

## CPEC AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM IN PAKISTAN

Dr. Talat Shabbir\*  
Asma Siddiq†

### ABSTRACT

*The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship infrastructure project under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), holds considerable promise for transforming cultural heritage and tourism in Pakistan. This research investigates how CPEC can make tourist destinations more accessible, promote Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, and foster economic growth through carefully planned tourism initiatives. The study will specifically examine how infrastructure development related to CPEC, such as improved road connectivity and transportation systems can connect remote sites of cultural importance, thereby attracting both domestic and international tourists. The study will also identify potential opportunities for the tourism sector, examining how policymakers can leverage CPEC infrastructure for the sustainable development of tourism. The study will provide insights to review and revise the existing policies, with the objective of fully harnessing the opportunities within the tourism sector. Ultimately, this research seeks to offer valuable insights for policymakers, tourism industry experts, and academics, emphasizing the strategic application of the CPEC initiative to significantly uplift tourism in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** CPEC, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, Pakistan, Infrastructure, Economic Development

---

\*Director, China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Email: talat@issi.org.pk (Corresponding Author).

†Research Assistant, China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Email: asmaasidd@issi.org.pk

## INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been unveiling several mega connectivity projects. Yet, no comparable initiative could match the magnitude, richness and multidimensional vision of China – Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): a route viewed solely through the lens of trade and connectivity but a gateway to uncover forgotten heritage, open diverse tourism potential into a national asset. Tourism can flourish in a country where breath taking and scenic mountains, roaring rivers, majestic deserts, historic cultural sites, and spiritual traditions have been a part of national resource. Pakistan has inherited with all of these assets. Its natural beauty pleases eyes but its cultural heritage connects people with the ancient and glorious landmarks. Despite having this fact, due to lack of sufficient infrastructure, overlook of heritage sites, lack of investments, and security issues remains a challenge. During this position, a landmark corridor delves in with the connectivity and infrastructure projects by reshaping the limited tourism growth and preservation of cultural hubs.

CPEC is a joint corridor of regional connectivity between China and Pakistan. The initiative promotes geographical linkages by building roads, highways, railways and ports to enhance economic and trade opportunities for both countries. This connectivity promotes and preserves Pakistan's rich cultural sites by giving access to discover the fresh historical sites and preservation of the old ones.

The Tourism Development Corporation of Pakistan (TDCP) identifies 480 cultural sites in Punjab. Of these, 106 are of historical importance, 120 religious and a further 26 of both religious and historical importance (Shaikh & Afraz, 2019). Pakistan has monumental cultural sites – Mohenjo-Daro (Sindh), Taxilla (Punjab), Harappa (Punjab), Baltit and Altit Forts (Gilgit-Baltistan) have supported mainly by CPEC motorway projects as in Sukkhar – Hyderabad motorway, Hazara motorway (E-35), Karakoram highway have made more accessible to tourists. A study of Hazara motorway impact on tourism growth by CPEC indicates that the districts of Abbottbad and Mansehra have been observed as the most visited places for tourists

and the E-35 motorway (CPEC route) passing from this region (Saheed et al., 2021).

At religious sites, both countries under CPEC are working on the UNESCO world heritage site (Takht-i-Bahi) an ancient Buddhist monastery - one of the rich cultural heritages of Pakistan. It is now more accessible for educational and religious tourism for Buddhist via (motorways or highways) in KPK like M1 motorway from (Islamabad to Peshawar) gives easy access (The Daily CPEC, 2024). Similarly, Historic Sikh Gurdwara in Skardu located along with the Karakorum highway of CPEC project and the holiest Sikh shrines Gurdwara Panja sahib located near the M-1 motorway has improved roads for Buddhists and Sikh pilgrims for religious and cultural tourism. As CPEC project has enhanced trade and energy and brings Pakistan's spiritual heart to be closure and opens doors for Sufi shrines and heritage sites. Major Sufi shrines include Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (Sehwan) and Baba Farid (Pak Patan) were Sufi saint known for their spiritual wisdom and it serves as a spiritual destination for devotees (DAWN.COM, 2018).

