

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) – A Project of Assurance for Inclusive and Quality Education in Pakistan

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Abstract

Pakistan is a member of UNO and has signed an agreement of achieving SDGs goals by 2030. Providing inclusive and quality education to all citizens of Pakistan is one of the SDGs' goals. All selected goals are interlinked and flaws in one goal could ultimately affect the others. CPEC is a project which is expected to bring economic revolution in China and Pakistan. The purpose of this research study was to explore whether this project (CPEC) will also support Pakistan in providing inclusive and quality education to its people and for the purpose comments of critics and research scholars were explored and analyzed using conceptual and relational content analysis techniques a qualitative approach.

Key Words: China Pakistan Economic Corridor; and Inclusive & Quality Education

The Rationale of the Study

Since its establishment, the governments during different times were endeavoring for high and sustainable economic growth. Although Pakistan was and is successful in restoring and maintain macroeconomic growth but still much more is needed to put Pakistan on the right track for sustainable economic growth. For this purpose, the policy-makers in Pakistan were planning and implementing different policy and the China-Pakistan economic corridor is one of them ([Li, & Khalid, 2018](#)).

China has helped Pakistan through thick and thins. At many times Pakistan has also supported China when it needs any kind of support. China is one of the Asian countries which has developed itself and now is in a position to be called the superpower of the world. This status is not achieved by China in few years but they have very long struggles and sacrifices behind it ([Cao & Bluth, 2013](#)). China has made itself economically strong by capturing the market of the world by selling China-made products at a cheaper rate. China has divided the world market into different zone depending on its sale. The trade in the world is done through Beijing seaport which is the only seaport of China. The ships of China approximately cover the distance of 9000 km to take its products from Beijing harbor to the middle east countries, China calls the market of middle east countries 'green market' means the products of all kind could be sold there but the long traveling not only increase the cost the goods but Chinese ships also have to face several hurdles which also increase the delivery time of the good in the market ([Zhang & Fan, 2013](#)). Keeping in view the hurdles the think-tanks of China proposed a solution to the government to construct a road between China and the Middle-East market and that will pass through Pakistan which not only mitigates the hurdles but costs by decreasing the distance. It will start from Kashgar (one of the cities of China which connect it with Pakistan) and end at Gwadar pass through different cities Pakistan, they named this route One-Belt-One-Road or old Silk route. The distance between Kashgar and Gwadar is about 3000 Km which 70% less than the distance from Beijing to the Middle East. This route will also boost the sales of China by decreasing the cost of products and time of delivery as well. And now when China has achieved the status of superpower China must sustain it.

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It is the only country that has supported Pakistan in the struggle for the independence of Kashmir. The Indian government is killing Kashmiri people who are wanting to join Pakistan, India has always blamed that Pakistan is supporting Kashmiri freedom fighters, any incident that happened in India is claimed to be done by Kashmiri freedom fighters and supported by Pakistan, and sometimes Indian not only threat Pakistan but do attacks. USA governments have verbally supported Pakistan but practically have always supported India and not taken any positive step in favor of Kashmir but on the other hand, China has always supported Pakistan in case of the Kashmir issue. Relation with Pakistan started strengthening with China when the USA left Pakistan alone back in 1990 after having a war against terrorism in Afghanistan. At that Pakistan was in severe economic problems and China promised to provide support to Pakistan during such a crucial time. Moreover, when China-Pakistan signed a treaty to share missile technology, the USA government imposed strict restrictions and asked Pakistan to revisit its deal with China. At that time China reenters its time verified associations with Pakistan and underway discerning new policies conferring to this innovative local and universal tactical situation and lastly categorically step into innovative Geo economical and Geopolitical enterprise with Pakistan in the custom of CPEC ([Ramay, 2016](#)). Publically this venture was started in 2003 after a gathering between President Hu Jintao and President General Pervez Musharraf in Beijing ([Falki, 2009](#)). In this agreement both the countries decided to help each other in all circumstances. This cooperation was strengthened in 2006 by signing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Chinese president Mr. Hu Jintao visited Islamabad and the volume of trade between the two countries was raised from Dollars one billion to Dollars 15.15 billion ([Vandewalle, 2015](#)). This job collaboration promoted the footing of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and lastly, this venture got approval amid Pakistani spokespersons when primer Li Keqiang presented this venture during his stay in Pakistan in 2013 ([Irshad, 2015](#)) China.

