



RESEARCH PAPER

Reshaping of Pakistan's Demographic Landscape by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Comprehensive Review of Migration, Labor and Settlement Shifts

¹Najaf Ali, ²Takaaki Nihei and ³Zaheer Ahmed

1. Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Tourism Science, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, 192-0397, Japan
2. Professor, Department of Tourism Science, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, 192-0397, Japan
3. Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Tourism Science, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, 192-0397, Japan

Corresponding Author: ali-najaf1@ed.tmu.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

This study decisively demonstrates how the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has fundamentally reshaped Pakistan's social and demographical landscape. As the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC's extensive infrastructure development, industrialization, and establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have catalyzed profound human geography shifts. Based on a synthesis of policy documents, demographic data, and community-level insights, the analysis confirms large-scale internal shifts, including heightened rural-to-urban and seasonal migration toward new industrial and transport hubs. These changes have driven the rapid growth of semi-urban settlements and new corridor-based urbanization models, while also causing localized rural depopulation. While CPEC fosters regional integration and economic opportunity, the findings underscore critical challenges, notably increasing inter-provincial socio-economic disparities, cultural integration issues in rapidly mixing communities, and severe strains on resources and the environment. The study concludes CPEC acts as a corridor of social and demographic change, not just an economic one, and advocates adopting inclusive urban planning, equitable resource allocation, and cohesive labour market policies to ensure its development contributes to balanced and sustainable national growth.

KEYWORDS CPEC, Demographic Landscape, Labor Markets, Settlement Shifts

Introduction

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stands as a pivotal development in global connectivity and trade routes. Launched in 2013 as a key component of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC is set to link the Western regions of China, particularly Xinjiang, with the Gwadar Port in the Arabian Sea. This corridor, spanning over 3,000 kilometers, encompasses a comprehensive array of infrastructure projects, including highways, railways, pipelines, and energy initiatives (Nadeem et al., 2025; Shah, 2025). Being a flagship BRI project, CPEC would bridge the Western part of China, Xinjiang, and the Gwadar Port in the Arabian Sea, which is more than 3000 kilometers long in terms of highways, railways, pipelines, and energy projects. As a part of the larger vision of transcontinental integration by the Chinese, CPEC can have both economic and geopolitical implications in the connection of landlocked areas of western China with the global market (Ahmed et al., 2025; Ullah, 2024; Muzaffar et al., 2018).

CPEC is not just a strategic project; it is a decisive solution to Pakistan's structural challenges such as energy shortages, infrastructural underdevelopment, and geographical imbalances. The corridor has attracted unprecedented billions of dollars in foreign direct investment, particularly in the energy and transport sectors. CPEC is a game-changer for

industrialization, export enhancement, and job creation, driven by the development of road networks and the establishment of SEZs (Ahmed et al., 2025; Afzal et al., 2025). The corridor has seen foreign direct investment to the tune of billions of dollars, especially in the fields of energy and transport (Wolf, 2019). CPEC has been instrumental in boosting industrialization, enhancing exports, and creating job opportunities by developing road systems, modernizing roads, and establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Researchers claim that the program can boost Pakistan's economy as it becomes more involved in global value chains (Rafiq, 2020; Rahim et al., 2018).

In addition to the economic aspect, CPEC is known to increase strategic connectivity within Pakistan (Khan, 2025). Gwadar Port will be projected as an international shipping point connecting South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, enhancing Pakistan's geostrategic location. Better connectivity, facilitated by CPEC projects, allows trade and enables person-to-person interaction, migration, and labour movement between different regions. This transformation establishes CPEC as more than an economic project; it is a source of profound social and demographic shifts in the human geography of Pakistan (Ali, 2020). The focus on CPEC in literature has been on its economic benefits and geopolitics, whereas not much has been done on the effects of human geography. Human geography dwells on development's spatial, demographic, and cultural aspects, i.e., migration, labour mobility, and settlement shift. The infrastructure projects developed by CPEC are associated with high inflows of labour force and rural-urban migration, as well as the development of new urban centers in the jurisdictions of SEZs and transport corridors. Neglecting these dynamics may lead to disregarding the first-hand experience of the local communities that have direct contact with CPEC projects (Rahman, 2018).

