

# CPEC and Inclusive Development of Balochistan: A Holistic Approach to Human Security and Sustainable Development

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## ABSTRACT

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The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) holds transformative potential for the socio-economic development of Balochistan, a region long characterized by structural inequalities, underdevelopment, and insecurity. This paper explores how a holistic approach integrating the Human Security Model can foster inclusive development and sustainable progress in Balochistan. By addressing various dimensions of human security—economic, food, health, community, and political security—this study outlines a framework to ensure that the benefits of CPEC reach marginalized communities and contribute to regional stability. The focus on inclusive development entails enhancing local capacities, promoting equitable resource distribution, and fostering participatory governance to mitigate socio-political grievances. It emphasizes leveraging CPEC's infrastructure and economic projects to create employment opportunities, improve access to essential services, and strengthen resilience against environmental and social challenges. Additionally, the Human Security Model provides a lens to address the

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unique vulnerabilities faced by Balochistan's population, ensuring that development efforts are people-centric and conflict-sensitive. By integrating human security into CPEC's implementation, this paper argues for a development paradigm that balances economic growth with human well-being. Such a strategy not only promotes sustainable development in Balochistan but also contributes to broader regional stability and prosperity.

**Keywords:** CPEC, Balochistan, Inclusive Development, Sustainable Development

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## **Introduction**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is regarded as an ambitious and transformative initiative in the realm of global economic cooperation. The CPEC can significantly impact regional trade, infrastructure development, and energy cooperation spanning a vast geographical area linking China and Pakistan. It is a comprehensive infrastructure development initiative encompassing a network of highways, railroads, pipelines, and other infrastructural projects. It is estimated to have a total cost of \$46 billion (Rauf and Zeidan, 2023). Subsequently, the two governing bodies formulated a comprehensive "Long Term Plan" in 2017, which extended the anticipated execution time till 2030. The projected expenditures have experienced an upward revision, reaching US\$ 62 billion (MERICS, 2020).

The project presents mutual interests and benefits for both countries by creating a quicker trade route through the Arabian Sea. This route allows China to avoid the lengthy and congested marine routes through the Malacca Strait. Additionally, it addresses the infrastructural shortcomings in Pakistan that have hindered economic growth. The development of roads, railroads, and energy infrastructure in Pakistan is likely to boost connectivity, energy supply, and transportation within the country, which will foster the growth of trade and industry. Furthermore, serving as a pivotal pearl within Chinese vast Belt and Road Initiative, the CPEC possesses the potential to enhance Pakistan's geopolitical significance and open up opportunities for increased foreign investment. Nevertheless, being primarily sited in Balochistan, the CPEC offers vital implications for the province in particular and the whole of Pakistan in general.

Balochistan, the largest but underdeveloped province of Pakistan, holds abundant natural resources in the region, such as coal, copper, gold, chromite, and limestone. Moreover, the province's geographical significance

and the presence of diverse communities render it a pivotal subject for examining the impacts of the CPEC on inclusive economic development, and the overall welfare of individuals. As the CPEC unfolds, the province is likely to emerge as an important contributor to achieving sustainable development and addressing human security issues.

The Human Security Model (HSM) provides a comprehensive framework that goes beyond traditional state-centric security approaches, focusing instead on the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities. It emphasizes seven dimensions: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Applying this model to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) located in Balochistan can help assess the human-centered implications of the project while identifying the challenges and opportunities in ensuring sustainable and inclusive development.

Given the context, the objective of this study is to develop a thorough comprehension of the interrelated dynamics of the implementation of CPEC in Balochistan by using qualitative method of research. It intends to examine the potential implications of the project on relations between Pakistan and China, also its impact on the fiscal policies, industrialization process and socio-economic and infrastructural development of the Balochistan through the lens of human security model. It also aims to assess the outcomes of CPEC for the local marginalized communities as human security model underscores the significance of inclusive policies to empower the local communities, protect their rights, and ensure equitable distribution of the resources.

Besides, it will comprehensively evaluate the advancement in economic, social and infrastructural domains along with the issues pertaining to human security i.e., prospects of improved education facilities, healthcare and employment opportunities. Furthermore, the research will also explore sustainability and long-term impact of CPEC on the future of local communities. It also contributes to the ongoing discourse of sustainable development goals and inclusive growth.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Understanding the role of CPEC in the inclusive development of Balochistan requires conceptual framework that includes key dimensions of human security and sustainable development. In this framework, the CPEC is an independent variable which drives the socioeconomic development of the province through infrastructural development, also investments in energy and industrial domains whereas, human security is mediating variable that emphasizes upon addressing the socioeconomic vulnerabilities, and sustainable development is dependent variable which is crucial for the

marginalised communities of Balochistan.