Though Pakistan is engaged in a treaty with China to collaborate in ventures linked to CPEC which will advance the economic progress of both of the countries at the same time Pakistan has also contracted to complete the SDGs, which are also named the Global Goals, these are sanctioned by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal mandate to accomplishment to varnish poverty, safeguard the planet and settle that everyone enjoyment coherence and richness by 2030. The 17 SDGs are combined that is, they identify that blow in one zone will shake consequences in others and that growth must poise social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The fourth goal is about inclusive and quality education for all and education has effects on all other goals, educated people can contribute in a better way in national development. If the governments claimed that the CPEC project will change the lives of the indigenous people living along the route of this project. (Sharma et al, 2019), then whether it will bring change improvement in quality and inclusive education of Pakistan or not. Education had played, is playing, and will play a vital role in the development of any nation/country. Pakistan is one of the developing countries where the literacy rate is still 56% which should 100% especially by 2030. Other developed countries directly or sometimes through UNO are helping developing or poor countries in improving their literacy rate by providing scholarships to the intelligent students of the third world or by providing funds for developing infrastructure of educational institutes, facilities, and recurring expenses.

Now as we are increasing our relationships with China and it is disliked by the other countries especially by the USA and they have started supporting India against Pakistan if we continue our relationship with China, then a time may come when other countries stop funding Pakistan. Keeping in view the future expected circumstances Pakistan needs to convince China not only to invest in energy or infrastructural projects but to invest in establishing educational institutes especially in those areas which are remote and located along the One-Belt-One-Road ([Rashid & Haq, 2016](#)). These projects will not only improve the literacy rate but will generate positive thoughts in the indigenous people. Educated people will play their vital role economic development of the country and the success of this project. Moreover, China should increase the number of scholarship opportunities for Pakistani youth to get higher education in their country but at the same time, they are expected to increase the quality of education imparted by the educational institutes of higher education in China ([Meixell & Norbis, 2008](#)). Because without quality it is difficult to compete or beat the other nations. The reason behind the low quality is the medium of instruction, as it is complained by many students who visit China for education that they are unable to understand because of

the language barrier. Although, all students who go there to get an education are expected to learn the Chinese language first to dismantle the hurdles in the teaching and learning process. But it is difficult to learn the Chinese language in a month therefore initially if China trained its teachers to use English as a medium of instruction in the beginning, but the same time makes people learn their language.

Statement of the Problem

In Pakistan CPEC is considered a game-changer, government as well people of Pakistan feel that there will be an economic revolution due to this project in Pakistan, but no one has ever thought and is thinking about the educational needs of Pakistani in general and people living along one-belt-one-route in specific. Only a few studies have been conducted till now which reflect the importance of the expansion of CPEC for indigenous populations ([Ali, et al., 2018](#) and [Kanwal et al., 2019](#)), moreover, according to them the envisioned benefits of these schemes to the indigenous populations in terms of service, education, economic benefits, and ventures need to be observed from the indigenous populations' viewpoints. [Ahmed, S.; Guan, X; & Mariah I \(2019\)](#) findings expose that the environmental and educational areas of CPEC essentially to be superiorly certified to the Pakistani community.