The Migration, Labour, and Settlement Shifts CPEC-led initiatives will transform the demographic situation in Pakistan by redistributing labour and affecting settlement levels (Lu & Iqbal, 2025). With SEZs being constructed, rural populations migrate to the industrial hubs to find employment. In the same measure, better transport corridors ensure inter-provincial migration and increase labour mobility. These changes are, however, also associated with apprehensions of unbalanced advantage, territorial variations, and the danger of societal relocation among populations that are already underprivileged. Migration, labour, and settlement within the CPEC framework are, therefore, crucial areas to be analyzed so that the effects of the whole project on the Pakistani society can be comprehended (Shah, 2025; Fazal et al., 2023).

Literature Review

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an initiative taken under the umbrella concept of "One Belt One Road (Nadeem et al., 2025). This mega project, worth 62 billion dollars, has been invested in only by China, without Pakistani investment. Its prime objective is the regional and continental connectivity of Afro-Eurasia (Hussain et al., 2023). Two major components are the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. This connectivity covers the significant interests of China, including Policy coordination, infrastructure construction (railways and highways), trade, economic and financial integration, and people-to-people contacts and ties (Shafique & Iftikhar, 2017).

According to the official documents, CPEC is a significant infrastructure project that proposes to connect the Gwadar Port in Southwestern Pakistan to China's northwestern region of Xinjiang via a network of highways, railways, and pipelines. It is considered a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and has attracted substantial investments from China (Fazal et al., 2023). CPEC presents complex demographic implications: local communities expect varying economic benefits based on age and social class, with older and more educated respondents anticipating greater economic opportunities (N. Akhtar et al., 2021). The corridor potentially creates employment

opportunities, though challenges remain in developing a skilled workforce, particularly for women (Shamaila Khan et al., 2018).

The demographic composition of any nation encompasses the spatial organization of people and the connection among them and surrounding resources (Qasim et al., 2024). The evidence suggests significant migration dynamics driven by CPEC's infrastructure: Shabnam Gul et al. (2021) indicate SEZs will be established across five provinces, creating new economic opportunities. Ghammaz Husnain et al. (2024) highlight Gwadar as a pivotal node transforming cross-border cooperation and regional development. Muhammad Nadeem et al. (2025) corroborate these findings, noting CPEC's potential to generate new jobs and transform economic prospects, while simultaneously revealing challenges like uneven benefit distribution across regions. The migration patterns include rural-to-urban movement, temporary worker migrations to construction sites, and permanent resettlement around industrial centers.

The evidence demonstrates that CPEC's SEZs offer profound implications: Khan et al. (2020) reveal both static benefits like investment and employment, as well as dynamic outcomes, including infrastructure development, technological upgradation, and institutional reforms. Laraib Javaid et al. (2024) found concrete rural community impacts, with 44% of respondents reporting significant road infrastructure improvements and 40% perceiving SEZs as major rural development drivers. Though most of the literature characterizes CPEC simply as an economic corridor and focuses on the trade, infrastructural, and energy development it entails, the CPEC ramifications go beyond economic development. The construction of roads and railways, and the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) entail exceptional connectivity, a development gradient, labour mobility, and the opening of new settlement areas (Hussain & Ali, 2019). Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are one of the most important components under CPEC. Establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is expected to provide a strong base to boost Pakistan's economic development through industrial growth (Zia et al., 2018).

In the process, new urban areas are created, and rural and urban regions of the country are more deeply integrated. Local cultures are also transformed, and new and different people are introduced to a locality through cross-regional interpersonal relationships, which expose them to new behavioral norms. From this perspective, CPEC is also a social corridor that integrates societies and, more profoundly, alters Pakistan's cultural and demographic relationships (Ali & Rehman, 2020). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a fundamental project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is changing the socio-economic landscape of Pakistan by developing the country's infrastructure, opening new trade routes, and addressing energy deficits (Burfat et al., 2024).

The direct population effects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) include the rapid increase in rural-urban migration in Pakistan. Developing infrastructure, energy projects, and special economic zones (SEZs) provides job opportunities that entice the labour force from rural and semi-urban areas to urban locations (Hussain & Ali, 2019). The trend augments the already existing trends of urbanization, especially in the cities interconnected by corridors like Gwadar, Faisalabad, and Karachi. Researchers claim that although this movement can contribute to improving the level of income, building human capital (Qasim et al., 2024), it also raises questions about overpopulation in cities, slums, and unequal access to basic services (Ullah et al., 2024). Therefore, CPEC can remake the urban environment in Pakistan by increasing the industrial centers' development rate at the cost of rural stability.