### **Background and Context of CPEC**

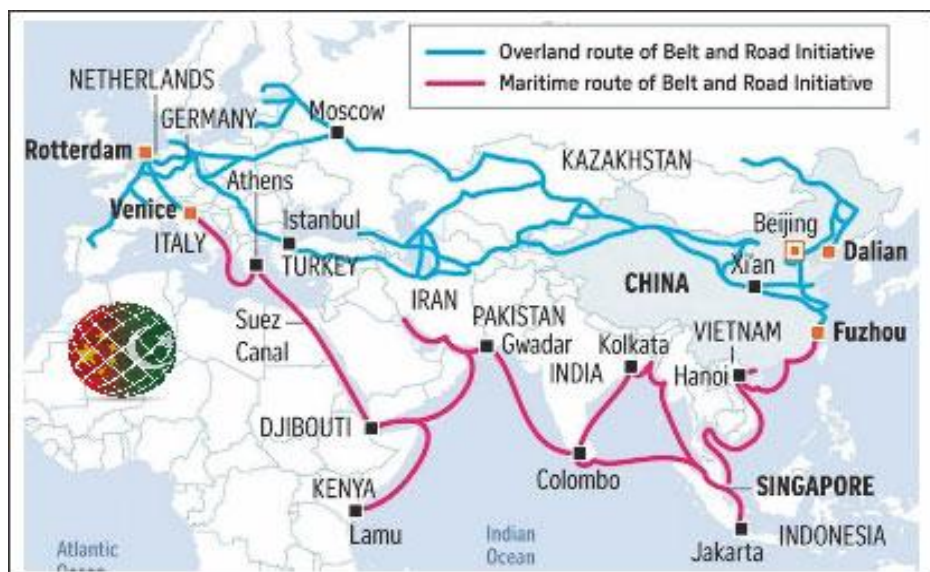
The CPEC, a momentous infrastructural project, envisions to promote economic cooperation between Pakistan and China by developing connectivity. Formally inaugurated in 2015, the project was launched under the umbrella of Chinese BRI. Connecting Xinjiang province of China with Gwadar Port located in Pakistan's Balochistan province, the project seeks to establish trade and transportation network.

This ambitious programme comprises an extensive network of transportation infrastructure, including roads, trains, pipelines, power installations, and other related activities.

The origin of the CPEC can be attributed to the year 2013, during which the President of China, Xi Jinping visited Pakistan and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to initiate the planning and execution of the corridor. The investment of the projects for the development of international infrastructure under BRI is projected to cost more than US\$1 trillion throughout the ten years which commenced in 2017 (OECD, 2018).

The importance of the CPEC extends beyond its vast dimensions, encompassing the geopolitical framework within which it functions. It holds significance for China since it is an integral component of its "String of Pearls" strategy. This policy is designed to safeguard maritime trade routes and bolster energy security through the establishment of strategically positioned ports

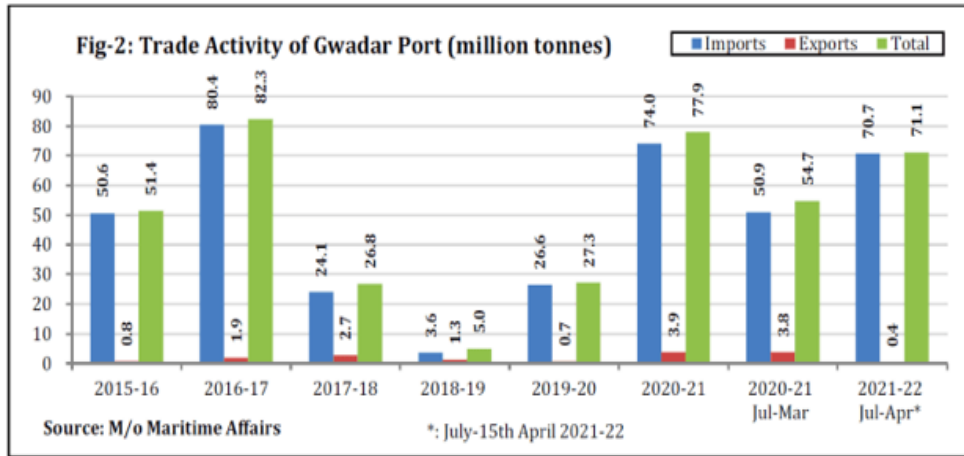
Source: Stratheia, 2023



around the Indian Ocean. The Gwadar Port plays a pivotal role in this strategic

plan, providing China with a more efficient and safe trade pathway to the Arabian Sea, thereby circumventing the need to traverse the Malacca Strait (Malik, 2012).

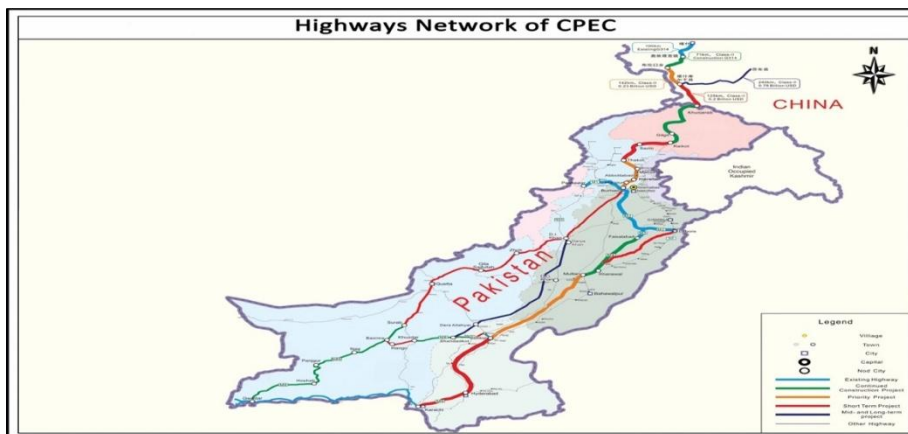
Source: <https://cpec.gov.pk/maps>



From the standpoint of Pakistan, the CPEC signifies a transformative prospect for fostering economic growth, generating employment opportunities, and advancing infrastructure development. The strategic importance of a commerce route connecting Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East is also augmented by the potential of the project. It also aims at effectively tackling the energy deficiencies in Pakistan by enhancing the overall connection throughout the nation.

