



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**India's Inclusion in the CPEC: A Gateway for India-Pakistan Cooperation**

<sup>1</sup>Tahir Khan\* <sup>2</sup>Jalil Ahmed <sup>3</sup>Kashif Ahmed

1. Lecturer, Department of Science and Humanities, FAST-NU Karachi Campus, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
2. Assistant professor, Department of Basic Science & Related studies, Mehran University, SZAB Campus, Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of Science and Humanities, FAST-NU, Karachi campus, Sindh, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author:** [tahir.khan@nu.edu.pk](mailto:tahir.khan@nu.edu.pk)

**ABSTRACT**

The Objective of this study is to discuss the possibilities of bringing harmony to India and Pakistan's relationship by making India part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. In 2013, the Chinese government introduced its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), under which it was decided that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would be constructed from China (Kashgar) to Pakistan (Gwadar). This research focused the response of India to the growing economic cooperation between Pakistan and China; secondly, the changes and continuities in the relationship between India and Pakistan will be discussed, and finally, the impact of the inclusion of India in the CPEC on the conflictual relationship between India and Pakistan would be discussed. It is argued in this research that India and Pakistan's relationship is conflictual because both countries have nothing to lose by engaging in war with each other. This study involves the existing literature review, official documents, Talks shows data and interviews of experts on the topic. However, if both countries develop a dependency on each other through growing trade and economic activity, then the chances of conflict would also be minimized because then both countries have to lose more than gain by engaging in the conflictual activity.

**KEYWORDS** BRI, China, Gilgit-Baltistan, India , Kashmir Dispute, LOC, Pakistan

**Introduction**

Since 1947, India and Pakistan's relationship has remained in conflictual independence; the two countries gained independence from the British. Both countries also fought wars in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999. The primary issue for fighting the war was the border demarcation between India and Pakistan over the region of Kashmir. The border in the region of Kashmir between India and Pakistan is yet to be defined. In 1947, when the Kashmir dispute emerged, it was taken to the United Nations (UN), which established a ceasefire line between India and Pakistan(Raja, 2013).

In 1965, India and Pakistan again engaged in a war over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. India and China fought a war over the demarcation of the border in 1962, and Pakistan settled its borders with China simultaneously. Pakistan and India also fought a war over the territory of Rann of Kutch in early 1960, in which Pakistan won and assumed control of Rann of Kutch territory (Sattar, 2013). In this manner, Pakistan considered that the situation was ripe for taking over the control of Jammu and Kashmir territory. Pakistan launched operation Gibraltar, in which Pakistani troops entered Indian-held Kashmir to incite rebellion against India. However, Indian Troops recognised them and attacked Pakistan, which resulted in the 1962 war(Alastair, 1991).

After the cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan, another war was fought between both countries in 1971. When Pakistan became independent, it was divided into Eastern and Western Pakistan. The Indian territory was located between East and West

Pakistan. East Pakistan had many grievances with West Pakistan and initiated a secessionist movement in East Pakistan. They sought the assistance of India and India involved in a conflict with West Pakistani forces in East Pakistan, resulting in another war between India and Pakistan (Ashraf, 2020).

India and Pakistan took several initiatives to bring normalisation to the relationship after the independence of East Pakistan in 1971 up to 1988. However, these efforts were not materialised because of the Kargil war in 1999. India and Pakistan fought another war in the Kargil region on the border of the Gilgit Baltistan region of Pakistan and the Ladakh State of India. This neighbouring region between India and Pakistan is also considered part of the disputed Jammu and Kashmir territory because it is located on the northern side of the Jammu and Kashmir region (Dixit, 2003).

After the Kargil war, Ex-President of Pakistan Gen Pervaiz Musharraf also visited India and met Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Ex-Prime Minister of India, in 2001 (Wheeler, 2010). However, amity was not achieved between India and Pakistan relationship, and then attacks on the Indian parliament took place in 2001, and the Mumbai attacks took place in 2008. India blamed Pakistan for perpetrating these attacks in India. Although Pakistan denied its involvement, the relationship between India and Pakistan remained strained (I. Ahmad & Ebert, 2013).

