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Gwadar Port-Pakistan as an Axis for Regional Connectivity under CPEC: A Geographer's Perspective

Dr. Azhar Rashid

Deputy Chief Librarian, Punjab University
Library University of the Punjab, Lahore

Email: azhar.rashid74@gmail.com

Dr. Safdar Ali Shirazi

Director/ Professor, Institute of Geography
University of the Punjab Quaid-i-Azam Campus, Lahore Pakistan

Email: shirazi.geog@pu.edu.pk

Abstract

This paper examines the geostrategic and economic significance of Gwadar port. Gwadar port is ideally located on the mouth of Strait of Hormuz near the Persian Gulf which holds 2/3 oil reserves of the world and has capacity to connect more than twenty five countries and at least two continents. Under CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor); Gwadar port has the grandiose potential not only for China as a shortest trade route in the Indian Ocean through Kashgar-Gwadar connectivity but also has embryonic tendency to become the trade hub for Pakistan and regional countries after its completion. International Relations theory of Regionalism has been embedded on the hypothetical framework of this research; How Gwadar port could become the cross junction of oil trade routes, providing shortest trade route of oil trade of and avoiding the Strait of Malacca dilemma for China. Descriptive, analytical and content analysis has been carried out based on qualitative data acquired through secondary resources. The results clearly manifests: Gwadar Port after its blossom could become fate and game changer for Pakistan and region in the economic and strategic perspective. Gwadar port will increase strategic depth and help Pakistan to monitor the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) originating from the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Gwadar port becomes entirely functional under envisaged projects of CPEC; like Kashgar-Gwadar linkages through road, rail, optic fiber, gas and oil pipelines, infrastructural development of docking, dredging capacity of large ship harbor, economic, industrial, trade, exports and processing zones, fishing, tourism, oil refineries installations, expanding bulk cargo capacity of transshipment, construction of vocational training institute, hospitals, hotels and Gwadar airport etc. it has requisite propensity to become the future Abu Dhabi for Pakistan despite of terrorism and other International, regional irritants and challenges.

Key Words: Gwadar port- Strategic and economic significance, CPEC and Regional connectivity through Gwadar port. Strait of Malacca dilemma and Gwadar port.

Introduction

Global politics has been transpiring into new demeanor. The global power shift from west to east has significantly been observed during the last two decades. New blocks are emerging on the global chess board. China is economically growing rapidly with impressive growth rate in comparison with the rest of the world. In the changing architecture of global politics the dynamics of sea power are getting popularity and rife for economic prosperity and commercial robustness of nations and states. Pakistan is a bestowed maritime state with natural ports and harbors on north Arabian Sea astride with vast coastlines.

Gwadar port of Pakistan is a third warm water deep Sea port of Pakistan after Port Qasim and Karachi which is ideally located on the apex of Persian Gulf and on the mouth of Strait of Hormouz in the Indian Ocean. Strait of Hormouz and Persian Gulf clasp jointly 2/3 oil reserves of the world.



Figure. 1. *Gwadar Port*

Gwadar Port is a deep-water port located in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. It is strategically located at the mouth of the Gulf of Oman, on the Arabian Sea. The port has been in operation since 2002, but it has only recently begun to play a major role in regional trade and connectivity. Figure 1 shows the Kashghar connectivity with Gwadar port on the map.

Geographical location of Gwadar Port:

Gwadar is a district of Balochistan Province of Pakistan which contains 12637 Sq. km.(Square Kilometers) of land. Gwadar Port is located at the mouth of the Gulf of Oman, on the Arabian Sea. The location of Gwadar Port gives it the potential to become a major hub for trade and commerce. The port is already connected to the national highway network in Pakistan, and it is planned to be connected to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This will provide the port with access to a large market of consumers and producers.

Research Objectives

- To Study the Strategic Significance of Gwadar Port.
- To explore the economic potentials of Gwadar port of Pakistan; enshrining the economic geography factors.