### **What is Inclusive Development?**

Inclusive development is an approach that raises the standard of living of every individual in the society leaving none behind (USAID, n.d.). It includes socioeconomic development by empowering the individuals and making them effective part of the society by addressing their vulnerabilities and inequalities of the society. Without inclusive development, the sustainable development is always at risk.



### **Holistic Approach to Human Security & Sustainable Development**

A holistic approach to human security & sustainable development presents a comprehensive framework for the well-being of individuals and communities. It integrates socioeconomic, environmental and governance aspects of a society and a country. It entails human centric focus, interconnectedness of threats like poverty, health crises, and armed conflicts etc., equity and justice and inclusivity for sustainable development in the society.

### **Significance of Inclusive Development and Human Security in Balochistan**

The vitality of inclusive development and human security cannot be challenged in any society so is the case in Balochistan where these are considered essential elements for achieving long lasting prosperity, stability, and social well-being.

Balochistan, as the largest province in Pakistan in terms of area and possessing abundant natural resources, exhibits considerable potential for fostering economic advancement and prosperity. Nevertheless, the presence of historical inequities, ethnic conflicts, and political instability have caused socio-economic inequality and human security concerns within the province. According to the 2017 Pakistan Census, Balochistan is characterised by a diverse array of ethnic and linguistic groups. The Baloch, constituting a significant majority of the populace, represent the most prominent ethnic community in the region of Balochistan. According to the census data, the Baloch community comprises more than 55.6 per cent of the total population in the province (Raisani, 2022). The Pashtuns are around 36 per cent. The remaining 12 per cent is comprised of several minor communities, including Brahuis, Hazaras, Sindhis, Punjabis, Uzbeks, and Turkmens (Singh, 2020).

To mitigate socio-economic disparities, it is imperative to prioritise

inclusive development in the region of Balochistan. This approach is essential for effectively tackling the prevailing socio-economic challenges that exist across many communities and regions within Balochistan. The province encompasses a wide range of ethnic groups and marginalised people, that has substantial challenges in multiple domains including their access to the edification, health care, and other services.

According to official records from the health department, Balochistan is said to have a total of 1661 hospitals, primary health clinics, and rural health centers. However, it is worth noting that out of these establishments, only 250 are operational in practice, while the remaining exist solely in documentation without any physical infrastructure being constructed (The Economic Times, 2023). Furthermore, within the realm of the education sector, it can be observed that Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan, is equipped with educational facilities that exhibit a significantly subpar grade of education. The remaining 32 districts are experiencing a lack of educational facilities. There is no evidence indicating that 17 per cent of the budget is designated for education, neither has there been any formal inquiry conducted to verify this allocation. The proportion of female education in Baluchistan is under 15 per cent, in contrast to the 37 per cent of male education (Nadir, 2022). Similarly, poverty is widespread in the province, with the Multidimensional Poverty Index recording the highest poverty level at 71.2 per cent in the province (with an average intensity of 55.3 percent) (UNDP, n.d.).

### **Literature Review**

The literature review critically evaluates the existing academic literature, encompassing scholarly works, research papers, reports, and studies that pertain to the subject matter at hand. The fundamental objective of conducting a literature review is to get a full comprehension of the present knowledge, and insights of the subject matter. This involves finding major themes, gaps, and contradictions within the existing body of research, to further advance the field of study.

The objective of the CPEC is twofold: firstly, to facilitate the economic transformation of Pakistan through the modernization of its road, rail, air, and energy transportation infrastructure; and secondly, establishing connectivity between the deep-sea ports of Pakistan including Gwadar and Karachi and in China with the Xinjiang, as well as other regions beyond, via land routes. The Chinese province of Xinjiang has connectivity with eight countries including Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Russia, where the ancient Silk Road traversed the region historically. The objective of this initiative is to mitigate the temporal and financial expenses associated with the transportation of commodities and energy resources like oil and natural gas, to China. This will be achieved by bypassing the Strait of

Malacca and the South China Sea. Likewise, the plan aimed to establish a number of special economic zones (SEZs), which were designed based on comparable zones in China. These SEZs provide investment incentives, and are intended to stimulate swift economic development. In 2016, the declaration of collaborative space and satellite endeavours amongst Pakistan and China, prompted by the CPEC, materialized. Additionally, the literature review critically examines scholarly research that specifically investigates the province of Balochistan, providing insights into its socio-economic challenges, historical inequalities, and issues about human security (Rauf and Zeidan, 2023).