In this manner, it could be observed from the overview of India and Pakistan's relationship that both countries have been fighting the war because India and Pakistan have nothing to lose if they fight each other. After all, both countries are not economically dependent on each other, and there is no trade between India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan's relationship could become peaceful if both countries economically dependent on each other. Under this context, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is worth mentioning because it could be a game changer in the India and Pakistan relationship. In the early 2010s, China launched the Belt and Road initiative (BRI), in which China is reviving the old silk route and the sea routes as well. Through the BRI projects, Asia would be connected with Africa and Europe through land and sea routes for the more significant potential for the expansion of trade globally (Karluk & Karaman, 2014).

China has launched the project of economic connectivity with both India and Pakistan at the same time. China initiated Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-CE), in which India is also involved and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Hence, in this manner, China is now moving towards geoeconomics and launching economic connectivity projects instead of geopolitics. In this manner, the BCIM-CE and CPEC have many advantages for India and Pakistan to grow economically (H. Ahmed & Fatima, 2015). Although China and India have border disputes and have also fought a war in the 1960s, and they have border skirmishes with each other, they are still trading with each other. China is the second largest trade partner of India after US. India cooperates with China at other forums, such as Asian Development Bank.

This research hypothesises that if India also becomes part of CPEC, then the chances of conflict between India and Pakistan would be eliminated because the focus of both countries would shift from geopolitics to geoeconomics. It is argued in this research that India and Pakistan's relationship is conflictual; once both countries develop a dependency on each other through growing trade and economic activity, then the chances of conflict would also be minimised because then both the countries have to lose much than gain by engaging into conflictual activity. This research study aims to discuss the prospects of developing India-Pakistan cooperation if India becomes part of CPEC.

## **Literature Review**

### **India-Pakistan relations since 1947**

Despite having similar cultural and historical ties, Pakistan and India are the two least integrated countries. Islamabad and New Delhi only have a tenuous commitment to one another despite sharing borders as sovereign entities for the past 75 years. Their relationship stands out for its constant hatred. Pakistan and India have continued to engage in recurrent outbreaks of belligerence due to their unstable coexistence, which led to the wars of 1948, 1965, 1971, and 1999 and frequently rising tensions along their borders (Shah, et al. 2020); Rehman et al., 2018). The fragile British legacy agenda has exposed the fragile peace process.

The relationship between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947 is the overview of the growing communalism in India before the partition of India and presents the politics between Nehru and Jinnah. By giving a background of communalism in India which ultimately led towards the partition of India into India and Pakistan, he links it to the emergence of the Kashmir dispute between the two countries. The Kashmir dispute became the bone of contention between the two countries and attracted the international community to resolve the dispute. However, no resolution of the Kashmir dispute was achieved. Moreover, the role of extremist ideology in further exacerbating the Kashmir issue. He argues that Islamic extremism in Pakistan and Hindu extremism in India have made the Kashmir dispute almost irresolvable (Wolpert, 2010)

The history of this conflict from its small beginnings in the first half of the 19th century—when the British sold Kashmir to the Ruler of Jammu to create Jammu and Kashmir in the early summer of 1990 when Pakistan and India appeared to be heading toward a fourth military confrontation over this disputed legacy from the British Raj. A sizable body of myth has grown around the series of events leading up to the overt Indian engagement in Jammu and Kashmir, beginning with the Radcliffe Commission's division of the Punjab in August 1947 (Alastair, 1991).

The India-Pakistan conflicts of 1965 and 1971, the Kargil conflict, the secessionist movement in Indian-held Kashmir, and the terrorist activities that took place in Mumbai and other places in India. The author has argued that India have held Pakistan responsible for the terrorist attacks on Indian soil and the secessionist movement that emerged in the Indian-held Kashmir. The crucial role played by US diplomacy in averting conflict and war between bitter enemies, reducing tensions, and applying pressure to both nations to open negotiations. India has often reaffirmed that it does not wish to take Pakistan's land, but Pakistan has persisted in teasing India by employing one deceit or another. Pakistan is not a state that prioritizes or seeks security (Ganguly, 2016).

On top of this, he contends that there would not have been a war in 1947–1948 if Pakistan had acted merely defensively. The same is true of Pakistan's invasion of India in 1965. Pakistan also attempted to annex Indian land in disputed Kashmir during the Kargil conflict. Only once, in 1971, India invaded Pakistan to broaden the war's theater of operations.