- To assess the trade embryonic of Gwadar port under CPEC as regional connectivity hub.
- To find out the possible irritants and challenges for the development of the Gwadar port.
- To calculate the geographical significance of the Gwadar port of Pakistan in comparison with the Chahbhar port of Iran.

Research Questions

- How the Strategic significance of the Gwadar port can be increased?
- Why the economic growth of Pakistan is being strapped with the economic geography potential of Gwadar port?
- What is the trade strength of Gwadar port under CPEC and how trade leverage of Gwadar port could be enhanced through Gwadar port regional connectivity?
- What are the possible threats for the development of Gwadar port and how those irritants can be eradicated?
- How geographical significance of Gwadar port of Pakistan is incredible in comparison of Chahbhar port of Iran?

Significance of the Study of Gwadar Port:

Gwadar is a warm water deep Sea port of Pakistan which is ideally located on the mouth of Strait of Hormouz. China has declared Gwadar port as fate Changer, game changer and Crown Jewel in its gigantic strategy of BRI and CPEC. Gwadar port has remarkable potential to provide China as unique maritime oil importing route and approach to the Indian Ocean. As per statistics of OPEC 2017 shows that Middle Eastern region possess 50% of oil reserves of the World. China is a major oil importer of Middle Eastern oil and Gwadar port could be a key stakeholder to cater the Chinese energy needs and interests. Gwadar port will connect Chinese Western province Xinjiang to Indian Ocean through road and rail networks and oil and gas pipelines beneath the flagship projects of China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Development of Gwadar port has embryonic magnitude for China to approach energy rich Middle East for oil and gas imports in the shortest period of six days only; in comparison with current Sea route of Bangladesh-India- Myanmar- economic corridor (BIMEC) through strait of Malacca in approximately 32 days (Shaikh et al, 2016).

China meets approximately 52% of its oil import demands from Middle East. During the year 2015, the oil imports of China were \$134.3bn from which \$69bn imports of oil were from the Middle Eastern countries. It means more than half percent of Chinese oil imports are from Middle East and Gwadar port can serve as gateway and shortest trade route for Chinese oil imports (Rahman and Shurong, 2017).

A content analysis of the literature on Gwadar Port reveals that the following are the main themes that emerge:

- The security implications of Gwadar Port. The port's strategic location also raises security concerns. Some analysts worry that the port could be used by China to project its power into the region or by terrorist groups to launch attacks.
- The port is expected to play a major role in the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The port has been the subject of some controversy, with some analysts expressing concerns about its strategic location and potential security implications.

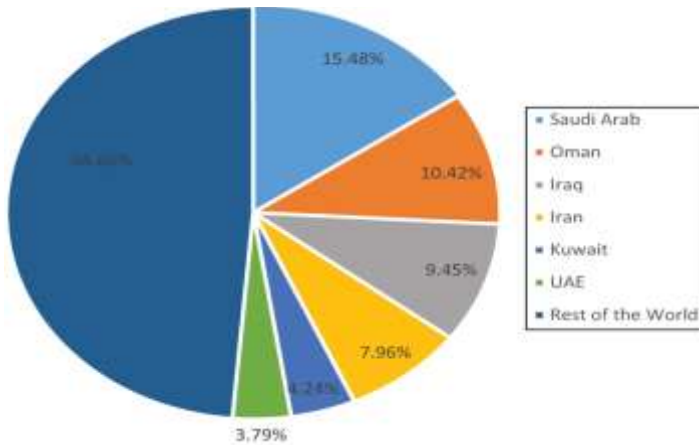


Figure. 2. *World's top exporters*

Figure 2 shows the data regarding oil imports of China from Middle East and rest of the World. China imported 15.48% of oil from Saudi Arabia, 10.42% oil from Oman, 9.45% oil from Iraq, 7.96% from Iran, 4.24% from Kuwait, 3.79% from UAE and 48.66% of oil imported from rest of the World during the year 2015 in order to meet their energy needs.