The CPEC holds substantial importance within the framework of BRI. It can be interpreted as a significant symbol representing a new age characterised by enhanced connectivity and integration inside Pakistan. This transformative initiative holds the potential to not only stimulate the region in terms of economy but also contribute to the overall well-being of the Pakistani population. China is anticipated to derive benefits from alternative trade and energy routes, alongside convenient connectivity to the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Consequently, it represents a complex initiative which grants China the most direct entry point to the Indian Ocean connecting to the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Moreover, it serves to foster the development, interconnection, and integration of regional economies and markets, while solidifying Pakistan's position as a crucial participant in the BRI. Additionally, the CPEC provides to China a reliable economic passage in the event of any potential conflicts arising in the South China Sea (Anwar et al., 2022).

Pakistan is presently grappling with a multitude of social, economic, and environmental challenges. The prevailing concerns encompass poverty, insufficient educational opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, security challenges, and worsening unemployment rates. According to officials from both nations, the efficient implementation of CPEC programmes is believed to hold the potential for resolving Pakistan's challenges. On the other hand, China aims to expand its sphere of influence, enhance its global footprint, and safeguard strategic oil and commerce pathways. The CPEC is a comprehensive economic undertaking aimed at enhancing regional connectivity between China and Pakistan, as well as facilitating trade and commercial linkages between China and Europe. Infrastructure encompasses several components such as road networks, electricity systems, manufacturing facilities, industries, and other developmental initiatives (Aman, 2022).

The Western Route of the CPEC is susceptible to security risks due to its trajectory through the politically unstable province of Balochistan. The Baloch separatist parties perceive Chinese investment as a form of resource

exploitation within the region and regard China as an external entity encroaching onto their territory. The outbreak at the Chinese consulate is the testimony to the fact. The establishment of a distinct security division, consisting of 9,000 personnel from the Pakistan Army and 6,000 paramilitary forces, was prompted by the imperative to ensure the safeguarding of the CPEC route. This division was specifically tasked to protect Chinese workers and projects operating within the framework of CPEC. Hence, it can be argued that the existence of the CPEC has the potential to intensify preexisting complaints and foster a surge in separatist sentiments, both inside the province and throughout Pakistan as a whole (Anwar, 2019).

The development of ecosystem in Balochistan presents a multitude of obstacles, encompassing issues such as inadequate governance, a struggling economy, high poverty rates, a pervasive sense of deprivation, limited social capital, gender inequality, water scarcity, underutilised land resources, and insufficient market connections.

The literature review offers a comprehensive analysis of available research pertaining to the subject matter of “CPEC and Inclusive Development of Balochistan.” It develops a solid groundwork, demonstrating that the issues under investigation are widely acknowledged within the society. Furthermore, it is evident that there is a certain level of understanding regarding potential solutions. Nonetheless, the primary challenge is in the effective implementation of these strategies. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis, propose policy recommendations, and make innovative contributions to the ongoing conversation surrounding the attainment of sustainable and equitable development in Balochistan. It specifically focuses on the execution of the CPEC as a means to achieve these goals.

### **CPEC’s Impact on Balochistan’s Inclusive Development**

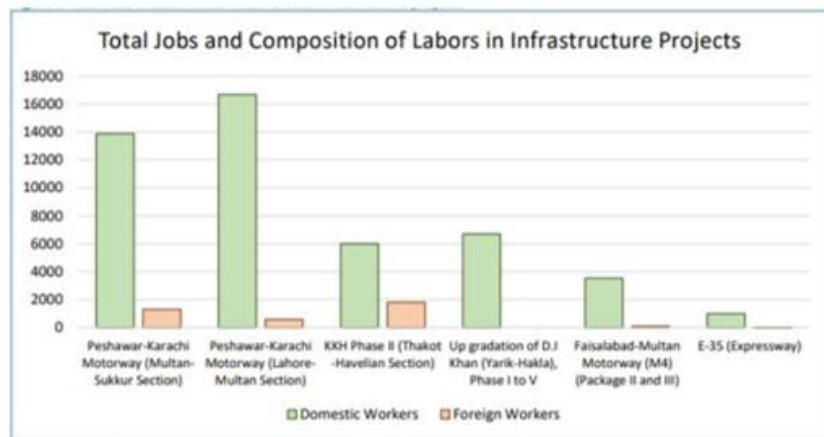
The CPEC, being a transformative endeavour, possesses the capacity to exert a substantial impact on the economic growth, infrastructure development, and social well-being of the province. Nevertheless, a thorough analysis is necessary to assess the influence of this phenomenon on inclusive and sustainable development, taking into account historical discrepancies, regional inequities, and concerns related to human security in the province of Balochistan.

