



China –Pakistan Educational and Cultural Cooperation Under BRI

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Abstract: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a mega-investment project that has accelerated Pakistan's socio-economic growth. Pakistan's higher education sector is one key area to be upgraded under CPEC. Since the conclusion of CPEC agreement in 2015, Sino-Pakistan collaboration in higher education is expanding. Beijing is offering scholarships, vocational training and Chinese language courses to Pakistani youth and providing opportunities for academic and research collaboration. This study is an attempt to examine China's effective employment of higher education as a soft power tool to increase its influence and prestige in Pakistan. It argues that growing educational cooperation is fostering intercultural linkages as well as faculty and students' mobility between Pakistan and China. The article suggests that Islamabad needs to expand cooperation with Beijing in areas such as faculty development, emerging fields of science and technology, industry-university linkages and digital collaboration of technology in higher education sector.

Keywords: CPEC, Cultural exchange programme, educational cooperation, BRI

Introduction

Hao said, "CPCEEC aims to promote the cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan and artistic education for the two nations." [1]

BRI also encompasses the educational and cultural ties between Pakistan and China. The cultural and educational cooperation is the key agenda of Pak-China relations to open the new avenues in their relations. Pakistan and China are closely bonded under BRI to explore and promote more cultural exchanges and educational cooperation to achieve quality education and exchange of cultural delegation between two friendly countries. The qualitative methodology will be used to analyze the data. The major objective of the research paper is to highlight the educational and cultural cooperation between Pakistan and China under BRI. According to the perspective of BRI, the China has always occupied the position of prominence in South East region. Pakistan and China have always maintained some degree of cultural exchange through art, literature and education. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a framework of regional connectivity. CPEC will not only benefit China and Pakistan but will have positive impact on Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asian Republic, and the region. The enhancement of geographical linkages having improved road, rail and air transportation system with frequent and free exchanges of goods and people to people contact, enhancing understanding through academic, cultural and regional knowledge and culture, activity of higher volume of flow of trade and businesses, producing and moving energy to have more optimal businesses and enhancement of co-operation by win-win model will result in well connected, integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development.

OBJECTIVES :

1. To highlight the educational and cultural exchange between Pakistan and China under BRI.
2. To bring in to lime light that what types of challenges and bottlenecks are confronted in the way of educational and cultural cooperation.
3. To foster strategy that how to strengthen Pak-China educational and cultural ties.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS :

- 1-In which areas of education sector Pak-China had promoted their educational cooperation with each other?
- 2- What is the outcome of cultural relations with each other ?
- 3-What is the impact of educational and cultural cooperation upon Pakistan and China ?

Methodology :

The qualitative and descriptive research methodology will be applied upon this research paper. The socio-economic approach will be applied in this research paper. The data collection will take place through secondary resources

i.e. books ,documentaries ,news channels ,journals ,magazines ,newspapers ,survey reports and published interviews etc .

Data Analysis Procedure :

DATA COLLECTION :

The data collection took place through various secondary sources :reports ,documentaries ,research journals ,newspapers and news channels etc .

DATA PREPARATION :

The data was prepared by thoroughly studying all the available material in form of books ,reports ,newspaper and internet websites . The web sketch was draft by giving proper shape to the research paper . The paper was divided in different segments or part .It includes introduction , objectives , literature review ,significance of study ,data analysis and conclusion . The data was arranged to fill these segments of research work .

DATA EXPLORATION :

The whole accumulated notes were studied and they were sorted out according to the requirement of research paper .The important themes and references were sorted out

DATA REDUCTION:

The data reduction stage plays a significant role in coding of the data .

DATA INTERPRETATION:

In this stage the data were interpreted under themes . The different themes were elaborated according to the research requirements.

Background :

Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China as a sovereign state in the 50s. Over the years, Pakistan-China relationship has been graduated into 'all-weather' Sino-Pak friendship, but mostly it is limited to inter-governmental contact with selected people-to-people interaction. Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China as a sovereign state in the 50s. Over the years, Pakistan-China relationship has been graduated into 'all-weather' Sino-Pak friendship, but mostly it is limited to inter-governmental contact with selected people-to-people interaction. Cultural exchange between Pakistani and Chinese citizens increased after the launch of CPEC. Cooperation and understanding between the governments extended to collaboration and acceptance among the people. And people-to-people relations between the two sides strengthened. Students, artists, sportspersons, businesspeople, professionals, and workers travelled and developed a rapport with locals. A detailed study of the Sahiwal coal power plant and nearby villages, comprising data collection through fieldwork, shows that despite cultural diversity, managers and workers from both sides accepted the cultural diversity and worked for mutual benefit. People working at the power plant exchanged material and non-material cultures with each other that helped them manage cultural diversity. And they strengthened cross-cultural relations, for their exchanges were rewarding and mutually beneficial.