Theoretical Framework

Despite these challenges, Gwadar Port has the potential to be a major driver of regional economic development. The port could help to boost trade and investment in the region, and it could also help to reduce poverty.

The following are some of the ways in which Gwadar Port can contribute to regionalism:

- It can help to promote economic integration. Gwadar Port can help to connect the economies of the countries in the region. This could lead to increased trade and investment, which would benefit all of the countries involved.
- It can help to reduce conflict. Gwadar Port can help to create jobs and opportunities in the region. This could help to reduce poverty and inequality, which are often the root causes of conflict.
- It can help to promote cooperation. Gwadar Port can be a platform for cooperation between the countries in the region. This could lead to the development of joint projects and initiatives, which would benefit all of the countries involved.

The port is located in a strategically important location, and it has the potential to be a major driver of regional economic development.

The significance of Gwadar port sea power can be asserted and evaluated on the six naval warfare principles of Alfred Thayer Mahan and it is concluded that Gwadar's characteristics are equal at power to Mahan's possible factors. The geographical proximity of Gwadar with Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hourmoz through which more than 65% of world oil trade is carried out makes its geostrategic landscape remarkable and noteworthy. Presently carried out development projects of port and harbours of Gwadar by China through CPEC will enhance consequential image of Gwadar not only for regional trade but also for the rest of the world. A large number of populations will enjoy its economic benefits and always be ready to defend its territory. Government determinations and dedications to develop Gwadar port shows the national character of

government and its people to make this port commercial and trade hub for the domination of Sea by taking military on board to ensure its maritime security is another salient feature of Mahan's Sea power theory.

Mahan has also inscribed the importance of Indian Ocean in following words "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will dominate Asia; the destiny of the world would be decided on its waters."(Mahan, A. T., 2010)

Economic Potential of Gwadar Port:

Gwadar port has lucrative economic potential to connect trade arteries of the world not only for China, Pakistan but also for the rest of whole region as well. In the CPEC ongoing projects Gwadar port could be a game changer and fate changer and has embryonic to boost the economy of Pakistan for decades to come.

Following economic advantages will be yielded from Gwadar port after its development.

1. Creation of New Jobs:

Gwadar port development projects involves millions of dollar infrastructural, commercial and residential ventures involving port development facilities, thus thousands of opportunities are to be created for local, national and foreign workers.

2. Tourism development opportunities:

Pakistan is a blessed country with endowed nature beauty and historical monuments. Gwadar port development has potential to attract tourist from all over the world to visit scenic spots of the country. Tourism sector can strength and augment GDP of Pakistan.

3. Attract investors for mega projects of Gwadar port:

Commercial and residential properties have remarkably increased and significantly appreciated at Gwadar in a short span of period. There are still a lot of potential to get a high rate of return on local and foreign investment in different sectors. Large number of investors are investing in the real estate sector. Saudi Arabia has announced to invest \$10b oil refinery project at Gwadar port (The Express Tribune, 2023). The massive investments of global investors will definitely pump in and strengthen the economy of Pakistan.

4. Strategic depth of Pakistan:

Gwadar due to its strategic location has tendency to transform and increase strategic depth of Pakistan for China and other regional players as well. Strategic depth enhancement will elevate economic benefits and gains.

5. Increase in trade volume and imputes of Pakistan:

Gwadar port after its development will definitely increase and enhance the imports and exports capacity of Pakistan. Pakistan significantly be able to escalate its trade volume with CARs and other regional countries using the roads and other infrastructure developed under BRI and CPEC initiatives. At present Karachi is the only port of Pakistan; Gwadar will be another valuable addition for the port trade of Pakistan encapsulating the economic growth of Pakistan.

6. Magnification of Business opportunities:

Gwadar port development is not a project to connect Gwadar with Kashghar or Xinjiang province of China; it will connect and provide opportunities for less developed provinces of Pakistan and businessman to export their products to China and other countries of the world. The enhancement of business will undoubtedly

increase the GDP of Pakistan. Small and large scale business will be able to expand and grow at a brisk pace after Gwadar port development.