### **Economic Development**

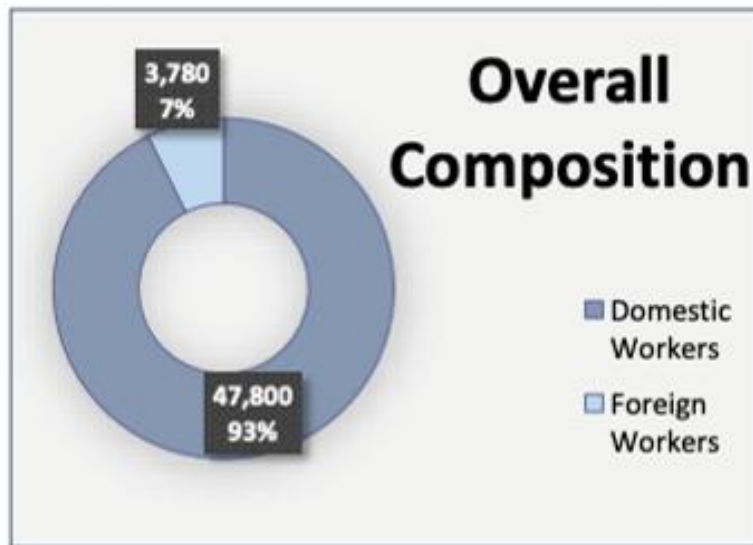
The CPEC possesses the capacity to stimulate economic expansion in the province of Balochistan by attracting foreign direct investments, enhancement of trade connectivity, and elevation of industrialization aligned with SDG 8. The energy and infrastructure initiatives inside the corridor are anticipated to generate employment prospects within the construction and

energy industries. This has the potential to mitigate unemployment rates and enhance the economic circumstances of nearby areas.

According to a report issued by Gwadar Pro, the CPEC is projected to yield significant benefits for Pakistan, with a total of 88 projects contributing to the creation of 2.3 million job possibilities by the year 2030 (The CPEC Portal, 2020). Additionally, the report highlights that the implementation of CPEC has already resulted in the generation of over 155,000 employment opportunities for the local population in Pakistan (Global Times, 2023). Another report indicates the work force employed under CPEC in infrastructural projects in which domestic workers account 93% of the total work force.



Source: cpec.gov.pk



Source: cpec.gov.pk

### **Transformative Transport Infrastructure Projects Within the CPEC Framework**

One of the primary goals of the CPEC is to facilitate the establishment of an extensive infrastructure system comprising roadways, trains, and seaports. This infrastructure development aims to improve connectivity both within the province of Balochistan and between Balochistan and other regions of Pakistan. Additionally, a notable achievement has been made in the infrastructure domain, with the construction of 809 km of highway and the installation of 886 km of transmission lines (Pakistan Today, 2023).

Similarly, the connection initiatives involve the construction of the 19 km four-lane East Bay Expressway in Gwadar. The ongoing infrastructure projects include the Zhob-Quetta, Kuchlak (N-50), Khuzdar-Basima Road (N-30), Hoshab – Awaran Road Section (M-8), Nokundi-Mashkhel Road, Awaran-Khuzdar Road Section (M-8), Up-gradation of D.I. Khan (Yarik) – Zhob, N-50 Phase-I, Mashkhel-Panjgur Road, and Quetta Mass Transit (Jappa, 2022). Developed infrastructure has the potential to boost the transportation of goods and individuals, stimulate commercial activities, and foster investment in geographically distant regions, thereby fostering equitable development and mitigating regional inequalities.

1.	KKH Phase II (Havelian - Thakot Section)	120
2.	Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur Section)	392
3.	Orange Line Metro Train – Lahore	27
4.	Cross Border Optical Fiber Cable (Khunjrab - Rawalpindi)	820
5.	Pilot Project of Digital Terrestrial Multimedia Broadcast (DTMB)	
6.	Hakla - D.I Khan Motorway	297

Source: CPEC Secretariat, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

#### **Under Construction Projects**

1.	Zhob - Quetta (Kuchlak) (N-50)	305
2.	Khuzdar-Basima Road (N-30)	106
3.	Hoshab - Awaran Road Section (M-8)	146
4.	KKH Alternate Route Shandur - Chitral Road	153
5.	Nokundi-Mashkhel Road	103

Source: CPEC Secretariat, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

#### **In-Pipeline Projects**

1.	Up-gradation and Dualization of ML-1 and establishment of Dry Port near Havelian	1733
2.	Up-gradation of D.I.Khan (Yarik) - Zhob, N-50 Phase-I	235
3.	KKH Alternative Route Gilgit-Shandur Road	213
4.	Realignment of KKH Phase-I Thakot - Raikot Section	250
5.	Peshawar - D.I.Khan Motorway	360
6.	Awaran - Khuzdar Road Section (M-8)	168
7.	Dir Expressway	29.6
8.	DTMB-A (Digitalize the existing three sites of PTV)	

Source: CPEC Secretariat, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

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### Long Term Projects

1.	Mirpur-Muzaffarabad-Mansehra Road	200
2.	Karachi Circular Railway	43
3.	Mashkhel - Pangur Road	200
4.	Quetta Mass Transit	
5.	Greater Peshawar Region Mass Transit	

Source: CPEC Secretariat, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives

### Energy Resources in Balochistan

Balochistan, equipped with abundant natural resources such as coal, gas, and minerals are of vital significance for the economic well-being of Pakistan. Based on an estimation, a significant portion of Pakistan's proved gas reserves, approximately 19 trillion cubic feet (tcf), is situated in the province of Balochistan, out of the country's total estimated reserves of 25.1 tcf (Tribune, 2022). Based on international studies, it has been determined that Balochistan possesses an estimated 6 trillion barrels of oil reserves, which are distributed throughout onshore and offshore areas (Balochistan Voices, 2016). In addition, the province is endowed with the ninth-largest shale gas deposits globally, located along its coastal stretch.

