

Exploring Multi-dimensional Impact of CPEC on Economy of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The study is carried out in the four major districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir entitled, “Exploring Multi- dimensional Impact of CPEC on Economy of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Pakistan.” The objectives of the study are to explore the socio economic impact of CPEC on AJ&K economy, to check the economic impact of CPEC on AJ&K economy and to check the strategic importance of CPEC on AJ&K economy. The study hoped to contribute to the development of infrastructure, industry, tourism, connectivity, energy, food, livestock and the social fabric in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. For this study, descriptive approach is employed. The research area has a total population of 23, 81,335 people from major districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Poonch, Kotli, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad).

Keywords: CPEC, socio-economic aspects, public opinion, quantitative research

INTRODUCTION

Regional cooperation is a process where two or more nearby nations work together to promote their social and economic growth through an agreement. Regional integration is facilitated by intergovernmental decision-making, an advanced degrees institutional framework, or a mix of the two (Wikipedia).

Types of regional integration

1. Area of Free Trade
2. Union of Cutoms
3. General Market
4. Union (Economic)
5. Union of Politics

Importance of CPEC in China

Xinjiang is an underdeveloped area in west China and is disturbed due to Uyghur's terrorist activity. CPEC is a way to bring development in the Xinjiang region thereby stabilizing the region and creating long-term peace (Quora\ Gautamkumar 2019). China has a huge demand for energy due to its large Industrial base, and more than 50% of this energy reaches China through the narrow Malacca Strait. China already has dispute with the island nations in the region due to the South China Sea and Fears that they can choke Chinese economy at the time of crisis. Therefore, China needs an additional route to safeguard its energy requirement, and CPEC exactly fits the requirement. Thus, CPEC has strategic significance for China (Quora 2019).

Pakistan & CPEC

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a 3,000-kilometer network of roads, rail lines, and pipelines that transports oil and gas from Gwadar Port in southern Pakistan to Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous province (Chinadaily 22-April-2015). It will cost 62 billion dollars to connect China's landlocked Xinjiang region with Pakistan's Arabian coast. This project was originally valued at 46 billion dollars, but it is now valued at 62 billion dollars. In 2015, during a visit to Pakistan by China's leader, Xi Jinping, the flag was officially sent off (spec wire). CPEC has three major components: working with Pakistan's modern and foundation development; fostering a cutting-edge transportation and media transmission network that advances the network between western China and Pakistan's seaside seaports; and allowing China to develop a deep-water port and unique monetary zone in the Gwadar region with a 40-year lease (the representative 2020).

Important CPEC Economic Benefits for Pakistan

1. Provided with strong companionship foundations.
2. A vital and profitable shipping corridor.
3. Improvements to the framework.
4. Interconnect all departments.
5. FATA, KPK, Baluchistan, and AJK are all improving.
6. Opportunities for employment (Power School).

CPEC AND AJ&K ECONOMY

Since 1949, China and Pakistan have enjoyed regions of mutual strength. CPEC is a joint venture between China and Pakistan in which China is investing \$62 billion on roads, trains, energy projects, fibre optics, and special economic zones (SEZs). Through this monetary contribution, CPEC will strengthen the partnership. An highway between Gwadar and China's Xijiang districts passes through four Pakistani provinces: Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan. (Day-to-day times, 2016) The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would connect Azad Jammu and Kashmir to global trade while also reducing the distance between nations and increasing exchange involvement (Khalique et al. 2019).

Projects of CPEC in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

1. Hydel Projects
2. Mirpur Industrial Zone
3. Mirpur -Muzaffarabad-MansehraMotorway

Mirpur Industrial Zone

AJK government has delivered over Rs. 183 million under the last monetary year 2017-18 for the development of the primary period of the super Special Economic Zone supported under the huge Industrial zone is created in the Mirpur region of AJK. 1000 sections of land of region is distributed for this task. This zone is found 120 km away from Islamabad worldwide air terminal to work with the transportation of products and HR. A few modern ventures are proposed to be laid out in this zone. (Akbar, et.al 2021).

Mirpur -Muzaffarabad-Mansehra Motorway

The Mirpur– Muzaffarabad– Mansehra Motorway, which will connect the state to the main CPEC route, is one of the most significant projects (MunawarHasan 2019). The estimated construction cost of this project is 246 billion Rs. The project includes four tunnels 122 bridges, 260 culverts, 6 interchanges and 3 weigh station (nha-approved).

Hydel Projects

Azad Pattan Hydro Project: China and Pakistan signed a £ 1.2bn (\$1.5bn) hydro project in July 2020. It is located approximately 7km upstream of the Azad Pattan Bridge on the Jhelum river. It is a 700MW hydroelectric power station (wikipedia).

