

Role of CPEC in Transformation of Baloch Society and Culture

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Abstract

The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor CPEC is an enduring multi-billion infrastructural venture which aims to transmute the Pakistan society in general and Balochistan society in special by connecting Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan to China’s northwestern region of Xinjiang. A cursory glance at the project of CPEC and its routes show that it is a crisscrossed network of railways, highways, airports, and energy pipelines for trade and tourism purposes which will pass through all the provinces of Pakistan. These railways, highways, airports and other means of transportations, communications and technologies are considered as modernizing agents and according to sociologists and anthropologists these modernizing agents strongly influence the socio-cultural contours of the people and society of any region. The historical evidences show that these modernizing agents, while intermingling through an area, help in transformation of the society and bring a cultural change in it. Such a transformation and development in different societies was observed by several historians and philosophers like Karl Marx and Ghalib also. Balochistan, in general, and Gwadar, in particular, are the key players of CPEC. Historically, the area had remained a cross-road of civilizations interacting through south Asia. Balochistan is multi-ethnic region in terms of religion, culture, language, tribe, community and caste. The area is also a wonderful mixture of “Close and Open Society”. Being the largest and richest in mineral and gas resources, the province is still backward. It is envisioned that the CPEC would address

various economic and social problems of Balochistan. Several studies have been conducted to discuss the project, its objectives, pros and cons, threats and its sways on different dimensions of economy, geographical, political and strategical impacts on the zone but its social and cultural feature is the most neglected dimension as virtually no study is available on this aspect. So the present discourse will try to estimate the influence of modernizing agents through CPEC on Baloch society and culture. This feature will be examined through the impacts of the interacting forces throughout known history of the region since the earliest times including the British contribution and will be connected to the current situation. All these configurations, operational all over the past till the contemporary circumstances, will be taken into deliberation through this paper.

Key Words: CPEC, Modernizing Agents, Transformation, Social and Cultural Changes

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Introduction

A Chinese saying goes as; “If you want to get rich first to build a road.”¹ The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an enduring multi-billion infrastructural venture which aims to transmute the Pakistani society in general and Balochistan society in special by connecting Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan to China’s northwestern region of Xinjiang, via a network of roads, railways and pipelines to transport oil, gas and other essential natural resources. The economic corridor will help cut 12,000 Km route for oil supply from Middle East² and run about 3,000 km (Approx.) from Gwadar to Kashgar.³ CPEC is the extension of China’s 21st century mega project OBOR-One Belt One Road.⁴

The CPEC involved four noteworthy tasks having various durations, the four major projects are: infrastructure (road, rail, aviation, and data connectivity), industry (Gwadar Free Zone and other industrial parks), energy (Coal, Hydel, Wind, Solar, LNG transmission), and Gwadar Port. The construction period of CPEC is from 2014 to 2030.⁵CPEC has been divided into three phases. The short-term projects-Early Harvest Projects include upgrading of the Karakoram Highway to Islamabad, Karachi-Lahore Motorway, establishment of New Gwadar Airport, hospital and vocational training institutes, Orange Line, Metro Train, development of Dry Port, construction of East Bay Expressway in Gwadar and development of Special Economic Zones on CPEC-were estimated to be completed by 2017-18. By January 2019, nine projects included in early harvest projects have been completed and 13 projects are under construction, with a total investment of US\$19 billion;⁶ mid-term projects are estimated to be completed by 2025, and the long-term by 2030.⁷

There are three proposed routes of the projects in Pakistan; Eastern Western and Central: These three routes remain same from Abbottabad to Kashgar. Eastern route will originate from Gwadar then move to Turbat-Panjgur-Khuzdar-Ratodero-Kashmore-Rajanpur-Dera Ghazi Khan-Multan-Faisalabad-PindiBhatian-Rawalpindi-Hasanabdal-Abbottabad-Muzaffarabad-Gilgit- Aliabad-and Kashgar. Western route is Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab-Panjgur-Besima-Kalat-Quetta-Qila Saifullah-Zhob-Dera Ismail Khan-Mianwali-Attock-Hasanabdal-and onwards.⁸ The western alignment will have an additional regional connectivity link to Afghanistan through Chaman and will connect with Iran through Quetta-Koh-e-Taftan link.⁹The Central route is Gwadar-Turbat-Panjgur-Khuzdar-Ratodero-Kashmore-Rajanpur-Dera Ghazi Khan-Dera Ismail Khan-Bannu-Kohat-Peshawar-Hasanabdal-and onwards.¹⁰