### **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)**

The CPEC is part of the China's larger connectivity projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Under the BRI, China is reviving the old silk and sea routes. Through the BRI projects, Asia would be connected with Africa and Europe through land and sea routes for more significant potential for the expansion of trade globally. (Karluk & Karaman, 2014) argue that the Russian and Chinese economic alliances are growing faster than before. Both China and Russia are working on economic growth through regional connectivity. Hence, the development of both land and sea routes is providing China with the opportunity to connect with Central Asian countries and Europe. The collaboration of Russia on this route is of pivotal importance for China.

In the context of South Asia, the CPEC holds more significant economic benefits for Pakistan because it has introduced different infrastructural and energy-related projects in Pakistan on the one hand and also connecting Pakistan with other parts of the world through land and sea routes. (H. Ahmed & Fatima, 2015) argue that Pakistan and China seek common economic interests. The authors discussed different projects China introduced in Pakistan under the CPEC: infrastructural development, energy projects, roads, and railway projects. There CPEC is expected to complete by 2030, and then Pakistan and China will benefit from it.

However, it is necessary to understand the reasons that have compelled China to invest heavily in Pakistan. Strategically China could not bypass the Indian Ocean to get the oil supply from the gulf region. Hence if China is not allowed by India to reach the Gulf region for oil, then China would be deprived of its oil supplies. To counter this threat, China have constructed port in Gwadar to bypass India in getting its oil supplies (Yaseen, et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2022) discusses the Chinese interest in the Indian Ocean and the implications for India. She argued that China's principal interest in the Indian Ocean is safeguarding its energy supply's sealines of communication (SLOC) from Bab-al Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, to Strait of Malacca. Hence, China is increasing its reach in the Indian Ocean by initiating the One Belt One Road Project. As in the year 2015 the China has also started the port facility in Gwadar, Pakistan, along with investment in other infrastructural projects.

### **India's Inclusion into CPEC**

The debate on the inclusion of India in CPEC is dependent on the debate of strained relations between India and Pakistan. Both countries have unsettled border issues and have irredentist claims against each other in Jammu and Kashmir. (Rehman et al., 2018), argues that despite of sharing same cultural and historical similarity, peace has not been established between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947. India-Pakistan relations have not been stabilized, and they have fought wars in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999 primarily on irredentist claims. The border clashes were due to the boundary line that the British has finalized. The Kashmir dispute is the central dispute between Pakistan and India, due to which the borders are not considered settled by both countries.

The sensitive nature of the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, and the adjoining unsettled border between China and India increases India's suspicion over the project (Zafar Bhutta, 2015) discusses the concerns of India and argues that the main problem for India is that the CPEC is passing from the disputed territory of the Greater Kashmir region between India, China, and Pakistan. Hence, India's primary concern against CPEC is that it would pass from the disputed territory of Kashmir. However, China and Pakistan have put aside India's complaints and are pursuing the CPEC (R. Ahmad & Mi, 2017) argue that India could not stop the CPEC project by violent actions. India could only voice its concerns over CPEC diplomatically. The authors consider that the diplomatic complaints are also raising concerns in China. Any escalation between India and Pakistan may also pose threats to the infrastructural development of China in Pakistan. In this manner, China and Pakistan are also contemplating not engaging in any conflictual relationship with India.

Despite the complaints India makes against CPEC and the threats posed to China by the escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan, India is also indirectly involved in financing the CPEC project. India is part of the Asian investment and infrastructure bank financing the CPEC schemes. Secondly, India's name is also enlisted in the BRI project of BCIM-CE, that is, Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar. In this context, if India joins the CPEC and BCIM-CE, then the economic partnership of China and India could be increased in the longer term (Kulkarni, 2015). The presence of India in the CPEC could increase the likelihood of its gaining access to Afghanistan, making it simple to join the major Central

Asian markets. It would also provide India access to the Central Asian natural resources. In a trilateral partnership, Pakistan might gain enormous advantages that would either ease or remove the Indian government's resistance to the CPEC. The trilateral cooperation might result in a more comprehensive economic support program as a first step toward rapid local growth and absorption. If it does, the BCIM-EC and CPEC could be the actual game-changers (Ranjan, 2015).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Complex Interdependence concept defies the central tenet of traditional and structural realism, which has always attempted to explain state behaviour in the context of economic and military prowess. Contrary to the State's stresses, collaborating actors are more critical in a complex interdependence. The focus was on international groups and institutions that could counteract conventional military strength. In contrast to conventional security concerns, international relations theories should also focus on the dimension of trade and welfare. Interdependence in international politics refers to circumstances when there are perceived to be reciprocal effects between countries or between groups in different countries. Due to their interests, countries in interdependence work together, and such cooperation leads to prosperity and stability in the global structure (S. Ahmad et al., 2019)