Kohala Hydro Project: The Kohala Hydro Project is a 1100 MW hydroelectric project in Hawaii. It is near Muzaffarabad, on the Jhelum River. This project is expected to cost US\$2364.05 million. By the year 2026, the project should be completed. (www.kohalahydro.com).

Karot Hydro Project: On the Jhelum River, the Karot HPP is the fourth of five cascade hydropower plants planned. The Karot hydropower project, located near the villages of Karot in Punjab and Hollar in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, is a 720MW project. This project is expected to cost \$1.74 billion. The building of this project began in December 2016 and is projected to be finished in December 2021. (www.power-technology.com).

Other Projects

Former Prime Minister Sardar Masood Khan in a speech described these two projects as part of CPEC but according to CPEC authorities they are not part of CPEC.

Mahal Hydro Project: The 640MW Mahl Hydropower is also to be located on river Jhelum on combined boundary of AJK, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The total construction period of this project is 6 year. The project cost is USD1, 281.46 million. (nepra.org.pk).

Chakothi - Hattian hydro project: The 500MW Chakothi Hattian Hydro Project is located in District Muzaffarabad Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Jhelum river. The estimated cost of this project is 1176.50 Million. (nepra.org.pk).

Objective of the Study

1. To explore the socio economic impact of CPEC on AJ&K economy.

Significance of the Study

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a significant deal between Pakistan and China. The CPEC will help Pakistan's socioeconomic development and industrial expansion. It will assist the people of China and Pakistan in improving their lives by utilizing the project's benefits. Simultaneously, it will help to build Azad Jammu and Kashmir's infrastructure, industry, tourism, connectivity and energy. The significance of this study is that there has been insufficient research on the CPEC in Azad Kashmir, and the current study will be based on public opinion because there has been no research based on public opinion, so there is a great need for research to explore the impacts through public opinion. This study is beneficial for launching any CPEC project in future as it will give the researcher an idea of what people think about it, because no project can be successful without the support of people.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was purely descriptive in nature. With the aid of a research instrument, a survey was done (Questionnaire). The study had a cross-sectional temporal horizon and was carried out through quota sampling. Furthermore, with a sample size of 399 participants, the technique used is a closed-ended questionnaire. Due to a shortage of time, data was collected in four districts of Azad Kashmir (Mirpur, Kotli, Poonch, Muzaffrabad). Furthermore, the study was based on public opinion because most participants had heard the tagline "Perception is Reality." Public opinion research is crucial when it comes to determining what people genuinely believe.

Research Design

For this study, descriptive approach was employed. The researcher was curious about the impact of CPEC. The study's objective is to look at the economic impact of the CPEC in Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Population of the Study

This study was analyzed using primary data. The study's participants included students, businesspeople, and government personnel. The research region has a total population of 23, 81,335 (Twenty three lac Eighty one thousand three hundred and thirty five) people from these four district (Poonch, Kotli, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad). The detail of population is given bellow in table (AJK Planning Cell, 2021).

Sample of the Study

The following formula was used to select the sample size. During the survey it was observed that most people were aware about the CPEC. The total sample size was 399. The sample was taken by using Taro Yamane method of sampling.

Sampling by using Taro Yamane Formula

$$n = N / N + 1(e)^2$$

Where n= Sample

N= Population

$$e = .05$$

$$n = 23,81,335 / 23,81,335 + 1 (0.05)^2 = 399$$

Variables

The key variables used for the study were socioeconomic status, economy, infrastructure, and international relations.

Collection of data

The questionnaire was delivered to the Participants who had been chosen at random. The questionnaire was gathered in the form of a filled questionnaire from the sampled Participants. The researcher gathered all of the information alone. The information gathered was transcribed, tallied, evaluated, and analyzed.

Analysis of Data

The researcher tallied, evaluated, and analyzed the data gathered from the Participants using the simple frequency approach and the Chi Square nonparametric test to determine the influence of CPEC. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Tables and graphs are used to display the results.

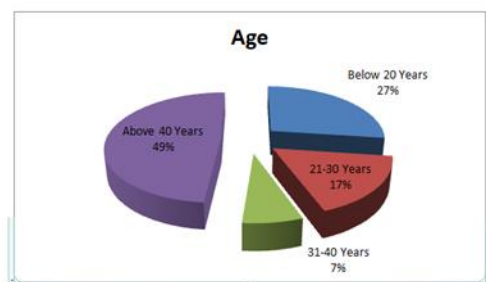
RESULTS

Data is analyzed and interpreted in this section of thesis. This chapter further contained Discussion on Results.