Stated in a detailed investigation conducted by the World Bank, it has been determined that Balochistan exhibits the highest levels of solar radiation in comparison to other regions within Pakistan. This is evident by the yearly solar radiation average reaching approximately 5.9-6.2 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> /day in the

province. About 40 percent of the geographical surface of Balochistan is directly exposed to the sun, with a potential of over 6 kWh/ sqm per day. The province exhibits a yearly average sunlight duration ranging from 8 to 8.5 hours, accompanied by an average daily global insolation of 19 to 20 MJ/m<sup>2</sup>/day. The figures represent some of the greatest levels of solar energy potential found globally. Moreover, Balochistan exhibits a notable prevalence of elevated wind velocities. Pakistan possesses significant potential for wind energy particularly, in the southern parts of Balochistan. The technical capacity for wind power is substantial along the extensive 1,000 km coastline, where wind speeds consistently vary between 7 and 8 m/s. According to estimates, the potential annual capacity for wind energy is 122.6 GW, which surpasses the present power generation level of the country by more than twofold (Board of Investment and Trade, 2021).

### **CPEC's Transformative Energy and Infrastructure Projects**

The CPEC is actively engaged in the domain of infrastructure and energy development, undertaking a bold endeavor to facilitate a range of crucial initiatives with the objective of augmenting Pakistan's power generation capabilities, harnessing renewable energy resources, and expanding connectivity. The aforementioned projects comprise a wide array of activities, comprising coal-fired power plants, wind farms, solar parks, and hydroelectric facilities. These initiatives not only provide a substantial contribution to Pakistan's energy requirements but also drive economic development and enhance the country's industrial and technological framework.

Given below is a comprehensive overview of the notable projects that have been successfully completed.

1. 1320MW Sahiwal Coal-fired Power Plant
  2. 1320MW Coal-fired Power Plant at Port Qasim Karachi
  3. 1320MW China Hub Coal Power Project, Hub Balochistan
  4. 660MW Engro Thar Coal Power Project
  5. 1000MW Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park (Bahawalpur)
  6. 50 MW Hydro China Dawood Wind Farm, Gharo, Thatta
  7. 100MW UEP Wind Farm, Jhampir, Thatta
  8. 50MW Sachal Wind Farm, Jhampir, Thatta
  9. 100MW Three Gorges Second and Third Wind Power Project
  10. Matiari to Lahore ±660 KV HVDC Transmission Line Project
  11. 720MW Karot Hydropower Project, AJK/Punjab
  12. 330MW HUBCO Thar Coal Power Project (Thar Energy)
  13. 1320MW SSRL Thar Coal Block-I 7.8 mtpa & Power Plant (2×660MW) (Shanghai Electric)
  14. 330MW HUBCO Thal Nova Thar Coal Power Project
- The ongoing projects, with a combined capacity of 1184 MW, include:

1. 884MW Suki Kinari Hydropower Project, KP
2. 300MW Coal-Fired Power Project at Gwadar

Meanwhile, there are also 3244 MW projects currently under consideration:

1. 1124MW Kohala Hydropower Project, AJK
2. 700.7MW Azad Pattan Hydropower Project, AJK/Punjab
3. 1320 MW Thar Mine Mouth Oracle Power Plant & surface mine
4. 50MW Cacho Wind Power Project
5. 50MW Western Energy (Pvt.) Ltd. Wind Power Project

**Source: “Energy Projects Under CPEC”, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives**

In Gwadar, the energy initiatives encompass a 320megawatt China Hub Coal Power Project and a 300megawatt Coal-Fired Power Project. A total of over 6,000 megawatts of electricity has been successfully added into the national grid, marking a significant milestone in the energy sector of Pakistan.

Nevertheless, the CPEC encounters various hurdles and issues. The pathway traverses Balochistan, a province abundant in resources and characterised by a historical backdrop of ethnic grievances and political instability. Its practicality and functionality are hindered by the safety and security concerns primarily due to the terrorist acts to sabotage the project.

