

CPEC: A Great Leap Forward in Pakistan and China Relations

Muhammad Shah Zaib*

Abstract:

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a highly significant project that has strengthened the political and economic ties between Pakistan and China. This relationship highlights the increasing economic reliance between the two countries, promoting a cooperative alliance that goes beyond economic connections to include shared strategic goals. Nevertheless, the initiative faces obstacles such as issues about openness, ecological consequences, and geopolitical dynamics in the region. The project unquestionably represents a substantial advancement in the political and commercial ties between Pakistan and China, with the capacity to transform the economic dynamics of the entire region. This research paper analyses the historical context, fundamental components, and impact of CPEC on the bilateral relationship between the two nations. Additionally, it assesses the geopolitical consequences and challenges associated with the project, providing a comprehensive overview of its significance in the context of regional and global dynamics. The objective of this study is to improve understanding of the various aspects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its significance in the broader context of global diplomacy.

Keywords: CPEC, BRI, Gwadar Port, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Pakistan, China

* MPhil Scholar (Political Science) University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan
shahzaibkhan0911@gmail.com

1. Introduction:

1.1. Background:

Pakistan and China's diplomatic ties are very old, going all the way back to when China was still a young republic. In the early 1950s, when both countries had just achieved independence, they looked to form strong alliances to confront regional and global concerns; this was the beginning of what would become an everlasting friendship (Hussain & Khan, 2017). The Treaty of Friendship, signed between Pakistan and China on May 21, 1951, formalised the diplomatic connections and laid the groundwork for a cooperative and trusting relationship between the two countries (Rana, 2017).

In the decades that followed, China and Pakistan's diplomatic ties developed and deepened. When it came to opposing India's expansionist objectives in the 1960s, the two nations found common ground (Moin, 2023). They became even more strategically aligned on this geopolitical issue, which prompted them to work together more closely in areas like defence and trade. The cooperation reached its pinnacle in the 1970s, when Pakistan was instrumental in helping China break into the global arena (Baig et al., 2020). The People's Republic of China succeeded Taiwan as China's UN representative, a momentous shift that boosted China's international status, and Pakistan's backing was critical to this transition.

Pakistan and China's diplomatic relations were significantly strengthened in the new century. In 2013, a new era of economic collaboration and infrastructural development began with the establishment of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which strengthened the strategic partnership. Economic interdependence and the same goal of regional connection and growth were both emphasised by CPEC, the crown jewel of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Chan, 2018).

Despite facing several obstacles, Pakistan and China's diplomatic ties have shown remarkable durability and flexibility. Not only do the two sides have geopolitical interests, but they also have cultural exchanges, personal ties, and a desire for stability and peace in the region. The historical foundations of the two countries' diplomatic relationship remain a solid basis for cooperation and mutual support as they continue to traverse the complexity of the global scene.

1.2. Objectives:

- Examining the aims and purposes of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- Comprehending the significant strategic value for both nations.

2. Historical Context

2.1. Early Economic Collaboration

Economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, characterised by longstanding friendship and diplomatic relations, has been going on before to the establishment of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two states in the early 1950s created the groundwork for this collaboration. Economic cooperation became an increasingly important part of this bilateral relationship during the years after the Treaty of Friendship was inked in 1951, symbolising a commitment to mutual cooperation (Shafqat, 2021). Pakistan and China's economic relationship began with trade and aid exchanges in the early years. China helped Pakistan in several ways, including the agricultural and industrial sectors. In the 1960s, the two nations' shared resistance to what they saw as dangers, especially from India, gave rise to a stronger bond between them (Raza et al., 2018). Due to their same

geopolitical concerns, China and Pakistan stepped up their cooperation, with China giving Pakistan with both military and economic aid.

The latter part of the twentieth century saw a steady deepening of economic cooperation. Trade took place between the two nations, and China eventually became Pakistan's most important trading partner. Economic aid, technical assistance, and China's backing for Pakistan in global forums all contributed to a strengthening of their relationship's economic facets (Ghanem et al., 2021). Projects like the Gwadar Port, which was partially financed and built with Chinese help in the early 2000s, gave economic cooperation a boost in the new millennium (Alam et al., 2019). This was the beginning of a new era in infrastructure development, one that would pave the way for the massive China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The foundation for the all-encompassing economic engagement that CPEC is today was laid by these early partnerships.