So a glance at the project of CPEC and its routes shows that it is a crisscrossed network of railways, highways, airports, and energy pipelines for trade and tourism purposes. Railways, roads, highways, pipelines and airways are the means of

transportation and communication. The main purpose of the CPEC project is to strengthen economic development through trade and industry. The means of transportation, communication and technologies play crucial role in trade and industry. They are essential for economic development. Once a motorway or a highway passes through a village, it induces the growth of link roads around that area. So railways, highways, airports and other means of transportation, communication and technologies can be regarded as modernizing agents and according to sociologists and anthropologists these modernizing tools strongly influence the socio-cultural contours of the people of any region.

Social and Cultural Change: Theories and Factors

Social scientists define society as a group of individuals who live inside a similar domain, share a typical culture, sustain themselves through proliferation and comprise a pretty much independent unit.¹¹ Numerous definitions of culture are defined by the anthropologists. As per Edward B. Tylor's: "Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by (a human) as a member of society."¹² Change in society and culture is a natural process. As explained by sociologists, social change is the process by which entire societies, social organizations, modes of interaction, work and leisure activities, roles and customs are altered or tailored.¹³ Changes in society and culture are often closely related. The cultural change refers to change in the technology or the emergence of new values.¹⁴

According to anthropologists, major factors which contribute to cultural change are: 'change in means of transportation, change in means of communication, evolution in technologies, acculturation, diffusion and change in geo-physical environment etc.,. Industrialization, urbanization, globalization/modernization are the forces which boost the cultural change in society.¹⁵ These forces are interconnected which finally lead a society to be modernized. The backbones of these forces are means of transportation, communication and

technologies. It helped to accelerate the commercial and industrial development of various countries.¹⁶ Its advances in transportation that roll out conceivable improvements in the way of living and the ways in which societies are shipshape and therefore have an extraordinary impact on the progress of civilizations.¹⁷ Our sense of moving is escalated by transportation technology. Indeed, we can trek at a higher speed and longer distance. The connections amongst transportation and society, nonetheless, are significantly more perplexing, numerous, profound, and primeval.¹⁸ Communication technology has enormously affected society by altering the nature of relationship among people.¹⁹ Our vision and our hearing ability extends with the expansion of communication technology.

Numerous social theories contend that technology is a main stimulator of society and it rolls out social change inescapable. Contacts among social orders and among groups within societies become a vital part of everyday life due to the advances in transportation and communications. Diffusion occurs through contact. For Ogburn, "Diffusion is the significant process of social change and he contends that it can have far-reaching impacts on human relationships."²⁰

So means of transportation, communication and technologies play a crucial role as backbone of the forces of social and cultural change. These are considered as modernizing agents and any revolution in the means of transportation, communication and technologies help in transformation of any society and region.

Modernizing Agents and Socio-Cultural Change: Historical Interplay

From the beginning of history, human sensitivity has showed the desire for movability and the progress in society can be measured through it. The history of transport is the history of civilization. For the true advancement of a country, a modern and efficient transport is essential as basic infrastructure. It has been viewed throughout the known history of any nation that proper, efficient and extensive means of transportation have assumed noteworthy role. Transport is the basic facility with

which individuals not simply associate but rather progress.²¹ Societies in England, Japan, China and many others countries have made progress through these modernizing agents.