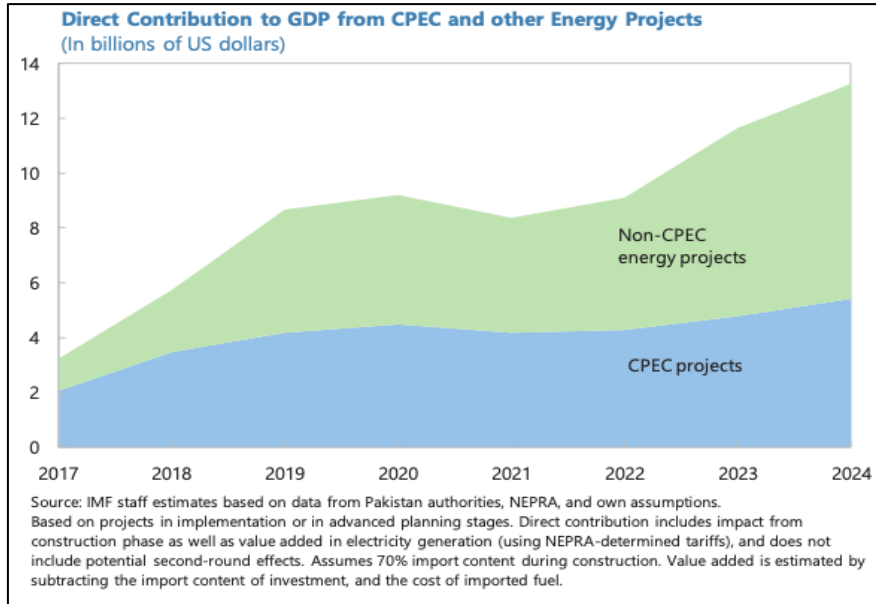
There are also apprehensions regarding the conditions of loans provided to Pakistan by China including concerns about the transparency of financial aspects attached to the project. The issues are genuine as they impact the sustainability of Pakistan’s debt. According to the latest records, the external debt of Pakistan has reached at \$133.5 billion in September 2024. One third of this amount which is more than \$30 billion, is owed to China (Hussain, 2023).

Despite of the apprehensions and concerns, the dedication of both Pakistan and China to achieve substantial and far-reaching outcome associated with CPEC is maintained. The project is aimed at effectively utilising these resources to address Pakistan’s energy requirements and stimulate its economic growth. By using its resources, Balochistan has the potential to significantly contribute to Pakistan’s energy security and economic growth, while promoting inclusive and sustainable development throughout the province aligned with SDG-7. CPEC is also likely to boost GDP through its energy projects.

### **Share in Human Capital Development**

Under the CPEC projects, the development in the education sector and in human capital is expected to elevate in the province of Balochistan. The human security model also ensures human development through focused and

human centered approach by establishing institutes and offering scholarships for the well-being of local communities.



Under CPEC, the implementation of vocational training institutes and skill development programmes have the potential to equip local communities with the essential skills and knowledge required to actively engage in the labour market and capitalise the economic prospects accompanying the CPEC-affiliated projects. The federal government of Pakistan is making investments in these specific sectors to promote the welfare of local communities. Education and professional development are currently receiving significant attention, leading to the reinstatement of various scholarship programmes. These programmes include scholarships specifically designed for the students of Gwadar, the Coastal Regions Higher Education Scholarship Programme, as well as the Master Leading to PhD Scholarships Program (Indigenous and Overseas) for the Students of Balochistan (Planning Commission, 2023). Given below is the snapshot of overall education in the province.

Institutions / Categories	Number	Enrollment	Teaching Staf
<b>Primary schools</b>	<b>12,541</b>	<b>453,436</b>	<b>17,987</b>
Male	8,470	239,496	10,280
Female	3,076	166,758	5,224
Co-education	678	-	-
Private	317	47,182	2,483
<b>Middle schools</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>267,307</b>	<b>14,124</b>
Male	868	93,684	5,989
Female	710	88,072	3,970
Co-education	-	-	-
Private	391	85,551	4,165
<b>High schools</b>	<b>1,644</b>	<b>584,255</b>	<b>32,003</b>
Male	738	219,153	13,697
Female	456	164,205	9,728
Co-education	-	-	-
Private	450	200,897	8,578
<b>Inter colleges</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>16,578</b>	<b>1,031</b>
Male	56	11,564	662
Female	32	5,014	369
<b>Degree colleges</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>55,115</b>	<b>1,983</b>
Male	30	38,043	1,378
Female	17	17,072	605
<b>Post Graduate Colleges</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>17,870</b>	<b>557</b>
Male	3	14,380	415
Female	1	3,490	142
<b>Residential colleges</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2,035</b>	<b>145</b>
Male	5	2,035	145
Female	-	-	-
<b>Cadet colleges</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3,430</b>	<b>236</b>
Male	9	2,978	206
Female	2	452	30
<b>Professional colleges</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4,548</b>	<b>1,713</b>
<b>Universities</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39,169</b>	<b>2,303</b>

Source:- Education Department/Organizations

Under CPEC, special attention has been given to the allocation of financial resources to facilitate the establishment or expansion of universities across various regions in Balochistan. Examples include the establishing of Bolan University of Health Sciences in Quetta, the founding of a sub-campus of BUITEMS in Qilla-Saifullah, the inauguration of an NUST Campus in Quetta, the laying foundation of Mir Chakar Khan Rind university in Sibi, the making of a University College in Dera Murad Jamali, the upgrading of SBK University, and the establishing the University of Gwadar. In addition, it is worth noting that Women's University campuses are also being established in the regions of Pishin and Khuzdar. Consequently, there has been a decrease in

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the count of eligible households in Gwadar from 8000 to fewer than 1500 who are awaiting registration with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) (CPEC Secretariat, n.d.).