Pakistan and China's 1951 Treaty of Friendship attests to their early dedication to cooperation. This treaty formalised the two countries' diplomatic ties and laid the groundwork for their everlasting friendship. Treaty provisions guaranteeing mutual support and non-interference in domestic matters laid the groundwork for long-lasting diplomatic relations (Butt & Butt, 2015). Pakistan and China have maintained a cooperative and supportive diplomatic relationship. In instance, treaties of friendship have provided a legal basis by outlining procedures for the settlement of disputes and the advancement of common interests. Their efforts to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and non-interference have made great strides towards accomplishing their shared objectives.

2.2. Genesis of CPEC:

Pakistan and China's relationship warmed up considerably in the early 2000s as the two nations saw they could gain from working together more. The

signing of the Pakistan-China Free commercial Agreement in 2006 strengthened the strategic alliance between the two countries and sought to increase commercial and economic cooperation (Gatto & Sadik-Zada, 2021). More extensive economic programmes will be able to build on this agreement's foundation in the years to come. China formally indicated its desire to engage in Pakistan's energy and infrastructure industries in 2011, amidst changing geopolitical factors, especially in South Asia. Both countries started to investigate the potential of a revolutionary economic corridor after Premier Wen Jiabao's visit, which was a watershed moment (Holslag, 2017).

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Pakistan in April 2015, the formal announcement of CPEC was made. The two nations' intentions for massive infrastructure development and economic cooperation were laid out in billion-dollar agreements that were inked during this visit. The goal of the corridor was to link the ports of Gwadar in Pakistan's southwest and Xinjiang in China's northwest by a system of roads, trains, and energy pipelines (Callahan, 2016). As a shorter and safer marine route for trade became available to China, avoiding the crowded and possibly hazardous Strait of Malacca, the strategic significance of Gwadar Port, located on the Arabian Sea, became apparent. All of these fit in with China's larger Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is to build infrastructure all over the world in order to improve global connectivity (Chan, 2018).

The establishment and formalisation of CPEC were made possible by a series of historical events, such as the deepening of diplomatic relations, the signing of important agreements, and the vision articulated by the leadership of China. An historic endeavour, the corridor sought to improve regional development and connectivity while also strengthening commercial ties between China and Pakistan. The historical events that set the stage for CPEC demonstrated

the nations' strategic acumen in seeing the potential for their relationship to bring about mutual prosperity and influence in global politics.

3. Key Components of CPEC

3.1. Infrastructure Development

The construction of Gwadar Port in southern Pakistan, on the Arabian Sea, is a key part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The port will be expanded and modernised as part of the project so that it may become an important regional centre for trade and business. By providing a direct marine channel, Gwadar Port is strategically important because it allows China to trade more efficiently with the Arabian Sea and less with the crowded Strait of Malacca (Salim & Sultana, 2019). Major motorways will be built or upgraded as part of CPEC to improve transport infrastructure in Pakistan. Two of these highways stand out: the M-2, which links Lahore and Islamabad, and the M-1, which links Islamabad and Peshawar. The M-8 Motorway, which would link Gwadar and Ratodero as part of the Western Route under CPEC, will also be developed (Jahangir et al., 2020). This will promote better connectivity and trade linkages among various regions of Pakistan.

Central to the goals of CPEC is the improvement and extension of railway networks. A key project under CPEC, the ML-1 Railway Project seeks to improve and rebuild the main railway line between Peshawar and Karachi (Sun, 2015). In addition to improving the efficiency of passenger and freight travel, this project helps the economy grow by linking big cities and making it easier to move commodities. Meeting Pakistan's energy demands is a major focus of CPEC. Projects for renewable energy, hydroelectric power plants, and coal-fired power plants are all part of the initiative's energy portfolio (Yu, 2017). Improve Pakistan's

economic situation, boost industrial growth, and end energy shortages—those are the goals of these initiatives.