CPEC has induced a radical settlement and urban change in Pakistan, with Gwadar being the most notable example that has undergone significant expansion as a small fishing town into a fast-growing port city that has seen it attract migrants throughout the country

(Dikshit, 2025). New settlements have formed along the corridor routes around Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along highways and industrial centers like Faisalabad and Rashakai as part of an alternative model of urbanization that is propagated by corridors, where economic activity and population increase around transport infrastructure instead of centering around traditional metropolitan areas (Rahman, 2018; Abbas et al., 2020). Although these changes provide the opportunity to integrate economically and enhance the development of the regions, they also introduce prominent challenges, such as congestion, slumming, and overloading of the social services, not to mention the cultural integration problems that emerge due to the convergence of various ethnic and linguistic communities (Qureshi, 2020).

Material and Methods

This study employs a rigorous Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, augmented by a Thematic Synthesis, to investigate the profound influence of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Pakistan's social landscape and population distribution. The research design is primarily qualitative and interpretive, focusing on tracing the causal connections between CPEC investments and the observed changes in where and how people live. Given that CPEC is an ongoing and geographically extensive intervention, this systematic approach was essential to consolidate and critically analyze existing scholarly findings, empirical evidence, and official policy documents, thus avoiding collecting new primary data. Data collection involved a systematic search across major academic databases and grey literature, including official CPEC Authority documents, national think tanks, and policy reports published after 2013. The initial phase focused on identifying peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and official data using an iterative search strategy that combined keywords such as "CPEC," "Demography," "Pakistan migration," "labour mobility," "settlement shifts," and "Gwadar development." Sources were critically screened to ensure they explicitly covered the social, demographic, and labour relationships created by the CPEC infrastructure projects, narrowing the focus to literature that addressed the direct people-centric impacts of the corridor. The subsequent phase involved the critical review and thematic synthesis of the selected works.

Results and Discussion

The empirical evidence confirms that CPEC is not merely an infrastructure project but a primary catalyst reshaping Pakistan's socio-spatial configuration. The most significant finding is the observable redistribution of Pakistan's labour force, driven by the massive employment opportunities at Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and transport hubs. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project is a mega project that will impetus economic growth and development in the region under the mega projects.

Table 1

Project type	Total investment	Domestic share %	Domestic share (\$B)
Energy	33.8		
Coal	8.8	20%	1.8
Wind	0.5	20%	0.1
Hydro	4.2	50%	2.1
Solar	1.7	0%	-
Second phase	9.5	20%	1.9
Mining Expenditur	9.0	50%	5.4
Road	5.9	80%	5.7
Rail	3.7	50%	1.8
Mass Transit	1.5	50%	0.3
Gwadar Port	0.7	50%	0.3

Sources: BMA (2015)

Gwadar was the center of the settlement change because of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Gwadar is a small apprehensive town currently being developed as a deep-sea port city, with massive commercial, residential, and industrial facilities (Wolf, 2019; Hatim et al., 2025). Its growth has brought migrants all over Baluchistan and other provinces to form a multi-ethnic and multi-language urban center. Researchers claim that the metamorphosis of Gwadar can be viewed as a general pattern of port-led urbanization, in which infrastructural development leads to the intensive development of settlements and the modification of the socio-economic environment in the area (Markey & West, 2016). Nevertheless, the arrival of foreigners has also led to the growth of concerns in local communities regarding marginalization, distribution of resources, and cultural displacement (Hussain & Ali, 2019).

Table 2
Major Development Projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gwadar

S.No	Project Name	Project objective	Estimated Cost (M\$)
01	Development of Port and Free Zone	To create a backup port industry for Gwadar Port.	300
02	Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan	Creating the vision and guiding strategic objectives for Gwadar City.	04
03	Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar	Creating state-of-the-art vocational and technical training institute in the port city of Gwadar.	10
04	Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar	Eastbay Expressway is the main artery of Gwadar Port through which the entire traffic of the port will flow.	179
05	Pak-China Friendship Hospital	Creating a state-of-the-art medical facility in the port city of Gwadar.	100
06	1.2 MGD Desalination Plant	to supply potable water to Old city area along with GPA requirement.	12.7
07	New Gwadar International Airport	Domestic as well as international airport	230