The execution of mobility network is a cornerstone of improved access towards tourism development – attracting more domestic and international tourists. The flow of tourists not only preserve cultural legacy but also promotes cultural wealth by generating economic revenue. Tourism encourages small businesses like hotels, restaurants, and local crafts, which creates employment opportunities for local residents. The Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan maintains that CPEC has brought a total of \$25.4 billion in direct investment, 236,000 jobs, 510 kilometres of highways; more than 8,000 megawatts of electricity and 886 kilometres of core transmission to Pakistan will ultimately boost tourism potential in the region (Correspondent, 2024). According to the *National Tourism Pakistan (NTP)* “the potential of CPEC to boost tourism and has been actively working to integrate its objectives with CPEC's infrastructure and development projects” (*CPEC and Tourism in Pakistan: The Role of NTP – National Tourism Pakistan*, n.d.).

CPEC also enhances cultural exchange programs and heritage collaboration. On January 23, 2024 a mega event of “CPEC Cultural Caravan 2024” between China, Pakistan and Central Asian states. It was aimed to enhance cultural ties and people-to-people connection through arts, music’s, writers, and filmmakers (Isbpostadmin, 2024). Quite recently, on July 7, 2025, Pakistan’s minister for culture, tourism and heritage Huzaiifa Rehman, met with Chinese Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gao Zheng and proposed commitment to preserve shared heritage and strengthens ties trough bilateral cultural initiatives (Hussain, 2025). To fully access the prospects of this development plan, the government must need to take concrete steps. Firstly, raise awareness about cultural and heritage restoration among the local population. Secondly, promote accessibility by acquiring the benefits of CPEC like projects and facilities. Thirdly, enhance public and private partnerships by encouraging investment. Fourthly, establish secure routes and measures to promote the safety and security of tourists.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

### **CPEC: Promotion of Tourism and Cultural Heritage**

Pakistan is home to a rich historical and cultural legacy spanning millennia. The Indus Valley Civilization (c.3300–1300 BCE) has major sites including Mohenjo-Daro (Sindh) and Harappa (Punjab) which makes it one of the world’s earliest urban cultures. Its rich legacy of art and craft continues to fascinate historians and travel enthusiasts. Artifacts such as the famous bronze “*dancing girl*” statuette from Mohenjo-Daro are an example of the aesthetic sophistication of Indus artisans (Shikha Prakash, 2024). The Gandhara civilization that followed the Indus age flourished in what is now north-western Pakistan. Taxila (Punjab), Pushkalavati/Charsadda, and the Swat Valley (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) became its centres. Gandhara became a renowned crossroads of cultures and a bastion of Buddhism. Historically termed the “Land of Convergence” Gandhara absorbed cultural influences from Persian, Greek, Central Asian and Indian

civilizations, blending them into a unique hybrid culture. The fusion became the hallmark of Gandharan art.

Pakistan's historical legacy is not just limited to textbooks rather it continues to thrive and evolve through tourism, local traditions and conservation efforts. Taxila Valley with its spiritual and historical importance continues to be a key tourism hub. It was one of the great centres of Gandharan art and learning. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, yielding a wealth of Buddhist monasteries, stupas and historical ruins that showcases its historical significance (Khan et al., 2025). The Swat Valley is another key Gandharan hub. It is cherished as a sacred landscape brimming with Buddhist monasteries, reflecting the deep roots of Buddhism in the region. At its peak, Swat Valley hosted as many as 1,400 monasteries and stupas. It was known as "the Uddiyana", a heavenly garden of Buddhism. The remains of sites like the Butkara Stupa in Swat (attributed to Emperor Ashoka's time) further highlights Pakistan's significance in early Buddhist heritage (Rajput, 2018).