By comparing eighteenth century's England and France on Industrial Revolution, Rick Szostak argues that during eighteenth century, Industrial Revolution occurred in England due to modern system of transport. He added that modern transport system was necessary for Industrial Revolution which the France had not, in comparison with England.²² According to Blumer, industrialization is the major factor of social change. He regarded industrialization as major agent in altering many western societies since the last two centuries.²³ Such a development was observed by Karl Marx when he examined the transformation of south Asian society in 1857 upheaval brought by the powerful agents of modernizations *i.e.* railways, roads, telegraph lines and educational institution introduced by the British using the term "Unconscious Tool of History."²⁴ The famous poet-philosopher Asadullah Ghalib had also observed likewise situations when he travelled to Calcutta and observed the same circumstances.²⁵ Furthermore, the British contribution who was the pioneer in mapping the South Asian region in general and Balochistan in special and exposing it to the outside world is cherished example. All these powerful means of modernization changed the society although the British did not want to change it.

Balochistan: Brief Contextual History

Balochistan, largest but thinly populated province of Pakistan, is one of the oldest settlements of the world. Strategically, as a gateway to south Asia, Middle East and the Central Asian States, Balochistan's location is peerless.²⁶ Ethnically, Balochistan is a plural society. The different ethno-linguistic communities-mainly Baloch, Pashtuns and Brahuies exist in Balochistan. Other small communities, *i.e.* Sindhi, Persian and Saraiki speaking groups, having their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural identities are also the part of Balochistan's society.²⁷

Balochistan has been the cradle of earliest human settlements²⁸ for thousands of years. It shows evidence of contacts through trade exchanges with Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran. There are mounds from which remains of a culture have been found with affinities to the Hissar Culture of north-eastern Iran around 3,500 BC. Kech (Turbat), is located on the main trade route linking Middle East, Central Asia and India and was equally influenced by different civilizations, migrants and conquerors.

The earliest history of the area can be traced back to 10,000 years, since the period of Prophet Dawood. Many ancient rulers²⁹ also traversed and subjugated the area. The Baloch are frequently mentioned in many Arabic and Persian chronicles.³⁰ Balochistan also remained under the rule of mightiest King Darius (522-485 BC) in 540 BC and under Achaemenid's Empire (c.550–330 BC) as well.

The Arab historians and geographers refer Zoroastrianism as the religion of the area. The area has been traversed by numerous foreign invaders and adventurers. Its coastal area provided a base to the armies ranging from the Iranians, the Greeks, the Arabs and the Turks. The Muslim armies laid the foundation of Muslim rule here. The Iranian claimed on the area during the British chronicles. The significance of the vast area of Balochistan to the British Empire became obvious during the 1st Anglo-Afghan War (1839-42). The area provided an easy access to Kandahar and Herat, the gateways to India. The developments in Afghanistan and Central Asia shaped the British policy towards Balochistan. Sir Robert Sandeman, 'the peaceful conqueror of Balochistan' had started his interaction with the land and people of Balochistan since 1866. He also strongly recommended the construction of a railway from Karachi, via Pasni, or Las Bela, to Panjgur, and ultimately to the Iranian frontier.³¹ Arab geographers like Ibne-Houqal, Ibne-Khudaba, Al-Isatakhari and Al-Idrisi wrote about the area and observed, for the most part desert. On the advent of British, Balochistan society was just like a 'Desert Society' with the characteristics of isolation, gallantry, group feeling, tribal

enmity and animal husbandry. There was hardly any area in Balochistan that could be considered an urban settlement.³²

British constructed a network of roads, railway lines, airports, bridges, telegraph lines and strategic garrisons. The objective behind this huge framework venture was not to develop the area but to keep up their rule and to defy the Russian progress towards the warm waters of Balochistan.