In this manner, the concept of complex interdependence argues that the states are concerned about their interests and those interests could only be fulfilled by some other state. It is due to this reason that the states are dependent on each other in a complex manner. The complex interdependence between states could lead to lesser chances of conflict and more chances of cooperation. This is because the states prioritize the benefits of the economic partnership and avoid engaging in conflict that costs them extensively (Sudula, 2012). In the context of South Asia, it could be seen that historically the trade relationship between India and Pakistan has not been materialized, due to which economic cooperation is absent. In the absence of a trade relationship, if the relationship between India and Pakistan is under strain, then both countries are not interdependent and would wage war against each other. However, if there is some economic cooperation on a regional level between India and Pakistan then the chances of conflict could be averted, and peaceful coexistence could be considered (Rahim, et al. 2018).

Despite India's diplomatic opposition to CPEC by its statements under the debates of Indian Parliament, India has hitherto not taken any serious action to bring the CPEC project to a halt. As discussed earlier, India is also part of the BIMC-EC, due to which it is also in some manner cooperating with China. However, if India became part of CPEC, it would get access to the landlocked countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Currently, India does not have a harmonious relationship with its neighbouring State of Pakistan, due to which the country of Central Asia is not accessible to her. Almost all the countries of South Asia are cooperating with China in the BRI project. Hence, if India also becomes part of the BRI project in general and CPEC in particular, then India could also gain much more than opposing it. Similarly, Pakistan and India have remained hostile towards each other since their inception. Several attempts have been made for confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan as discussed earlier in the second chapter, and there has been no large-scale war fought between India and Pakistan in the last fifty years after the 1971s war.

Historically, there has been a lack of dependency between India and Pakistan in terms of trade and economic cooperation because India and Pakistan readily took up arms against each other. After all, they have nothing to lose from fighting each other. If both countries become economically dependent on each other and the trade between both countries increases, then India and Pakistan would not consider a possibility of war with each other because, in that context, both India and Pakistan would lose much and gain

nothing from engaging in war. India could connect with the CPEC route from different sides because it shares a long 1600 km border with Pakistan. The CPEC passes through the region of Gilgit Baltistan, Punjab and Sindh in Pakistan. In this manner, India could also connect with CPEC via the route of Jammu and region of Laddakh to the region of Gilgit Baltistan in Pakistan. The Indian Punjab could be connected with the CPEC in Pakistani Punjab. Similarly, India's Rajasthan and Gujrat regions could be connected with the CPEC in Sindh province. In addition, India would also get access to the Central Asian markets and Afghanistan. Hence, this chapter discusses the possibility of India and Pakistan conflict mitigation through an economic dependency model.

### **Gains for India under CPEC**

BRI should be examined within the larger framework of India-China ties in order to comprehend how India views it entirely. For Indian politicians, as for most Asian governments, managing ties with China is among the toughest challenges. There is currently a significant imbalance between the two economies. As a result, "the Indians are far more anxious about the emergence of China," whereas "the Chinese are rather complacent about the rise of India" (Grant, 2010).

Numerous South Asian neighbours of India enjoy stable relations with China, particularly with Pakistan. Due to its unified state control system and the improvement in its bilateral economic links, China is significantly more successful than India in its diplomatic efforts using natural resources. China has become India's largest trading partner, with an annual transaction of \$80 billion. However, despite the strong economic links, the hostility has not subsided as anticipated. India views the CPEC project as a looming threat and interprets it as either propaganda to undermine the economies of other nations in the region or as China's approval of Pakistan's (S. Ahmad et al., 2019).

Following Pakistan's refusal to allow trade between India and Afghanistan via Pakistan, Indian accessibility to Central Asia and Afghanistan became challenging. However, India can still create several avenues for dispute resolution if it understands how the CPEC project benefits it. India must know how she can gain by taking on this mission for herself (Sachdeva, 2018). The primary issue will be India's access to Republicans in central Asia. India and central Asia have built extensive trade and commercial links over the past centuries. As soon as the marine route from India to Europe was made known, the Silk Road connected Central Asia with India from the third century BC until the fifteenth century AD.