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) acts as the gateway for advancing Pakistan's quest for promoting cultural heritage and boosting its tourism sector. The mega infrastructure development project not only acts as a vital catalyst for upgrading the cultural heritage landscape of the country, but also turning around its economic destiny by undertaking modernization of national tourism industry. The CPEC, in its entirety, offers more than a network of modern highways and roads, going beyond the brand of an exclusively infrastructure-driven initiative. Rather, it is considered as a mega-project stimulating the country's broader socio-economic development (Rehman et al., 2018). The CPEC is actively reshaping travel and tourism landscape of Pakistan by developing and expanding tourism sector such as adventure, leisure, coastal, education, cultural and religious tourism (Alam et al., 2020).

CPEC carries strategic opportunity for Pakistan to realize promotion of its cultural heritage and religious tourism by enabling rapid infrastructure development, encouraging cultural exchanges,

preservation and development of heritage sites, reforming tourism industry, and fostering local community development through cultural awareness and sustainable tourism practices. Infrastructure development as a part of CPEC aims for improving overall tourist mobility and accessibility to cultural heritage sites. Development and upgradation of physical infrastructure such as roads, highways and motorways directly impacts rural-urban connectivity and market accessibility thus culminating into increased tourist influx. Improved infrastructure is considered critical for connecting to remote heritage sites subsequently improving accessibility of tourists and encouraging cultural and religious tourism.

On the other hand, the development of new infrastructure may open up possibilities of not only rehabilitating the existing cultural heritage sites but also discovering new sites that may develop into new historical landmarks of tourist attraction (Gul et al., 2023). For instance, the upgradation of Karakoram Highway (KKH) under CPEC connecting Islamabad to Khunjerab Pass has boosted tourism to Hunza, Skardu, and Gilgit, which are home to rich Buddhist cultural heritage. Similarly, Thakot-Havelian (M-15) motorway constructed under CPEC connecting Havelian to Thakot, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shortened distance for commuters leading to tourism boost (*Xinhua*, 2021). Another important example is the Jaglot-Skardu Road, upgraded and inaugurated in 2017 as a part of CPEC, aimed to link Karakoram Highway (KKH) and Skardu (Bo, n.d.). The upgradation of this strategic road infrastructure helped in spurring tourism surge in Gilgit Baltistan (GB), the world-famous trekking and expedition hub.

In a similar vein, modernizing transit facilities such as airports and railway networks can drastically improve international tourism facilitating greater accessibility to cultural heritage hotspots Lahore, Rohtas Fort, Mohenjo-daro, etc. Reforming hospitality infrastructure of the designated locations at the cultural heritage sites is another crucial component of cultural tourism promotion. The inauguration of the New Gwadar International Airport in October, 2024 is a glaring

example of the importance of modern airport facilities in kick starting domestic and international tourism. The New Gwadar International Airport built under the framework of the CPEC has revitalized tourism potential of Pakistan's southwest province of Baluchistan particularly Gwadar and surrounding regions (Huaxia, 2023). Moreover, ensuring robust rail access to tourist hotspots in the provinces can significantly amplify tourist influx. Operationalizing specialized tourist trains for the foreign and local tourists can increment overall positive effect. Towards achieving this end, Pakistan railway authorities took up the task of railway upgradation to the Gandhara civilization and from Peshawar to *Takht-e-Bai* on a priority basis, which resulted in tourism promotion (Ahmed, 2019).

Another dimension is the transformation of hospitality industry so as to enable it to unlock full potential of tourism sector. By developing sound and modern hospitality infrastructure such as hotels, resorts, tourist information centres, and rest houses, the demand for domestic and international tourism can be enhanced. Furthermore, building tourism cooperation authorities and certified centres can aid in bringing together all the relevant stakeholders especially business communities in developing and promoting tourism. For instance, the *Hashoo Group*, which is Pakistan's leading hospitality brand took an eager interest in expanding their enterprise and hospitality services, *Hotel Two*, in areas close to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route. Building their hotel chain close to the route would earn them greater revenue on their business (Haq, 2018). The construction of five-star hotels at key locations would aid in attracting greater number of domestic and foreign tourists particularly to the scenic areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. In the midst of expanding economic growth, especially in relation to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Pakistan's hospitality sector continues to grow at a remarkable pace.

