

A Review Paper on Impact of CPEC on Pakistani Culture

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Abstract— Generally China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is viewed as a bonus package for Pakistan’s economy. It carries packages for industrial growth, infrastructural development, power generation, market expansion and employment. Besides economic prospects and advantages of this project, the fact that Pakistan have very wide and dominant culture, religion and values and it will be affected by this project is completely ignored. CPEC will not only bring economic changes to Pakistan but it will be like chines cultural intrusion on Pakistan.

Keywords- China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan Economy, Pakistan Culture, Language, Society.

I. INTRODUCTION

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has so far played a very tremendous role in increasing Pakistan’s GDP, growth rate, employment and most importantly the support to tackle the energy crisis. Since its inception, May 2013, people from all walks of life in Pakistan are expecting so high of it. Though West has continuously criticized this project. The opposing of this project by US can be express from the media interview of US state secretary Pompeo, saying that Pakistan is not going to use the US supported International Monetary Fund (IMF) funds to pay Chinese debts. It is not first incidence that the west has abstain Pakistan China relationship but both the countries are steadfast to complete the project that will benefit both the countries. The CEPC industrial zone will attach much Foreign Direct Investments to Pakistan as the route is global value chain. This completion of this magnificent project will lead to the Industrial Development, Global cooperation, trade and cultural exchange, reduction in foreign exchange deficit and will balance the imbalance trade of Pakistan [1].

According to the Pakistan Planning commission, the CPEC will currently produce about 38,000 jobs of which 75% will be for Pakistanis and the figure will increase up to 500,000 job in the next five to seven years. The improvement of rural areas will bring the local Education, clean drinking water, health and transport facilities and improve their standard of living as a part of corporate social responsibility [1].

CPEC which comprises of Grants, Investments and loan which could raise up to sixty billion dollars, starting from Kashgar of Xinjiang province of China crossing Khunjarab pass in Gilgit Baltistan coming down through Kurrakuram highway and reach to Gawadar sea port in Balocistan. The project includes developing energy power plants, infrastructure, industrial zone, modernization of Agriculture and developing Gawadar sea port [2].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There was a time in 60s to 80s when the cities of Pakistan has the open spaces for women and they used to roam in the city freely without hesitation or fear. They use to visit cinemas and riding bikes and go to colleges etc. Even foreigner female tourists use to where their own cloths and style while visiting throughout Pakistan and local people knew that this is their culture and would not bother of their wearing. In 80s with the introduction of afghan refugees, changes this culture shaping the society into more conservative, gated communities, refraining women of roaming and segregation of gender. Groping, staring and eve teasing started raising. The government ignored the issue as Islamic parties were in favor of gender segregation. Urban areas held more affected by the trend than rural areas [3].

The benefits of CPEC are undeniable but it will also impact Pakistan in socio-cultural wise. The impact of Europeans colonies and white super messy is still visible in our society. Likewise the globalization is affecting Pakistan’s culture and now with CPEC project this cultural change is eminent [4].

Currently, proficiency in English language is considered valuable to have decent jobs and fit in the society but now a day people are taking about learning of Chinese language as new Chinese companies will come to Pakistan where proficient Chinese language will be required. In 2013, Premier Li Keqiang promised to send about 1000 Chinese teachers to teach Chinese to the indigenes students but now we can see that there are enough Chinese teachers in Pakistan to tech Chinese. As a result, the Urdu language which was already losing in value because of English invasion in the society will further diminish will the arrival of Chinese language [4].

Most of the Chinese people are irreligious and people are materialistic. Contrary to this, Pakistani people are most religious following religious norms and values. The CPEC route will not only be used for carrying goods but also language, social norms, customs, values and beliefs. The ancient Silk Road was also the way to introduce Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Manichaeism to China. Buddhism also reached to China via this route as a traveler from China when visited different areas they used to bring the native culture, norms and religions with them. The inter-cultural communication will also help to share the knowledge of technology, trade and commerce, growth and cooperation as China is the goods example for us who developed in few decades [4].

The advertisement of “Shaan masala” is the eminent example of cultural exchange where Chinese women are shown bringing Pakistani Biryani to Pakistani neighbour’s home but some we shall see the opposite of it as the news of Pakistani girl marrying Chinese boy was the cynosure for Pakistani people [4].

The upcoming CPEC plans revealed that soon Chinese contents will also be broadcast on Pakistani televisions via Digital Television Terrestrial Multimedia Broadcasting (DTMB). It is pertinent to note that for last several years Indian and Turkish contents largely affected and deteriorated the norms and customs of Pakistani public, especially youth, and the upcoming Chinese contents will bring up further change. A Chinese hero has already made its appearance in a Pakistan film “Chalay thay saath” and yet more to come [4][5].

The Belt and Road is mainly moved by the motive of exploring new markets as their local market is already saturated because of over production. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will come hard on the local manufacturers as the cheaper products will capture the local market leaving no space for the local goods leading to materialistic culture [4].

There is no harm in adopting good ethics from Chinese culture like hard work, commitment to job and dedication, which are the key features for fast growth of the country [4].

As a nation we have to understand the fact that only those nations rise and grow on the earth who preserve and protect their own culture and history. We have to adopt good and beneficial features of other culture by sticking to our own as those nations who fall for others cultures vanish from the surface of earth as a nation [4].

