

Benefits of CPEC for Balochistan:

By

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Abstract:

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is not only a game changer but also fate changer for Pakistan. And, for China it is an initiative towards the accomplishment of "One Route, One Belt". Balochistan is an equal beneficiary of CPEC. In fact, CPEC is a bulk of development projects in Pakistan financed by China. And, in Balochistan the projects of China Pakistan Economic Corridor are also under construction. Infrastructure development in the shape of construction of highways and railways, projects in energy sector and development projects in the port city of Gwadar are the main projects in Balochistan under China Pakistan Economic Corridor. The completion of these projects will shape up infrastructure development in Balochistan. Moreover, the weak economy of the province will be boosted due to CPEC. The quality of life in Balochistan will improve with creation of jobs and accomplishment of prosperity and economic stability. The arrival of investment will further ameliorate the economic conditions of the people. Finally, CPEC will yield in the establishment of permanent peace and serenity in the troubled Balochistan.

Keywords: China Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC, Balochistan, Gwadar, Economy, Infrastructure,

Introduction:

The chief purpose of this research paper is to illuminate the benefits which the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can furnish to Balochistan, one of the four federating units of Pakistan. This paper is also meant to throw light on the major projects of CPEC which are either under construction or supposed to be in pipeline in near future in Balochistan. Moreover, the development work in Gwadar and its benefits for Balochistan are also meant to be discussed here.

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China Pakistan Economic Corridor: CPEC is the name given to the development megaproject. The prime purpose of this megaproject is to connect Gwadar to Xinjiang. Gwadar is a deep-water sea in province Balochistan and Xinjiang is located in the northwestern region of China. The governments of Pakistan and China intend to connect Gwadar and Xinjiang via highways and railways. Construction of gas pipeline and establishment of optic fibers are also included CPEC. The purpose of gas pipeline is said to be for the transportation of gas and oil. In the beginning the cost of the projects of CPEC was forty six billion US dollars but it has reached \$54 billion due to the inclusion of new projects. (Tribune, 12 April 2017). The longtime friendship and presence of mutual trust between Pakistan and China resulted in the birth of such a huge and glorious megaproject like CPEC.

CPEC, apart from economic importance, has political and strategic importance, too. It is, therefore, called “game changer”. CPEC, no doubt, is a game changer for Pakistan and the region. Up gradation, extension and development of infrastructure in Pakistan is inevitable once the projects which are under construction in CPEC are completed. Moreover, the economic relationship between China and Pakistan will enhance due to CPEC. Seven lac directed jobs are said to be created in Pakistan due to CPEC. Furthermore, people-to-people contact between the citizens of both the countries will be established.

Western Route of CPEC: Western route is name given to the primary route of CPEC in Balochistan. This route is also called M-8. It is said to be the shortest route of CPEC. This route starts from Gwadar. Following areas of Balochistan come in this route:

Turbat

Panjgur

Nag

Basima

Sorab

Qalat

Quetta

Qilla Saifullah

Zhob

After Zhob, this route enters Dera Ismail Khan, an area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This route then reaches to Hassan Abdal. Five hundred and fifty six kilometer of this route in Balochistan is complete. 870 Km is the total length of this road network in Balochistan.

Balochistan- Main Beneficiary of CPEC: Although there is a view that Balochistan is not going to be benefitted from the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, this view cannot be supported by facts and ground realities. Balochistan like other parts of Pakistan is a beneficiary of CPEC. In this regard Mir Sherbaz Khetran, a research fellow of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad writes: “Balochistan ranges second in its share from the Chinese investment in CPEC”. (Tribune, economic corridor: Chinese official sets record straight, 2 March 2015). Dr. Muhammad Khan writes “the bulk of the economic and strategic advantages of CPEC are for the Province of Balochistan.” (Zubair). He lists Balochistan as the first beneficiary of CPEC followed by Sindh. Punjab is placed in third category. He further argues that the maximum benefits of CPEC go to Balochistan.

Development Projects of CPEC in Balochistan: The development projects of China Pakistan Economic Corridor in Balochistan mainly consist of Infrastructure development, energy Sector and Gwadar.

