

Preface

Special Economic Corridors facilitate and promote economic growth between countries and regions. These corridors enhance regional connectivity and reduce communication and transportation costs and time. China's establishment of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), comprising six economic corridors, manifests its desire to create an interconnected global economy. As such, the BRI aims to enhance connectivity and promote economic cooperation between China and countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and beyond.

Among the six economic corridors, as the pilot and flagship project of the BRI, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) carries significant importance for China, Pakistan, and the neighboring countries. CPEC involves a series of infrastructure projects, including constructing roads, railways, pipelines, power plants, and other energy and transportation-related developments. The corridor spans from Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Baluchistan province to Khunjerab Pass in northern Pakistan to China's western region of Xinjiang.

After almost ten years of its initiation, academics and policymakers are still critically investigating CPEC and its implications. Despite the burgeoning literature on the topic, many important questions have yet to be answered. As a part of the ongoing academic scrutiny, this book project invited chapters from senior and budding academics and researchers. The multidisciplinary contributions ranging from economy to politics to culture to disaster management to agriculture have critically and scientifically analyzed various aspects of CPEC and its challenges and opportunities.

In this book, we have selected fifteen chapters keeping a balance between different academic fields. The first chapter analyzes the effects of CPEC on trade in terms of transport cost and travel time and compares the existing routes with the new CPEC route. This chapter has some significant findings, suggesting that the transport cost for a 40-foot container between Kashgar and destination ports in the Middle East decreased by about \$1450. For destination ports in Europe, it fell by \$1350. It further suggests that the travel time is reduced by 21 to 24 days for destination ports in the Middle East and 21 days for European destinations.

The second chapter explores the understanding of the Pakistani stakeholders' perception of how CPEC may impact various dimensions of tourism, their level of preparedness to benefit from CPEC's tourism potential, and the policy directions they suggest for planning and negotiating tourism investments with China. The study involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with 22 individuals and groups representing. Their results indicate that the current policy and practices in tourism are primarily influenced by state actors, leaving limited space for non-state entities such as NGOs, local actors, and communities to participate. The chapter suggests that if people-centric development is the goal of any development project, including the CPEC, special measures are needed to promote

meaningful participation of local stakeholders. The study's findings have valuable policy implications for socially acceptable tourism development. They may help policymakers, investors, developers, NGOs, and other stakeholders foster practical ways of mainstreaming them in local tourism development.

The next chapter highlights the importance of the blue economy in the context of CPEC. Blue economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and job creation while preserving the health of ocean ecosystems. It focuses on harnessing marine space for development, energy, biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation, and food security. The chapter suggests that Pakistan's unexplored maritime zone can become a vital asset, especially in CPEC and the Gwadar Port. It has the potential to utilize the country's blue economy for long-term development with the hope of reducing poverty. Furthermore, the chapter recommends that Pakistan should focus on policies that target long-term and inclusive economic development where CPEC can be the tool to benefit the country through establishing local and regional economic zones that support travel and tourism, providing more opportunities for employment for local communities, guaranteeing poverty reduction and social well-being of residents.

CPEC in perspective, Chapter 4 examines Pakistan and China relations. The chapter sheds light on the friendly relations with China that have been the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. The historical relations between China and Pakistan and their evolution in the post-CPEC era remain the major focus of the chapter. It emphasizes the importance of the partnership between the two countries, which has been further strengthened with the initiation of the flagship project, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of President Xi Jinping. The chapter argues that Pak-China relations are faced with many obstacles at regional and global levels.

Chapter 5 of the book explores the relationship between residents' knowledge of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and their perception of tourism development in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. The research investigates the influence of attitudes toward CPEC, CPEC knowledge, and CPEC and Tourism Development on CPEC support from individual residents living in areas along the planned CPEC route. The findings indicate that understanding of CPEC and its potential impact on tourism development leads to a more positive attitude towards CPEC and increased support for the project. However, having a positive attitude does not always equate to support, as other factors, such as economic benefits, also play a role. The study reveals that tourism development mediates CPEC knowledge and CPEC support, emphasizing the importance of promoting tourism initiatives in shaping attitudes towards CPEC. Based on the results, the chapter proposes several policy recommendations to enhance public support for CPEC, including disseminating more information about CPEC's impact on tourism development, promoting the potential benefits of CPEC, prioritizing tourism development initiatives, investing in educational programs, and addressing con-

cerns related to the project.