These statements reveal that most of the researchers, politicians, and policy-makers are endeavoring to explore the political, economic, and infrastructural benefits of CPEC but no one has written or tried to find the educational benefits/impacts of CPEC for communities living along One Belt One Road and there in dare need of researching problems of indigenous people related to education because without education expected economic revolution is not possible and researchers need to discover those opportunities which could provide educational benefits to the local people or should determine and suggest to both the government how and what could be done for educational development of the regional people. Many researchers/scholars have highlighted that Pakistan has agreed to achieve SDGs by 2030 including providing inclusive and quality education to all but this is not possible with creating educational opportunities for those who are living in far-flung areas and having no institute in the vicinity.

The Objective of the Study

The main objective of this research study is to explore the outcomes of CPEC in terms of educational benefits/impacts on communities living along one belt one road in specific and Pakistani community in general. And has aimed to clarify the question present in minds of Pakistani will CPEC only improve the economy of Pakistan or will provide business opportunities to the Pakistani business community or will also help indigenous communities to get a quality education. Providing inclusive and quality education is the most important area for any nation in term of SDGs goals (Firou et al., 2019)

Justification of the Study

The findings of this research study will be beneficial for both the countries i.e., China and Pakistan in term of availabilities of opportunities for investment or improving quality education in return the quality of life in Pakistan by providing education opportunities to the indigenous populations who are residing along one belt one road and will also help both the countries in achieving the fourth SDG by 2030 which will have an ultimate impact on other goals. It will also provide a guideline to those investors who are interested to invest money in the education sector and to those who are interested in avail funding opportunities offered by the Chinese government for better and quality higher education for Pakistani nationals not only in China but also in the other parts of the world.

Literature Review

Governments and political bodies have declared CPEC and game-changer because according to them this project will create opportunities for governments as well as the indigenous to improve their living standards, quality education for their young ones, and contribute to national goals for achieving SDGs ([Kanwal et al., 2019](#)). The supporters of CPEC discuss a long list of benefits that could result because of this project but in reality, the benefits for indigenous are very rare but according to [Tehsin et al.\(2017\)](#), it is planned to configure several sectors along this route i.e. industrial, health, energy, and education by developing economic zones which will provide

jobs opportunities to indigenous communities residing beside the one belt one road. CPEC can also support Pakistan in having a good understanding or relation with the other countries especially India, Afghanistan, Iran, Bangladesh, and the countries of the Middle East, and will also help Pakistan in having stable relations with China and Europe ([Khwaja, Saeed & Arooj, 2018](#)). CPEC is measured as one of the direct factors in job elevation and business evolution ([Anwar, Shah & Khan, 2018](#)). China and Pakistan contemplate this project will have a positive impact on the future of both countries with 27 economic zones scattering throughout both the countries ([Munir, Khalid, & Latif, 2018](#)), will promote industrialization in Pakistan ([Anwar, Shah & Khan, 2018](#)), industrial zones will provide jobs opportunities to local people resulting in the economic growth of Pakistan ([Latief & Lefen, 2019](#)), with the help of China energy sectors will also develop and will have sustainability ([Uddin et al., 2019](#)), etc. In these macro-level projects at the conception stage little attention was given to the indigenous communities' benefits which were given attention in the SDGs. [Kanwal, Chong, and Pitafi, \(2019\)](#) claimed that the majority of Pakistani especially the indigenous communities living along the route perceive that CPEC is beneficial for them. The local people feel that it will be good for them in the case of transport, infrastructure, and environment ([Ali et al., 2018](#)). Benefits of local communities will be given preference in these megaprojects because it will have ultimate effects on the projects ([Chen 2000](#)). Ali et al (2015) have argued that CPEC will have a strong impact on industries in Pakistan i.e. SMEs, exports & imports (industrial), and education & health (non-industrial), and ultimately will have a strong impact on the quality of lives of people living along One-Belt-One-Road.

Research Methodology

This research study was qualitative, conceptual, and relational content analysis techniques were used. Content analysis is a technique in which the words, sentences, or text related is found and compared. The researchers sometimes, quantify the words, text, or sentences having the same concepts, this type of content analysis is called conceptual content analysis while sometimes the researchers also the events or activities similar in nature, and this type of analysis are called relational analysis. For the present research, conceptual and relational analysis were done to conclude.