From 1878 to 1922 the British laid a crisscrossed rail network throughout the land, built many bridges and created wonders i.e. the Khojak Pass which is considered as one of the longest tunnels in south Asia. British built this infrastructure for their own administrative determinations without the involvement of local communities' interests so it did not bring any economic change in the region.³³ They opened a few schools in newly built cantonments and townships. This primitive and inadequate infrastructure brought visible dent in the attitude and behavior of the young virile belonging to upper classes but the system did not prove beneficial for the females especially of the tribal areas. When the British evacuated the Baloch soil, Balochistan became part of Pakistan in 1947.³⁴ But unfortunately after the passage of the seven decades the area is still backward at present having 88 % deprivation, 63 % poverty, 76 % illiteracy, and 70% of the population lives without gas facilities, 78% without electricity, and 62% without safe drinking water.³⁵ This caused anger in Baloch people and led to insurgencies in Balochistan. Economic and resource exploitation is the major factor of perceived friction between Balochistan and the central government.³⁶

Currently the Baloch people are facing several other major problems such as poor health facility, underdevelopment of education sectors, lack of employment opportunities, marginalization, lack of connectivity and access in rural areas of the province. Pitiably condition of the existing railway infrastructure cannot put up the increasing traffic burden. The lack of infrastructure, rail road network combined with underdevelopment impedes economic activity in Balochistan. To transform the outdated system into modern trade routes, and

for the socio-economic development in this province, an adequate transport network for the transfer of goods at a faster speed and a comprehensive development project for transformation and addressing the grievances of the people of Balochistan is the ultimate necessity.³⁷

Socio-Cultural Transformation in Balochistan Through CPEC Projects: An Assessment

The main aim of the CPEC project is to boost economic development. Development means progress.³⁸ There is close relation between society and economic development. Modernist theorist Karl Marx is of the view that economic development brings permeative cultural change.³⁹ It is assessed that modernizing agents in CPEC will bring social and cultural changes in Balochistan.

Industrialization

Major project of CPEC is to construct and improve infrastructure. Improved road and rail network is the backbone of industrialization. Advanced infrastructure will give connectivity to help industrial expansion, scaling up of social service condition through schools, health facilities, and sanitation services.⁴⁰ As well as provide citizens access to education, health, water and energy which are currently inaccessible in many areas of Balochistan.⁴¹ A road network linking the free economic zone to the new airport and the seaport will also be built by China.⁴² Under CPEC project several industrial free zones (first phase of free zone is completed in January 2018. Around 30 companies have invested in free zone)⁴³, mineral economic processing zones, industrial zones and industrial parks would be constructed in Balochistan. The main objective of these zones was to develop a commercial logistics center, exhibition hall and some industries with local resources, i.e. fisheries and livestock exhibition and sales. The logistics processing centers and development of industries would cover service and household appliances, textiles and garment processing machinery.⁴⁴ These industrial projects would help to promote industrialization in the area.

Urbanization

Remoteness hinders in urbanization process. Through the upgrade of the rail, road networks, connectivity to the remote areas would be provided. Socially, the rustic regions have been oppressed by customary social structures and urbanization would offer the inhabitants an impartial space where the people don't pay steadfastness to a specific individual or group and are at liberty because of the advantage of their nationality.⁴⁵

Impact on Trade and Commerce

The deplorable condition of the existing railway network in Balochistan does not provide access to the far-flung areas of Balochistan. The remote areas having no access to rail links for transport and commerce become backward and thus enhance the sense of deprivation in people. Under the CPEC project, the rail network - new tracks of Gwadar-Basima-Jacobabad (1050 km), Gwadar-Karachi (700 km), Jacobabad-Havelian (959 km-existing track to be upgraded) and Havelian-Khunjerab's new track (682 km), railways projects-Karachi-Lahore-Peshawar (ML-1) and railways track (1736 kilometers) would become progressively coherent and upgraded.⁴⁶

It is assessed that through this network, the effective movement of containers and cargo, from the various cities of Balochistan to the other provinces of Pakistan, will be increased. The increased connectivity will help in reducing several problems of farmers such as post-harvest and transportation losses and the railways network will also provide the greater inter-region connectivity including the remote areas such as Turbat, Hoshab, Besima, Khuzdar, Havelian, Besham, Gilgit as well as it will help in providing them with a link to enhance their trade with the rest of the country.⁴⁷