As the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an important initiative that has the potential to stimulate economic growth in Pakistan and create opportunities for new businesses to start up. Chapter 6 investigates how the CPEC would change the landscape of entrepreneurial activity in the nation. CPEC intends to raise living standards, help reduce poverty, and close the development gap between Pakistan's urban and rural areas. The research highlights the relevance of CPEC for the socio-economic growth of Pakistan as well as its ramifications for the countries adjacent to Pakistan. It examines Pakistan's challenges in terms of entrepreneurship, such as the lack of infrastructure, insecurity, limited educational opportunities, and high unemployment rates. However, the completion of CPEC projects paves the way for new opportunities for business expansion in various sectors, including those dealing with processing dried fruits, hotels, restaurants, tourism, construction, retail, transportation, salt refining, education, and seafood handling. This chapter looks at the business opportunities presented by the various aspects of CPEC. It explores how improvements in infrastructure, particularly transportation networks, make markets accessible to small businesses and improve their connectivity to one another.

The next chapter emphasizes the significance of Pakistan's rising urbanization and energy security. Energy security refers to the availability of energy to meet demand. When demand exceeds supply, this signals energy insecurity. Electricity consumption and the generation gap are energy security proxies in this case. Rapid urbanization and economic growth are significant drivers of energy insecurity in developing countries. Unplanned urbanization may jeopardize the country's energy security. Pakistan's energy infrastructure is in transition and needs to be effectively managed. Pakistan is experiencing an energy crisis because of inadequate infrastructure and poor management. In the last two decades, growth-led energy demand has been increasing, but progress has yet to be made in overcoming the growth-led energy issue. Pakistan can create electricity from solar energy of approximately 100,000 MW. China has made incredible strides in renewable energy, and electricity generation from renewable energy resources is rapidly rising. These green growth energy sources could significantly contribute to China's economic growth. Pakistan requires foreign investment, and China may be interested.

As business relationships and people-to-people contacts between China and Pakistan steadily increased with the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, one arena that has yet to be given substantial attention in the academic discourse is the cross-cultural challenges and associated issues between the two disparate cultures. Chapter 8 examines the two cultures from a theoretical and empirical standpoint. The study aims to compare the two cultures, highlighting their differences, challenges, and similarities. It argues that the success and smooth functioning of the relationships between the two nations depend not only on the political clichés and bilateral cooperation in economic, industrial, and diplomatic spheres

but also on understanding the cultural differences and similarities between the two countries. It is argued that recognizing cultural differences is the first step in reducing the difficulties of dealing with these two disparate cultures. The study further contends that despite some noticeable differences and unique aspects in the cultures of China and Pakistan, there are also commonalities that can be well utilized to cultivate mutual acceptance and bring the two nations closer to each other.

The Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan has remained at the crossroads of great power politics for centuries. Geopolitical developments at the turn of the twenty-first century and the global shift in power dynamics in the context of the Asian Century have revitalized the geostrategic significance of the historical and contemporary perspective. The Chinese BRI and CPEC envision regional integration as a significant regional role. Gilgit-Baltistan, a geographical pivot in the High Asian region, has re-emerged as a lynchpin for regional and extra-regional integration. The region is situated at the junction of Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia through the ancient Chinese Silk Route. It can play a significant role in attaining the goals. Besides being an intersection since ancient times, Gilgit-Baltistan has been strategically instrumental as a transit route, connecting adjoining and bordering states of Afghanistan, China, and India. Against this backdrop, Chapter 9 of the book analyzes the geopolitical and economic significance of Gilgit-Baltistan and its geostrategic placement amidst the region's ongoing geopolitical and geo-economic development. Notwithstanding its controversial political status, the importance of Gilgit Baltistan demands considerable analysis, more importantly, because it is located at the intersection of regional crossroads among Asia's three emerging regional economies. This research argues that with all its potential, Gilgit-Baltistan is a vital arena for consolidating regional integration that can dampen the growing animosity amongst the competing regional powers.

As noted at the onset, CPEC could enhance energy infrastructure, industrial growth, and transportation infrastructure and drastically alter Pakistan's economic situation. Chapter 10 outlines the economic implications, mostly the positives of CPEC in Pakistan. The chapter highlights the importance of the deep-sea Gwadar Port-- Pakistan's critical maritime connection to the world economy, attracting foreign capital and promoting trade. The industrial zones built along the CPEC route are anticipated to draw global business and support domestic businesses, generating employment opportunities and boosting Pakistan's manufacturing capacity. It is further suggested that the country's total economic growth can be improved through more foreign direct investment and technology transfer, encouraging innovation and boosting productivity. The project seeks to increase bilateral trade between China and Pakistan by removing trade barriers and enhancing logistics. As the project is significant for the economic potential it provides for Pakistan, the chapter suggests that without planning, good governance, and resolving conflicts, getting the maximum out of CPEC would not be easy.

By enacting reasonable legislation, establishing an atmosphere welcoming to investors, and encouraging inclusive growth, Pakistan can fully benefit from the economic advantages of this game-changing initiative.