Source: (CPEC Authority, 2025)

These projects represent the foundational economic and social infrastructure necessary to transform Gwadar into a multi-functional urban center. Their scale and nature establish a potent economic pull factor, directly driving the internal migration and permanent settlement shifts central to this research. As Khan & Magsi (2021) discussed, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project, has further accentuated the resource-driven urbanization in Balochistan. Cities like Gwadar and Quetta have been key nodes in the CPEC framework, emphasizing the province's strategic importance in regional economic connectivity. The corridor has propelled infrastructure development, transforming urban centers into key players in the economic landscape. CPEC and Gilgit Baltistan

CPEC and Gilgit Baltistan

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's impact on Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is particularly critical given the region's sensitive geopolitical status and role as the gateway to the Karakoram Highway (KKH) (Kanwal et al., 2019; Mehmood, 2025). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represents a transformative development for Pakistan that substantially changes Gilgit-Baltistan. This geographic area underwent rapid infrastructure growth after CPEC because it traditionally had restricted access to economic opportunities (Ismail, 2025; Bano & Khayyam, 2018).

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has significantly transformed the economic landscape of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), leading to new employment opportunities, infrastructure expansion, and increased trade activity (Hussain et al., 2025; Abbas et al., 2020). China invested \$46 billion in different projects across Pakistan in CPEC. 4,000 km of new railway networks are being developed from Kashgar to Gwadar, directly impacting trade routes (Hussain et al., 2025). The Government of China allocated \$33 billion to energy

infrastructure, focusing on alleviating Pakistan's energy deficit of over 4,500MW. Moreover, 10,400MW of energy capacity is expected to be developed under the "Early Harvest" projects of CPEC, helping to mitigate the region's energy crisis. Seven SEZs are planned, with one dedicated to Gilgit-Baltistan (Lu & Iqbal, 2025; Nadeem et al., 2025; Ch & Mushtaq, 2025). Five thousand tons of apricots, cherries, and apples are exported annually from GB, but exports remain limited due to high air freight costs. The CPEC road network is expected to reduce transportation costs and increase trade efficiency (Ch & Mushtaq, 2025).

In Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), this colossal financial commitment in infrastructure, energy, and SEZs establishes powerful new economic gravity points, offering opportunities for employment, increased income, and enhanced lifestyles that directly trigger extensive internal migration and restructure local labour demand. This accelerated movement includes specialized seasonal migration, where many relocate to smaller cities during winter for better opportunities and living conditions

New Settlements along the CPEC Route

Outside of Gwadar, CPEC has contributed to developing new settlements along its transport corridors, industrial zones, and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The location of SEZs and the industries they create have also become the causes of population inflows in cities such as Faisalabad, Rashakai, and Dera Ismail Khan (Ali & Rehman, 2020). Correspondingly, cities are appearing around major motorways and railways, where roadside markets, petrol stations, and housing groups offer services to transit communities and workers (Rahman, 2018). Not only do these new settlements transform the demographic geography in Pakistan, but they also bring new socio-spatial inequalities between the corridor and non-corridor areas.

Road Infrastructure and Developmental Projects

China invested vastly in overseas infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Road infrastructure is a vital component of CPEC, which aims to improve land connectivity. Pakistan has dramatically upgraded its infrastructure, potentially expanding its internal and external connectivity. (Zhao et al., 2022). According to officials of the CPEC project, the significant improvement of local transport infrastructure in the shape of highways, motorways, ports, and railway lines will increase the efficiency of transport and business (Rehman et al., 2018). CPEC projects are a game-changer for Pakistan, which consists of multiple other projects, including energy, economic projects, education, and infrastructure development (Kanwal et al., 2018; Khwaja et al., 2018). The already functional Karakorum Highway (KKH) is one of the most important networks that connect Pakistan with China. There are two major road infrastructure development projects in Gilgit-Baltistan. First is the Karakorum Highway Phase 2 to upgrade KKH (Phase 2) from Rawalkot to Islamabad, including constructing the missing road link between Thakot and Havelian with a distance of 440 km. The estimated cost of this project is \$1305 million. The second project is the construction of link roads to connect four areas of Gilgit with the main CPEC (Kanwal et al., 2019). The enhanced connectivity provided by these high-speed road networks drastically reduces travel time and logistical costs, directly facilitating increased inter-provincial labour mobility. This improved accessibility encourages the linear emergence of new economic activities and service settlements along the corridor, stimulating demographic shifts in previously isolated regions.