Another major factor contributing to this natural partnership is religion. Since Buddhism originated in India, spread to Central Asia, and many Central Asian kings ruled in India, religion had a significant role in fostering intercultural understanding. For many other reasons, India has traditionally placed great importance on the Central Asian region. Given that the Central Asian region is endowed with abundant natural resources, including crude oil, uranium, copper, natural gas, aluminium, iron, and gold, it is unquestionably precious to an emerging market like India (Hafeez & Rafique, 2017). If India is included in the CPEC project, then there are chances that India's economy could also face a similar economic development as Pakistan's economy has witnessed. India would also be connected to the regional economic corridors by joining CPEC and accessing the hitherto inaccessible markets of Central Asia via Pakistan. Additionally, this will make it possible for other nations to market their goods in South Asian areas.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistan's foreign minister, was cited by the foreign office as saying that Pakistan was unwilling to allow trade between India and Afghanistan to pass through its land (Times, 2018). As a result of India's membership in the CPEC, Pakistan would permit India to trade with Afghanistan by crossing Pakistan's territory. Through the CPEC, new doors for regional trade connection between North and South for Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and India can be created in addition to providing Pakistan with

new economic opportunities. The BRI's elements that would increase India's connection to important markets and resource supply may be worth carefully examining. India's economy will benefit from inclusion, accelerating industrialization and employment growth. India's isolation from the rest of South Asia will only increase if she chooses to reject the BRI. Joining OBOR and inviting Chinese investment in Indian development is the only way to avoid any regrets in the future. (Jha, 2016). India may run the risk of becoming completely immobile and without any economic opportunities in a growing area that is emerging with the Chinese economy on a global scale if it chooses to remain isolated (Joshi, 2017).

### **Prospects of India-Pakistan economic cooperation**

India has so far taken a conventional approach and raised its concerns about the project because it will run through disputed territory between India and Pakistan. India essentially has two options on how to react to the CPEC. India can whine and protest indefinitely, which may cause the corridor's construction to be delayed or obstructed but cannot halt it altogether. India takes a more favourable policy by approaching China and Pakistan and building trilateral cooperation in establishing the planned corridor (Mohan, 2011).

Unquestionably, China, India, and Pakistan are parties to severe unresolved territorial disputes, and the proposed CPEC crosses several of these areas. However, it could also be seen that the trade between China and India has increased up to \$90 billion. Hence, it could be argued that if the economic dependency increases between China and India then the chances of conflicts between both countries would not only decrease, but both India and China would also try to avoid conflict and engage in the peaceful pursuit of trade and economic activities (Krishnan, 2014). The Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, also elaborated on the importance of CPEC for India's economic growth during his visit to China in July 2013 (Bi, Mingxin, 2013)

There are already several economic and transportation connections between Pakistan and India, albeit most of these connections are currently dormant. Pakistan and India should cooperate in reactivating and strengthening those ties in the initial stage. For instance, trade in Punjab is currently restricted to the Wagah-Attari land route, while several alternative linkages through road network between India and Pakistan have not been considered.

For instance, in Punjab, many routes could be constructed between India and Pakistan for trade. The proposed trade routes could be constructed from 1) Ferozpur to Kasur (through the border crossing at Hussainiwala-Ganda Singh) and 2) Fazilka-Sahiwal (joining Southern Punjab through the border crossing at Sulemanki).

These two routes offer enormous possibilities for the development of transnational "Joint Industrial Zones" or "mini economic corridors (Indian Express 2012). Given that the distance between Hussainiwala and the Bhatinda oil refinery is only 100 km, the Kasur-Ferozpur economic corridor might be expanded as a corridor for petroleum and leather goods.

There are also many leather manufacturing units in the neighboring region of Kasur at Kot Radha Kishan, which is adjoining to the Ganda Singh border of the Indian Punjab. If these two towns in the Pakistani side of Kasur and Ganda Singh region of India is joined through the economic corridor, then there are chances that the leather business would increase between India and Pakistan.

The Sulemanki gateway might also be transformed into a corridor for the textile and agricultural sectors. Moreover, the neighboring region of India, Fazilka, also located near the Kasur border, is rich in cotton production. During the British period, the cotton merchants

from Fazilka exported their goods via Port Qasim in Karachi, Pakistan. Sahiwal has been well-known for its dairy and cotton industries since the pre-partition period.

