems, improve trade and enhance economy. CPEC bring a chance to Pakistan which normalization of relations with Iran, India and Afghanistan which will put balance, establish peace and develop socio-economic standard of the people of Asia. However, there are many internal and external factors for Pakistan to the smooth

implementation of CPEC. Security concern is the main challenge for this multi dollars projects.

The discussion is carried by Ali, Liaqat, Jianing Mi, Mussawar Shah, Sayed Jamal Shah, and Kausar Bibi in 2017. They described that with the construction of CPEC, China the current rout (12500km) through the Strait of Malacca will replaced. They discussed the socio-economic impacts of China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The construction of this mega project developed the economy of Pakistan. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Pakistan reached 8 percent the export rate \$25 billons to 150% billion and 1500 MW electricity included in system. With the grant of 46\$ billion dollars design the eight economic zones raised the high-speed international trade and the create job opportunities and improved the living standard of people are the social impact of CPEC. They raised the benefits of CPEC however, ignored the its challenges.

Hafeez Ullah described that many projects are design under CPEC included energy, infrastructure and developmental schemes in Pakistan which boost regional connectivity among Pakistan, China and Eurasia. There are socio and economic benefits for Pakistan like network of roads. He conducted his study on especially northern route of CPEC in KPK in which they showed the map of Hazara Division. However, his study cannot cover the dept of discussion.

Shoukat described that CPEC was link from China to Gwadar port of Pakistan in 2017. It would give access China's trade to the Africa and Middle East. The construction included the mega projects in Pakistan and connects Pakistan with China, Iran, India and Afghanistan. CPEC also weaken the influence of America in Asian region. This study discusses the impacts of CPEC on world.

CPEC is a flagship project that changed the fate of Pakistan. Many researches have been carried out on CPEC with different aspects. The above researches do not describe security challenges and Indian factor in detail. The current research is based upon the CPEC challenges for Pakistan like security challenges, challenges in Balochistan, Indian challenges and tax and tariff challenges and further researcher will discuss especially CPEC impacts upon Hazara division which did not discuss still now by anyone.

CPEC Challenges for Pakistan

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a flagship project that transfer the fate of Pakistan and China get access to the Central Asia and European's markets through the warm water of Arabian Sea. There are many challenges for the smooth implementation of CPEC. The Vice Director General of Policy Research Office at the International Department of the Central Committee Communist Party of China, Dr. Luan Jianzhang is of the view that security situation, political unrest and administrative issues are some of the main challenges in the successful completion of this corridor.

Security Challenges

China is investing multi-billion dollar in Pakistan for different projects in Pakistan. Some internal and external elements are not happy with the huge investment of China that is considered golden chance for Pakistan. Security of the corridor is the major challenge. It is also a challenge for both countries to develop the CPEC in the specified time frame.⁸ The activities of Taliban and Pakhtoon Tahafaz Movement in former FATA, different militant organizations of Balochistan, ethnic and religious groups in Sindh and Punjab are major security challenge for the completion of CPEC. In the opinion of some, the negative feelings can have unintended adverse consequences for the personal security of Chinese nationals working on these projects.⁹ To meet security challenge Pakistan military has established a force of 10,000 for the protection of Chinese labor force consisting upon Army, Frontier Corps and Rangers known as Special Security Division (SSD). For security point of view Pakistan's Army launched the operation Zarb-e-Azb to control militancy, which started in summer 2014.¹⁰ The Pakistan military also started Operation Raddul Fassad (Elimination of Strife) in February 2017 without determining geographic limits in Pakistan. The project under CPEC is completed till 2030. These are above many internal and external security challenges for CPEC as well.