Infrastructure:

The poorly-developed infrastructure of Balochistan will surely be shaped up with the completion of various infrastructure projects. According to official website of Government of Pakistan on CPEC “following are the main highways which are under construction in Balochistan and these projects are part of Public Sector Development Program 2016-17”. (Dawn, 2014)

Gwadar-Turbat–Hoshab Section (200Km) of Gwadar-Ratodero Road (892 Km) M-8 including Khuzdar -Shahdadkot - Ratodero (143km) - (Gwadar, Turbat, Khuzdar in Balochistan and Kamber, Shahdadkot & Larkana in Sindh)

Widening & Improvement of N-85, Hoshab-Nag-Basima-Surab Road (459 Km) (Khuzdar, Panjgur)

Zhob Mughal Kot 81 Km N-50

Basima - Khuzdar (110 km) N-30

“The highways constructed under CPEC will connect Balochistan”.
(Tribune P. , 13 November 2015)

According to the data available on the official website of National Highways Authority “Almost 85% of work on Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab has been completed and more than 80% of work on Gwadar-Ratodero Road is complete.” (Dawn, Transport Policy: need of the day, 13 February 2017)

These highways will result in the creation of jobs. Hotels, restaurants, petrol pumps and markets will be built on these highways. People will be facilitated with construction of these highways. Farmers and businessmen dealing in crops and fruits will be able to have early and easy access to the markets due to these highways. Communication sources will, no doubt, become fast and the transporters will also be benefitted. The construction of these highways will boost the economy of Balochistan and would help to bring socio-economic change in the province.

Energy: According to the official website of government of Pakistan on CPEC “following are the prime projects in energy sector”. (News, 29 June 2015)

Gwadar Coal /LNG / Oil Power Project, Gwadar

HUBCO coal power plant 1X660 MW, Hub Balochistan

A. Gaddani Power Park Project (2×660MW)

B. Gaddani Power Park Project (Jetty + Infrastructure)

Mir Sherbaz Khetran writes: “2940 Megawatt energy is going to be generated by the energy projects of CPEC in Balochistan”. (Times, 19 November 2015). These projects will benefit the people of the province and will ameliorate the economy of Balochistan. Moreover, energy needs of the province will also be fulfilled. The generation of energy in province will help the agricultural sector of the province to develop. The domestic and commercial needs of Balochistan are deemed to be fulfilled with completion of these projects.

Projects in Gwadar: “Following are the main projects which are either under construction or be under construction in Gwadar under CPEC”, according to the official website of Government of Pakistan. (Kugleman, 9 July 2015)

East-Bay Expressway

Gwadar International Airport

Construction of Breakwaters

Dredging of berthing areas & channels

Infrastructure for Free Zone & EPZs port related industries

Necessary Facilities of Fresh Water Treatment and Supply

Hospital at Gwadar

Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar (Hussain, 19 April 2015)

The completion of projects, vide ut supra, will on one hand result in the development of infrastructure in Gwadar, the port city of Balochistan which is the main area in China Pakistan Economic Corridor. And on the hand these projects would help the fragile economy of the province to become robust. The conditions of fishermen and farmers will equally improve as CPEC will facilitate fishery, shipping, agriculture, livestock and other sectors in Balochistan. (Kiani, 30 September 2016)

As we know that Balochistan is a mineral-rich province. The mineral resources of this province have not been properly utilized due to lack of advanced technology. These mineral resources and other natural resources of Balochistan will surely attract the investors, especially the foreign investors, to invest in the vast field of mineral resources of Balochistan because of the Special Economic Zones which are going to be established in Balochistan. (Malik, 7 December 2015)

The location of Balochistan is quite important. It has border with Afghanistan which is connected with Central Asian Countries. The Gwadar port provides an easy access to the landlocked Afghanistan and other Central Asian Republics. Functional Gwadar port will not only create jobs for the people of the province but it will also attract large investment from both national and international investors. (Claude, 2015)

China Pakistan Economic Corridor will bring socio-economic changes in Balochistan. Life standard of the people of the province will augment. In addition of it, peace and tranquility would kiss the feet of the fate of the people of Balochistan once prosperity and economic stability come to the province. And, CPEC will, no doubt, result in the prosperity of the people in the province. (Zhen, 11 November 2015)

Methodology:

Time series secondary data has been used in this study. Data has been taken from different project which are in the pipeline and some are under progress. Books, magazines and other internet sites were also used to collect and analyze the data.

Results and Discussion:

The results were supportive to the data presented in the study. Analysis show the positive trend of analysis as there is a huge potentials for development of Balochistan through the projects which are running in the province. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a huge opportunity for the people of Balochistan as well as for the whole country. The study presumes that with infrastructure development, the Phase of development will be initiated and it may have a huge impact to develop the remote areas of the province of Balochistan

Conclusion:

China Pakistan Economic Corridor is no doubt an important megaproject for Pakistan in general and Balochistan in particular as Balochistan is one the main beneficiary of CPEC. The poorly-developed communication in Balochistan will develop with infrastructure development. Projects in Gwadar and energy sector in Balochistan are enough to attract foreign investment. The people of Balochistan belonging to any walk of life will surely gain benefits from CPEC. The fragile economy of this province is going to stand on its own feet due to CPEC. Prosperity and stability will come with CPEC. And, peace will follow economic prosperity.

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