Since China's reform and opening up, its economic strength has continuously improved, and its global importance has grown. Consequently, there has been a surge in interest in learning the Chinese language worldwide. In foreign countries, numerous Chinese language training institutions have been established. Confucius Institutes have been set up in colleges and universities to promote cultural exchange and help students understand and learn about Chinese culture. Within China, an increasing number of international students can be observed studying in higher education institutions, contributing to the rising popularity of learning Chinese. Chapter 11 explores the impact of Chinese learning motivation on international students' Chinese proficiency. The authors of the chapter surveyed Pakistani students studying Chinese in China. It delves into the influence of Chinese learning motivation on their language acquisition, aiming to shed light on Chinese global significance. The suggestions encompass overcoming psychological barriers during the learning process, mastering Chinese learning methods, making Chinese friends, and integrating into Chinese social life. Moreover, Chinese teachers are advised to organize engaging classes, understand the psychology of learning, and actively participate in teacher training courses. Textbook compilation and selection should adhere to language cognitive laws, align with government guidelines, and maintain simplicity. The chapter also discusses factors influencing Pakistani international students' motivation to study Chinese in other countries.

The China-Pakistan relationship has evolved into a multifaceted partnership encompassing various sectors, including education, culture, and bilateral cooperation. Chapter 12 highlights the critical aspects of the educational, cultural, and bilateral collaboration between China and Pakistan and their significance. The authors argue that the academic cooperation between China and Pakistan has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years. China actively supports Pakistan's educational development through scholarships, exchange programs, and the establishment of educational institutions. This collaboration enhances academic opportunities for Pakistani students and facilitates the transfer of knowledge, expertise, and technological advancements between the two countries. Cultural exchange is integral to the China-Pakistan relationship, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation. Both nations actively promote cultural exchanges, including art exhibitions, film festivals, and cultural performances. These initiatives deepen cultural ties, promote people-to-people connectivity, and foster a sense of shared heritage. The authors have concluded that the China-Pakistan educational, cultural, and bilateral cooperation demonstrates the depth and breadth of their relationship. They have forged a robust partnership encompassing various sectors by promoting knowledge exchange, cultural understanding, and economic collaboration. This collaboration is poised to continue fostering mutual benefits,

enhancing regional connectivity, and strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two nations.

Chapter 13 examines the global perspectives on the CPEC. The authors have tried to explore how different countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa can benefit from CPEC. They suggest CPEC be a positive-sum game for all the countries willing to become a party in it.

Considering the multidisciplinary nature of the book, we have included an important chapter on food and agriculture. The chapter draws lessons from Chinese successes in the cultivation of 'Morels.' Morels are high-priced wild edible commodities of immense nutritional, health, and economic significance. They have been a focus of scientific research for years around the globe, and their cultivation has been successful in China recently. The chapters emphasize the cultivation of Morels as it is a scarce seasonal variety of mushrooms mainly found in Gilgit-Baltistan, Swat, and Kashmir of Pakistan and Kashmir. Its economic and medicinal values make it a viable option for sustainable food security and income generation. Providing food and nutritional security for Gilgit-Baltistan's expanding population is challenging. With less than one Kanal of farmed land per person, the population is entirely dependent on wheat provided by the government at subsidized rates. Fruits and vegetables are the only sources of revenue, but unfortunately, pre-and post-harvest losses of fruits and vegetables range between 50 and 70 percent. In this situation, cultivating mushrooms becomes a favorable option that can be grown even by landless people. Developing indigenous production technology and producing skilled human resources using Chinese expertise in mushroom technology is essential.

The final chapter highlights the possibility of climate uncertainties and natural hazards along the CPEC route. The Karakoram region of Gilgit-Baltistan, in northern Pakistan, is home to some of the highest mountain peaks in the world. The Karakoram Highway bisects these rugged mountain terrains to make its way from Pakistan to China. This region is one of the highest relief regions in the world, where the difference between the highest and lowest contour sometimes reaches more than 5000 meters. The chapter suggests that many natural processes, like erosion and mass wasting, are at their peak due to high slope inclination and extreme weather conditions. Furthermore, the natural hazards, from landslides to rock falls, debris flow to glacial lake outburst flooding (GLOF), and riverain flooding to cloudburst phenomena, are pervasive. As a way forward, the authors highlight the importance of carrying out Hazard, Vulnerability, Capacity, and Risk Assessment (HVCRA) to cope with these natural hazards. Planning, mapping, mitigations, and using new scientific approaches are essential and can at least minimize the effects of these mountain hazards.

In a nutshell, the contributors to this book have rigorously explored the implications of the CPEC. The chapters contribute to the existing discourse on CPEC and provide an enriching and enlightening analysis. It offers a multifaceted discourse

Preface

on the new regional geopolitics and the evolving global economic order.

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Gilgit
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