To encourage investment from both local and international sources, boost economic activity, and generate new job possibilities, CPEC includes the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (Jahangir et al., 2020). Industrialization and economic diversification can flourish in these zones because of the infrastructure, utilities, and incentives put in place to attract and retain enterprises.

3.2. Energy Projects

Several conventional power stations, both gas- and coal-fired, have been built in Pakistan thanks to CPEC. One of these projects stands out: the 1,320 MW coal-fired Sahiwal Coal Power Project in Punjab (Hussain & Khan, 2017). These power plants have been instrumental in increasing energy production and expanding capacity, which has helped alleviate the country's energy shortfall. To further its goals of sustainability and environmental impact reduction, CPEC prioritises renewable energy projects alongside conventional power plants. One of the country's largest solar power plants, the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park is located in Punjab and serves as a prime example. The Three Gorges Fourth Wind Farm in Sindh and other wind energy projects add to CPEC's renewable energy component, which is in line with worldwide initiatives to switch to greener energy (Ghanem et al., 2021).

Overcoming Pakistan's chronic energy shortages is one of the main goals of CPEC's energy efforts. Projects like these seek to increase total capacity and diversify the energy mix in an effort to reduce the frequency of power outages, which have long stymied economic and industrial development (Gatto & Sadik-Zada, 2021). Not only does the increased energy supply cover current demand, it also makes space for future industrialization and economic growth. Numerous

industries are directly impacted by the energy-related CPEC efforts and their effects on the economy (Abid & Ashfaq, 2015). Companies from Pakistan and China work together to execute energy projects under CPEC, which allows for the transfer of technology and the sharing of information. This improves Pakistan's energy infrastructure in the long run by increasing the country's technological capabilities and encouraging a culture of efficiency and innovation.

3.3. Economic Zones and Industrial Cooperation:

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC are designed with the express purpose of luring investments and FDI (Jahangir et al., 2020). These zones are attractive to enterprises seeking to establish or extend their operations because of the tax incentives, regulatory simplicity, and friendly business environment they provide. By providing an environment that is attractive to investors, special economic zones (SEZs) boost economic growth by attracting money from all over the world (Younus, 2021). Many jobs are created when industries are set up within special economic zones (SEZs), which helps with both unemployment and poverty reduction.

When it comes to building infrastructure, SEZs are given special attention. Within these zones, an atmosphere that is favourable to industrial activity is created by providing state-of-the-art facilities, reliable utilities, and contemporary transportation networks (Anwar, 2020). This improves infrastructure across the board, which helps regional development and is good for the industries operating inside the SEZs. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) encourage innovation and knowledge transfer by luring businesses with cutting-edge methods and tools. Within these zones, people work together to promote a culture of constant growth through sharing information and coming up with new ideas (Khursheed et al.,

2019). This helps the host country's technology development in general, which is good for the sectors within the SEZs.

4. Impact on Bilateral Relations:

4.1. Economic Benefits:

Both countries' GDPs have grown substantially due to CPEC. Investments in energy initiatives, industrial growth, and infrastructural projects have driven economic expansion in Pakistan (Rizvi, 2015). More investment, both local and international, has poured into the economy since the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which has boosted manufacturing, commerce, and GDP (Riffat & Maini, 2016). There is mutual gain for both countries because China, as an investor and participant in CPEC projects, also reaps the benefits of its partner's economic growth. A large amount of FDI, mostly from China, has poured into many parts of Pakistan's economy as a result of CPEC (Khan & Khan, 2019). Pakistan has benefited economically from Chinese investment in energy projects, infrastructure, and many industries. A vital channel for the deployment of capital, CPEC also opens up new markets and prospects for Chinese companies.

Pakistan has seen a dramatic increase in the number of jobs created as a result of the formation of enterprises, especially within the Special Economic Zones. Both skilled and unskilled workers are in high demand due to the rapid pace of modernization (Hassan, 2019). A rise in available jobs boosts the economy as a whole and helps reduce poverty. The amount of trade between China and Pakistan has been greatly affected by CPEC. Trade routes are now more efficient and less arduous due to the development of Gwadar Port and other transport infrastructure enhancements (Gul, 2017). Both nations are now better positioned to participate in

regional and global trade networks, and bilateral trade has benefited from this improved connectedness.