7. Establishment of industrial processing zones:

Although Pakistan is primarily a agricultural country but industrial activities of Gwadar port development will lead the industrialization not only on port but also rest of the parts of the country. Establishment of industrial processing zones at Gwadar port under CPEC for industrial growth and agricultural exports will significantly strengthen the economy of Pakistan (Ikram, 2018). The economic significance of Gwadar port is only going to increase in the future. As the port continues to develop, it is expected to generate even more economic benefits for Pakistan.

Strategic significance of Gwadar port:

It is a pertinent fact that economic development of states is directly linked with the maritime security of states. Historically and even in the contemporary world the significance of maritime routes is advent. The majority of world trade still passes through maritime passages and routes. Gwadar port development projects under CPEC is anticipated to increase maritime security both for China and Pakistan and enhance trade traffic flow eventually (Chang & Khan, 2019). The mounting concern of India in the Indian Ocean has hammered certain challenges for the security of the Gwadar port. Pakistan Navy in collaboration and cooperation of China is working on three dimensions which includes; security of Gwadar port, vessels security and security of sea lanes by fetching law enforcement agencies, deploying security guards, enhancing maritime awareness in the region and littoral exercises. In order to topple the security challenges for the development of Gwadar port; Pakistan Navy has started the strategic mission in the name of special task force-88 (The Value walk, 2017).

The strategic significance of Gwadar Port for Pakistan and China is as follows:

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a major initiative that is being implemented to develop Gwadar Port. The CPEC is a \$62 billion project that includes the construction of roads, railways, and pipelines. The CPEC is expected to boost the economies of both Pakistan and China. The strategic significance of Gwadar Port is likely to continue to increase in the years to come. The port is a key part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, and it is also seen as a potential base for China's navy. The future of Gwadar Port will be closely linked to the future of China-Pakistan relations. Figure 3 shows the regional connectivity of Gwadar port in the prism of regionalism theory.

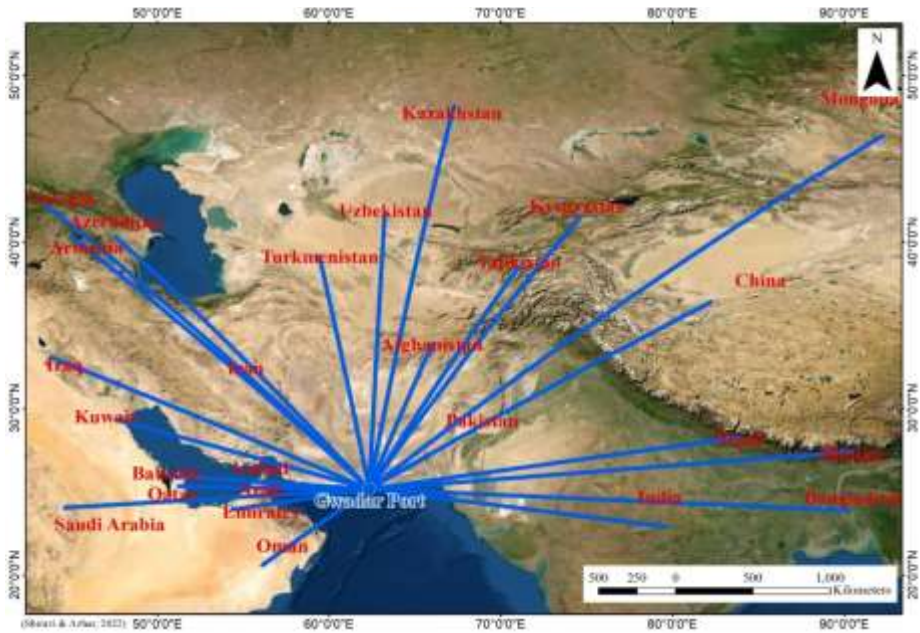


Figure. 3. Geographic location of Gwadar Port

Gwadar development Projects under CPEC:

Gwadar has great potential for trade, economic activities and to cater the exports, imports of China, Central Asia, Middle East, Afghanistan, Iran and rest of the regional countries as well. CPEC contains unveiled plans for the development of Gwadar city and port and to make it international hub of economic and trade activities. Construction of international airport at Gwadar, construction of 300 MW power plant, development of free trade zone, industrial park, processing zones, mineral economic zones and development of Gwadar city with estimated amount of Rs.25 billion by GDA are a few glimpses of Gwadar development project under CPEC. Table 4.4 shows the details of Gwadar development projects under CPEC.

List of Gwadar development projects under CPEC

Name of Project	Est. cost in \$US (M)
Gwadar East-Bay Expressway	140.60
New Gwadar International Airport	230.00
Construction of Breakwaters	123.00
Dredging of berthing areas & channels	27.00
Development of Free Zone	32
Necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution	130.00
Pak China Friendship Hospital	100
Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar	10.00
Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan	

Bao Steel Park, petrochemicals, stainless steel and other industries in Gwadar
Development of Gwadar University (Social Sector Development)

Upgradation and development of fishing,

boat making and maintenance services to protect and promote livelihoods

of local population (Source: [www. http://cpec.gov.pk/gwader](http://cpec.gov.pk/gwader))

Gwadar Port is of utmost significance under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative. Its location near the Arabian Sea's opening gives ships quick and easy access to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. This port provides a quicker path for ships to reach the markets of Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond because of its deep water and ability to handle huge vessels.

Some of the key significances of Gwadar Port under CPEC:

- It will provide China with a strategic alternative to the Straits of Malacca. The Straits of Malacca are a chokepoint in the South China Sea that are heavily congested and vulnerable to piracy. Gwadar Port would give China a direct route to the Indian Ocean that bypasses the Straits of Malacca.
- It will help to boost trade and economic cooperation between China and Pakistan. Gwadar Port will provide a gateway for Chinese goods to enter the South Asian market, and it will also facilitate the export of Pakistani goods to China.
- It will help to develop the Makran region of Pakistan. Gwadar Port is located in the Makran region of Pakistan, which is a relatively underdeveloped region. The development of Gwadar Port will help to bring economic development to this region and improve the lives of the people who live there.
- It will enhance regional connectivity. Gwadar Port will be a major hub for regional connectivity, linking China, Pakistan, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This will help to promote trade and economic cooperation between these regions. Overall, Gwadar Port is a strategically important asset that has the potential to play a major role in the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the region as a whole.



Figure. 4. Boundaries of Gwadar Port

The significance of Gwadar for China is multifarious in nature. Firstly China is the world biggest oil importer and its imports are being carried out through Strait of Malacca and this sea route is approximately 12,000 km long. Gwadar-Kashghar connectivity will reduce the distance to 3,000 km from Xinjiang to Gwadar and safeguard its energy supplies. The vulnerability of energy ships of China through Malacca can cause the “Malacca Dilemma” for its oil supplies and China is fully aware of the fact. The energy imports of China through Gwadar port would be more secure and economically more feasible as an alternative sea route. Gwadar port development will also improve the access of western China and it will complement the “western development Plan (Ahmad, 2015). Figure 4 shows the distance of Gwadar from Kashghar and present energy import route of China through Strait of Malacca.

Comparison of Gwadar port of Pakistan with Chahbhar Port of Iran

Feature	Gwadar Port	Chahbhar Port
Location	Balochistan, Pakistan	Hormozgan Provinc, Iran
Size	4.3 square kilometers	2.6 square kilometers
Capacity	200 million tons per year	100 million tons per year
Connectivity	Connected to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)S	Connected to the North-South Corridor
Strategic importance	Provides China with access to the Arabian Sea	Provides Iran with access to the Persian Gulf



Figure. 5. Chahbahar Port and Gwadar Port

The development of both ports is likely to have a significant impact on the regional economy. Gwadar Port is expected to boost economic growth in Pakistan and the wider region. Chahbhar Port is expected to boost economic growth in Iran and the wider region.