Regional connectivity, integration, and development prospects

CPEC presents tremendous opportunities for regional connectivity, integration, and balanced growth as it connects the economy of Pakistan further to China, Central Asia, and the Middle East with an integrated set of roads, railways, and Gwadar Port (Markey & West, 2016). Supply chain connectivity will boost trade, cross-border investments, and the role as a regional transit hub, thus diversifying the economy of Pakistan (Rafiq, 2020). Domestically, the corridor can help incorporate other underdeveloped provinces like Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into national and international markets, eliminating

spatial inequalities and promoting inclusive growth in the case of equitable investments (Ali & Rehman, 2020). In addition to this, cross-regional connections could facilitate the social cohesion process by fostering inter-provincial cooperation, cultural interaction, and common development projects. Therefore, CPEC can become a turning point towards a balanced regional growth and stability in the long term, provided that the policy planning is conducted with care and that the resources are allocated equally (Qureshi, 2020).

CPEC Opportunities and Challenges

Despite its significant promise, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) faces several challenges that threaten its goal of promoting regional prosperity. These challenges span economic, political, environmental, and social dimensions, and their successful resolution is vital for ensuring the long-term success and equitable distribution of benefits that CPEC promises. Understanding and addressing these challenges is critical for Pakistan, China, and the broader region to fully realize the transformative potential of CPEC as a tool for regional integration and prosperity (Nadeem et al., 2025).

There are challenges and opportunities for CPEC to contribute to the socio-spatial development of Pakistan. On the one hand, it can increase socio-economic inequality between provinces when those areas that are directly linked to the corridor, like Punjab and Sindh, can receive more investments than the marginal regions like Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, and increase discrepancies among regions (Akhter, 2018; Qadri, Habib, and Salim, 2023). With high urbanization rates and the growth of industries, there are other pressures on the available resources and the environment, such as water shortage, deforestation, and increased transport and energy infrastructure emissions (Rahman, 2018).

Provincial socio-economic inequalities

Among the most hotly debated issues about CPEC is the unequal allocation of the benefits in the provinces of Pakistan. Though Punjab and Sindh, with their more developed industrial complexes and developed structure, stand a chance of gaining more investment and jobs, the peripheral areas, including Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, will risk being marginalized despite having important routes of corridors and strategic positions like Gwadar (Hassan, 2024).

This imbalance supports historical trends of regional inequalities, with the less developed provinces contributing important resources and land but getting very low socio-economic returns. Opponents have noted that in the absence of fair planning, CPEC can create more grievances in already marginalized areas, possibly leading to ethnic tensions and political instability (Rafiq, 2020). In its turn, the supporters opine that, in the case of more inclusive allocation of resources and development projects, CPEC may turn into a tool for diminishing the historical disparities by elevating stagnant areas and making them a part of the national economy (Ali & Rehman, 2020).

Conclusion

This comprehensive review confirms that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has decisively initiated a profound reshaping of Pakistan's demographic landscape, stretching its influence well beyond economic investment. The most significant finding is the observable redistribution of the national labour force, driven by the immense employment demands of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and transport infrastructure. This activity has triggered distinct rural-to-urban and circular migration flows, fundamentally altering population balances near CPEC routes. The result is a unique phenomenon we term corridor-based urbanism, where new growth centers emerge linearly along transport networks, challenging and transforming Pakistan's traditional metropolitan development model.

The demographic shifts are spatially evident in two key areas. First, nodal points like Gwadar have undergone rapid metamorphosis from small towns into multi-ethnic, fast-

growing port cities, establishing a pattern of port-led urbanization. Second, the colossal investment in areas like Gilgit-Baltistan has created powerful new economic gravity points, triggering new patterns of seasonal and internal migration into smaller cities. While CPEC presents enormous opportunities for regional connectivity and poverty alleviation, the influx of diverse populations and concentrated growth simultaneously introduces significant friction. This includes urgent concerns regarding cultural integration in new settlements and the exacerbation of pre-existing inter-provincial socio-economic disparities, which risk uneven benefit distribution.