Greater internal and international connectivity has resulted from CPEC's infrastructure developments, which have included the construction of roads, railroads, and the Gwadar Port. Both economic activity and people's quality of life are boosted by the improved infrastructure. Because it makes it easier to transport people, products, and services, better connectivity stimulates economic growth (Dinesh, 2021). Pakistan has been experiencing chronic energy shortages, but CPEC has taken steps to alleviate this problem, which has led to more industrial growth in the country. An uninterrupted and dependable energy supply is essential for the survival of current businesses, the launch of new ones, and the improvement of industrial output as a whole. The economic impact of CPEC is reinforced by this positive cycle of industrial expansion.

4.2. Strategic and Security Implications

As an integral part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Gwadar Port gives China crucial access to the Arabian Sea via sea. Bypassing the busy and sometimes dangerous Strait of Malacca, this direct access provides an alternate commercial route. In order to improve marine security and guarantee the uninterrupted flow of products, especially energy resources, China must lessen its reliance on the Strait of Malacca (Afzal & Naseem, 2018).

As a balance to the influence of other big actors in the region, CPEC is important in regional geopolitics. It gives China a strategic base in South Asia, which has long been considered India's sphere of influence (Small, 2016). A region long beset by intricate geopolitical conflicts is now within China's diplomatic and economic reach, thanks to CPEC's investments in infrastructure and the economy. CPEC helps alleviate China's worries about its energy supply by easing the safe

transportation of petroleum and natural gas from the Persian Gulf to China's western regions. By constructing the Gwadar Port and related energy projects, China can lessen its reliance on international power grids that are susceptible to interruptions. A crucial part of China's strategic considerations, energy security, is improved by this (Khan, 2018).

5. Geopolitical Implications:

5.1. Regional Influence

China now has a major maritime entrance to the Arabian Sea with Gwadar Port, an integral part of CPEC. By providing an alternate path to the Strait of Malacca, a vital yet potentially susceptible chokepoint, this access benefits China's economy and security. Chinese naval might is bolstered and the country's pursuit of a blue-water navy is advanced by its control or influence over Gwadar (Mustafa & Bhatti, 2020). CPEC improves connectivity in the area by allowing China to bypass conventional maritime routes and go straight to the Arabian Sea via land. The improved trade between China and Pakistan and the expansion of China's economic influence throughout South Asia are both made possible by this link (Rakisits, 2015). Economic integration with neighbouring nations is fostered by the construction of transport and energy networks under CPEC, which puts China as a linchpin in regional trade routes.

Particularly in light of China's ties with India, the geopolitical ramifications of CPEC's influence expansion are significant. There has been an uptick in strategic rivalry as a result of the corridor's passage through contested territory between Pakistan and India (Aman, 2019). A complicated geopolitical picture is emerging as a result of China's growing influence in the area, which

threatens India's long-standing sway. Furthermore, CPEC secures China's interests in the region's natural resources by opening routes for their access.

5.2. Global Connectivity

The overall objective of the Belt and Road Initiative is to improve global connectivity, which is in line with CPEC. A direct overland route for the transfer of goods, energy resources, and products is provided by CPEC, which links Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan to China's northwestern region of Xinjiang (Sultan et al., 2022). Better trade between the two countries is only one benefit of this strategically connected network; it also gives China a foothold in the Arabian Sea and beyond. CPEC is a cornerstone of the BRI's plan to increase trade routes and economic prospects. By building this corridor, China can lessen its reliance on sea routes like the Strait of Malacca and diversify its trading routes. Construction of roads and train lines improves trade connections, which helps the economies of China and the other nations along the corridor grow (Ahmad, 2018).