Discussion

China and Pakistan claim that this plan will carry auspicious deviations in the subsists of the indigenous populations in both countries ([Saleem, 2019](#)). Usually, the existing standard and value of the life of a collective fellow be contingent on numerous features, but having satisfactory contact to simple wants and provisions significantly pays to the quality of life. As demanded by the governments from both sides, the CPEC would affect the local communities in Pakistan, the outcomes of CPEC will not only good for Pakistan but will equally be good for communities living in China. As [Blanchard \(2017\)](#) agree that this project is beneficial for Pakistani as well Chinese communities as they will get employments, opportunities of quality education, and ultimately quality life. CPEC will not only help Pakistan to improve and sustain economic growth but will also support in achieving societal goals such as providing educational opportunities and environmental protection, as in these projects number of schools, institutes of higher education will be established which will have significant effects on the education level of local people. ([Asomani-Boatteng et al. 2015](#)). CPEC projects are tailored in such a way that these projects will not support the development of infrastructure but will also provide opportunities to the local communities to get or improve their education. Most of the routes of CPEC are passing through non-populous areas or areas which are far-flung from the cities where educational facilities are not available, but these projects will provide educational facilities to local people by establishing educational institutes which will ultimately help them in getting jobs in the zones. The literacy rate of any community is depending on the availability of educational facilities or easy access to the institute and this factor is given due importance in CPEC ([Mattson, 2011](#)). [Haq & Farooq \(2016\)](#) have pointed out the reason for low literacy in the remote areas is the non-availability of educational institutes in nearby vicinity and parents do not send their children especially daughters to the institutes which are at a distance and ultimately their children are deprived of the educational opportunities. It is expected that CPEC will provide transport facilities to the people living in far-flung areas to access educational institutes ([Smith,](#)

[2001](#)). The Chinese government has announced several scholarships related to CPEC and an increasing ratio of Pakistani students availing these scholarship opportunities is the indirect influence of CPEC. The huge investment of both countries in CPEC improves interaction and educational improvement (Haider, 2019). The major benefits which the local communities are going to get our infrastructure, technology, and education ([Nasir et al. 2017](#)). It is expected the projects included in CPEC will resolve the energy and educational issues of rural areas of Pakistan ([Tong, 2015](#)). Due to CPEC, the numbers of educational institutes will increase and resultant the traveling of students to get an education will decrease. But according to [Ahmed Guan & Mariah \(2019\)](#), forty-three (43) projects are approved or initiated under CPEC mega project including twenty-five (25) Energy priority projects, four (04) Transport-Infrastructure Projects, eight (08) Gawader-Port City Projects, and eight (08) Industrial Corporation Projects. In these projects, only one project Technical and Vocational Institute at Gawader is related to education somehow (Annexure-A P-17 &18).

Conclusion

As claimed by both the governments, [Blanchard \(2017\)](#), [Saleem, \(2019\)](#), and [Asomani et al. \(2015\)](#) that CPEC will not only improve infrastructure, fulfill energy needs but will also provide quality education opportunities to the indigenous people residing along the One Belt One Road but [Mattson \(2011\)](#) and [Haq & Farooq \(2016\)](#) have pointed out that one of the reasons behind low literacy rate in Pakistan is the non-availability of educational institutes in the remote areas. As more than 70% population (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2020) of Pakistan is residing in remote areas having no access to the educational institutes provide quality education and this situation will ultimately affect on achievement of SDGs by 2030 in Pakistan. Although the Chinese government ([Qing, 2011](#)) is providing scholarships to Pakistani students for getting higher education in China these are only for a few but to provide collective and long-term educational benefits to those who are living in remote areas especially along the One-Belt-One-Road, the Chinese government needs to initiate projects of establishing educational institutes.

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