Since Punjab's partition during the independence of Pakistan and India, the railway link was also disconnected from the Indian side of Punjab. This railway link connected Ludhiana from Karachi via Fazilka and Ferozpur By enabling trade over the Munnabao-Khokrapar corridor, which has already been used for passengers travelling since 2006, a comparable small economic gateway can be built between the Sindh province of Pakistan and the Rajasthan side of India. Before the partition of India, the region of Ahmedabad, presently in India, and Hyderabad, presently in Pakistan, were connected. Before Partition, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad (now in Sindh, Pakistan) were connected through the Ahmedabad-Palanpur-Marwar-Pali-Jodhpur-Luni-Barmer-Muabao-Khokhrapar-Mirpurkhas-Hyderabad. The Sindh mail railway has connected the regions(Ranjan, 2015)

If the abovementioned measures yield good results, Jammu and Kashmir may also establish comparable small-scale trans-border mini-economic corridors in the final phase. Currently, Muzaffarabad-Uri and Poonch-Rawlakot are the two routes used for inter-trade between Pakistan and India in Jammu and Kashmir, but many other routes might be developed there. These include Turtuk-Khapulu, Gurez- Astor-Gilgit, Jorian-Chahamb-, Chilhan-Titwal, Kargil-Skardu, Jammu-Sialkot, and Kotli(Chowdhary, 2010).

Similarly to this, the region of the disputed region of Gilgit Baltistan could also be used as a trade route between India and Pakistan. The old commercial routes connecting Xinjiang, Ladakh, and Tibet could also be revived as trade routes and the trade could be increased not just between India and Pakistan but also between China and India. The residents of Ladakh have already demanded that Demchok be made available for cross-border trade. According to reports, China and India were on the verge of establishing borders via Nyoma in Ladakh over the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 2003. Demchok and the Tibetan Tashigang belt are connected by this route. Huge commercial prospects would also arise if the Nyoma route were opened up to full-fledged trading for Haryana and Punjab(H. Ahmed & Fatima, 2015).

Numerous transnational projects, particularly those connected to silk products, agro-industries, silk products, and hydroelectricity, might be established along these lines. Such endeavours might resuscitate the historic Silk Route and turn the Jammu and Kashmir Valley into a "bridge uniting India, Pakistan, and China"(Mohan, 2011) Although this situation may seem idealistic at this time, there are tangible benefits for all parties involved.

First of all, such collaboration would significantly increase India's chances of securing transit to Afghanistan, further opening the vast Central Asian markets and giving India more access to the region's immense natural resources, a long-held goal of India. Trilateral cooperation along these principles would either moderate or terminate India's opposition to the CPEC, which would also be of enormous advantage to Pakistan(A. Ahmed et al., 2017). Additionally, it would give Pakistan access to South East Asia, a stated goal of that country's "Vision East Asia program" According to China, the Silk Road Economic Belt must "connect all subregions in Asia, as well as between Asia, Europe, and Africa" to succeed. In other words, by increasing the cooperation between two South Asian economic corridors, these modest projects would create a favourable regional climate for the BRI project.

## **Conclusion**

Since gaining their independence, both India and Pakistan have been in conflicts and disagreements. The two nations engaged in conflict shortly after independence over control of the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. As a result, a ceasefire line was drawn, dividing the princely State between the two nations. In 1965, the two nations engaged in another conflict over the Jammu and Kashmir area. Finally, in the 1971s, India and Pakistan fought



another war, but this one was fought for the independence of East Pakistan rather than to settle territorial disputes in Jammu and Kashmir.

When Pakistan won its independence, it was split into two halves, East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Indian land traversed between two wings of Pakistan into its two-wing countries. A separatist movement in East Pakistan started, and they began to desire independence due to their growing discontent with West Pakistan. India was asked for assistance by East Pakistan in its quest for independence. In this way, the 1971 conflict between India and Pakistan was initiated when India arrived to aid East Pakistan.

Due to the establishment of nuclear enrichment facilities by both India and Pakistan and joint military exercises by both nations, the relationship between the two countries remained tense from 1972 to 1988. However, both nations began to explore confidence-boosting measures in 1988. Under the terms of the agreement, neither nation was allowed to hold military drills close to the other's border. When the Kargil conflict broke out in May 1999, the peace process between India and Pakistan was derailed.