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: Age

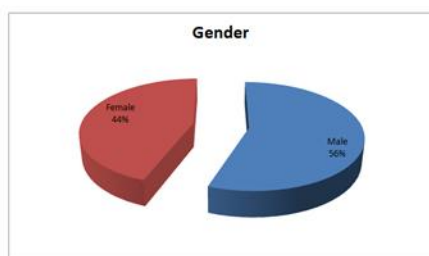
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20 Years	108	27.1	27.1	27.1
	21-30 Years	69	17.3	17.3	44.4
	31-40 Years	28	7.0	7.0	51.4
	Above 40 Years	194	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	100.0	



The percentages and frequencies of the Participants' ages were shown in Table 1. The majority (48.6%) was over 40 years old, 27.1 percent were under 20 years old, 17.3 percent were between the ages of 21 and 30, and just 7.0 percent were between the ages of 31 and 40 years old.

Table 2: Gender

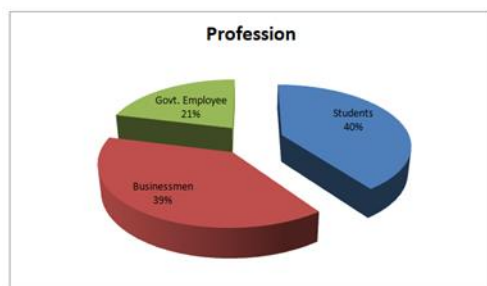
		F	% AGE	V % AGE	C % AGE
Valid	M	222	55.6	55.6	55.6
	F	177	44.4	44.4	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	100.0	



The gender of the survey participants was shown in Table 2. Male Participants made up 55.6 percent of the total, while female Participants made up 44.4 percent.

Table 3 Profession

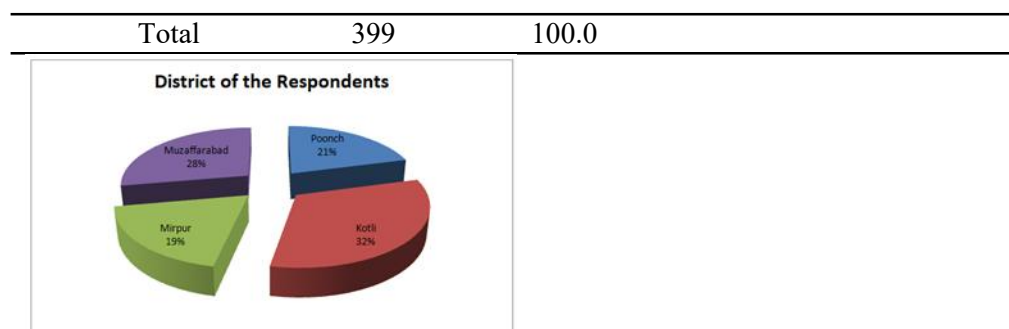
		F	% AGE	V % AGE	C % AGE
Valid	Student	160	40.1	40.1	40.1
	Businessman	155	38.8	38.8	78.9
	Govt. Employee	84	21.1	21.1	100.0
	Total	399	100.0	100.0	



The occupations of the participants were listed in Table 3. The majority of Participants (40.1%) were students, 38.8% were merchants, and 21.1 percent were government workers.

Table 4: District of the participants

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poonch	83	20.8	20.8
	Kotli	129	32.3	53.1
	Mirpur	76	19.0	72.2
	Muzaffarabad	111	27.8	100.0



The Sample used in this investigation was shown in Table 4. The Participants were mostly from Kotli, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, and Mirpur districts, with 32.3 percent from Kotli, 27.8% from Muzaffarabad, 20.8 percent from Poonch, and 19.0 percent from Mirpur.

Table 5: Do you have any information about CPEC?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	P
Yes	336	133.0	203.0	467.504	2	.000
No	18	133.0	-115.0			
Unaware	45	133.0	-88.0			
Total	399					

The residual value of the agreed group is 203.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of the Participants agreed on the statement that they had information regarding CPEC (see Table 5). The majority of the participants have heard of CPEC, according to the results. The $\chi^2 (2) = 467.504$, $p.05$ indicates that CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 6: Do you know how many billion dollars China is investing in Pakistan?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	P
Yes	181	133.0	48.0	63.579	2	.000
No	159	133.0	26.0			
Unaware	59	133.0	-74.0			
Total	399					

Table 6 reveals that the agreed group's residual value is 48.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of the Participants agreed with the assertion that they knew how much money China is investing in Pakistan. The disagreeing group's residual value is 26.0. The majority of the participants knew how much money China is investing in Pakistan, according to the results. CPEC has a multi-dimensional influence on Azad Jammu and Kashmir, as evidenced by the $\chi^2 (2) = 63.579$, $p.05$.