### **Regional Connectivity and CPEC**

The geographical positioning of Balochistan, serving as a gateway to both the Middle Eastern and the Central Asian Region, amplifies its capacity to function as a prominent regional center for economic activities. The CPEC has the potential to act as a facilitator for the promotion of regional economic integration, hence enhancing trade and investment activities among Pakistan, China, and the bordering states. The integration of Balochistan has the potential to enhance economic diversification and foster inclusive growth, while establishing its significance within the broader regional economic framework (Afzal, 2022).

The potential transformation of the coastal town of Gwadar into a dynamic regional commerce hub is closely tied to the construction of Gwadar Port. This development encompasses the establishment of a seaport, airport, significant road networks coupled with a trade zone. These infrastructural advancements hold the promise of promoting economic growth, and facilitating international trade for the province of Balochistan (Ebrahim, 2021).

The inclusive growth of Balochistan is contingent upon the efficient planning, transparent governance, and proactive measures used to ensure the equitable distribution of economic advantages stemming from the CPEC. Through the identification and resolution of these obstacles, the CPEC has the potential to act as a catalyst for comprehensive economic expansion, advancement in human well-being, and the overall prosperity of the Balochistan region.

### **Challenges Related to Inclusive Development**

The province of Balochistan manifests a wide spectrum of diversity, encompassing both well-established urban areas and geographically isolated regions. This diversity presents a range of challenges and opportunities within the context of the CPEC. The possible focus on urban centers may exacerbate regional disparities, underscoring the importance of targeted investments in underdeveloped regions to foster inclusive economic growth.

There are apprehensions over the potential dominance of non-local trained labour in the workforce as a result of the CPEC, which may impede the employment opportunities for local individuals. Mitigation is the provision of training and development opportunities to empower local individuals with the necessary skills.

The infrastructure projects associated with the CPEC may potentially

require land acquisition, which could lead to the displacing of local people. The use of transparent terrestrial acquisition processes and equitable resettlement strategies is crucial in order to protect the rights of local communities.

Besides, the mitigation of environmental impacts, such as deforestation, necessitates the implementation of robust safeguards and the adoption of sustainable practice to avoid adverse consequences. The preservation of cultural assets necessitates active involvement and participation from the community in decision-making processes.

Additionally, the foreign loans acquired by the CPEC have raised concerns regarding the sustainability of debt. It is imperative to prioritise transparent financing practices and exercise fiscal discipline to address these concerns. It is, therefore, essential to enhance local governance, promote equitable access to decision making process and opportunities for the marginalised communities to mitigate the challenges.

### **A Holistic Approach to Inclusive Development and Human Security**

The development and security in Balochistan require a comprehensive and inclusive approach within the framework of CPEC and human security model. Equitable distribution of benefits can be guaranteed by incorporating the principles of inclusivity into the planning, implementation, and oversight of CPEC. The essential element include:

- To engage local stakeholders and marginalised communities in planning process to address the needs effectively.
- To invest in the infrastructural development to connect the marginalised communities for better education, healthcare and employment opportunities.
- To offer vocational and technical training under the CPEC projects well aligned with industrial needs to enhance job prospects.
- To encourage women participation for economic development through specific initiatives.
- To promote eco-friendly practices in order to safeguard livelihoods and natural resources for sustainable environment.
- Promote human rights and enhance governance to safeguard local rights.
- To implement strong tracking system to assess the impact of the projects and making necessary adjustments according to the ground realities.
- To promote transparency in governance, also to resolve conflicts if they occur to improve the unity among the local community.

By applying the indicators of human security model, the province can harvest maximum benefits transformative and sustainable growth, equitable

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development, and improved human well-being from the CPEC.

### **Sustainable Development and Balochistan's Future: Assessing the Long-term Sustainability of CPEC Projects**

Enduring sustainability of CPEC projects ask for a dedicated adherence to the principles of sustainable development which benefit the present and future cohorts upholding the ecological and sociological coherence of the province. Environmental conservation, preserving the natural resources of Balochistan and protection of biodiversity, and social sustainability are the key to long term resilience of the province and to ensure sustainable development.

The social sustainability in the province can be achieved through addressing the challenge of social inequality by providing enhanced educational opportunities, improved healthcare services and preserving cultural heritage. For sustained economic growth the province requires to foster economic variety, cultivate a skilled workforce, engage the private sector, and maintain transparent governance.

### **Conclusion**

The CPEC, in a nutshell, is a project that holds the potential to significantly impact socio-economic environment of the region, promote inclusiveness and safeguard human well-being. It has the capacity to boost economy, enhance infrastructure and strengthen regional connectivity being an integral component of BRI. Hence it demands to adopt a holistic and inclusive approach of human security to effectively address the challenges and vulnerabilities of the society.

The blend of historical legacy, population composition and geo-political environment of the province require a circumspect approach for its development. The uncertain and turbulent situation in the neighbourhood add into the challenges of the province including the conflicts and Middle East and Afghanistan which demand strategic diplomacy to tackle the challenges.

The functionality of the CPEC necessitates the careful approach towards environmental conservation, social sustainability and active involvement of the local community to address human security concerns i.e., poverty, education, healthcare, and resource access that holds immense significance for the future trajectory of Balochistan and for sustainable development. By applying the human security model and adopting a holistic approach towards addressing the challenges, desired outcome can be achieved.

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