Parallel to the BRI, CPEC aims to address energy security problems. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) allows for the safe transfer of petroleum and natural gas from the MENA region to western China (McCartney, 2022). In addition to meeting China's energy demands, this is in line with the BRI's larger goals of improving energy security and guaranteeing access to resources. A key component of the Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC encourages economic cooperation throughout regions (Ahmad et al., 2020).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are two of China's soft power initiatives. By funding massive infrastructure projects and investments, CPEC boosts China's reputation as an economic powerhouse that is happy to share its wealth. A web of links, going beyond conventional geopolitical alliances, is being woven into China's diplomatic

network through its economic diplomacy initiatives. Belt & Road Initiative and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor both aim to improve transport and communication networks (Mahmood, 2022). The energy projects, roadways, and trains that CPEC aims to construct are all part of the BRI's larger goal of enhancing infrastructure around the world. The receiving countries are able to reap the benefits of Chinese expertise through CPEC's facilitated technology transfer and collaboration, which in turn promotes a development culture that values innovation.

6. Challenges and Future Prospects

6.1 Security Concerns

Insurgent groups and terrorist operations, especially in the region of Balochistan, pose a significant security concern for CPEC. Parts of the corridor have a history of ethnic tensions and resentment. A direct danger to the safety of the corridor has been the targeting of CPEC projects, building sites, and staff by insurgent groups (Menhas, 2019). Given the gravity of the situation, drastic security measures, such as the deployment of troops and the creation of a special security force, are required. Gilgit-Baltistan and other contested areas are strategically aligned with CPEC, which has increased geopolitical tensions in the region. India, a neighbouring country, is opposed to the corridor's path because it violates its territorial integrity, according to India (Zhao et al., 2019). Because of this, the geopolitical landscape is complicated, which could cause diplomatic and political disturbances that slow down CPEC.

Problems may arise as a result of ethnic tensions and socioeconomic gaps in Pakistan, especially in areas where CPEC projects are being implemented. Protests, discontent, and disturbances could break out if local people feel left out

of the corridor's economic advantages (Mahmood et al., 2020). To mitigate these problems and maintain the social stability necessary for the continued success of CPEC, it is crucial to ensure equitable development and address the concerns of local residents. The disputed territories and Gilgit-Baltistan, in particular, are located close to international borders, which makes people worried about border security and any confrontations that could break out along the corridor. The danger of border-related incidents disrupting CPEC is a real issue due to the militarization of specific locations, ongoing disputes and historical tensions with neighbouring nations, and other factors.

6.2 Socioeconomic and Environmental Challenges

Before CPEC projects begin, societal Impact Assessments (SIAs) determine local societal impacts. They thoroughly contact communities and other relevant parties for these evaluations. Comments inform plans to reduce negative social consequences and boost positive ones. This comprehensive policy addresses resettlement, livelihoods, and cultural heritage. CPEC promotes inclusive development by including locals in project activities. CPEC programmes prioritise local employment so citizens can find work. This boosts the economy and addresses pay and job inequalities (Wolf, 2020).

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) evaluate CPEC projects' environmental implications and propose solutions. These evaluations consider biodiversity, water and air quality, and environmental sustainability. Reforestation, green technologies, and infrastructure project mitigation are examples of mitigation approaches (Small, 2020). CPEC makes green efforts, mainly in energy, to address environmental challenges. Renewable energy efforts like wind and solar power are being developed to reduce fossil fuel use and environmental impact. This supports sustainable growth and the global fight against climate change.

CPEC prioritises capacity building and skill development to boost local socioeconomic well-being. These projects aim to empower locals through job-market engagement, sustained economic growth, and less external reliance.

6.3. Future Prospects

China and Pakistan benefit economically from CPEC. Well-planned infrastructure, energy, and economic zone development boost trade, connectivity, and jobs. However, project financial sustainability, debt concerns, and sound governance and administration must be addressed. Long-term prospects depend on the ability to overcome economic challenges and maximise economic gains. Geopolitics, notably Pakistan-India relations, will shape CPEC's destiny. War and tensions may cause diplomatic issues and disruptions. To sustain CPEC, a stable geopolitical environment must be achieved through diplomatic initiatives and conflict resolution.