### **Leveraging Heritage for Economic Growth and Cultural Diplomacy**

Cultural heritage is not just about preserving the past; it is about shaping the future. Pakistan's historical and cultural legacy, rooted in

ancient civilizations, can be leveraged to boost cultural diplomacy, tourism, and economic growth. Strengthening bilateral relations hinge upon traditional and non-traditional modes of diplomacy of which cultural diplomacy forms a significant part. Cultural diplomacy institutes on the idea of exchange between cultures and increasing people-to-people connections at the grassroots to infuse deeper mutual understanding between nations and its peoples. It establishes a toolkit that favours closing bridges of mistrust, hate, and misunderstandings between two peoples thus opening new avenues of cooperation. This toolkit constitutes promoting art and cultural exchanges, joint exhibitions and media cooperation; establishing language and research centres, collaborating on joint preservation and rehabilitation of heritage projects, promoting inter-faith and intercultural dialogue, launching learning exchanges, and promoting sports and cultural festivals.

The CPEC facilitates Sino-Pak cultural collaboration through arts exchanges, joint festivals, exhibitions, heritage preservation projects, museum cooperation, joint academic research initiatives, literature and language festivals and cultural journalism. Art exchange exhibitions such as *Star Moon Road* (2023), celebrating the 10th anniversary of the BRI and CPEC and the *Esthetic Bridges* exhibition, showcasing paintings by Chinese artists are illustrative of expanding bilateral; art collaborations (*Feature: Art Exhibition Highlights Pakistan-China Friendship*, n.d.). Similarly, joint exhibition between the Hunerkada College of Fine Arts and Performing Arts, the Silk Road Culture Centre, and China's prestigious Sichuan Fine Art Institute, showcased traditional, contemporary and miniature paintings reflecting deep Sino-Pak cultural ties (Ali, 2025). Such exhibitions form a platform of artistic dialogue that nurtures mutual understanding and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) between different art institutions play an important role in building education exchange linkages between the two nations. For instance, a MoU signed between Hebei Academy of Fine Arts (HAFA) and Quaid-i-Azam University establishing proper education exchange mechanism is a

prime example of deepening education links between Pakistan and China (Salamat & Salamat, 2024).

Collaboration in cultural heritage and religious tourism sets the stage for harnessing cultural diplomacy. Such collaborations include heritage conservation and preservation, joint archaeological research, museum cooperation and conservation, joint exhibitions featuring learning opportunities and celebrating history and artifacts. Key MoUs regarding joint heritage protection include the *Guardians of Gandhara* program (2024) focusing on preserving the UNESCO World Heritage Site, *Takht-i-Bahi* Buddhist monastery (Correspondent, 2025), and an MoU on Establishing Friendly Relation and Cooperation signed between the Academy of Dazhu Rock Carvings and Museum of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar (Hussain, 2023), for the protection of cave carvings amidst intensifying climate crisis. Such bilateral collaborations are crucial in furthering protection and conservation efforts thus facilitating cultural heritage and tourism.

The use of digitization in heritage preservation is also an important aspect of cultural diplomacy. The DiGA (Digitization of Gandharan Artefacts) Project is an important milestone achieved in this domain. The project aims for digitization and developing a catalogue of almost 2,000 Buddhist sculptures excavated in 13 ancient Buddhist monasteries located around Chakdara and Saidu Sharif (Harvard FAS CAMLab, 2022). The initiative seeks to support conservation and scholarly access to experts, and other audiences interested in studying and learning about the Buddhist art of Pakistan. Cultural heritage protection bilateral accords signed by Pakistan, China and Afghanistan reflect the growing commitment when it comes to cooperation in archaeological research, conservation and preservation of cultural assets, and sustainable development of world cultural heritage sites.