Challenges in Balochistan

Balochistan is largest province of Pakistan by area, Gwadar Port located in Balochistan. CPEC is connectivity from Gwadar to the city of Kasghar in China. This province remained behind over the decades due to bloody separatist insurgency. CPEC provided a chance for the development of this province. However, many elements in province created hurdles in the developmental schemes in Balochistan. They do not want to see Balochistan to develop as an economic and trade hub unless it becomes independent.¹¹ The current bloody Baloch insurgency demanded the succession of Balochistan from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. They make different plans to disturb this huge investment of China in Balochistan. In May this year three terror incidents were made signaling the upcoming security challenges for Pakistan and China.¹² Various separatists' groups in Balochistan like Balochistan Liberation Army and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) in the province are faced severe threats for CPEC. According to editor of the Balochistan Express newspaper they want to disturb the working of the economy, disrupt the administration and challenge the administration in the area.¹² These militant groups consider, China is occupying the natural resources of Balochistan. Separatist are making efforts of killing and kidnapping of Chinese workers and the security personnel of Pakistan. On 9 November 2018 they attacked Chinese consulate and killed two security personnel of Pakistan. However, attack was become fail due to the efforts of security forces. For few months insurgency got power in Balochistan, in April 2019 insurgents killed 14 bus

passengers in Ormara, 11 of whom were security personnel. In the month of May insurgents stormed Pearl Continental hotel in Gawadar.¹³ Brahumsdag the leader of Baloch Republic Party also criticized CPEC projects in Balochistan. He said United State should held referendum in province to decide the future of Balochistan. He alleged the military equipment and funds provided to Pakistan by US and other western countries for contesting terrorists and extremist groups were also being used against the democratic and political struggle of the Baloch people.¹⁴

Indian challenges and CPEC

India is traditional enemy of Pakistan that always supports anti Pakistan elements. CPEC is a greater project that changed Pakistan into economic hub. India does not see Pakistan as economic hub. India created hurdles in the smooth implementation of CPEC by different ways. The motorway under CPEC passes through challenge territory (Gilgit Baltistan) between India and Pakistan. India makes allegation that CPEC is a violation of its territorial integrity.¹⁵ The US defense Secretary James Matiss also supported the Indian's claims.

India became confuse with huge investment of China in Pakistan. The intelligence agency of India (RAW) opened a special office in Delhi and allotted \$300 million to disrupt CPEC.¹⁶ The arrestment of Indian Naval Officer Kalbushan Yadhav by Pakistan security agencies shows that India adopted nontraditional ways to disrupt this mega project. Pakistan accuses India is funding and sponsoring the Baloch insurgency.¹⁷ Kashmir issue is the root cause of all rivalry between India and Pakistan. The current conflict between India and Pakistan is the abrogation of 370 article of Indian constitution may led towards war and implication would be global."²⁰

CPEC Impacts upon Hazara Division

The part of this article is related to the impacts of China Pakistan Economic Corridor upon Hazara Division. Many projects have to started under CPEC, including roads network and development of Gwadar Port, establishment economic zones and social sector projects, but most prominent is across the country construction of roadway networks, which can be divided into northern, eastern and central route. The northern route in KPK under CPEC inters KPK in Kohistan district, passes through Battagram, Shangla, Mansehra, Abbottabad & Haripur districts and the exiting KPK at Sarai Gadai (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Districts in KPK along northern CPEC road route.

In 2015 work was started on Hazara motorway from Burhan (a village of Attock District in Punjab) to Thakot (Battagram) under CPEC. Hazara Motorway section from Burhan to Shah Maqsood (Haripur) was inaugurated on December 27, 2017 by PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. On 18th November 2019 PM Imran Khan inaugurated the Hazara motorway from Shah Maqsood to Thakot (a town of Battagram District in KPK) with the distance of 120 kilometer. The remaining section of Hazara Motorway is being constructing.

Roads construction under CPEC impacts upon Hazara Division

The construction of roads in six districts of Hazara Division has the environmental impacts upon Hazara Division. Except Haripur the rest of districts are hilly and large vegetation areas. The roads construction activities like the deforestation, blasting of mountains and the movement of heavy machinery effected the natural resources like water level and grubbing of tree and destroyed the Karakorum highway (Silk route). These steps disturbed the ecosystems of Hazara Division. According to Robinson migrating ecosystems and resources may result in socioeconomic stresses.²²

Creation of job for the people of Hazara

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor is going to build up with speedy construction. The Hazara motorway from Burhan to Shah Maqsood completed in 2017. The second section from Shah Maqsood to Thakot (Battagram) have been opened for traffic on 18 November 2019. While remaining part of Hazara Motorway is under construction. During the construction of Hazara Motorway the people of Hazara got

maximum jobs i-e supervisor, security staff and labors etc.