Employment

With the construction of roads and highways, there will be establishment of schools and universities, hotels, hospitals and shops onto the routes. Local people have started setting up

hotels, shops and houses along the completed portions of the CPEC's Western route. It will provide jobs and business opportunities for youth of Balochistan.⁴⁸ It was estimated that Over 200,000 Jobs would be generated on the completion of CPEC which will provide job opportunities to the millions of people of Pakistan and Balochistan as well. But with the investment of US\$ 18 billion made so far has created 75,000 jobs for Pakistanis.⁴⁹ A recent study conducted by CPEC Centre of Excellence demonstrated that CPEC could help generate 1.2 million jobs under its presently joint venture 2013-2030.⁵⁰ It will help in reducing unemployment and the living standards of the people will be improved.⁵¹

Impact on Social Nomadic Lifestyle

Since most of the western route would pass through Balochistan, there would be substantial rise in the living standard of the people and the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the people would be transmuted to a more service based one. This economic corridor can be viewed as a channel which could help in improving the well-being of the people from all social strata. By active participation in the development and fair distribution of benefits people could enjoy the advantages of the project.⁵²

Energy

Currently Pakistan is facing energy crises. It is planned under CPEC projects to develop 300 Megawatts (MW) coal based power project at Gwadar.⁵³ Its ground breaking was done on 4th November 2019. A Coal-fired power plant of 1320 MW at Hub is inaugurated on 21st October 2019.⁵⁴ Energy plays a significant lifeline in the economic progress of a country because industries need efficient and consistent supply of electricity. The CPEC would provide energy required in ship-breaking industry and thus increase production, compatible with the export standards, in Balochistan. Energy projects, like shrimp farm and mining, which would transform the fiscal shapes and create job opportunities.⁵⁵ Socially, people would enjoy the benefits of the projects by utilizing energy in cooking, heating and water stipulation.⁵⁶

Gwadar

Gwadar port is the deep warm water seaport which is located on the Strait of Hormuz in Persian Gulf. Two third of the world oil trade is channeled through here. Historically, Pakistan purchased Gwadar in 1958 from the Sultanate of Oman at the cost of US \$3 million. Construction at Gwadar was started in 1988.⁵⁷ Under CPEC, launched in 2013, it was planned to develop fishing town of Gwadar into a metropolis.⁵⁸ According to the details of the project, development of Gwadar power generation plants (300 Megawatts (MW) coal based power projects at Gwadar under progress and a HUBCO power plant of 1320MW inaugurated),⁵⁹ and Gwadar International Airport (ground breaking held on 29th March 2019),⁶⁰ free trade zone, a special economic zone, a coastal expressway, and a pipeline linking Iran are also the part of proposed plan. When Gwadar would become plainly operational, cargo and trade movement will produce economic action and will influence the socio-cultural landscape of the region. Obviously, there would be resistance by personal stakes, yet then powers of progress and change can't be expected for long.⁶¹

Gwadar can become the international hub because it connects three regions *i.e.* Central Asia, South Asia and Middle East. It will attract tourists and foreign investors due to tax free investment. Foreign reserves and free trade zone will create job opportunities and will help in development of Pakistan particularly in Balochistan. So the project will help in addressing the Baloch grievances and bring prosperity in Balochistan.⁶²

However, the Baloch people have some reservations over the construction of Gwadar port project. The multi-billion-dollar project does not present any promising picture for the people of Gwadar because they are still living in poor conditions and security threats. The major occupation of the people of coastal areas is fishing. With the development of the Gwadar Port their major occupation is at the risk of extinction. They may be forced to migrate thus losing their traditional culture.⁶³

Cross-Cultural Exchange

Cultural studies show that where the development goes a pace, social and cultural norms and values intermingle and influence each other. Pakistan has a multi-cultural multi-lingual past and it has imbibed heritage from Arabic, Turkish, Iranian, Greek and Indians.⁶⁴ Hussain and Ali (2015), argue that CPEC will increase social connectivity among people.⁶⁵ For sustained relationship between China and Pakistan, people to people contact is declared as one of the five major goals of CPEC by the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China (NDRC). 'People-to-people bonds', primarily mean cross-cultural exchange through academia and tourism, art and religion.⁶⁶