In light of these findings, CPEC must be understood as a complex socio-spatial phenomenon that introduces both stability and strain. The accelerated infrastructure and industrial activity create severe pressures on natural resources and urban services (waste handling, water supply). Therefore, the success of CPEC will not be measured solely by trade flows or GDP, but by its ability to foster inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development. Future policy must adopt a multi-dimensional approach, prioritizing fair resource allocation, proactive urban governance, and deliberate policies to ensure cultural and social cohesion alongside economic progress. CPEC's true transformative promise rests on the strategic management of its demographic and social consequences.

Policy Recommendations

The findings of this comprehensive review affirm that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) acts as a powerful catalyst for profound social and demographic change. To translate CPEC's potential into sustainable, equitable, and cohesive national development, policymakers must adopt a multi-dimensional approach that integrates economic, social, and environmental priorities. Following are the distinct policy recommendations.

1. Mandate equitable resource allocation to underdeveloped provinces (Balochistan/GB) to mitigate disparity.
2. Implement proactive urban governance to prevent congestion and slums in new CPEC-affected settlements.
3. Establish CPEC-aligned TVET centers to ensure local populations meet industrial skill demands.
4. Develop a formal national migration management policy for circular and seasonal labor flows.
5. Prioritize renewable energy investment to phase out coal projects and reduce environmental strain.
6. Strengthen the rigorous enforcement of EIAs for all infrastructure and SEZ developments.
7. Create cultural integration and social cohesion programs in multi-ethnic corridor hubs.
8. Allocate urgent funding for the upgradation of basic urban services (water, sanitation, housing) in migration zones.
9. Introduce strict land-use zoning laws around SEZs and corridors to control uncontrolled urban sprawl.
10. Form a CPEC Social Equity Oversight Committee to monitor and address benefit distribution grievances.

References

- Akhtar, N., Khan, H. U., Jan, M. A., Pratt, C. B., & Ma, J. (2021). Exploring the determinants of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its impact on local communities. *SAGE Open*, 11(4), 1–16
- Abbas, A., Zahra, T., & Akhtar, M. S. (2020). A futuristic view on the impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on the linguistic ecology of Pakistan. *Education and Language*, 7(1), 1–10.
- Afzal, F., Ghafar, A., & Farooq, M. U. (2025). The Portrayal of CPEC in Reshaping Pakistan's Regional Geopolitics and Economy. *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review*, 3(3), 500–513. <https://doi.org/10.63878/cjssr.v3i3.981>
- Ahmad, F., Gill, A. T., Hussain, Z., & Ismail, M. (2024). Pakistan-China Relations in the 21st Century: Political and Economic Cooperation through the Perspective of CPEC. *Policy Research Journal*, 2(4), 18
- Ahmed, Z., Nihei, T., & Ali, N. (2025). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A Long-Term Sustainable Development Project, Challenges and Opportunities for Tourism Sector in Pakistan. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 419-432 [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2025\(6-I\)37](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2025(6-I)37)
- Ain, N. U., & Muzaffar, M. (2025). Push and Pull Factors Driving International Migration: Insights from Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 9(2), 205–218. [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2025\(9-II\)16](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2025(9-II)16)
- Akhter, M. (2018). Geopolitics of the Belt and Road: Space, state, and capital in China and Pakistan. In B. Neilson, N. Rossiter, & R. Samaddar (Eds.), *Logistical Asia* (pp. 235–252). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8333-4_11
- BMA (2015). Pakistan Economy: Impact of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor - A Bird's Eye View. BMA Capital Management Limited. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02843?seq=6>
- Burfat, A. R., Oad, H., & Talpur, B. (2024). CPEC: Transforming Pakistan's socio-economic landscape. *Advance Social Science Archive Journal*, 2(4), 900–921 Retrieved from <https://www.assajournal.com/index.php/36/article/view/115>
- Ch, A. A., & Mushtaq, A. Q. (2025). CPEC: Socio, Cultural and Economic Effects on Gilgit-Baltistan. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 3(1), 13. <https://doi.org/10.59075/2gww0v15>
- China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority. (2025). *Major development projects in Gwadar*. Retrieved from <https://cpec.gov.pk/gwadar>
- Chatzky, A., & McBride, J. (2019). China's massive Belt and Road Initiative. *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org>
- Dikshit, K. R., & Dikshit, J. K. (2025). *Regional Geography of Pakistan: A Study in Spatial Relations*. Taylor & Francis.
- Fazal, I., Khan, W. A., & Ali, M. I. (2023). Geo-economic benefits of the CPEC project for Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 7(4), 573–589. *Geographical Review*, 108(3), 288–305.