The construction of CPEC not only benefited the globalization but also boost the economy of Pakistan. The trade between China and Pakistan crossed the barriers of nearly \$12 billion in 2013.²³ The completion of CPEC also prove the trade volume and economy of Pakistan. The former Pakistani Minister of Development and reform Ahsan Iqbal discussed the CPEC Pakistan's vision 2025 in the third Pak-China Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), he said Pakistan aim to achieve his goal of growth rate 8 percent and fall inflation rate to one digit from 2018 to 2025.²⁴

Under the project of Eight Economic Zones are to be constructed under CPEC that Economic Zones provided 150,000 jobs opportunities (Dawn). The construction of Small Industrial Estate and Havelian Dry port respectively more important. These Economic Zones attract the foreign investors and provided jobs in Hazara Division.

Road infrastructure

The development of the Karakoram highway in 1978 provided a link from Hassan Abdal (Punjab) to Kasghar in China through Khunjerab pass which was also called as the Friendship Highway.²⁵ The frontier work organization succeeded to complete the Eighth Wonder of the world. The six districts of Hazara Division connect China to the rest of Pakistan and give to access China to Central Asia, Afghanistan and Europe.

The construction of Makran Coastal Highway and Gwadar Sea Port led to the dream of CPEC. The road construction under CPEC that passes in Hazara Division known as Hazara Motorway. The road from Burhan to Thakot (Buttgram) is 190kilometer but through motorway it remained 180kilometer. This motorway provided easy and time saving access to the people. CPEC provided an easy access to the rural and urban people of Hazara to the basic needs of life like banking, market, education and health.

Tourism and Exchange of Culture

Hazara Division attracts the attention of Pakistani as well as the foreign tourists due to its picnic spots. According to the media resources more than one lac tourists entered Hazara during eid holydays (The News, 2019, June). Now the establishment of Hazara motorway further proved tourism. CPEC will also provide exchange of culture and traditions of Pakistan and China in the entire Region, the people of Hazara also effect from Chinese culture and traditions. Historically the growth of a state along with the Silk Route had its own culture circle of influence. In Great Tang Dynasty, the Buddhist students going to the religious places of Buddhist like Taxila, Swat Peshawar along Indus River through Karakorum Range. The construction of CPEC would connect the people of one country with other and raise the living standard of the people of Hazara and rest of Pakistan.

Conclusion

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is 2000-kilometer road link from Gwadar

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Balochistan to Kashghar China. This Economic Corridor passes through the fourth provinces of Pakistan, Muzaffarabad the Capital of Azad Kashmir and the area of Gilgit Baltistan. This huge project change fate of Pakistan into economic hub. Pakistan poor road infrastructure would be replaced with huge, time saving and easy road infrastructure. While the oil from the middle east would be supplied to China via CPEC route through Gwadar, it also would give a save and short route to China. With the road infrastructure China would get access to Central Asian and European's markets for trade. The northern route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor inters KPK from Kohistan district, passes through Battagram, Shangla, Mansehra, Abbottabad & Haripur districts and the ending KPK at Sarai Gadai (Haripur). During the construction of CPEC, people of Hazara Division got number of jobs. After the completion of CPEC roads, the infrastructure problems have solved and people get access to the basic necessities of life like education, health etc. Tourism would be improved and people would get different jobs and start business like hoteling etc. CPEC could improve transportation problems if Divisional Headquarter of Hazara Division ABBOTTABAD was given Interchange in Abbottabad. But there are serious challenges for the smooth implementation of China Pakistan Economic Corridor i-e security challenges in whole Pakistan, insurgency in Baluchistan and most of all the role of India with support of other countries may freeze the entire Corridor and China investment would lose its confidence. For the smooth completion it is necessary for Pakistan to take positive step in this direction. Pakistan needs to focus on the intelligence sharing of Pakistan intelligence agencies like ISI, IB and FIA to destroy the powerful nexus of internal and external factors. Pakistan must improve the law-and-order situation in country and border areas to prevent the movement of anti- Pakistan elements. Pakistan needs to restore the confidence of foreign investors and Pakistani investors and also should take steps for the improvement of export. After taking these positive steps, more than 3 billion people of Middle East, South Asia and China would be benefited from China Pakistan Economic Corridor.



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