The development of Chahbhar port was started by India in order to counter the presence of China in the Arabian Sea because China is developing the Gwadar port which has less than 100 nautical miles distance by road from Chahbhar port. The Indian Minister of External Affairs Ms. Sushma Swaraj has asserted her views after making the Chahbhar port functional by taking first shipment of 1.1 million of wheat from India to Afghanistan through Chahbhar port in October, 2017 as

“That the shipment would spur an unhindered flow of commerce and trade throughout the region. I believe that this is the starting point of our journey to realize the full spectrum of connectivity from culture to commerce, from traditions to technology, from investments to IT, from services to strategy and from people to politics” (The Maritime Executive, 2017).

India is developing the Chahbhar port of Iran for its trade, business and investment flows to Iran and neighboring states by passing Pakistan. A Trilateral agreement has been signed by India, Iran and Afghanistan for Transport and Transit Corridor through Chahbhar port and India will invest \$ 500 million besides the \$ 150 million credit investment from Exim Bank. The two berths of Chahbhar port will be equipped and become operational with initial investment of \$ 85.21 million with annual \$ 22.95 million revenue expenditure for 10 years lease in Phase I. After completion of 10 years the ownership of the equipment will be transferred to Iran as per conditions of the MoU signed. Chahbhar port is situated outside of Strait of Hormuz on Makran Coast and Gulf of Oman of Baluchistan and Sistan province of Iran. It will serve as gateway to Russian and Europe as an alternative of land sea route. It will be a multipurpose port with cargo terminal and container terminal facilities. “Chahbhar port once completed will open numerous geopolitical and Economic opportunities for India. It will lead to not only increasing India’s leverage in Afghanistan but will also establish its strategic presence in the region” (Sodhi, 2015:4).

There is a possibility that China may use Gwadar port for military purposes and development of Chahbhar port will protect the Indian naval interests in the region. “Economically, India will achieve many strategic gains through utilizing the Iranian port of Chabahar”(Leila, 2016:102). It could also counter the Chinese ubiquitous influence for infrastructure development of Pakistan and the entire region. The cost of Indian trade through Pakistan to Afghanistan will be reduced and it could circumvent the current hold of Pakistan on the geostrategic sway of Afghanistan. As Afghanistan nodal location to provide access to west, south and Central Asia and Chahbhar port development will make Afghanistan a unique hub of regional economic activity. As per US Geological Survey department statistics reveals that Afghanistan contains gold mines of 2.2 billion tons of iron ore, 60 million tons of copper and 1.4 million tons of rare earth elements. India is already investing \$ 11 billion for extracting of Hajigak mines of iron ore. The Chahbhar port development project will be an asset for Indian investments (Paladhi, 2015).

Irritants and Challenges for the Development of Gwadar port:

The development of Gwadar Port is a complex and challenging undertaking. However, the potential benefits of the project are significant. The port could become a major economic driver for Pakistan, and it could also help to improve the connectivity of the region.

The internal security situation of Pakistan is becoming a biggest challenge for the projects of CPEC and Gwadar port development. Pakistan is fighting against terrorism internally since the 9/11 incident as a non NATO ally of US. The law and order threats in tribal areas of Pakistan, Karachi violence and insurgency in Baluchistan are posing great irritants for Gwadar port envisaged projects (Rashid, 2018).