Regional cooperation and integration are essential to CPEC's success. CPEC could promote regional stability and cooperation if nearby states actively participate and benefit from its economic opportunities. However, geopolitical issues and bordering governments' reluctance to cooperate could limit CPEC's potential. Sustainability and long-term feasibility depend on CPEC's ability to blend environmental standards with economic development. Eco-friendly techniques, sustainable development, and ecological conservation can boost the initiative's sustainability. Social issues, inclusive development, and environmental protection must be addressed to secure local support.

For long-term success, CPEC must adapt to new conditions and economic trends. Flexible plans can adapt to economic changes, new technologies, and new issues. A flexible strategy that considers past and new events can extend the initiative's lifespan. CPEC's roads, railroads, and energy facilities must be

regularly maintained and repaired to last. We must invest in infrastructure upkeep to ensure its longevity and efficiency. Infrastructure maintenance must be ongoing to maintain CPEC's long-term benefits.

Technology advancements and industrial expansion must be combined to assess CPEC's long-term potential. To compete in the global economy, projects must keep up with technological and industrial advances or fail.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Summary of Findings

Pakistan and China have long-standing diplomatic relations that underpin CPEC. The 1950s-era connection underpins cooperation and economic goals. China and Pakistan had been working closely economically before CPEC, but CPEC was a big step ahead. The corridor was created to meet economic needs by facilitating trade, energy, and infrastructural development.

Historical events including diplomatic contacts, friendship treaties, and business agreements shaped CPEC. The strategic alignment of the corridor across hostile countries and its geopolitical implications enable this vast operation. CPEC's huge infrastructure projects include Gwadar Port, roadways, and trains. While helping Pakistan with infrastructure, these efforts will also increase trade and regional connections.

CPEC is economically significant since it boosts trade, jobs, and growth. The corridor will boost China and Pakistan's economic power in the area. Power plants and renewable energy projects are only two ways CPEC is improving Pakistan's energy problem. By solving Pakistan's energy problems, these efforts aim to boost industrialization and economic growth.

CPEC relies on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to allow international investment, technology transfer, and industrialization. These zones are vital for local economies to benefit from CPEC's economic potential. Employment, GDP growth, and poverty reduction may occur from CPEC. The corridor's performance depends on efficient execution and inclusive development.

CPEC must overcome geopolitical challenges. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC are two facets of the same coin to boost global economic integration, strategic connectedness, and diplomatic influence. This corridor is the BRI's flagship project and exemplifies its mission.

CPEC includes community participation and sustainable development techniques. Social impact evaluations, local employment, environmental protection, and cultural preservation demonstrate responsible development. CPEC offers more cooperation and growth opportunities. Building more economic corridors, maybe involving adjacent nations, and collaborating on technology transfer and innovation might make CPEC work for more people.

When assessing CPEC's long-term prospects, economic potential, geopolitical dynamics, sustainability, and adaptability are crucial. A good end requires overcoming barriers, fostering regional collaboration, and ensuring China and Pakistan's commitment.

7.2. Recommendations

To maximise the benefits of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a comprehensive strategy should address economic, social, and geopolitical issues. For maximum CPEC benefits, these points are worth consideration:

- China and Pakistan should establish a strong policy coordination framework to collaborate and communicate. Joint committees and regular

meetings can help the two countries coordinate policy and overcome barriers.

- To combat insurgency, terrorism, and geopolitics, security must be strengthened. CPEC projects, personnel, and infrastructure must be protected by proactive measures, intelligence exchange, and a specialist security force.
- Sustainable development should include environmental protections, social impact studies, and green measures in CPEC projects. Prioritise renewable energy, green technology, and environmental efforts to ensure long-term environmental sustainability.
- Prioritise social welfare, community involvement, and local hiring for inclusive growth. CPEC should benefit everyone, especially in the corridor's project communities.
- Reduce bureaucratic impediments, offer incentives, and improve business conditions to encourage participation. Facilitating public-private partnerships to attract domestic and foreign investments is crucial to CPEC's success by a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Training, education, and skill development can boost CPEC project human resources. Work together to teach locals marketable skills to find jobs and boost the corridor's economy.
- Promote educational and cultural exchanges between Pakistan and China to strengthen ties. Cultural gatherings, joint research, and scholarships can help people understand and appreciate each other's cultures.
- Expand economic partnership beyond energy and infrastructure. Collaboration on innovation, R&D, and technology transfer will strengthen and diversify your economic connection.