Main Subject :

Cultural Cooperation :

- Culture plays a vital role in promoting friendly relations between Pakistan and China . China and Pakistan are exchanging their cultural values, norms and patterns with the initiative of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Cultural relations are more neutral and comprehensive between China and Pakistan. CPEC, as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), both countries have once again embarked on a journey for colourful cultural exchange.China has played key role in creating awareness about cultural exchange under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).The cultural exchange programme is an integral part of CPEC .The cultural relations gives the advantages to both countries .The major purpose is to achieve and give an understanding of both societies.”The culture is the asset of every nation . The both countries exchange products ,commodities and resources with each other to strengthen the material culture .In non-material culture involves dress ,food ,religion and mode of living .Pakistan has participated in various cultural activities .”^[2] Jamal Shah, the director of Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), came with their delegation and participated in Xinjiang Cultural festival, PNCA given numerous performances which reflected the rich culture of Pakistan.Pakistani students also exhibit their culture .The cultural activities are proliferating day by day between Pakistan and China .

“Pakistan-China cultural relations are the continuation of the great ancient civilisational bonds that existed centuries ago between the two nations. Close geographical contiguity and the ancient Silk Road inspired the flow of goods and

exchange of ideas between the two great Asian civilisations – Buddhism and Islam. The Silk Route transformed the foundations of China and became a source of interaction with ancient and present-day Pakistan.”^[3] Another positive effect of CPEC that Chinese and Pakistani individuals are marrying each other. Before initiation of CPEC, Pakistani male students married to Chinese girls. Most of the couples lived in China and earning money together. But now Chinese males are working in Pakistan in different projects marrying Pakistani women and living with them in Pakistan. It is taking a beginning of new bond between two diverse cultures.

Both countries have rich traditions and literature, which has immense potential to promote the long lasting friendship. Both countries are sharing the tourism with each other, and are rich in tourists sites. There is a need to explore the cultural heritage and tourists attractions of both countries. China has established Chinese cultural center in Islamabad, in which different type of exhibition are held. In this center, cultural Heritage Exhibition and art workshop are held at the Pakistan National Council of Arts. All these types of events are part of cultural exchange programmes. The major purpose of these events is to promote people-to-people contacts.” Under the 2019-2022 Cultural Exchange Programme, China and Pakistan are working on six agreements to strengthen ties in the field of culture, education and tourism. A Pakistan cultural week will be held in Beijing mid-October to showcase cultural heritage and a large exhibition of Gandhara art will be displayed at the National Museum of China in May 2021. The other agreements to be signed in the near future include the promotion of tourism, recognition of diploma and certificates in higher education, youth exchanges, promotion of co-production and exchange of films and television.”^[4]

Chinese Food :

The food is one of major pillar of culture which promotes the relations between Pakistani and Chinese people. Chinese people also like Pakistani spicy delicious food. The Chinese people had expressed their good will feelings for Pakistani chicken biryani, chapatti and chicken. Pakistani people offer their home-made food to Chinese co-workers. Chinese people are of the view that Pakistani people are very hospitable and well-mannered. They really give honor to the guests despite of their meagre resources. The Chinese restaurants are open in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Quetta. The Chinese food are very popular among Pakistani people, especially during winter season the people rushed towards Chinese restaurants for the intake of warm soup. Pakistani food restaurants are open in major cities of China.

“It is well established that a majority of urban Pakistanis love their Chinese food. But unbeknownst to many, this circumstance has been the culmination of a long relationship that the Chinese have had with the Subcontinent Cuisine and culture are intertwined, as are religion and customs. The rising number of Chinese people visiting Pakistan to work on hundreds of CPEC projects and Pakistanis visiting China for various reasons has helped Chinese cuisine gain popularity in Pakistan.”^[5]

Chinese Language :

Language plays a key role in promoting the culture between Pakistan and China. There are multiple Confucius centers which are imparting Chinese language in Pakistan, and Pakistani students are keen to learn Chinese language in Pakistan. The Chinese language is replacing English language for jobs which are being created under CPEC. The Chinese courses are introduced at BS levels in different universities of Pakistan. The Chinese constitution is taught in Political Science subject. The university of Balochistan has opened Chinese center and multiple students are taking admission to learn Chinese language. The NUML has also introduced Chinese language courses and foreign service officers who are posted in China complete their language courses prior going to China. The university of Agricultural Faisalabad opened a Chinese language institute. The Pakistani students have qualified HSK and applied for admission in Chinese universities. The workers who are well-versed in Chinese language also teach Chinese language in their respective villages. The Chinese workers are also learning Urdu language in Pakistan. CPEC is a powerful tool to motivate to learn each other cultures, and new pattern of society will be developed which will be the blend of Pakistan and Chinese culture.