Gwadar port and Regional Connectivity with CARs:

Gwadar port with its tremendous economic spinoffs, it has potential to emerge as gateway for Central Asia and China and hoped to usher in the prosperity of the region. Besides the geostrategic importance of Gwadr it will serve as the cornerstone for the economic development of Baluchistan and Pakistan. It can serve as mother port of Pakistan providing junction of traditional trade routes opposite to Strait of Hormuz and has tendency to change the landscape of the region. Chinese ambitious involvement for the construction of port will help china to connect under developed regions of western China to energy rich Persian Gulf and will increase its Maritime power (Rashid, A., 2018).

Gwadar Port has the potential to serve as a hub for trade between the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Afghanistan. The CARs are landlocked countries, and Gwadar Port would provide them with a much-needed outlet to the sea. The port would also reduce the distance that goods have to travel from the CARs to other markets in the region. Gwadar Port could also play a role in regional connectivity. The port is located on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is a major infrastructure project that is connecting China and Pakistan. The CPEC includes a road and rail link between Gwadar Port and Kashgar in China. This link would provide a new route for trade between China and the Middle East, and it would also help to connect the CARs to the global economy.

The geostrategic strength of Gwadar port of Pakistan is significant not only for strong economic well-being of Pakistan, China but also for the rest of the Asian region as well. Improvement of regional infrastructure, trade and establish linkages among different regions and continents are main purposes of CPEC. Gwadar port development projects under CPEC have provided Central Asian energy rich region an efficient opportunity to excess consumer markets for oil and gas exports. The developments of trade zones of Gwadar will definitely ameliorate trade of trade of Asia (Nazir, H.,2021).

Proposed Railway line project to connect Kashghar to Gwadar worth of \$58 Billion:

Under BRI and CPEC envisaged projects; a feasibility study for Kashghar- Gwadar railway line project has been commenced by a Chinese government commission. This is a proposed railway line project containing massive investments worth of \$58 billion from China. This project will increase the geopolitical significance of Gwadar port of Pakistan and revolutionize the energy trade of China. It is an approximately 3000 km long railway proposed project which will start from Kashghar a part of western province, Xinjiang of China through Gilghat Baltistan of Pakistan and to Gwadar port of Baluchistan situated on the mouth of Strait of Hourmouz in the Arabian Sea (Jamal, 2023).

Benefits of Kasghar- Gwadar Railway line Project:

This project will make easier to transport goods between China, Pakistan and rest of the region. It will cater and facilitate the Chinese exports to Middle East, Europe and other parts of the world and will reduce the dependency of China on the Strait of Malacca, which contain most vulnerable blockades and chokepoints for Chinese trade. Project will connect landlocked provinces of Pakistan with Arabian Sea and is expected; that numerous jobs will be created through this project which will ultimately stimulate the economic growth of Pakistan (The Diplomat, 2023).

Challenges for Kasghar- Gwadar Railway line Project:

Kashghar- Gwadar railway line project is still in the planning stages however Pakistan and China both government are determined to make it a success story. As far as the

challenges for Kashghar- Gwadar railway line project are concerned; they are manifold in nature. One major challenge is unrest of Baluchistan, second one is the mountain terrain which this project have to cross and third one is political instability of Pakistan. Despite of all the challenges both governments are negotiating and in the process of finance agreements for the construction of this Kashghar- Gwadar railway line project for making it a reality.

Conclusions

It is concluded Pakistan's location is such that it lies at a place where half of the world lies. India, South Asia and China are on one side and on the other side Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asian republics encompassing almost 3 billion population of the world is in this region.

Pakistan has the idiosyncratic geography which is not so much in the east and west but also in north and south. So the entire shape of the Pakistan is geographically important not only in Asia but also in the world. Pakistan's unique economic significance comes from three dimensions which make it geo-strategically important. Pakistan has a unique geographical whereabouts. Due to the geostrategic position of Pakistan, China accords top Priority to Pakistan in its foreign policy as similar United States entrust to the Great Britain in its development. Pakistan should use its geostrategic worth into geo-economics power by taking the advantages of Chinese assistance in Gwadar port development and trade development expertise.