Chinese women are generally considered hard working, non-submissive to the man and aggressive to attain their rights. And now it is commonly observed that Chinese women roaming and visiting Pakistani communities and markets [3].

Communist ideology has long ago retrieved the women to be refrain of labor, public spaces or joining government and military. Women who once used and restricted to their homes and housewives are now in every field like government officer, military and engineering. Chinese communist environment are although not well known for immigrants but several female immigrants have achieved their marks in this communist society where they are free to advance in education and make their own career as compared to the countries they come from. No doubt that some Pakistani women have also marked their name to be the best beside the oppressive environment and constant harassment and achieved Noble prize, human right struggles, fighter jet pilots and military generals are the few names. So it is right to say that Chinese women visiting Pakistani communities and markets will definitely leave their impression on it. The Chinese women visited Pakistan seen to be inspired by the Marxist ideologies of Mao by not feeling shy to work hard, laboring and getting their business done without relying on man [3].

There is twofold effect of Chinese women, who are raised in a communist society, on the culture of Pakistan [3].

First, it provides forefront for Pakistani women to follow the Chinese women as they carry on their businesses, pushing back the males making space for themselves in the male dominant society and claiming and fighting for their rights. They visit Sunday bazar, markets and parks with minding the time and the strength on men in the places. Pakistani girls at Dhabas are also a gesture for claiming their women space, freedom and right firmly as Dhabas are male dominated, rough road side food suppliers [3].

Second is women bike riding? As mentioned above before 80s women used to ride bike and cycle for visiting colleges and markets which later on vanished because of conservatism. Pakistani women are now fed-up of abusing and started riding again regardless of what people think or talk of them reclaiming their lost space [3].

This is how CPEC project is impacting on Pakistani culture which would never been expected when the decision of this project was going to make that this may happen two and this is one of the top 20 impacts that CPEC will bring with its formation [3].

The change in culture is positive or negative is depending on one’s own mind and is a subjective matter. For instance, the boldness of women and visit those places where she was not expected before without hesitation of being harassed is good or bad is a subjective matter [3].

We and the rest of world or stakeholder have eyes on CPEC as it is big energy and infrastructure project undergoing and huge amount of money is involved is the part of one belt one road but we are ignoring cultural impact of Chinese on Pakistan. Chinese culture is following its money make its impact count [3].

CPEC is a common buzz today and considered as a game changer. Yes, indeed it is a game changer but not

only economical but also cultural. Culture is a way of life of a nation. It include a nation's ideology, ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, language, customs, and the things they practice. The institution like family, schools, and religion are considered as the social pillars of the culture and media is the one whose responsibility is to preserve it. Pakistani media completely ignoring its role by playing foreign contents to make more and more money [5].

Pakistani is a nation of multilingual and multicultural society having unique norms, ethics, beliefs and values making an attractive and delightful national culture. But Western, Indian and Arabic culture is deteriorating its real values and its main source is foreign and Pakistani media. The youth are more influence toward adopting different values from media's foreign contents, e.g. unethical values which are against the religion, dividing joint family system into nuclear families, disrespect of their elder and sending old ones to the old age homes etc. [5].

Normally, people from weak culture are attracted toward the higher or strong cultures and adopt it, but in case Pakistan, it has its own higher and strong culture but it is the media that is promoting the foreign weaker culture showing it much attractive and charming and by not promoting or denouncing its own culture. Hence the foreign media got the chance to introduce their unethical value and culture to our societies. Especially the elite class of our country are more prone towards the American, European and even Indian culture which is the threat to our own culture. The new generation of these elite class even do not know about their own culture considering this foreign culture as their own [5].

Another factor of adopting foreign culture is the influx of chines with the CPEC project and businesses. The future media sharing plans of Pakistan with china to make the two countries friendlier and to increase the mutual understanding with each other, will also affect the Pakistani culture and would spillover it [5].

There is a wide difference between Chines culture and Pakistani culture. Chines are socialist following confusion's ethics and norm and most of their people are Buddhist or atheists. Contrary to this, Pakistani people follow Islam and share Islamic values, ethics and beliefs. Therefore, one can say that there will be very adverse effect of chines culture on Pakistani culture [5].

Various institutions has started teaching Chines language and culture in various universities. Students in Pakistan were already confuse in learning Urdu and English and now this new language is introduced and considered important to attain jobs in chines Projects in future. The recent report states that Pakistan's national language Urdu is one of the languages which will lose its status in coming two or three decades. Interaction with different cultures is not itself a bad idea but losing or leave one's own culture is a bad thing to do [5].

In this regard, PEMRA has to play its role seriously in censoring the contents, ban the coping of other cultures and should promote entertainment and contents based on our local culture and values. This will not only improve our culture value but also help us to gain our lost image in the eyes of the world [6].

It is right to say that nations raise in its own language, values and culture. We need to respect our true religion and culture and this the only way to bring back our lost identity [5].

III. CONCLUSION

Pakistan's society is general religious having their distinct values and culture. Because of CPEC and arrival of chines people to Pakistan's markets and society, its values are changing at a very high pace and the people of the country welcomes this new culture. People are trying to welcome communist life style and after inclusion of chines content in electronic and print media this change in culture will severe further. People are ready to change and even they are now diverting from focusing and learning of English language to Chines language.

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