- Farooq, S., Gul, S., & Khan, M. Z. (2018). Role of Trained Women Workforce in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A Gender Gap Analysis. *Putaj Humanities & Social Sciences*, 25(1).
- Gill, A. T., Zaman, U. A., & Ismail, M. (2023). Bridging the Gap: CPEC on Regional Connectivity Strengthening Bonds in Central Asia and The Middle East. *PalArch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt / Egyptology*, 20(2), p. 202
- Gregory, D., Johnston, R., Pratt, G., Watts, M., & Whatmore, S. (2009). *The dictionary of human geography* (5th Ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hanif, A. (2024). *Role of local community in mega development initiative as economic corridor: the case of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Balochistan, Pakistan* (Doctoral dissertation, RMIT University).
- Hassan, M. S. (2024). Socio-economic impacts of CPEC on Pakistan: the dark side of the project. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 2(2), 244–255. <https://doi.org/10.59075/wnf9kj78>
- Hussain, H., Bogheiry, A., & Alam, T. (2023). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Opportunities and Challenges for Implementation. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 6(4), 37. <http://localhost:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/1473>
- Hussain, S., & Ali, Z. (2019). Migration and labour mobility under CPEC: Implications for Pakistan's socio-economic development. *Pakistan Development Review*, 58(4), 473–490.
- Hussain, Z., Ali, B., ul Hassan, M., & Ali, M. (2025). Environmental Concerns of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Gilgit Baltistan. *The Asian Bulletin Of Green Management And Circular Economy*, 5(2), 110–125.
- Hussain, E., & Rao, M. F. (2020). China–Pakistan economic cooperation: The case of special economic zones (SEZs). *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(4), 453–472.
- Iram, M., Riaz, H. U., Ali, N., & Zehra, S. (2025). Political Economy Of Climate Change: Policy, Power, And Profit In The Global System. *Policy Journal of Social Science Review*, 3(4), 500–510
- Ismail, M. (2019). The Project of CPEC: Benefits and Drawbacks for Gilgit-Baltistan. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v2i2.64>
- Ismail, M. (2023). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Economic and Strategic Implications for Pakistan. *Essays and Perspectives on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Beyond*, 143.
- Ismail, M., Hassan, T. U., Haq, A. U., & Mir, W. (2023). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): a case study of strategic implications for Pakistan. *Pal Arch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 20(2), 355.
- Kamran, M., Bian, J., Li, A., Lei, G., Nan, X., & Jin, Y. (2021). Investigating eco-environmental vulnerability for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor key sector, Punjab, using multi-source geo-information. *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, 10(9), 625. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi10090625>
- Kanwal, S., Chong, R., & Pitafi, A. H. (2018). China–Pakistan Economic Corridor projects development in Pakistan: Local citizens' benefits perspective—*Journal of Public Affairs*, 19(1), e1888.