The geo-strategic and geo-political location of Pakistan makes it a hub of regional geo-economics in terms of connectivity, in terms of trade and in terms of access to other countries. Pakistan has the amazing geo-strategic location because it is the pivot of three regions; which are China, South Asia and Central Asia.

Gwadar is considered as a strategic point and strength of Pakistan. The efficiency of Gwadar in terms of transport, trade and economic ends to the Middle East, Europe and Asia Pacific is significant. The economic importance of Gwadar for Central Asia, Russia, and China is unprecedented because it is connecting the energy basins of the world with the world manufacturing base .China as an economic base is also getting access to the sea-lanes which come through Gwadar of Pakistan.

Gwadar is not a straitjacket geostrategic port or not the part of so called String of Pearls but now it has become the part of gigantic OBOR initiatives which will open the economic geography blocked and unused arteries linking Asia, Europe and Africa. The corridor can only be successful by increasing cross border connectivity and engaging business and investors' communities.

It is identified in the study that Gwadar port holds immense potential to translate Pakistan into a regional trading hub for merchandise trade of energy and regional connectivity. Similar patterns of Suez Canal opening in 1869 to provide the shortest trade route between Europe and Asia, Gwadar could provide shortest trade route to Central Asia, Afghanistan and Western China. Gwadar port can trigger the economic revival of Pakistan generating additional revenue, creating jobs openings, investment, transit trade, establishing industrial processing zone, energy plants, fishing, fruits and vegetable exports and real estate sector promotion. Presently it is not possible to calculate the actual trade and economic advantages of CPEC, Gwadar port and regional integration unless it becomes completely functional but estimation could be asserted.

It is concluded that Gwadar is a shortest international trade route for China due to its distance from Xinjiang which is 2,500 km while Xinjiang eastern Seaboards distance is about 4,500 km. The anticipated trade potential for Pakistan from Gwadar port is about \$ 60 billion per year. "The expected flow of 10-15 million tons of Central Asian trade and much more than this from Xinjiang would generate millions of dollars per year for

Pakistan in the form of Various taxes, fees, levies and service charges”(Takreem, 2017, p. 339).

The construction of Gwadar port and infrastructural development projects under CPEC will make the Gwadar a sea gateway for Central Asia and China safeguarding regional peace, harmony, stability, political trust, economic integration, creating trade and investment opportunities, energy cooperation, civilizational and cultural adherence advocating tolerance and facilitating the anti-terrorism cooperation for shared mutual interests of the region (Youkang, 2016).

It is concluded that to become the regional vital trade hub due to its geopolitical and geostrategic location in the Indian ocean not only for Pakistan and China but also for central Asia, South Asia, Middle East and Africa as well. In order to avoid the dilemma of strait of Malacia and topper security threats to the oil supplies of China; Gwadar port has protrusive role to play in the CPEC envisaged projects. Gwadar port will eventually replace Malacia and secure oil import routes of China by reducing the transportation cost due to short distance.

US, India and Japan have ensured their maritime security in the India ocean (2015) US has launched anti-piracy operations in the Indian ocean to secure their International ocean trade routes. India has already secured their ocean trade routes by building Waval bases in Adman and Nicobar Islands is India ocean. As China has become the world largest maritime trader despite of insufficient and secure maritime trade routes in comparison with US; China and Japan.

Gwadar port will definilly safeguard and increase the amplitude of Chinese trade by monitoring the Sea Lanes of communications in India ocean (The Guardian, 2016)

CPEC worth of \$62 Billion is a cornerstone project of BRI initiated in 2015 which will connect southwest part of China with Pakistan. The development of Gwadar port under CPEC projects will dramatically enhance the economic security of both Pakistan and China increasing the maritime trade capacity of Pakistan. Gwadar port in superbly located the intersection of 21st Century maritime Sild Road and Silk Road economic belt. The irritants and challenges for the development of Gwadar port are copious in nature. If it becomes completely functional in the coming years it has grandiose potential to become Abu Dhabi for Pakistan.

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