Education

Under the CPEC plan, Gwadar primary school, Gwadar hospital and Gwadar vocational school (with Chinese government's grant), will also be constructed.⁶⁷ There is a proposed plan to establish two university campuses in the remote areas of Balochistan- one at Gwadar and the other will be built at Zhob the campus of University of Balochistan by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, in collaboration with China. The aim of establishing universities is to provide modern education to the masses of these underdeveloped areas.⁶⁸ Pakistani culture will also be affected by Chinese educational system, language and cultural customs. Chinese language is already getting attention in Pakistan. Pakistanis are familiar with the soft image of China such as music, dance, sports and cultural activities and by attracting this soft power, the educationist, doctors, and engineers will prefer to go to China for education.⁶⁹

Tourism

Tourism became leading industry since the last decades. Many sectors such as transport, hotels, restaurants, shops, travel guides and tourism operators etc., associated tourism sector in economic activity and has played significant role in creating

job opportunities. Travel and tourism brings closer the people of different customs and cultures and serves as powerful vehicle in promoting worldly peace and harmony. Modern rail and road link will not only increase trade and industrial activity but would boost tourism industry in Pakistan, especially in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and coastal areas of Balochistan. The rail and road route will pass through high mountains, long glaciers and valleys and will attract the tourists from the world especially Chinese tourists. The Karakarm route is considered one of the 10th major rail journeys of the world.⁷⁰ Pakistan is the country of beautiful cultures including Buddhist culture. There are several well-known Buddhist remains in Peshawar, Swat, Takhat-i-Bahi, and Taxila etc. Tourism Bureau Pakistan is sponsoring Gandhara Week, Buddhist Culture and Art Expositions since the last decades. Exchange in Buddhist culture and art is the significant part of people to people contact.⁷¹

Religion and Values

Pakistan is an Islamic country. Chinese know that Pakistanis are moderate, warm hearted, honest and very friendly with Chinese. Muslims in China mainly live in northwest of China and due to the presence of Muslims in the areas there is Muslim cultural atmosphere and tradition. The people from northwestern china are familiar with local diet and their religious traditions.⁷² China is a Socialist country. Culturally, the Confucian norms and traditions and Buddhism define the culture of China. Chinese emphasize Confucian values such as family, respect of authority, harmony, work ethics and efficient management.⁷³ In spite of having religious differences, China and Pakistan resonate same value systems like ideals and concerns about family, respect of women, respect of authority etc.⁷⁴

Pakistanis have worked with Chinese in the construction of Karakorum Highway KKH and dams, in defense and energy related projects, so they are aware of the work ethics and value system of china. When Pakistani and Chinese workers will work and interact together on the construction of CPEC projects in Balochistan, besides transfer of skills by China, they

will definitely share some of their cultural values with each other. A change in attitude will also occur when Pakistanis will observe and get the benefit of the Chinese work ethics. When the CPEC route will reach Gwadar, after passing through the northern areas KP, the Punjab and Balochistan, along with the result of CPEC projects there will be a lasting spillover of socio-cultural corollary because major economic developments very often bring socio-cultural changes in societies.⁷⁵

Tribal and feudal system always resists the modernist changes in society but it does not mean they are static and will remain the same. There will be considerable change with the passage of time. It might be possible that currently there will be no visible change occurs in northern areas and Balochistan's society and culture but when the projects will be completed in time and when the benefits of the project will reach the common people, there will be increase in goodwill towards the Chinese people.⁷⁶