Table 7: Do you know about the Chinese projects in Pakistan?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	P
Yes	347	133.0	214.0	517.714	2	.000
No	35	133.0	-98.0			
Unaware	17	133.0	-116.0			

Total	399
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The residual value of the agreed group is 214.0, which is larger than the other groups, indicating that the majority of the participants agreed to the assertion that they are aware of Chinese initiatives in Pakistan (see Table 7). Participants are aware of Chinese projects in Pakistan, according to the findings. The $\chi^2(2) = 517.714$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 8: Will CPEC is a game changer for Pakistan?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	P
Yes	237	133.0	104.0			
No	144	133.0	11.0			
Unaware	18	133.0	-115.0	181.669	2	.000
Total	399					

Reveals that the agreed group's residual value is 104.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of participants agreed that CPEC will be a game changer for Pakistan. The conclusion is that the CPEC will be a game changer for Pakistan. The $\chi^2(2) = 181.669$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 9: Will CPEC bring peace and prosperity to Azad Kashmir?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	p
Yes	315	133.0	182.0			
No	17	133.0	-116.0			
Unaware	67	133.0	-66.0	382.977	2	.000
Total	399					

Table 9 reveals that the agreed group's residual value is 182.0, which is larger than the other groups, indicating that the majority of participants agreed with the assertion that the CPEC will bring peace and prosperity to Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The CPEC will bring peace and prosperity to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, it has been agreed. The $\chi^2(2) = 382.977$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 10: Will CPEC has any effect on our traditions?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	p
Yes	117	133.0	-16.0			
No	229	133.0	96.0			
Unaware	53	133.0	-80.0	119.338	2	.000
Total	399					

The residual value of the disputed group is 96.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of the Participants disagree with the assertion that CPEC would have any impact on our traditions. The conclusion is that CPEC has little impact on our customs. The $\chi^2(2) = 119.338$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted influence on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 11: Will CPEC affect our culture?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	p
Yes	199	133.0	66.0			
No	182	133.0	49.0			
Unaware	18	133.0	-115.0	150.241	2	.000
Total	399					

Table 11 reveals that the agreed group's residual value is 66.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of participants agreed with the assertion that CPEC will have an impact on their culture. The disagreeing group's residual value is 49.0. It has been determined that CPEC would have an impact on their culture. The $\chi^2 (2) = 150.241$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 12: Will CPEC increase crime rate?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	p
Yes	177	133.0	44.0			
No	204	133.0	71.0			
Unaware	18	133.0	-115.0	151.895	2	.000
Total	399					

The residual value of the disputed group is 71.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of participants disagree with the statement that CPEC will raise crime rates. It has been determined that the CPEC would not increase crime rates. The $\chi^2 (2) = 151.895$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 13: Will CPEC increase our social interaction with other countries?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	p
Yes	311	133.0	178.0			
No	34	133.0	-99.0			
Unaware	54	133.0	-79.0	358.842	2	.000
Total	399					

The residual value of the agreed group is 178.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of the participants agreed with the assertion that CPEC will boost their social engagement with other nations (see Table 4.13). CPEC, it has been found, will improve their social engagement with other nations. The $\chi^2 (2) = 358.842$, $p.05$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 14: Will CPEC is good for tourism?

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	χ^2	df	P
Yes	346	199.5	146.5			
No	53	199.5	-146.5	215.160	1	.000
Total	399					

Table 14 reveals that the agreed group's residual value is 146.0, which is greater than the other groups, indicating that the majority of the participants agreed with the assertion that CPEC will benefit tourism. The conclusion is that the CPEC will benefit tourism. The $\chi^2 (1) = 215.160$, $p.00$, indicates that the CPEC has a multi-faceted impact on Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

DISCUSSION

The main objectives of the study were to explore the socio economic impact of CPEC on AJ&K economy, to check the economic impact of CPEC on AJ&K economy and to check the strategic importance of CPEC on AJ&K economy. The objective of the study was to explore the socio economic impact of CPEC on AJ&K economy the study found that majority of the Participants have information about Chinese projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The study found that the Participants were found of the opinion that CPEC will bring peace and prosperity to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and have not any effect on their traditions though it will affect our culture. CPEC will create more jobs for the people of the area and will not create crime rate. They will be able to use their natural resources properly and will be helpful to eliminate energy crises in this area. The study also concludes that CPEC will increase their social interaction with other countries of the world and these countries will definitely invest in Azad Kashmir due to CPEC importance. CPEC will open new avenues for them in the field of education and will be good for tourism. These findings of the study were in line with the studies of Shah (2015), Malik (2015) and Suleman (2015) who also found similar type of results in their studies.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study the study concludes that majority of the Participants have information about CPEC and they know that how many billion dollars China is investing in Pakistan. The masses are aware of the Chinese projects in Pakistan and they think that this will be proved as a game changer for Pakistan. The study also concludes that Majority of the Participants have information about Chinese projects in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The Participants are found of the opinion that CPEC will bring peace and prosperity to Azad Jammu and Kashmir and have not any effect on their traditions though it will affect our culture. CPEC will create more jobs for the people of the area and will not create crime rate. They will be able to use their natural resources properly and will be helpful to eliminate energy crises in this area.

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