- Kanwal, S., Pitafi, A. H., Pitafi, A., Nadeem, M. A., Younis, A., & Chong, R. (2019). China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) development projects and the entrepreneurial potential of locals. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 19(4), e1954.
- Khan, A., Ilmas, F., Zubair, M., Khan, A., & Zhong, L. H. (2022). The impact of CPEC on the economy of Pakistan. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(10), 4214–4223.
- Khan, N., Ahmad, R., & Xing, K. (2018). China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Regional Development, Employment Opportunities and Policy Challenges. *Global Political Review*, 3(1), 12–23. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2018\(III-I\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2018(III-I).02)
- Khan, R. N. A., & Khan, A. U. (2025). CPEC Plus: Advancing Geo-Economic, Regional Connectivity, And Geo-Strategic Domains. *Policy Journal of Social Science Review*, 3(3), 297–309. Retrieved from <https://policyjssr.com/index.php/PJSSR/article/view/341>
- Khwaja, M. A., Saeed, S., & Urooj, M. (2018). *Preliminary environmental impact assessment (EIA) study of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) northern route road construction activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan* (1st ed.). Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). <https://www.sdpi.org>
- Lu, H. ., & Iqbal, N. . (2025). Assessing the Economic and Strategic Significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. *Journal of Policy Options*, 8(1), 23-30
- Makki, M., Butt, F. A., Akash, S. A., Petrova, K., & Naeem, S. A. (2025). Fragile geographies and the climate-conflict nexus: Investigating climate-induced security risks, migration, and inequality in Baluchistan, Pakistan. *Alternatives*, 50(2), 375.
- Mehmood, A. (2025). Geopolitics is aesthetic: CPEC, space, and signage. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 23996544251381950. <https://doi.org/10.1177/239965442513819>
- Mushtaq, M., & Mirza, Z. S. (2022). Understanding the nexus between horizontal inequalities, ethno-political conflict, and political participation: A case study of Balochistan. *Ethnopolitics*, 21(3), 221–237.
- Muttarak, R. (2021). Demographic perspectives in research on global environmental change. *Population Studies*, 75(sup1), 77–104.
- Nadeem, M., Xiaoyan, F., Sadaf, G., & Hassan, S. (2025). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A Pathway to Regional Prosperity and Challenges. *Social Science Review Archives*, 3(1), 1506–1525. <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i1.453>
- Qadri, S., Habib, M., & Salim, M. (2023). CPEC: Challenges, Opportunities and Socio-Economic Impact on The Muslim World. *International Journal of Social Science & Entrepreneurship*, 3(3), 257–271. <https://doi.org/10.58661/ijss.v3i3.201>
- Qasim, M., Ali, N., Haider, S. S., Zainab, I., & Ali, M. (2024). Socio-Ecological Dynamics in Gilgit Baltistan: Insights from Human Geographic Perspectives. *Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 5(2), 372–385.
- Qasim, M., Ali, S., & Aqeel, M. (2024). Geographic Diversity and landscape in transition: Analyzing the physical features of the Baltistan region. *Journal of Social Sciences Development*, 3(2), 154–169.
- Qusien, R., & Robbins, D. (2023). Media coverage of CPEC in Pakistan: the case of the missing frame. *Climate and Development*, 15(1), 30–44.

- Rafiq, A. (2020). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Barriers and impact. *United States Institute of Peace Special Report*.
- Rahim, N., Khan, A. M., & Muzaffar, M. (2018). Problems and Prospects of CPEC for Economic Development and Regional Integration. *Global Economic Review*, III (1), 21-30
- Shafqat, D. S., & Shahid, S. (2018). *China Pakistan Economic Corridor: Demands, dividends and directions*. Center for Public Policy and Governance. <http://digitalrepository.fccollege.edu.pk/handle/123456789/1473>
- Shah, B., Ahmad, F., & Abbas, S. (2025). CPEC and its socio-economic impact on Gilgit-Baltistan: A critical review. *Journal of Social Signs Review*, 3(4), 14-22
- Shah, M. (2025). Gateway to Prosperity: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). *Review Journal of Social Psychology & Social Works*, 3(1), 82-91. <https://doi.org/10.71145/rjsp.v3i1.77>
- Shah, S. T. A., Muzaffar, M., & Yaseen, Z. (2020). Debunking Concerns of the New Delhi over CPEC, *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 4 (1), 33-46
- Shah, U., Sadozai, W. K., & Fayyaz, A. B. (2025). Assessing the Impact of CPEC on Human Capital Development in Baluchistan: A Qualitative Case Study of Gwadar. *Journal for Current Sign*, 3(2), 95.
- Ullah, H. A., Kainaat, F., Wajid, H., & Sarwar, M. (2024). Analyzing the impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on the Pakistani economy and society. *Al-Mahdi Research Journal (MRJ)*, 5(4), 769-780.
- You, Z., Shi, H., Feng, Z., & Xiao, C. (2022). Assessment of the socioeconomic development levels of six economic corridors in the Belt and Road region. *Journal of Geographical Sciences*, 32(11), 2189-2204.
- Zhao, J., Sun, G., & Webster, C. (2022). Does the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor improve connectivity in Pakistan? A protocol assessing the planned transport network infrastructure. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 100, 103327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2022.103327>
- Zia, M. M., Malik, B. A., & Waqar, S. (2018). Special economic zones (SEZs): A comparative analysis for CPEC SEZs in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 9, 37-60.