Another illustration of high-level cultural diplomacy is the agreement signed between China and Pakistan aimed at protecting important heritage sites, making them more accessible to international

audiences through digital platforms thus preserving them for coming generations (Mazumder & Mazumder, 2025). Strengthening the development of museums in both countries should also be focused. Museum sector has to be reformed through advancing museology practices and improving museum experiences. Cultural interactions, including the hosting of delegations composed of artists and cultural ambassadors, art exhibitions, and film festivals are all part of expanding cultural exchanges. These programs aim to strengthen the bonds between the peoples of both countries and promote a better knowledge and respect of their rich cultural traditions. Furthermore, to target Chinese tourists, customized cultural tourism packages inclusive of language aid, Chinese-speaking guides, Chinese food etc. may be devised.

Heritage and cultural tourism through the CPEC is driving economic growth by job creation and employment generation, entrepreneurship, and attracting FDI. Pakistan's overall socioeconomic development has greatly benefited from the CPEC. As per the Pakistan Economic Survey (PES) (2019-20), the CPEC's early harvest projects have directly provided over 85,000 jobs for the local population (China Pakistan Economic Corridor, 2020). It stated that more job possibilities would be stimulated by the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under the CPEC. In the second phase of CPEC, the development of industrial units and technology collaboration would be given priority. Over 39,000 Chinese have visited Pakistan in the last five years since the commencement of construction on the CPEC. In an apparent attempt to increase foreign investment, commercial prospects, and tourism in the country during this time, the Pakistani government issued over 92,204 visas to foreign nationals. Furthermore, officials told this correspondent that during the previous five years, roughly 91,000 Chinese nationals travelled to Pakistan on tourist visas (Gishkori, 2018).

CPEC facilitates connectivity, which in turn promotes cultural tourism and adventure travel. According to the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Pakistan saw a 115% increase in

foreign tourism which has helped the country earn \$1.3 billion in foreign exchange revenue (*Pakistan - Pakistan Saw Over 115% Increase in Tourism in 2023*, Wasi., n.d.), largely due to improved connectivity and security. Since 2015, domestic travel to Pakistan has increased significantly, mostly as a result of increased security and easier access to well-known locations like Murree, Hunza, and Swat. According to estimates, more than 50 million domestic tourists visit the nation each year, motivated by mostly through adventure, leisure, and religious travel. According to a World Travel & Tourism Council-WTTC research, international tourism has been on the rise, with around 1.9 million foreign visitors coming to Pakistan in 2019 (Rashid & Nadeem, 2025). When it comes to Pakistan's contribution of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), China is the largest contributor. For instance, the year 2023 saw \$319.7 million in inflows from China, rise from \$375.6 million during the same year. Thirty percent of all foreign direct investment came from China (DAWN.COM, 2023).

## **Policy Recommendations**

### *Integrated Tourism Policy*

The potential of Pakistan's geostrategic and geoeconomics significance are known to us as well the world since it came into existence in 1947. Tourism requires physical infrastructure for hospitality, aviation, transport, food industry, services of all sectors and sub sectors with all sectors fully integrated and digitized. Its attraction demands a cohesive transport network along with reliable information centers, which therefore can be facilitated through the CPEC project. All this can be useful only if Entry / visa controls / immigration policy are facilitating the processes and the Law-and-Order situation provides safety and guarantee to the tourists. Tourists are extremely hesitant to unstable, threatening social or cultural environments hence China and Pakistan must capitalize on their strengths, integrating their tourism policies that align with aims of CPEC to provide culturally rich experiences.