Following the Kargil incident, Pakistan and India renewed their attempts to settle their differences. In 2001, Gen. Musharaf, the Ex-president of Pakistan, travelled to India and met Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the prime minister. The ongoing Kashmir dispute was not, however, settled during this summit. The SAARC summit was conducted in 2004, and both Premiers gathered there to discuss their bilateral issues. However, the terrorist strikes by Islamist groups in India in the attacks on the Lok Sabha in 2001 and Mumbai in 2008 destroyed the peace negotiations between India and Pakistan. India blamed Pakistan for carrying out these assaults. Pakistan, though, refuted any involvement in the assault.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of China's broader Belt and Road Initiative projects, which aims to connect nations via land and maritime routes to boost international trade and business. Gilgit Baltistan and the Chinese area of Kashgar are where the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor enters Pakistan. It travels through Pakistan before ending in the Balochistan province's coastline region of Gwadar. China is establishing energy generation projects, gas pipelines, industries, and other things as part of the CPEC project and building Pakistan's infrastructure.

In this way, the CPEC has the potential to aid Pakistan's economic growth. However, it is essential to note that China has not merely worked with Pakistan to improve commercial connections; instead, when the Chinese prime went to Pakistan in 2013 to introduce the CPEC project, he went to India first. India also has concerns about the CPEC because its path goes through Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan area, which India considers a part of the Greater Kashmir issue and asserts an irredentist claim. India has begun to oppose the CPEC project because of this reason diplomatically. The border conflicts on the northwestern side of the China-India boundary also have strained relations between the two countries. As a result, India's main argument in its objection to the CPEC has been the issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

However, if India became part of CPEC, it would get access to the landlocked countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan. At present, India does not have a harmonious relationship with its neighbouring State of Pakistan, due to which the country of Central Asia is not accessible to her.

Almost all the countries of South Asia are cooperating with China in the BRI project to become part of the trade and economic connectivity. Hence, in a similar manner, if India also becomes part of the BRI project in general and CPEC in particular, then India could also gain much more than opposing it. Similarly, Pakistan and India have remained hostile towards each other since their inception. Several attempts have been made for confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan as discussed earlier in the second chapter,

and there has been no large-scale war fought between India and Pakistan in the last fifty years after the 1971s war.

Historically, there is a lack of dependency between India and Pakistan regarding trade and economic cooperation. It is due to this reason that India and Pakistan readily took up arms against each other because they have nothing to lose from fighting each other. If both countries become economically dependent on each other and the trade between both countries increases, then India and Pakistan would not consider the possibility of war with each other because, in that context, India and Pakistan would lose much and gain nothing from engaging in war.

There are several ways India and Pakistan would benefit if India became part of CPEC. Firstly, the Kashmir dispute could be resolved if India became part of the CPEC because then the economic corridor that enters Pakistan through the region of Gilgit Baltistan could be connected with India through the Kargil and Ladakh. In this manner, the trade route could expand trade between China, India, and Pakistan. The trade route between India and Pakistan could also be established via the Jammu and Kashmir region.

In this manner, if Pakistan and India engaged in trade through the Jammu and Kashmir region, the chances of conflict would decrease. Presently, many border shelling and skirmishes are going on between India and Pakistan through the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In this context, if the trade route of CPEC is extended to the Jammu and Kashmir region, India and Pakistan would not have a conflictual relationship.

Moreover, India could not only join CPEC through the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, but it could also join CPEC from bordering regions that include the border between Indian and Pakistani Punjab and the Sindh and Rajasthan border. In this manner, India could also get land access to the Central Asian countries. Central Asian countries are rich in gas and oil reserves.

Under the CPEC project, the oil and gas pipelines are proposed to be brought from the Central Asian countries to Pakistan. India could also benefit from it by becoming part of CPEC. India would also get access to the natural resources of Central Asia. Moreover, the Central Asian states are landlocked and lack access to the sea routes, India have a large coastal belt due to which India could also provide the Central Asian states access to the sea routes.

The CPEC project is expanding the trade linkages between China and Pakistan and other projects in which agriculture would be extended, hydroelectricity generation plants would be installed, and industrialization of Pakistan would also be done. In this manner, CPEC would also alleviate poverty in Pakistan by giving employment opportunities to the people and overcoming the energy deficit that is haunting the industrial units in Pakistan. India is also suffering from extreme poverty; if India joins the CPEC, then China would launch different projects in India, which would alleviate the poverty in India.