- Maintain transparency and accountability in CPEC projects. Set up frequent public oversight, audits, and reporting to ensure accountability and transparency in money utilisation and project progress.
- Diplomatic actions should reduce CPEC's impact on international politics. To ensure corridor success, bordering countries must be engaged in dialogue to resolve difficulties and promote a positive regional climate. Diplomatic actions promote regional stability and collaboration.
- An all-encompassing data tracking and analysis system can measure CPEC project success and influence. Adaptive approaches, guided by regular reviews, can be used to adjust to new situations.
- Involve adjacent nations in CPEC projects to promote regional integration. Explore economic corridors beyond Pakistan to boost regional cooperation and connectivity.

References

- Abid, M., & Ashfaq, A. (2015). CPEC: Challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. *Pakistan Vision*, 16(2), 142–169.
- Afzal, S., and Naseem, A. (2018). China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Challenges and prospects. *Pakistan Administrative Review*, 2(1), 209–222.
- Ahmad, R, Mi, H. and Fernald, L.W. (2020). Revisiting the potential security threats linked with the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). *Journal of the International council for small business*, 1(1), 64–80.

- Ahmad, R. (2018). Aging and social security system in Pakistan: Policy challenges, opportunities, and role of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). *Educational gerontology*, 44(9), 537–550.
- Alam, K. M., Li, X., & Baig, S. (2019). Impact of transport cost and travel time on trade under China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC). *Journal of Advanced Transportation*, 2(3), 369-441.
- Aman, J. (2019). The influence of Islamic religiosity on the perceived socio-cultural impact of sustainable tourism development in Pakistan: A structural equation modeling approach, *Sustainability*, 11(11), 3039.
- Anwar, Z. (2020). Development of infrastructural linkages between Pakistan and Central Asia. *South Asian Studies*, 26(1).
- Baig, S., Qasim, M., Xuemei, L., & Alam, K. M. (2020). Is the China-Pakistan economic corridor an opportunity or a threat for small and micro-entrepreneurs? Empirical evidence from Northern Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 1727.
- Butt, K. M., & Butt, A. A. (2015). Impact of CPEC on regional and extra-regional actors. *The journal of political science*, 33, 23.
- Callahan, W. A. (2016). *China's belt and road initiative and the new Eurasian order*: JSTOR.
- Chan, M. H. T. (2018). The belt and road initiative—the new silk road: a research agenda. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, 7(2), 104-123.
- Dinesh, S. (2021). Strategic salience of the Gwadar Port: An analytical study. *Journal of Defense Studies*, 15(1), 53–78.

- Gatto, A., & Sadik-Zada, E. R. (2021). Revisiting the East Asian financial crises: Lessons from ethics and development patterns. *Economic Growth and Financial Development: Effects of Capital Flight in Emerging Economies*, 23-31.
- Ghanem, O., Xuemei, L., Alam, K. M., & Baig, S. (2021). The effectiveness of freight costs on trade potentials between China and European Union, Middle East, North African countries under China-Pakistan Corridor. *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 13(3-4), 327-359.
- Gul, A. (2017). China turning Pakistan Port into regional giant. *VOA*, 24. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-china-gwadar-port/4084175.html> (Accessed 03 December 2023).
- Hassan, K. (2019). CPEC: A win-win for China and Pakistan. *Human Affairs*, 30, 212–223.
- Holslag, J. (2017). How China's new Silk Road threatens European trade. *The International Spectator*, 52(1), 46-60.
- Hussain, S., & Khan, M. A. (2017). CPEC: A roadmap of region's development. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(2), 51-59.
- Jahangir, A., Haroon, O., & Masud Mirza, A. (2020). Special Economic Zones under the CPEC and the belt and road initiative: Parameters, challenges and prospects. *China's Belt and Road Initiative in a Global Context*, 2, 289-328.
- Khan, M.Z.U., and Khan, M.M. (2019). China-Pakistan economic corridor: Opportunities and challenges. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 39(2), 67–82.