### ***Public – Private Partnership***

The governments of both the countries should actively facilitate financing and investment of the public welfare project along with adopting policies that attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The financial institutions of both the states should strengthen their strategic cooperation and also fully utilize the capacity of international institutions including the World Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Internally, they must therefore actively engage in various forms to provide credit enhancement support for major financing projects, effectively reducing the financing costs and protecting the rights and interests of creditors. On the other hand, sectors like hospitality, transport and cultural preservation are traditionally run by private sector and therefore for meaningful economic impact there will be need of a liberal unbiased policy governing all the spectrum of these sectors. This could include providing tax incentives, deregulation, the government aiming to mitigate the sizable risks associated with infrastructure investments in the region using methods like project finance and assisting in providing technical training to the staff. Hence, these proven ways shall assist in attracting fastest investment and resorted where best results are anticipated.

### ***Balanced Capacity Building***

Both the states aim to expand their training programs mainly by sending students from CPEC regions to Chinese universities, which will help to achieve cultural diversity as well as establishing cultural homogeneity making individuals less exposed to external shocks. However, such ideological influence may not align with Pakistan's democratic framework, leading to brain drain with talented individuals remaining abroad and disconnected with Pakistan's local context and needs. Therefore, putting the Chinese investment to its most efficient use, Pakistan should set up more domestic technical training programs while also investing in local universities to host joint programs which would not only help in equipping the staff with the appropriate required skills but would also control the large

outflow of Pakistan's population, vital for its growth.

### ***Community Involvement***

In order for this project to achieve its aims, there must be meaningful cooperation with the local communities for tourism to be sustainable. This can be achieved by engaging with educational institutions, by serving as centers of skill building, awareness and collaboration identifying tourism opportunities and preserving cultural assets. Active participation of the local communities would also involve the religious scholars on board in order to minimize restraints in achieving CPEC's goals as well as maintaining culture sensitivity. Additionally, it would be viable to give a certain percentage of job opportunities for the local population in order to encourage the acceptance of the plans.

### ***Inclusive Culture and Security Integration***

The CPEC route should aim to achieve cultural inclusivity, which would help establish national unity by celebrating and preserving tribal cultures like that of the Baloch and the Pashtuns. It must therefore include community led security mechanisms where the tribal leaders play an active and vital role in development and protection from external factors. Such indulgence can be achieved through hosting cultural festivals that highlight the traditions, music, and film of the Pakistani culture along with heritage of the Chinese fostering people-to-people connections and reduce cultural apprehensions. Therefore, CPEC's culture diplomacy not only would benefit the growth of the project but it would else ensure that the development be sustainable and deep rooted in respect for indigenous identities.

### ***Environmental Safeguard and Security***

Future CPEC policies must foresee the need to integrate environmental sustainability along with climate change resilience in order to prevent environmental degradation. This can be done by enforcing emission controls in industrial zones, protecting

biodiversity and ensuring the use of clean and renewable energy. In order to ensure accountability, there should be a separate body set up with the aims to overlook whether the green objectives are followed or not. Such environmentally friendly policy frameworks would not only benefit the states and the project, but would also bring them to the forefront aligning with their global climate change commitments.

## CONCLUSION

The CPEC, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is key to Pakistan's future development in terms of the economy as well as preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. With the development of strategic infrastructure including transportation and communication, CPEC gives Pakistan this valuable opportunity to increase tourist footfall both domestically and internationally while also preserving and appreciating Pakistan's diverse cultural tapestry. This research defines the dual value of this CPEC project, serving as a mechanism for economic uplifting, yet also is a platform to enhance both the states cultural diplomacy and soft power. This timely opportunity would assist Pakistan in positioning itself as unique cultural destination, promoting traditional arts, cuisine, local festivals to a global audience.