## References

- Ahmad, I., & Ebert, H. (2013). Will Pakistan's India Policy under Sharif Shift Strategically? *Strategic Analysis*, 37(6), 667–674.
- Ahmad, R., & Mi, H. (2017). China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Its Social Implication on Pakistan: How Will CPEC Boost Pakistan's Infrastructures and Overcome the Challenges? *Hilaris*, 8(2), 1–8.
- Ahmad, S., Syed, A., & Bhutta, M. (2019). Indian inclusion in CPEC: A path to Indo-Pak threat reduction via complex interdependence. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 3(2), 11–19.
- Ahmed, A., Arshad, M. A., Mahmood, A., & Akhtar, S. (2017). Neglecting human resource development in OBOR, a case of the China–Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC). *Emerald Publishing Limited*, 10(02), 130–142.
- Ahmed, H., & Fatima, S. (2015). *CPEC and economy of the region*. 134–138.
- Alastair, L. (1991). *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846–1990*. Oxford University Press.
- Ashraf, T. (2020). Economic Relations between Pakistan and India: Impressions from the Past and Prospects for Future. *Global Strategic & Security Studies*, 05(III), 22–33.
- Bhutta, Z. (2015, August 30). India bid to halt Pakistan projects fails. *The Express Tribune*.
- Bi, Mingxin. (2013, July 6). *Pakistani prime minister gives exclusive interview to Xinhua* [Interview]. [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/06/c\\_132516529.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-07/06/c_132516529.htm)
- Chowdhary, R. (2010). The political economy of cross-LoC trade. *Conciliation Resources*, 14, 17.
- Dixit, J. N. (2003). *India-Pakistan in war and peace*. Routledge.
- Ganguly, S. (2016). *Deadly impasse*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grant, C. (2010). *India's response to China's rise*. London: Centre for European Reforms.
- Hafeez, M., & Rafique, N. (2017). *India's connect Central Asia policy*. Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI).
- Jha, P. S. (2016). Why India Must Embrace China's One Belt One Road Plan. *The Wire*.
- Joshi, M. (2017). India should work with China on OBOR for its own economic benefit. *ORF: Observer Research Foundation*.
- Karluk, S. R., & Karaman, S. C. (2014). Bridging civilizations from Asia to Europe: The silk road. *Chinese Business Review*, 13(12), 730–739.
- Khan, T., Talpur, A. R., & Ahmed, J. (2022). Emerging Strategic Collaboration between the USA and India in the Indian Ocean: A Move Towards Chinese Containment. *Human Nature Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(4), 415–431.
- Krishnan, A. (2014, August). China wants India to play key role in 'Silk Road' plan.' *The Hindu*.
- Kulkarni, S. (2015, September, 01 ). Charting a new Asian history. *The Hindu*.

- Mohan, C. R. (2011). India and the Changing Geopolitics of the Indian Ocean. *MARITIME AFFAIRS*, 6(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2010.559779>.
- Rahim, N., Khan, A. M., & Muzaffar, M. (2018). Problems and Prospects of CPEC for Economic Development and Regional Integration. *Global Economic Review*, III (I), 21-30
- Raja, S. (2013). Kashmir. In *Flashpoints in the War on Terrorism* (pp. 215–236). Routledge.
- Ranjan, A. (2015). The China-Pakistan economic corridor: India's options. *Institute of Chinese Studies*, 10(1), 1–25.
- Rehman, A. U., Ashfaq, S., & Khan, T. M. (2018). Kargil Operation and its Effects on the Civil-military Relations in Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 2(2), 10–21.
- Sachdeva, G. (2018). Indian perceptions of the Chinese Belt and Road initiative. *International Studies*, 55(4), 285–296.
- 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
- Have not agreed to open Afghan trade route to India, Pakistan clarifies. (2018, September,17). *Hindustan Times*.
- Wheeler, N. J. (2010). "I had gone to Lahore with a message of goodwill but in return we got kargil": The promise and perils of "leaps of trust" in India-Pakistan relations. *India Review*, 9(3), 319–344. Have not agreed to open Afghan trade route to India, Pakistan clarifies.
- Wolpert, S. (2010). *India and Pakistan: Continued conflict or cooperation?* Univ of California Press.
- Yaseen, Z., Afridi, M. K. & Muzaffar, M. (2017). Pakistan and Chinas Strategic Ties: Challenges and Opportunities in Trade Perspective. *Global Regional Review*, 2 (II),16-30