Educational Cooperation:

Pakistan and China are highly cooperating with each other in educational sector under BRI. A large number of Pakistani students are studying in Chinese universities, medical and Engineering colleges. China is offering a large number of scholarships under cultural exchange programme. Chinese students are also studying in Pakistan. In regard, the first Urdu-Chinese dictionary has been developed in Peking university. The “Youth Exchange Programme” is a milestone to foster friendly relations between two neighboring countries. The both countries are collaborating to

enhance research activities by sharing different types of research projects under BRI . Pakistani universities has established Chinese study center to impart Chinese language to Pakistani students . The Chinese study centre are also displaying the Chinese history and culture . Many public and private schools are also teaching Chinese language to their students .

The Pakistan students are giving priority to Chinese universities to pursue their higher education .After CPEC ,the scholars numbers is increasing and they are being supported by fully –funded or partially funded scholarships . The Pakistani students are highly satisfied with Chinese standard of education in various universities.Pakistani universities has signed MoU with Chinese universities to indulge in collaborative research .The 18 Pak- China has established the CPEC consortium to promote academic exchange for the high quality development of CPEC . “The educational cooperation and exchanges between Pakistan and China are playing an important role in promoting the high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a Pakistani scholar said.: Pakistan has produced young talented youth which can be according to the criteria of Chinese multi-national companies ^[6].

Challenges :

The cultural onslaught of Chinese society will clash in the long run with the traditional Islamic society of Pakistan. CPEC has an economic potential. China's intention is to expand its dominance in the region, where as Pakistan will be in a position to move forward from its stagnant economy. We cannot forget the results of intermingling of socio-cultural norms, values and traditions. It may change the rules of the game. Under the canopy of euphoria, identity must not be forgotten. There is no doubt that regional connectivity would ultimately bring regional prosperity but there are serious socio culture impediments

Analysis :

“The relationship has been established on the basis of mutual trust, cooperation and harmony. The relationship is unique, as without having common language, culture and political system, the countries succeeded to establish the ever-flourishing relationship, which started from diplomatic relationship to ‘Iron Brothers’.^[7] It is the finest example of strategic relations.”In the perspective of BRI ,besides economic relations ,the socio-cultural and educational relations also carry pivotal importance to bring these countries together . Cultural exchange between Pakistani and Chinese citizens increased after the launch of CPEC. Cooperation and understanding between the governments extended to collaboration and acceptance among the people. And people-to-people relations between the two sides strengthened. Students, artists, sportspeople, businesspeople, professionals, and workers travelled and developed a rapport with locals.

Impacts :

1-EDUCATIONAL UPLIFT :The educational cooperation between Pakistan and China will uplift the educational standards of Pakistan and China . The Pakistani students will learn from experiences of Chinese teachers ,and will impart the education in Pakistan .

2- POPULARITY OF CHINESE LANGUAGE :The Chinese languages is getting popularity in Pakistan and it is replacing the English language . Most the students are learning Chinese language, despite of knowing this that it is one of toughest language of the world . Most of the students have passed HSK, and applied for admission in different universities of China.

3-CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES : The cultural exchange programme enabled the people to make contact with eachother .The Chinese culture ,art and food is getting popularity in Pakistan vis-a –vis Pakistani food ,art and culture is also introduced in China . The Pakistani delegations are exhibiting their culture in China .

Conclusion :

Pakistan considers China as one of its closest friend and partner and China considers Pakistan as its “Iron Brother”. The bilateral relationship between the two neighboring countries is characterized by feelings of mutual trust, respect and goodwill towards each other. Cultural relations between Pakistan and China are need of the hour to broaden the basis of the two countries’ friendship and enhance people-to-people relationship, said an expert during a lecture organised by the Shanghai University, China, under the South Asian Lecture Series to mark the 70th year of Sino-Pak diplomatic relations. Chinese Premier Keqiang Li said, “It is necessary to engage citizens of both Pakistan and China in mutual interaction through cultural exchanges and people-to-people.”^[8] Cultural relations between Pakistan and China are need of the hour to broaden the basis of the two countries’ friendship and enhance people-to-people relationship. Both have succeeded to cultivate deep-rooted relationship between state to state. The relationship is multi-dimensional, ranging from diplomatic to defence and to vibrant economic ties. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), being the flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), speaks volumes of the strength of the mutual friendship,” ^[9]

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