Art and Music

Art is a language with no boundaries. Exhibitions, performance and music such as songs and dance of Xinjiang have much in common with Pakistanis musical art.⁷⁷ Due to regular contacts of both sides of the people, art, such as calligraphy, handicrafts, paper making, Chinese traditional methods of cure, medicines, Kungfu, martial arts, and kite flying will promote in Pakistan and will have some impact on Baloch society also.⁷⁸ Folk music plays an important role in Baloch traditions. Balochi music and instruments belong to the Persian branch of music which is also performed by other Persians such as Kurd, Lur and Tajik people. The music instruments commonly include; *Tanbur* –long necked flutes ⁷⁹*Dhol*, *Surna*,⁸⁰ *Ney*, (flute), *Suroz*, a Balochi folk violin, *Tar* and the *Saz*.⁸¹ If Balochi music has adopted the much from the music instruments of different civilization in the course of their interaction then it is assessed that Chinese music will influence the Balochi music to some extent.

Language

Language is the most important component of culture. Historical evidences show that frequent contact between any

two nations definitely results some change in language of both nations. Words of Arabic, Persian and English in Urdu language are clear example of it. The Balochi language is spoken in Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, Arab states, Turkmenistan, and as far as East Africa and some Western countries. It is classified as a member of the Iranian group of the Indo-European language family. Words of Kurdish, Persian, Pashto, Dari, Tajik and Ossetia in Balochi language show that this language has accepted the influence of various other languages.⁸² Similarly, with frequent interaction between Chinese and Balochi people there might be some change occurs in language too.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is said that CPEC is not just a trade route it is a bouquet of projects. Among its five major projects, infrastructure project can rightly be regarded as backbone of all these projects. The infrastructure includes: roads, railways, highways, airports, institutions etc. These means of transportation, communications and technologies are essential to establish and to develop industry. Energy is the basic requirement and necessity for the persistent working of industry. Sustained and developed industry leads to industrialization and mechanization leads a society towards urbanization and modernization. So the base of modernization is infrastructure *i.e.* means of transportation and means of communication. Transportation, communication and technologies are rightly called as modernizing agents because they help in transformation of any society. A cursory glance at historical evidences reveals that this feature has played a fundamental role in the development of the different societies and transformed them. The expected influential role of this feature in Balochistan is also tried to assess through the lens of CPEC projects. It is assessed that socially, modernizing agents in CPEC will provide connectivity in remote areas of Balochistan and the people of these areas will get opportunities to come close to each other and understand the problems, life style, of other areas of Pakistan and Balochistan as well. The population of the underprivileged rural areas will get access to other cities, hence social cohesion and integration within a

society as well as between societies will be possible. The modernizing agents will help in poverty alleviation as they will provide the poor with better physical access to employment, education and health services in Balochistan with setting of hotels, schools and hospitals along the route and in other areas. The business activity and the economic improvement is the enemy of insurrection.⁸³ The transport network in Balochistan will transform trade routes in to modern ones which would effectively transfer goods at a faster pace. Development of industry and free trade zones will provide jobs and business opportunities in the area. It would also help in addressing the grievances of the Baloch people. Culturally, this feature will play significant role in connecting people. Through constant contacts of both societies, the rich Baloch culture will be exposed to the people from outside of the province and country and Baloch people will get a chance to know the cultures of other societies. Moreover, there will be socio-cultural spill over with the contact of both societies. There will be exchange of ideas, values, work ethics and concepts in the cultural domain of language, religion, arts, tourism and academia which will strongly influence the Baloch culture and society would be transformed.

Tribal system in Balochistan may resist to this transformation but finally would yield to forces of modernization and development with the passage of time. British, on their advent in the subcontinent, also paid attention to build the infrastructure and despite some resistance they were welcomed by the people due to their social and cultural policies of development. Though CPEC is trade route and its main purpose is to strengthen the economy of Pakistan but this corridor definitely would leave great impact on society and culture of Pakistan because economic development and culture are inter linked. According to Emmanuel, "Economic development in its simplest form, is defined as 'progress towards prosperity' or 'improvement in well-being' and simply culture is 'the way of life of a people.'"⁸⁴ So, any improvement in the well-being will definitely result a change in the way of life of people.

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