In order to make this project effective and help achieve its aims, efforts will have to be made for deliberate coordinated policies. Solely creating a route would not be sufficient without adopting supportive frameworks that integrate sustainability, preservation and community engagement. Hence to achieve this, they must provide more training opportunities to the local communities to make sure that the economic and social benefits are distributed equally and equitably among the citizens. Therefore, the CPEC project is not just a physical effort of connecting trade routes, but servers as a strategic opportunity for Pakistan not only to enhance its global image, but also foster regional growth and stability.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, W. (2019, February 14). Govt decides to connect tourist spots via air railroad links. *The Express Tribune*. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1910016/govt-decides-connect-tourist-spots-via-air-rail-road-links>
- Alam, M., Ahmad, R., & Nargiza, M. (2020). Pakistan - CPEC and Tourism Vinculum: A corridor of tourism opportunities in Pakistan. *Global Sociological Review*, V(III), 65–71. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2020\(v-iii\).08](https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2020(v-iii).08)
- Ali, F. (2025, March 26). Fusion of heritage and modernity – Chinese Artists Bridge cultures through art. *DAWN.COM*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1900283>
- Arts & Crafts of the Harappan Civilization: An Analysis with regards to Their Socio-Economic Role and Relevance. (2024). *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(6), 4920–4929. <https://kuey.net/index.php/kuey/article/view/8829/6652>
- Bo, F. (n.d.). CPEC Gateway: Jaglot-Skardu Road inaugurated--China Economic Net. [http://en.ce.cn/Insight/202112/17/t20211217\\_37182137.shtml](http://en.ce.cn/Insight/202112/17/t20211217_37182137.shtml)
- CPEC. (2020, June 12). CPEC early harvest projects have created over 85,000 direct jobs for locals: Pakistan Economic Survey (PES). <https://cpecinfo.com/cpec-early-harvest-projects-have-created-over-85000-direct-jobs-for-locals-pakistan-economic-survey-pes/>
- Correspondent, O. (2025, May 23). ‘The Guardians of Gandhara Project’ hailed. *The News International*. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1314241-the-guardians-of-gandhara-project-hailed>
- Correspondent, O. (2024, December 14). CPEC brings 25 4b investment 236k jobs. *The Express Tribune*. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2515902/cpec-brings-254b-investment-236k-jobs>

- NPT (n.d.). *CPEC and tourism in Pakistan: The role of NTP – National Tourism Pakistan*. <https://ntp.com.pk/cpec-and-tourism-in-pakistan-the-role-of-ntp/>
- DAWN.COM. (2018, October 26). CPEC termed realisation of Bhitai's famous prayer for Sindh. *DAWN.COM*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1441356>
- DAWN.COM. (2023, April 20). Foreign direct investment jumps 62pc to \$163m. *DAWN.COM*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1748598>
- Feature: Art exhibition highlights Pakistan-China friendship*. (n.d.). <https://english.news.cn/asiapacific/20230606/90305567d2c749b2a882609484b5bc88/c.html>
- Gishkori, Z. (2018, March 5). Over 92,000 foreigners visit Pakistan since launch of CPEC. *The News International*. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/288599-over-92-000-foreigners-visit-pakistan-since-launch-of-cpec>
- Gul, S., Rahman, I. U., Iftikhar, A., Mohammad, Dr. N., Haque, M., & Fahim Khan, M. (2023). The Potential of CPEC in Promoting Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development in Pakistan. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 20 (2), 449–457. <https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/11802>
- Harvard FAS CAMLab. (2022, October 16). *Bringing Gandhāra into the Digital World – A Novel Approach and New Perspectives - Harvard FAS CAMLab*. Harvard FAS CAMLab -. <https://camlab.fas.harvard.edu/event/bringing-gandhara-into-the-digital-world-a-novel-approach-and-new-perspectives/>
- Hussain, T. (2025, July 7). *Pakistan and China forge new cultural and tourism partnership*. China Pakistan Economic Corridor. <https://cpecinfo.com/pakistan-and-china-forge-new-cultural-and-tourism-partnership/>