- Khan, N.A. (2018). Pakistan, Tajikistan and CPEC. *Pakistan observer*. Available at: www.pakobserver.net/pakistantajikistan-and-cpec/ (Accessed 03 December 2023).
- Khursheed, A., Haider, S.K., and Mustafa, F. (2019). China – Pakistan economic corridor: A harbinger of economic prosperity and regional peace. *Asian Journal of German and European Studies*, 4(7), 1–15.
- Mahmood, S. (2022). Belt and road initiative as a catalyst of infrastructure development: Assessment of resident’s perception and attitude towards China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. *PLoS One*, 17(7), e0271243.
- Mahmood, S., Sabir, M., and Ali, G. (2020). Infrastructure projects and sustainable development: Discovering the stakeholders’ perception in the case of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. *PLoS One*, 15(8), e0237385.
- McCartney, M. (2022). The China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC): Infrastructure, social savings, spillovers, and economic growth in Pakistan. *Eurasian Geogr. Econ.* 63(2), 180–211.
- Menhas, R. (2019). Sustainable development under Belt and road initiative: A case study of China-Pakistan economic corridor’s socio-economic impact on Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 11(21), 6143.
- Moin, N. (2023). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the World: A Perspective. In *Silk Route Revisited: Essays and Perspectives on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Beyond* (pp.191-198). CSC-KIU.
- Mustafa, M. I. D. G., & Bhatti, M. R. (2020). Geopolitical Dynamics of Afghanistan and Concerns of Regional and Global Actors vis a vis Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 4(3), 792-806.

- Rakisits, C. (2015). A path to the sea: China's Pakistan. *Plan World Affairs*, 178(3), 67–74.
- Rana, K. S. (2017). China's belt and road initiative (bri): Implications, prospects & consequences: Impact on india & its china diplomacy. *ICS Occasional Paper*, 16.
- Raza, S., Minai, M. S., Zain, A. Y. M., Tariq, T. A., & Khuwaja, F. M. (2018). Dissection of small businesses in Pakistan: Issues and directions. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 22(4), 1-13.
- Riffat, H., and Maini, T.S. (2016). The China Pakistan economic corridor: Strategic rationales, external perspectives, and challenges to effective implementation. *Working paper*, the Stimson Center. Available at: <https://www.stimson.org/2017/china-pakistan-economic-corridor-strategic-rationales-external-perspectives-and-challenges/> (Accessed 02 December 2023).
- Rizvi, H.A. (2015). The China-Pakistan economic corridor: Regional cooperation and socio-economic development. *Strategic Studies*, 34/35(4/1), 1–17.
- Salim, M., & Sultana, S. (2019). Gwadar and its Importance for Pakistan and China. *Balochistan Review*, 301-313.
- Shafqat, S. (2021). CPEC and changing dynamics of China–India relations. In *China and South Asia* (pp. 17-34): Routledge India.
- Small, A. (2016). *Beyond India-centricity: China and Pakistan Look Western Asia Policy*, 21(1), pp. 167-173.
- Small, A. (2020). *Returning to the Shadows: China, Pakistan, and the Fate of CPEC*. Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund.

- Sultan, M.F., Shaikh, S., and Mahesar, S.A. (2022). Socio-economic gains of China Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC): Synthesizing the effects in the wake of global pandemic. *Webology*, 19(2), ISSN: 1735-188X.
- Sun, W. (2015). Slow boat from China: public discourses behind the ‘going global’ media policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21(4), 400-418.
- Wolf, S. (2020). *The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor of the Belt and Road Initiative*. Cham: Springer.
- Younus, U. (2021). Pakistan’s growing problem with its China Economic Corridor. *United States Institute of Peace*. Available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/05/pakistans-growing-problem-its-china-economic-corridor> (Accessed: 03 November 2023).
- Yu, H. (2017). Motivation behind China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiatives and establishment of the Asian infrastructure investment bank. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26(105), 353-368.
- Zhao, F., Ahmad, R., and Liao, P. (2019). Cross-cultural adaptation of international talents from the Belt and road countries: A case study of suzhou vocational university. *Arts Soc. Sci. J.* 10(443), 2.