- Huaxia, X. (2023). *Pakistan's Balochistan to be tourism hub after inauguration of CPEC airport project, says official*. XINHUANET.com. <https://english.news.cn/20231101/50ca938f9e8440e6923bc08cfbac7888/c.html>
- Hussain, T. (2023, August 22). *China-Pakistan collaboration: Historic MOU signed to safeguard cultural heritage amid climate change*. China Pakistan Economic Corridor. <https://cpecinfo.com/china-pakistan-collaboration-historic-mou-signed-to-safeguard-cultural-heritage-amid-climate-change/>
- Isbpostadmin. (2024, January 23). *Jamal Shah shares plan of second CPEC cultural caravan*. Islamabad Post. <https://islamabadpost.com.pk/jamal-shah-shares-plan-of-second-cpec-cultural-caravan/>
- Khan, O., Dogar, A. A., Mumtaz, Z., & Ijaz, H. (2025). Religious Tourism in Taxila Valley: Assessing Tourist impact and Strategies for Heritage Management. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(1), 281–289.
- Mazumder, R., & Mazumder, R. (2025, July 7). *Pakistan and China strengthen cultural diplomacy and tourism ties to boost economic growth - Travel and Tour World*. Travel and Tour World. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/pakistan-and-china-strengthen-cultural-diplomacy-and-tourism-ties-to-boost-economic-growth/>
- Pakistan - Pakistan saw over 115% increase in tourism in 2023, Wasi. . .* (n.d.). [https://www.facebook.com/ptdc.pk/photos/pakistan-saw-over-115-increase-in-tourism-in-2023-wasi-shahislamabad-minister-of/758595942966369/?\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/ptdc.pk/photos/pakistan-saw-over-115-increase-in-tourism-in-2023-wasi-shahislamabad-minister-of/758595942966369/?_rdr)
- Rajput, S. A. (2018). Beauty and Mystery of Gandhara Art. *Deleted Journal*, 3(3), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3126/researcher.v3i3.21546>
- Rashid, Y., & Nadeem, M. (2025). *Tourism A Panacea for Pakistan*. The Pakistan Business Council (PBC). <https://www.pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/Tourism-A-Panacea-for-Pakistan.pdf>

- Rehman, A. U., Hakim, A., Khan, K., & Khan, I. U. (2018). Role of CPEC in development of trade, transport and economy of Pakistan. *Romanian Journal of Transport Infrastructure*, 7(1), 77–92. <https://doi.org/10.2478/rjti-2018-0005>
- Saheed, R., Ahmed, N., & Khan, A. (2021). Evaluating the impact of Hazara Motorway on tourism growth under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Hazara Region, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Global Political Review*, VI(II), 55–66. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021\(vi-ii\).07](https://doi.org/10.31703/gpr.2021(vi-ii).07)
- Salamat, S., & Salamat, S. (2024, August 29). *Hafa, QAU partner to boost art & culture*. Daily Times. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1221552/hafa-qau-partner-to-boost-art-culture/>
- Shahram.Haq. (2018, March 10). PC owners to build new hotel chain along CPEC route. *The Express Tribune*. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1656667/pc-owners-build-new-hotel-chain-along-cpec-route>
- Shaikh, H., & Afraz, N. (2019, October 17). Pakistan is uniquely placed to take advantage of religious tourism. What is stopping us? *DAWN.COM*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1479801>
- The Daily CPEC. (2024, May 21). *China-Funded project helps preserve cultural heritage in Pakistan*. The Daily CPEC - #1 Source of News on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. <https://thedailycpec.com/china-funded-project-helps-preserve-cultural-heritage-in-pakistan/>
- Xinhua*. (2021, October 14). <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/10/14/china-built-road-bespeaks-cpecs-commitment-to-development/>

Received: July 14, 2025

Revision Received: August 13, 2025

Published: August 25, 2025